

Youth employment and entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific

Lessons for a human-centred recovery

Concept note and agenda

Webinar: 6 October 2021, 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, GMT+7

1. Background

The COVID-19 labour market challenge for youth in Asia and the Pacific

Asia and the Pacific is home to the majority of the world's young people. The more than 660 million youth aged 15-24 are key to the region's current and future inclusive economic and social development.ⁱ The massive disruptions to economies and labour markets in Asia and the Pacific due to the COVID-19 crisis have resulted in disproportionate impacts on their prospects and aspirations across three dimensions: (1) disruptions to education, training and work-based learning; (2) increased difficulties for young jobseekers and new labour market entrants; and (3) job disruptions in the form of reduced working hours, reduced earnings and job losses, along with deteriorating quality of employment.ⁱⁱ

Youth-led enterprises were negatively impacted by the multiple shocks, including collapsing demand and supply chain disruptions.ⁱⁱⁱ Youth aged 15-24 in Asia-Pacific have been particularly hard hit by job losses, with a 10.3 per cent decline in employment in 2020, compared with 2.4 per cent for adults.^{iv}

What is more, global evidence suggests that employment losses did not generally translate into unemployment, but resulted in increased inactivity with youth dropping out of the labour force, or delaying their entry into it.^v The risk of a long-term exclusion for a generation of young people is exacerbated by pre-existing labour market vulnerabilities, inequalities and gender disparities among youth in Asia-Pacific. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, more than 8 out of 10 young workers in Asia-Pacific were in informal employment. More than

160 million youth in Asia-Pacific were not in employment, education, or training (so-called NEET) and nearly three quarters of NEETs were young women.^{vi}

The policy response in Asia and the Pacific

Targeted and effective investments are needed to improve the labour market prospects of young people during the socio-economic recovery process.^{vii} The global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2021, provides guidance on promoting youth employment through a human-centred recovery.^{viii} In Asia and the Pacific, governments have adopted a wide array of policy measures in the socio-economic recovery process to stimulate economy and employment as well as to support enterprises, jobs and incomes. Youth-relevant labour market policy responses ranged from financial support to sectors critical for youth employment to youth-targeted measures to facilitate training and employment, and provide income support. Young people themselves have taken action and demonstrated agility and resilience in shaping the crisis response, including through youth entrepreneurship.^{ix} Yet, little is known about the effectiveness of these measures at country-level to support further evidence-informed youth employment investments.

2. Objectives

The webinar on “Youth employment and entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific: Lessons for a human-centred recovery” aims to facilitate knowledge sharing among policymakers and practitioners towards the promotion of effective youth employment and entrepreneurship interventions in the COVID-19 recovery.

The webinar is co-organized by partners of the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth^x in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

While the webinar will build on existing evidence on the impact on youth employment and entrepreneurship, the discussion will take a forward-looking approach and focus on the policy responses needed for youth employment in

Asia and the Pacific, their implications and priorities for a human-centred recovery, with the following objectives:

- Improve understanding about policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis relevant to youth employment and entrepreneurship.
- Learn about various innovative and effective youth employment initiatives led by governments, social partners and other key stakeholders to improve youth labour market prospects in the crisis recovery.
- Explore opportunities, lessons and priorities to strengthen support to youth employment at regional and country-level.

3. Agenda

2:00 – 2:10	<p>Welcome remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ILO • Mr. Christophe Bahuet, Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and Director of the Bangkok Regional Hub, UNDP
2:10 – 2:30	<p>Evidence on policy responses for youth employment and entrepreneurship in the COVID-19 recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons from tackling labour market challenges for youth in the COVID-19 response in Asia-Pacific, Presentation by Mr Felix Weidenkaff, Employment Specialist, ILO • How youth entrepreneurship can be effectively fostered in Asia-Pacific in the COVID-19 response, Presentation by Ms Ellie Horrocks, Impact Measurement Consultant, UNDP
2:30 – 3:10	<p>Panel session: Towards a human-centred recovery in Asia and the Pacific - Lessons from youth policy responses</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Dominique Rubia Tutay, Assistant Secretary, Employment and General Administration Cluster, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippines • Ms Nicole Anne K. Parreño, Vice Chair, International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific (ITUC-AP) Youth Committee • Mr Watesoni Nata, Chair of the Young Entrepreneurs Council (YEC), Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) • Mr Paul Vandenberg, Senior Economist, Economic Research and Operations Support Division, ERCD, Asian Development Bank (ADB) <p>Moderator: Ms Sukti Dasgupta, Chief of the Employment, Labour Markets and Youth Branch, ILO</p>
3:10 – 3:20	Open forum and Q&A , with presenters and panellists
3:20 – 3:30	Closing remarks Mr Savinda Ranathunga, Regional Youth Project Manager, UNDP

4. Audience

- Government representatives
- Representatives of workers' and employers' organizations
- Youth and civil society organizations
- Researchers, think tanks and foundations
- Private sector representatives
- UN System entities, regional institutions and development partners
- Partners of the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, and other practitioners promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship

5. Registration

Zoom registration:

<https://undp.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZclduGoqT8iHd04a8-pitOUvsjmcPhCL7UH>

Event webpage: https://ilo.org/asia/events/WCMS_816506/lang--en/index.htm

6. Language

The webinar will be held in English.

7. References

ⁱ UN population estimates and projections, Nov. 2020, available in [ILOSTAT](#).

ⁱⁱ [ILO \(2020\) Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2020](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [UNDP \(2021\) How Young Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific Responded to COVID-19](#)

^{iv} [ILO \(2021\) World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021](#)

^v [ILO \(2021\) An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Statistical brief](#)

^{vi} [ILO and ADB \(2020\) Tackling the COVID-19 youth employment crisis in Asia and the Pacific](#)

^{vii} [ILO \(2021\) Recovering towards a human-centred future of work in Asia and the Pacific](#), and

ILO (2021) Employment, job creation and skills policies for an inclusive, integrated job rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis in Asia Pacific.

^{viii} [ILO \(2021\) Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient](#)

^{ix} [UNDP \(2021\) How Young Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific Responded to COVID-19](#)

^x Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth at <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>