**SKYMUN 2014 Chair Research Report**

**Committee:** General Assembly II

**Issue**: Fostering intergenerational integration in the workplace by promoting youth employment

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1. Description of Issue

The great wave of the 21 century brought incredible globalization and technological advances - such impacts have had profound impacts on labour markets throughout the world, as well as new uncertainties. In the past, young people’s involvement in paid work was typically full-time post-school work. Today, there is a greater tendency for young people to be employed in part-time, casual work while still at school. In the modern-day society there is an issue that is affecting the global community both economically and socially: there are not enough young people in the workplace.

Young people, defined as persons between the age of 15 and 24 years, represent around one fifth of the world’s population, but only half of the total unemployed global workforce. For a society to strengthen its social cohesion, youth employment is not an option, but a clear necessity. Improving opportunities for youth employment and income opportunities would contribute significantly to reduce poverty, increase economic growth, and social inclusion. Every young adult should experience a job offering that offers decent work in order to complete his/her’s transition to adulthood, a milestone towards independence and self-reliance.

The issue of youth unemployment has been around in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) for a while now. Most recently, data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggest that over a quarter of all youth in Sub-Saharan Africa and a third of all youth in Central and Eastern Europe are neither educated nor employed (“Youth Employment”). Additionally, many of the youth in LEDCs work in the informal economy and poor conditions. Having young individuals have first-hand insight and involvement inside the realms of the “real world” can be beneficial because then young individuals can become skilled by experts and professionals on the productive sectors of an economy, and can enable the economy to sustain or increase in productivity and competitiveness in the future global marketplace.

This issue is not only prevalent in just LEDCs but also in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs). With the global economy suffering great damage from the recession that began in 2008, millions of jobs have been shed, and the job market does not seem to be opening any new opportunities. The ILO has even released data that show that roughly one in seven youth in MEDCs are neither in education nor in employment (“Youth Employment”).

However, even in time periods of high economic sustainability, young workers tend to be concentrated in the low-end retail, food, and entertainment service sectors. As the “young group,” these workers tend to have lower wages, fewer benefits, less job security, and are less likely to be unionized than any other age group in the workforce. Although their workplace concerns and needs are often ignored, young workers constitute one of the largest, most marginalized groups of workers in the US economy. What makes the situation even trickier is that the youths are not confined to low-end service sector jobs because of limitations of skill or literacy. Marginalized youth work in North America has become naturalized as an accepted fact of life.

Not only are youth unemployment rates rising, but also the gap between older people and younger people is increasing. The combined effects of a rapid increase in the aging population and a decline in birth rates are producing fundamental changes in many societies. In developed countries the demographic shift is already having a profound impact on every aspect of society, requiring adjustments in economic and social policies and the societal infrastructure. The demographic transition in developing countries will occur at a much faster rate than it has in developed countries, and in many cases, the necessary infrastructure and policies will not be in place to deal with the consequent developments.

Overall, the high youth unemployment rates create a problem because they can make youth more vulnerable to social exclusion and sever relations between intergenerational societies. It is the workplace where youth are able to interact with people of older generations, and the fact that the number of adults greatly outnumbers that of the youth in the workplace is troubling because it can eventually lead to economic downfall. Because the workplace is the bridge that can remove the gap between generations, youth employment is crucial to society today.

2. Definition of Key Terms

**“Intergenerational integration”:** In recent times, there is less interaction between the youth of our era and people of previous generations. Major economic, social, cultural, political and demographic changes have disrupted and redefined traditional family and social structures and intergenerational relationships. Before relations are more severed, it is important to promote intergenerational integration, the maintenance of productive and mutually beneficial relations between all generations.

**“Youth employment”:** Young adults ranging from ages 15 -18

**“Promoting youth employment”:** The idea of youth employment is familiar to all, but one may not understand the necessity of promoting youth employment. This relates back to the first part of the question, “fostering intergenerational integration in the workplace.” There are too many people from older generations working and not enough young people, and as a result the economy is not as effective as it can be. Although youth employment is encouraged, unjust use of youth labor must be prevented so that young people can seek for a job out of their own will.

**“International Labour Organization (ILO)”:** The ILO was founded in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to pursue a vision based on the notion that universal, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. The ILO is very involved in increasing youth employment and making sure that workers are treated fairly.

**“Youth Employment Network (YEN)”:** YEN, a partnership of the UN, ILO, and World Bank, was created in 2001 to mobilize action on the commitment of the Millennium Summit for decent and productive work for young people. YEN is a global platform to prioritize youth employment on the development agendas and to exchange on policies and programs to improve employment opportunities for youth.

**“EEOC”:** U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

EEOC fights against workplace discrimination on individual workers based on prejudicial factors like race, gender, sex, religion, disability, etc. The EEOC firmly believes that every individual worker should be treated fairly.

3. Timeline of Key Events

**1950** -Youth employment-population ratio for 16-24 year olds approximately 60%

· Youth unemployment rate at 9.6%

**1953**- Youth employment-population ratio at approx. 58%

**1960**-Youth job unemployment rate at approx. 11.7%

**1980**- Youth job unemployment rate at approx. 14.7% (Great Depression)

**1990**- Youth job unemployment rate at approx. 10.9%

**1995** March – At the end of the World Summit for Social Development, governments adopt the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which underlines the centrality of youth employment to social development, both through poverty alleviation and social integration (“Youth Employment”).

**1998** August – The Lisbon Declaration On Youth Policies and Programmes is adopted at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, which sets forth important commitments regarding youth employment (“Promoting Youth Employment”).

**2000**- Youth job unemployment rate at approx. 9.6%

* **2000** September – The Millennium Summit, the largest gathering ever of Heads of State and Government, “recognizes the political urgency and relevance of addressing the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment” (“Fact Sheet: Youth Employment”). Here, the Youth Employment Network (YEN) is established as a joint effort of the ILO, World Bank, and the UN Secretariat.

**2001** July – The High-level Panel of the Secretary-General’s Youth Employment Network holds its first meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. At the invitation of the UN, ILO, and World Bank, twelve eminent people are appointed members of the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General’s Youth Employment Network (“United Nations Initiative on Youth Employment”).

**2002-**

* September – A permanent secretariat for the Youth Employment Network is set up at ILO headquarters, and a full-time Secretary is named (“United Nations Initiative on Youth Employment”).
* October – The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly approves a draft resolution on promoting youth employment (“United Nations Initiative on Youth Employment”).

**2002** December – The resolution, which invites the ILO to play a major role in its follow-up is adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in New York (“United Nations Initiative on Youth Employment”).

**2005** June – The annual Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopts a resolution on youth employment that sets out policies and an overarching framework for government, employer, and worker organizations to address the youth employment challenge at the national level (“Fact Sheet: Youth Employment”).

**2008**

* It is reported that an estimated 152 million young workers are living with their families on less than US$1.25 a day (“Fact Sheet: Youth Employment”).
* Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization

· Youth employment-population ratio at its lowest ever since 1948 – approximately 50%

**2009**

* About 81 million young people are unemployed, the most ever in history (“Fact Sheet: Youth Employment”).
* Global Jobs Pact : Initiative of the UN Chief Executives Board - called for the establishment of a social protection floor, the aim behind all these measures being to foster better global governance
* Copenhagen Summit on social development – established employment as a priority

**2010** – Due to the Arab uprisings, the total youth unemployment rate in 2010 is 25.5% in the Middle East 23.8% in North Africa (“World Youth Report 2012”).

**2012** – Unemployment rates go up :Out of the 21.4 million youth in the labor force, 17.9 million were employed in July, while approx. 3.5 million were unemployed; unemployment rate at 16.4%

4. Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies

- **European Union (EU):** Due to the recent economic crisis that the EU is currently facing, many of its member states have appeared on the list of countries with the highest unemployment rates for the first time. Some of these countries that rank high on the list are Spain, Greece, Portugal, and Ireland. Young workers are struggling the most in EU nations: the unemployment rate for young workers in the euro zone is over 22 %, and in Greece and Spain it is over 50% (Naidu-Ghelani). EU countries are already in so much debt that it is very difficult for them to increase the job market.

- **Afghanistan:** The most current unemployment rate in Afghanistan is a staggering 36.0%, one of the highest in the world. Although this number is a bit outdated because it was obtained in 2008, one can predict that the unemployment rate is even higher because of the uprisings occurring in the Middle East and North African regions. Unlike the EU however, the unemployment rate in Afghanistan has always been on the higher side, so it is not a surprise that the numbers are higher than those of other countries.

- **United States of America:** The US plays a huge role in this issue not only because it is extremely relevant to its society, but also because it plays a large influencer role in the global issue as a whole. Although the United States still remains the wealthiest country in the world, its economy has received a strong blow due to the recession that began in 2008. The U.S. lost 8.3 million jobs during the recession and only 43% of the lost jobs have been recouped in the last 34 months (Naidu-Ghelani). The U.S. is trying to promote youth employment, but its job market is already so limited that it has trouble doing so.

However, the US has faced an immense increase in its youth unemployment due to the economic recession and downturn. Its youth unemployment is incredibly high at reaching almost 16-20% - the highest that it has ever been in its history. In terms of influence if the US can discover ways to promote more youth employment and develop laws and organizations that can protect any discrimination of the youth in the work area, then other developing and even developed countries can use those methods into their own economy.

- **International Labor Organization (ILO):** The ILO is probably the most involved non-nation party in promoting youth employment. It works with the United Nations to write reports and resolutions, hold conferences, and set up organizations (e.g, the Youth Employment Network). The ILO also is responsible for collecting data from each nation which include total unemployment rates, unemployment rates based on age group, and progress of the job market.

- **African Union:** Youth unemployment seems to be the most severe in the African continent. Over a quarter of all youth in Sub-Saharan Africa and are neither educated nor employed. Additionally, in Africa, 93 percent of all new jobs created for young labor market entrants are in the informal economy: the workers must work long hours with low wages, under poor and precarious working conditions, without access to social protection, freedom of association, and collective bargaining. If decent employment opportunities for young people are provided in sub-Saharan Africa, it is expected that the labor force will rapidly increase (with a forecasted growth of young people of 30 million; 28 percent).

**Youth Employment Network (YEN)**: a multilateral programme aimed to put youth employment centre stage and helping other vulnerable groups who are unable to get jobs. It works to educate and provide employment opportunities for the youth and also acts as a platform and service provider to deliver policy advice, knowledge sharing, etc. It also makes use of its connections with agency partners to ensure youth participation in delivering its services.

**EEOC***:* The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission works to enforce federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate job applicants or employees based on prejudices on race, religion, sex, age, origin, disability, etc. Pertaining to our issue, this organization will be used heavily to prevent youth employees from being assaulted, harmed, or discriminated in any way. Overall, the EEOC investigates and fairly/accurately accesses the allegations in the charge and then make a finding. It is also a good source of leadership and guidance for federal agencies

5. Suggested Solutions

- Education clearly enhanced opportunities in the labor market in the past. Education serves as a basis for the youth when they first enter the workplace without any experience, followed by real opportunities for decent jobs. By focusing on enhancing the educational system with building schools, public libraries, etc., would foster knowledge and willingness for young adults to enter the job market in youth.

- Creation of both qualitative and quantitative amount of jobs in the workforce as it would allow the workers to realize their true aspirations, improve their living conditions, and actively participate in society. In the status quo, the degrees that most young adults graduate with are mostly degrees that have never little number of jobs available. With an overabundance of students graduating with degrees in such disciplines as political science or education, but not enough work jobs results into a high unemployment rate. By creating new jobs in the informal sectors of the economy or working to larger market for trade would enhance the economic situation and the social stability within the nation.

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