



THE WORLD POLICY FORUM

Social Realignment

Building sustainable economies by getting youth into work

Speakers:

Panelists:

- **Kate Behncken**, Vice President and Lead, Microsoft Philanthropies
- **Bethan Grillo**, Director, Sustainability and Climate Change, PwC UK
- **Mamta Murthi**, Vice President of Human Development, World Bank
- **Taha Bawa**, CEO & Co-Founder, Goodwall

Moderator:

- **Kevin Frey**, CEO, Generation Unlimited

Session description:

The economic system that uplifted society coming out of World War II has, with the aid of a massive disruption in technology, also created significant income and wealth disparities, a lack of trust in institutions, growing populism and social unrest. Youth are among those who have often been locked out of the benefits of the economic system, and COVID has exacerbated this. The ILO in January estimated that 8.7% more young people withdrew from the workforce in 2020 than would have done otherwise, with employment losses being relatively higher for women and young workers. At the same time, there are 267 million young people (15-24 years old) who are not in employment, education or training, two-thirds of which are young women. And even before the pandemic, 77 per cent of the 429 million employed youth had jobs in the informal sector, often characterized by poorer working conditions, less protection, long hours and lack of organization and voice¹.

The world faces an urgent need to focus on (re)skilling youth and connect them to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities as countries make the shift to educational and economic recovery and “building forward stronger.” Coming out of COVID, society has an opportunity to create more sustainable, resilient, and healthier economies by getting youth back to work and skilled in a way that meets the needs of employers facing an increasingly digital economy. This will require, however, that the public and private sectors and civil society work together to bring youth —particularly young women and girls, and disadvantaged communities —back to work quickly,

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the Future of Jobs. 2020.



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provide them with adequate skills training to close skills gaps, and create jobs to utilise this new group of entrants.

Objectives:

- Discuss the impact that COVID-19 and the digital divide has had on youth employability and skills for young women and men including from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Develop an understanding of what specific policies, investments, and actions are needed to get youth back to work
- Identify how stakeholders can best utilise the levers available to them, and also work together, to empower youth with relevant skills to meet future labour market need

Literature:

Further readings:

- Stepping Forward: Connecting today's youth to the digital future (PwC, UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, 2020), https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/GenU-PwC-Report_FINAL.pdf
- What Works? A Guide to Action: Creating and sustaining successful school-to-work transitions (Generation Unlimited, Decent Jobs for Youth, ILO, UNICEF, 2020), <https://www.generationunlimited.org/documents/Action-Guide-2-School-to-work-transition>
- Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020 –Technology and the future of jobs (ILO, 2020), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf
- Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being (ILO, 2020), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_753026/lang--en/index.htm
- Technical note -Transitions from STW (UNICEF, 2019), <https://www.unicef.org/media/60366/file/Transitions-from-school-to-work-2019.pdf>
- Unpacking School-to-Work Transition Data and evidence synthesis (UNICEF, 2019), <https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv:88368>
- The school-to-work transition by the numbers (UNICEF, 2019), <https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/stories/school-work-transition-numbers>