Youth employment remains a global challenge, with an estimated 70.9 million youth unemployed in low- and middle-income countries worldwide, and numbers are rising. Without work, youth are unable to contribute to the economy or provide for their own or their families’ livelihoods. In contexts where lack of skills is a contributing factor for this high unemployment, workforce development is the practice that targets this challenge and may be one solution, among others. Youth workforce development is many things to many actors. Understanding how to program for it begins with knowing what it is. A two-part definition is commonly used, although this is not the only one:

ENABLING INDIVIDUALS
to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for gainful employment or improved work performance in a particular trade or occupation.*

PROVIDING EMPLOYERS
with an effective means to communicate and meet their demand for skills.*


For more information please visit www.youthpower.org and refer to additional resources below:

- Inclusive Growth Diagnostics 1
- Failing Young People? Addressing the Supply-Side Bias and Individualization in Youth Employment Programming
- Youth Agricultural Resources:
  - Youth Unemployment, Job Creation, and Agriculture
  - Youth Engagement in Agriculture
  - Skills Development and Agriculture Education and Training (AET) for Youth
- Examples of Labor Market Assessments implemented:
  - LAC Regional Workforce Development Program: Honduras Labor Market Assessment 2
  - LAC Regional Workforce Development Program: Guatemala Labor Market Assessment 3
  - Kenya Labor Market Assessment 4
  - Zimbabwe Labor Market Assessment

Every country’s development is complex and unique and is characterized by a range of economic and socio-political factors. A country’s level of development can help determine if workforce development is an appropriate response or what type of activities are likely to be most effective.

For example, in some contexts it might be more effective for interventions to address constraints to economic growth—such as increasing private sector investment, supporting firms to improve human resources or management practices, addressing barriers to credit for micro-enterprises or household enterprises, or working with government to develop policies that strengthen the business enabling environment.

### 5 Levels of Development (Fox & Kaul, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Potential</th>
<th>Levels of Development</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-Potential, Lower-Middle-Income</td>
<td>The “Resource Curse” • Low INV. in Non-Resource Sectors • Gov't Depends on Resource Profits</td>
<td>Nigeria, Rep. of Congo, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Potential, Low-Income</td>
<td>Violent Conflict/Threat Thereof • Aid Dependency • Weak Political Institutions &amp; Rule of Law</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Haiti, Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Potential, Lower-Middle-Income</td>
<td>Well-Diversified, High Unemployment • Economic Elites Stifling Innovation • Political Stability and Security At-Risk</td>
<td>Armenia, Morocco, Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Potential, Low-Income</td>
<td>High Growth, Non-Ag Diversification • Increased Private Investment • Poor Urban Governance</td>
<td>India, Kenya, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Malawi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10 Vital Signs of a Healthy Youth WFD Country System or Program

1. **Alignment with government’s economic priorities:** Is the strategy and investment aligned with existing development plans?
2. **Leadership and Accountability:** Is there effective leadership that holds key stakeholders accountable?
3. **Demand-Driven:** Is the program driven by employers’ labor demands?
4. **Inclusion:** Is there accessibility for different groups?
5. **Portable Skills:** Are skills taught portable across positions and occupations?
6. **Continuous Improvement:** Is there an internal process for analyzing results and lessons and ensuring learning will occur?
7. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Are there PPPs in place with co-investment and co-responsibility?
8. **Sustainability:** Are the major interventions/activities sustainable?
9. **Replicability/Scalability:** Are the major interventions/activities replicable and scalable?
10. **Economic and Social Impact:** Is the economic and social impact measurable?
WHO ARE THE YOUTH WFD STAKEHOLDERS WHERE YOU WORK?

It is important to understand the different actors who need to be engaged to have a sustainable youth workforce activity. This Stakeholder Map is a system map. It shows the main groups of stakeholders in a country’s system that one often encounters: government, education institutions, employers, and the workforce. It is also an illustrative reminder of intermediaries that connect the stakeholders. This serves to show where the introduction of new stakeholders or intermediaries might help a workforce system function better.

WHO ARE THE YOUTH LOOKING FOR WORK?

When designing workforce development programming, it is important to understand the youth themselves. What are the characteristics of the young people you want to reach (e.g., age, educational levels, gender, level of vulnerability) and what specific challenges or opportunities do they face? What is the context in which they live (violence, discrimination, access to transportation, access to role models)?

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) promotes programs tailored to youths’ age and developmental stages to build youth assets, focuses on building youth agency, provides a supportive environment, and engages with youth rather than viewing them as passive recipients of workforce programs.

A PYD approach can include activities that build assets such as key soft skills or academic or technical skills and knowledge; develop youth agency by helping them set goals, develop their own identities, and build confidence that they can accomplish those goals; involve youth in decision making as programs are designed and implemented; link youth to a supportive environment through internships, and access to mentors; and help parents better support youth as they prepare for their economic futures.

https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development
SO HOW DO I DESIGN A YOUTH WORKFORCE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL OR ACTIVITY?

Numerous tools exist to help you orient a proposal or activity to a country’s context. Below are illustrative examples of just a few tools to help youth WFD stakeholders engage in new ways of solving problems with the communities they support. Some are pulled from the “Key Approaches to Labor Market Assessment” (LMA) guide.* In addition, numerous tools exist outside the LMA guide and can be found through the development space! Several examples include tools to support gender integration, youth inclusion (particularly to support PYD), and monitoring, research, and learning.

* https://www.youthpower.org/labor-market-assessment-module-1-economic-context

Apply and use analysis from the Key Approaches to Labor Market Assessment to get insights on youth employment challenges and how one might solve them

**YOUTH SOFT SKILLS ANALYSIS**  
Helps identify and understand the most important soft skills to include in youth and workforce development programs.  
* https://www.youthpower.org/resources/key-soft-skills-cros-sectoral-youth-outcomes

**SECTOR SELECTION**  
Helps select sectors to target industries with high potential for growth and youth employment  
* LMA Guide Tool  
* https://www.youthpower.org/key-approaches-labor-market-assessment-interactive-guide

**JOB GROWTH**  
Performance, Past, and Future  
- Output  
- Employment  
- Productivity  
- Diversification  
- Exports

**YOUTH ACCESS**  
- Ease of Entry  
- Education and skills  
- Exports  
- Linkages  
- Gender Analysis  
- Conflict Analysis  
- Geographic

**IMPORTANCE TO REGIONAL ECONOMY**  
- District typology  
- Spillover potential to other sectors

**FACTOR DRIVING SECTOR SELECTION**  
Issues to be Understood

**METHODS OF INFORMATION COLLECTION**  
Desk Research  
Confirm interviews

**FIELD RESEARCH**  
Further Analysis

**DOCUMENT REVIEW**  
Interviews with Planning Authorities

**SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS**  
Helps understand how network actors influence each other and interconnect and can show over time how networks transform due to an intervention and workforce development programs.

**YOUTH COMPASS**  
This tool provides a flexible and adaptive framework to strengthen the design and implementation of youth activities, ensuring they achieve intended results  
* https://www.youthpower.org/resources/youth-compass-strategic-guide-strengthen-youth-activities