

Youth Initiatives

Introduction

Unemployment among youth represents one of the greatest global challenges. A staggering number of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The global NEET rate has remained stubbornly high in the last 15 years and now stands at 30 percent of young women and 13 percent of young men worldwide¹ and many of those who do find work are employed in precarious and/or informal situations, delaying their full socioeconomic integration². Recent estimates suggest that 600 million jobs would have to be created in next 15 years to address this challenge. In addition, it is estimated that 96.8 per cent of all young workers in developing countries are in the informal economy. Also, low youth unemployment rates may mask poor job quality, especially for 87% of world's youth living in the developing countries².

Globalisation, technological advancements and the development of key industries have created new job opportunities for young people. However, the nature of work is rapidly changing, and evolving labour market realities compel youth to continually invest in skills development³. The skills gap has a significant impact on youth employment, so maintaining a dynamic relationship between education and employment has never been more important.

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world with a population of 207.78 million; given the current rate of population growth it is estimated to reach 280 million by the year 2030. Currently, 63 percent of the population is below the age of 30. Helping young people develop the right skills for employment makes economic sense⁴. Over the past decade, youth (15-24 years) employment to population ratio for Pakistan has waned down from 40.9% at beginning of the period (2006-07) to a level of 36.9% at the end (2017-18) of the period⁵ but still considerably high. Pakistan has the 9th largest labour force in the world⁶ with almost 4 million youth attain working age every year in Pakistan⁷. Pakistan's youth unemployment is higher than other South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Nepal although better than Sri Lanka's. Pakistan has the lowest female labour force participation rates (LFPR) in South Asia across all age groups.

Enrolment in Pakistan's specialised Technical vocational education and training (TVET) sector remains low. Slightly more than 13 percent of Pakistan's young adult population reports having been enrolled in TVET⁷. Low enrolment persists despite high demand for skills training among both genders. The skills gap has a significant impact on youth employment, so maintaining a dynamic relationship between education and employment has never been more important⁸. Young people need relevant skills, knowledge, competencies and aptitudes to help them obtain jobs and establish career paths⁹. There is a growing need to enhance opportunities for skills development which can offer an avenue for young

¹ United Nations, 2019. World Youth Report 2018. URL: <http://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html>

² United Nations, 2020. World Youth Report 2020. URL: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2020.html>

³ World Economic Forum, 2019. Skills for Future. URL: <https://www.weforum.org/focus/skills-for-your-future>

⁴ World Bank, 2017. Skills Development (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>)

⁵ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018. Labour Force Survey 2017-18

⁶ Government of Pakistan, 2019. Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19

⁷ UNDP Pakistan, 2019. Human Development Report Pakistan 2018. URL: <https://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/human-development-reports/PKNHDR.html>

⁸ Bhurtel, A., 2015. Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Workforce Development. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281737916_Technical_and_Vocational_Education_and_Training_in_Workforce_Development

⁹ United Nations, 2016. World Youth Report 2015. URL: <http://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/2015-2.html>

people of Pakistan to explore in the quest for sustainable employment¹⁰. TVET sector is highly fragmented and unstructured in Pakistan and requires reforms at all levels from policy formulation to delivery. The novel coronavirus pandemic has rapidly transformed from a health into an economic and labour market crisis that has already taken its toll on young people across the globe including Pakistan, through unemployment, lower quality jobs, and broken transitions to education, skills development, employment counseling and decent work¹¹. Reforms based on the principles of quality, access and relevancy have been identified under National Skill Strategy (NSS) and need to be diligently followed in lieu of COVID-19 reality shift.

Review

In 2019-20, considerable advances have been made for youth skills development in Pakistan with 0.6 million young people trained under skills development program. With 3634 technical institutions available countrywide, total enrolment of youth stood at 203,041 in 2019-20¹². According to Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 11.2 million human resource was exported into the international market as of March 2020¹³. Since the development of National 'Skills for All' Strategy in 2018, the TVET Reform Support Programme has undertaken efforts to enhance role of the private sector in governance of TVET sector and creation of strong linkage with informal sector through recognition of prior learning (RPL). This is helping streamline TVET sector and produce skilled, competent, motivated, entrepreneurial, adaptable, and creative workforce acceptable to the local and international job market. Other ongoing initiatives in 2019-20 include Prime Minister's Skills for All (Hunarmand Pakistan) under the Kamyab Jawan Program (KJP) initiative, upgradation of Government Polytechnic Institute for Women (H-8/1) Islamabad and establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Boys at Skardu (Baltistan Region).

Besides considerable progress in the first two quarters, an unprecedented challenge in form of COVID19 crisis has challenged the sector to respond swiftly and effectively to the emerging demands for social and economic wellbeing of young people in Pakistan. With an estimated rise between 5.3 and 24.7 million in the number of those unemployed globally, the impact on youth employment is likely to be severe given that youth (15-24) are already 3 times more likely to be unemployed than adults¹⁴. COVID-19-related shocks to the labour market are likely to impact the quality of jobs for young people, especially young women in Pakistan who are already have disproportionate access to opportunities and higher burden of care in such health emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to drastically increase unemployed youth, a population already overrepresented in the informal economy. Many Pakistani young people acquire training through informal sector; known as the "Ustad-Shagird" system. In the absence of a formal certification for their skills, such youth do not get employment as skilled workers, in both national and international markets¹⁵. With current and anticipated lockdowns and other social distancing measures put in place, these informal youth workers are likely to be most affected. There is need to realign the sector priorities to ensure negative impacts on social and

¹⁰ LSE (2018) (<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2018/02/09/young-blood-pakistans-bulging-youth-population-needs-employment-opportunities/>)

¹¹ ILO, 2020. Global Survey on Youth Employment and COVID-19. URL: https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_740745/lang-en/index.htm

¹² NAVTCC, 2020. National Skills Information System (NSIS)

¹³ Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 2020

¹⁴ UNDESA, 2020. Special Issue on COVID-19 and Youth. URL: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/04/YOUTH-FLASH-Special-issue-on-COVID-19-1.pdf>

¹⁵ Government of Pakistan, 2019. Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19

economic wellbeing of young people in Pakistan are minimized and the risk of losing livelihoods be averted through holistic programming and policy design.

Accomplishments

In the year 2019-20, several key accomplishments were achieved in strengthening the governance and infrastructure of TVET sector, along with development of skills development opportunities for young people across Pakistan. Some of the key accomplishments are listed as follows:

A) Strengthening TVET Infrastructure

- Accreditation of almost 400 TVET institutes and 1400 training programs across the country
- Replacement of Apprenticeship Bill 1962 with Apprenticeship Act 2018 to strengthen industry and private sector role in TVET

B) Training and Capacity Building

- Roll out of Prime Minister's Skills for All (Hunarmand Pakistan) under the Kamyab Jawan Program (KJP) initiative
- Launch of a National Job Portal to link 55000 skilled workers with employers
- Establishment of Job Placement Centres (JPCs) at Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore along with 100 Job Placement and Vocational Counseling Centers (JP&VCCs) across the country for the benefit of youth
- Launch of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system to recognise and certify 15000 informally skills youth
- Completion of pedagogical (in-service) training of 8500 TVET teaching staff across Pakistan

C) Curriculum Development

- Launch of online training courses for youth in ICT and STEM focused trades ranging from manufacturing technology to quality control and assurance in wake of COVID-19 through collaboration with the government of China
- Standardisation of skills qualification under national vocational qualification framework (NVQF) and development of curricula for over 100 trades/ areas

Program

Objectives

In present scenario, the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan has imposed a major challenge on government to prepare an immediate COVID-19 responsive action plans or strategies to efficiently and effectively minimize, mitigate and manage the adverse effects and imminent risk on the social and economic aspects of the lives of the people particularly poor and vulnerable groups. Thus, efforts will be made to ensure that the objectives/targets of annual plan 2020-21 are well aligned with the draft three years Economic Growth & Equity Strategy.

For youth employment and skills development, the annual plan will endeavour to mitigate the challenging socio-economic effects by:

- Monitoring youth unemployment and underemployment¹⁶ in Pakistan and taking targeted measures during the recovery to promote youth employment and decent work
- Incentivising youth innovation for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19¹⁷ and the management of its corollary socioeconomic impacts
- Adapting the delivery of technical education, through digital and non-digital methods, to ensure the continuation of skills acquisition and learning¹⁸.
- Ensuring that social protection systems include all young people¹⁹, with special attention paid to those who are most vulnerable and marginalized
- Consult and meaningfully engage youth in the development of health, economic, and social interventions in response to COVID-19 and in its recovery²⁰

Strategies

Realigning Kamyab Jawan Program for COVID-19 Response

The program activities of Kamyab Jawan Program will be reviewed and re-aligned to meet the evolving demands of social and economic wellbeing of young people during and post COVID-19 crises with a strong emphasis on saving livelihoods of young people especially in vulnerable informal economy sectors. Technical training of youth in conventional and High -End/High- Tech trades under “Skill for All” program would be shifted to distant/ virtual training and E-learning so that employability of youth may not suffer in socio-economic impacts of COVID -19. This will also expand the pool of skilled workforce in all sectors of economy bridging demand and supply gap of skilled workforce. Women will also be able to meet their domestic expenses subsequently. Under the Start Up program, Business incubation Centers (BICs) would be established to promote youth entrepreneurship with focus on post COVID-19 recovery. To ensure sustainability of the program during COVID-19 social distancing period, all necessary training will be imparted online and virtual. The national start up ecosystem will provide one million young people training in entrepreneurship and launch 10,000 start ups by 2023 as well as create jobs and economic activities in an inclusive, scalable and sustainable way to provide a single point of contact for the entire Start up Eco system. The program will be executed by Higher Education Commission.

Providing income and livelihood support to COVID-19 affected workers

The Government will devise mechanisms for providing income support to the more vulnerable segments of the labour market which includes the casual and daily wage workers as well as the self-employed working in the different sectors, which are most vulnerable to losing their livelihoods due to slowdown of economic activities in wake of possible shut down. It is also important that the data/numbers of workers in vulnerable forms of employment as well as vulnerable workers likely to lose their livelihoods may be collected and covered under upcoming Labour Force Survey. Modalities of collecting COVID-19 situation specific labour force data and information will be worked out jointly by the federal and provincial governments. The platform of Digital Pakistan will be harnessed to employ digital

¹⁶ OECD, 2015. Achieving better youth employment outcomes. URL: <https://www.oecd.org/g20/topics/employment-and-social-policy/Achieving-better-youth-employment-outcomes.pdf>

¹⁷ OECD, 2020. What steps are youth organisations taking to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis? URL: <https://www.oecd.org/fr/gov/what-steps-are-youth-organisations-taking-to-mitigate-the-covid-19-crisis.htm>

¹⁸ UNDESA, 2020. Policy Brief: Impact of COVID-19 on Children. URL: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_children_16_april_2020.pdf

¹⁹ United Nations, 2020. A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 [DRAFT]

²⁰ UNDESA, 2020. Special Issue on COVID-19 and Youth. URL: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/04/YOUTH-FLASH-Special-issue-on-COVID-19-1.pdf>

technologies in collecting COVID-19 situation specific labour force data at a disaggregated level by sex, occupation, employment status.

The scope and objectives of ‘Ehsaas Program’ targeting the poor and vulnerable segments of the society will be expanded to include Home-based Female Workers and youth working in informal sectors. The project on “Improvement of Livelihood and Well-Being of Female Home-Based Workers (FHBWs) In the Informal Economic Sector in Sindh Province” at estimated cost of Rs. 541.086 Million (JICA Assistance) envisages improvement livelihood and wellbeing of Female Home-Based Workers with economic empowerment of women through capacity building, access to financial services and imparting the skills necessary for income generation. The total number females to be benefitted under this project stand at 6800 for the time period of 4 years.

Supporting implementation of Prime Minister’s Corona Tiger Force Initiative

Support will be provided for the development and successful implementation of Prime Minister’s Corona Tiger Force initiative. Almost 739,000 youngsters have already registered themselves to join the volunteers’ body for relief works during the lockdown under present situation of COVID-19. The updates of the Tiger Force will be made public and linked with the government’s official portal of Covid-19.

Developing Matric-TECH Pathways for integrating TVET in Formal Education

At estimated cost of Rs.315.00 Million, new labs will be established and workshops in public sector schools and colleges will be done to ensure the provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to youth by integrating TVET into General Education stream. The target youth (middle pass) after Grade 8 will be enrolled on the same pattern of general education for this “general education/ skills-based qualification’ in specific TVET disciplines / technologies as per geographic and market needs.

Snapshot of Plans

Intervention	Time frame	Subject
Implementation of following three components of Kamyab Jawan Program Initiative		
Roll out of Prime Minister’s Skills for All Program at estimated cost of Rs. 9,880.00 million focusing on 14 skill interventions	MT	Federal
Provision of training to young people in entrepreneurship and launch startups under Prime Minister’s Start-up Pakistan (target: one million trained and 10,000 startups by 2023)	MT	Federal
Provision of loans to young people under Prime Minister’s Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) for successful business development	MT	Federal
Other Skill Development Programs/Interventions		
Introduction of Matric-Tech pathways for integrating TVET and formal education at estimated cost of Rs.315.00 Million	MT	Federal
Improvement of livelihood and well-being of Female Home-Based Workers (FHBWs) in Sindh province at estimated cost of Rs. 541.086 Million	MT	Provincial
COVID-19 Specific Measures		

Review and re- alignment of Kamyab Jawan Program with COVID-19 responsive national action plan	MT	Federal
Provision of e-learning mode for conventional and High -End/High- Tech trades under “Skill for All” program	MT	Federal
Establishment of Business incubation Centers (BICs) for provision of virtual training	MT	Federal
Development of mechanisms to facilitate distance-learning, accreditation and monitoring of leaning outcomes	MT	Federal
Provision of support to Prime Minister’s Corona Tiger Force to provide relief works during the lockdown under present situation of COVID-19	MT	Federal
Training of female entrepreneurs suffering significant economic loss due to COVID-19	LT	Federal
Provision of compensation packages and relief measures for workers with period of closure considered by the employers as paid leave	ST	Federal
Inclusion of vulnerable groups including youth in informal economy in the “Ehsaas program”	MT	Federal