



Data Base Handbook

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Disabled Young People



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Introduction to the Data Base Handbook

ARABLE suggests the implementation of youth workers' learning experiences, research activities on best practices among 10 countries, and transnational organizational meetings, resulting in the development of the ARABLE transitional DataBase & e- Guide on best practices, training techniques, rates & guidelines and the Open online Learning Environment for agricultural entrepreneurship for disabled young people.

ARABLE "talks" about the arable lands that will be cultivated, the opportunities that are ready to be seized, and the ABILITIES that will shine.

Through this project we aim to support inclusive and sustainable future societies, by empower youths that face disabilities and live (or not) in a rural area, to gain entrepreneurship skills to build their (agri) business through an encompassing curriculum that correspond to their needs and the challenges that they face. Our aim is through our transnational cooperation to raise our capacity in the field of education, by using non-formal educational methods with the main goal to develop digital educational material to empower young people with disabilities and train them around sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship, in a way that suites to disabled people's needs and interests in inclusive settings.



Introduction to the Data Base Handbook

People with disabilities are not insulated from the problems facing the country, particularly the high rate of poverty, youth, and graduate unemployment. Disabled youths are among the poorest and most marginalized of the world's youth, and often face significant challenges, including negative attitudes, discrimination, and lack of accessibility in physical/virtual educational environments. However, findings from related research show that disabled people in rural areas are economically active, able to generate income, and have the possibility of a productive path out of poverty. By enhancing the professional knowledge and business skills of disabled persons with disabilities, they are supported to implement their own businesses and to be part of the labor market under equal conditions.

The 24month ARABLE project involves 10 experienced partner organizations in 3 EU Member states (Greece(2) and Croatia), 2 third counties associated with the Programme (Liechtenstein and North Macedonia) as well as 4 third countries not associated with the Programme – Southern Mediterranean / Region 3 (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan) to support inclusive and sustainable future societies, by empowering youths that face disabilities, to gain entrepreneurship skills, to engage in sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship through an encompassing curriculum that suits to their needs and interests.

Introduction to the Data Base Handbook

In spite of the recent economic recovery, levels of youth unemployment remain high, relative to other age groups. Young people, aged 16 to 24, are almost three times as likely to be unemployed as all other age groups combined. Disadvantaged young people, such as those who have experienced homelessness are particularly likely to be unemployed. Due to the multiple and complex barriers that this group faces when finding a route into employment they are more often not in education, employment or training (classified as NEET) compared with other 16 to 24 year olds. (ONS, 2015) These barriers can include:

- Poor educational experiences and low attainment
- Lack of labour market experience and high competition for job vacancies
- Lack of a permanent address
- Financial pressures
- Low confidence and personal motivation
- Mental health and substance misuse problems
- History of institutional care
- Financial barriers to travelling [1]

[1] Eurofound (2012), NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Study Approaches and Methodologies

Based on the objective of the research part, three independent but complementary methodologies and procedures were used.

These included:

- **Desk-literature review**
- **Field research surveys** in project countries: **Greece, North Macedonia, Liechtenstein, Croatia, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco and Egypt**
- **Data and policy analysis**

The field research survey, focus group discussion, combined observation, and consultations with key informants were major research methods used in collecting secondary and primary data and information. The primary data and information were collected using questionnaires and interviewing the respondents based on the study objectives and questions. The target respondents included youth organizations; disabled organizations; government ministries, departments and agencies, individual youth and older people. The combined observational research technique involved the direct observations of phenomena in their natural setting. The aim was to observe the situation in order to allow the research team to qualitatively access the youth unemployment context and obtain useful meanings for framing the evaluation and making sense of the data collected using other methods.

Thus the Data Base Handbook used both Quantitative and Qualitative research design.

COUNTRY FINDINGS

Addressing Youth Unemployment, **DISABILITY** and Promoting Sustainable Agriculture



COUNTRY CASE: GREECE



Youth Unemployment – Unemployment of Disabled Youth

Youth unemployment in Greece, particularly among the 15–24 age group, remains a pressing issue with significant economic and social consequences. By May 2019, Greece held the unfortunate distinction of having the highest youth unemployment rate in the European Union, reaching a staggering 40.4%, far surpassing the EU average of 14.3%. This positioned Greece not only as a leader in EU youth unemployment but also as the second-highest among OECD nations, trailing only behind South Africa [2].



The trajectory of youth unemployment in Greece is deeply rooted in external economic shocks, notably the 2008 Financial Crisis and subsequent European Debt Crisis. Stringent austerity measures imposed by the EU compounded these challenges, resulting in what has been termed the "economic massacre of the young generation. The peak was in 2013 when the youth unemployment rate soared to an alarming 58.2%[3].

While young women continue to be less economically active than men, their share in the labour force has increased over the past twenty years. Two factors may sustain this trend: (a) young women have more educational qualifications than young men; they account for roughly 60 per cent of recent post-secondary vocational and tertiary education graduates, (b) the increased opportunities for flexible employment after the crisis could also lead to a higher employment rate for women, as women tend to work more in part-time jobs [4].

[2] Youth unemployment in Greece. (n.d.). Retrieved from From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_unemployment_in_Greece

[3] Kraatz, S. (n.d.). Youth unemployment in Greece: Situation before the government change.

[4] Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. (2021). Youth inclusion and gender equality in the Greek labour market: Trends, challenges, and lessons from the Nordic countries.

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Youth Unemployment – Unemployment of Disabled Youth

Persistently high youth unemployment levels in Greece are influenced by factors such as low productivity, below-average GDP per hour compared to the EU, and a reduced level of workforce participation—only 66% engaging in the labor market compared to the EU-27 average of 73% in 2009. Structural issues within the Greek economy, including over-regulation and a cumbersome public sector, hinder investment and job creation. The nation's government debt, exceeding 180% of GDP as of 2018, poses a substantial burden on public finances. Corruption issues and an ineffective judiciary further complicate the economic landscape.

Addressing the multifaceted challenges of youth unemployment in Greece requires comprehensive and targeted policy measures. Initiatives should aim to boost productivity, increase workforce participation, and address gender disparities. Structural reforms, including streamlining regulations, promoting investment, and enhancing the efficiency of public institutions, are crucial steps toward creating a more favorable environment for youth employment. This complex issue demands a holistic and sustained effort to bring about meaningful change for Greece's young population.

Youth Unemployment Rate in Greece decreased to 22.90 percent in January from 25.80 percent in December of 2023. Youth Unemployment Rate in Greece averaged 35.45 percent from 1998 until 2024, reaching an all time high of 62.20 percent in May of 2013 and a record low of 20.50 percent in January of 2008. [5]



[5] EUROSTAT (2023). Greece Youth Unemployment Rate. Retrieved from: <https://tradingeconomics.com/greece/youth-unemployment-rate>

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Youth Unemployment – Unemployment of Disabled Youth

Caliendo and Schmidl (2016) [6] categorize four types of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), with job search assistance and wage subsidies proving effective, while labor market training, although minimizing unemployment, led to reduced formal education participation rates. Public work programs, present in only two countries, showed minimal impact.

A 2016 report by the Hellenic Statistical Authority highlighted that counseling services were deemed most useful, but only a small percentage of young individuals received support. Moreover, a high percentage of youth aged 15 to 29 had never been employed while in university, emphasizing the lack of a transitional framework from education to work. Social networks and personal connections played a crucial role in reducing NEETs, with approximately 50% finding employment through personal connections, according to ELSTAT's (2016) survey. The elevated number of NEETs in Greece is closely linked to rising youth unemployment, creating a necessity rather than a choice. A pervasive mistrust in public institutions, reaching 91.4%, has led to a de facto regime of social exclusion for unemployed youth. Economic crises and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 have heightened feelings of marginalization among young people, leading to increased political apathy and self-marginalization [7].

Furthermore, there are very stark regional inequalities, with the youth unemployment rate being 49.1% in rural areas in 2020 and 43.5% in urban areas. Additionally, in the same year, the percentage of unemployed youngsters who have been out of work for more than a year was 72.7%. This is known as long-term unemployment, and it can often create a negative spiral effect, in which social exclusion and psychological effects can significantly diminish a young person's ability to enter the labour market the longer they are unemployed. [7]

[6] Caliendo, M. ., (2016). Youth unemployment and active labor market policies in Europe.

[7] Tsigris (2023). Youth Unemployment in Greece and the integration of NGEU funds into the new National Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://esthinktank.com/2023/04/07/youth-unemployment-in-greece-and-the-integration-of-ngeu-funds-into-the-new-national-strategy/>

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Youth Unemployment – Unemployment of Disabled Youth

Greece's National Recovery and Resilience Plan, "Greece 2.0," allocates significant attention and funds to address unemployment and youth unemployment. The plan, with a dedicated pillar titled "Occupation, Skills, and Social Cohesion," allocates 4.1 billion Euros in grants (25% of the total plan funding) and sets ambitious goals under the National Strategy for ALMPs from 2022 to 2030. [8]

The execution of ALMPs in Greece is orchestrated through DYPA [9], the Public Occupation Service, collaborating with independent Life Learning Centres (KDVM) and Life Learning and Research Centres (KEDiViM). Two key programs targeting reskilling and upskilling in digital and green skills for both unemployed and employed individuals have been initiated, with subsidies provided to executing centers and participants.

Challenges persist despite these efforts. A first-come-first-served basis for program participation, while addressing past issues, could benefit from an age-specific pool to enhance the involvement of young unemployed individuals. The digital dissemination strategy, while aligning with digitalization goals, presents challenges in a country with the third-lowest score in the Digital Economy and Society Index among EU Member States.

DYPA is also implementing an employment program for 10,000 individuals facing barriers to (re-)entering the labor market, with a generous and inclusive approach addressing various marginalized groups in two phases. Scrutiny is a critical aspect of these programs, with the 2013 decision outlining procedures that may be overburdened by the volume and size of the 2021 RRF-funded program.

[8] Tolias (2022) : Linking the "recovery and resilience plan" and smart specialisation: The Greek case, JRC Working Papers on Territorial Modelling and Analysis, No. 09/2022, European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC), Seville

[9] DYPA (2023). URL: <https://www.dypa.gov.gr/>



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Entrepreneurship for disabled individuals

The vast majority of support programmes for those who experience disability are aimed at facilitating their integration into the workforce. These include funding mechanisms for workplace adaptation and financial incentives for hiring people who experience disability.

Regular national labor force surveys do not incorporate disability factors. Disability was initially integrated into the European Labor Force Survey in 2002, serving as the sole source of statistics concerning the employment status of individuals with disabilities in Greece. Findings revealed that 18.2% of the surveyed population had a disability or health issue impacting their work capacity, with half of them aged 65 or older. A significant proportion (approximately 85%) of this demographic was economically inactive, compared to 58% of the general population. Surprisingly, the unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities (8.9%) was lower than that of the general populace (9.6%). [10]

The latest analysis of disability and employment, based on the 2011 Labor Force Survey, indicates discernible disparities in activity rates (54.0% versus 77.6%), employment rates (36.7% versus 59.7%), and unemployment rates (32.0% versus 23.1%) between those with and without disabilities. The 2011 survey concentrated on the challenges individuals with disabilities encounter in accessing employment. Results revealed that 40.9% of respondents experiencing health problems or activity limitations encountered constraints concerning working hours, 41.4% in the type of work they could undertake, and 20.1% in transportation to and from work [11].

Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED) is the main body in Greece for mainstream employment services. It is responsible for the promotion, design and implementation of programmes and actions targeted at the inclusion of people who experience disability in the labour market (established under Law 2643/1998). [12]

[10] ELSTAT. URL: <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SJO12/2002>

[11] ELSTAT. URL: <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SJO24/>

[12] OECD (2020) Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes Greece.

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Entrepreneurship for disabled individuals

It has six specialised offices across the country, for “Special Social Groups,” which are in charge of services for groups considered vulnerable in terms of inclusion in the labour market. Unemployed persons with chronic health issues with a certified disability degree of over 50% can be included in this group. The services offered by these specialised offices include career orientation guidance, psychosocial support and referral to mainstream employment and vocational training programmes. [12]

The most relevant policy change with a potential benefit to the disabled has been the establishment of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (2017). The GMI Scheme perhaps best exemplifies a synergy between employment and social inclusion policies, and may be an effective vehicle in increasing participation in active labour market policies and other social support services for disabled people with very low income, equally with the non-disabled population. The positive impacts of that scheme are assured where disability benefits are not counted towards total income, and by the recent policy (Law 4331/2015) enabling people participating in employment or vocational training schemes (usually through co-funded ESF projects) to retain disability welfare benefits. Anticipated measures to improve the accessibility of public employment services and work placements in the public and private sector, although still quite weak on a policy level, would strengthen the effectiveness of the synergy. Further, linking the scheme with available vocational training or employment schemes (rolled out in February 2017) has also been designed to increase participation of disabled people in ALMPs. The policy is discussed in more detail under Section 4.3, as it is considered “the backbone of the reformed Greek social assistance system”. [12]

The co-ordination among different sectors and the continuity of support have not been adequately achieved in national employment integration services, which constitutes a significant obstacle to labour market participation. Knowledge and information sharing among civil servants, social workers and health professionals is poor. [12]

[12] OECD (2020) Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes Greece.

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Entrepreneurship for disabled individuals

However, some previously implemented programmes such as TOPEKO (Local Actions for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups), co-funded by the ESF and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour Welfare, attempted to adopt an integrated service approach, as they combined vocational counselling, training and internship in specific and relevant subjects. TOPEKO projects were based on a partnership between private and public sector and an integrated effort of municipalities, consultancy businesses, and vocational training centres. The aim of TOPEKO was to provide integrated support services to unemployed people from vulnerable groups who were registered at OAED. [12]

The social economy also has a growing role in supporting those people who experience disability. The main body responsible co-ordinating, monitoring and developing the social economy in Greece is the Special Service for Social inclusion and Social Economy (EYKEKO). The Law 4019/2011 provides a general legal framework for social economy and social cooperative enterprises (Kinoniki Sineteristiki Epihirisi, KoinSEp) in Greece. Two categories of KoinSEp can be distinguished in relation to work integration – those that focus on inclusion and those that focus on social care. [12]

Most of the entrepreneurship support programmes are focus on training. Example include the Standard Craft Unit of the Lakkia Training Centre, which offers vocational training (apprenticeship) to an average of 140 teenagers per school year. 12 The programme lasts 3 to 4 years, depending on the performance of the trainees and weekly curriculum includes 30 teaching hours. The training centre seeks to support the labour market participation of people who experience disabilities either through employment or self-employment. [12]



[12] OECD (2020) Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes Greece.

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Agricultural entrepreneurship in Greece has been a topic of significant interest and development. The agricultural sector in Greece has seen a rise in young people turning to farming, driven by various factors such as EU subsidies, the country's economic vision beyond tourism, and the potential for recovery from economic crises. The contribution of agriculture to the Greek economy has increased, with the sector's contribution rising to 4.2 percent, twice that of any other EU country ². Despite facing obstacles like changing tax laws and limited access to bank loans, many young farmers are applying for EU subsidies, highlighting the sector's importance for Greece's future [13]

Historically, agriculture has been a fundamental part of the Greek economy, with nearly 80% of the population involved in agricultural activities in ancient times. The agricultural sector in Greece is characterized by the cultivation of crops like corn, wheat, barley, sugar beets, olives, grapes, and more, with olive oil, wine, and cotton being significant exports to other EU countries. Livestock such as sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, and chickens are also raised for local consumption and export. The sector has benefited from EU subsidies, leading to signs of growing rural prosperity, although its overall importance to the economy has been diminishing. [14]

In recent times, the focus on agricultural entrepreneurship in Greece has been evident through the engagement of young farmers, the application for EU subsidies, and the challenges faced by new entrants in the sector. The country's agricultural landscape reflects a blend of traditional practices and modern challenges, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of Greek farmers in navigating economic and regulatory hurdles to sustain and grow their agricultural ventures. [15]

Over the period 2011-2018, agriculture represented 82% of Greece's total freshwater withdrawals, the highest rate in the OECD (Eurostat, 2020). 36% of the agricultural area was irrigated. [16]

[13] Apostolou, N. (2017). Why are so many young Greeks turning to farming? URL:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/22/why-are-so-many-young-greeks-turning-to-farming>

[14] Britannica (n.d) URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Agriculture-forestry-and-fishing>

[15] Pliakoura (2021) : Accepting the challenges of agricultural entrepreneurship and management development research: A viewpoint, CES Working Papers.

[16] OECD (2013) Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/topics/water-and-agriculture/documents/oecd-water-policies-country-note-greece.pdf>

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship

The Greek CAP Plan responds to modern challenges through a balanced approach to the ambitions of the common agricultural policy for a more resilient, green, and digital agriculture, in line with the priorities of the European Green Deal. It marks the shift towards a new production model for Greek agriculture and the entire agri-food sector in Greece. The Plan focuses on improving competitiveness by promoting innovation and new technologies, fostering young entrepreneurship, and securing a fair income for farmers. Moreover, the Plan aims to reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture. The main priority remains the sustainable development of rural areas.

Financial aid ranging from €30,000 to €42,500 for young farmers joining a new program. This aid is part of the intervention P3-75.1 "Establishment of Young Farmers" under the Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy (SP CAP) of Greece 2023-2027 [15]. The financial support is designed for young people below 41 years old, entering and remaining in agricultural employment, and establishing themselves as leaders on farms. Those receiving a disability allowance with a disability rate equal to or greater than 67% must be deemed capable of work by the competent body (KEPA). The full details of this program are expected to be published after the end of the 2024 OASDE applications.

Recently, The Micro-Loan Fund for Agricultural Entrepreneurship features a risk-sharing micro-loan facility under a Fund of Funds (FoF) structure, managed by the Hellenic Development Bank (HDB). Supported by Greece's Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2022 with a contribution of EUR 21.5 million from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), it is the first micro-finance instrument for the primary sector in the country. The instrument co-finances new loan portfolios built-up by financial intermediaries at a risk-sharing rate of 50%. In addition to the Micro-Loan Fund's 50% interest-free participation in each loan, it provides an interest rate subsidy during the first two years of the loan for the remainder. Furthermore, there is an optional grant of EUR 300 for consulting services, facilitated by consultancy firms associated with the financial intermediaries. [16]

[15] Greece – CAP Strategic Plan. URL: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans/greece_en

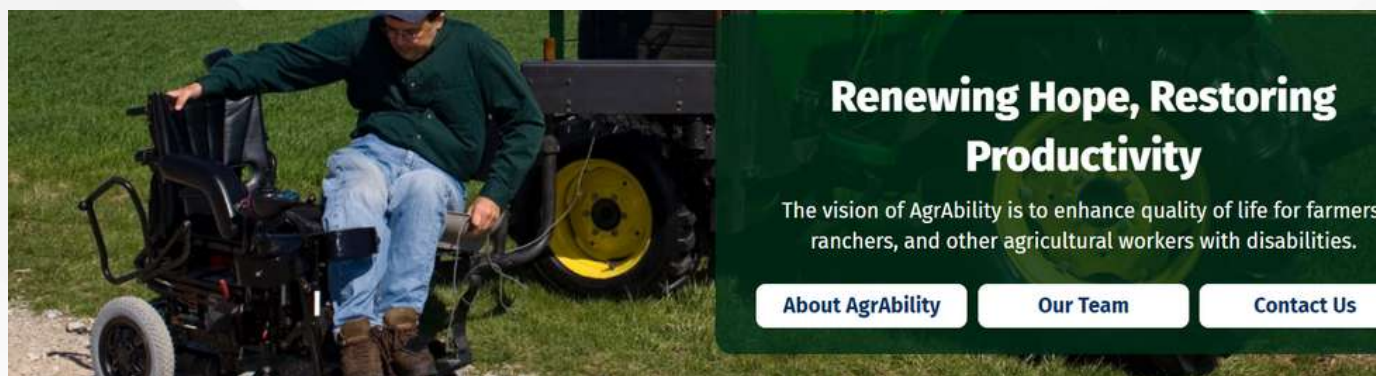
[16] Micro-loan fund for agricultural entrepreneurship in Greece URL: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans/greece_en

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AGRI-ABILITY project - The AGRI-ABILITY project is a co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in Interreg VA "Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020. The AGRI-ABILITY project and the policies placed in action should aim to the enhanced quality of life for farmers and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to thrive in rural areas For this target audience, "success" may be defined by many parameters, including:

- gainful employment in production agriculture or a related occupation;
- access to appropriate assistive technology needed for work and daily living activities;
- evidence-based information related to the treatment and rehabilitation of disabling conditions; and targeted support for families.



In fulfilling this mission, certain actions should be taken of which the most important are:

- Developing service capacity through innovative educational programs designed to advance individual capabilities, adapting new technologies, and delivering program content through appropriate educational venues
- Encouraging networking to facilitate information sharing, the provision of services, and funding from individuals or organizations
- Establishing a mechanism which will provide direct services to agricultural workers through individual consultations and other means [17]

[17] Greece-Bulgaria Interreg Programme. (n.d.). Social, cultural, & legal challenges of agriculture-related enterprises of disabled people in the cross-border area (Greek Part). Retrieved from [https://old-2014-2020.greece-bulgaria.eu/gallery/Files/PROJECTS%20DELIVERABLES/AGRI-ABILITY/Del-4_2_1_Social-cultural-%26-legal-challenges-of-agriculture-related-enterprises-of-disabled-people-in-the-CB-area-\(Greek-Part\)_EN.pdf](https://old-2014-2020.greece-bulgaria.eu/gallery/Files/PROJECTS%20DELIVERABLES/AGRI-ABILITY/Del-4_2_1_Social-cultural-%26-legal-challenges-of-agriculture-related-enterprises-of-disabled-people-in-the-CB-area-(Greek-Part)_EN.pdf)

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Sustainable Agriculture

Greece is moving towards a more competitive market-oriented agriculture, aiming at producing quality and branded products. Capitalizing on the comparative advantages of different areas and regions, agriculture contributes to the development of the Greek countryside. A greener and more sustainable agriculture is promoted, enhancing the complementarity between rural policy and the Renewable Energy Sources (RES). A new era of high nutritional value food products of the Greek land and sea is on track, emphasizing the importance of the Mediterranean-Greek diet.

Greece is dedicating substantial financial resources, totaling EUR 1.5 billion, to environmental and climate objectives. This includes promoting organic farming methods, reducing pesticide use through alternative plant protection methods, and reinforcing nature-protected areas. Of this, EUR 1.4 billion is specifically allocated to promote organic farming, with the goal of more than doubling the agricultural land under organic cultivation. An additional annual allocation of over EUR 425 million is earmarked for eco-schemes, supporting practices such as resilient species, green cover practices, biodiversity, circular economy initiatives, and environmentally-friendly management across approximately 3 million hectares.

Agriculture is very important - in economic, social as well as environmental terms - for the sustainable development of rural areas in Greece. Changes in the CAP involve making the 'direct payments' system more effective, changing the market management tools, focusing more on rural development policy and dealing with price and income volatility. Through transformative measures such as reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, adopting nature-based technologies, and providing support actions to enhance agricultural income and competitiveness, the CAP fosters a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector.

[18] HELLENIC REPUBLIC Greece in Canada. (2024). Sustainable Agriculture. Retrieved from: <https://www.mfa.gr/canada/en/about-greece/food-and-gastronomy/sustainable-agriculture.html>

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Sustainable Agriculture

The survey by Teklu et.al., (2023) highlight the significant effects that cutting-edge technology like artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), and precision agriculture have on improving resource efficiency, lowering environmental effects, and raising agricultural yields. [19]

In a bid to ensure demographic renewal and sustainable development in rural areas, Greece is committing over EUR 730 million to support young farmers. This support encompasses financial assistance, education, advisory services, and business plan reinforcement. The initiative aims at achieving social inclusion, local development, and gender equality, ultimately benefiting over 4 million people in rural areas.

Efforts to improve animal welfare, prevent diseases, and minimize antibiotic use are expected to contribute to the production of healthier and more nutritionally valuable products. The initiative anticipates the creation of over 70,000 new jobs in rural areas, particularly through support for young farmers and investments in agricultural product processing, marketing, forest technologies, and marketing of forest products. In the domain of knowledge sharing, innovation, and digitalization, Greece is planning to establish an Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS[20]). This system will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and new technologies, encouraging farmers to adopt digital technologies and innovative solutions. More than 15,000 farms are expected to participate in knowledge exchange groups, benefitting over 200,000 individuals through advice, training, and participation in European Innovation Partnership (EIP)[21] operational groups.



[19] Teklu, A.; Simane, B.; Bezabih, M. (2023) Multiple adoption of climate-smart agriculture innovation for agricultural sustainability: Empirical evidence from the Upper Blue Nile Highlands of Ethiopia. Clim. Risk Manag.

[20] AKIS in the EIP-AGRI spotlight, n.d.

[21] European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs), n.d.



**COUNTRY CASE:
REPUBLIC OF
N.MACEDONIA**

The Economic Challenges of New Times - Youth Unemployment in N. MACEDONIA

One of the most pressing economic phenomena in modern societies is unemployment. The data says that globally, the unemployment rate in 2020 increased to a record 6.5%; that is, 220.3 million people lost their jobs (UN 2021). Such situations definitely can be evaluated as unfavourable.

Economists agree that high unemployment indicates inefficient resource allocation, leading to lost production potential and negative consequences for individuals, families, and economies. Unemployment results in decreased income, eroded skills, and a demotivated workforce, affecting physical and mental health. The broader economic costs of high unemployment include lost output, increased public expenditures, and reduced tax revenues. Enterprises face higher taxes, limiting profits and discouraging new hires. Socially, unemployment contributes to protectionist measures, reduced economic freedoms, and increased crime. High unemployment is a harmful economic phenomenon affecting individuals, economies, and societies. The focus on youth unemployment highlights its potential for creating long-term economic "scars." N. Macedonia is not an exception nor immune to these problems.

Youth unemployment: concept and consequences

According to the International Labor Organization, youth unemployment is a situation where young people are actively looking for employment and are available to start work if they find it. At the same time, young people usually mean people between the ages of 15 and 24. Youth unemployment is presented in two forms: as a share (percentage) of the total population or as a share (percentage) of the active population, the labour force.

Unemployment causes negative consequences, but when it comes to youth unemployment, it can have long-term effects on an individual's life. [22]

[22] United Nations. (n.d.). Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Retrieved from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/goal-08/>

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Youth unemployment: concept and consequences

Youth unemployment can limit their chances of achieving a high salary, reduce their chances of finding employment, and limit other life opportunities. There are several reasons why this happens.

Secondly, youth unemployment can negatively affect young people's acquisition and development of work skills. This can limit their productivity and future income opportunities. Moreover, the lack of specific skills or qualifications can often be seen as a predictor of unemployment. Early employment in a young person's career positively impacts the development of non-cognitive skills like self-discipline, independence, interpersonal skills, communication, adaptability, persistence, self-confidence, etc.

Reaching YES: Addressing the Youth Employment and Skilling Challenge, notes that young people aged 15-24 years old are unable to identify which skills they need for future employment opportunities. Young people are also unable to access relevant skills training and employers lack a standard way to verify the skills new employees claim to have. The report notes there is a disconnect between requirements and education and training systems.

For example, young people unable to access the internet aren't able to access training opportunities online. Where skills are acquired, young people need a way of verifiably, accurately and securely tracking and sharing these with employers. "A global skills gap, economic decline and an employment market that requires more complex and diverse skills than ever before have contributed to a 12 percent drop in youth employment over the past two decades. Governments and businesses must come together to give today's young people – future earners and employees – the skills and opportunities they need to access meaningful employment and thrive in today's job market," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. [23]

[23] UNICEF. (2021). Young people unable to access skills needed for today's job market, new report says. Retrieved from United Nations. (n.d.). Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Retrieved from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/goal-08/>

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Youth unemployment: concept and consequences

Since gaining independence, the Republic of North Macedonia has grappled with a troublingly high unemployment rate, particularly among its young population. From 1991 until 2015, the youth unemployment rate consistently exceeded 50% but dropped below this threshold for the first time in 2015. As of 2023, the current rate stands at 25.7%, as reported by the State Statistical Office. In the first quarter of 2023, North Macedonia's total labor force numbered 787,645 individuals, of whom 683,242 were employed and 104,403 were unemployed. The activity rate during this period reached 52%, while the employment rate stood at 45.1% and the unemployment rate at 13.3%. To address the issue of youth unemployment, the government has prioritized implementing a new set of measures. This comprehensive strategy combines employment, education, and social assistance policies aimed at enhancing young people's employability.

The youth unemployment rate in North Macedonia is a significant challenge, especially in rural areas. According to a World Bank report, the youth unemployment rate in North Macedonia was 44 per cent in the first quarter of 2018, compared to 15 percent in the EU. This program aims to improve young people's access to the labour market and reduce the high youth unemployment rate, which was at 35 percent for those aged 15-24 in 2023. Despite recent progress, North Macedonia continues to show very poor labor market outcomes, especially for the youth. Youth unemployment in North Macedonia is among the highest in the world (44 percent in North Macedonia in the first quarter (Q1) of 2018, compared to 15 percent in May 2018 in the EU), reflecting the challenges youth face to gain a foothold in the labor market. The grim prospects for youth represent a challenge for inclusive growth and poverty reduction, as prolonged spells of unemployment and inactivity in these early years negatively affect subsequent labor market outcomes. [24]



[24] 1. United Nations, Youth unemployment and underemployment in North Macedonia: Coping mechanisms and strategies https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/youth-unemployment-and-underemployment-north-macedonia-coping-mechanisms-and?fbclid=IwAR0fS091mHF7qZKo9YdK020Sc-Q1jBsEnwysor_ewqUd1xPGRo3ItfvmMV8

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The current situation of young people in RSM

Many young people in RSM face employment challenges due to the low quality of education and inconsistent vocational education and training that do not align with the current labour market demands. Youth unemployment is still a major issue, with young people being almost twice as likely to be unemployed compared to other age groups. The unemployment rate among young people has decreased by almost 10% in recent years, dropping from 39.2% in 2017 to 27.6% in 2021 (State Statistical Office of North Macedonia). Despite this, RSM still has one of Europe's highest youth unemployment rates. Furthermore, one in three young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and rural areas are at risk of poverty and social exclusion [24]

The fact that over a third of the youth in the nation are neither employed nor involved in education or training (NEET - Neither Employed nor in Education or Training) is also concerning. This issue of youth unemployment has led to migration movements, as more than half of the young people (58%) would leave the country given the opportunity, and only 6.9% would return. The state of the environment and poor air quality are some of the primary reasons for this migration. As a result, 20% of RSM citizens who have already emigrated are highly educated, which is the highest rate among the Western Balkans countries. The number of students from RSM studying in OECD countries has nearly tripled between 2013 and 2019 [25]. Besides the previously mentioned challenges, young people in N. Macedonia face numerous challenges that require urgent attention and action.



[25] State Statistical Office of North Macedonia. (2023). Active Population in the Republic of North Macedonia - Third quarter 2023. Retrieved from https://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2023/2.1.23.36_mk.pdf

[26] Employment & Entrepreneurship (2024). Retrieved from: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/republic-of-north-macedonia/3-employment-entrepreneurship>

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Recent programs

ACT ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICIES

This law was voted and started being effective on 24.01.2020. This law regulates the various forms of youth organizations, the involvement of young people in the creation of youth policies and decision-making processes related to them, the strategic documents at national and local levels, the measures taken by government bodies and local authorities to promote the position of young people in society, as well as the coordination of information and planning of activities related to and for young people.

The purpose of this law is to ensure:

- 1) creation and implementation of youth policy at all levels through a multi-sectoral approach, starting from the needs and interests of young people;
- 2) strengthening the participation of young people in the processes of creating policies for young people, active information, promotion and protection of the interests of young people, as well as strengthening awareness of the importance of young people and their social role;
- 3) promoting intergenerational partnerships to support the participation of young people in the process of making decisions and policies;
- 4) support and promotion of youth organisations;
- 5) encouragement of structural dialogue at the national and local level;
- 6) encouraging volunteerism, youth activism and youth work and
- 7) encouragement of personal, professional and social development among young people.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2023-2027

The National Youth Strategy 2023-2027 (NSM) in the Republic of North Macedonia is a five-year plan developed by the Agency for Youth and Sports. Its purpose is to improve the societal status of young people.

[26] Employment & Entrepreneurship 3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market (2023) National policies platform. (2023, November 28). Retrieved From: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/republic-of-north-macedonia/36-integration-of-young-people-in-the-labour-market>

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Recent programs

THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2023-2027

The National Youth Strategy 2023-2027 (NSM) in the Republic of North Macedonia is a five-year plan developed by the Agency for Youth and Sports.



Its purpose is to improve the societal status of young people. The strategy aims to reform institutions and empower stakeholders to enable youth to realise their rights and interests. The government has adopted this plan which covers eight key thematic areas, including youth participation, information, work, education, culture, health, entrepreneurship, and security (violence). Over 500 participants have been involved in the creation of this strategy, which includes the perspectives of young people and various stakeholders through consultative, inclusive, and transparent processes.

The strategy's key goals and measures are based on challenges identified by the youth, the status of the youth sector, and trends in the country, as highlighted in the 2022 Youth Trends Survey and other relevant research. Furthermore, it aims to reduce youth poverty and discrimination and promote social inclusion, targeting vulnerable groups with specific needs. Horizontal topics such as gender equality, environmental improvement, crisis management (e.g., COVID-19), and digitalisation are addressed within thematic areas.

Aligned with the European Youth Strategy and UN Sustainable Development Goals, the NSM incorporates indicators for success, achievements, and impact in each thematic area, enabling a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. The strategy emphasises a commitment to partnership, recognising the dynamic nature of youth needs and striving to create conditions for their full potential realisation [25]

[26] Employment & Entrepreneurship 3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market (2023) National policies platform. (2023, November 28). Retrieved From: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/republic-of-north-macedonia/36-integration-of-young-people-in-the-labour-market>

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Recent programs

THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2023-2027

The poor labour market situation for young people is also reflected in the high rates of the youth population, not in education, employment, or training. In response to this issue, the government introduced the Youth Guarantee in 2018. The Youth Guarantee aims to offer young people employment, continuing education, training, or internships. This program specifically targets individuals aged 15-29 and offers them a four-month opportunity for employment, continuing education, training, or internships. Its purpose is to improve young people's access to the labour market and reduce the high youth unemployment rate. In fact, the rate for those aged 15-24 in 2023 stood at 35 per cent. [27]

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2023

The youth of North Macedonia face significant challenges, including a lack of attractive careers, unemployment, and underemployment, inadequate skills for jobs, and minimal opportunities for career advancement. They also have few chances for civic engagement and, therefore, struggle to contribute meaningfully to society. Historically, the government has prioritized party affiliation and politics over citizens' needs. Endemic corruption, a lack of a merit-based system, and minimal environmental standards further contribute to pushing the youth to leave the country. Data demonstrates that almost half of all young people plan to emigrate in pursuit of better jobs, career progression, good living standards, and the observance of the rule of law. If provided with support and empowerment, the youth of North Macedonia can become change agents and drive positive progress in the country.

Program description: this program by USAID aims to strategically work with the youth, focusing on creating opportunities to enhance prosperity and democracy in North Macedonia. [28]

[27] Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, (2022), Operation Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services on the Labour Market for 2022

<https://av.gov.mk/content/pdf/FINALEN%20OP%202022.pdf>

[28] USAID (2023), Youth Actively Create Opportunities. Retrieved from:

<https://www.usaid.gov/north-macedonia/fact-sheets/youth-actively-create-opportunities>

ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, DISABILITY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE – REPUBLIC OF N.MACEDONIA

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Recent programs

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2023

Three key objectives will guide their efforts: 1. Supporting economic opportunities that appeal to young people. 2. Strengthening the skills and capabilities of youth for modern jobs, progressive careers, and civic engagement. 3. Promoting experiences that develop values such as participation, ethical conduct, civic engagement, and the pursuit of personal and collective achievements.

Expected Results & Impact

- More youth will secure attractive internship placements, employment, or self-employment.
- Businesses will be more interested in investing in youth innovation.
- Youth will have access to specialized and innovative skill-building that leads to careers.
- Youth will be civically active in anti-corruption, environmental protection, and the inclusion of marginalized populations. [28]

STUDY ON THE SITUATION AND THE NEEDS OF RURAL YOUTH IN NORTH MACEDONIA NEWS WEBALKANS.

In a recent study focused on the situation and needs of rural youth in North Macedonia, various challenges were discovered. One of the prominent challenges rural youth face is the limited access to education, training, and employment opportunities. This study shed light on the difficulties these young individuals encounter when it comes to accessing essential resources and opportunities. A Young European Ambassador (YEA) named Damjan Zlatanovski recently coordinated an event in partnership with Europe House Kriva Palanka, supporting the sixth goal from the eleven European Youth Goals, which focuses on advancing rural youth. [29]

[28] USAID (2023), Youth Actively Create Opportunities. Retrieved from:
<https://www.usaid.gov/north-macedonia/fact-sheets/youth-actively-create-opportunities>

[29] Study on the situation and the needs of rural youth in North Macedonia. (2023). Retrieved from:
<https://webalkans.eu/en/news/study-on-the-situation-and-the-needs-of-rural-youth-in-north-macedonia/>

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The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved the following project: North Macedonia Agriculture Modernization Project. IBRD Loan: EUR 46 million (\$50.5 million equivalent). Terms: Maturity = 12 years, Grace = 4 years Project Description: The project aims to improve competitiveness in targeted agricultural sub-sectors and strengthen agricultural public sector readiness for EU accession. [31]

The World Bank approved the Agriculture Modernization Project in North Macedonia on January 30, 2020. With an IBRD loan of EUR 46 million, the project seeks to enhance competitiveness in specific agricultural sub-sectors and strengthen agricultural institutions for EU accession. The project is divided into three components, prioritising improving farm-level competitiveness and reinforcing agricultural public sector institutions. The initiative aims to benefit vulnerable and small-scale farmers by addressing sector constraints, and ensuring their involvement in the project. This project strives to modernize and enhance the agricultural sector in North Macedonia while paving the way for EU integration [32]

The Annex of The Republic Of North Macedonia: EU Instrument For Pre-Accession (IPA) Rural Development Programme, is a supplementary document that provides additional information on the main IPA III Programming Framework for 2021-2027. It outlines the specific areas of focus and indicative allocations for assistance under IPA III. The document is a strategic plan developed with the participation of young people and relevant organizations. It addresses the needs and challenges of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia such as education, employment, health, and societal participation are expected to be covered. The Annex encompasses various assistance windows such as rule of law, fundamental rights, democracy, good governance, green agenda, competitiveness, and territorial cooperation. It acts as a guide for implementation and allocating resources to support the development priorities of beneficiary countries. [33]

[30] The World Bank, (2019). Finding Solutions to Youth Unemployment in North Macedonia. Retrieved from: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/867231589230179351/pdf/Finding-Solutions-to-Youth-Unemployment-in-North-Macedonia.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2VbxXZa0-z8AF34Msx_tjNkbl0cQYM7lIT10Ks1ByGHH24-F3EK2o7aaY

[31] The World Bank, (2020). North Macedonia: Agriculture Modernization Project. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2020/01/30/north-macedonia-agriculture-modernization-project>

[32] Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy, (2022). Rural Development Programme 2021-2027. Retrieved from: https://ipard.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Draft-IPARD-III-PROGRAMME-MK_210122.pdf

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Moreover, the Agency for Youth and Sport has started the preparation of the new National Youth Strategy 2023-2027 with the support of UNDP, UNFPA and OSCE Mission to Skopje. In the period between October and December, comprehensive consultations in different forms with young people took place. Thematic groups were organised in each of the topics covered by the National Youth Strategy: youth participation, education, youth information, youth work, security, culture, health, and employment. A total of 24 working groups involved relevant institutions, civil society organisations and young people from around the country. Moreover, consultative meetings were organised with youth from political parties, umbrella youth organizations and high-school students [34]

The high rates of youth unemployment are a clear indication of the problematic position of young people in the labor market of our country. Upon analyzing the structure of unemployed youth, it was found that there were differences based on gender and education levels, which should be considered when devising solutions to this issue. We believe that youth unemployment should be prioritized in the economic policies.

The Macedonian government has taken initiatives to tackle this issue, such as the Youth Guarantee introduced in 2018, the act on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, and the more recent National Youth Strategy 2023-2027, which was developed with the active participation of young individuals, and various stakeholders, focuses on eight key areas crucial to the overall well-being of the youth. As we navigate the complexities of youth unemployment in North Macedonia, it is evident that a collective effort involving government bodies, civil society, international organisations, and the youth themselves is necessary. The path ahead requires sustained commitment, innovative solutions, and a focus on addressing the root causes of youth unemployment. By fostering an environment that promotes education, skill development, and meaningful employment, North Macedonia can unleash its youth's potential and pave the way for a more prosperous and inclusive future.

[33] Agency for Youth and Sport, (2023). National Youth Strategy 2023-2027. Retrieved from: <https://api.ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/akciski-plan-2023-2025.pdf>



COUNTRY CASE: CROATIA



Understanding Youth Unemployment in Croatia

Demographic Challenges, Unemployment Statistics and Challenges for Persons with Disabilities

Considering that the population of Croatia is characterised by declining fertility, natural depopulation (negative natural growth rate), migration depopulation and extreme ageing of the population, the present generation of young people is becoming increasingly burdened, and their future is uncertain due to the accelerated ageing of the population and the high level of youth unemployment. In this respect, two demographic processes are particularly negative: long-lasting natural population decline and the emigration of young and educated people. It is important to emphasise that the adverse effects of the population's ageing and emigration are evident at the local level. The trend of young people leaving small towns and rural areas and immigrating to larger cities leads to the depopulation of rural areas, the disappearance of small towns and excessive centralisation, which, consequently, causes uneven development and has negative consequences on economic growth. The youth Unemployment Rate in Croatia remained unchanged at 20 % in June 2023. The maximum rate was 49.8 %, and the minimum was 16.2 % [34] [35]

Of that number, 7,196 are persons with disabilities, which is 6.1% of the total population of unemployed persons registered in the records of the Institute. Most registered persons with disabilities are between the ages of 55 and 59 (12.1% of unemployed persons with disabilities out of the total number of unemployed persons of the same age), followed by persons with disabilities aged 20 to 24, 867 of them (12%) and persons aged 25 to 29, 803 of them (11.2%) [36]

[34] OHCHR. (n.d.). Croatia Country Report. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/17990094/3-30112023-BP-EN.pdf/943a8c59-bbb4-8c44-b4b7-54ce08b45a49?version=1.0&t=1701263796016>

[35] Eurostat. (2023). Structural business statistics: economic sectors in the European Union (No. 3-30112023-BP-EN). Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/17990094/3-30112023-BP-EN.pdf/943a8c59-bbb4-8c44-b4b7-54ce08b45a49?version=1.0&t=1701263796016>

[36] HRVATSKI ZAVOD ZA ZAPOSŁJAVANJE (2023). Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/17990094/3-30112023-BP-EN.pdf/943a8c59-bbb4-8c44-b4b7-54ce08b45a49?version=1.0&t=1701263796016>

Understanding Youth Unemployment in Croatia

Demographic Challenges, Unemployment Statistics and Challenges for Persons with Disabilities

Although precise data from 2023 are not available, previous research indicates the challenges that persons with disabilities, including young people, face in the labour market. These include difficulties in employment and the need for special programs.

The presented data on trends in the employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities in Croatia point to certain positive developments in recent years, which are the result of the creation of legislative and institutional infrastructure in accordance with the highest world standards in the field of social integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, as well as greater allocation funds to encourage their employment through the Fund for Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. However, the data also point to the fact that the economic crisis, for its part, made it difficult to integrate people with disabilities into the labour market. It is, therefore, important to approach the creation of special employment programs intended for this population in a situation of economic recession.

On the other hand, the data on the number of unemployed people with disabilities and their structure, especially with regard to the level and profile of education and the duration of unemployment, are warning and point to the still largely inadequate and outdated education programs in which people with disabilities participate. The aforementioned education programs strengthen their already "vulnerable" position in terms of "competitiveness" in the open labour market and often make it even more vulnerable. In addition, the system of high school and elementary school education does not prepare young people with disabilities with sufficient quality for participation in higher levels of education at the university, as evidenced by the low enrolment rate of people with disabilities in university programs [37]

[37] Soc. ekol. Zagreb, Vol. 19 (2010.), No. 2 Zdenko Babić i Zdravka Leutar: Položaj osoba s invaliditetom na tržištu rada RH; <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/90147>

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Understanding Youth Unemployment in Croatia

Sector-specific Insights: Agriculture

As for YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR OF ACTIVITY, THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT IS VISIBLE IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

According to the statistical data of the State Bureau of Statistics as of August 2023, the total number of employees in the Republic of Croatia was 1,677,842, of which only 25,588 were employed in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sector [38]

Also, an analysis by the World Bank (2019) showed that agricultural holdings managed by young farmers adapted their production level to the size of the most productive level better than the average Croatian agricultural holding. Farms managed by young farmers show higher efficiency in terms of production volume compared to farms managed by older farmers. The interest of young farmers in professional training is also increasing [39]

However, despite all the advantages of employing young people in agriculture, there is high youth unemployment in Croatia in that sector. Some of the reasons why young people have difficulty finding employment in agriculture are:

- Lack of education and training: Young people often do not have adequate education or training to work in agriculture.
- Lack of access to relevant educational programs and technical skills can make it difficult to enter the sector.
- Lack of access to resources: starting your own farming business can be financially demanding, with the need for land, equipment, seeds and capital. Young people often do not have access to these resources.
- Labor market and urbanisation: There is a strong urbanisation trend in many countries, which means that young people often move from rural areas to cities in search of better employment and living conditions.

[38] Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). LABOUR FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA, SECOND QUARTER OF 2023. Retrieved from: <https://podaci.dzs.hr/2023/en/58052>

[39] European Commission (n.d). At a glance: CROATIA'S CAP STRATEGIC PLAN. Retrieved from: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a279c085-7078-4a78-a343-50da16bf983a_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-croatia_en.pdf

ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, DISABILITY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE - CROATIA

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SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

National Development Strategy Croatia 2030

Croatia's strategy aims to support the sustainable development of economically viable farms, the processing sector and the improvement of living and working conditions in rural areas. It will support the protection of natural resources, biodiversity and the climate through a number of incentives.

Croatian agriculture is characterised by small family agricultural holdings, often located in mountain or karst (limestone) areas and areas facing natural or other specific constraints for farming. Forests cover 37% of the total area of Croatia. About 68% of the utilised agricultural area is arable land, while 26% is mostly permanent grassland and meadows.

The competitiveness of rural areas in Croatia depends, among other things, on improving technical infrastructure, accessibility to essential services, and the development of entrepreneurship.

Rural areas represent 63% of Croatia's land. More than 1.7 million people live in rural areas, representing 42.5% of Croatia's population.

For this reason, more than 14 000 new jobs will be created in rural areas and 84 infrastructure investments (such as water, local roads and kindergartens). Seventy-six off-farm investments will also be supported. Around EUR 103 million will be invested in rural areas and will contribute to social innovation in the framework of the European LEADER programme. Around 87% of the rural population will be able to benefit from 54 local development strategies implemented by Local Action Groups under the community-led LEADER approach. To encourage young people to undertake agricultural activities, specific incentives will be given to more than 1,000 Croatian farmers under the age of 40 to help them set up their agricultural holdings and sustain the initial costs of their investments. [39]

[39] European Commission (n.d). At a glance: CROATIA'S CAP STRATEGIC PLAN. Retrieved from: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a279c085-7078-4a78-a343-50da16bf983a_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-croatia_en.pdf

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SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

National Development Strategy Croatia 2030

The Croatian Plan also focuses on support for training and advisory activities for farmers. To organise and strengthen links and cooperation between farmers, advisors and researchers, a coordination body will be established at the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture. The register of both public and private advisors will be made public through a dedicated platform. In this way, Croatian farmers will be able to select the advisory support best suited for their individual needs. Overall, there will be a focus on digitalisation and the uptake of innovation, in general, as tools to facilitate the green transition.

More than 2% of farms will receive financial assistance to restructure and modernise their infrastructure, with almost half of them getting support for the uptake of digital farming technologies. In addition, 34 Operational Groups will be created in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP); their task will be to bring together different actors (such as researchers, advisors, and farmers) who will cooperate to address environmental and other challenges in an innovative way. Other EU instruments will address the needs of rural areas. For example, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the European Regional Development Fund and national funding (the national telecommunication operators' own resources) will ensure increased broadband coverage in rural areas



[39] European Commission (n.d). At a glance: CROATIA'S CAP STRATEGIC PLAN. Retrieved from: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a279c085-7078-4a78-a343-50da16bf983a_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-croatia_en.pdf

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National Development Strategy Croatia 2030

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I.: Increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural and food sector

- Priority 1.1.: Increasing the efficiency and added value of agricultural holdings
- Priority 1.2.: Ensuring higher and more stable incomes for small producers
- Priority 1.3.: Diversification of the market for Croatian agricultural and food products
- Priority 1.4.: Integration of SMEs and young farmers into food and agricultural value chains
- Priority 1.5.: Facilitating access to strategic market segments.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE II.: Strengthening the sustainability and resistance of agricultural production to climate change

- Priority 2.1.: Improving the sustainable management of soil, water and biodiversity
- Priority 2.2.: Reducing vulnerability to climate change and encouraging production with low emissions
- Priority 2.3.: Facilitating access to agricultural land.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE III.: Reconstruction of the rural economy and improvement of living conditions in rural areas

- Priority 3.1.: Reduction of poverty in rural areas
- Priority 3.2.: Creating jobs in rural areas
- Priority 3.3.: Accelerating the transition to a green rural economy

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IV.: Encouraging innovation in the agricultural and food sector

- Priority 4.1.: Increasing public and private investment in research and development
- Priority 4.2.: Improvement of technology transfer

[39] European Commission (n.d). At a glance: CROATIA'S CAP STRATEGIC PLAN. Retrieved from: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a279c085-7078-4a78-a343-50da16bf983a_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-croatia_en.pdf

Best Practices and Interventions - NATIONAL INTERVENTION

Croatian Employment Service (CES) provides lifelong career guidance activities and support to all unemployed people who need career help. Special attention and focus in providing career support is directed to young people in their transitional career points – from one level of education to the next and from education to employment. Early intervention activities focus on pupils in elementary and secondary schools, especially those with health and developmental obstacles, who might have difficulties entering the labour market. Pursuant to The Rules of Procedures on the Elements and Criteria for the Selection of Candidates Entering Secondary Schools, adopted by the Ministry of Science and Education, pupils with difficulties are entitled to particular criteria which facilitate them entering secondary school, based on CES career guidance expert team assessment and recommendation, taking into account labour market needs. Special attention is also given to unemployed people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

In the National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from 2016 until 2020, career guidance is recognised as a tool for increasing the availability of secondary education to pupils with difficulties.

The Youth Guarantee is a new approach to solving the issue of youth unemployment, which seeks to activate all persons under the age of 25 (in the Republic of Croatia, under the age of 30!), as quickly as possible on the labour market. The measures of the Youth Guarantee in the Republic of Croatia may include all young NEETs who have reached the age of 15 and are under 30 years of age. Although the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on the Establishment of the Youth Guarantee Scheme stipulates that the Guarantee should cover persons aged 15 to 25, at the initiative of Croatia and several other members, it also enables persons under 30 to be included in the measures. Today, most states have moved the age limit to 30. In Croatia, the priority is young people in NEET status with lower qualifications and highly educated young people without work experience because analyses show that they have the most challenging time finding employment. Also, priority is given to inactive young people, i.e. young NEETs who are not registered in the records of the Croatian Employment Service [40]

[40] <https://gov.hr/en/employment-incentives/856>

Best Practices and Interventions - NATIONAL INTERVENTION

Through active employment measures, entrepreneurship is developed throughout Croatia; employment is increased, and through support for education and training, investments are made in the competitiveness of workers in the labour market. As a target group, young people can be found in all measures.

One of the measures is employment aid, which helps disadvantaged, extremely disadvantaged or disabled individuals to find employment. The government provides co-financing for the cost of the gross salary amount for 12 or 24 months. The Institute also offers a monthly lump sum amount of support, based on the level of education and the possibility of using tax relief for the co-financed person.

Support for self-employment – is granted to unemployed persons to cover the costs of establishing and starting a business entity in the following organisational forms: crafts, companies, self-employed and institutions. Support may also be granted to several unemployed persons if they jointly establish and start a new business entity or continue with the business of the existing business entity they have taken over. This measure aims to provide financial support to unemployed people who decide to start their own business, which lasts 24 months.

In addition to measures related to green and digital jobs, the measure Biram Hrvatsku (Choose Croatia), as an extension of measures for self-employment, attracted the most significant public attention. Returnees from the European Economic Area can use the measure Choose Croatia after January 1, 2022. The measure provides additional HRK 6 600 euro support to returnees who decide to become self-employed. People who relocate their business to less developed regions can receive HRK 3 300 euro support.

Traineeships – traineeship grants can be granted to employers who, as natural or legal persons and persons established based on special regulations, independently and permanently perform economic activities as low-value employment grants without state employment aid characteristics [40]

[40] <https://gov.hr/en/employment-incentives/856>

Best Practices and Interventions - NATIONAL INTERVENTION

This measure aims to enable persons to work independently by encouraging the employment of persons by co-financing the cost of their gross salary and other expenses to employers, all in accordance with this measure. The duration of this measure is 12 months. The amount of the subsidy is 100% of the amount according to the amount of the trainee's gross salary, which is 85% of the gross salary of the job, which does not include the amount of overtime, night, shift, field or any other right by the provisions of the Labor Law of other applicable regulations and acts.

An internship can lead to employment, but no intern is guaranteed a job. Namely, internships can also be accepted in activities for which young people are not directly educated or are wondering if they would like to do that job in the future. Nevertheless, such an internship can bring new experiences, knowledge and acquaintances that may be useful in the future [40]

Projects Showcasing Innovation

This measure aims to enable persons to work independently by encouraging the employment of persons by co-financing the cost of their gross salary and other expenses to employers, all in accordance with this measure. The duration of this measure is 12 months. The amount of the subsidy is 100% of the amount according to the amount of the trainee's gross salary, which is 85% of the gross salary of the job, which does not include the amount of overtime, night, shift, field or any other right by the provisions of the Labor Law of other applicable regulations and acts.

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[40] <https://gov.hr/en/employment-incentives/856>



Gruntek - a combination of digital and natural agriculture

The first application that offers to plant organically grown vegetables has been launched in Croatia, offering digital management of a real garden located an hour from Zagreb. Gruntek provides users with a digital solution for growing organic domestic vegetables via a digital platform, making it a kind of "Farmville in real life". This example of a "smart garden" represents a step towards the digitalisation of agriculture and is an example of cooperation between entrepreneurship and a local agricultural cooperative.

Unlike the Farmville above game, the Gruntek gardens are an authentic experience located an hour's drive from Zagreb, near Čazma. On the website www.mojgruntek.hr, users design their gardens. For individual beds, they choose some of the eco vegetables available for planting at that moment. In doing so, they receive information about the harvest time and the expected harvest amount. During the months of vegetable growth, information is published about the garden's progress and the expected harvest time.

Vegetables grown at Gruntek can be delivered, or garden owners can pick them up at Gruntek. The website is also an application through which, in addition to viewing content, users will be able to monitor the development of their garden with photos and videos. A typical garden at Gruntek has eight beds, and each bed is 5 m². [41]

[41] <https://mojgruntek.hr/>

Best Practices and Interventions - NATIONAL INTERVENTION

GREENVILLE - Greenville eco-education farm- 1964 m² of land with an existing residential building and an auxiliary building for the garden, indoor work space and agricultural land. The property currently contains:

- Residential building with accommodation for 21 people, internal workspace and toilets;
- Small orchard with organically grown domestic fruit varieties;
- Vegetable garden with 10 raised beds;
- Barbecue and fireplace;
- A spacious meadow for holding outdoor workshops.

Their vision is to turn the property into an eco-education farm called Greenville, which will become a training ground for creating young ambassadors of sustainable development.



The issue of youth unemployment in Croatia is a pressing concern caused by factors such as an ageing population, low fertility rates, and the emigration of highly educated individuals. Furthermore, persons with disabilities face additional barriers in the job market, and the current education programs fail to address their needs adequately. While some progress has been made, the statistics show that the existing programs need to be updated and more effective. As the country faces an economic downturn, it is crucial to prioritize developing specialized employment programs tailored to this demographic.

[41] <https://www.pozitivsamobor.hr/en/home/zeleni-vrh/>

COUNTRY CASE: LIECHTENSTEIN



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Youth Unemployment

According to the World Bank, the youth unemployment rate in Liechtenstein was 1.5% in 2021. Unemployment in Liechtenstein increased by 94 individuals in December 2020, reaching a total of 370 people. This translates to a rise of 0.4 percentage points in the unemployment rate, bringing it to 1.8 percent.

Among individuals aged 25-49, there were 225 unemployed, marking an increase of eight people from November. There were 864 job vacancies advertised by the labor market service, which is an increase of 78 jobs compared to December 2019. Additionally, 860 businesses reported short-time working hours due to the coronavirus pandemic, while 12 companies applied for compensation related to weather-related short-time working hours. [42]

The causes of poverty in Liechtenstein become evident when analyzing the immigration policies put in place by the country's government. In 2013, many media outlets in Europe began to report that the growing immigrant population was composed of many low-income families. This is mainly due to the increased share of the population that are immigrants, with the incomes earned by these immigrants being lower than those of the native population. This has caused the overall income growth of Liechtenstein to be subjected to downward pressure in recent years.



The unemployment rate of immigrants in Liechtenstein is approximately twice as large as it is for national citizens that have lived in Liechtenstein for their entire lives. In terms of how this applies in practice, one in two unemployed persons living in Liechtenstein is an immigrant. Despite these concerns, compared to other European countries, Liechtenstein remains in a prosperous position and the unemployment rate in general is at a very low level. [43]

[42] Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Liechtenstein. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=LI>

[43] The Boargen Project. (2017). INEQUALITY: CAUSES OF POVERTY IN LIECHTENSTEIN. Retrieved from: <https://borgenproject.org/causes-of-poverty-in-liechtenstein/>

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Labour Market and People with Disabilities

In Liechtenstein, efforts are being made to promote the inclusion of disabled individuals and young people in the labor market. The country has implemented measures such as the Disability Equality Act, accessibility initiatives, and social assistance frameworks to empower individuals with disabilities.

Liechtenstein's disabled population faces some challenges, including restricted workforce integration and educational inclusion. Despite existing legal frameworks, comprehensive employment and health accessibility remain uncertain. Economic disparities are evident, with higher unemployment rates and lower wages than the general population. Limited economic research further complicates the issue.

Reports from the Liechtenstein Institute and the Liechtenstein Association for Persons with Disabilities indicate poor career and education integration for disabled people. Few disabled students attend public schools, and just one-third have accessibility measures. Liechtenstein provides social aid to people without social insurance or with income below a certain threshold. Specific individuals require government aid due to relative disadvantages. [44]



Liechtenstein's global impact on disability inclusion is notable. Unique approaches to poverty dynamics, pioneering inclusiveness through legislation and mandates, government-NGO synergy, progressive legislation and advancements in accessibility are commendable. However, there's room for even more progress.

[44] The Boargen Project. (2017). DISABILITY AND POVERTY IN LIECHTENSTEIN
. Retrieved from: <https://borgenproject.org/causes-of-poverty-in-liechtenstein/>

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Sustainable Agriculture Practices & Agri-Entrepreneurship

Liechtenstein is determined to adopt environmentally friendly practices in agriculture and combat climate change, recognizing its potential impact on the agricultural sector. The country has committed to reducing carbon emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels. To stimulate the development of climate-friendly technologies, Liechtenstein believes an active climate policy can provide the right incentives. Additionally, ensuring access to clean and affordable energy is a priority for the nation. To promote efficient and sustainable resource management, Liechtenstein has increased environmental taxes, leading to positive changes in consumption and production patterns.

Liechtenstein is also committed to sustainable development and has made strong progress in implementing the SDGs, particularly in poverty, hunger, health, education, water, work, and peace. Liechtenstein prioritizes sustainable development by promoting economic growth, responsible resource management, nature conservation, a just society, and the rule of law. The country actively commits to sustainable development at the international level by protecting human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and advocating for effective environmental protection. [45]

Liechtenstein emphasizes multilateralism to address global challenges and played a key role in negotiating the UN's 2030 Agenda. [46] Liechtenstein's government has historically been intentional in the protection of its environment, but the sectors of Liechtenstein that are most vulnerable are the water management plants, forestry, agriculture, biodiversity, and tourism. Liechtenstein's government also advocates for more international climate agreements, as the country's air pollution comes mostly from neighboring countries. [47]

[45] Liechtenstein Country Profile - Sdgs And The Environment. Government Of The Principality Of Liechtenstein. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/sustainability-transitions/sustainable-development-goals-and-the/country-profiles/liechtenstein-country-profile-sdgs-and>

[46] Sustainability in Liechtenstein Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein. (2019). Retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23369Full_VNR_Liechtenstein_June_2019.pdf

[47] Discover And Learn About Liechtenstein: Environment. Retrieved from: <https://projectworldimpact.com/country/liechtenstein>

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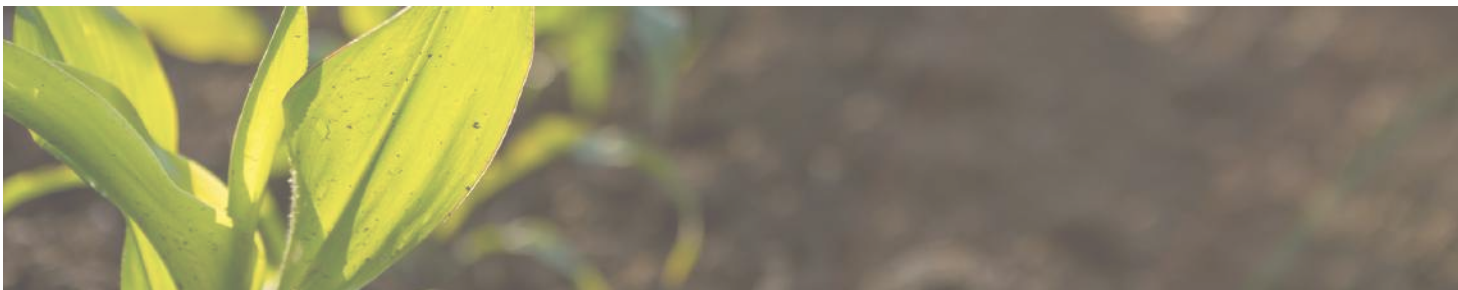
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Sustainable Agriculture Practices & Agri-Entrepreneurship

They have key initiatives to put the financial sector at the heart of global efforts to end modern slavery and human trafficking, Public-Private Partnership between Governments of Liechtenstein, Australia, Netherlands and private sector actors from Liechtenstein, Accelerate engagement of the global financial sector to tackle these crimes, The Commission consists of 25 members with diverse backgrounds, Presentation of Blueprint during 73rd Session of UNGA, Multi-stakeholder dissemination and implementation phase. [48]

The development of organic agriculture in Liechtenstein has been supported by the Farmers' which is the Swiss Federation of Organic Organizations, and almost exactly an eighth of all of Liechtenstein's land is used to produce agricultural products that meet international organic standards. [49]

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[48] Government Principality Of Liechtenstein. Sustainability in Liechtenstein Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Retrieved from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24525Prasentation_VNR_HLPF_Juli_2019.pdf

[49] Organic Liechtenstein. 2004-2023 Embassy of the Principality of Liechtenstein. Retrieved from: <https://liechtensteinusa.org/article/organic-liechtenstein>

[50] Sustainability in Liechtenstein Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein. (2019). Retrieved from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23369Full_VNR_Liechtenstein_June_2019.pdf

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Sustainable Agriculture Practices & Agri-Entrepreneurship

Liechtenstein has established an Interdisciplinary Working Group to bridge any gaps in SDG implementation and data availability for progress tracking. The government has integrated the SDGs and their associated targets into its strategic guidelines. A Voluntary National Review (VNR) was submitted to the UN in 2019, showcasing the country's commitment to sustainable development. The National Statistical Office maintains an indicator system for sustainable development, which currently does not align directly with the SDGs. The government intends to continue expanding collaboration between the public and private sectors. [50]



Agribusiness in Liechtenstein is characterized by a focus on sustainable practices and organic production. Liechtenstein's agriculture sector contributes 2% of its GDP, with activities like animal husbandry, dairy farming, and market vegetable gardening being prominent. Before World War II, almost half of the working population was occupied in agriculture. This number has continually decreased, and in 2000, about 350 persons (or 1.7 percent of the workforce) are active in agriculture, fishing, forestry, and horticulture. Despite the decline in that number, yields have been significantly increasing due to scientific rationalization and intensive machine cultivation. [51]

[50] Sustainability in Liechtenstein Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein. (2019). Retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23369Full_VNR_Liechtenstein_June_2019.pdf

[51] Nations Encyclopedia (2019). Liechtenstein - Agriculture. Retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23369Full_VNR_Liechtenstein_June_2019.pdf

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Bionetz Liechtenstein - a network of pioneering agroecological farms

This project aims to develop the Bionetz as a network of pioneering and pilot farms that are keen to try out new things in their arable farming practice. In field trials, we jointly test strategies for the increased cultivation of legumes and cereal varieties. With the Bionetz, we are generating know-how for their cultivation specifically under the types of site conditions prevailing in Liechtenstein. Our aim is to draw on traditional farming knowledge, to discuss the existing knowledge of local stakeholders and also to use the experience gained in neighbouring countries. We endeavour to share the knowledge thus generated in the Bionetz with all interested farms in Liechtenstein. We are planning specialist events, field visits, practical seminars and symposia.

The project described involves field trials aimed at increasing the cultivation of legumes and cereal varieties in Liechtenstein, specifically tailored to the local site conditions. This initiative, conducted in collaboration with Bionetz, focuses on leveraging traditional farming knowledge, engaging with local stakeholders, and drawing from the experiences of neighboring countries.

The objectives encompass both agricultural production and marketing aspects. On the production side, the aim is to develop innovative cultivation strategies that are economically viable, well-suited to regional conditions, and capable of delivering added value to consumers. This involves testing various strategies through specialist events, field visits, seminars, and symposia, with the goal of sharing the knowledge gained with interested farms across Liechtenstein. Additionally, the project extends to processing and regional marketing, with a focus on creating innovative products that are attractive to consumers and economically feasible for producers. Pilot farms serve as contact points for field visits, providing opportunities for individuals to experience farming firsthand and fostering interest in the new agricultural products being developed. The ultimate aim is to introduce these products to the marketplace by the end of the first growing season. [52]

[52] <https://www.agroecology.science/en/projekte/bionetz-liechtenstein.html>

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**COUNTRY CASE:
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Tunisia's Complex Unemployment Landscape

Tunisia struggles with high unemployment rates, reaching 16.2% in the first quarter of 2023.

The problem is particularly severe for the young, recent graduates, and those in low-income households. The issue is further worsened by gender and regional disparities, as well as a lack of opportunities for the long-term unemployed. These disparities are a significant challenge for the Tunisian economy and require an urgent and adequate response. One of the important issues on the labour supply side is the structural setbacks and obstacles that the country faces.

The labour market is highly dualistic, with over 60% of employment in some sectors being informal. This is particularly prevalent among non-graduates, with 80% of the informal workforce having only reached a primary or secondary education level and 10% needing to be literate. Self-employment in rural areas is also often informal, especially among young people. Meanwhile, university graduates tend to be unemployed rather than working in the informal sector. On the other hand, the public sector tends to offer higher wages and social benefits than the private sector, especially for entry-level positions.



[53] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/813115/youth-unemployment-rate-in-tunisia/#:~:text=Youth%20unemployment%20rate%20in%20Tunisia%20in%202022&text=The%20youth%20unemployment%20rate%20in,remained%20at%20around%2037.13%20percent.>

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Tunisia's Complex Unemployment Landscape

This has resulted in 78% of new graduates preferring to wait for a public sector job rather than accept a career in the private sector. The existence of a "wage premium for public jobs" of about 40% provides incentives to "queue" for public sector jobs and raise the reservation wage in the formal private sector. The labour demand side also faces several challenges, including the low productivity and competitiveness of the Tunisian private sector. The manufacturing and service sectors, which employ 19% and 52% of the labour force, are the leading job creators. However, they are far from the most productive sectors.



On the other hand, sectors with potentially higher productivity are regulated or dominated by state-owned enterprises, hindering the private sector's development and employment. Institutional factors also play a role in the dynamics of the labour market. Employment protection legislation, wage bargaining systems, product market regulation, access to finance, and taxation are all factors that can impact employment. [53]

[53] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/813115/youth-unemployment-rate-in-tunisia/#:~:text=Youth%20unemployment%20rate%20in%20Tunisia%20in%202022&text=The%20youth%20unemployment%20rate%20in,remained%20at%20around%2037.13%20percent>.

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Tunisia has roughly two-thirds of its land suitable for farming, with around one-fifth of the working population engaged in agriculture. Despite this, agricultural production contributes only about one-twelfth of the GDP, and the sector needs to meet the demands of the country's growing population. However, Tunisia is a significant exporter of agricultural produce, including citrus fruits, olive oil, grapes, tomatoes, melons, figs, and dates. [54]

While 69-83% of the energy consumed in Tunisia comes from non-native crops, agriculture remains a crucial economic sector that contributes to domestic food security and provides employment opportunities for about 17% of the workforce. In 2021, the agriculture sector accounted for 9.14% of the country's GDP. Olive oil is particularly significant as Tunisia is the fourth-largest olive producer globally. Due to its proximity to European nations, Tunisia heavily depends on the European market for agricultural exports.

The increasing demand for organic products in Europe and the domestic market has led to increased organic farming in Tunisia. Organic cultivation, particularly of olives and dates, has grown substantially, supported by government policies and licensing agencies for organic certification. Initiatives such as the Promotion of Agricultural Economic Development in Tunisia (PEAD) project, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry, aim to improve smallholder productivity and boost the agricultural economy. [55]



[54] <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=TN>

[55] Agro-food Jobs for Youth in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia | OECD

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Tunisia is leading in organic agricultural land in Africa, with a growing preference for organic farming observed in the country. The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) reported a significant increase in the area under organic cultivation, mainly for olives. Despite being a net importer, Tunisia has high export potential for agricultural products strengthened by trade agreements, tax-free trade with EU nations, and government initiatives such as PAMPAT 2. The country's export of agricultural products, including tomatoes and dried tomatoes, has increased, with government support driving high export values. These trends are expected to drive the growth of the agriculture market in Tunisia in the coming years. [56]



[56] <https://www.croptrust.org/pgafa-hub/crops-countries-and-genebanks/countries/tunisia/#:~:text=Tunisia%20nonetheless%20exports%20a%20fair,not%20native%20to%20the%20region>

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Youth in the Agricultural Sector

Agricultural development is a powerful tool for ending extreme poverty. However, there is a declining interest in the agricultural sector among young people. Although the industry provides employment for 25.6% of those aged 15 to 19, the rate decreases to 12.4% for those aged 25 to 29. The agricultural workforce is also ageing, with many workers over 60 years old.

The Tunisian government allocated irrigated lands to young people to tackle youth unemployment. However, this initiative encountered challenges. Young farmers leased the land, but some either abandoned it or rented it to other farmers without formal contracts.



Another strategy was to allocate plots to agricultural technicians to create jobs for agricultural graduates. These allocations were made with long-term leases (15 or 40 years) without transferring ownership. While there were some successes, there were also failures, including significant indebtedness for some allottees. The allocation of plots aimed to rejuvenate the agricultural sector and create jobs for rural youth. However, the program failed due to small plot sizes and the need for more financial support. Young farmers were excluded from credit lines, leading some to sell their leased land and abandon farming. [57]



Initiatives and Solutions

There are several initiatives in place to combat the alarming rates of youth unemployment and promote inclusive territorial development.

Building livelihoods and climate resilience in Tunisia

The main goal of the program is to build livelihood and climate resilience in an area of the country with some of the highest poverty rates and the most vulnerable to climate change and drought. The target population encompasses 5,000 households, which includes those identified by the government as “families in need,” limited-income families (which includes the elderly, persons with reduced mobility, and persons with disabilities), youth populations, small family farms with limited land, and farmer cooperatives.

The program will officially run from 2020-2025 and includes a strong [robust] gender empowerment strategy built into the design. This empowerment strategy will promote economic empowerment and independence, enabling women and men to have equal voices and influence within rural institutions and organisations, as well as to build more equity between households in terms of work distribution and economic/social benefits. Additionally, there are agricultural skills projects aimed at disadvantaged young people, including those with disabilities, to integrate them into the agricultural sector. [58]

Rural Tunisia – An Agricultural Skills Project For Disadvantaged Young People

These efforts reflect a commitment to inclusivity and the economic empowerment of marginalised groups in Tunisia's agricultural industry. The purpose of this project is to promote the care/empowerment and value of handicapped persons and their integration into the social life of society. To develop the structures of vocational training, especially in the agriculture area, which had given a lot of satisfaction on the educational level and even on the professional level, to ensure these students a future by providing them with the possibility of exercising and acquiring a trade at the end of the training, and that will facilitate their integration in the society.

[58] <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about>

[59] <https://iqfa.net/rural-tunisia-agricultural-skills-project-for-disadvantaged-young-people/>

Defending The Rights of People Living With Disabilities And Women Working In The Agricultural Sector In Tunisia.

The larger theme of the promotion of human rights encompassed focused discussions with civil society representatives on topics such as the rights of women working in the agricultural sector, the rights of people living with disabilities in the workplace and rights of access to technology.

The objective of the forum was to encourage decision-makers to play a more active role in promoting respect for human rights and strengthening the human rights movement in the country. By capitalising on the experiences of the community actions in Siliana and Tunis implemented in the framework of Rawabet, the forum was intended as an opportunity to:

- Stimulate discussions that put rights holders and their reality at the forefront.
 - Develop recommendations.
 - Secure commitments from authorities regarding measures to be taken to implement the recommendations developed.
 - Obtain commitments from the authorities regarding the follow-up needed to ensure the promotion of the rights discussed during each session of the forum.
- [60]

Empowering Tunisian Youth to invest in agri-food systems

An initiative was launched in Tunisia to address the issue of high youth unemployment rates and promote inclusive territorial development. The initiative was launched in collaboration with the Tunisian Agricultural Investment Promotion Agency (APIA) and the National Agricultural Research Institute (INRAT) with the support of the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM) and the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture. The aim of the initiative is to empower youth to make responsible investments in agri-food systems in line with the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. [61]



[60] <https://equitas.org/defending-the-rights-of-people-living-with-disabilities-and-women-working-in-the-agricultural-sector-in-tunisia/>

[61] <https://www.fao.org/flexible-multipartner-mechanism/news/news-detail/ar/c/1416071/>

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TRACE – Tunisian Rural and Agricultural Chain of Employment

Microfinanza is a Limited Liability Company committed to making financial inclusion a permanent right worldwide. The TRACE programme aims to create job opportunities in Tunisia's rural agricultural and agri-food sectors. This programme is funded by a donation from the Government of the Netherlands, managed by the World Bank. Its main objective is to enhance the productivity and resilience of small Tunisian producers, especially targeting young people and women. Additionally, it aims to improve the competitiveness of professional organizations and SMEs by providing better access to knowledge, innovation, and financial services.

The program involves a 3.2 million US-dollar investment fund managed by Microfinanza (Italy), ACK International (France), and AGER (Tunisia). The fund will provide equity contributions to 220 businesses, primarily in the Governorate of Jendouba and later in the Governorate of Béja. This will help address the undercapitalisation of businesses.

The project aims to achieve the following 220 projects by the end of 2024. As stated on their page, to achieve these targets, the program follows the below-mentioned approach:

- **Dialogue and Integration:** Engage with partners and integrate into the local ecosystem, including the private sector, financial institutions, public services, and support programs.
- **Specialized Coaching:** Mobilize specialised coaches to provide tailored support to entrepreneurs, helping them with funding requests, connecting with financial institutions, and offering post-financing monitoring.
- **Project Selection:** Target commercially viable investment projects to support sustainable employment, increase productivity, and raise incomes.
- **Sustainability Consideration:** Consider both quantitative and qualitative market demand and social and environmental sustainability aspects. [62]



[62] <https://www.fao.org/3/i7738e/i7738e.pdf>

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Support for the implementation of the ATCA strategy through organizational capacity building

The "Strengthening of the Reform Capacities of Tunisian Institutions - Support for the Implementation" project is a part of the GIZ project "RECAP: Capacity Building for Tunisian Institutional Reform". RECAP's main objective is to improve Tunisian institutions' reform capacities by building their capacity and creating favourable conditions for successful reform implementation.

The current mission focuses on supporting the General Directorate for Agricultural Land Management and Conservation (DGACTA) in implementing the ATCA strategy through organisational capacity building. The strategy aims to guide interventions in the SWC sector for the integrated preservation and management of natural resources within a sustainable agricultural and rural territorial development framework. It emphasises local governance and participative approaches.



AFC is responsible for facilitating the systemic implementation of the ATCA strategy and enhancing the organisational skills of DGACTA. Services provided include developing a ten-year ATCA strategy action plan, creating a procedures manual (PADIT), formulating funding requests, establishing a results-based monitoring and evaluation system, and conducting capacity building for DGACTA and partners at regional and local levels.

Activities involve the development of an action plan and organisational support, strengthening project steering and monitoring, formulating a capacity-building strategy, creating a communication strategy, and facilitating exchange visits for experience sharing in France and Spain. [63]

[63] <http://www.rodra.co.za/index.php/tunisia>

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Opportunities For Youth in Africa

The OYA program is a youth employment initiative in Tunisia that focuses on revitalizing the agricultural sector. It offers various measures and services like access to finance, training, mentoring, communication, and knowledge sharing to enhance youth participation in agriculture. The program also aims to improve competitiveness in selected value chains while collaborating with different stakeholders, including financial entities, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector, to address the impact of COVID-19 on young individuals. The CAP Strategy of OYA seeks to modernize agriculture by bridging the gap between youth and the elderly and between rural and urban areas in the agricultural sector. It involves a value chain approach that collaborates with stakeholders at all levels of selected value chains. OYA emphasizes the importance of developing skills aligned with the labour market in agriculture and agro-industry. It advocates for effective skill matching through close cooperation between training institutes and the private sector. The program identifies eight value chains with high potential for youth attraction, investment, and job creation. These include olives, snail farming, aromatic and medicinal plants, plant production, viti-vini culture, dairy sheep, olive oil, and dates. OYA suggests modernizing production, processing, and marketing methods to unlock their full potential and promote policies and investments targeting high-potential value chains. OYA promotes innovative approaches like virtual learning and youth network platforms to ensure broader stakeholder participation. These also amplify the voices of the youth advocating for increased investment in the agriculture sector.



COUNTRY CASE: JORDAN



Youth Unemployment & Unemployment of Disabled Youth Background, Disparities and Challenges

In Jordan, youth unemployment stands as a significant socio-economic challenge, reflecting broader issues within the country's labour market. With a youth population comprising a substantial portion of Jordan's demographic landscape, the burden of unemployment disproportionately affects this segment of society. Data provided by the World Bank shows that 39.4% of Jordanian youth aged 15 to 24 were unemployed in 2022. Previously, youth unemployment peaked at an alarming 42.3% in 2020 as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. [64]

While Jordanian youth are generally subjected to the challenge of unemployment, gender differences become apparent as female youth face noticeably higher unemployment rates. While 41.5% of the male labour force aged 15-25 were unemployed in 2021, female youth displayed 55.3% of unemployment in the same year. [65]



An additional demographic factor challenging Jordan's labour market is the high presence of refugees and subsequent demand for job creation. "Jordan hosts one of the world's highest shares of refugees [...]. The ratio of non-Jordanians residing in Jordan's population was projected to reach 30% in 2020.". Simultaneously, many refugees do not receive work permits from the government leading to an economic dependency on remittances rather than e.g. foreign direct investments that could promote the economy and enhance employment opportunities. [66]

[64] <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=JO>

[65] <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.FE.NE.ZS?locations=JO>

[66] <https://www.ulussekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Jordan-labour-market-2023-final.pdf>

Youth Unemployment & Unemployment of Disabled Youth

Background, Disparities and Challenges

Jordan's youth unemployment rate, persistently above the global average, underscores the urgency of addressing systemic barriers to entry into the workforce. Hindered by factors such as limited job opportunities, skills mismatches, and structural inequalities, young Jordanians encounter formidable obstacles in securing meaningful employment. [67] While Jordanian youth generally face challenges regarding employment, persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged due to structural and social barriers such as stigma.

As part of the efforts to establish a common 'EUROMED Regional Agenda on the Socioeconomic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities', the first situational assessment report was published in October 2023. The report reveals that, according to UN estimates, an average of 81% of persons with disabilities are unemployed in Jordan. Referring to 2015-census-data from Jordan, it is further stated that persons with disabilities only make up for "a 1% rate in the public sector and 0,5% in the private sector. Positions are primarily in poorly paid jobs. Women appear the most marginalised, with an employment rate of 4.7%, while 5.5% are not employed and 89.3% are inactive, with little variation in urban areas. Men with disability have an employment rate of 27.8%, while 14.3% are unemployed and 57.9% are inactive. [68]

This reveals that, among persons with disabilities, unemployment also disproportionately affects women. It becomes apparent that there are intersecting inequalities and disadvantages, confronting women with disabilities with an even higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. Further desk research has shown that reliable and especially recent data on the employment of persons with disabilities is scarce, particularly regarding the sub-group of youth aged 15 to 24. This also applies to sector-specific data related to agriculture in this context.

[67] <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.FE.NE.ZS?locations=JO>

[68] https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ufm-disabilities2024-report_05.pdf

Ongoing Efforts to Generate a Better Understanding of the Jordanian Labour Market to Foster Youth Employability and Employment

The Jordan National Youth Strategy 2019-2025^[69] was drafted with the engagement of relevant bodies such as ministries, official and local institutions as well as local, regional and international organizations. It is based on the results of a youth survey in Jordan, assessing their needs and aspirations, and the results of opinion polls and focus groups carried out by the Ministry of Youth in 2017. The strategy addresses new pilot projects such as activities promoting positive attitudes towards vocational training, keeping youth aware of their community situation, the use of creative arts to confront violence and extremism, authenticating religious discourse, establishing a bank for volunteers, youth health clubs, an electronic gateway for engagement, home working through information technology, and more. [69]

A Jordanian Labour Market Profile (LMP) was created by the Danish Trade Union Development Agency, covering 2023/24. This analysis format comprehensively overviews the labour market's structure, development, and challenges. In line with the framework of the international Decent Work Agenda (DWA) and SDGs, LMPs analyze several central indicators addressing labour market development aspects, especially the unionism evolution, social dialogue and bi-/tri-partite mechanisms, policy development, and legal reforms status vis-à-vis ILO conventions and labour standards, among others. [66]

The "Design and Determination: Building Resilience of Vulnerable Jordanians and Refugees through Livelihoods Support and Protection"- project is being implemented by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD). An associated report analyzes the characteristics and causes of unemployment among Jordanian youth (in the 15-24 age range), as well as the various employment measures Jordan's successive governments have adopted so far to tackle this national issue. In doing so, the analysis aims to provide a better understanding of the Jordanian labour market dynamics. This project is funded by the European Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP II) for Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, which is supported by the European Union, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland and Switzerland. [70]

[69] https://haqqi.s3.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/2020-03/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019.pdf

[70] <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04362170/document>

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Ongoing Efforts to Generate a Better Understanding of the Jordanian Labour Market to Foster Youth Employability and Employment

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) is a six-year program launched by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create inclusive jobs for 200,000 young people in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, with a particular focus on women. The Fund is scoping for private-sector-driven proposals that offer solutions to create and improve jobs and enable better placements for young women and men. An associated report presents an overview of the key findings from the scoping study that was conducted for Jordan between October 2020 and January 2021. The goal of this study was to identify the nature of employment challenges at the country level by mapping six key domains of the labour market. [71]

National Commitments Regarding Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Initially adopted in 1993, the Jordanian “Protection of the Disabled Law” has undergone a series of revisions. It was revised and transformed in 2007, mainly introducing new sanction mechanisms in the case of non-compliance. It further legislated the creation of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) which exists to this day. A second phase of revision resulted in the adoption of the current “Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” in 2017 which is valid until today. This law is perceived as progressive, complying with international human rights instruments ratified by Jordan, such as the UN CRPD. [72]. The UN CRPD was ratified by Jordan in 2008.

Regarding employment, the law prohibits the exclusion of persons with disabilities from work, training, and career advancement opportunities. It further reaffirms the quota system regarding the employment of people with disabilities which was initially introduced in 2007. Accordingly, public and private organizations/corporations “employing 25 to 50 individuals must hire at least one person with a disability. In the event the corporation employs more than 50 individuals, up to 4 percent (or as decided by the Ministry of Labour) of such corporation’s workforce must consist of persons with disabilities” [72].

[71] Jordan Scoping Report: Challenge Fund for Youth Employment. February 2021. <https://fundforyouthemployment.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Scoping-Report-Jordan-2021-Challenge-Fund-for-Youth-Employment.pdf>

[72] <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15517/Disability%20Inclusive%20Development%20Situational%20Analysis%20for%20Jordan%20V2%20June%202020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

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National Commitments Regarding Employment of Persons with Disabilities

For compliance, the law requires private entities to prepare periodic reports to the Ministry of Labour. Nonetheless, it is criticised that “successive governments have failed to protect disability rights and enforce the quotas due to legal loopholes, conflicting laws, paltry fines for violators, deep-seated social stigma and a lack of accessible workplaces and transport networks” [73].



[73] <https://arij.net/disabilities-in-Jordan-EN/>

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Disabled Youth

Jordan increasingly faces a competitive entrepreneur environment regionally and globally. The Government has recognized the importance of entrepreneurship, in part by appointing its first Minister for Entrepreneurship [74]

Agriculture is a significant sector in Jordan, employing a considerable portion of the population and contributing to the country's economy. However, disabled youth often face challenges in accessing opportunities within the agricultural sector due to physical barriers and social stigmas.

Efforts to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among disabled youth in Jordan are emerging, albeit slowly. There is a great need to provide more training in adaptive agricultural techniques, facilitate access to assistive technologies, and offer financial support for entrepreneurial ventures.

A Jordanian national awareness-raising campaign titled “Waei” (Arabic for aware) was initiated in 2022, aiming to educate workers and employers to prevent labour rights violations and discrimination. The campaign initially focused on gender-related discrimination and female education concerning labour rights and law. However, a second phase launched in 2023 aims to additionally promote labour rights and inclusivity in Jordan, emphasizing the rights of workers with disabilities. The ILO held a three-day workshop for employment service officers, focusing on the generation of employment which is more responsive to persons with disabilities [75].



[74] Jordan's National Entrepreneurship Policy: Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Provided by Modee.

[75] https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_894601/lang--en/index.htm

Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Disabled Youth

Organizations such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the ILO and rural development programs are working to create more inclusive environments within the agricultural sector. However, there is a lack of current practical initiatives and measures and there remains a need for greater awareness, resources, and policy support to fully harness the potential of agricultural entrepreneurship for disabled youth in Jordan.

In the agricultural sector, persons with disabilities and women, generally, are considered underrepresented and portrayed as a vulnerable group regarding employment. Within the framework of the project "Towards Social and Economic Inclusion of Young Marginalised Women and People with Disabilities", funded by IM, the Swedish Partner for Development in the Middle East, the WANA Institute has researched work conditions and challenges women are subjected to in the agricultural sector in Jordan.

The effects of identified working conditions are further analyzed regarding employment to suggest solutions to current employment challenges. This aims to contribute to the improvement of working conditions and to raising female participation in economic and social life.

Corresponding suggestions are as follows:

- 1. a policy manifested in reviewing and developing legislation related to working in the agricultural sector to promote legal protection against abuse;
- 2. a policy aimed at exerting more efforts to improve the work environment for women working in the agricultural sector;
- 3. a policy focused on organizing employment in the agricultural sector;
- 4. and a policy manifested in the implementation of a national or local campaign to raise awareness and increase knowledge on the rights of women working in the agricultural sector [76].

[76] <http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Women%20in%20Agriculture%20-%20WANA%20template%5B1%5D.pdf>

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Sustainable Agriculture - Background

Sustainable agriculture practices are gaining traction in Jordan as the country grapples with water scarcity, land degradation, and climate change. Jordan has implemented various initiatives to promote sustainable agriculture, including water conservation measures, organic farming practices, and agroforestry projects.

Efforts to promote sustainable agriculture in Jordan also focus on enhancing the resilience of smallholder farmers, improving food security, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. International organizations, NGOs, and government agencies collaborate to support research, training, and policy development in this field.



National Commitments and Efforts to Promote Sustainability in Agriculture

The Green Growth National Action Plan 2021-2025' provides insights into sustainable agriculture in Jordan and involves various national institutions such as the Department of Statistics and the National Agriculture Research Center, all of which are involved in the agriculture sector. [77]

[77] <https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/ggi-jordan-agriculture.pdf>

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Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Disabled Youth

The **National Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production** in Jordan is working towards sustainable shifts in three identified priority areas, one of them being agriculture and food production. It aims to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by identifying measures to minimize resource- and food waste in the life cycle of food and by promoting sustainable diets, calling for increased consumption of fresh and organic vegetables, fruits, and cereals to substitute general health and reduce overall meat consumption. [78]

Further, King Abdullah of Jordan has been overseeing the implementation of the 'National Plan for Sustainable Agriculture (2022-2025)'. The plan aims to enhance food security in the country and promote sustainable agricultural practices. The King has secured financing for investment projects worth JD 58.9 million and aims to create 13,090 permanent job opportunities for Jordanians, along with training opportunities in the agricultural sector. [79]

Jordan's 'Economic Modernisation Vision' aims to accelerate growth by unleashing economic potential. Achieving increased sustainability and subsequently improved quality of life is a driving factor for the vision. An associated implementation roadmap has been developed and includes a comprehensive overview of various actionable initiatives which have been identified throughout sectoral economic workshops, particularly focussing on the period 2022-2025. At the heart of the roadmap are eight drivers that will lead the implementation, among others, stressing the increased use of sustainable resources (energy, water) and initiatives to promote green economic practices in Jordan. An emphasis is put on unleashing women's and youth's potential across all domains. [80]

[78] <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/jor178828E.pdf>

[79] <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-says-national-sustainable-agriculture-plan-should-bolster-food-security>

[80] <https://www.jordanvision.jo/en/site/roadmap>

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Example of Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Agriculture

Smart Green AgriTech Solutions' is a Canadian-Jordanian company following the main objective of increasing sustainability in agriculture. Some of the company's efforts include: innovating the Jordanian agricultural sector by using the latest technologies in the field of greenhouse and sustainable agriculture, achieving economic returns by raising the quantity and quality of agricultural production and entering privileged markets, saving water consumption, employing members of the local community to promote social cohesion, especially women and youth, and training and qualifying the local community to apply modern agricultural technology practices to their own projects [80].



[80] <https://www.jordanvision.jo/en/site/roadmap>

COUNTRY CASE: MOROCCO



ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE - MOROCCO

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Youth employment

Youth employment in Morocco is a complex issue that involves various public and private sector stakeholders and has significant social and economic consequences. Current weak employment policies have resulted in a loss of trust in political institutions, lack of social stability for young people, reliance on informal sector work, and a desire to leave the country in pursuit of professional opportunities. [81] Morocco's unemployment rate was higher among young people at 35.3%. Among graduates it stood at 19.8% and among women 18.1%, HCP said in a quarterly report. [82]

To address these challenges, the government must initiate institutional reforms that improve the business climate, address demographic growth, and invest in human capital. Key areas for reform include integrating entrepreneurship into school curricula to foster a creative mindset, revising work contracts in the private sector to provide stability and incentivize young people, expediting tax reform and streamlining administrative procedures to enhance the business environment, and establishing a national entity to coordinate youth employment programs and ensure the creation of wealth within a robust social protection system. [83]

From 2016-2023, Instiglio partnered with the Moroccan government and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to address youth unemployment. This collaborative effort has made significant strides in combating youth unemployment and fostering a culture of innovation and efficiency in employment initiatives. [81]

[81] Youth Unemployment Program in Morocco Gets it Right. (2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.amideast.org/news-resources/success-stories/youth-unemployment-program-in-morocco-gets-it-right>

[82] Ismail Ait Bassou (2023). Why Morocco's Youth Employment Policies Continue to Fail. Retrieved from: <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/why-moroccos-youth-employment-policies-continue-to-fail/>

[83] Tackling systemic youth unemployment in Morocco. Instiglio: Tying Funding to Impact. Retrieved from: <https://www.instiglio.org/impact/workforce-development-in-morocco/>

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Youth employment

The youth unemployment rate in Morocco saw no significant changes in 2022 in comparison to the previous year 2021 and remained at around 24.94 percent. The youth unemployment rate refers to the share of the economically active population aged 15 to 24 currently without work but in search of employment. (11) Youth Unemployment Rate in Morocco increased to 38.20 percent in the third quarter of 2023 from 33.60 percent in the second quarter of 2023.

Emploi FBR, a partnership initiative between Amideast, MCC, MCA Morocco, and Morocco's Ministry of Employment, seeks to address high unemployment rates in the country, particularly among the youth. [83]

Disability

Disability and poverty in Morocco are closely linked. Poverty increases the risk of disability, while disability can lead to poverty. People with disabilities face challenges in finding employment and accessing education, which exacerbates their poverty. Additionally, the high costs of healthcare and specialized needs further contribute to their economic struggles. Limited access to healthcare among the impoverished population also increases the likelihood of disability. However, organizations like Humanity & Inclusion are working to address these issues and prevent the growth of poverty in Morocco. Census data from 2014 reveals that 4.1% of Morocco's population, over 1.3 million individuals, had disabilities. This data also highlights the urgent need for improved accessibility to education for those with special needs. A study conducted in 2014 notes an 85% increase in the prevalence of disability compared to 2004, attributed to a broader screening scope. [84]

[83] Tackling systemic youth unemployment in Morocco. Instiglio: Tying Funding to Impact. Retrieved from: <https://www.instiglio.org/impact/workforce-development-in-morocco/>

[84] Petrovska, O. (2022, November 24). Disability And Poverty In Morocco. Retrieved from: <https://borgenproject.org/disability-and-poverty-in-morocco/>

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Disability

USAID and GiveDirectly are joining forces to support Moroccan agricultural cooperatives facing economic shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, drought, and inflation, as well as the global food crisis triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Together, they are providing an additional \$4 million in funding. With this new funding, more than 330 agriculture and agribusiness cooperatives in vulnerable areas will receive cash grants, thereby strengthening household and community resilience and providing opportunities for women, youth, and people with disabilities. [85]



[85] USAID (2022). USAID, GiveDirectly Provide \$4 Million to Support Moroccan Agricultural Cooperatives. Retrieved from: <https://www.usaid.gov/morocco/press-releases/oct-14-2022-usaid-givedirectly-provide-4-million-support-moroccan-agricultural-cooperatives>

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Sustainable Agriculture

The International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized a forum on sustainable value chains to examine opportunities for enhancing the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of Morocco's agrifood sector by working with the private sector. The EBRD, in partnership with FAO, is committed to supporting Morocco's agrifood value chains through finance and policy discussions. Furthermore, the CIHEAM is launching the "Mediterranean Pact for sustainable agriculture and food," which aims to bring together public and private actors to promote inclusive value chains, food security, sustainable resource management, and employment opportunities for youth and women in the region. [86]

Morocco's agricultural sector employs 37 percent of the population and plays a significant role in the country's economic growth. By supporting agricultural companies and facilitating market entry, IFC aims to foster inclusive and sustainable economic development in Morocco. [87]



[86] IFC Supports Sustainable Agriculture in Morocco's Farming Sector through its Partnership with Zalar Agri. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://pressroom.ifc.org/all/pages/PressDetail.aspx?ID=16877>

[87] Developing sustainable value chains in Morocco by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/support-to-investment/news/detail/en/c/883367/>

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Sustainable Agriculture

Farmers are adopting resilient production techniques, seeking drought-resistant seeds, and implementing sustainable farming practices like slow-release nitrogen applications and drip irrigation. To support the agricultural sector, the World Bank is assisting Morocco through programs such as the Resilient and Sustainable Water in Agriculture Project and the "Green Generation" Programs-For-Results initiative. These programs aim to modernize irrigation, support water governance, encourage youth employment in agri-food, and develop climate-smart tools. It is crucial for the agricultural sector to adapt to climate change and enhance risk management to ensure the sustainability of Morocco's food security. [88]

The Agency for Agricultural Development of Morocco (ADA) provides action plans and value-added solutions to address agricultural needs at the local and national levels. Its mandate, under the national green plan in place since 2008, is to contribute to social and economic development through more resilient and productive agriculture. ADA has developed a comprehensive portfolio of climate change related projects and programmes worth approximately US\$ 33 million, which has been financed by bilateral and multilateral organizations. [89]



[88] Moroccan Farmers Search For Solutions In The Face Of Climate Change Feature Story. (2023) Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/12/20/moroccan-farmers-search-for-solutions-in-the-face-of-climate-change>

[89] <https://www.greenclimate.fund/ae/ada-morocco>

ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE - MOROCCO

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Sustainable Agriculture

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors has approved a US\$250 million program in partnership with the French Development Agency to support Morocco's agriculture sector's Green Generation Strategy. The program aims to promote agricultural productivity, climate resilience, and economic inclusion of youth in rural areas. It seeks to make farming more rewarding and sustainable by integrating climate-smart practices. The strategy represents a shift in Morocco's agricultural development approach, focusing on building human capital, fostering livelihoods, and nurturing sustainable and climate-smart rural value chains. [90]

The International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized a forum on sustainable value chains. The event aimed to examine opportunities for enhancing the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of Morocco's agrifood sector by working with the private sector. The forum took place in Meknes and capitalized on the Salon International de l'Agriculture au Maroc, one of Africa's largest international fairs. The government's "Green Morocco Plan" served as a foundation, with emphasis on the partnership between farmers and commercial organizations for modern techniques, financing, and market access. The EBRD, in partnership with FAO, is committed to supporting Morocco's agrifood value chains through finance and policy discussions. Furthermore, the CIHEAM is launching the "Mediterranean Pact for sustainable agriculture and food," which aims to bring together public and private actors to promote inclusive value chains, food security, sustainable resource management, and employment opportunities for youth and women in the region. [91]

[90] World Bank Supports Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture in Morocco. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/15/world-bank-supports-moroccos-green-generation-strategy>

[91] Developing sustainable value chains in Morocco by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/support-to-investment/news/detail/en/c/883367/>

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Sustainable Agriculture

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, has provided \$24 million in financing to Zalar Agri, a leading fruit producer in Morocco, to support the expansion of its operations and create jobs in rural areas. The financing, which includes a \$12 million C loan and a mobilization of a \$12 million B loan, will help Zalar Agri grow its fruit and nut growing activities, generating permanent and seasonal employment opportunities. The support from IFC is crucial in a country where rural poverty rates are double those of urban areas. Zalar Agri plans to use the financing to diversify its farming operations, enhance downstream capabilities, and expand processing activities for exports. This investment is part of IFC's larger effort to promote sustainable agriculture and help local producers tap into valuable foreign markets. Morocco's agricultural sector employs 37 percent of the population and plays a significant role in the country's economic growth. By supporting agricultural companies and facilitating market entry, IFC aims to foster inclusive and sustainable economic development in Morocco. [92]



[92] IFC Supports Sustainable Agriculture in Morocco's Farming Sector through its Partnership with Zalar Agri. Retrieved from: <https://pressroom.ifc.org/all/pages/PressDetail.aspx?ID=16877>



COUNTRY CASE: EGYPT

Understanding the Landscape of Egypt

With its vibrant culture and rich history, Egypt is home to a significant youth population, with around 20 million individuals aged 18-29, constituting approximately 21% of the total population. Despite advancements in education and a narrowing gender gap, many young Egyptians, particularly female university graduates, encounter challenges in securing employment.

Only in 2022 will the young people of Egypt, aged 15 to 24, struggle with an unemployment rate of 17.1%. This statistic is further complicated by a significant gender gap, with male unemployment at 12.9% and female unemployment at a staggering 42%. While there has been a slight decrease from the previous years, the issue of youth unemployment remains a pressing concern.

Furthermore, there has been a slight yet notable rise in the female labour force participation rate in 2023. This rate signifies the percentage of women aged 15 and above involved in economic endeavours within a specified time frame. The increase of 0.5 percentage points (equivalent to +3.42%) brings the total rate to 15.12%, indicating that steps are being taken towards promoting and empowering women's involvement in the labour force. This is a significant development in the effort to improve these numbers gradually. [93]

The complex problem of youth unemployment in Egypt is deeply intertwined with more significant concerns within the job market. This includes a lack of new job opportunities, low productivity levels, a prevalence of informal work, and inadequate pay. A nuanced comprehension of the employment landscape is vital for both young individuals and adults, as it allows us to recognise the specific obstacles each group encounters and sheds light on overarching economic issues. Additionally, it is crucial to closely examine job trends during times of crisis, such as the Arab Spring and the ongoing events in Egypt since 2011. This provides valuable insight into the effects of tumultuous times on employment and helps us identify persistent challenges in the job market. Prove female participation in the workforce.

[93] FAO Egypt. (n.d.). From <https://www.fao.org/egypt/en/>

ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE - EGYPT

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Initiatives for Youth Empowerment:

Recognising the urgency of addressing youth unemployment, Egypt has launched several programs to empower young people and improve their job prospects. Of these initiatives, two stand out as particularly noteworthy:

UNICEF Initiatives for Youth Empowerment in Egypt

1. Shabab Balad: Generation Unlimited in Egypt

Shabab Balad (Generation Unlimited in Egypt): Shabab Balad, a part of the Global UN initiative Generation Unlimited, operates as the world's first Public-Private-Youth Partnership in Egypt. Launched during the World Youth Forum in 2022, it aims to equip young Egyptians aged 10-24 with essential skills for the labour market, providing education, entrepreneurship opportunities, and training. Anchored by UNICEF, Shabab Balad coordinates efforts to address youth employment, involving multiple stakeholders and fostering positive social impact. [94]

2. Meshwary: Facilitating the Transition from Learning to Earning

Meshwary is a flagship program under the Government's Egypt Vision 2030, focusing on prioritizing the youth agenda since 2008. It was led by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) in partnership with UNICEF, civil society, development partners, and the private sector. It operates within MoYS youth centres and offers employability, entrepreneurial and soft skills development. Among the rest, it provides practical career guidance. The program also Established Innovation Labs to foster idea development. Meshwary, a non-formal skilling and learning programme, is training this key age group in life skills and transferable skills aligned with the 21st century skills, making them become more employable, resourceful and resilient.

The program's impact counts over 400,000 adolescents and youth aged 14-24 who have graduated from Meshwary since 2017. Approximately 1,000 youth ambassadors are actively involved in delivering training modules. [95]

[94] <https://www.generationunlimited.org/press-releases/egyptian-version-un-global-initiative-generation-unlimited>

[95] https://www.unicef.org/egypt/media/7971/file/Meshwary_Bid_-_Sports_for_Development_%28ToR%29.pdf

UNICEF Initiatives for Youth Empowerment in Egypt

3. Dawwie: National Girls Empowerment Initiative

Egypt is home to 14 million girls aged between 10 and 24. In response to gender inequality, this issue has been prioritised in Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy (Egypt 2030) and the National Women's Empowerment Strategy 2030. In 2019, the Government of Egypt launched Dawwie, the first National Girls' Empowerment Initiative, with the support of UNICEF. The primary goals of this program are as follows: - To advocate for girls' empowerment through improved access to quality services and skills development. - To promote opportunities for participation and amplify girls' voices. Dawwie uses intentional gender transformative programming to achieve its objectives. The program focuses on essential transferable and digital skills, including communication, negotiation, and critical thinking. [96]



[96] <https://dawwie.net/en>

ADDRESSING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE – EGYPT

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Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE): Providing a Reason to Stay

The "Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE)– Providing a Reason to Stay" project, conducted from December 1, 2018, to December 31, 2020, aligns with Egypt's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 8, emphasising women's participation in the job market.

With a commitment to addressing unemployment, the Egyptian government faces challenges due to economic reforms impacting the lives of youth. National statistics revealed that of the 26.2 million youths (aged 15-29), nearly one in four is unemployed (24.8%). Recognising the urgency, the project aims to counter irregular migration by providing employment opportunities.



The project targeted economic insecurity, focusing on the root causes of migration, creating decent job opportunities for vulnerable groups, and involving the government and the private sector in employment generation. It addresses social and environmental threats by promoting social entrepreneurship and raising awareness in local communities. [97]

[97] https://www.ilo.org/africa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_699935/lang--en/index.htm

PROGRAMS FOR AGRICULTURE

Egypt's Vision 2030 indicated that among the most critical challenges facing the agricultural sector are the limited agrarian industrialisation, the high prices of raw materials and production requirements, the stagnation of marketing systems, the absence of contract farming, the stagnation of credit policies and their confinement to traditional patterns, and the application of crop structures with high water consumption, such as rice.

From this standpoint, it launched several major national programs and projects. To be the starting point towards the recovery of the agricultural sector and achieving food security, the most prominent of these projects are:

- **Supporting agricultural industrialisation:** intending to increase the added value of farm products by improving quality elements, preparing manufactured products for export, and establishing production villages specialised in industries based on agricultural products.
- **Expanding the use of biotechnology in agricultural development:** to develop new varieties that tolerate drought, soil salinity, and temperature.
- **Increasing field irrigation efficiency** in the valley and delta lands through plastic pipelines instead of waterways or lining them.

The National Program for the Development of Livestock, Poultry and Fish Resources: It aims to increase supply on the one hand and improve quality and reduce costs on the other hand.



PROGRAMS FOR AGRICULTURE

- **Developing water resources:** reusing agricultural and sanitary wastewater treated according to specifications, expanding groundwater use and harvesting rainwater.

The project to establish the International Logistics Center for Grain Trade and Trading in Damietta: It aims to transform Egypt into a logistical centre for trading, storing and manufacturing all value-added activities related to grains and oil-producing seeds coming from producing countries in North and East Europe, Central Asia, and North and South America, as well as refining oils and sugar and through 4-6 sea berths, storing them in modern silos and fibreglass domes, and establishing value-added industries of about 7.5 million tons annually in four modern industrial zones.

Developed barn and silo projects: The project aims to increase the available storage capacity, reduce the rate of loss of stored wheat and grains, and connect them to electronic operating systems. To ensure the safety and monitoring of the pills they contain.

Building a monitoring and early warning network for markets to prevent practices harmful to consumer health and safety and avoiding unjustified changes in the prices of goods and products by benefiting from the daily monitoring carried out by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics through fifteen thousand monitoring points nationwide



National Council for persons with disabilities

The National Council for Persons with Disabilities in Egypt was established in 2019 to replace the previous National Council for Disability Affairs. The Council works independently and aims to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities by raising awareness and advocating for their constitutional rights. It is headed by a Governing Council chaired by the Prime Minister and comprises members from various government ministries, representatives from civil society organisations, and experts in the field. The Council is responsible for several tasks, including preparing an annual report on disability rights, recommending state policies for rehabilitation and empowerment, and coordinating with ministries and international organisations to advance disability-related issues. Furthermore, the Council conducts awareness programs, documents disability-related information, handles complaints, and issues internal decisions to manage its affairs. [98]

Integration Challenges

At present, there is a lack of official coordination between initiatives related to agriculture and those empowering disabled individuals in Egypt. There needs to be a specific framework designed to integrate these two concepts seamlessly. However, both agriculture and disability-related websites provide reliable, official data individually. Even though initiatives in the agriculture sector may involve disabled individuals, their inclusion is often under the broader umbrella of being "inclusive" and lacks a specific and focused approach. Similarly, efforts to empower disabled individuals may not strongly emphasise their involvement in agriculture-related activities. This highlights the need for a more explicit and targeted approach that addresses the intersection of these two important areas.



[98] The National Council for Persons with Disabilities. (2019). From <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/142861/The-National-Council-for-Persons-with--Disabilities?lang=en-us>

PART I



**Youth Unemployment:
Unemployment of Disabled Youth**

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT:

UNEMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED YOUTH

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- Youth with disabilities are amongst the most marginalized and poorest of all the world's youth.
- UNESCO estimates that 98% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school and 99% of girls with disabilities are illiterate.
- Youth with disabilities face dual disadvantages as individuals with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty even in developed countries.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)

The CRPD entered into force in 2008 (UN (3 May 2008) in accordance with article 45. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability). At its core, the Convention ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy the same human rights as everyone else, and are able to lead their lives as citizens who are given the same opportunities to grow and contribute to society as those without disabilities. It marks a paradigm shift from seeing persons with disabilities as objects of charity and pity to holders of rights. The Convention notes that "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments." The extent to which these impairments disable someone is dependent upon the level of attitudinal and environmental barriers encountered in society. Examples of these can be seen everywhere from stairs into buildings, reading materials in inaccessible formats, and prevailing negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The more barriers, the less likely persons with disabilities are able to participate in society. Throughout the world, youth are dropping out of school and being excluded from the economy. However, young women and men with disabilities commonly face more discrimination and severe social, economic, and civic disparities as compared with those without disabilities, even in developed countries. For many young people with disabilities, exclusion, isolation, and abuse, as well as lack of educational and economic opportunities are daily experiences.

[99] International year of youth (2016) Fact Sheet: Youth employment, pg 1
The National Council for Persons with Disabilities. (2019). From <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/142861/The-National-Council-for-Persons-with--Disabilities?lang=en-us>

[100] UN (3 May 2008) in accordance with article 45(1). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. Publisher International year of youth (2016) Fact Sheet: Youth employment, pg 1
The National Council for Persons with Disabilities. (2019). From <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/142861/The-National-Council-for-Persons-with--Disabilities?lang=en-us>

Youth with disabilities are amongst the most marginalized and poorest of all the world's youth, whose basic rights are not well met and for whom full societal acceptance is often out of reach. Disparities in education, employment, and relationships are more pronounced in youth with disabilities. Like adults with disabilities, youth with disabilities do not enjoy the same human rights or equal access to goods and services as peers without disabilities. The international community recognized this and after three years of negotiation, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2006 to ensure that persons with disabilities, including the youngest ones, enjoy the same human rights as everyone else. Effective implementation of the Convention requires a focused effort by all sectors to guarantee that young people with disabilities participate in mainstreamed as well as in disability specific programs on an equal basis with others (UN (3 May 2008) in accordance with article 45(1). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability).

Employment of people with disabilities

In the EU 27, about 50.7% of persons with disabilities aged 20-64 were employed in 2020, compared with 75.1% of persons without disabilities. The employment rate for all persons aged 20-64 was 70.8 %. The target for 2030 is 78%. At the EU 27 level, about 22.2 million persons with disabilities aged 20-64 are employed out of a total of 43.7 million persons with disabilities in the same age group. The data are indicative. In fact, as noted, available data, at the moment of elaborating this report, did not include Germany and Italy. Consequently, we had to proceed at some estimations for these countries. Concerning gender, about 48.1% of women with disabilities aged 20-64 were employed, compared with 53.7% of men with disabilities in the same age group. Concerning the degree of disability, the employment rates of persons aged 20-64 in the EU were 29.6% for persons with severe disabilities, 58.3% for persons with moderate disabilities and 75.7% for persons without disabilities. Extensive policy interventions have significantly reduced the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is some indication that the percentage of persons with disabilities aged 50-64 who received financial help from employers due to the coronavirus crisis was slightly higher compared with persons without disabilities (SHARE survey data).

[101] Stefanos Grammenos (2020). European comparative data on persons with disabilities, Publisher: under Contract VC/2020/0273 with the European Commission

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: UNEMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED YOUTH

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Unemployment Rate of people with Disabilities

In the EU, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities aged 20-64 was 17.7% in 2020, compared with 8.6% of persons without disabilities in the same age group. The total unemployment rate was 9.9%. These estimations are based on self-declarations. For the monitoring of EU policies, the ILO definition is used but EU-SILC does not provide sufficient information in order to provide a similar indicator. About 17.9% of women with disabilities aged 20-64 were unemployed, compared with 17.4% of men with disabilities. Unemployment increases with the degree of disability. The increase in the total unemployment rate is relatively small, notably due to active policies to preserve jobs (e.g. SURE) and a reduction of hours worked during the pandemic. Youth unemployment rate In the EU 27, about 31.3% of persons with disabilities aged 16-24 were unemployed in 2020, in comparison with 21.2% of persons without disabilities. The overall level of youth unemployment in 2020 was 21.5% (20.0% in 2019). These indicators are based on self-declarations. [101]

For the monitoring of EU policies, the ILO definition is used but EU-SILC does not provide sufficient information in order to provide a similar indicator. European comparative data on persons with disabilities 9 Long-term unemployment rate as noted above, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities aged 20-64 was 17.7% of the labour force in the EU 27 in 2020. This rate includes 3.7% short-term unemployed, 10.9% long-term unemployed and 3.0% excluded from the ILO definition of unemployment. The percentages all refer to the total labour force. The respective rates for persons without disabilities are 2.8% (unemployed for less than 12 months), 4.6% (long-term) and 1.3% (excluded from the ILO definition). The long-term unemployment rate increases with the degree of disability. It was 4.6% in 2020 for persons without disabilities, 9.2% for persons with moderate disabilities and 19.3% for persons with severe disabilities. [101]

[101] Stefanos Grammenos (2020). European comparative data on persons with disabilities, Publisher: under Contract VC/2020/0273 with the European Commission

Activity Rate

In the EU, about 61.6% of persons with disabilities participated in the labour market in 2020 (whether employed or unemployed), compared with 82.2% of persons without disabilities. The total rate is 78.6%. This implies that about 26.9 million persons with disabilities (aged 20-64) are economically active out of 43.7 million persons with disabilities in the same age group. The upward trend in activity rates was reversed in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary data indicate that the pandemic has pushed older workers to take early retirement, notably older workers with disabilities. [101]

Transition Into Working Life and Financial Independence

Many young individuals with disabilities face a difficult period of upheaval and uncertainty as they transition from childhood into adulthood, primarily in the area of achieving successful employment and independent living. For youth with disabilities excluded from community participation and interaction in their formal years, transition into adult independence in the real world can be particularly challenging as they face discrimination and attitudinal barriers. In developed countries with established services to support youth under the age of 18 through school, the sudden lack of individualized supports and services and the need to fight for appropriate accommodations can become a daunting barrier (National Council on Disability, 2000). The World Youth Report 2021, focusing on transition into adulthood, states that the lack of an enabling environment that supports youth development in all aspects including education and health care, is a critical constraint to successful transition into adulthood (UN-DESA, 2021). Inequities in, and inaccessibility of these systems for youth with disabilities makes their transition even more difficult and barrier-prone than their peers without disabilities. Youth generally face greater employment uncertainties and hiring disparities during economic downturns and shrinking labour markets (UN-DESA). In such scenarios, youth with disabilities face even greater discrimination in hiring practices. [102]

[101] Stefanos Grammenos (2020). European comparative data on persons with disabilities, Publisher: under Contract VC/2020/0273 with the European Commission

[102] UN (2021) Global Youth Survey for the World Youth Report 2021: Improving Youth Wellbeing and Mental Health)

Employment

Not receiving the skills and qualifications to function in the wider society limits the employment opportunities for youth with disabilities. Unemployment rates for people with disabilities are higher than for people without disabilities in every society. For example, in some countries of the Africa region the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is over 80%. While inequities in educational and skill development resources can impact their competitiveness in the labour market, negative attitudes about disability and discrimination on the basis of disability are the most prevalent and primary obstacles to the successful employment of people with disabilities. Negative perceptions of youth with disabilities and misconceptions held by employers, for example, that they are less productive than their peers, require too much assistance, affect the employer's image, and/or concerns over initial hiring costs (e.g. building ramps, accessible IT), pose a formidable barrier to youth with disabilities looking for employment. In fact, studies have shown that most accommodations do not impose significant financial costs to the employer and even people without disabilities use and benefit from the use of supportive workplace policies and practices. Youth with disabilities are given little room for error, and are quickly labelled unemployable if they are unsuccessful at their first job.

For young women with disabilities, the situation is even worse as they have to counter disability and gender based societal prejudices. Even with a good education, young women with disabilities take a longer time to find a job. These negative perceptions do not correspond with studies that show that people with disabilities are just as productive, dependable, and less absent from work than workers without disabilities. The World Programme of Action for Youth urges countries to take measures to develop the possibilities for youth with disabilities. Article 27 of the Convention addresses employment concerns by stipulating that people with disabilities have the right to work as everyone else in an open, inclusive, and accessible labour market, without discrimination, and with access to reasonable accommodations in the workplace. [103]

[103] (UN (2021). The World Programme of Action for Youth – a guide for action on youth development. Journal of Information Social UN, 15(3)).

Lack of Labour Market Experience and High Competition for Vacancies

At a general level, young people are disadvantaged in the labour market by their relative lack of work experience and work-related skills compared to older adults. More specifically, young people with low skill levels, few or no qualifications, and little tangible work experience, face labour market competition from older, more experienced and often better qualified people. Accordingly, some young people in the focus groups were despondent about their chances of finding work due to their lack of experience and qualifications. Their accounts suggested that this was perceived as particularly acute for disadvantaged groups, such as those living in supported accommodation. Many felt frustrated and that they were in a catch-22 situation: they were unable to find work due to a lack of experience, but could not acquire the experience they needed without first getting a job. Some had undertaken work experience placements but found that this was not sufficient in the eyes of employers. Others identified that they were unable to provide references given that the few jobs they had held were cash in hand. Even those who had quite a bit of work experience felt that what prevented them gaining employment was a lack of appropriate opportunities in the local labour market, and high competition for the few positions that are available. Young people taking part in the research said that they still applied for jobs in order to receive their welfare benefit but that their motivation was diminished by their lack of results.

Some practitioners agreed, noting that, 'it's an employer's market' and businesses will always prefer the more experienced candidate. Further, a few young people believed they were stereotyped by employers as well as wider society. They commented that they had been advised by their key workers to leave their address off their CV as employers would be biased against those living in supported accommodation. [104]

[104] Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2020)). Publisher: (UN (2021). The World Programme of Action for Youth – a guide for action on youth development. Journal of Information Social UN, 15(3)

Low Confidence, Self-esteem, and Personal Motivation

Low confidence and self-esteem are barriers to progress for many. Practitioners noted that the majority of young people they deal with 'think they are good for nothing' with family circumstances, prior educational experiences and their ability to participate in the labour market contributing to this mind set. Young people also reported that getting into a negative routine whilst staying in supported accommodation can also be a barrier to getting into and maintaining employment. For instance, young people in this situation who participated in the focus groups commented that they had irregular sleeping patterns, ate unhealthily and generally lacked discipline. This resulted in poor time keeping and attendance. They reflected that although they would like to move out of supported accommodation as soon as possible, these types of behaviours and this negative routine do not get them into a mind-set where they are actively thinking about getting into a job or training on a day-to-day basis.

Barriers for Disadvantaged Young People

There are a number of supply-side issues which act as barriers to apprenticeship or FE participation, particularly for vulnerable young people. In particular, low traineeship volumes (which could bridge the school-apprenticeship gap), low-quality careers guidance and lack of apprenticeship promotion within schools have been identified as blocking greater take-up (Ofsted, 2015a; 2015b). From the qualitative research, several specific barriers were noted that confirm and elaborate on these points. Some of these overlap with the general barriers identified to engaging in education, employment and training (EET) opportunities and include: financial issues, entry requirements, attitudinal/behavioural preparedness for work, the perceived value of apprenticeships and a lack of support in workplace transitions. Taken together, these factors may go some way to explain why the take-up of apprenticeships is markedly low among these groups. [105]

[105] Jonathan Buzzeo, Rosa Marvell, Clare Everett and Becci Newton (March 2016). Institute for Employment Studies. Journal of Information 15(3), 20 – 27.

Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements for many further training, education and employment opportunities, is five GCSEs at A* to C. The 2022 national average achieving these grades stood at 53.8% including English and maths and 69% overall, whilst 38% of young people which Centrepont supports have fewer than five A* to C GCSEs. Three-quarters of apprentices report their highest educational qualification as Level 2, whilst only 11% were qualified to Level 1, suggesting young people who fail to gain up to five GCSEs at A*-C will struggle to access these opportunities. [106]

Further, when employers have limited vacancies to fill, they may be more likely to choose the highest qualified and candidates with the most skills and experience. This idea was reflected in the business omnibus to some degree, with 11% of employers stating that a lack of skills and/or experience prevented them from offering more opportunities to disadvantaged groups. A further 12% of employers stated that the main barrier to employing disadvantaged young people was that they don't currently require any more staff. This reinforces the point that employers are able to be selective when they fill limited vacancies. One provider noted there have been 'a few' cases where they persuaded an employer to take on a young person that they had not initially selected but this has been 'a leap of faith' for the employer.



[106] Education and training foundation (January 2023). Guidance on teaching qualifications for the Further Education (FE) and Training sector. Publisher

Entry Requirements

Giving vocational and academic qualifications equal recognition does provide greater inclusiveness for young people who have followed 'atypical' learning journeys and was welcomed. However, training providers' and practitioners' suggestion to get rid of entry requirements based on qualifications altogether (to reduce inherent structural inequalities) was met with resistance from employers. Those employers offering apprenticeships in traditional sectors such as engineering further elaborated on this point by stating that they have a strong union input regarding the minimum entry requirements for the vacancies they advertise and that they therefore have limited flexibility in terms of what they ask for from applicants. Practitioners also noted that the young people they work with can have limited literacy and numeracy skills, and that they need to gain a basic foundation before they can move towards more formal qualifications.

These young people frequently come in at Entry Level standard, and are therefore unlikely to be ready for work opportunities until they have gained literacy and numeracy skills that employers are likely to require. Therefore a major barrier to disadvantaged young people accessing apprenticeships and other work opportunities is that employers are usually looking for a minimum level of formal qualifications which disadvantaged young people may not possess. Employers feel that there are objective reasons for using qualifications as an entry requirement when they are filling a limited number of vacancies or when these requirements are stipulated by an external body, such as a trade union.

Traineeships may be one way to bridge this gap. These programmes, which can last up to 6 months, help 16 to 24 years olds to prepare for entry into work or an apprenticeship by providing them with the chance to gain work experience while also improving their attainment in maths and English if required. The first-year process evaluation of traineeships suggests that, of surveyed trainees, 'half (50%) of the trainees who had left or completed the traineeship were either on an apprenticeship (22%) or in work (28%). A further 17% were in training or education' (Coleman et al, 2015). Therefore, 67% of those who left or completed a traineeship were said to have a positive outcome.

Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Work

Alongside the role qualifications play in accessing apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship pathways, employers also stressed the importance of having the 'right' attitudes and behaviours for work. Some of the larger employers interviewed gave particular emphasis to a young person's behaviours, as part of their recruitment processes. Practitioners and training providers confirmed that disadvantaged young people can initially be ill-prepared for entry into employment. A few commented that the physical nature of work and long-hours could come as a shock for some young people, and entering a new and unfamiliar environment could be unsettling. Disadvantaged young people can also be unaware of the expectations of employers, for instance, with regards to how they present themselves, attendance, and punctuality. One provider noted that for disadvantaged learners they had to undertake a lot of work on social communication.

Training providers and practitioners further emphasised that it was not just familiarity with work-related behaviours that could pose a problem. Young people's self-belief in their ability to work was low as a result of the educational, social and labour market barriers they had experienced. This in turn could reduce motivation to engage in support programmes. Practitioners and training providers therefore have to work with young people to address the importance of work and to raise their aspirations.

Awareness of the Value of Apprenticeship Provision

Among young people, while there was a general awareness of what apprenticeships are, there was a lack of knowledge around their potential value. This included their contribution to future career and earning opportunities and tended to be concentrated among a few individuals who had the 'work first' mentality. Members of one focus group had generally negative experiences of apprenticeships which compounded this. They questioned the quality of the off-the-job training they received, which was non-existent in some cases. Further, in one instance, the work placement just re-confirmed the apprentice's existing skills and there was little room for development. This made them hesitant to engage in similar programmes in future, although the opportunity to gain work experience if nothing else was seen to be of value for future job applications.

Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Work

It is clear that young people are not receiving the information and careers advices that they need to be able to make informed decisions about education and vocational options. This means that a further barrier to young people accessing apprenticeships between the ages of 16 and 18 is that they are unaware of the options available to them, other than staying in further education. [107]

Among young people, while there was a general awareness of what apprenticeships are, there was a lack of knowledge around their potential value. This included their contribution to future career and earning opportunities and tended to be concentrated among a few individuals who had the 'work first' mentality. Members of one focus group had generally negative experiences of apprenticeships which compounded this. They questioned the quality of the off-the-job training they received, which was non-existent in some cases. Further, in one instance, the work placement just re-confirmed the apprentice's existing skills and there was little room for development. This made them hesitant to engage in similar programmes in future, although the opportunity to gain work experience if nothing else was seen to be of value for future job applications.



[107] House of Commons Library (2015). Retrieved from: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-and-training-and-employment/2021>

Unsupported Workplace Transitions

Another barrier for learners successfully accessing work opportunities is that if they transition into the workplace without support there is a risk of relationship breakdown or disengagement between employers and learners. Firstly, if training providers do not carefully match employers and young people in placements, this can endanger the young person's engagement and ability to sustain their position. This relates both to aligning a young person's aspirations with a particular vocation but also ensuring that they are placed with staff that understand their situation and can offer appropriate support. Additionally, providers and practitioners described how a lack of wraparound support during the initial stages of workplace exposure heightened the likelihood of attrition/drop out. It was stated that work placements may be at greatest risk of breakdown during the first six weeks as young people struggle to adjust to new routines, requirements and responsibilities.

It was widely accepted that vulnerable groups thereby require additional support and advocacy during the first few weeks of their placement to iron out any issues that they experience. This underlines the importance of clearly setting the expectations of both employers and young people. Employers need to be aware of the learner's circumstances so that they can offer the right support and learners need to be explicitly told what is expected of them in a workplace environment.

Without the external support of training provider or practitioners, who can act as intermediaries between the young person and an employer and as an advocate for the former, it can be hard to overcome any relationship breakdown that occurs during a placement. For example, if a young person has an issue or has not turned up to work one day, without the encouragement or intervention of an assessor, they may be reluctant to return to the employer because they are worried about potential repercussions. Likewise, without neutral support within the workplace, it may be harder for young people to raise and have addressed any concerns they have, leading them to disengage. Where placements lack clear instructions or forward planning, or require variable shift patterns, this can make it harder for young people to structure their life around day to day realities of work without extensive labour market experience to fall back on.

PART II



Agricultural Entrepreneurship for Youth

Unsupported Workplace Transitions

Agricultural entrepreneurship is a promising approach to enhance rural development and sustainable agriculture. This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of agricultural entrepreneurship, exploring its opportunities, challenges, and impacts. [108]

The study is based on a literature review and case studies from India and other countries. This manuscript introduces the concept of agricultural entrepreneurship and its framework, highlighting the theories and models that support this approach. It then explores the different types of entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture, including value-added products, agro-tourism, and e-commerce. The factors that influence entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture, such as policy, infrastructure, markets, and technology, are also discussed. Furthermore, the manuscript identifies the challenges and barriers to agricultural entrepreneurship, such as access to finance, markets, and technology, as well as environmental degradation, climate change, and gender inequality. The study draws on recent research and case studies to identify the best practices and success stories of agricultural entrepreneurship in India and other countries. This also examines the impact of agricultural entrepreneurship on farmers, entrepreneurs, and the broader society. The benefits of this approach, such as enhancing productivity, profitability, and resilience, are highlighted, as well as the potential challenges, such as exacerbating social and economic inequalities. The manuscript provides a forward-looking analysis of the future directions for agricultural entrepreneurship. It calls for innovative and sustainable approaches to drive rural development and sustainable agriculture, leveraging new technologies, such as precision agriculture and blockchain, and promoting regenerative agriculture practices that enhance biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and soil fertility

Unsupported Workplace Transitions

Agricultural entrepreneurship has emerged as an important concept in recent years, given its potential to transform the traditional agriculture sector into a more profitable and sustainable enterprise. Agricultural entrepreneurship refers to the creation of innovative and profitable business ventures in agriculture, which involve the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of agricultural products and services. The growing demand for high-quality, locally sourced, and sustainable agricultural products has created a conducive environment for the development of agricultural entrepreneurship. This review paper aims to explore the opportunities, challenges, and impacts of agricultural entrepreneurship, with a focus on recent trends, best practices, and success stories. Agricultural entrepreneurship offers a wide range of opportunities for farmers, rural communities, and agribusinesses.



One of the key opportunities is value addition, which involves processing and packaging of agricultural products to enhance their market value. For example, small-scale farmers in different countries have started producing and packaging their own brand of rice, which has gained popularity among local consumers and attracted buyers from international markets. Another opportunity is Agri-tourism, which involves the provision of tourism-related services on farms, such as farm stays, visits, and other cultural experiences.

Unsupported Workplace Transitions

Agri-tourism can generate additional income for farmers and rural communities, while promoting the sustainable use of natural resource. Despite the opportunities presented by agricultural entrepreneurship, there are also several challenges that hinder its growth and development. One of the major challenges is access to finance and credit, which is critical for entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. Lack of access to finance is a major constraint for small-scale farmers and rural entrepreneurs in developing countries, who often lack collateral and credit history. Another challenge is marketing and branding, which is essential for agricultural entrepreneurs to reach their target markets and differentiate their products from competitors. Lack of marketing skills and knowledge can limit the success of agricultural entrepreneurship ventures. Agricultural entrepreneurship has the potential to generate significant economic, social, and environmental impacts.

Economic impacts include increased productivity, profitability, and income for farmers and rural communities. Social impacts include empowerment of farmers, gender equality, and reduction of poverty through job creation and income diversification. Environmental impacts include sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity through adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. In conclusion, agricultural entrepreneurship has the potential to transform the traditional agriculture sector into a more profitable and sustainable enterprise. While there are challenges to be addressed, the opportunities presented by agricultural entrepreneurship are significant, and the potential for positive impacts is substantial. This review paper will explore these opportunities, challenges, and impacts in greater detail, drawing on recent trends, best practices, and success stories.



Agricultural Entrepreneurship Framework

The agricultural entrepreneurship (AE) framework provides a roadmap for farmers, rural communities, and agribusinesses to create innovative and profitable ventures in agriculture. The framework combines business principles with agricultural practices to identify and capitalize on market opportunities, while promoting sustainable and inclusive development. The framework emphasizes the importance of value addition, market research, financial management, and collaboration, among other key elements. By adopting the agricultural entrepreneurship framework, stakeholders can enhance their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, while contributing to the transformation of the agriculture sector. [109]



[109] Dr. Nagaratna Biradar, Dr. Rayees Ahmad Shah, Mr. Adil Ahmad (June 2023) In book: Recent Advances in Agricultural Sciences and Technology (pp.599-608))Publisher: Dilpreet Publishing House Recent Advances in Agricultural Sciences and Technology (2023) (pp.599-608). Publisher: Dilpreet

Benefits of Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Agricultural entrepreneurship has the potential to provide numerous benefits, both for individual entrepreneurs and for the broader agricultural sector. In this section, we will discuss some of the key benefits of AE, and provide recent citations and references to support these claims.

- **Innovation:** AE are often at the forefront of innovation in the sector, developing new products, technologies, and business models that can increase productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. For example, a study by Hornum (2022) found that smallholder farmers who participated in an agribusiness incubator program developed new products and services that helped to increase their incomes and improve their livelihoods.
- **Job creation:** AE can create new job opportunities, particularly in rural areas where unemployment rates may be high. According to a report by the International Labor Organization (Kuhn, 2018), agriculture is the largest employer in the world, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the sector are responsible for a significant share of employment.
- **Value addition:** AE can help to add value to raw agricultural products, by processing them into higher-value products such as food, beverages, and cosmetics. This can help to increase the income of farmers and other actors in the value chain. For example, a study in 2022 found that the production of shea butter has created new business opportunities and improved the livelihoods of women entrepreneurs.
- **Economic growth:** AE can contribute to economic growth at the local, national, and regional levels, by creating new businesses, increasing productivity and efficiency, and stimulating demand for goods and services. AE can help to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, by providing access to new markets and opportunities for value addition. Similarly, a study by van Dijk et al. (2021) found that agricultural entrepreneurship can improve food security and nutrition in countries, by promoting the production and consumption of nutritious crops.

[110] Bonadonna, A., Duglio, S., Bollani, L., and Peira, G (2022). Mountain Food Products: A Cluster Analysis Based on Young Consumers Perception. *Sustainability*, 14 (19), 12511

Types of Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Agriculture

The agricultural sector offers a wide range of entrepreneurial opportunities that vary in scope and scale, from small-scale agribusinesses to large-scale commercial enterprises. Entrepreneurs in the sector can create new products, services, and business models, leveraging on technological advancements and innovative approaches to meet evolving consumer demands. In this section, we will provide an overview of the different types of entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture, supported by recent citations and references.

Primary Production: This involves cultivating crops or raising livestock for sale, either for direct consumption or for processing into other products. Smallholder farmers, who comprise a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce in many developing countries, represent a key group of primary producers. A study in 2022 found that smallholder farmers who participated in a farmer field school program were able to improve their crop yields and incomes.

Argo-Processing: This involves transforming raw agricultural products into higher-value products, such as food, beverages, and cosmetics. Agro-processing enterprises can create new value chains, increase the shelf-life of perishable products, and provide new markets for farmers. For example, a study by Uduji et al. (2022) found that cassava processing has created new business opportunities and improved the livelihoods of women entrepreneurs. [111]

Marketing and Distribution: This involves the sale and distribution of agricultural products, either through traditional channels such as local markets or through modern channels such as e-commerce platforms. Marketing and distribution enterprises can provide farmers with access to new markets, increase their bargaining power, and improve their income. For example, a study found that smallholder farmers who participated in a mobile-based market information service were able to improve their sales and increase their incomes.

[111] Dr. Nagaratna Biradar, Dr. Rayees Ahmad Shah, Mr. Adil Ahmad (June 2023 (June 2023)In book: Recent Advances in Agricultural Sciences and Technology 15(3). Publisher: Dilpreet Publishing House

Types of Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Agriculture

Agritourism: This involves providing tourism services, such as accommodation, food, and recreation, in rural areas. Agritourism can help to diversify rural economies, create new job opportunities, and promote local cultures and traditions. For example, in EU countries has the potential to create new business opportunities and contribute to rural development. Recent studies have highlighted the potential of these different types of entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture to contribute to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and economic growth. [112]



[112] Cheng, W. and Adejuno, O.O (2021). Entrepreneurship channels and sustainable development: Directions for the economy. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 22(3), 799-822)

Impacts of Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Agricultural entrepreneurship has significant impacts on various aspects of the economy and society. These impacts range from increased agricultural productivity and income to the creation of job opportunities and the reduction of poverty. This section highlights some of the most notable impacts of agricultural entrepreneurship, drawing on recent research and case studies. One of the primary impacts of AE is increased agricultural productivity. By introducing new technologies, practices, and value chains, agricultural entrepreneurs can improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. For example, a study conducted by the World Bank found that farmers who participated in an AE program increased their crop yields by 32% and their income by 29%. AE can also create job opportunities and reduce poverty, especially in rural areas where agriculture is the primary source of income. Agricultural entrepreneurship programs had a positive impact on both income and employment, with participants reporting a 35% increase in income and a 37% increase in the number of jobs created. Similarly, a study found that agricultural entrepreneurship had a positive impact on rural employment, with entrepreneurs creating an average of 2.5 jobs per enterprise. Moreover, agricultural entrepreneurship can contribute to the development of rural areas and promote inclusive growth. By investing in rural infrastructure, supporting local supply chains, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, agricultural entrepreneurs can create a positive cycle of growth and development.

Future Directions

Agricultural entrepreneurship has the potential to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth, promote rural development, and address global challenges such as food security, climate change, and poverty. However, there is a need to address the challenges and barriers that hinder the growth of AE and explore new opportunities and innovations. One of the key future directions for AE is the adoption of new technologies and innovations. Emerging technologies such as precision agriculture, biotechnology, and blockchain can enhance the efficiency, quality, and sustainability of agricultural production and supply chains. For example, a study conducted in Kenya found that the use of mobile-based digital platforms increased the productivity and income of smallholder farmers by facilitating access to markets, information, and finance. Another future direction for agricultural entrepreneurship is the promotion of sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

PART III



Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable Agriculture

Young people are often identified as “the leaders of tomorrow”. In recent years, however, this mantra has slowly been replaced by a growing emphasis on the role of youth communities as critical agents of change, “leaders of today” who are already contributing to the sustainable development of their economies and societies. This holds particularly true for the challenge of food system sustainability, given that increases in agricultural productivity and broader rural transformation critically require skills and knowledge that rural youth are more likely to possess over older adults. Accordingly, this chapter analyzes the interplay between existing youth-led contributions to implement Sustainable Development Goal 2 (‘No Hunger’) and the challenges imposed upon young people by unsustainable agricultural practices and food systems. First, the chapter examines the negative impacts that unsustainable food systems have on rural youth, including in terms of rural outmigration, youth unemployment and rural poverty. Secondly, the chapter focuses on young people’s actual contributions to sustainable food system transformations, as well as on the importance of addressing the barriers facing young farmers and entrepreneurs in their countries and communities.



Providing economic opportunities for youth in agriculture is essential to securing the future of agriculture in Africa, addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. However, barriers limit youth participation in agriculture and the broader food system.

Sustainable Agriculture

This scoping review aimed to investigate the opportunities and challenges for youth in participating in agriculture and the food system in Africa. This review conducted a scoping review using the PRISMA guideline. Published studies were retrieved from online databases. The findings showed that existing agricultural interventions are production-centric and provide low-income earnings and inadequate social protection. We also found that the youth have pessimistic perceptions about agriculture's capability of improving their living standards. This could be ascribed to the minimal youth involvement in agricultural activities and the youth's shared understanding of the agricultural sector's contribution to general economic growth. From a policy perspective, the literature revealed that current agricultural development programs do not adequately address structural issues underpinning youth participation in the economy. Therefore, to enhance the involvement of youths in agriculture, there is a need for policy implementation in the area of integrated agricultural-based interventions that are context-specific and promote meaningful youth participation in shaping future food systems. [113]

Youth unemployment is a challenge in the global south. This is primarily due to rapid population growth, slow economic growth, a higher unemployment rate concomitant with a large volume of unskilled workers, and an ageing and declining agricultural sector.

The findings showed that existing agricultural interventions are production-centric and provide low-income earnings and inadequate social protection. We also found that the youth have pessimistic perceptions about agriculture's capability of improving their living standards. This could be ascribed to the minimal youth involvement in agricultural activities and the youth's shared understanding of the agricultural sector's contribution to general economic growth. From a policy perspective, the literature revealed that current agricultural development programs do not adequately address structural issues underpinning youth participation in the economy. Therefore, to enhance the involvement of youths in agriculture, there is a need for policy implementation in the area of integrated agricultural-based interventions that are context-specific and promote meaningful youth participation in shaping future food systems.

[113] Web of Science, Cab Direct, and Science Direct) for 2009 to 2019

Sustainable Agriculture

Agriculture is recognised as a primary livelihood source for many rural people in world and an essential contributor to economic growth. Previous research studies and policies have highlighted the role of agriculture in employment creation, food and nutrition security, and reducing societal inequality and poverty. The agricultural sector also presents opportunities for entrepreneurship, which would be ideal for employment creation, especially among youth. Moreover, the increasing growth urban markets further presents an opportunity for increased demand for processed and prepared foods. Consequently, this would attract substantial private sector investments for small, medium, and large agribusiness entrepreneurs and other food system participants. Fulfilling the potential of agribusiness could open up markets estimated to be worth more than US\$100 billion per year by 2025.

Conversely to the urban sector, entrepreneurship within the agriculture sector presents several challenges. For youth, these challenges include poor and/or limited infrastructure, and a lack of access to finance, production inputs and resources, markets, extension services, and training. Additionally, youths are seen competing with older and more established farmers for resources. The youth's socioeconomic environment mainly portrays farming as a "poor man's" occupation, characterised by long working hours with low economic returns and social status.

Defining the term 'youth participation' is essential to understand the link between youth and agricultural development. According to Checkoway, youth participation is the active engagement and influence of young people. This is not only based on their passive presence or token roles in adult agencies, but also on quality, such as when people have a real effect on the process, influence a particular decision, or produce a favourable outcome. Furthermore, youth participation assumes that young people are competent citizens rather than passive recipients of services. Finally, it involves young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. Therefore, youth participation in agriculture entails the engagement of youth in the sector through entrepreneurial activities, participation in value-chain activities, policy formulation, and advocacy in structures and systems linked to the food system. [114]

[114] Author manuscript; available in PMC 2023 Sep 11. Published in final edited form as: Sustainability. 2021 Aug 14; 13(16): 9120. Published online 2021 Aug 14. doi: 10.3390/su13169120.

Sustainable Agriculture

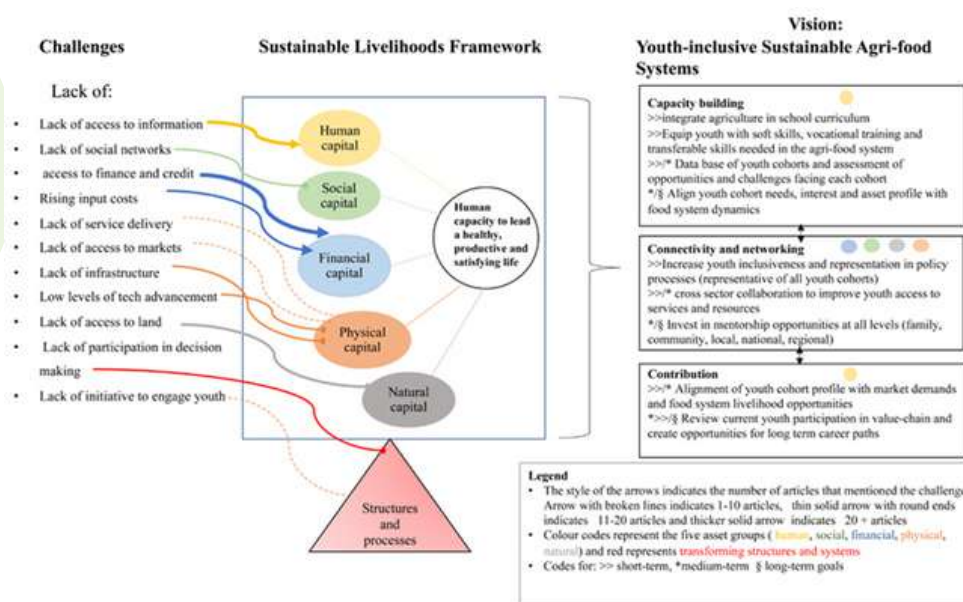
While youth participation is vital for the growth of a nation's economy, youths also face additional socio-economic barriers that underpin their involvement in the agricultural sector. Such barriers include parents' discouragement of youths from pursuing careers in farming and opting for white-collar professions that are thought to have higher economic returns and fewer risk factors. Additionally, for most youths in rural areas, the choice to be involved in farming is determined by their immediate need to fulfil basic needs, lack of employment opportunities, or assurance to inherit the land. When it happens, participation is circumstantial instead of being aspirational; the youth will often leave in pursuit of a "better life" in urban areas when opportunities present themselves.

A growing body of knowledge suggests that part of the solution for promoting youth participation in agriculture should include supportive policies and frameworks that promote capacity building, stakeholder investment, and creating innovative spaces in agriculture in a way that takes into account youth aspirations. Such policies and frameworks should be inclusive and recognise at the onset young people as key players in policy formulation. However, this should be complemented by other initiatives as well. In a policy analysis conducted on agricultural, rural development, youth and employment policies in SSA, Schwebel et al. concluded that policies focus more on promoting labour supply strategies, such as training programmes on entrepreneurship skills, rather than the strategies on the demand side, such as reducing the constraints to business development and job creation at the sectoral level. Moreover, this focus fails to respond to the region's human capital shortcomings, which result from poor-quality education and a lack of employable skills. Thus, upgrading the skills of young people is essential in ensuring their participation in agriculture, promotion of food security, and reducing poverty in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas. [115]



Challenges and Opportunities for Youth in Agriculture

This research identified by the review were unable to articulate the key priority areas for youth in agriculture. However, some studies suggested improvements in the rural environment to encourage youth participation in agriculture. These improvements include the incorporation of youth aspirations in agriculture, capacity building and the development of rural infrastructure, improving the image of agriculture, and the engagement of youth in policy processes.



The density of the included studies across each challenge is mapped onto the conceptual framework and has been integrated into identifying key pathways for the role of youth in future agricultural food systems in Africa. These challenges were mostly related to access factors (production resources, finance, knowledge and information, extension, innovation, and technology) and control over resources. Lack of education, career guidance, employable skills to enter the job market, mentorship, resources, and supportive policies were mentioned as other challenges affecting youth participation in the economy. Using the sustainable livelihood approach, physical capital challenges such as service delivery, access to markets, infrastructure, and low technological advancements were the most dominant. Human and financial capital, that is, access to information and finance and credit, respectively, were mentioned as a challenge across most articles. It was interesting to note that social capital was mentioned as a challenge. Youth in agriculture have embraced information and communication technology (ICT) and use different networking platforms such as Facebook, Google, and WhatsApp. Unfortunately, the cost of data has prohibited the full use of ICT for networking.

Youth Aspiration, Interest, and Participation in Agriculture

Only youths involved in agriculture as a primary occupation, members of agricultural clubs/organisations or participants of agriculture-related interventions (for example, the Young Farmer's Club) had aspirations of choosing agriculture as a career.

Youth participation and pursuing agriculture as a career was mentioned in terms of negative or positive experiences and perceptions of high school students, graduates, and rural youth. Adverse experiences were associated with demographical challenges related to marital status, education levels, access to resources, and information in rural areas. A demographical challenge was the retention of land by the elderly, where land in rural areas is used as a bargaining chip for power and respect. Young people gain access to land through inheritance, permission to occupy agreements, or leasing.

Some studies highlighted that elderly people perceive the youth as self-centred, 'problematic members' in society, who are 'inexperienced', only concerned about their economic welfare and their own immediate family, rather than extended family needs. These perceptions negatively affect youth regarding accessing land for agricultural use, as they would then not be prioritised. Additionally, when it comes to land allocation, preference is often given to married youths. These experiences directly influence how youths perceive agriculture, their interest in participation, and their career aspirations. Positive perceptions of agriculture are related to youth experiences of participating in agricultural programs, the influence of family members who are farmers, and access to services and resources. These experiences were also linked to the entrepreneurship opportunities that youth perceived agriculture to have, making them want to pursue it as a career.

Youths who are already involved in agriculture through participation or exposure to training programs are more likely to have future aspirations related to agriculture than those who are not. Additionally, socio-economic factors such as the youth's marital status, education levels, access to resources and information, and perceptions of community resource 'gatekeepers' about youth influences how youths perceive agriculture and their interest in participating

Factors That Influence Youth Participation in Sustainable Agriculture

This scoping review identified various areas of existing research on youth involvement in agriculture. The key challenges for youth participation in agriculture are centred around knowledge availability; production resources; and lack of infrastructure, support, and access to advisory services. The findings suggest that building the capacity of young people is essential in ensuring their participation in agriculture. It is noted that although the number of people employed in agriculture is still increasing, the workforce share is declining over time. This suggests that young people are fleeing from poverty and not farming. The majority of youths in SSA reside in rural areas, where labour productivity is low and employment opportunities are scarce.

However, underemployment offers limited social protection and rights, low wages, poor job security, and limits future career development opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and hunger. Therefore, addressing youth participation in agriculture requires a holistic approach, broadly focused on improving rural economies, social well-being, and service delivery. Moreover, making farming more profitable and less laborious could potentially attract youth into agriculture.



Way Forward: The Role of Youth in Future Food Systems

Based on evidence found in this scoping review, this study therefore recommends:

- The exposure to agricultural studies at secondary and tertiary level could influence youth's intention to participate in agri-preneurship. This will expose youth to the full range of career options in the agricultural sector at earlier stages. In the project programme areas creates an environment for school children to participate in sustainable agriculture activities through food gardens that supplement the school feeding scheme.
- National agricultural policies need to account for youth aspirations, contributing factors, challenges facing youth under different contexts, and characterise data based on age groups. This will assist in developing youth tailored initiatives relevant to the context.
- For youth who are inclined to work in agriculture, high-potential value chains that align with their aspirations and have the potential for increased economic returns should be identified, including the provision of support and removing barriers for youth participation, for example, the YEAP program and Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Programme. These initiatives are creating decent employment opportunities along the agricultural value chain for youths in rural areas. Initiatives can be facilitated through the implementation of regional policies such as the Malabo declaration and Agenda 2063. [116]
- For youths who are not inclined to work in the farm, including those without access to land and production resources, mobilization of support through government and the private sector could position these youths in nonfarm activities that drive agricultural transformation and the improvement of rural markets. For example, marketing and trading of agricultural related products.
- Regional strategies for developing the agricultural value chain (for example the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy) must mainstream youth considerations, with the objective of youth inclusion, capacity development, and sustainable employment opportunities. There is a need for more deliberate investments to be made to create opportunities for youth throughout the value chain.

[116] Sustainability 2021, 13(16), 9120; Wendy Geza, Mjabuliseni Ngidi, Ojo Temitope, Adetoso Adebisi Adetoro (August 2021). Sustainability 13(16) DOI:10.3390/su13169120, License CC BY 4.0 Submission received: 27 July 2021 / Revised: 8 August 2021 / Accepted: 12 August 2021 / Published: 14 August 2021 (This article belongs to the Special Issue Lessons on Building More Sustainable Rural Societies: Youth and Mobility)

Way Forward: The Role of Youth in Future Food Systems

- Efforts must be made to create a supportive environment to increase opportunities through which youths can pursue food system-related careers and interests. This can be achieved through increasing social capital, improving youth connectivity to value-chain actors, promoting networking, peer-to-peer learning, raising awareness, mentorship, and other forms of linkages.
- Modernisation of agricultural production systems and promoting the development of local value-chains to increase awareness, provoke youth interest, and establish relevant role models. Additionally, the design of national policies should explicitly support informal businesses in rural and peri-urban areas.



Barriers to All Stakeholders



Barriers for Disabled Youth: Unemployment and Agriculture Enterpeneruship

Financial barriers clearly restricted access to apprenticeships for disadvantaged young people. Training providers and practitioners highlighted that when a young person starts an apprenticeship, a household's entitlement to benefits reduces, which can drive the young person to withdraw from the apprenticeship. In addition, young people in supported accommodation felt that apprenticeship pay, which has a lower national minimum wage rate, is not enough for them to be financially self-sufficient. As such, entering full-time paid work was a more attractive prospect for some. This suggests that, because of financial barriers, disadvantaged young people are often not in a position to make a choice between earning or learning. They therefore may become further disadvantaged because of pressures to focus on short-term financial outcomes, rather than the longer-term benefit of undertaking an apprenticeship.

Entry requirements presented another barrier to access. Employers with limited vacancies are more likely to choose the most highly qualified and/or most experienced candidate. Training providers and practitioners argued that qualifications should be removed as an entry requirement for apprenticeships, but some employers were reluctant to do this as they saw qualifications as a sign of a necessary level of competence. Given that employers value qualifications as an entry requirement, interviewees emphasised that it is crucial to place equal value on vocational and academic qualifications. To overcome these barriers to apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship pathways such as traineeships were also seen as important as they can provide young people with the chance to gain work experience and improve their attainment in maths and English.

In interviews, larger employers stressed that behaviours play a central role in their recruitment processes. Training providers and practitioners confirmed that disadvantaged young people can be less prepared for work in terms of 'soft' skills such as presentation, attendance and punctuality, which is of concern to businesses. Traineeships and lower-level learning opportunities were therefore again promoted by interviewees as a way to establish the required workplace behaviours, build young people's confidence and assist them to become work-ready.

Barriers for Disabled Youth: Unemployment and Agriculture Enterpeneruship

Despite being reasonably aware of apprenticeships, young people (particularly those with a 'work first' mentality) did not consistently understand their value, including any contribution to future career and earnings potential. This was partly driven by their first-hand experiences of low-quality apprenticeship provision. Training providers, practitioners and stakeholders drew attention to how the absence of consistent, high quality careers guidance, limited promotion of vocational pathways and varying levels of workplace exposure when at school further compound the issue.

Even where disadvantaged groups are able to access training opportunities in the workplace, their continued engagement is not guaranteed. Training providers explained that careful matching of employer and young person is essential to avoid relationship breakdown and ensure that appropriate support is in place. They outlined the need to set expectations for both parties by being clear with employers about the circumstances of the young person joining the company, and by being clear with learners about how they will be expected to behave in the workplace.

Practitioners and training providers alike spoke of the need for employers to provide regular shifts, daily structures and where necessary financial support with additional costs such as travel, lunch expenses or buying a uniform. Practitioner and provider on-going support in the initial few weeks of a placement was also highlighted as being crucial to ensure that the young person remains engaged. This might include being there on the first day as a 'friendly face', regular catch-ups to check progress, and acting as an intermediary between the young person and employer if there are problems.



Barriers for Training Providers and Practitioners: Unemployment and Agriculture Enterpeneruship

A number of obstacles limit the ability of training providers to increase access for the most disadvantaged young people. Firstly, they find it harder and more resource intensive to prepare young people or those outside of the labour market for entry into apprenticeships. As such, among non-specialist organisations, even with more apprenticeship starts, there may be a greater focus on providing apprenticeships for those who require less training, such as current employees. This is borne out by the fact that the majority of apprenticeships are currently provided to people over 25. This will create higher competition for the remaining vacancies available for younger age cohorts or those with less labour market experience, at the expense of widening access for disadvantaged groups.

Second, training providers described varying levels of knowledge about pre-apprenticeship provision among services supporting young people NEET. This includes traineeships, which have been shown to be effective in helping young people to progress to further training opportunities.

Third, they explained that statutory and third sector support (particularly for mental health needs) was diminishing due to financial pressures. This places an additional burden on providers to provide the support themselves.

Finally, training providers commented that the requirement for learners to attain their functional skills in maths and English as part of the lower level courses they offer (a condition of funding) provided them with limited flexibility in terms of how they could shape the course content to best engage learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Training providers explained that forcing young people whose prior experience of education may be largely negative to return to this before they had the opportunity to build confidence through vocationally-orientated learning, can cause them to disengage.

To increase success, training environments must foster a supportive culture. Interviewees cited examples of best practice including robust pastoral care monitoring and reporting systems, opportunities for peer-to-peer support and learning, small class sizes and using external expertise for wider support where available.

[117] Jonathan Buzzee, Rosa Marvell, Clare Everett and Becci Newton (2016). Institute for Employment Studies. Journal of Information 15(3), 27 – 29)

Barriers for Employers

Four out of five (82%) employers felt that there are barriers to them providing more apprenticeships or work experience to young people. Of those that identified barriers, 15% reported that the financial costs made it difficult to employ a disadvantaged young person. A further 12% stated that they do not require any more staff at this point, while over one in ten (11%) felt that a lack of skills and experience among this group was a barrier to offering them opportunities. [118]

However, overall, respondents showed enthusiasm to work more with disadvantaged groups; 42% agreed that they would like to offer more provision in this area. Furthermore, 44% say that they do not need any extra incentives to increase their provision. However, the findings indicate a lack of awareness about how the opportunities they currently offer may be better targeted or how greater engagement can benefit the business, with 76% of employers not targeting any of their apprenticeship or training opportunities towards disadvantaged young people.

Training providers and practitioners discussed their role in raising awareness among employers around the realities of offering placements to disadvantaged young people and the returns that can be derived. They emphasised that increased opportunities for employers to meet with disadvantaged young people (for example, through 'business breakfasts') would allow them to better understand young people's support needs and therefore increase engagement and prevent placements from falling through.



[118] World Economic Forum. (2023). The Future of Jobs Report 2023.

[119] Jonathan Buzzee, Rosa Marvell, Clare Everett and Becci Newton (2016). Institute for Employment Studies. Journal of Information 15(3), 29 – 33)

Effective Employment and Training Support for Young People

In order to offer recommendations on how the Youth Obligation should be delivered, this research examined the elements of support that are effective in moving disadvantaged young people towards employment, education or training opportunities. Practitioners and training providers identified several key principles that are necessary for packages of support to be effective. These principles focus on practitioners developing goals and plans in partnership with the young person and offering young people adequate emotional support and encouragement.

Firstly, models of re-engagement are most effective when practitioners assess a young person's aspirations, goals and support needs shortly after coming into contact with them. Secondly, for support to be effective, practitioners should set clear goals with the young people, which are linked to their aspirations and interests.

Models of re-engagement also ideally need to include holistic, personalised action plans, based on each young person's educational or employment goals. Support models that do not include personalised action plans, may fail to meet young people's needs and increase the likelihood that the young person will disengage from a programme or not make progress.



It is also crucial that practitioners and employers provide a young person with an adequate support network while they work or train; putting the young person in a position where they are going to succeed. This helps to build their confidence and lower the risk that they will disengage.

Finally, effective models of support need to be designed so that young people are able to take responsibility for their own progression. Young people need to understand that practitioners expect something back from them in return for the flexibility and support they give them.

What is the Youth Obligation?

Participate in a intensive programme of support from day one of their benefit claim. After six months, involved youth will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills, or undertake a mandatory work placement to give them the skills they need to move into sustainable employment.

Employability as a Major Factor Affecting Youth Employment in the EU and Africa Countries

Many people, i.e., about 58% had the opinion that employability is a major factor affecting youth employment in the EU and Africa countries. [121] Drawing on secondary data and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, suggested that lack of job competencies among graduates fundamentally emanates from poor training at primary and secondary levels resulting from incompetent teachers and inadequate facilities. The problem is further fuelled by ineffective curriculum, incompetent lecturers, less emphasis on general knowledge and skills as well as lack of career guidance at higher training levels.



[120] Jonathan Buzzeo, Rosa Marvell, Clare Everett and Becci Newton (2016). Institute for Employment Studies. Journal of Information 15(3), 33 – 39

[121] IOE – Faculty of education and society (2021), Research report

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a light pink hoodie and blue jeans, is seated in a wheelchair on a paved path. He has his arms outstretched to the sides and is smiling at the camera. Behind him, a young woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue sweater, is leaning forward and smiling. The background is a park with many trees and a signpost with several white directional signs. The overall atmosphere is positive and hopeful.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Young people are not widely accessing apprenticeships due to the range of barriers faced by prospective learners, available employers, and training providers outlined above. The Government's commitment to achieving three million new apprenticeship starts by 2025 is thereby unlikely to improve access to employment and training for young people, unless these other barriers can also be overcome.

There is also a real risk that rather than benefitting from the Youth Obligation, young people who face complex barriers to engagement will instead be unfairly penalised as a result of the policy. The evidence gathered shows that not all groups of young people can and will be ready to engage in employment, education or training within six months. To effectively support youth groups, a more holistic and prolonged package of support is required than is currently being proposed.

This research presents recommendations for how the apprenticeship policy and the Youth Obligation should be structured to ensure that disadvantaged young people are able to make progress towards accessing sustainable employment opportunities and thereby reduce their long-term welfare dependency.



The Department for Education Should:

- Extend careers guidance in schools to include earlier promotion of apprenticeships, as well as pathways into them. This must also apply to services supporting young people who are not in formal education or training
- Strengthen and extend work experience for all 14 to 19 year olds and ensure that training providers and employers are provided with appropriate support to help deliver quality assured schemes

The Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills Should:

- Ensure that funds raised are available to SMEs as well as those organisations paying into it
- Incentivise all employers to provide apprenticeships for disadvantaged young people by including disadvantaged young people aged 16-24 as a group who would attract an additional incentive payment in the new funding model
- Allocate a proportion to create a support fund for disadvantaged young people, allowing employers to provide access to specialist support where required
- Make additional funds available through the Skills Funding Agency to finance traineeships
- Ensure that the available funds have the power to maintain and improve the quality of apprenticeships and are able to close apprenticeship programmes which do not meet minimum standards



The Department for Work & Pensions Should:

- Include early assessment of a claimant's circumstances under the Youth Obligation and match claimants to employment and training opportunities that are consistent with their career aspirations
- Allow an extension of the six month period under the Youth Obligation if vulnerable young people are not yet work ready, but are showing acceptable progress towards work
-
- Ensure that the benefits system is not a disincentive to young people taking up apprenticeship because of the impact on their or their family's income

Employers Are Advised to:

- Play a greater role in careers guidance services for young people to improve their knowledge of different job roles and pathways into employment
- Coordinate with a young person's support provider throughout a placement to ensure the employer has a full understanding of their support needs



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