



# Global Center for Youth Employment

Generating solutions for a working world

# OVERVIEW

## WHY

What's the best way to reduce poverty, build community, and improve the world economy? **Invest in youth employment.**

Roughly half the world's population is under 25, an unprecedented demographic reality that creates real challenges and significant opportunities.<sup>1</sup> We can tip the scales toward opportunity by helping the growing population of young people prepare for, find, and hold jobs.

Today more than 350 million young people worldwide are neither employed nor in school, their potential going unrealized and their life chances diminishing.<sup>2</sup> Employment is the key to improving not only individual lives but also local communities and the world economy.

The world's unemployed youth include a quarter of young people in the Middle East and North Africa, nearly 20 percent of those in Europe and North America, and one in seven youth in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the growing global economy demands workers who have skills and are positioned to succeed. To meet the needs of both employers and the youth workforce, we must revolutionize how we prepare young people for work, connect young people to existing jobs, and ensure that there are enough good jobs available.

Current solutions are insufficient because they are too fragmented and incremental. The Global Center for Youth Employment combines innovation with public/private collaboration to provide a more strategic approach to this global challenge.

**“When young people are out of work, they don't just miss out on wages. They miss the chance to learn the skills they'll need for the rest of their careers, weakening the workforce for years to come.”**

MARK WEINBERGER  
Global Chairman and CEO, EY  
*Forbes*, July 17, 2014

## WHAT

**The Global Center for Youth Employment is a virtual learning and action center that brings together a broad, diverse coalition of allies to identify and nurture innovative youth employment solutions.** The Center is focused on solutions that:

- Are systemic and can be replicated widely.
- Have clear metrics of success and rigorous evidence behind them.
- Are the result of collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including local participants, to ensure fit.

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, [www.worldbank.org/progress/reducing\\_poverty.html](http://www.worldbank.org/progress/reducing_poverty.html)

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum, [www.weforum.org/community/global-agenda-councils/youth-unemployment-visualization-2013](http://www.weforum.org/community/global-agenda-councils/youth-unemployment-visualization-2013)

<sup>3</sup> Fast Fact on Youth Employment Challenges. 2012. Geneva: International Labour Organization (Europe and North America); International Labour Office, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012, [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_180976.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_180976.pdf) (all other areas)



In particular, the Center supports efforts that:

### 1. Provide education and training that meet employers' specific needs

In a 2015 survey of 1,300 company leaders from 77 countries, PricewaterhouseCoopers found that 73 percent of CEOs are concerned about the availability of employees with key skills, up from 63 percent just one year earlier.<sup>4</sup> The Center and its partners are working to make sure that workers have the skills local employers need.

- **ConnectEd** and **RTI International (RTI)** are working to adapt Linked Learning for the developing world. Linked Learning is a proven U.S. model that integrates academics, technical education, and real-world experience at the high school level. Students follow industry-themed pathways that are planned and implemented with significant employer input. This model is significantly improving education and career outcomes for a wide range of U.S. students and should be relatively easy to adapt.

“[High numbers of disengaged youth] represent not only a personal calamity for those individuals concerned, but a squandered investment ... and a potential burden for their countries too: lower tax revenues, higher welfare payments, and social instability.  
... **Young people should be an asset to the economy, not a potential liability.**”

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD),  
*OECD Skills Outlook 2015*

### 2. Connect young people to existing jobs

Basic breakdowns in information sharing are a significant barrier to employment. Young people need to know what jobs exist, what skills they require, and how to apply. The Center and its partners are focused on helping young people answer these and other questions.

- Finding a job can be about who you know as much as what you know, and U.S. workers have found a range of benefits from building professional networks on LinkedIn. Now, **Accenture, Harambee, LinkedIn, RTI, and World Vision** are working to extend the LinkedIn platform to the developing world where it can help youth workers there develop networks and find jobs. In addition, LinkedIn will launch a new function that allows workers to indicate particular types of training they have completed — and allows the training organizations to confirm this information on the employees' LinkedIn profiles. Employers will get third-party verification of a potential employee's skills. And trainers will be able to track the professional lives of their trainees, creating a significant pool of data to inform educational programs.
- To raise awareness of the youth perspective on employment — and to encourage more employers to hire youth — **The GroundTruth Project, Plan International USA, and RTI** are giving young people around the world a platform to share videos and stories about what working means (or could mean) to them.

### 3. Increase new employment opportunities

Even in the best workforce development systems, there may not be enough jobs to employ all youth seeking work. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) account for as much as 70 percent of

<sup>4</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers 18th Annual Global CEO Survey, [www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2015/assets/pwc-18th-annual-global-ceo-survey-jan-2015.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2015/assets/pwc-18th-annual-global-ceo-survey-jan-2015.pdf)



jobs in advanced countries and an average of 30 percent of jobs worldwide.<sup>5</sup> The Center and its partners are helping entrepreneurs and SMEs create more jobs for youth.

- **Acceleration Group** and **International House** are introducing Cred fellowships, which sponsor young entrepreneurs as they make the case for their ideas, validate their concepts, and recruit supporters. As a result of these Cred fellowships, some young entrepreneurs will prove their concepts and create job-providing companies. All will learn skills that transfer to other jobs and will be able to explain the value of these skills to future employers.
- For SMEs, hiring people often takes a back seat to investing in equipment or other needs, or it is considered too risky. **Catholic Relief Services**, **FHI 360**, and **RTI** are developing an approach to help SME owners think more strategically about the return on investment from hiring. With the right assistance, SME owners can assess their operations and easily determine when it makes sense to hire additional employees. In many cases, looking at the data for their companies will show that adding employees is a sound investment in growth.
- Micro-work is an emerging phenomenon that can provide a variety of new work opportunities, particularly for individuals with mobility constraints or who face discrimination in the traditional labor market. **Banyan Global**, **Future Work**, and **Land O'Lakes** are conducting research on micro-work and exploring ways to scale this model.

## HOW

**Collaborative innovation, research, and action drive the Center's work.** The Center systematically brings together unique perspectives, expertise, and capabilities to develop solutions that address the youth employment problem from every angle. The Center and its partners have developed two primary work streams:

- **Identifying and supporting scientifically rigorous programs.** We host intensive innovation discovery and planning sessions that develop a set of tools and prototypes within the Center's portfolio of innovation projects.
- **Guiding a coordinated research agenda.** We collaborate on collective research projects and disseminate knowledge through publications and thought-shaping presentations.

## WHO

**The Center's partners include workforce development experts from universities, NGOs, foundations, and the private sector.**

**RTI International**, one of the world's leading research institutes, created and now leads the Center. Other partners include:

**The Acceleration Group** connects young entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurial businesses.

**Accenture** is a global organization providing management consulting and technology services that build world-class skills and develop knowledge capital.

**Banyan Global**, a women-owned, small business, is a development consulting firm that integrates expertise and experience from the development community and private sector.

**Catholic Relief Services** provides both emergency and sustainable relief to impoverished communities worldwide.

**Children International** improves the living conditions of children and families in poverty.

**ConnectEd: The California Center on College and Career** works to advance research, policy, and practice to prepare young people for employment through Linked Learning.

<sup>5</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/2090740.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/2090740.pdf); "Advanced countries" are OECD countries



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**Creative Associates International** provides on-the-ground development services in 20 countries.

**Educate!** delivers an experience-based education model, including leadership and entrepreneurship training, to 16–20 year old youth in Ugandan schools.

**Education for Employment** generates economic opportunities for unemployed youth in the Middle East and North Africa.

**FHI 360** is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to advancing integrated, locally driven solutions.

**Future Work Consulting** is a consulting and policy development firm that helps promote sustainable, skill-based regional economic growth and competitiveness.

**GeoPoll** is a platform that surveys people on their mobile phones without the need for data plans or internet access.

**George Washington University Institute of Public Policy** serves as a university-wide nexus for faculty and graduate students engaging in research on important public policy issues.

**The GroundTruth Project** is training a new generation of international correspondents to use digital media to build understanding of social justice issues.

**Harambee** seeks to reduce unemployment in South Africa by giving employment seekers key skills and connecting employers with members of the community.

**International House New York** houses 700 graduate students from 100 countries, giving them the opportunity to live together in a community of mutual respect and building their global leadership skills.

**International Rescue Committee** provides healthcare, infrastructure, and economic support to those whose lives are disrupted by conflict and disaster.

**International Youth Foundation** aims to expand employment opportunities for the world's youth.

**JE Austin Associates** is a strategy and management consulting group that works with emerging and developing economies.

**Land O'Lakes** uses its corporate and global technical expertise to assist smallholder farmers in 80 developing countries.

**Making Cents** provides consulting and technical assistance to organizations around the world to promote economic opportunities to women, youth, smallholder farmers, and vulnerable populations.

**Partners of the Americas** connects northern and southern countries in the Western Hemisphere to create opportunity and solve real-life problems.

**Plan International USA** is a development organization that improves children's lives by helping families meet basic needs, build relationships across cultures and countries, and promote the rights of children worldwide.

**RTI International** is an independent, nonprofit institute that provides research, development, and technical services to government and commercial clients worldwide.

**Souktel** integrates development and technical expertise to connect job seekers with employers by helping transmit necessary information between them.

**Tech Change** provides online professional development in technology and social change for those who work to improve public health, emergency response, monitoring and evaluation.

**VSO** is an international development organization with volunteers in 27 countries working to alleviate poverty and inequality by addressing issues related to education and health.

**World Vision** is a Christian humanitarian organization that works with children and families to address key causes of poverty and injustice.