



Livelihoods and Dropout

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IYF OVERVIEW

The International Youth Foundation envisions a world in which all young people achieve their full potential and shape the future with power and confidence.

- Founded in 1990 with a mission to prepare young people worldwide to lead healthy, productive and engaged lives
- Programs provide at-risk youth with training and life skills, employability skills and jobs, and opportunities to improve their communities.
- In 25 years, IYF has mobilized more than 64 public and private sector donors to invest over US\$194 million to maximize the impact and reach of youth development programs.
- IYF has partnered with and enhanced the capacity of 472 youth-serving organizations in over 100 countries.
- IYF works with and through local NGOs, governments and the private sector to achieve scale and sustainability – over 472 youth-serving organizations in over 100 countries.

SITUATION OF GLOBAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

- **Global youth unemployment rate for 2014:** 13 percent (ILO)
- **Unemployed youth (15-24) in 2013:** An estimated 620 million youth, the majority of them women, are not working. (World Bank)
- **Underemployment:** “More than **200 million** youth are working-poor, earning **under US\$ 2 a day**, mostly employed in the informal sectors of developing countries.” (ILO)
- **NEET:** The share of young people (aged 15-29) that are neither in employment, nor education or training (NEET) has risen in 30 of 40 countries for which data are available from 2007 to 2011-2012. (ILO)

CONNECTION BETWEEN LIVELIHOODS AND DROPOUT

Economic pressures conspire to push some kids out of school:

- Because of an urgency to earn a livelihood for themselves or their families.
- Because the cost of education is out of the reach of their families.
- Because they don't believe their education will contribute to their ability to earn a better living later on.

IMPACT OF DROPOUT ON YOUTH LIVELIHOODS

Dropping out of school reduces youth chances for securing and keeping decent employment:

- Cannot meet minimum educational requirements of potential employers
- Missing marketable skills/technical skills that employers desire (even basic literacy and numeracy)
- Lacking career awareness and job search skills
- Limited employability-focused life skills to be successful on the job

IMPACT OF DROPOUT ON YOUTH LIVELIHOODS

Many youth dropouts end up:

- Working in menial labor with little opportunity for advancement
- Working in sub-standard conditions or under-employed
- In the informal economy or subsistence-level self-employment
- Idle and thus more likely to engage in risky behavior (drugs, alcohol, gangs, petty crime or more serious delinquency), making it harder still to get a job
- As targets for gangs or criminal groups looking for recruits

RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM

Second chance :

- Programs to serve youth already out of school

Preventative:

- Programs to keep kids at risk of dropping out in school, and prepare them for the world of work

Systemic:

- Educational systems that better serve youth at-risk and the labor market

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMS

Goals are to:

- 1) Get youth back to school or into training if possible
 - May not have financial resources to return to education
 - May not be motivated or be ‘too old’
 - May need equivalency programs instead
 - May need remedial support (literacy and numeracy) to enter technical training programs
- 2) Help youth get decent jobs with growth potential
 - Need to provide intensive support to navigate job market
 - Strong connections with potential employers are key
 - Life skills as important as technical skills
 - Career orientation is critical

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMS

Youth:Work Mexico

Funded by USAID in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

1800 youth who had dropped out of school and were unemployed received:

- 7 weeks of employability life skills training
- 4 months of job placement support
- 70% of youth who complete training found jobs or returned to school

YOUTH:WORK

trabajando con los jóvenes de México

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMS

Keys to Youth:Work Mexico's success:

- Employability life skills to raise self-awareness and self-esteem
- Goal setting to visualize a better future and see how they could achieve it
- Training located in their own community
- Youth-friendly approach that was engaging and interactive
- Career guidance specific to youth circumstances and local labor market
- Direct connections to employers and on-going mentoring support

“If it wasn't for Youth:Work Mexico, I would be at home doing nothing; I wasn't working, I wasn't studying...., but when I started the YWM workshop, I realized I have a lot of abilities and great potential to find a job and keep studying”.

- Ana, Youth Participant, 17 years old

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMS

Challenges faced by Youth:Work Mexico:

- Resource intensive
- Recruitment and retention
- Desire to return to school or training but lacking resources
- Need for additional social services
- Convincing employers to hire youth from ‘troubled’ neighborhoods
- Economic pressures to work immediately
- Constant temptation of ‘easy money’ from drugs/crime
- Young age of some youth limit job options

PREVENTATIVE RESPONSE

To improve their livelihood prospects of youth at risk of dropping out:

- Provide academic support to maximize their basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Teach core life skills to increase self-esteem, awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses, set life goals, etc.
- Include ‘employability’ life skills such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, responsibility, communications, teamwork, personal hygiene and dress, time management, problem-solving, etc.
- Begin career orientation early, well before drop-out is a risk, to help youth understand what jobs might suit them and to help youth see the connection between education and work.
- Teach job search and interviewing skills

SYSTEMIC RESPONSE

A contributing factor to youth dropout rates is a **mismatch of educational offerings and the labor market**. Youth – and their parents – sometimes are not convinced that the educational system is preparing them for the job market.

They are often right:

- More than one in three employers surveyed in 2013 reported difficulty filling positions as a result of a lack of suitable candidates.
- Nearly one in five employers (19%) say candidates lack the required employability skills or ‘soft skills.’ (Manpower)

SYSTEMIC RESPONSES

Some responses that can help improve educational systems to prepare youth for livelihoods (and keep them in school):

- Collaboration with employers to better align educational/training offerings with labor market needs
- Increased options of non-academic tracks for students who are not college-bound
- Better facilitate school to work transition through:
 - Teaching life skills as well as academics/technical skills
 - Career orientation, early and often
 - Job placement/internship support
 - Information for youth about the job market

Thank you!

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