



What We Know About Youth Employment: Research Summary and Best Practices

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Abstract

The goal of this white paper is to bring greater attention to the issue of youth employment, and, through reviewing research, identify ways that current practice can be enhanced. We accomplish this objective by highlighting why youth employment demands more focused attention, outlining the key research findings, reporting on international similarities as well as differences, and sharing a list of best practices.

Introduction

Young people are the future for any economy, not only as consumers and clients but also as workers. Current evidence from around the world indicates that young workers are facing particular problems and challenges in gaining access to the labor market and finding secure employment. Indeed current evidence from different countries around the world shows that youth unemployment rates are most often double those of adult workers. In this report we consider the evidence regarding the issue of youth employment and identify why the situation might be different for young job seekers compared to older counterparts. Youth has been defined by the United Nations and the International Labor Organization (ILO) as those between 15-24 years. We summarize the specific challenges and make the case for why greater attention needs to be paid to the role of context for young job seekers. We outline the significant economic and psychological impact of failure to encourage and develop young workers and highlight how work psychology has important insights into the type of preparation for work and the development of career decisions and job search skills. Based on current research, we outline how employers, educators, and young job seekers themselves can adopt a more effective approach that will have dividends for organizations and our wider society. We make the case for more care and focus on young employees without whom we will be unable to build and develop our economies. We seek to challenge some assumptions and offer some new perspective on this growing problem. Without attention we risk endangering both their individual futures and that of society at large.

Our report begins by looking at the international context of youth labor market engagement. We then look at the benefits and challenges for young job seekers, focusing first on capital management. We then consider the difference for human and social capital for young people before turning our attention towards the issue of career identity and adaptability for youth cohorts. Next, we examine the consequences of underemploy-

ment, which seems to be a growing problem for young workers, and then summarize current insight into coping strategies for young people but also their wider family and community networks. Finally, we consider equality of opportunities and the potential of entrepreneurship, which is increasingly being seen in some contexts as the only option for young people to access paid employment. We conclude with some recommendations for employers, psychologists, young people, and educators.

Youth and Labor Unemployment: A Regional Analysis

The position of youth in the labor market across different regions of the world is really complex and its understanding is far from comprehensive because data are not always available, and where comparisons are possible, it is difficult to generalize given the different realities and macro and micro context. Recently, a number of reports have been produced on the subject of unemployment from either a global perspective for the general population (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013b) or focused more directly on the issue of youth unemployment (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2013a, and b). The information provided in those reports may help us to draw some general trends of youth unemployment and to identify relevant specificities that occur within different regions.

Since 2007, in most industrialized countries, the current economic and financial crisis has produced a sharp rise in unemployment rates. Data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2013b) show an increase in unemployment rates for the overall population as well as for youth ranging from 15-24%. By 2012 global unemployment had risen from 28.4 million people in 2007 to a total of more than 197 million. In contrast, the *youth unemployment rate* in 2013 stands near its high at 12.6% with 73.8 million young people estimated to be unemployed (ILO, 2013b). Thus, overall youth unemployment is considerably higher than global population unemployment rates. In addition, during this period of economic crisis the *duration* of unemployment has also increased; while in 2007 28.5% of unemployed youth remained in this situation for more than 6 months, by 2012 this figure has risen to 35%. Another relevant change is in the status of young people, with a significant percentage (12.7% out of the overall youth) by 2012 not in education, employment, or training (so called NEETs). This latter situation generates severe subsequent difficulties for finding employment in the future. However, it is important to highlight two important facts:

- **Youth unemployment rates were increasing even before the financial crisis**, challenging the effectiveness of government policy and organizational actions towards young workers.
- **These rates tend usually in most countries to be considerably higher than those of adult workers**; indeed, the ILO report (2013) forecasts sustained and high levels of youth unemployment above those of adults until 2017.

The response of many governments in different regions of the world, specifically in developed countries, to the current economic crisis has been to introduce policies aimed at delaying the age of retirement, yet this creates further tensions with one in every four or five young job seekers who want to work being unemployed (Peiró, Tordera, & Potocnik, 2012). Although the above statistics represent a depressing and perplexing overall picture, the figures depicted here need to be considered in a more sophisticated way, and exploring more subtle regional differences (ILO, 2013) in different geographic areas provides an overview into the different situations of youth unemployment.

In the past, remaining in full-time education created more opportunities for young people: however, the current recession has seen no differences between the employment levels of those with greater tertiary education than their less well educated counterparts. Such a trend is a worrisome development, as a larger nine country study reveals; these young people are the cream of their societies, and so their failure to progress into the labor market may create a greater breach of trust than those who did not comply with the societal conventions (Limonta, Manzini, Nastri, Quarantino, & Searle, 2014). Yet those without education or access to further education have seen a rise in the precariousness of their employment opportunities. Thus, it is no longer sufficient for just education per se to insulate young people.

“...young people are the cream of their societies, and so their failure to progress into the labor market may create a greater breach of trust...”



Regional Differences. Developed economies and EU countries show the worst general picture during the recession. For example, in the EU between 2007 to 2011, more than 22% of young workers were unemployed; discouraged workers increased by 50% in the total labor force from 2007 to 2011, with more than 12% of NEET's and 33.6% of total job seekers remaining unemployed for 12 months or longer. Only in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland did unemployment rates remain lower, while in the Baltic republics and in the Mediterranean countries the picture has become espe-

cially severe. In other contexts, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, improvements in formal employment have created more positive prospects, while East Asia's deceleration of growth has produced the opposite: an overall rise in unemployment levels. This can be contrasted with impact of oil on North and Middle West African context, which causes clear differences between oil exporting and importing countries.

Central and South-East Europe (non EU) and the Confederation of Independent States (CIS) indicated slight economic growth between 2007 and 2012, with reductions in unemployment rates for both overall population and young workforce. These levels of unemployment are expected to remain high until 2017. In this area there are large differences between countries as well as variations by gender. In most of these countries employment had increased in recent years to 54.8% of the total population, yet youth unemployment rates are substantially higher, reflecting the difficulties for youth in both gaining and retaining jobs.

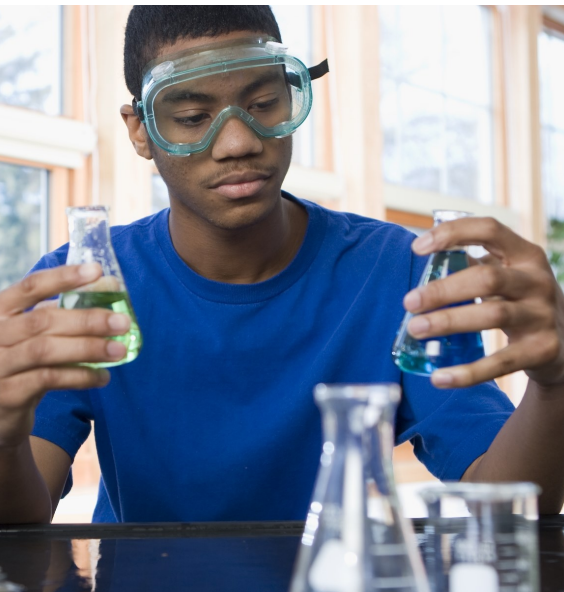
In contrast, in **Latin America and the Caribbean** area, employment levels increased indicating their resilience to the economic crisis. However, this is also in some part due to the ongoing transformation of informal economies into formal employment. The regional employment-to-population ratio increased from 58.7% (2002) to 61.9% (2012), with participation rates rising over the same period from 64.6% to 66.3%. As a result, a larger number of workers gained new jobs, a trend that was not affected much by the crisis in 2009. Despite this increase, the youth unemployment rate is also more than twice the overall unemployment rate in this area.

In **East Asia** the deceleration of growth had consequences for unemployment. Despite low overall rates, unemployment increased between 2007 and 2012 to more than 6 million people, representing an increase to 21.8% of the population. As with other contexts, the youth here has paid a special price with 9.5% of the young workforce unemployed, with several countries (such as Taiwan and Hong Kong) experiencing levels above 10%. Indeed a young East Asian job seeker is 2.7 times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts. In this region, unemployment rates for men are consistently worse than those of women.

In **South-East Asia and the Pacific**, a similar resilience was shown to the global financial crisis, with unemployment rates decreasing to 4.4% in 2012 as participation in the workforce rose. Nevertheless, here too the youth-to-adult ratio of unemployment rate in 2012 was 5:2 as youngsters continue to face a difficult situation in this labor market. Economic growth in South Asia has started to weaken. Although unemployment rates are lower than in other regions, informal employment is the rule rather than the exception. Thus, in general youth unemployment rate is twice those of adults.

North Africa and Middle West African countries revealed important differences in their economic and labor figures, with clear differences found between those countries who are oil exporters and oil importers in both the rates of growth and labor rates. Overall this region had an unemployment rate above the 10%, characterized by ongoing instability and great variations. In 2012 the youth unemployment rate stood at 28.1%, yet in some countries for those under 20, this level rose above 50%. Therefore, the unemployment rate for youngsters here is four times that for adults. North African countries have a particular problem as a result of the Arab Spring. Despite these countries' potential for growth, unemployment rates and youngster's unemployment remain amongst the highest around the world.

Finally, in **Sub-Saharan Africa** despite demographic development, two decades of continued slow growth have produced low levels of unemployment (6% adult unemployment, 7.6% overall unemployment during 2007-2012 period). However, the quality of work and the informal economy are key challenges, beyond that of mere participation in the labor market. Nevertheless, youth unemployment rates are near 12%, and show higher levels for women than men.



Although these data are informative about youth unemployment trends around the world, there are important differences in terms of the quality of employment in developed versus developing economies. Data from 10 developing and 10 developed economies show that although in developed countries regular employment predominates, in developing countries irregular employment in informal jobs is the norm, with implications for the career development and salary prospects of young people. Analysis of the differences in the qualitative features of such employment provides rich information that must be considered when analysing the unemployment and employment of youngsters in different parts of the world.

Unemployment is often experienced by youth as a stressful situation, although its consequences may vary as a function of the context, its occurrence and duration, and the personal characteristics of the individual who experiences it. Stress has been characterized as an experience in which people are confronted by situations that tax or exceed their ability to manage (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Work plays several significant functions in a person's life and fulfils important needs not only in economic terms, but also in psychological and social ones. Thus unemployment, regardless of the age

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that it occurs, is often experienced as taxing and threatening because it may harm individuals' comfort, well-being, and psychological and physical health.

Models of stress may contribute to a better understanding of how to improve these situations. In this context, it is important to take into account the meanings that individuals give to their unemployment as such appraisals influence their experiences of future situations and can determine the choice of coping strategies (Latack, Kinicki, & Prussia, 1995). We need to consider their circumstances and life context, and also their future projections for their lives. Individuals are not just positioned as reactive beings; instead, they are purposeful beings with plans, intentions, and projections who make decisions based on those projections in order to build the life they want.

Challenges of Younger Job Seekers: An Employability Perspective

Although youth unemployment is directly connected to national unemployment rates, and therefore reflects the national context in which it emerges, young job seekers around the world also clearly share certain barriers and challenges regarding their employability. These challenges may be examined from a personal employability perspective, that is, by examining the "work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities" (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004, p. 17). Employability is usually described as a multidimensional concept consisting of three to five relatively broad components centering around workers' human and social capital, their work related identity, and their personal adaptability (Fugate et al. 2004). In the following, we will outline specific advantages and disadvantages that young job seekers may face in each of these domains.

Human capital refers to the skill set of job seekers, including abilities, knowledge, experience and education. Human capital is a key component of employability. Recruiters seek out job seekers with greater human capital, with the expectation that human capital predicts ability to perform the job. Therefore, possessing human capital will affect the ability of job seekers to get and keep a job.

Education is an important part of human capital, and young job seekers who have higher levels of schooling are at an advantage compared to early school leavers (Vallejo & Dooly, 2013). Although this is generally true for the workforce overall, it seems particularly true for younger people and in the context of an economic crisis (OECD, 2013b). The good news is that in many countries, levels of formal education have increased in the past decades (e.g. Levinson, 2010), and more people are participating in education than ever before. Thus, the rate of university level education across 36 OECD countries has increased by almost 10% since 2000, with 25 to 34 year olds showing an increase of 15% in university-level education compared to workers 30 years older (OECD, 2013a); a similar pattern emerges with regard to upper secondary education, which is now attained by more than 80% of young workers in the OECD countries.

Yet, while college graduates tend to have higher employability, possession of a college degree is not necessarily a clear path to employment. A study shows that only 42% of recruiters believe that college graduates are adequately prepared to enter the job market (McKinsey, 2012). This is likely due to the loose connection between educational institutions and industry in many countries around the world. In fact, research shows that in countries where educational institutions send strong signals about job seeker skills and abilities, youth unemployment rates are lower (Breen, 2005). Furthermore, internships and work-based learning tend to provide more secure paths to employment (Shoenfelt, Stone, & Kottke, 2011). Both of these factors may also contribute to explaining why, during the recent economic crisis, countries with a strong tradition of vocationally oriented programs (e.g., Austria and Germany) fared better in curbing unemployment among young adults with upper secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment (OECD, 2013 a and b).

In looking at the evidence, a mismatch is clear between what employers require and what vocational education is delivering (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004; Billett, 2009). Schools are repeating ineffective approaches that do not raise career-related competences and aspirations (Kuijpers, Meijers, & Gundy, 2011). Career guidance methods and instruments coupled with conversations appear very useful in getting students to become more reflective, helping them identify meaningful actions and useful interactions.

Despite the apparent importance of education combined with experience, young job seekers often have limited or no work experience, presenting challenges to their employability. According to National Association of Colleges and Employers' survey (2014), three out of four recruiters state that they prefer job candidates with relevant experience. Work experience is found to be a good predictor of later quality and stability of employment for young people (Ling & O'Brien, 2012). Although work experience is a differentiator, college students often do not realize its importance. For example, a study on Greek college students showed that more than half the participants had no interest in working while in school (Mihail & Karaliopoulou, 2005). In fact, abstaining from work while in school is fairly common in many countries around the world, due to factors such as free education, living with parents while in school, parental encouragement to focus on studies, lack of availability of part time work suitable to students, and the failure of university schedules to accommodate work schedules. Although students have social permission not to work while in school, graduating with no work experience has consequences. A qualitative study on Australian graduates indicates that during their studies, college students hold the belief that going to col-

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lege and getting good grades is the path to a good job, and they only realize later that a college degree is simply the price of admission but by no means sufficient to acquire high quality employment (McKeown & Lindorff, 2011). Work experience is critical to the development of a professional attitude and confidence and helps to secure and retain a job, indicating it is an important gap in the human capital of youth. Nevertheless, the most effective way of developing human capital during the university studies differs as a function of the academic area.

In research on a representative sample of 4,828 graduates from a Spanish university (graduated between 2002 and 2006), work experience during academic study was found to predict the quality of graduation employment, with academic area clearly moderating this relationship (Yeves, Gamboa, & Peiró, 2009). For example, work experience negatively predicted the quality of the job placement after the graduation (up to 5 years later) for those studying health sciences, natural sciences, and technology, whereas those graduating from social sciences got better quality jobs if they had gained some work experience during their studies. This was also the case for graduates in education and social sciences, especially if this work was related to their academic subject, but also for those who worked part time.

Social capital refers to the idea that *who you know matters* when looking for a job. It is the sum of relational resources a person has and includes both the size of one's social network and its strength and quality. Through relationships, job seekers can find out about job opportunities, and one's network can vouch for the job seeker's abilities and fit with job requirements (Fugate et al., 2004). Personal connections are often the primary way in which job seekers access job openings, and in fact they yield faster entry to the job market (e.g., Kogan, Matkovic, & Gebel, 2013). It is reasonable to expect that young job seekers will have more limited social capital due to their limited experience and connections to organizational insiders. Although their family and connections through school will be part of their network, they are less likely to have access to actual decision makers, resulting in limited access to information about organizational opportunities.

Parents can play a critical role for young people. Longitudinal research indicates the importance of parents' knowledge of the post 16 options available (e.g. Schneider & Stevenson, 2000). Parental involvement is found to reduce young peoples' indecision (Feldman, 2003). However, parents' own experiences of job insecurity can affect the levels of career indecision in their children. Therefore, it is important to explore options and their rejection to ensure the reasons are pertinent for *that* young person. Yet, how much knowledge do parents actually have about the current education options or employment training programs available? This is especially critical for migrants who may not be aware of the different opportunities available in their new country. Young people, however, require both knowledge but also an ability to navigate the diverse and complex array of options that might be available to them. Evidence from some developed contexts, such as the UK, in-

dicates that those from higher socioeconomic groups and higher educational achievement are potentially more adept in negotiating these pathways, but this is not always the case, as recent examples from Southern Europe show.

In contrast to parents, teachers have a significant role especially for those from lower socioeconomic groups and can assist both young people and their parents become aware and understand better how best to go about achieving their concrete and obtainable goals (St. Clair, Kintrea, & Houston, 2013). In the absence of others' support, they can offer a significant support for parents in helping to deliver the early promise of talented young people from less privileged backgrounds, in particular in better navigating subject choices and university options (Koshy, Brown, Jones, & Portman Smith, 2013). In a school career context, attention towards clarifying career goals can be especially effective in supporting young women from lower academic attainment groups into training (Haase, Heckhausen, & Köller, 2008).

Limited social capital serves as a barrier to employment, and at the same time the depleting effects of unemployment on social capital of youth will be compounded over time. Zeng (2012), in an analysis of Chinese youth, showed how limited financial resources and face saving resulted in those who were unemployed being far more likely to limit their interactions to others in a similar situation. Although this type of social network within unemployed groups clearly provided invaluable emotional support, such contacts had a more limited value in supporting their job search process. This hints at the merit of proactive measures by young job seekers, which build and maintain their organizational connections.

Identity. Relevant to employability is also a notion of career identity (see Gunz & Peiperl, 2007) whether it is the more self-centered career identity (Fugate et al., 2004) or the more employer-centered corporate identity (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). A central idea here is that people live by certain narratives defining “who I am” or “who I want to be” that enables them to integrate their past, present, and future, and provides them with personal goals and aspirations (Fugate et al., 2004).

On average, subsequent generations of younger workers have reported a somewhat lower centrality of intrinsic work values compared to leisure values than earlier generations (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Also when it comes to their aspirations, young workers are sometimes credited with expecting too much from their surroundings, demonstrating a strong sense of entitlement. Although re-



cent reports usually refer to Millennials when voicing such concerns (e.g., Hill, 2002; see also Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008), it is worth noting that similar concerns always seem to have troubled researchers looking at young people (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010).

Other research suggests that new job starters are actually quite realistic about their expected starting salary and the ability of their first job to match their different aspirations, (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Consequently, young people are usually also far cheaper to hire than older job seekers (e.g., Adler & Hilber, 2009).

Yet, identity can also turn into a serious difficulty for younger job seekers. For one, career identity often shows itself via the narratives that we all create in order to give meaning to our past and future career, but also to impress others, such as in the context of a selection process (Fugate et al., 2004). Creating a convincing story, however, becomes more difficult in the absence of sufficient material on which to build it, placing young job seekers at a disadvantage compared to older ones.

Younger workers themselves may need more time to develop their career identities. A study of workers aged 20 to 34, indicated that 40% of the sample were identified as “shifters,” (i.e., as people with fractured career trajectories who moved constantly between jobs, often across occupational categories and between employment statuses, such as between work, unemployment, and traveling; Bradley & Devadason, 2008). Often respondents became shifters following poor academic achievement and dropping out of school or university. A frequent theme among these respondents was the pursuit of some basic training opportunity in order to end the ‘revolving-door existence between intermittent unskilled labor and unemployment they found themselves in. Yet others who were shifters were academically trained, choosing a “time out” after their graduations to travel, work in a variety of miscellaneous jobs, pursue further training on a part-time basis, and essentially figure out where they wanted to go with their lives. In addition to these 40%, an additional 20% were found to have some reported “shifter” experience in their past before they made a conscious decision to settle for a specific job or career. In contrast, just 36% of this sample reported finding a suitable career path very soon after leaving full-time education and sticking to it. In short, a clear “identity,” although needed for providing direction to our careers, may often be difficult for younger workers to achieve.

Adaptability. The final component of employability is personal adaptability: the willingness and ability to change personal factors (e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, dispositions and behavior) to meet the demands of the situation (Fugate et al., 2004), either by proactive anticipation or by reactive flexibility (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

Adaptability is a component that may place younger job seekers at a distinct advantage over older counterparts. First, both young peoples’ life stage (Super, 1990) and their temporal proximity to their educational training facilitate the access to and suitable use of learning opportunities. Second, younger workers have already been born and socialized

into a world where job insecurity exists. For them, the calls for “worker flexibility” and “lifelong learning” are the norm, which also may have a beneficial impact of making them more immune to the detrimental effects of job insecurity on their health and willing to switch organizations on their own accord in the face of adverse circumstances (Cheng & Chan, 2008). Indeed, in a large scale survey among Canadian undergraduate students, only half of the respondents reported that they would like to spend their whole career within one single organization (Ng et al., 2010), placing higher value on good training opportunities and work variety above that of job security. Also, qualitative data suggest that many younger workers not only accept insecure working conditions as part of their career but actually come to embrace the need to adapt and to continue their learning (Bradley & Devadason, 2008).

Relevant in this context is also their psychological capital, which concerns the mental and personal resources a person has, including hopefulness, optimism, and confidence (Chen & Lim, 2012). Young adults often report a rather high satisfaction with their lives and a great optimism towards the future, even in the face of a poor income at the moment (Bradley & Devadason, 2008). Yet, looking for work is inherently a stressful process, in which applicants may often never hear back from the companies to which they apply, and every day without a job contributes to their financial stress and impatience. Research shows the critical importance of resilience and hopefulness for young people. For example, a longitudinal study on youth indicated how having a positive attitude and being optimistic predicted continued efforts to seek a job and also their actual success in finding a job (Mohanty, 2012). Further, young job seekers’ confidence during job search and their level of proactivity were associated with more positive outcomes (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006). Particularly during periods such as a recession, young workers preparing for the labor market often attribute their success to luck rather than effort (Giuliano & Spilimbergo, 2009). They can thus become susceptible to hopelessness when looking for a job in contexts with high youth unemployment. Furthermore, young job seek-



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ers, particularly those without prior job experience, may lack confidence in their job search and interview skills, and lack the resilience to sustain their search process. It has been argued that young job seekers will have lower career resilience and are more likely to get frustrated and feel hopeless when they are faced with obstacles (Feldman, 2003), which erodes further their chances. Work experience during school years, targeted mentoring and training in job search processes, as well as direct interventions aimed at increasing psychological capital (e.g., Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006) appear particularly useful to young job seekers.

Consequences of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment around the world is resulting in a potential “lost generation” in which young people can find themselves as NEETs (Not in Employment, Education, or Training). This early experience of unemployment can create a considerable rupture in their transition to adulthood (Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003). The impact of not finding viable work and a career has consequences not just for young people but also for their families and society at large (Gough, Langevang, & Owusu, 2013). Studies show that unemployment in youth has a “scarring” effect. Beyond simply the wages that are lost, it has long term implications for their well-being and increases the risk of unemployment later in life after controlling for human capital factors (e.g., Gregg, 2001; Mroz & Savage, 2006).

In addition to health and well-being, youth unemployment has implications for societies as a whole. The ILO’s (2013a) World of Work Report warns that such levels of youth unemployment are a predictor of social unrest. In particular, studies show individuals who are able to accumulate more socioeconomic, educational, and motivational resources throughout their lives have higher levels of trust in institutions than do those who have been able to acquire fewer resources (Schoon & Cheng, 2011). In this section, we examine two specific outcomes of youth unemployment: underemployment and youth migration.

Young job seekers, particularly those without prior job experience, may lack confidence in their job search and interview skills, or the resilience to help them sustain their search process.



Youth underemployment. A direct consequence of youth unemployment is underemployment: the finding and accepting inadequate work. In this context, underemployment usually refers to those who are overeducated, who accept a job that is below their education level, or who accept a job in a different field than their training. Both of these have negative consequences for salaries and the happiness of graduates (Beduwe & Giret, 2011). Alternatively, when not able to find a job, young job seekers often decide to continue their education, acquiring graduate degrees (Clark, 2011). This can potentially make them even more overeducated for the job they ultimately take.

Underemployment is usually a function of a mismatch between the number of graduates and the available jobs at this level. Although much is made of the emerging knowledge economy by policymakers and media, it is important to recognize that not all job growth occurs in the highly educated segment. In fact, the new knowledge-based economy has resulted in the creation of many “old economy” jobs. For example, according to U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics projections (2012), jobs with the highest expected growth include personal care aides, home care aides, and insulation and construction workers, each with modest formal education requirements. Where there is an oversupply of college graduates, credential inflation can occur, making some formerly nondegree jobs de-facto graduate jobs (MacDonald, 2011). Although these more qualified incumbents may proactively craft and expand these jobs resulting in an acceptable situation where their attitudes do not suffer (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Erdogan, Bauer, Peiró, & Truxillo, 2011), there is no evidence that organizations are exerting concerted effort to fully utilize the skills of these overeducated workers, making these jobs poor alternatives to full employment. Research also shows that while overeducation could serve as a stepping stone to a better job within the same organization, it does not usually fulfill this promise, essentially serving to “entrap” the individual into a poor quality position. Baert, Cockx, and Verhaest (2013), in their study of Flemish youth, showed that overeducation reduced the probability of transitioning into adequate employment in a number of ways including diminishing the intensity of continued job searching, building of nontransportable skills, and sending negative signals to potential employers. Although there is likely to be a point where being underemployed is better than being unemployed, young job seekers may actually benefit from making such a decision only after careful consideration, rather than impulsively as an impatient reaction to their frustration in failing to find work.

Youth migration. When faced with poor employment prospects, unemployed job seekers may choose a second route out of the current context: to migrate. Migration can take three forms: within-country, rural to urban migration, or international. In Europe, this is particularly salient due to the free movement of labor principle of EU member countries. As a case in point, in 2012, there were 1 million new immigrants in Germany, mostly highly educated and unemployed job seekers from Southern and Eastern European Countries (Taberner, 2012). Although solving the youth unemployment problem temporarily for these job seekers, immigration brings with it many challenges and complications, including the need for cultural adjustment on the part of the job seeker as well as those inside the employing organization, language difficulties, and the emotional toll of separation from

extended families, sometimes separating generations permanently when immigrants raise children in their new communities. Immigration can also have an impact on those receiving these migrants, such as increasing tensions within communities, with locals viewing new migrants as competitors for their own local resources and potentially scarce jobs. Finally, particularly in countries where tertiary education is paid by the government, the loss of their highly educated workers is a form of “brain drain” reducing the return on this form of investment. In short, youth migration has both short term and long term consequences, and its effects on the lives of the home and host countries are complicated and poorly understood.

Coping Strategies for Young People

Individual responses to unemployment are not homogeneous; instead “people vary their coping strategies to accomplish different coping goals” (McKee-Ryan, & Kinicki, 2002 p.14). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage, [i.e., master, tolerate, reduce, minimize], specific external and/or internal demands, [and conflicts among them], that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). Individual coping strategies have been classified in different, and not always consistent, ways.

A classical distinction differentiates between problem- and emotion-focused coping, but Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) suggest that a more fruitful distinction is between engagement and disengagement coping. The former aims to deal with the stressors or related emotions, while the latter aims to escape the threat or related emotions.

Individual coping strategies. In considering unemployment, a number of individual engagement coping strategies have been encapsulated recently under the concept of employability. Fugate et al. (2004) have defined employability as a psychosocial construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behavior, and affect, and enhance the individual–work interface; it is a form of work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realize career opportunities” (p. 15-16). This concept focuses on four person-centered constructs: individual’s human capital, social capital, career identity, and personal adaptability. So, efforts by individuals to improve these employability components clearly evoke engagement in coping strategies to deal with unemployment.

Employability can provide a rich source of coping resources, such as increasing human capital through education and training, and enhance opportunities to find a job. Of course, not all training is equally relevant for employability, and when choosing new investments in human capital through education and training, individuals should adopt a “strategic” approach. For example, increasing social capital through networking is a relevant coping strategy that helps the individual to benefit from the goodwill inherent in their social networks. Social support from relevant others can improve the probabilities of being re-employed.

Adaptability, which was highlighted earlier, is another facet of employability. As Fugate et al. (2004) points out, “adaptable people are willing and able to change personal factors — Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other characteristics (KSAOs), dispositions, behaviors, and so on—to meet the demands of the situation” (p. 21). These dispositions encompass optimism, propensity to learn, openness, internal locus of control, and generalized self-efficacy. Thus, adaptability facilitates different engagement coping strategies through the individuals’ willingness to adjust to job requirements both in terms of contents (aiming for a stepping stone to later access better qualified jobs; see Erdogan et al. 2011) and non-standard conditions (e.g. contractual, time, mobility, etc.; see García-Montalvo & Peiró, 2008). Nevertheless, the decision to accept a job with suboptimal conditions (e.g. an underqualified job just to avoid geographical mobility or because it implies a permanent contract) may in fact induce losses in human capital, for example, reducing opportunities to practice or develop the acquired KSAOs. Adaptability needs to be tuned with career identity to enhance employability. As Fugate et al. (2004) pointed out, “career identities provide a compass for the individual, thereby offering a motivational component to employability” (p. 20). Thus, an individual’s career identity is expected to influence their coping goals by making them more consistent with their desired selves. In general, enhancing employability for the unemployed requires a complex set of engagement coping strategies that can be effective even among the long-term unemployed (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2013).

Modifying the span of acceptable job types and the range of job features that a job seeker considers represent another set of engagement coping strategies. Flexibility in searching for jobs and the readiness to sacrifice some preferred features in order to preserve others underlines the complex realities of the decision-making processes involved in determining whether to accept or reject a job offer. Readiness for mobility may lead young job seekers to extend their search area and to find a larger number of job offers. Also helpful is extending the range of flexible features they might be willing to consider such as nonstandard work schedule, temporary contracts, or functional flexibility. Self-employment may be a further strategy that is considered (Garcia-Montalvo & Peiró, 2008; Peiró, Gracia, & García-Montalvo, 2002; this option will be discussed in more detail shortly).

The issue then is how an individual can balance their adaptability with their career identity. In some cases rejecting a given offer while continuing the search may be functional for their career development. As Zikic and Klehe (2006) have pointed out, a job loss, or not accepting a job offer, under particular conditions may actually have positive outcomes. Thus, the more individuals actually plan their careers during their period of unemployment and the broader the career exploration they conducted, the higher they rated the quality of their subsequent job 6 months later.

Central to effective coping are two factors: job search behaviors and the skills and attitudes that contribute to their quality. Wanberg (2012) reviewed empirical evidence about job search behaviors and found individual differences play an important role in job search

behaviors in terms of reemployment and the quality of jobs obtained. A recent meta-analysis showed the positive influence of job search interventions in creating more effective job search practices (Liu, Huang, & Wang, 2014). This analysis found the importance of the combined factors of individual agency together with the support of their local community for effective coping.

Recently proactive coping, together with career adaptability, have been shown to mitigate the negative effects of unemployment (Klehe, Zikic, van Vianen, Koen, & Buyken, 2012), with proactive coping preventing the negative effects of some stressful events before they occur. Thus, anticipation and accumulation of resources enables individuals to cope far better in future stressful situations (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997), especially where it is viewed as an opportunity to grow and develop. In this sense, the emphasis is not just on avoiding threats but also in taking advantage of demanding situations as a challenge and opportunity (Davis & Asilturk, 2011).

One proactive strategy related to unemployment and career development that has been identified by Savickas (1997) is career adaptability. He defined this construct as “the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions” (p.254). Four components are included in the resources for adaptability (Savickas, 2005):

- concern about the future as a worker,
- control about the vocational future,
- curiosity by exploring future scenarios, and
- confidence to pursue the own goals.

Other types of engagement coping focus on finding alternative ways to fulfill the latent functions of employment while being unemployed. For example, maintaining time structures during unemployment is an effective way to cope and contributes to psychological well-being (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005).

Time structure is a multidimensional construct that includes five aspects (Bond & Feather, 1988):

- sense of purpose,
- structured routine,
- present orientation,
- effective organization,
- persistence.

Paradoxically some personality characteristics and life role demands, such as being single and having children, are positively related to providing a more structured routine (Van Hove & Lootens, 2013).

Evidence suggests that disengagement strategies can also be effective in helping to cope with unemployment. Emotional social support may be sought to palliate negative emotions of unemployment and to buffer negative effects. Clearly some escape and avoidance strategies are employed by young people when conducting seemingly futile searches, including becoming discouraged or passive. Indeed, some studies suggest that these disengagement strategies may become imperative in helping to cope with frustrating situations where goals become unattainable, such as actively trying not to think about the situation or believing that the situation will resolve itself. For example passivity may moderate negative effects of a highly demanding situation on work satisfaction (Tomasik, Silbereisen, & Pinquart, 2010). Lin and Leung (2010) suggested that those who employ a combination of both engagement and disengagement strategies cope better with prolonged unemployment.

In contrast, the consumption of alcohol or other substances may be considered a less effective disengagement coping practice. Unemployment has been found to be related to alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and smoking (Paul, Hassel, & Moser, in press; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). However, the studies conducted point out the problematic causality issue: Alcohol misuse may reduce productivity, may lead to unemployment, and may limit the employment opportunities later. More research is needed about these particular disengagement coping strategies and how they are used for different contexts and by different groups as a means of coping with unemployment.

Collective coping strategies. In the past, unemployment has been positioned as an individual experience, but increasingly it is being viewed as a collective one, which requires more comprehensive attention towards social aspects (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Clearly some coping strategies involve the seeking or utilizing of social support, and some types of social support involve coping efforts (Revenson & Lepore, 2012, p. 201). For example, supportive relationship with others is an important resource for individual coping.

This shift toward a more comprehensive understanding of unemployment enables greater attention to be paid regarding the broader negative impacts on the wider members of the family (Dunlop, 1997). For example, other family members may also appraise their young



Those who engage in collective activism are found to feel more control, have higher self-esteem and be more optimistic about their future than those who were not involved in such initiatives.

person's lack of work as taxing and threatening, and so they may utilize collective strategies as a way of coping, such as identifying potential job leads, managing time and interactions, dealing with emotional contagion, and palliating negative effects (Hanisch, 1999). Interestingly interventions have been developed to enhance effective and functional coping strategies by the family members and thus diminish the risk of emotional disorders and family dysfunctions (Howe, Caplan, Foster, Lockshin, & McGrath, 1995; Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996). In the Spanish Observatory of the Youth Labour Market Entry, survey data have shown that seeing collective coping strategy, rather generalizing behaviors as a product of collectivistic culture (Kuo, 2013), offers a distinct and important perspective. Nevertheless, education exchanges, such as Erasmus mobility program, may be an important factor that increases the mobility for university educated young people in Europe. Such experiences have been found to significantly alter job search behaviors (Limonta, et al., 2014). Finally, collective activism is another type of collective action in which laid-off employees create new jobs in their communities to cope with their job loss (Leana & Feldman, 1995). Those who engage in collective activism are found to feel more in control, have higher self-esteem, and be more optimistic about their future than those who were not involved in such initiatives.

In sum, the analysis of youth unemployment requires the consideration of coping behaviors, paying attention to different relevant facets of this complex phenomenon. It is important to take into account the role of coping in the process of stress and the acknowledgement of the active role of the youngster in the appraisal and control of the situation. At the same time, this analysis needs to be carried out within a comprehensive person-centric and life-span approach that pays attention to the youngster as a person and with the focus on his or her career and not only on an unemployment episode or experience. (Peiró, Hernández, & Ramos, in press).

The Employment Compromise

Different Trajectories to the Same Destination?

Young people are regarded by most countries as their greatest natural asset, and although many are very ambitious, their ability to achieve these ambitions can vary enormously. In this section we examine briefly the differences in trajectory focusing on gender and race issues before turning to more overarching concerns of socioeconomic differences.

In many countries there is a notion of an equality of opportunity, yet sadly recurring evidence from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies reveals there to be important differences based on gender, social origin, and individual agency in individuals' ability to achieve their potential (e.g. Schoon, Martin, & Ross, 2007). For example, although school attainment results show an increase in the performance of young women, and in the occupational aspirations among women (Schoon et al., 2007), across Europe this fails to translate into better paying jobs, especially for those with parents who have fewer qualifications (Iannelli & Smyth, 2008).

One of the distinct pressures for young women can be their family commitments, which might have a cultural dimension to them (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger, & Schmidt, 2008), and the impact of having children on their career trajectories. Certainly becoming a parent early can adversely impact occupational success for both sexes (Hobcraft & Kiernan, 2001), but it has a disproportionately marked impact on women, especially those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (Schoon et al., 2007). In addition, in some communities, alternative options to careers, such as motherhood, are more readily proposed to young women rather than young men who have similarly failed to find employment or progressed as quickly as expected. Indeed a recent study of CEOs of Australian companies identified the importance of marital partners in supporting women's careers, with male CEOs having stay at home wives while their female counterparts frequently juggled dual-career families (Fitzsimmons, Callan, & Paulsen, 2014).

A second area where there are clear disparities is in terms of ethnicity. Studies that have used correspondence audit techniques have shown marked differences in obtaining interviews for those from different ethnic origins, even when the details on the resumés were standardized (Derosus & Ryan, 2012; Derosus, Ryan, & Nguyen, 2012; Hiemstra, Derosus, Serlie, & Born, 2013). Although gender was found to moderate the ethnicity effect, there were clearly lower success rates for this group of candidates.

Studies show an inequality of opportunities for young people, both in terms of knowledge about the options available to them and, more importantly, in their ability to navigate the diverse and complex decision pathways concerning their education, training, and employment options. Those from higher achieving and higher socioeconomic groups not only appeared more adept at negotiating such pathways (e.g., Yates, Harris, Sabates, & Staff, 2011) but also are likely to remain more positive despite the current context (Taylor & Rampino, in press). It is therefore important to avoid the view that those less well-off are somehow lazier; instead, the failure of them to achieve their full potential is a sad culmination of a number of factors.

Although educational attainment remains a critical factor in young peoples' career success (e.g., Schoon & Parsons, 2002), especially in terms of occupational aspirations between 13 and 16 years (Furlong & Biggart 1999), small scale studies reveal the depth of the issue for parents of highly talented young people from poorer backgrounds; the lack of knowledge and experience about school or university subject choices can prevent these parents from feeling that they can support fully their high achieving children (Koshy et al., 2013). Further, such parents often recognized that neither their wider family, their community, nor their children's peer groups were able to offer adequate support to these talented youth. Policy in this area has tended to focus solely on raising aspirations which, given the current labor market, is disingenuous and risks increasing further institutional trust breach.

In addition, such policies fail to consider the critical role teachers can play in marginalized communities by helping to disseminate and better apply knowledge and so transform aspirations into concrete and obtainable goals (St. Clair et al., 2013). Two factors which are critical here in raising the likelihood of becoming a NEET by age 18, include (Yates et al. 2011):

- misalignment between aspirations and educational expectations, and
- uncertainty about occupational direction.

Importantly, both appear to be more widespread and their impact far more detrimental for those from poorer backgrounds. Indeed a UK study that followed-up young people showed the long-term consequences of both factors, with deficits to employment stability from those with lower educational attainments, which in turn resulted in lower wage attainments at age 34 (Sabates, Harris, & Staff, 2011). Those who were less focused were found to have more periods without paid work, lower educational attainment, and lower hourly wages in their subsequent adulthood compared to their contemporaries with high occupational aspirations and educational expectations (high-aligned ambitions). Thus there appears to be a complex but insidious combination of factors that are amplified for those from less fortunate backgrounds. This group is more likely to experience fractured transitions from education into employment (Furlong, Cartmel, Biggart, Sweeting, & West, 2003). The resultant lowering of institutional trust levels (Schoon & Cheng, 2011) may therefore be a consequence of the paucity of targeted practical support that is given to these young people but also to their families and communities.

Differences between rich and poor can be further magnified by differences in social capital, as those from lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to identify job opportunities or to have others that can vouch for their abilities and job fit (Fugate et al., 2004). These personal connections are important in yielding quicker entry into the job market (E.g., Kogan et al., 2013). In addition, those with greater social capital can access internships, which are an important stepping stone towards gaining the necessary experience to secure permanent employment. It is reasonable to expect that young job seekers will have less social capital due to their limited experience and connections to insiders; yet, it is clear that the social capital of their parents' can be leveraged to some young person's greater advantage.

The use of the term "NEET" here can be inherently problematic, giving a negative focus and fostering an aggregation of disparate groups with quite distinct and divergent needs. Work psychologists have an important role to play here to better understand these differences.

Transitioning to Employment

Routes into employment. Changes to the structure of modern work and the increasing deregulation of labor markets across the world have made the transition from school to work less standardized. As a result it has become far more complicated for young people from most countries to be able to navigate their way, producing significant and deleterious consequences for their current and future economic and psychological well-being (Heckhausen, 2002). The value of a smooth first step into the world of adulthood is important in setting future transition patterns regarding the perceptions of change regarding jobs, organizations, and also careers (Ng & Feldman, 2007). Such changes have produced a discontinuity in the traditional progression into employment and a career. Examples include changes from craft jobs to work in the service sector, and the far greater attention on high-tech and knowledge intensive skill (Heinz, 2002). Sadly, the pressures for organizations to become competitive in a now-global market place create pressure on pay rates for all types of workers, but particularly among younger less skilled people. In addition, these structural changes to reduce costs have eroded, or at times removed entirely, traditional provisions of youth training schemes.

Research from a number of different countries reveals the fragmented and fractured path for young people into work (Yates et al., 2011). This can include migrating from one low paying job to another (Yates, 2005). A recent 4-year longitudinal study from the USA of motivational engagement with educational and career goals following high school graduation revealed the improved educational and enhanced psychological benefits of those motivated at both 2 and 4 years postgraduation and their increased job progress after 4 years (Heckhausen, Chang, Greenberger, & Chen, 2013). This study also revealed that those working longer hours shortly after graduation had poorer subsequent educational outcomes.

This discontinuity and disruption to employment patterns has produced a decline in “occupation” as being a central means of helping to guide individuals in their life planning but also in their social identity construction (Heinz, 2002). The speed of such changes to work creates a divergence from previous successful training routes for young people, such as Germany’s world standard apprenticeship training, which involved the slow acquisition of new skills required by employers. In the past, this type of training route operated in two distinct and very effective ways: First, it equipped young adults with technical skills that employers actually required, and second, it did so in a way that helped young people to orient themselves towards their careers. Instead, many youth now find themselves having to manage their own apprenticeship through the far less satisfactory internships route. Indeed while internships can be important in achieving necessary work experience, they may not be universally positive in their outcomes and large variations can exist in development opportunities and mutual dissatisfaction between young people and their employers (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010; Holyoak, 2013; Shoenfelt et al., 2013). Although work

experience offers an important insight into prevocational socialization, and better transitions into work, there is often a tension between the demands of the current flexible and insecure labor market and the expectations, aspirations and orientations of many young people.

Entrepreneurship and young people. An important employment option for many young people is self-employment (Gough et al., 2013). Indeed, young people are reported to have higher values and levels of ambitions regarding entrepreneurship (Bosma & Levie, 2010). The vicious circle concerning young peoples’ “lack of experience” can often be the catalyst in starting to shift perceptions of work toward more self-generated enterprise rather than more traditional routes into employment (Ryan, 2003). In some countries, such as Greece, Spain, and Ireland, this may be one the few options for those who complete education, and yet the enormity of the task is apparent with young entrepreneurs needing to be able to identify and tap into more buoyant international markets rather than those closer to home. This option is not necessarily a route for all. For example, a recent nine country study showed distinct differences in the goals of many young graduates with those from Italy aspiring to work for a multinational rather than in small or self-developed businesses (Limonta et al., 2014).

Insight into this topic is limited as there has been a tendency to either subsume young entrepreneurs as part of the general adult population, or to simply ignore such proactive efforts by young people. Overall, there is a lack of adequate understanding of the potential benefits of youth entrepreneurship as a means of improving livelihoods but also in how best to direct support specifically for young people (Cassia, Criaco, & Minola, 2012). As with other studies in the area of work, there are differences between distinct categories of young people, which reflect the value of adopting a more tailored and nuanced approach rather than seeking simple solutions. This next section outlines the early experiences of young entrepreneurs. First, a taxonomy of three distinct phases of entrepreneurship is discussed, and then evidence of the ongoing gender, socioeconomic, and ethnicity differences are highlighted. Strikingly, this is an area that reveals that this might be a more viable option for those from minority groups who may be more likely to have experienced discrimination.

Efforts to support young entrepreneurs can be considered in terms of three distinct phases, each with their own particular challenges. These stages include the formative, developmental, and start up (Chigunta, 2002). Such distinctions are helpful in identifying and attending more directly to how best to identify distinct training needs of young people. For example, the formative stage focuses on the factors influencing the early desire to become an entrepreneur, whereas the developmental phase is more concerned with the acquisition of key skills, in which it can be useful to differentiate between learning and strategic skills.

Knowledge, information, and learning from the world around them are clearly important in determining what area of work young people should choose. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa there are striking differences in the impact of globalization affecting the viability of self-employment, which reveal the better current options of those choosing hairdressing compared to making clothes (Langevang & Gough, 2012). In the last stage, the start-up, the emphasis needs to shift to acquiring distinct skills that enable successful entrepreneurs to better consolidate and expand their businesses, such as how to access credit or finance. This access to funding can be a key barrier for many young people (Schoof, 2006).

There are also clear disparities on the grounds of gender, education, and socioeconomic grounds in the success rates of entrepreneurs, suggesting that greater attention needs to be paid to targeting and more tailored approaches of support (Cassia et al., 2012). A recent study of Australian women at the top of organizations highlighted the importance of early exposure to the world of business for their subsequent entrepreneurship, with discussions around family dining tables of the realities of running small firms offering important learning (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). Although men are far more likely to view self-employment as a viable option (Bosma & Levie, 2010), there are other psychological dimensions that are also important. Psychological and social capital clearly plays important roles here regardless of national context. Success appears to depend on access to both strong and supportive personal networks, but also higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which together act to enhance entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors; thus, mere business knowledge and experience without the strong ties appears less effective for these two distinct aspects of entrepreneurship activity (Sequeira, Mueller, & McGee, 2007). Further, individual differences regarding entrepreneurship include personal initiative (Glaub, Frese, Fischer, & Hoppe, in press) and an internal locus of control, these combined with high levels of self-efficacy are particularly significant among women (Babalola, 2009). For example, in contexts such as those in Africa, higher levels of education provide more im-



petus for achievement and growth. In understanding reasons for gender differences in a US graduate context, psychological and environmental factors emerged as critical with womens' reduced entrepreneurial self-efficacy regarded as a product of their lack of previous exposure to entrepreneurship (Dempsey & Jennings, 2014). Young women from the USA were found to have less positive affect about entrepreneurship plus greater adverse effect for negative feedback. However, other research from the same context indicates that this is not a simple gender effect, with female members of minority groups showing more interest in this work option (Wilson, Marlino, & Kickul, 2004).

Entrepreneurship needs to be considered as a far more significant option for young people, with evidence showing the importance of early experiences in raising awareness and later positive attitudes towards this as a potential work option. Psychological factors, such as self-efficacy, personal initiative, but also social support and effective training are also significant factors in making individuals more able to withstand the failures that are a necessary part of this route to successful employment (Glaub et al., in press). Resilience and tenacity are clearly important as most entrepreneurs experience a number of set-backs and challenges in their life journeys. The role of educators, employers, psychologists, and career professionals remains underdeveloped for young entrepreneurs.

Recommendations and Considerations

For Job Seekers:

- Be proactive in building your employability profile by furthering their formal education, work experience, professional skills, and confidence that will help you gain employment
- Build and maintain a social network with peers or others who are working to learn vicariously what organizations are looking for; find out about opportunities and gain a foothold to organizations during the job search
- Keep energy levels high and hold on to a routine where you have goals about how many organizations you will contact, how you will spend your days productively, and what the failsafe plan is after a certain period of unemployment, including options such as going overseas, starting your own business, and working with family members

For Parents:

- Encourage and support youth to pursue internships or work opportunities during school years to gain critical skills that improve their employability
- Encourage young people to work part time during holidays and their studies
- Support young people to help them identify job leads and skill development opportunities

For Educators:

- Inform and support both parents and students about options and their implications, particularly those in lower socioeconomic and migrant communities who may not be aware of wider choices and possibilities
- Devote time to conversations with young people to help them think about careers and work from elementary school onwards
- Design educational programs to extend young peoples' social capital such as targeted mentoring; for example with women and minority groups, science, technology, engineering, and math opportunities are critical
- Devote educational resources towards developing skills training that includes job search skills, self-presentation abilities, self-efficacy, proactivity, goal setting, and how to enlist social support
- Manage young people's expectations to view careers as life-long journeys, framed around ongoing learning and development rather than as a final destination. This is significant in shifting mind sets and enhancing resilience
- Design university programs with the view to improve young people's employability and become pathways to work
- Offering internships where students have easy access to corporate partners would be a start, but also developing projects and other pieces of work that link clearly into work would be helpful

- Improve career advice and young people's opportunities for interaction with people from the industry
- Enable young people to continue working during studies
- Encourage nontraditional employment options, such as start-ups by providing business incubators. Young entrepreneurs would benefit from access to mentorship and dedicated space, and they can be the role model to students as well

For Employers:

- Create links with schools and universities in order to develop projects and exercises that tackle real organizational issues
- Design engagements that offer students the chance to ask questions and gain insight into work matters
- Make educators and organizations reflect on the skills being provided and the relevance of learning more apparent
- Create apprenticeship opportunities and other routes into work that deliberately target young workers and do not disadvantage applicants who do not have connections
- Train recruiters to provide developmental feedback not to dishearten job seekers

For Policy Makers:

- Boost youth employment via growth-oriented policies that will provide job creation
- Provide incentives for organizations, especially smaller workplaces, to take part in apprenticeship programs and provide more incentives for partnerships between schools and work organizations
- Enrich employability programs to include job search and interview skills alongside work experience, work relevant training, and unemployment coping skills

Conclusion

In this summary, it is clear that young people face unprecedented levels of challenge around the world in accessing the careers they want to pursue. Human capital is a vital area in which employers, educators, and young people need to focus in order to ensure that the skill set of job seekers are related to the world of work. Evidence shows some levels of exposure and experience of work during secondary education is of value, as are discussions about careers and aspirations. Clearly education plays an important role providing an advantage to young job seekers with higher levels of schooling. Social capital includes the relational resources available to a person, with both the size and strength and quality of social networks playing important roles. Therefore, those with limited social capital can be effectively barred from some options of employment. In addition, periods of unemployment can result in young people spending time with their peers rather than those who can offer them work opportunities. Thus, there are clear depleting effects of youth unemployment which become compounded over time. In looking at coping strategies, we can identify both engagement and disengagement strategies that are important to young people. The first ones are more clearly functional and effective though under given circumstance, although it may also be useful to utilize some temporary disengagement strategies too. There is a wide array of potential engagement coping strategies that may be effective to increase reemployment not only in quantitative terms but also according to quality criteria. Many of those coping strategies have been researched, and a number of evidence-based interventions have been developed and evaluated that may enrich the coping strategies to make them more effective. It is important, however, to pay attention to the boundary conditions both in terms of the context and the personal characteristics. Enhancing employability, improving job search abilities and practices, building and strengthening adaptive career strategies, and promoting proactive coping behaviors are just a few coping strategies that can be improved and made more effective with the support and guidance of well-designed and evaluated programs. Finally, it is important to emphasize that even if the active role of youth is crucial in dealing with unemployment it should not lead to an agentic assumption that blames the individual if he or she is not successful in coping with unemployment. It is important to realize that this is a multilevel phenomenon with important contextual and structural factors that cannot be dealt with just by an individual. Coping needs to be enacted at different levels and requires also collective action. Indeed, for young people their families are often actively involved in helping them find work. Moreover, it is important that governments, education institutions, companies, and other organizations design and implement interventions that facilitate resources for the youngsters to effectively cope with unemployment experiences and profit from them to grow and flourish in the broader context of their career development.

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