

CASE STUDY

# SCHOOL-TO- WORK TRANSITION

Based on ILO's School-to-Work Transition  
Survey

2018

Just as entry into stable employment has become a lengthier and more complex process, so the notion of what constitutes a young person has also undergone some modification. The standard United Nations (UN) definition of a young person as one aged between 15 and 24 years no longer fully covers the typical period of transition from education to employment which the concept of youth was originally intended to capture. These days, more young people stay in education to higher levels, and the transition process itself is becoming more drawn out, so that a significant number of young people do not complete that transition until their late twenties. Information from the ILO's School-to-Work Transition Survey (SWTS) illustrates that, in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), nearly one in three young men and around one in two young women aged between 25 and 29 were not working, either because they were still in education or training, and so had not yet begun the transition process, or because they were neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET), and so had not completed it.

The school-to-work transition can be a long and difficult process. At the same time, improving such transitions is a policy priority for many countries. Traditional labour market surveys do not provide sufficient data for designing and monitoring responses on this important subject. The School-to-Work Transition Surveys aim therefore to strengthen the evidence base.

Covering young women and men aged 15–29 years, the SWTS are detailed national household surveys that cover young people's current and past labour market experiences, along with their perceptions and aspirations. It encompasses indicators that define the stages and quality of transition, applying the concept of decent work.

According to the standard United Nations definition, established more than a quarter of a century ago, "youth" comprises young people aged from 15 to 24 years inclusive (United Nations, 1992). This has traditionally been used to capture the period of transition between childhood and full adulthood. One aspect of this transition concerns the movement from education to employment. Conceptually, the school-to-work transition refers to the period between leaving (usually full-time) education and entering (usually full-time) employment. Not all children participate in education, nor do all those who leave education enter the labour market. Nevertheless, the age-range was intended to encompass the normal school-leaving age and the typical age of entering the labour market.

Over the last two decades, more children are going to school and more young people go onto tertiary education. According to the SWTS data, at age 25 over 10 per cent of young women and young men in low- and middle-income countries were still in full-time education with a significant minority (over 5 per cent) staying there throughout their twenties. Moreover, it takes until age 24 until the majority of young people are in employment. There are also gender differences.

For young men, half were in employment by age 23; for young women, the 50 per cent threshold was only reached by age 29. Not only are young people spending more time in education they are also taking longer to enter the labour market. Both phenomena make the use of a slightly broader age-range, including also those aged 25 to 29, more sensible in operationally defining young people. This also conforms to national practice in many countries throughout the world where youth employment policies and programmes are often aimed at young labour market entrants aged under thirty.

Nowadays we could observe the «lost generation» formation – emergence of young people group, who are *not in employment, not in education, not in training* (NEETs), and who have lost hope on employment and do not intend to change the current situation. By age 25, over 30 per cent of young men and more than half of young women are either still in education or NEET. Moreover, even at age 29 a significant minority – over 5 per cent – of young people are still in education. Both of these factors tend to favour the extension of the "youth" category to all those still in their twenties. For both young men and young women, the proportion of NEETs tends to grow with age up to a point; among young men the percentage of NEETs in the population peaks at age 23, while for young women the rising trend continues into their late twenties – for fairly obvious reasons.

There are few stages of the transition from school to work:

I. Transited – A young person who has transited is one not in school and who is currently employed in either:

- a. *a stable job*
    - i. based on a written contract of duration at least 12 months; or
    - ii. based on an oral agreement and likely to keep the job over the next 12 months; or
  - b. *a satisfactory temporary job*
    - i. based on a written contract of duration less than 12 months and does not want to change the job; or
    - ii. based on an oral agreement; not certain to keep the job over the next 12 months and does not want to change the job; or
  - c. *satisfactory self-employment (in self-employed status and does not want to change the job).*
- II. In transition – A young person still “in transition” is one who is currently either:
- a. *an active student (employed or unemployed); or*
  - b. *unemployed (non-student, relaxed definition); or*
  - c. *employed in a temporary and non-satisfactory job*
    - i. based on a written contract of duration less than 12 months and wants to change the job; or
    - ii. based on an oral agreement; not certain to keep the job over the next 12 months and wants to change the job; or
  - d. *in non-satisfactory self-employment (in self-employed status and wants to change the job); or*
  - e. *inactive and not in education or training, with the aim of looking for work later.*
- III. Transition not yet started – A young person whose “transition has not yet started” is one who is currently:
- a. *still in school and inactive (inactive student); or*
  - b. *inactive and not in education or training (inactive non-student), with no intention of looking for work.*

Implemented in 2014, the Youth Guarantee programme committed European Union member states to ensure that within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed, anyone younger than 25 receives either a quality job offer suited to their education, skills and experience or the opportunity to acquire the education, skills and experience needed to find a job in the future through an apprenticeship, a traineeship or continued education. The programme has since been extended to individuals up to age 29 in a number of countries.

The Youth Guarantee programme is more than just a comprehensive active labour market programme (ALMP). It is intended to ensure that all young people who are NEET receive assistance before extended unemployment permanently impairs their chances of finding work. An important innovation is that it aims systematically to reach young people who are not looking for a job and who are not in education or training.

Previous interventions usually targeted only people explicitly seeking work – the young unemployed. The emphasis of the Youth Guarantee programme on young people who are not looking for a job and who are not in education or training (inactive NEETs) significantly extends the initiative to reach the most disadvantaged and discouraged. The range of options also goes well beyond the scope of typical ALMP interventions. In addition to subsidized employment and training opportunities, it includes subsidized participation in general education and apprenticeships. Because it has stimulated national policy reforms, it is better viewed as a youth labour market policy framework rather than simply a large scale ALMP.

The monitoring framework for the Youth Guarantee programme uses national and subnational NEET rates as an aggregate indicator of effectiveness. It is too early to have a systematic evaluation of the programme’s impact across the European Union. However, the NEET rate of 15- to 29-year-olds (as well as both of its components, unemployed and inactive youth outside of education) fell from 15.9 per cent in 2013 to 14.2 per cent in 2016, although not necessarily as a result of the Youth Guarantee programme. Indeed, in a number of countries with high youth unemployment and inactivity, such as Italy and Romania, the NEET rate over this period declined little or actually increased.

**Read the Case Study about ILO's School-To-Work Transition Surveys and Answer the Questions:**

1. Name the main stages of the transition from school to work for youth.
2. Describe the peculiarities of the school-to-work transition procedure in your country.
3. What consequences could occur due to long-term transition from education to getting a first job for individual, family, country?
4. Give the reasons for the appearance of the NEET generation in the global scale.
5. How acute is the issue with unemployed youth and NEET generation in your country?
6. Does higher education have an influence on employment status?
7. What measures does your government use to solve the problem of youth unemployment?
8. Provide the recommendations how to solve youth unemployment problem in your country.