



Youth Unemployment

HORIZON 30: Empowering Youth for Tomorrow's Workforce

Topics for Open Discussion



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Understanding Youth Unemployment



Youth unemployment refers to the situation in which young people, typically between the ages of 15 and 30, are actively seeking work but are unable to find employment. It is a complex social and economic issue that affects millions of young individuals worldwide. Beyond the lack of income, youth unemployment often leads to long-term consequences such as reduced career prospects, lower lifetime earnings, and delayed independence.

- How would you personally define youth unemployment based on your own experience or observations?
- Why do you think youth unemployment has long-term effects beyond the loss of income?
- In what ways does unemployment at a young age affect independence and life planning?

Structural Causes of Youth Unemployment

One of the main causes of youth unemployment is the mismatch between education systems and labour market needs. Many young people leave formal education without the practical skills, work experience, or digital competencies required by employers. Rapid technological change and evolving job profiles further widen this gap, making it difficult for young people to compete in an increasingly demanding labour market.

- Do you think education systems today prepare young people well for the labour market? Why or why not?
- What skills do you believe are most missing among young job seekers?
- How can schools and universities better adapt to labour market changes?



Economic Instability and Labour Market Conditions



Economic crises and periods of instability disproportionately affect young people. During recessions, employers tend to reduce hiring, and young workers are often the first to be excluded due to limited experience or temporary contracts. In many countries, young people are overrepresented in precarious jobs, internships, or informal employment, which offer little security or long-term career development.

- Why are young people often more affected during economic crises than other age groups?
- How do temporary or insecure jobs impact young people's future career paths?
- Should governments regulate precarious work more strictly for young workers?

Social Inequalities and Vulnerable Groups



Youth unemployment does not affect all young people equally. Those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities, migrants, young people with disabilities, and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) face higher risks of long-term unemployment. Structural discrimination, limited access to networks, and unequal educational opportunities further deepen these disparities.

- Which groups of young people face the greatest barriers to employment in your community?
- How does discrimination affect access to job opportunities?
- What actions can be taken to ensure equal opportunities for all young people?



The Transition from Education to Work

The transition from education to employment is a critical phase for young people. Many struggle to gain their first job due to a lack of professional experience, while employers often demand “job-ready” candidates. Apprenticeships, traineeships, and work-based learning can play a crucial role in easing this transition, yet access to such opportunities remains uneven across regions and social groups.

- Why is the first job often the hardest for young people to obtain?
- How effective are internships, apprenticeships, or traineeships in your country?
- What responsibilities do employers have in supporting young people’s transition to work?



THANK YOU



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