

ECOSOC RESEARCH REPORT—MEASURES TO COMBAT YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

I. Introduction of Topic:

Through an abstract but realistic lens, employment is at the root of any form of civilization. Economics provides the baseline of most civilization; employment thus perpetuates societies by maintaining the financial markets: unemployment threatens them. Oxford Dictionary defines employment both as “the state of having paid work” and “the utilization of something”¹. Both of these simply put definitions explain the core value of employment in society. Sources of income are crucial to smooth function and order of an economic market. A sustainable and reliable flow of money provides the security people need in order to lead enjoyable lives. The second description links to the fact that people who have livelihoods are, contrary to those who don’t, not only happier but also are better members of society. This may seem obvious but if analyzed closer the issue becomes much broader and connects to other subjects.

Civil unrest, including crime, would greatly decrease with the upsurge of employment. The two are interlinked and thus harmonize well with the theme of PAMUN this year. “Enhancing Global Standards for an Expanding Population”, means in other words increasing the quality of life whilst keeping up with an increasing population. The lack of livelihood clearly hinders the development of these “global standards” to improve. In addition, unemployment has been a product of this rapidly enlarging populous and so in order to attempt to obtain this desired “happiness” we must adapt and find solutions to provide job opportunities. Our target at PAMUN this year is the younger generation. The reason of this being that our population is expanding and will continue to do so. The next decade is very important in setting up the future course of the world. Which is why the development of the young is crucial and it must be ensured that by all possible means we seek to improve their lives thus preparing for the next generation.

Currently, youth (defined as being between fifteen and twenty-four years of age) unemployment is at an all time high. According to the International Labor Organization, there are on average 73 million young people currently looking for work, but individual country rates can range from low numbers such as Norway placed at 3.5% to dangerously high digits like Greece at 27.6% (Statistics of 2013).

A direct correlation emerges between population growth rates and unemployment rates. In particular relatively small nations in African regions and the Middle East are growing at an exponential rate. These same countries also face some

Global youth unemployment

Region	2012 jobless rate
Middle East	28.3 %
North Africa	23.7 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	11.8 %
South Asia	9.3 %
East Asia	9 %
South-East Asia and the Pacific	13.1 %
Latin America and the Caribbean	12.9 %
Central and South-Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS	17.9 %
Advanced economies	18.1 %

¹ "Definition of Employment in English:." *Employment: Definition of Employment in Oxford Dictionary (British & World English)*. N.p., n.d. Web.

of the largest unemployment rates. This reality is becoming more eminent and needs urgent attention. High population growth in already high unemployment areas leads to the risk of market collapse in the nation. The issue of joblessness will continue to worsen when the two factors coincide.

In the past, any bachelor degree seemed to create a direct link to a well-paying job. However, with the influx of college-educated students in recent years, a college diploma hardly has the same weight; data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and the U.S. Department of Labor confirms this when they conducted a study in 2011. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Youth Unemployment 2013-2014, "youth are finding it ever more difficult to find jobs that match their skills and education"², a statement which succinctly describes the problems that students face upon entering the job-market.

Student incentive to enter collegiate education is thus decreasing because the massive time and financial investment does not seem to impact the likelihood of getting a job. The World Economic Forum has responded to this problem via Entrepreneurship Educational Programs. These programs enable its participants with training to better equip them in the workforce. The tool they focus on teaching is innovative thinking. Their belief is that in order to conquer the lack of employment opportunities, entrepreneurs must emerge and for that to take place new approaches and creative solutions must be made.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are many- especially youth who live in LEDC's- who are plagued by a lack of access to quality education. In order to receive a job placement, and consequent reliable source of income, education is a key element that is often overlooked. There are still many areas today that lack fundamental education and the youth concerned suffer greatly from this deficit once they enter the job market. Without any information whatsoever they are also losing awareness as to what rights they have once they are employed. Thus this lack of schooling leads to poor working conditions.



II. Background:

The United Nations determined youth as those people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. This specific age range was chosen due to the focus on education, as in the UN Human Rights Declaration, it is stated that all children should receive

² Mehran Gul, Tanya Milberg, and Martina Gmür. "Global Agenda Council on Youth Unemployment 2012-2014." *The World Economic Forum*. N.p., n.d. Web.

mandatory education up to the age of 15. Of course, beyond schooling is encouraged but the official decree is such. Beyond the age of 15 many young people begin to look for work. There are some countries whose federal laws oppose this and have set a higher age such as 16 or 18 before adolescents can enter the workforce. However, once a youth is of age, there is a struggle to enter the workforce: a battle that becomes more difficult to conquer every year.

To tackle this issue, post World War I, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded under the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Its objectives then was to promote peace by helping to sustain the economy through the job market. The organization still exists today, in 1946 coming under UN jurisdiction, maintaining the same goals. In specific, during the Great Depression, when it was faced with a huge unemployment crisis, the ILO promoted industrialization of countries to ameliorate the situation. They also made initiatives to create areas where employment could be studied such as the Geneva-based International Institute for Labour Studies in 1960 and the International Training Centre in Turin in 1965. Both of these accomplishments contributed to them winning the Nobel Peace Prize on its 50th anniversary in 1969.

The ILO also takes part of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), which is also in collaboration with the United Nations, and the World Bank. They were founded in 2001 after the creation of the Millennium development goals. It was created to focus on the objective of youth employment. The YEN has a small number of achievements but has the potential to grow if it had renewed effort and cooperation. Similarly to the YEN the ILO has another effort known as the Youth Employment Program (YEP). Some of its operations include data collection, analyzing different countries youth employment strategies, and providing advice and assistance to nations.

The situation worsened extremely rapidly at the end of the 1900s. Gary Martin reported in the Monthly Labour Review (2009) that, “During the 1960s, the United States and Canada were the only industrialized countries to have youth unemployment rates over 10 percent, but by the 1980s many more countries had double digit youth unemployment rates”³. The global job market’s position changed dramatically in just 20 years. Every economic crisis sets us back dating back to the years of the Great Depression. In 2008, the world dealt with (and still has not fully recovered from) a financial crisis, which prompted a remarkable amount of cutbacks. Today, many nations especially in Europe (such as Greece and Spain) are beginning to mirror the US in 2008 by laying off workers to combat economic crisis’s.

III. Relevant International Agreements, Conventions, Organizations and Resolutions:

- **January – April 1919:** International Labour Organization (ILO)- Foundation of the organization; “The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.”⁴
- **September 1961:** Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is created in order to gather statistics on the global fiscal market and

³ "Youthinnovators." *Youthinnovators*. Citizens for Accountable Governance, 06 Sept. 2013. Web

⁴ "About the ILO." *About the ILO*. N.p., n.d. Web.

issues related to economics. Today it continues to collect data on the employment sector around the world.

- **March 1999:** ILO Decent Work Agenda Creation - This is a pledge to tackle the issue of youth employment through means such as: creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue.
- **September 2000:** United Nations Millennium Declaration- Section III on Development and Poverty Eradication outlines the immediate need for work as a human right. It says that the future of the workforce relies on the governments and their desire to increase quality of life in their respective nations. It sets goals such as: “To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work”.
- **2001:** Youth Employment Network (YEN)- As a branch off of the ILO it searches to “engage, educate and motivate actors to provide improved employment opportunities for youth.”⁵
- **June 2005:** 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference
- **November 2005:** ILO Decent Work Agenda Revised from 1999

June 2012: 101st International Labour Conference – The ILO convened and wrote a resolution targeting youth unemployment. They divided the issue into five parts, which the resolution is based on: “macro-economic policies, employability, labour market policies, youth entrepreneurship and rights”⁶. The resolution includes a summary of tested solutions to battle the issue and their outcomes.

IV. Main Issues:

Lack of work opportunities:

Blatantly the lack of employment opportunities is the main issue. Its effects are leading to disastrous consequences internationally and the damages being caused now are setting the course for future generations. The spirits of young people today are exceedingly low as they confront rejections every day and encounter social problems due to financial restrictions.

Quality of work offered:

There are two components to the issue of “Quality”. The first being that many young people today have poor working conditions. Unfortunately youth searching and desperate for employment can be seen as easy prey for businesses who will then exploit their workers. Especially in LEDC’s easy employment often times comes from unreliable sources that fail to respect basic human rights. On another point, the problem of over qualification comes into play. Students obtaining undergraduate bachelor degrees are working for medium wage because of the lack of jobs.

⁵ "The Youth Employment Network." *The Youth Employment Network*. N.p., n.d. Web.

⁶ "Youth Employment." *Youth Employment*. N.p., n.d. Web

Equivalently graduate studies are proving to be unhelpful as well. Therefore the lack of high quality work is discouraging students from pursuing high education.

Lack of necessary tools in order to obtain work:

Education has been recognized the UN and the ILO as being an absolute necessity for the advancement of young people. Without it the job market restricts itself even more than it is now. In order to provide better job opportunities mandatory education as outlined in the Millennium Declaration must be implemented. This will ensure at least a basic knowledge of the unalienable rights people hold in the workplace.

Employment disadvantages based on identity differences:

Identity differences whether physical, ethical, cultural (“gender, age, education, social background, origin, disability, HIV/AIDS, or being a migrant”⁷) should not be affecting the employment opportunities presented to a young person. In conjunction with the Human Rights Declaration, these characteristics should not be causing any disadvantages to the candidate’s chances at being employed.

V. Additional Resources:

EUROPA is a EU website that provides official and verified information on EU institutions, bodies and agencies

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-968_en.htm

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship has written a document suggesting methods to help “Grow the Global Economy”

http://www.nfte.com/sites/default/files/nfte_whitepaperfinal.pdf

World Economic Forum seeks to promote global cooperation

<http://www.weforum.org/content/global-agenda-council-youth-unemployment-2012-2014>

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is a bountiful source of statistics and data on all issues relevant to the economy

<http://www.oecd.org/youth.htm>

CIA World Factbook data and statistics on individual countries

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS>

International Labour Organization

<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/youth.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/resolutions.pdf>

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---

[relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_182840.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_182840.pdf)

<http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm>

⁷ "Discrimination, Inequality, and Poverty-A Human Rights Perspective | Human Rights Watch." *Discrimination, Inequality, and Poverty-A Human Rights Perspective* | Human Rights Watch. N.p., n.d. Web.

It is advisable, before starting any research on specific issues on the agenda, to browse extensively the <WWW Virtual Library: International Affairs resources>, one of the best portal with scores of valuable links: <http://www2.etown.edu/vl/> and of course the main UN portal: <http://www.un.org/> as well as the invaluable UN cyber-school-bus website: <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/> . The THIMUN website, <http://www.thimun.org/> also has an extensive and efficient <Research> section worth browsing. For comprehensive academic documents on international crisis: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/> has numerous reports in PDF format.

Procedural Reminder

Delegates are reminded that at PAMUN conference, they are not expected to arrive with full-fledged resolutions. One or two solid clauses with which to caucus and kick-off the debates is all that is required. These clauses should arise from the <Main Issues> section in the Research Reports, which aims at directing the attention of the delegates to the pending issues which are in need of finding a solution, which is what the debates in the committees seek to achieve. At PAMUN, Resolutions are expected to emerge from the clause by clause debates in the committees.