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Enhancing the employability of disadvantaged youth: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills

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Foreword

Skills development is essential for increasing the productivity and sustainability of enterprises and improving working conditions and the employability of workers.[1] In order to secure that first job as well as navigate in the labour market, young women and men need the technical skills to perform specific tasks as well as core work skills: learning to learn, communication, problem-solving and teamwork. Development of core skills, awareness of workers' rights and an understanding of entrepreneurship are the building blocks for lifelong learning and capability to adapt to change.

The ILO defines employability skills as:

> *… the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work.*[2]

Employability results from several factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills – and is critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets.[3]

As countries seek strategies to ensure that all young women and men get opportunities to enhance their employability and improve the productivity of enterprises, the ILO has prepared this guide to assist key stakeholders to better understand core work skills, their importance and ways in which these skills can be delivered, attained and recognized. This guide illustrates various ways of integrating employability skills into core academic content and vocational training, rather than through a "core skills curriculum". An ILO review of numerous teaching methodologies and training techniques reveals that acquiring such skills requires innovative ways of delivering training that combine core skills and technical skills.

Recognizing the added hurdles that disadvantaged youth face in the labour market the guide pays particular attention to this group. Innovative use of ICT, improving informal apprenticeships systems and targeted interventions directed at the specific hurdles provide greater opportunities to bring core work skills into technical training of disadvantaged young women and men.

Approaches presented in this guide are currently being used to build core skills development into various ILO technical cooperation projects and programmes, notably youth employment and child labour

[1] Resolution on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development. 97th Session the International Labour Conference, 2008.

[2] HRD Recommendation 195, 2004; this was reinforced in the Resolution on Youth Employment 2005.

[3] See footnote 1.

initiatives. There is potential to extend this effort more widely in the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE), local economic development and intensive investment projects, amongst others. Given this potential and opportunity to learn more from its implementation, the guide will remain a living document as additional approaches and concrete illustrations are gathered, which will be incorporated into a later edition.

I am grateful to Laura Brewer, Specialist in Skills for Youth Employment, for writing this document. I would like to thank the skills specialists and employment services specialists at Headquarters and in the field who provided invaluable direction when the idea for this guide was initially presented, and comments and suggestions on various drafts. Contributions from ILO colleagues in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour Programme (IPEC), the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), and the Sectoral Activities and Employment Policy departments are much appreciated. I look forward to continued support in providing innovative approaches and concrete illustration of how core work skills have been taught, learned and recognized and what difference this has made in facilitating the transitions of youth into decent work.

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Enhancing the employability of disadvantaged youth: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills

Skills have become increasingly important in the globalized world. Vocational and technical skills are essential, but employers are seeking applicants with more. They want employees who can continue to learn and adapt; read, write and compute competently; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently; manage themselves at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology, lead effectively as well as follow supervision. These **core skills for employability** are both important to employers' recruitment and enhance an individual's ability to secure a job, retain employment and move flexibly in the labour market as well as engage in lifelong learning.

Employability entails much more than the ability to get that first job. It is having the capacity to network and market oneself, navigate through a career and remain employable throughout life. It requires the ability to ask questions, acquire new skills, identify and evaluate options, understand rights at work including the right to a safe and healthy work environment, adapt successfully to changing situations and the courage to innovate.

This paper is designed to guide readers through the key issues in identifying the relevant core skills for employability, understanding their importance and ways these skills can be delivered, attained and recognized. An ILO review of numerous teaching methodologies and training techniques demonstrates that acquiring such skills requires innovative ways of delivering training, so that core skills go hand in hand with technical skills. This guide illustrates various ways of integrating employability skills into core academic content and vocational training, rather than providing a "core skills curriculum". The audience is broad as there are many actors in this field (see Box 1).

Box 1: Who can benefit from this guide?

This guide is designed for:

- **policy-makers** and shapers in the fields of education and employment/labour, who would benefit from greater knowledge of the changing demands of the labour market and school-to-work transitions;
- **education and training institutions** which are often responsible for delivering these skills;
- **employers and their organizations** in order to facilitate recognition of core work skills acquired without certification;
- **youth,** who need to appreciate both the demand for these skills but also the personal benefits of attaining them;
- **practitioners**, who are addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth on the ground, to provide good practice examples in delivery as well as benefit from the experiences of other practitioners;
- **public employment services** which have a key role in facilitating labour market transitions, providing advice to employers, workers' associations, training institutions and jobseekers;
- **international agencies** to build cooperation and understanding in this area.

This guide begins with an overview of the challenges facing young women and men in the labour market. It provides the background to this discussion, highlighting the daunting situation of youth unemployment, underemployment, and detachment from the labour market and working poverty. It looks at the role of skills in improving transitions to decent work, whether from school or from the informal economy.

Recognizing the relevance of core skills for employability, the ILO's Governing Body addressed issues around skills recognition and policies to enhance portability of skills at the national, regional and international levels. The debate directed the work of the Office in this area. This guide builds on the 2007 discussions, moving the agenda on enhancing employability forward.[4]

***What** are core skills for employability?* Core employability skills build upon and strengthen those developed through basic education, such as reading and writing, the technical skills needed to perform specific duties, and professional/personal attributes such as honestly, reliability, punctuality, attendance and loyalty. Core work skills are often not certified nor formally recognized. Section 2 provides a review of the numerous lists of skills and abilities developed by countries, agencies and researchers, identifying the core skills that individuals need to be successful in attaining, retaining and advancing in employment. The skills are categorized under four broad headings: learning to learn, communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

***Why** are core work skills important* for young women and men embarking on their first job, employees and employers? For job-seekers, the simple answer is that employers are seeking recruits that are job ready, not just those with the technical skills. Employees will be able to respond quickly, reducing the time taken for a product to be conceptualized, manufactured, distributed and sold. Workers will be able to learn more quickly and perform more effectively, allowing for more innovative workplaces where employees can offer novel ideas. Enhanced flexibility means that businesses will be able to adjust quickly to technological change and organizational restructuring. Section 3 briefly discusses the benefits of core skills for ability and their demand in the labour market.

The bulk of this guide explores ***how*** these skills are *taught/delivered, learned/acquired* in various settings. Traditionally these skills were learned on-the-job but the changing nature of work places is such that employers expect workers to come with core employability skills in hand.

Box 2: What do we mean by disadvantage?

Disadvantage refers to income poverty, or lack of experience in and poor understanding of the formal job market; discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, race or ethnicity amongst others; and geographical isolation with poor access to quality education and job opportunities.

Section 4, noting that the best way to learn these transversal skills is on the job, explores alternative delivery modalities as many employers are no longer prepared to train new recruits. Secondary education and training systems are developing innovative ways of delivering the academic curricula; recognizing this is better than developing a core skills curriculum. Reaching disadvantaged youth, so they have the same

[4] ILO Governing Body GB.298/ESP/3, 298th Session, *Portability of Skills,* March, 2007. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_gb_298_esp_3_en.pdf

opportunities to acquire the skills needed for the world of work, is discussed in this section, presenting various good practice examples of second chance opportunities, apprenticeships and active labour market programmes.

Section 5 considers **how** core skills for employability are *recognized or acknowledged* by key actors; and *demonstrated* when no formal certification accompanies them. Public employment services (PES), private employment agencies and NGOs play a key role in this area, assisting applicants to address skills being sought by employers. PES help match supply and demand on the labour market through information, placement and active support services at local, national and regional level.

1. The labour market reality of young women and men

The employment situation of young people today is characterized specifically by high unemployment and underemployment, lower quality jobs and difficult transitions into decent work, which combined, contribute to the detachment of the current generation from the labour market altogether.

According to the ILO,[5] the world faces the challenge of creating 600 million jobs over the next decade. The challenge is formidable given the present growth and economic forecasts, and without significant changes in the policy environment. There are likely to be significant consequences for young people as upcoming cohorts of new entrants join the ranks of the already unemployed. The associated risks of social unrest, detachment from the labour market and society, and loss of faith in social progress are no longer potential, but real.[6]

1.1. Creating jobs or developing skills?

At the same time as the world struggles with youth unemployment, paradoxically, it is experiencing a skills shortage. The McKinsey Report, drawing on survey data from nine countries, demonstrates that 43 per cent of employers indicated they could find the skills entry-level workers they needed.[7] So addressing youth unemployment and under-employment requires both job creation and skills development.

Box 3: Youth and the labour market: some facts and figures (2012)

- Close to 75 million young people worldwide unemployed, 4 million more than in 2007.
- More than 6 million youth had given up looking for a job.
- Over 200 million young people were working but living on less than US$2 a day.
- Globally, the world will need to create some 40 million new jobs each year for new labour market entrants.
- 200 million jobs are needed to absorb the unemployed in 2012 (of which 75 million are youth).

A skilled workforce goes hand in hand with economic growth. Skills development needs to be part of a comprehensive, integrated strategy for growth that improves the lives of all. The question is not whether creating jobs or developing skills comes first; both need to be pursued in a coherent, integrated manner. Investing in skills training and education is smart; for every US$1 invested in skills and education in developing countries, US$10-15 is raised in economic growth.[8] By measuring education levels based on what students have learned, one

[5] ILO Global Employment Trends 2012: Preventing a deeper jobs crisis, January.

[6] ILO 2012 Report V The youth employment crisis: Time for action, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, 2012 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_175421.pdf

[7] McKinsey Center for Government 2012. Education to Employment: Designing a system that works. The nine countries: Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UK and US.

[8] Hanushek, E., and L. Woessmann. 2011. GDP projections for low-income countries based on education quality. Background paper for UNESCO 2012 Education or All Global Monitoring Report. EFA GMR 2012 *Youth and skills: Putting education to work* http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf

influential study estimates that an increase of one standard deviation in student scores on international assessments of literacy and mathematics is associated with a 2 per cent increase in annual GDP per capita growth.[9]

Core work skills help individuals to understand the labour market, make more informed choices about their options in education, training, wage employment, self-employment, cooperatives. They also help them become better citizens and contribute to their communities and societies.

Generally, education improves a young person's chances of securing a better quality job, and increases his/her productivity and income. In OECD countries, for example, unemployment among young people aged 20–24 who have completed upper secondary education is reduced by 7.4 percentage points. So countries need to continuously upgrade the educational and skill levels of their labour force so they can compete in the global economy.[10]

Many young people face difficulties in finding a job because of the mismatch between their education/training and labour market requirements. Innovation, technology and market developments have turned the world of work into a fast-changing environment. There is a need to equip a growing young workforce with skills required for the jobs of the future, not to mention re-equipping the current workforce with the skills required to keep up with a changing world. The greatest challenge lies in the technology- and knowledge-intensive sectors that also have the highest potential for economic growth and employment.[11]

Anticipating future skills needs is the first building block of strong training and skills strategies. Several methods are used to forecast future skills needs. These include: forecasting occupational and skills profiles at various levels of disaggregation; social dialogue; labour market information systems and employment services; and analysis of the performance of training institutions, including tracer studies. Country experience suggests it may make more sense to prioritize core and transversal skills,[12] especially building the capacity to learn, rather than training to meet detailed forecasts of technical skill needs, because these may change before curricula can adjust. Shorter training courses, which build on general technical and core skills, can minimize time lags between emerging skill needs and the provision of adequate training.[13]

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[9] Hanushek, E., and L. Woessmann. 2008. "The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development." Journal of Economic Literature 46 (3): 607–68; as cited in Learning for All: Investing in Peoples' Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, 2011.

[10] OECD. 2011 *Education at a Glance 2011: Highlights.* http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED524204.pdf

[11] ILO 2012 The Youth Employment Crisis: Highlights of the 2012 ILC report. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ed_emp_msu/documents/publication/wcms_181269.pdf

[12] These "core and transversal skills" are the focus of this guide. This paper uses the ILO term "core skills" for employability or core work skills.

[13] ILO 2012 Report V The youth employment crisis: Time for action, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, 2012 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_175421.pdf

2. What are core skills for employability?

In 2000, the then 175 members of the ILO adopted a Resolution concerning human resources training and development, which defined employability skills as:

> *… the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work.*[14]

Table 1: Skills for the world of work	
Basic/foundation	At their most elemental, foundation skills include the literacy and numeracy skills necessary for getting work that can pay enough to meet daily needs. These skills are also a prerequisite for continuing in education and training, and for acquiring transferable and technical and vocational skills that enhance the prospect of getting good jobs
Vocational or technical	Specialized skills, knowledge or know-how needed to perform specific duties or tasks
Professional/personal	Individual attributes that impact on work habits such as honesty, integrity, work ethic
Core work skills	The ability to learn and adapt; read, write and compute competently; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently; manage oneself at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology, lead effectively as well as follow supervision.

Core employability skills build upon and strengthen those developed through basic education, such as reading and writing, the technical skills needed to perform specific duties, such as nursing, accounting, using technology or driving a forklift and professional/ personal attributes such as honestly, reliability, punctuality, attendance and loyalty. Core work skills enable individuals to constantly acquire and apply new knowledge and skills, they are also critical to lifelong learning.

These skills have been labelled differently by various agencies and organizations (see Box 4). Not only are these variably labelled, the incumbent skills differ, depending on the definition and scope adopted as well as the level/type of employment under discussion. There is also a developed country bias in the literature covering this area of skills development.

Most of the research in this area has been conducted in industrialized countries, through employer surveys seeking information on skills, competencies, abilities and expectations of their prospective employees. Often these surveys serve to inform policy-makers of the need for educational reform and/or

[14] HRD Recommendation 195, 2004; this was reinforced in the Resolution on Youth Employment 2005.

restructuring to address the gap between the skills required for entry-level employment and the skill-levels of the applicants. Business and industry representatives often express dissatisfaction with the general level of "preparedness" of job applicants. In other words they feel that too often applicants are not "job-ready."

Box 4: Terminology: a selection

United Kingdom	Core skills, key skills, common skills
New Zealand	Essential skills
Australia	Key competencies/employability skills/generic skills
United States	Basic skills, necessary skills, workplace know-how
Singapore	Critical enabling skills
France	Transferable skills
Germany	Key qualifications
Switzerland	Trans-disciplinary goals
Denmark	Process independent qualifications
ASEAN	Employability skills
Latin America	Key competencies, work competencies
European Cmsn	Key competencies
OECD	Key competencies
ILO	Core work skills/core skills for employability
EFA-GMR	Transferable skills

Matrices of skills are developed from the survey results across sectors, which reflect general skill categories as well as specific skills within each category. Upon review of dozens of matrices of core skills it becomes evident that certain skills recur throughout.[15] Clearly some skills are more relevant than others depending on the type of employment, the sector, the size and nature of the enterprise, whether self-employed or working in the formal or the informal economy. There is also some overlap with regard to the specific skills under the broad headings. For example, in order to function effectively on a team you need good communication skills. The core employability skills from the various matrices have been pooled under four broad skill categories: learning to learn; communication; teamwork; problem-solving (see Table 2 Core skills for employability).

Learning to learn

Learning to learn is about acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes which enable individuals to set, plan and reach their own learning goals and become independent autonomous learners. It allows young people to meet the demands of lifelong learning. It implies not only that individuals gain certain skills, but also that they become self-directed learners and rely on their own learning capacities. Therefore, learning to learn strategies are about learning what you know, learning what you do not know, and learning what to do about it.

These skills will enable one to take more responsibility for his/her own learning; spend one's time effectively and stay on task; select the best approach(s) for each task; provide the knowledge and skills needed to begin, follow through, and complete tasks; access to a variety of content and reference materials; and give the confidence to know when and who to ask for help.

Learning to learn includes knowledge of study strategies, practice and attitudes, which are interrelated. Youth will not acquire knowledge on information retrieval or effective reading strategies if they are not motivated to learn. They cannot develop positive attitudes towards lifelong learning or become self-directed learners if they do not perceive themselves as capable of succeeding in learning tasks. Skills and

[15] See Annex for relevant matrices.

habits are important, since developing better learning strategies takes time and requires training opportunities.

Companies are looking for knowledge workers who take responsibility for their own professional development. Lifelong learning is a must for workers; it is a key element to being successful.

Communication

Oral, written and IT communication skills are the media for sharing knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions, feelings, and ideas in order to influence and ultimately lead others.

Communication skills include the ability to: listen and observe to gain understanding; clearly and effectively relate ideas; use strategies and skills to work effectively with others; and analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of formal and informal communications.

Being able to effectively communicate has been found to result in positive outcomes such as improved family, peer and group relationships. Interpersonal competence [learning to be empathetic, sensitive and make friends easily] and interpersonal communication skills [ability to express oneself, listen, or resolve conflicts] are among the life skills and assets that youth need to succeed. The development of skills to resolve conflicts is considered to be a key to a youth's social development. Communication skills are highly correlated to problem-solving and conflict resolutions skills.

Teamwork

Teamwork is all about being able to operate smoothly and efficiently within a group. Doing this draws on a number of other skills: the ability to encourage and inspire other team members to perform better; the ability to compromise and ignore one's own ego; and communication and other interpersonal skills such as negotiation, influence, advising and interpreting.

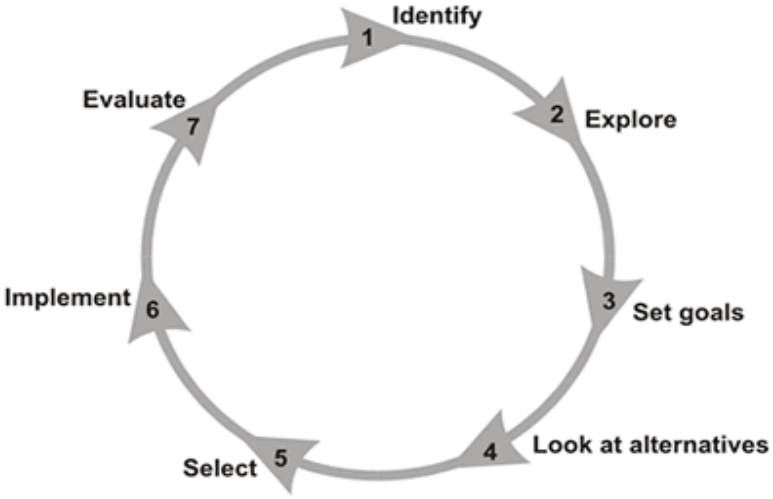
Teamwork is a high priority for most employers; being able to work well with colleagues is essential. Employers, therefore, are looking for individuals who can bring different strengths to teams – monitoring or evaluating progress; urging the team on when needed; contributing innovative new ideas.

Teamwork skills include the ability to make decisions, including specifying goals and constraints; consider risks; and generate and evaluate alternatives. It requires cooperation and leadership, including: organizing groups to accomplish a purpose; helping others to do things their way; ability to choose appropriate leadership style; understanding personal strengths; and teaching others new skills. Equally it is about following orders, respecting leadership and knowing how to communicate concerns and position.

Problem-solving

In order to succeed in the workplace (and in life generally) individuals need to be able to evaluate information or situations; break them down into their key components; consider various ways of approaching and resolving them; and decide which is the most appropriate. These problem-solving skills include recognizing long-term consequences of solutions to problems and probing, devising, implementing, and evaluating a plan of action for problem resolution.

Employers want workers who will take the personal responsibility to make sure targets are met; who can see that there might be a better way of doing something and who are prepared to research and implement change; people who don't panic or give up when things go wrong but who will seek a way around the problem. The following is a typical problem-solving model.



2.1. Range of skills and abilities

The range of skills and abilities falling under each of the broad skill categories appears in Table 2. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but seeks to capture those skills that consistently appear in employers' surveys and country and agency definitions (see Annex).

Table 2: Core skills for employability

Broad skill category	Core work skills/abilities
Learning to learn	• think abstractly • use learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills • organize, process, and maintain information • interpret and communicate information • pursue independent learning • conduct systematic inquiry; and follow through to find answers • take responsibility for own learning • spend time effectively • stay on task • select the best approach for tasks • begin, follow through and complete tasks • manage own learning • adaptable • works safely • is willing to learn • uses time efficiently without sacrificing quality

Communication	• competent in reading • write to the needs of an audience • write effectively in the languages in which the business is conducted • listen and communicate effectively • listen to understand and learn • read independently • read, comprehend and use materials, including graphs, charts, displays • understand and speak the language which the business is conducted • use numeracy effectively • articulate own ideas and vision
Team work	• interact with co-workers • understand and contribute to the organization's goals • work within the culture of the group • plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes • work in teams or groups • respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group • coach, mentor and give feedback • lead effectively • lead when appropriate • mobilize a group for high performance • manage oneself at work • accountability for actions taken • build partnerships and coordinate a variety of experiences • work toward group consensus in decision-making • value others' input • accept feedback • resolve conflicts
Problem-solving	• think creatively • solve problems independently • test assumptions • identify problems • take the context of data and circumstances into account • adapt to new circumstances • ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done (initiative) • collect, analyse and organize information (planning and organization) • ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals

The list is long and for those just embarking on the labour force, looking for their first job, keen to start their own small business, finishing studies, it's intimidating. Of course not all these skills and abilities are required for every job, nor does every job-seeker need every single one of them, but a good combination of the broad skill categories is desirable. It is important to keep in mind that many of the skills/abilities listed develop as one gains more and more experience in the workplace.

Much of the literature in this area focuses on defining the skills and developing matrices. There is a reluctance or inability to move beyond, to areas which are contingent upon definitions: the teaching, learning, assessing and certification of generic workforce skills and recognition by employers, especially when developed outside the formal education system. That is the intent of the remainder of this guide: to

move beyond identification to why core work skills are important and how individuals obtain these skills in a variety of settings.

3. Why are core skills for employability important?

Core skills for employability underpin everything one does - at school, at work and at home. We communicate all the time and use ICT more and more each day. One who works well with others, is well organized, and can tackle problems effectively, often gets on best in his/her studies, gets good grades, and gets on well at work and in life in general. Better results are achieved when students improve their discussion, speaking, listening and writing skills; find and process information in all its forms; use numbers confidently; and get the best out of ICT.

These skills benefit those embarking on the labour market, employees and employers. Employees will be able to respond quickly, reducing the time taken for a product to be conceptualized, manufactured, distributed and sold. Workers will be able to learn more quickly and perform more effectively, allowing for more innovative workplaces where employees can offer novel ideas. Enhanced flexibility means that businesses will be able to adjust quickly to technological change and organizational restructuring.

Similarly, improving one's own learning and performance allows one to manage time and work or study programme, while working with others shows one how to get the best out of working in groups and teams. Problem-solving helps individuals develop a systematic approach to tackling the various problems encountered in their studies, work and everyday life.

Box 5: *Employers want assurances that young people applying for jobs have at least strong foundation skills and can deploy their knowledge to solve problems, take initiative and communicate with team members, rather than just follow prescribed routines. These ... skills are not taught from a textbook, but can be acquired through good quality education. Yet employers often indicate that they are lacking in new recruits to the labour market* (EFA GMR 2012).

The bottom line is, in addition to applying technical skills in the workplace, employers are looking for job applicants who: can communicate effectively, including with customers; can work in teams, with good interpersonal skills; can solve problems; have good ICT skills; are willing and able to learn; and are flexible in their approach to work. Employers are asking three broad questions of candidates: Can you do the job? Are you motivated? Do you fit the organization?

3.1. Core work skills and rights at work

Improving young workers' knowledge of their rights at work, will, in turn enable them to identify whether their conditions of work are in line with these rights. Core employability skills help young workers exercise their rights as workers more effectively.

The ILO's Youth rights@work: Facilitator's Guide and Toolkit increases awareness of young peoples' rights at work, their social protection entitlements and fair conditions of work.

This training material has been designed to support trade unions, employment services, education and training institutions and civil society organizations to help young workers learn about their rights in the workplace. The tool consists of a guide for facilitators, a toolkit that provides examples, individual and group activities and a glossary of terms and links to key international labour standards. This material could

Box 6: Some key features of the *Youth rights@work* training process

- learning sessions are enriched through the presence of local experts in the area of employment including trade unions' activists, labour inspectors and young workers themselves;
- distribution of examples of written employment contracts and payslips help young workers better understand their entitlements;
- young workers are given contacts of institutions and organizations that can provide information on workers' rights and advice on how to ensure that these rights are respected.

also be used by facilitators to develop users' guides that are tailored to national circumstances. This has been the case in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Peru and Albania.

The training addresses: the key features of employment contracts; social security systems; conditions of work; occupational safety and health issues, the identification of hazards in the workplace and measures to minimize risks; and practical advice to young workers to manage conflict in the workplace.

4. How do individuals acquire core skills for employability?

This section looks at: a) how individuals acquire core skills for employability; b) how these skills are acknowledged; and c) how job-seekers can demonstrate that they have them. **The best way to learn these skills is on the job.** But as the previous section demonstrates, many employers are no longer prepared to take on new recruits without demonstrated ability in this skills set. In the 1970s, employee training was commonplace, meaning that new recruits learned these core work skills on the job. The shift from extensive training began after the 1980 recession as companies became more cost conscious and intensified in the economic and employment crisis of 2007-2009. Firms also grew weary of paying for workers to gain skills and learn about work culture only to watch them defect to competitors. Therefore, the onus now falls on individuals and education and training systems.

4.1. The role of formal education and training systems

Developing core employability skills and ensuring lifelong learning for all presents major challenges for education and training systems. It is crucial to ensure quality basic education; change learning practices to equip people for work, with more emphasis on learning by doing, working in teams and thinking creatively; and developing reliable and efficient assessment methods so the skills developed are recognized by employers.

Good quality primary and secondary education, complemented by relevant vocational training and skills development opportunities, prepare future generations for their productive lives, endowing them with the core skills that enable them to continue learning.[16]

Secondary school is an important channel through which young people acquire skills that improve opportunities for good jobs. High quality secondary education that caters for the widest possible range of abilities, interests and backgrounds is vital to set young people on the path to the world of work as well as to give countries the educated workforce they need to compete in today's technology driven world.

Lower secondary school extends and consolidates the basic skills learned in primary school; upper secondary school deepens general education and adds technical and vocational skills. Neither is possible, however, without ensuring that all children complete a good quality primary education as the first priority in building the skills those individuals, societies and economies need.[17]

[16] ILO, 2010. A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth, A G20 Training strategy.

[17] For more information on secondary education and training especially for disadvantaged youth see EFA GMR 2012.

Cognitive research suggests that key employability skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, is dependent on deep content knowledge and cannot be taught in isolation. So teaching such skills requires **innovative ways of delivering the academic curricula;** it's not about developing a core skills curriculum**.** The question is how best to integrate these skills into core academic content.

Box 7: Educators and employers together are the key to defining and delivering the skills

Surveys conducted in 9 diverse countries revealed:

- Nearly 4/10 employers who had vacancies report that this is due to lack of the right skills in new graduates;
- Only 50 per cent of youth surveyed believe their post-secondary education improved their chances of getting a job;
- A third of educators could not estimate the percentage of their graduates who found jobs and those that guessed overestimated.

Strategies to make it work include:

- Educators and employers actively engage in each others' worlds;
- Intensive continuous efforts to engage youth and provide them with the facts about particular careers and programmes through detailed and comprehensive information about various occupations;
- Address the stigma of vocational training by shifting the focus from academic versus vocational to the opportunities;
- Design an effective curriculum through intensive collaboration between industry and providers to define required skills at a detailed level.

Source: McKinsey Center for Government 2012. Education to Employment: Designing a system that works. The nine countries: Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, U.K. and U.S.

This requires a dynamic process for developing curricula that is not predetermined but, rather, evolves through continuous dialogue with employers to **align the training programme with business needs** and local realities. **A project-based learning approach** that simulates the workplace so that youth gain real-world, hands-on skills is important. Combining specialist equipment and facilities with contemporary teaching and learning practice, training workplaces simulate or replicate a 'real-world' work environment to help develop students' skills and knowledge, and provide an accurate environment for assessment**.**

Mentoring programmes that link students with professionals or young workers, to give students access to networks, a clear understanding of what it means to work in the formal sector and the opportunity to practice communications skills, are equally beneficial.[18]

[18] Programa Para O Futuro. Enabling disadvantaged youth to build new futures: A new model for employability training. Eric Rusten, Tania Ogasawara and Kristen Brady, Academy for Educational Development, Center for Applied Technology. http://itac.fhi360.org/pubs/Programa-Para-O-Futuro.pdf

Employers seek recruits who are comfortable facing a problem with "no right answer," therefore schools must find more ways to give students more complex and unstructured problems and fewer multiple choice questions. Factual knowledge, the ability to follow directions, knowing how to find a right answer when there is one is important. What is required is a curriculum that teaches students how to apply what they learn to solve real world problems and helps them to develop the broader competencies that are increasingly important for success in an ever more complex and demanding world.

4.1.1 Teacher methodologies

Learning environments require curricula and assessment systems that allow students to think creatively and collaborate. It is crucial to design curricula and assessment systems that emphasize authentic real world problems, engage students in inquiry and exploration and provide opportunities for students to apply what they know in meaningful ways.

Box 8: Some successful teaching methods

• Use multiple and varied representations of concepts and tasks, such as diagrams, numerical and mathematical representations, and simulations, along with support to help students interpret them.

• Encourage elaboration, questioning, and explanation – for example, by prompting students who are reading a text to explain the material aloud to themselves or others as they read.

• Engage learners in challenging tasks, while also supporting them with guidance, feedback, and encouragement to reflect on their own learning processes.

• Teach with examples and cases, such as modeling step-by-step how students can carry out a procedure to solve a problem while explaining the reason for each step.

• Prime student motivation by connecting topics to students' personal lives and interests, engaging students in problem-solving, and drawing attention to the knowledge and skills students are developing and their relevance, rather than grades or scores.

• Use "formative" assessments, which continuously monitor students' progress and provide feedback to teachers and students for use in adjusting their teaching and learning strategies.

Source: Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century. U.S. National Research Council Report Brief, July 2012.

Various methods have been included in modern teacher training to enhance the learning process of such skills as team-work, advanced communication, critical thinking and problem-solving.[19] One is **interactive teaching,** through which instructors facilitate exercises that provide opportunities for experience, practice, reinforcement, and reflection. This

[19] See, for example, Partnerships for 21st century skills, US http://www.p21.org/overview/skills-framework ; Teaching and Assessing Soft Skills, K. Kechagias (Ed.), 2011. http://www.mass-project.org/attachments/396_MASS%20wp4%20final%20report%20part-1.pdf ; Dawe, S., 2002. Focussing on generic skills in training packages. Leabrook S. Aust.: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER); NCVER. 2003. Fostering generic skills in VET programs and workplaces. At a glance. Adelaide: Australian National Training Authority.

approach requires skilled instructors and a well-designed curriculum, but has the disadvantage that the exercises, no matter how well designed, lack the authenticity of the real workplace.

Using a coach in a workplace setting through on-the-job training work experience, internships, and work-study programmes are all examples of teaching both technical and core skills in the workplace in a manner that achieves optimal authenticity. The disadvantage of this method is the difficulty of finding employers who will provide both opportunities and a qualified coach to assure that learning does not compromise workplace productivity.

Altering aspects of the classroom setting where general education or technical skills are being taught to workforce entrants so that the **classroom simulates the workplace** is another proven technique. This approach, which includes practice firms, workshops, experiential learning and role play, provides an authentic context for teaching and practicing core work skills that gives the teacher control over the teaching agenda, while creating an environment that benefits from the improved job-related skills of its students.

The problem is many schools and training programmes do not operate this way. They focus instead on the technical skills needed to perform specific tasks, because this approach is simpler, less expensive and easier to train a greater number in a shorter period of time. Many youth who graduate from this type of programme do not have the skills necessary for the current job market and do not have the capacity to adapt to changing requirements and remain employable over time.

Understanding how businesses operate gives young people a better understanding of the world of work, enhancing their employability. Entrepreneurial training can provide youth with basic financial and business literacy, a stronger understanding of the needs of the enterprise, and an awareness of the need for initiative, innovation and creative problem-solving disciplined by teamwork and cooperation (see Box 9. ILO's Know About Business).

Box 9: ILO's Know About Business (KAB)

KAB, a training programme for vocational, secondary and higher education, is a modular course for students aged 15-18 years. The objective is to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Although the specific objectives of the KAB package are to: develop positive attitudes towards enterprises and self-employment among the population and provide knowledge and practice of the desirable attributes for and challenges in starting and operating a successful enterprise, this package has the potential to offer much more, such as:

- Facilitate the school-to-work transition as a result of a better understanding of functions and operations of enterprises.
- Prepare students to become better employees through improved understanding of business and stronger positive and adaptive behavioral attitudes.
- Create a responsible, enterprising culture among young women and men - the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.
- Encourage qualities such as initiative, innovation, creativity and risk-taking among youth.
- Strengthen skills – how to apply professional skills to the realities of new jobs, now mostly generated by the private sector.

Source: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_159163.pdf

4.1.2. Improving access to secondary education

Given the evidence on the success of innovative quality secondary education and training in transmitting core skills for employability, more needs to be done to get young women and men into secondary education and help them complete it.

An estimated 130 million young people lack the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills needed in everyday life. Many are emerging from education without these basic skills, making it difficult for them to obtain the technical skills needed to compete in the labour market or transition into secondary school. In addition, they are unlikely to have the knowledge or skills to get good jobs, to fully understand the elements of a healthy lifestyle or to negotiate business and legal systems.

As of 2010, 71 million children of lower secondary school age were still out of school either because they had not completed primary school or could not make the transition to lower secondary school.[20] For many adolescents the education system is not sufficiently flexible to adapt to their needs, and the quality of their basic education is insufficient to allow an easy transition; for others, their families simply cannot afford it, whether due to the fees or the lost income of not working.

[20] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Out-of- School Adolescents , UIS, Montreal, 2010, p. 9.

A long-term effect of leaving school early is adult illiteracy; almost 160 million adults in high income countries do not have the skills they need to write a job application.[21] In the United States alone, one in five adults scored the lowest level in literacy and one in four in numeracy. Scoring at this level leaves an adult eight times more likely to be unemployed than an adult who scored level 4 or 5.[22]

This youth skills deficit is being felt all over the world. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012 calculates that one fifth of young people aged 15 to 24 years in all developing countries around the world have not even completed primary school and lack skills for work. While this skills crisis is adding to unemployment rates in developed countries, in developing countries, un-skilled young people are being trapped in working poverty for life. More than 200 million young people were working but living on less than US$2 a day.[23] In order to address this deficit, **disadvantaged youth need a second chance at basic education and good quality training in relevant skills at lower secondary school. Upper secondary curricula should provide a balance between vocational and technical skills, including IT, and core work skills**.

To improve the opportunities for disadvantaged youth to gain access to good jobs, secondary education has to be made more equitable and more inclusive, offering the widest possible range of opportunities in order to meet young people's differing abilities, interests and background**.** Achieving equity and inclusiveness is important not only because education is a universal right, but also because countries need an educated workforce to compete in the modern global economy.

At the secondary level, few governments are able to provide the number of seats for students and also provide the teachers needed for the increasingly larger cohorts of primary school graduates. The total cost of putting a child through a year of secondary school in Sub-Saharan Africa is three to twelve times that of a year of primary school, due to higher costs for teaching materials and classrooms. The private cost of secondary school for students makes it prohibitive for many. **The main obstacles to attendance include: costs; distance; teaching; language and learning materials; and management**.[24]

[21] Clearly not all of these are illiterate because they did not complete lower secondary school, but many of them are.

[22] UNESCO 2012 Education or All Global Monitoring Report. EFA GMR 2012 *Youth and skills: Putting education to work http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf*

[23] ILO Global Employment Trends 2012: Preventing a deeper jobs crisis, January.

[24] For more on this see Rebecca Winthrop and Marshall S. Smith. A *new face of education: Bringing technology into the classroom in the developing world. B*rooke Shearer working paper series, January 2012.

Box 10: Increasing opportunities in secondary education for disadvantaged youth

- Provide detailed information on occupation requirements to students, families and friends.
- Coordinate strong community-based and personalized support.
- Assign an academic advisor responsible for supporting and monitoring student's progress.
- Expand geographical outreach – distance education.
- Make it affordable.
- Improve the quality of primary level education.
- Reform policies that deny girls' participation.
- Make it more relevant to the world of work.
- Tailor skills to the needs of the local market.
- Offer technical and vocational training.
- Design an effective flexible curriculum.
- Use hands-on learning techniques and modular course design.
- Bring the classroom to the workplace.
- Bring the workplace to the classroom.

Many countries, especially those with large youth populations, are struggling to provide sufficient secondary school options for eligible students. Secondary schooling is often not free and school fees are progressively more expensive, requiring substantial contributions from households. In Sub-Saharan Africa, household contributions cover 30 to 60 per cent of the cost of secondary schooling.[25] The limited availability of schools in remote, inaccessible, or particularly impoverished regions of developing countries restricts the participation of marginalized youth.

Teacher training needs to include a **"learner-centered methodology"** to meet the specific needs of those students who face disadvantages in participation in secondary education.[26] Many teacher training schools continue to use teaching methods where transmission of knowledge is primarily one-way. Quality teaching and learning materials are essential for learning. In many developing countries there is a shortage of any materials, quality or otherwise. The content is either out-of-date, inappropriate for the learning or grade level at which it is being used, or not linked to the curriculum. Often, materials are not available in the students' mother tongue, reflecting a wider problem with local language instruction.

Early drop-out from school is also an issue in developed countries. The average rate in the EU is about 14 per cent while in some countries it reaches 20–30 per cent. To mitigate the negative effects of poverty on education requires the **scaling-up of social protection measures** to help poor households manage the risks without compromising on education.[27] Transfers of cash or food implemented in a number of Latin

[25] Verspoor, A. "At the Crossroads: Choices for Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa." Washington: World Bank, 2008.

[26] Perlman Robinson, J. "A Global Compact on Learning: Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries." Center for Universal Education Report. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2011.

[27] UNESCO 2012 Education or All Global Monitoring Report. EFA GMR 2012 *Youth and skills: Putting education to work http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf*

American countries show the potential to both mitigate the short-term impact of an income crisis and attenuate its long-term negative effects.

Second-chance programmes aim to provide basic skills corresponding to the primary education curriculum so as to improve young people's employability. Without a second chance to learn basic skills, young people are unlikely to be able to develop core skills for employability. Programmes that engage youth throughout adolescence and are tailored to address the specific circumstances leading to drop out or lack of attendance appear to be the most effective. Practical curricula, flexible schedules, and less formal instruction methods are likely to attract and retain young people (see Box 11 for other key features).

Box 11: Key features of successful second chance initiatives

- focus on the holistic development of the individual;
- a learning environment which is safe, structured and challenging;
- programmes that focus on independence and integration;
- a flexible and dynamic programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience;
- a process which is both participant-centred and participant-led; there should be open and honest feedback between trainer and participants;
- a multidisciplinary team approach;
- a methodology/pedagogy which begins with the young person;
- a general emphasis on achievement rather than failure;
- appropriate assessment and certification;
- flexibility (at all levels - management, relationships, curriculum, school timing);
- programme duration based on need rather than time;
- operating in a close proximity to student's residence;
- little or no homework;
- for young women or those with children: female teachers and child-friendly teaching environment;
- reduced or no financial cost for students or guardians;
- close involvement of families and communities in learning process.

4.1.3. Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are a proven way to build bridges between the worlds of education, training and work. Formal apprenticeship is structured and regulated, usually by legislation at national level, is waged, is based in the workplace, with a contract which specifies duration, programme of learning (including core work skills) assessment and final certification and the entitlement to off–the-job learning. In many countries, apprenticeship programmes have been developed in a range of service sector occupations and, more recently, in media and information technology sectors. Apprenticeship can accommodate a wide

range of abilities and aptitudes because it reflects the equally wide range of skills required in a modern economy. As was indicated earlier, the best way to acquire core employability skills is on the job. Given that apprenticeship systems combine inclass and workplace training it is ideal for transmitting these skills.

However, it is not a solution to improving the labour market transition of young people with poor school achievements or other disadvantages.[28]

Given the success of quality apprenticeships (see Box 12), creating opportunities for programmes in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and improving access are essential.

[28] For more information on apprenticeship see, ILO November 2012. Overview of Apprenticeship Systems and Issues. ILO contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment by Hilary Steedman. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_190188.pdf

Box 12: Key elements of quality apprenticeships

- Promote **active participation and support of key stakeholders** (youth; employers; trade unions; training and education institutions and vocational schools; national, regional and local governments) to develop, implement and continuously improve the quality apprenticeship programmes; encourage business and labour organizations to contribute to defining training programmes.
- Determine a **legal framework** to regulate apprenticeships, which: respects the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work; facilitates social security schemes for apprentices; provides occupational safety and health training and protection; ensures equal access to apprenticeship programmes; and encourages the participation of women and disadvantaged youth and people with disabilities.
- Engage in a **contractual relationship** between the firm and the apprentice that guarantees decent working conditions.
- Ensure **appropriate education level** to incorporate youth to apprenticeship programmes: A comprehensive knowledge basis of skills and competences, including literacy and numeracy skills, is necessary before entering vocational training.
- Facilitate **labour market relevance** of apprenticeship programmes by: fostering timely reviews of programmes; ensuring qualifications and skills provided match evolving labour market demands; providing skills that facilitate occupational mobility of apprentices; encouraging continuous training; fostering close collaboration, consultation, alliance and dialogue among relevant stakeholders, especially training institutions, employers, labour organizations, business stakeholders and professional associations; continuous reviewing of occupations and skills within each occupation to ensure relevance of apprenticeship learning; establishing effective pathways for entry, as well as assurance of high quality trainers and training provision of on-the-job and off-the-job mentoring.
- Establish **good career guidance-apprenticeship relationship** that: provides information on the opportunities and benefits of vocational alternatives to further learning, including apprenticeships; improves transition from school to further training, study or work; provides labour market information to assist youth to make informed decisions.
- Promote the **recognition and validation of training** through national bodies (commissions, committees), with the involvement of social partners, that certify qualifications and competences.

Adapted from G20 Task Force on Employment. 2012, *Key elements of quality apprenticeships.* Forthcoming.

4.2. Alternative delivery modalities: reaching out-of-school youth

Young women and men who never attended school, are working in the informal economy under poor conditions and often do not have professional or personal role models to nurture the employability skills that are essential for success in the workplace. This section looks at alternative ways to reach disadvantaged youth. It also looks at how core skills are acquired in the activities that young people are doing but which are not formally recognized.

4.2.1. Informal apprenticeship systems

Apprenticeship in the informal economy is a widespread practice to pass on skills from one generation to the next; poor societies have developed informal apprenticeship systems that are purely workplace-based. A young apprentice learns by way of observation and imitation from an experienced master craftsperson, acquires the skills of the trade and is inducted into the culture and networks of the business. Apprenticeship agreements are mostly oral, yet they are embedded in the society's customs, norms and traditions. Quality informal apprenticeships are an important way of acquiring both employability and job-specific skills.

Box 13: Do informal apprentices learn core skills?

Informal apprentices learn at the workplace. They are exposed to the real working environment, and have to adapt to business work processes. Experts generally concur that informal apprentices are much better at solving problems and identifying new solutions than trainees graduating from vocational schools or training centres. This is not surprising given that their way of learning is determined through observation, trial and error. Master craftspersons and skilled workers are facing changing client requests and thus pass on new tasks to apprentices. It also appears logical, that apprentices acquire communication and teamwork skills while dealing with their supervisors, colleagues and also clients. Oftentimes, older apprentices are asked to help younger apprentices and thus need to provide and accept feedback, lead others, and work in a team. While the workplace also offers room to learn how to learn, this area of core skills probably requires stronger supervision and guidance, and master craftspeople are usually not trained to encourage learning strategies.

Source: Training workshop for 30 master craftspersons in Cotonou (Dec. 2010); Training workshop for 30 master craftspersons in Ouagadougou (March 2011); Informal economy and upgrading of informal apprenticeship systems, Skills Academy, Turin (Oct. 2012).

Despite the system's strength of providing skills relevant to local markets, informal apprenticeship has a number of weaknesses. Long working hours, unsafe working conditions, low or no allowances or wages, little or no social protection in case of illness or accident, and strong gender imbalances are among the decent work deficits often found in informal apprenticeships. While upgrading informal apprenticeship is considered important to address these weaknesses, it is also a cost-effective way to invest in a country's skills base and enhance employability of youth, since training is integrated into the production process.[29]

[29] For more information on Informal apprenticeship systems, see ILO 2012 Upgrading informal apprenticeship: A resource guide for Africa http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_171393.pdf

4.2.2. Active labour market programmes

Over 50 practices were reviewed for this paper to try to draw out some key features of successful programmes for imparting core skills to out–of-school youth. The first thing to note is that literacy and numeracy training were the most typical intervention, again re-affirming the importance of basic education for further training. The second is that learning while earning is essential as is promoting saving and investment, as a package.

Box 14: Key features of active labour market training programmes for disadvantaged youth

- Developing a curriculum that integrates technical skills, reading, writing, basic math, and creative thinking skills; and employability skills.
- Using a project-based learning approach that simulates the workplace so that youth gain real-world, hands-on skills.
- Offering a system of social support that includes social worker/psychologist and active links to families to help address personal struggles and build self-esteem.
- Providing essential physical support, including daily meals and transport costs.
- Making all learning hands-on and experiential rather than focusing on textbooks and theory.
- Emphasizing communication skills in both local language and English, if appropriate.
- Emphasizing building employment capacity rather than simply focusing on finding jobs for youth.
- Involving a gender specialist to explicitly integrate gender awareness activities into the curriculum.
- Hiring professional teachers as learning facilitators rather than depending on volunteers.
- Partnering with the private sector to identify high demand technical and core skills to help formulate the curriculum and provide resources to help support the pilot.
- Scheduling regular meetings with parents and youth to reinforce family support for youth participation in the project and to address problems youth might be facing at home.
- Providing consistent guidance to teachers and staff from project and pedagogical coordinators.

Each of the boxes appearing in this section draw on the interventions reviewed, reflecting on approaches and methodologies and lessons learned.[30]

Programmes aimed at disadvantaged youth increasingly integrate a set of components to address the multiple obstacles faced by these youth. Programmes tend to combine skills development – including second-chance programmes and job training in the classroom or at work, life skills, job search assistance and job placement.

[30] This paper builds on the two previous papers on this topic: Youth at risk: The role of skills development in facilitating the transition to work, June 2004, EMP/SKILLS Working Paper No. 19 and Skills for Employment - Policy Brief : Increasing the employability of disadvantaged youth, May 2012 http://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-for-youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm

Interactive and participatory methods are especially relevant in gaining youth interest in learning and practicing core work skills. Sport and technology attract youth interest and imbue these skills. Creative approaches can help programmes "speak" to youth in a way that makes sense to them, so the skills resonate more effectively.

4.2.3 The power of ICT to reach and teach the marginalized

Multiple and varied strategies are needed to address the complex issues affecting quality learning for all in the developing world. Technology—from distance learning, to digitized teaching and learning materials, to information management and teacher support— has the potential to break down some of these existing barriers.

Box 15: Using IT to teach core skills to the marginalized

- Provide robust and continuous Internet access with a 1:2 computer-youth ratio.
- Offer an online learning programme for specialized technologies, e.g., Linux (an open-source operating systems software application).
- Provide e-Mentoring that links students with professionals, as mentors to give students access to new professional networks, a clear understanding of what it means to work in the formal sector, and the opportunity to practice professional communications skills using ICT tools.
- Develop digital classrooms that allow for greater scale and the potential for lower cost per trainee, once the initial investment in hardware and software is made.
- Combine civic and digital education to empower youth to understand the challenges that face their communities and work together to solve them.
- Reinforce "work-related" issues such as skills development, entrepreneurship and professional guidance in teachers' education curricula.
- Ensure that newly qualified teachers have the appropriate skills and practical experience to foster core work skills and that they can engage with digital media.

Source: Based on Programa Para O Futuro. Enabling disadvantaged youth to build new futures: A new model for employability training. Eric Rusten, Tania Ogasawara and Kristen Brady, Academy for Educational Development, Center for Applied Technology.

ICT allows learners to learn better, faster, more, differently, on their own, together, inside and outside the classroom, in a greater variety of ways and to be creative. This is a different learning culture, featuring: more independent learning; learners producing knowledge themselves; more content available via the Internet; easier distance learning; connection to experts and access to resources globally; access to quality learning material; more fun and motivation.

Today the vast majority of mobile phone subscribers live in the developing world, with Africa showing growth rates faster than the rest of the world. In most developing countries, and particularly countries in Africa, mobiles provide a solution to the challenge of poor access to fixed telecommunication infrastructure. Limited access to fixed broadband Internet across the Continent at 0.2 per 100 inhabitants

is low compared to 25.8 in Europe and 15.5 in the Americas. But the widespread availability of mobile phone subscription increasing from 12.4 to 53 per 100 inhabitants in less than half a decade provides an opportunity for mobile broadband access.[31]

Research from the World Bank[32] has demonstrated that access to broadband boosts economic growth in all countries but most especially in developing ones. The study showed that in developing countries, for every additional 10 per cent of broadband access, an economy will grow by 1.38 per cent. Broadband access leads to economic growth; Africans are seizing the opportunity that it offers to move their economies forward.

Youth value technology as a means of communicating and connecting with others, including employers. Technology is a useful training tool, even for youth who had never used technology for educational purposes and who struggled with reading, following instructions and learning in a relatively fast paced environment.

Disadvantaged youth need personalized attention. Ensure that digital or mobile technology does not replace or minimize the relationship between the youth (trainee) and staff, be it an instructor, tutor, community manager or coordinator of job placement services.

[31] Bosch, Tanja. *African youth, identity formation and social media*. In: Isaacs, S. and Hollow, D., (eds) 2012. The eLearning Africa 2012 Report, ICWE: Germany.

[32] Information and Communication for Development Report, World Bank, 2009.

Box 16: Technology in lifelong learning and the workplace: Lessons learned from E*ntra21* projects in Latin America*

ICT contributed to the development of youths' basic competencies. In E.dúcate, for example, trainers observed that some youth read mechanically without comprehending content or meaning. Trainers had to adjust to youths' low levels of formal education by providing remedial classes to increase youths' reading, writing and math skills. To do this, ICT was helpful not only in making learning more interesting but also in providing ready access to on-line math and literacy tools.

Technology allowed trainers to adjust more easily to differences in how quickly youth mastered course competencies. With FUP, for example, each young person was able to complete the course at his/her own speed, allowing faster students to move ahead and slower learners more time to complete modules. Some youth objected to this self-paced, self-instructional approach because it required more self-discipline than what they were accustomed to in the formal education system.

Technology helped many youth with their job-seeking efforts. Young Chileans found the e-portfolio easy to use, update and share with employers. The online application allowed youth to upload diplomas, certificates and other documents required by employers, making it far superior to the traditional CV.

Using technology required projects to redefine the roles of its training staff. Depending upon the type of technology being used, how it was used, and youths' levels of education, these roles varied. It meant re-thinking the qualifications of the teaching staff regarding their knowledge of social media, digital tools and online resources. The research noted that job training providers in the region have not used technology extensively, nor have employment offices. The study identified three new roles defined by the projects to facilitate the acquisition of competencies and/or the job placement process:

- Tutors who monitored the use of the digital courses and helped youth navigate the technology or use the hardware, but who did not have any content expertise (FUP).
- Community managers who encouraged and helped youth and instructors post content on Facebook, interact with employers, and manage a network (E.dúcate).
- Career counselors who advised youth in defining their education and career path and in their job search (FCH).

*The projects appearing in the study by International Youth Foundation were implemented by the **Fundación Universitaria Panamericana** (**FUP**) in Bogotá, Colombia; the **Fundación E.dúcate** in Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador (**E.dúcate**); and the **Fundación Chile** (**FCH**) in Chile.

Source: International Youth Foundation, 2012. The role of technology in preparing disadvantaged youth for the world of work: Findings from Three Latin American Projects.
http://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/entra21_Learning_7_ExecSum.pdf

4.2.4 *Using social media*

Social media use on mobile devices has also increased in developing countries.[33] The rise of social media in Africa has probably been most documented with reference to the Arab Spring, and the use of online social networks for political activism. But what role have African youth played in these developments, and how do they use social media in the formation of their own social and political identities?

Youth see ICT as a powerful tool for creating and maintaining relationships with their peers and for helping them feel part of a larger youth culture. For marginalized youth who are relatively isolated from other young people, technology helps them overcome feelings of separation and disconnection.

Social media can enrich the training process and facilitate the management of internships and placement of youth in formal jobs. E.dúcate, for example, introduced Facebook into the curriculum to help youth become more proficient in using a computer and accessing the Internet and to connect with the project, instructors and one another. Youth created their first email accounts under the entra21 project and spent the first fifteen minutes of each day updating the project's Facebook page. Facebook also was used to help youth find jobs since it allowed E.dúcate to post information on vacancies and job requirements and to connect with employers. Youth used Facebook to post advice based on their own experience as interns or pass on tips about vacancies and how to handle the first day on the job.[34]

Social media contributes significantly to the strengthening of links between youth, trainers and employers. However, using social media requires a higher level of training for teachers and a redefinition of the role of trainers in the classroom, which is traditionally viewed as direct and controlling the classroom work agenda.

4.2.5 *Sport and recreational activities*

Even if you don't play anymore, having competed as an athlete can help you get a job. Many hiring managers proactively search for and prioritize candidates who have played organized sports, particularly as part of a team sport. Most often, those candidates know what it takes to function as part of a team, from pulling your own weight to jumping in to do what's necessary to win. If they've carried a sport into college, they've had to work that into a busy schedule and cut into precious free time. So they're likely to know how to juggle priorities. They are also inspired to win.[35]

Playing sports provides participants with opportunities to develop skills in communication and team building. These skills enable people to function effectively as leaders, as well. Playing and coaching sports

[33] André-Michel Essoungou; A social media boom begins in Africa: Using mobile phones, Africans join the global conversation. From Africa Renewal: December 2010 http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2010/social-media-boom-begins-africa

[34] Source: International Youth Foundation, 2012. The role of technology in preparing disadvantaged youth for the world of work: Findings from Three Latin American Projects. http://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/entra21_Learning_7_ExecSum.pdf

[35] Susie Hall, president of talent agency, Vitamin T. Business News Daily Oct. 2012. http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/3207-resume-writing-tips.html

Box 17: Skills and values learned through the sports sector

- Cooperation
- Communication
- Respect for the rules
- Problem-solving
- Understanding
- Connecting with others
- Leadership
- Respect for others
- Value of effort
- How to win
- How to lose
- How to manage competition
- Fair play
- Sharing
- Self-esteem
- Trust
- Honesty
- Self-respect
- Tolerance
- Resilience
- Teamwork
- Discipline
- Confidence

helps participants learn to treat other competitors with respect, identify strengths and weaknesses, develop winning strategies and manage time effectively. Participating in sports helps people develop confidence and make quick decisions necessary to succeed in leadership roles of all types.[36]

Playing and coaching sports allows a future business leader to develop team-building skills, inspire others and focus on achieving objectives.

Volunteering to teach or counsel children or adults, or provide physical and/or emotional support for groups of people with disabilities or special needs, for example, require skills such as planning and organization; problem-solving; and communication skills.

Creativity in producing art, music or drama; participating in clubs and organizations require planning and organizational skills; problem-solving; people skills and skill in doing precise, detailed and accurate work.

Leaders require excellent communication skills. Recreational activities help people develop the ability to work together effectively using techniques that also apply in business situations. They learn, convince others and gather support. Leaders improve their leadership capacity by listening to others and speaking clearly and enthusiastically.

[36] Keith Zullig, a public health researcher. http://www.livestrong.com/article/537884-do-sports-help-improve-leadership-skills/

5. How do core work skills get recognized: The role of employment services?

Many young job applicants are unaware or unable to demonstrate the core work skills sought, even if they do possess them. These skills can be asked for in a variety of ways. Many job advertisements will simply ask for candidates who "can take initiative" or "have the ability to resolve problems"; others, however, may not make it so clear, which means having to interpret phrases like:

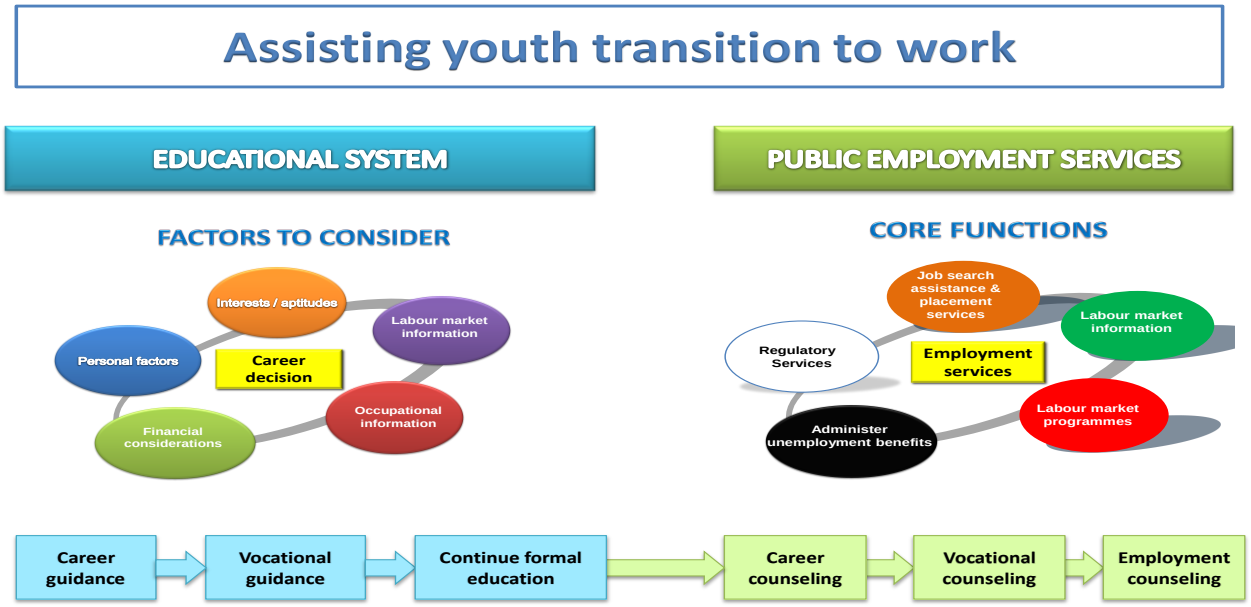
- *"Someone keen to take responsibility and with the confidence to challenge established practices and come up with new ways of working…"*
- *"An enquiring mind and the ability to understand and solve complex challenges are necessary…"*
- *"We are looking for innovative minds and creative spirits ..."*
- *"We need ambitious applicants who will respond with enthusiasm to every issue they face…"*
- *"Polished and professional approach to client relationships"*
- *"Outgoing, lively and positive outlook towards people"*
- *"Good communication, influencing and negotiating skills"*
- *" Excellent team spirit and skills"*
- *"Ability to see the 'bigger picture'"*
- *" Ambition, innovation, confidence and good work ethic"*
- *"A commercial focus, organization skills, energy, confidence and assertiveness"*[37]

Public Employment Services (PES) are the authorities that connect job-seekers with employers so they have a big role to play in assisting applicants to address skills being sought by employers. PES have two clients – job-seekers and enterprises.

PES help match supply and demand on the labour market through information, placement and active support services at local, national and regional level (see diagram below). PES provide assistance to young job-seekers, particularly new graduates, school leavers and out-of-school and unemployed youth in transitioning to the world of work. In this regard, the ILO, for example, has produced guides for job-seekers and those supporting youth in their search: *Minute Guide for Young Jobseekers* and *Guiding Youth Careers: A Handbook for those who help young jobseekers; Career Guidance: A resource handbook for low and middle income countries*.[38]

[37] These were taken from on-line job advertisements for entry positions.

[38] http://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/employment-services/lang--en/index.htm



The possibility of achieving a good match between the employer's vacancy and the job-seekers skills is strongly influenced by the quality of the data on vacancies. PES therefore need to enter into a dialogue with employers so that they provide as precise a definition of their vacancies as possible. Job-matching software of PES needs to be improved to better capture competencies in core skills as well as technical and vocational skills. Every opportunity should be used to work together with employers associations, local chambers of commerce, etc. to make progress.

The profiling focus requires a common understanding/ taxonomy on core work skills as a starting point. Linking profiling to individual action plans/personalized service offer or re-integration strategies needs to be further strengthened.

Existing jobs and vacancies need

Box 18: Companies and PES working together can:

Raise awareness about schemes for recognition and certification, guidance and counseling, and assist job seekers to better analyze their own skills.

Break down barriers and widen access to education for a variety of audiences, including adults and vulnerable groups through accreditation of prior learning and flexible pathways.

Develop indicators to measure levels of core employability skills, set targets and monitor progress.

Create, adapt and develop new assessment methods and tools to capture and reflect the core work skills and competences of learners.

Ensure that common terminology is used through the use of occupational classification systems (ISCO).

Clearly identify the required skills for occupations.

to be described, not only in terms of occupations, but also in terms of technical and core skills and competences. Employers should also develop a better understanding of relevant vs. additional skills, essential core skills, workplace-action based competence descriptions, etc. For Human Resource Managers of companies it must become normal to capture skills and competence acquisition through informal and non-formal learning at the level of the workplace.

In many developing countries PES are non-existent or poorly resourced. The particular challenge for PES in these countries – besides the financing constraints that many of these countries face – is the fact that they need to reach out to the informal economy and unregistered job-seekers. Lowering the administrative burden involved in accessing services at the PES is crucial. This includes ensuring short distances to local outlets, non-discriminatory access to services (i.e. disregarding the status and type of current employment), opening hours compatible with typical working hours in the informal economy and, eventually, also proactive outreach into the informal economy, potentially in partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations.[39] Equally important will be the setting of incentives to PES to make best use of their regional and local knowledge of the state of the labour markets and to motivate both unemployed and informally employed workers to find jobs in the formal economy.[40]

While the focus of this guide is on public sector systems, recognition of core skills in the recruitment done by private employment agencies (PrEAs) and online recruitment systems is equally warranted. Often where PES are weak or do not exist, we find PrEAs and NGOs providing employment services.

5.1. Recognizing skills gained outside formal education and training systems

Many of the regular activities done in the home, or in the community, recreationally provide the core skills needed for the world of work. It is a matter of understanding, documenting and relaying them to employers. The previous section highlighted how participation in sports builds teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills. The same can be said for volunteer work, hobbies, looking after siblings and so on.

PES advisors can also assist job-seekers demonstrate their skills and abilities by helping them develop a functional résumé, which is designed for those who do not have a great deal of work experience or relevant experience. It is the preferred method for: students with little or no work experience (see Box 18); non-students with little or no work experience; people who are switching careers and lack experience in the new one; those who have been out of the workforce for some time and are now re-entering it.

[39] These partnership arrangements are also common in some of the most highly developed PES in the world such as: Australia, UK, Canada in order to deal with youth issues in a holistic way. Youth often feel more comfortable in dealing with these less bureaucratic agencies.

[40] Globalization and Informal Jobs in Developing Countries, a joint study of the International Labour Office and the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization, Marc Bacchetta, Economic Research and Statistics Division, World Trade Organization, Ekkehard Ernst Juana P. Bustamante, International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labour Office, 2009.

As non-formal and informal qualifications increase in importance, the validation of skills and competences outside of the formal qualifications frameworks has to be addressed. The verification and classification of competences gained through work-experience will be especially important in the future work of PES. PES are starting to work with accredited training institutions to have certificates automatically recognized by employers to facilitate training investments. Work has commenced to verify the core work skills which are increasingly important to employers.[41]

Box 18: Example of a functional résumé: Student with no work experience

Qualifications:

- Ability to write clear, comprehensive and grammatically correct documents
- Demonstrated skill in managing change and maintaining flexibility in a variety of challenging environments.
- Experience in using the library and the internet to locate and retrieve valuable information for both academic and community service projects.
- Ability to work in diverse teams and to communicate well with others.
- Experience in fund raising and recruiting volunteers for fund raising events.

Communication skills

- Proficient in Word and Internet applications
- Fluent in oral and written English, good spoken Spanish
- Ability to communicate effectively with my teammates, as their captain on the team
- Active participation in the school debating club
- Use social media networks to share my ideas

Leadership

- Volunteered to assist in a community awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS.
- Captain of the local football team, lead the team to the regional championships (2009 and 2011)
- Helped coach younger players in the football club
- Reading stories and doing crafts with students in the after-school care programme
- Ability to discuss strategies with the coach.

Planning/coordination

- Planned and scheduled siblings' responsibilities when parents were working.
- Helped coordinate a fund-raiser for the local football club
- Managed good grades at school as well as actively participating in sporting events and volunteering at the local community centre.

[41] European Network of the Heads of Public Employment Services. The Case for Skills: A Response to the Recommendations regarding the Future Role of Public Employment Services under the New Skills for New Jobs Agenda. September 2011.

6. Key issues, messages and good practice: Some lessons learned

This guide revolves around four broad issues: 1. Securing that first job as well as navigating in the labour market requires the technical skills to perform specific tasks as well as core work skills: learning to learn, communication, problem-solving and teamwork; 2. Innovative quality secondary education and training can transmit core skills for employability, so more needs to be done to improve access, participation and completion at this level; 3. Young women and men who have dropped out of school or never attended, are working in the informal economy under poor conditions often do not have professional or personal role models to nurture the employability skills that are essential for success in the workplace; and 4. Many of the regular activities done in the home, or in the community, recreationally provide the core skills needed for the world of work. It is a matter of understanding, documenting and relaying them to employers.

Each of these issues is considered in this section, delving into the some of the key messages surrounding the issues and good practice examples in addressing them, summarizing the information presented in the previous sections.

1. Key issue:

Skills development is essential for increasing the productivity and sustainability of enterprises and improving working conditions and the employability of workers and job-seekers. In order to secure a job, retain employment and advance in the labour market, individuals need to be able to continue to learn and adapt; read, write and compute competitively; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently; manage themselves at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology, lead effectively as well as follow supervision. These **core skills for employability** are required by employers, and enhance an individual's ability to navigate in the labour market as well as engage in lifelong learning.

Key messages:

1. The best way to acquire core skills for employability is on the job. But many employers are no longer prepared to take on new recruits without demonstrated ability in these skills. So individuals and education and training systems must do more.

2. Secondary school is an important channel through which young people acquire skills that improve opportunities for good jobs. High quality secondary education and vocational training that caters for the widest possible range of abilities, interests and backgrounds is vital to set young people on the path to the world of work, as well as to give countries the educated workforce they need to compete in today's technologically driven world.

3. So teaching such skills requires innovative ways of integrating these skills into core academic content.

Good practice:

- Developing curricula that evolve through continuous dialogue with employers to align the training programme with business needs and local realities as well as keep teachers up-to-date about workplace practices.
- A project-based learning approach that simulates the workplace so that youth gain real-world, hands-on skills.
- Mentoring programmes that link students with professionals or young workers, to give students access to the world of work, a clear understanding of what it means to work in the formal sector and the opportunity to practice communications skills.
- Interactive teaching, through which instructors facilitate exercises that provide opportunities for experience, practice, reinforcement, and reflection.
- Using a coach in a workplace setting through on-the-job training, work experience, internships, and work-study programmes.
- Altering aspects of the classroom setting to simulate the workplace, such as practice firms, workshops, experiential learning and role play.

2. **Key issue**:

Given that innovative quality secondary education and training can transmit core skills for employability, more needs to be done to improve access, participation and completion at this level.

Key messages:

1. Disadvantaged youth need basic education and good quality training in relevant skills at lower secondary school. Upper secondary curricula should provide a balance between vocational and technical skills, including IT, and core work skills.
2. To improve the opportunities for disadvantaged youth to gain access to good jobs, secondary education has to be made more equitable and more inclusive, offering the widest possible range of opportunities in order to meet young people's differing abilities, interests and background.
3. The main obstacles to attendance include: costs, distance, language and learning materials and perceived relevance.

Good practice: Formal education and training

Improving access to, participation in and completion of secondary education and training is enhanced by a sytem that:

- ✓ Provides detailed information on occupation requirements to students, families and friends;

- ✓ Coordinates strong community-based and personalized support;
- ✓ Assigns an academic advisor responsible for supporting and monitoring student's progress;
- ✓ Expands geographical outreach – distance education;
- ✓ Makes it affordable;
- ✓ Improves the quality of primary level education;
- ✓ Reforms policies that deter girls' participation;
- ✓ Makes it more relevant to the world of work;
- ✓ Tailors skills to the needs of the local market;
- ✓ Offers technical and vocational training;
- ✓ Designs an effective flexible curriculum;
- ✓ Uses hands-on learning techniques and modular course design;
- ✓ Brings the classroom to the workplace;
- ✓ Brings the workplace to the classroom.

For those who dropped out of school or never attended, second chance opportunities at formal education that:

- ✓ Focus on the holistic development of the individual;
- ✓ Provide a learning environment which is safe, structured and challenging;
- ✓ Design flexible and dynamic programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience
- ✓ Are participant-centred and participant-led; there should be open and honest feedback between trainer and participants;
- ✓ Take a multidisciplinary team approach
- ✓ Emphasise achievement rather than failure;
- ✓ Use appropriate assessment and certification;
- ✓ Is flexible at all levels - management, relationships, curriculum, school timing;
- ✓ Duration is based on need rather than time.
- ✓ Operate in a close proximity to student's residence
- ✓ Assign little or no homework
- ✓ Minimize financial cost for students or guardians
- ✓ Involve families and communities in learning process.

Quality apprenticeships that:

- ✓ Promote active participation and support of key stakeholders (youth; employers; trade unions; training and education institutions and vocational schools; national, regional and local governments).
- ✓ Determine a legal framework to regulate apprenticeships.
- ✓ Engage in a contractual relationship between the firm and the apprentice that guarantees decent working conditions.
- ✓ Ensure appropriate education level to incorporate youth into apprenticeship programmes.
- ✓ Facilitate labour market relevance of apprenticeship programmes.

- ✓ Establish good career guidance-apprenticeship relationship.
- ✓ Promote the recognition and validation of training through national bodies (commissions, committees), with the involvement of social partners, that certify qualifications and competences.

3. Key issue:

Young women and men who have dropped out of school or never attended or are working in the informal economy under poor conditions often do not have the opportunities to learn, nor personal role models to nurture, the employability skills that are essential for success in the workplace.

Key messages:

1. Young people need to complete at least the basic education cycle, which is essential for further skills training and prospects of getting a decent job.
2. Active labour market training programmes (ALMPs) targeted at disadvantaged young people have been increasingly used with positive impact in the short, medium and long term.
3. Innovative approaches to skills acquisition that combine training with employment- and income-generating opportunities are essential.
4. Support services including literacy and remedial education, vocational and job-readiness training, job search assistance, and career guidance and counseling can also help young people to find their way into work.

Good practice: Reaching out of school youth

Active labour market programmes that:

- Develop a curriculum that integrates technical skills training reading, writing, basic math, and creative thinking skills; and core employability skills.
- Use a project-based learning approach that simulate the workplace so that youth can gain real-world, hands-on skills;
- Offer a system of social support that includes social worker/psychologist and active links to families to help address personal struggles and build self-esteem;
- Make all learning hands-on and experiential rather than focusing on textbooks and theory.
- Emphasize building employment capacity rather than simply focusing on finding jobs for youth.
- Explicitly integrate gender awareness activities into the curriculum.
- Partner with the private sector to identify high demand skills to help formulate the curriculum and provide resources to help support the pilot.
- Schedule regular meetings with parents and youth to reinforce family support for youth participation in the project and to address problems youth might be facing at home.

- Provide consistent guidance to teachers and staff from project and pedagogical coordinators.

Uses IT to teach core skills to the marginalized that:

- Offers an online learning programme for specialized technologies, e.g., Linux (an open-source operating systems software application).
- Provides e-mentoring that links students with professionals, as mentors to give students access to new professional networks, a clear understanding of what it means to work in the formal sector, and the opportunity to practice professional communications skills using ICT tools;
- Develops digital classrooms allowing for greater scale and the potential for lower cost per trainee, once the initial investment in hardware and software is made.
- Combines civic and digital education to empower youth to understand the challenges that face their communities and work together to solve them.
- Reinforces "work-related" issues such as skills development, entrepreneurship and professional guidance in teachers' education curricula,
- Ensures that newly qualified teachers have the appropriate skills and practical experience to foster core work skills and that they can engage with digital media.

4. Key issue:

Many of the regular activities done in the home, or in the community, recreationally provide the core skills needed for the world of work. It is a matter of understanding, documenting and relaying them to employers. Many young job applicants are unaware or unable to demonstrate the core work skills sought, even if they do possess them.

Key messages:

1. Public Employment Services (PES) are the authorities that connect job-seekers with employers so they have a big role to play in assisting applicants to address skills being sought by employers.
2. PES provide assistance to young job-seekers, particularly new graduates, school leavers and out-of-school and unemployed youth in transitioning to the world of work.
3. The possibility of achieving a good match between the employer's vacancy and the job-seekers skills is strongly influenced by the quality of the data on vacancies. PES therefore need to enter into a dialogue with employers so that they provide as precise a definition of their vacancies as possible. Job-matching software of PES needs to be improved to better capture competencies in core skills as well as technical and vocational skills.
4. Existing jobs and vacancies need to be described, not only in terms of occupations, but also in terms of technical and core skills and competences. Employers should also develop a better understanding of relevant vs. additional skills, essential core skills, workplace-action based competence descriptions, etc.
5. In many developing countries PES are non-existent or poorly resourced. The particular challenge for PES in these countries – besides the financing constraints that many of these countries face – is the fact that they need to reach out to the informal economy and unregistered job-seekers

Good practice:

Companies and PES together:

- Raise awareness about schemes for recognition and certification, guidance and counseling, and assist job-seekers to better analyze their own skills.
- Break down barriers and widen access to education for a variety of audiences, including adults and vulnerable groups through accreditation of prior learning and flexible pathways.
- Develop indicators to measure levels of core employability skills, set targets and monitor progress.
- Create, adapt and develop new assessment methods and tools to capture and reflect the core work skills and competences of learners.
- Ensure that common terminology is used through the use of occupational classification systems (ISCO).
- Clearly identify the required skills for occupations.

PES reach out to the informal economy and unregistered job-seekers by:

- Lowering the administrative burden involved in accessing services at the PES, by ensuring short distances to local outlets, non-discriminatory access to services, opening hours compatible with typical working hours in the informal economy and proactive outreach into the informal economy.
- Setting incentives to PES to make best use of their regional and local knowledge of the state of the labour markets and to motivate both unemployed and informally employed workers to find jobs in the formal economy.

To facilitate the recognition of skills gained outside formal education and training systems:

- PES advisors can assist job-seekers to demonstrate core work skills by developing a functional résumé, which is designed for those who do not have a great deal of work experience or relevant experience.
- PES can work with accredited training institutions to have certificates automatically recognized by employers to facilitate training investments, verifying the core work skills which are increasingly important to employers.

Annex - Selected matrices of core skills

A comparative analysis of skills for employability drawn from 63 documents and synthesized in a research report, identifies three broad categories:

- Basic skills (oral communication (speaking and listening); reading (especially understanding and following instructions; basic arithmetic; and writing);
- Higher-order thinking skills: problem-solving; learning skills, strategies; creative, innovative thinking; and decision-making;
- Affective skills and traits: dependability/responsibility; positive attitude toward work; conscientiousness, punctuality, efficiency; interpersonal skills, cooperation, working as a team member; self-confidence, positive self-image; adaptability, flexibility; enthusiasm, motivation; self-discipline, self-management; appropriate dress, grooming; honesty, integrity; and ability to work without supervision.

Basic Skills	**Higher-Order Thinking Skills**	**Affective Skills and Traits**
Oral communications (speaking, listening)	Problem solving	Dependability/Responsibility
Reading, esp. understanding and following instructions	Learning skills, strategies	Positive attitude toward work
Basic arithmetic	Creative, innovative thinking	Conscientiousness, punctuality, efficiency
Writing	Decision making	Interpersonal skills, cooperation, working as a team member
		Self-confidence, positive self-image
		Adaptability, flexibility
		Enthusiasm, motivation
		Self-discipline, self-management
		Appropriate dress, grooming
		Honesty, integrity
		Ability to work without supervision

Source: *Developing Employability Skills*, Kathleen Cotton, School Improvement Research Series Research You Can Use http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/524).

In 1997, OECD member countries launched the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with the aim of monitoring the extent to which students, near the end of compulsory schooling, have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. Driving the development of PISA has been:

- Its policy orientation, with design and reporting methods determined by the need of governments to draw policy lessons;
- Its innovative "literacy" concept concerned with the capacity of students to analyze, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, solve and interpret problems in a variety of subject matter areas;
- Its relevance to lifelong learning, which does not limit PISA to assessing students' curricular and cross-curricular competencies but also asks them to report on their own motivation to learn, beliefs about themselves and learning strategies; and its regularity, which will enable countries to monitor their progress in meeting key learning objectives.

PISA assessments began with comparing students' knowledge and skills in the areas of reading, mathematics, science and problem-solving. The assessment of student performance in selected school subjects took place with the understanding, though, that students' success in life depends on a much wider range of competencies. The OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) Project provides a framework that can guide the longer-term extension of assessments into new competency domains.

The OECD proposes three categories of competencies needed to operate successfully in the knowledge economy:

- Acting autonomously: building and exercising a sense of self, making choices and acting in the context of a larger picture, being oriented toward the future, being aware of the environment, understanding how one fits in, exercising one's rights and responsibilities, determining and executing a life plan, planning and carrying out personal projects.
- Using tools interactively: using tools as instruments for an active dialogue; being aware of new tools; accommodating to the potential of new tools; being able to use language, text, symbols, information and knowledge, and technology interactively to accomplish goals.
- Functioning in socially heterogeneous groups: being able to interact effectively with other people, including those from different backgrounds; recognizing the social embeddedness of individuals; creating social capital; being able to relate well to others, to cooperate, and to manage and resolve conflict.

http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf and
http://www.oecd.org/edu/highereducationandadultlearning/definitionandselectionofcompetenciesdeseco.htm

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The process of defining generic skills in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada has involved two phases. Early initiatives produced sets of skills relevant to work and life generally; employer-led initiatives then followed, resulting in extended lists of skills closely related to employability. There is no one definitive list of generic skills; instead, there are a number of lists. Collectively, the lists have six common elements:

- basic/fundamental skills
- people-related skills
- conceptual/thinking skills

- personal skills and attributes
- skills related to the business world
- skills related to the community.

In Australia employability skills are:

- communication skills, which contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers
- teamwork skills, which contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes
- problem-solving skills, which contribute to productive outcomes
- initiative and enterprise skills, which contribute to innovative outcomes
- planning and organizing skills, which contribute to long and short-term strategic planning
- self-management skills, which contribute to employee satisfaction and growth
- learning skills, which contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes
- technology skills, which contribute to effective execution of tasks.

http://www.governmentskills.com.au/images/file_groups/8440/employability_skills.pdf

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The Conference Board of Canada lists the following skills as those requested (required by Canadian employers):

Academic skills: those skills which provide the basic foundation to get, keep and progress in a job and to achieve the best results.

- Communicate:
  - understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
  - listen to understand and learn
  - read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays
  - write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

- Think:
  - think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
  - understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results
  - use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
  - access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g. skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts and social sciences
- Learn:
  - Continue to learn for life

Personal management skills: the combination of skills, attitudes and behaviour required to get, keep and progress in a job and to achieve the best results.

- Positive attitudes and behaviour:

- self-esteem and confidence
- honesty, integrity and personal ethics
- a positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health
- initiative, energy, and persistence to get the job done

- Responsibility:
  - the ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
  - the ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
  - accountability for actions taken
  - adaptability
  - a positive attitude toward change
  - the ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done (creativity)

Teamwork skills: those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results.

- work with others
- understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- understand and work within the culture of the group
- plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- seek a team approach as appropriate
- lead where appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance

http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx

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The United States State School Commission (Alaska), addressing the high youth unemployment rate in the State, focused specifically on Youth Employability Skills, identifying the following broad and specific skills;

Productive attitude and personal qualities

- demonstrates personal character (for example: honesty, ethics. integrity)
- uses time efficiently without sacrificing quality
- works safely
- shows courtesy and respect (tact)
- is willing to learn

People skills

- contributes as a team member
- values others' input
- accepts feedback
- builds constructive and effective relationships (customers, subordinates, supervisors, peers)

Punctuality and attendance

- arrives at work site/station on time
- is prepared for the work day
- observes company policy regarding scheduled and unanticipated absences

Critical thinking and problem-solving

- identifies the problem, reviews cause and effect, selects best solution within system
- utilizes logic, research, innovation, future visioning and creativity.

Time and resource allocation

- dependable in work assignments
- meets deadlines

Business basics

- understands employers organization and mission
- supports employer's standards
- responds to customer's expectations
- appropriately dressed and groomed
- understands business concepts

Information and analysis, technology and communication

- demonstrates communication skills necessary to accomplish work
- collects and interprets relevant information accurately
- appropriately uses workplace technology

http://www.apicc.org/servlet/content/YES.html