



## **Q&A: On the recently launched ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships and how it helps to promote a path to stable employment for young people**



*In this article, ILO's Ashwani Aggarwal, Senior Skills Specialist, highlights some of the advantages offered by Quality Apprenticeships, including how they can augment the employability of young jobseekers and increase the access of employers to a talent pool that has the relevant skills they need. Aggarwal also provides background information on the ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships - Vol. 1 Guide for Policy Makers, a resource guide to improve the design and implementation of apprenticeship systems and programmes.*

### **Q: Why focus on apprenticeships?**

The global youth unemployment rate has risen to a global average of more than 13 per cent in the decade since the global financial crisis began in 2007, with some countries and regions significantly harder hit than others. Moreover, young people are over-represented among the unemployed, accounting for more than 35 per cent of unemployed people globally, despite representing just over 15 per cent of the world's labour force.

Policy-makers have been searching for responses to these negative employment impacts of the crisis. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, policy-makers at the national, regional and global levels are rediscovering, or discovering for the first time – whether at the national, regional or global level – the importance of Quality Apprenticeships. Quality Apprenticeship systems contribute to matching skills in demand in the labour market with skills acquired in education and training systems, enabling young people to transition from the world of learning to the world of work. What is more, they play a key role in enhancing youth employability through personal development and a recognized qualification. They also offer a real opportunity to experience the world of work and to start the process of building a career. Equally important, quality apprenticeships provide a system that supports skills development and the hope of better employment prospects, today and in the future.

### **Q: What exactly is meant by Quality Apprenticeships?**

Apprenticeships come in different forms in different countries, depending on national traditions and practices. The ILO has been involved in numerous initiatives to support apprenticeship training and has promoted the concept of a Quality Apprenticeship system to emphasize the quality and relevance of training to the labour market. Such a system has the following key features:



*Quality Apprenticeships are a unique form of technical vocational education and training, combining on-the-job training and off-the-job learning that enable learners from all walks of life to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies required to carry out a specific occupation. They are regulated and financed by laws and collective agreements and policy decisions arising from social dialogue and require a written contract that details the roles and responsibilities of the apprentice and the employer and provides the apprentice with remuneration and standard social protection coverage. Following a clearly defined and structured period of training and the successful completion of a formal assessment, apprentices obtain a recognised qualification.*

### **Q: What is the ILO's approach to establishing Quality Apprenticeships?**

The ILO's approach is based on six building blocks: meaningful social dialogue; robust regulatory frameworks; clear roles and responsibilities; equitable funding arrangements; strong labour market relevance; and, inclusiveness.

### **Q: Why are these building blocks important?**

Quality Apprenticeships provide a bridge from the world of education to the world of work, based on [social dialogue](#) involving the social partners – employers and their associations and trade unions that are best placed to identify the training that is needed and the way that it should be provided. Quality Apprenticeships:

- require a robust and stable [regulatory framework](#) that establishes the overall conditions for designing and implementing systems and secures decent work for apprentices.
- are built on the support and commitment of numerous stakeholders who have a clear understanding of their [roles and responsibilities](#) and who have a common purpose which ensures the coherence of the entire system.
- generate both [costs and benefits](#) for public authorities, employers and apprentices themselves. A clear overall understanding that costs are shared equitably is required to ensure that all stakeholders are willing to participate on a long-term basis.
- prepare young people for occupations and their participation in the labour market. This requires employers and apprentices to know which occupations and which skills are in [demand](#) and how these skills will be recognised.

Quality Apprenticeships are not just designed for one social group. For Quality Apprenticeship to offer opportunities for all, there is a need to take positive action to increase diversity, improve reporting and accountability, incorporate a level of flexibility and to enhance advice and support.



### **Q: What is the ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships?**

The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships is a resource to improve the design and implementation of apprenticeship systems and programmes. It provides a comprehensive but concise set of information, guidance and practical tools aimed at policy-makers and practitioners engaged in designing and implementing Quality Apprenticeships.

The Toolkit presents examples of good practice from ILO constituents around the world, and demonstrates how Quality Apprenticeship systems and programmes can be developed in practical terms. It consists of two volumes: Guide for Policy Makers (Volume I); and Guide for Practitioners (Volume II): Volume I defines the features of the ILO approach to Quality Apprenticeship systems and aims to support policy-makers in their design and further development of these systems; Volume II will focus on the practicalities of developing Quality Apprenticeship programmes, and is intended to enable practitioners – human resource managers, trade union representatives, teachers and trainers from technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and employees of local/sectoral coordination support services – to design, implement and monitor these programmes.

### **Q: Can you give us examples of countries that have implemented apprenticeship programmes and how this has helped lower youth unemployment?**

Research undertaken for the European Commission<sup>1</sup> has shown that apprenticeships consistently lead to positive employment outcomes. On average 60 to 70 per cent (and up to 90 per cent in some cases) of apprentices secure employment immediately upon completion of their apprenticeship – for example in Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In Brazil<sup>2</sup>, an impact assessment of the Apprentice Act shows that apprentices, after graduating, have a greater chance of finding a non-temporary formal job and earning higher wages in the short- and medium-term relative to comparable people who did not benefit from such a programme.

In general, apprentices are more likely to find employment than the wider cohort of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) students. For example, in the Netherlands the unemployment rate of youth who followed the apprenticeship pathway

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. 2013. *Apprenticeship and traineeship schemes in EU27: Key success factors* (Brussels, European Union) available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/apprentice-trainee-success-factors\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/apprentice-trainee-success-factors_en.pdf) [accessed 14 December 2017]

<sup>2</sup> Fazio, M.V.; Fernández-Coto, R.; Ripani, L. 2016. *Apprenticeships for the XXI century: a model for Latin America and the Caribbean?* (Inter-American Development Bank), available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7855/Apprenticeships-in-the-XXI-Century-A-Model-for-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 14 December 2017)



was low, three per cent, compared to those who underwent a school-based pathway for the same qualification, between 11 and 30 per cent.

In light of the above, it is no wonder that Quality Apprenticeships have been referred to as the “gold standard”<sup>3</sup> to get youth into decent jobs.

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<sup>3</sup> *Quality apprenticeships “gold standard” to get youth into decent jobs.* ILO Director-General Guy Ryder highlights role of efficient apprenticeship systems in overcoming high youth unemployment, see [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_307451/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_307451/lang--en/index.htm), accessed on 14 December 2017.