



Quick Facts

► Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategies and actions under the Youth Employment Action Plan 2020-30 (period covered: 2020-24)



► October 2025

► Description and purpose of the evaluation



The high-level evaluation (HLE) reviewed the Office's strategies and actions under the [Youth Employment Action Plan \(YEAP\) 2020-2030](#) for the period 2020 – 24. The evaluation paid particular attention to the five policy areas of the YEAP: employment and economic policies for youth employment; labour market policies; employability (education, training and skills, and the school-to-work transitions); youth entrepreneurship and self-employment;

and rights for young people. The HLE offers key findings, lessons learned, good practices and forward-looking recommendations to improve the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) work in these areas.

► Methodology

The evaluation followed [EVAL's high-level evaluation protocol for strategy and policy evaluations](#). The HLE applied an outcome-based evaluation approach to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact, and sustainability of the ILO's strategies and actions on youth employment. This approach was guided by a high-level framework that outlined required actions to achieve intended outcomes. Overall, the HLE delivered expert-level analysis grounded in data derived from:



Comprehensive review of ILO documentation



10 case studies:

- 4 in-depth country-based (Colombia, the Philippines, Tunisia, and Kenya);
- 4 desk-based (Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Youth Guarantee Scheme in the Western Balkans); and
- 2 thematic (balance between demand-side and supply-side approaches, and ILO's Partnerships on Youth Employment)



170 interviews
(46% men and 54% women)

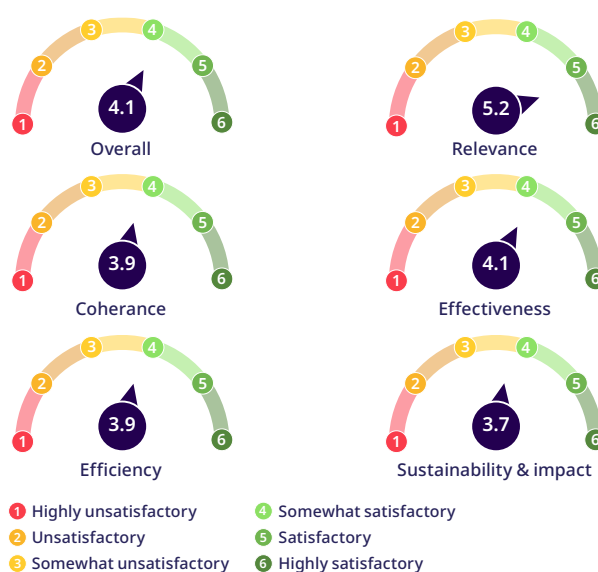


3 surveys with ILO staff, constituents, donors, United Nations and other partners (25%, 36% and 23% response rates, respectively)



Synthesis review of 30 evaluation reports on youth employment

► Overall assessment



KEY FINDINGS

The YEAP 2020–2030 sets out a focused strategic vision that reaffirms the ILO's normative and technical leadership in youth employment, positioning it as a lever of economic and social stability. Positioned as a global knowledge leader, the ILO has advanced policy integration and country-level diagnostics, and promoted youth rights at work, while also strengthening social dialogue and tripartism. Programming improved public employment services, enhanced skills systems, and promoted youth entrepreneurship—primarily through supply-side interventions.

Moving forward, the ILO's capacity to deliver on the YEAP remains constrained by critical gaps and decent work deficits. Demand-side interventions need stronger focus to unlock solutions for job creation challenges and to strengthen the private sector in youth job creation and talent retention. Moreover, youth participation in decision-making requires improvement. Internally, short funding cycles with limited resources, loose internal governance for interdisciplinary work, and the absence of costed planning, monitoring and reporting weaken long-term strategic delivery and impact assessment. Limited uptake of results by Member States through integration into national systems further restrict the scale, sustainability, and impact of youth employment initiatives.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

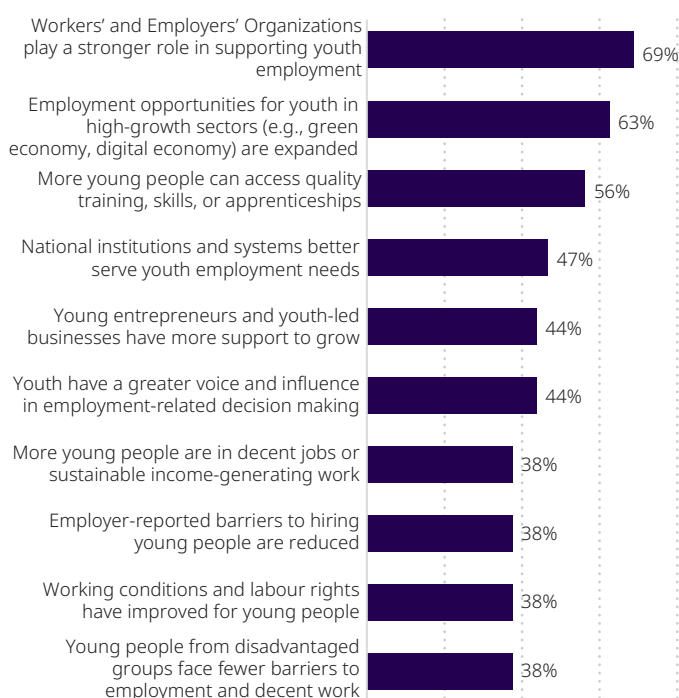
Relevance and strategic alignment of ILO's work: The YEAP 2020–2030 outlines a strategic approach that underscores the ILO's normative and technical leadership in youth employment. The organization has contributed to addressing constituents' priorities through stronger integration of youth employment into national policy frameworks since 2020.

Programmatic achievements: The YEAP has driven results at country level in policy integration, skills development, entrepreneurship, self-employment, and the promotion of tripartism and social dialogue. Yet, overall effectiveness is constrained by gaps in demand-side interventions, fragmented programming, short-funding cycles, market-related barriers, limited youth involvement in social dialogue, and socioeconomic and political factors. In the absence of a results framework, efforts to monitor progress under the YEAP have remained limited and largely ad hoc.

Efficiency: Since 2020, the ILO estimated total resource expenditure reached USD 445.8 million on youth employment — 22% of its total expenditure. Despite clear commitment, the ILO's delivery model for youth employment do not match the ambitions of the YEAP. Persistent staffing shortages with limited-term appointments, absence of formalized roles, and gaps in internal coordination affect efforts towards youth employment outcomes.

Sustainability and emerging impact: Integrated solutions and local buy-in demonstrate potential for impact and sustainability in several countries. However, ILO's work relies on technical assistance, with limited scale, and challenged uptake of results through integration into national frameworks with sustained domestic financing. These factors undermine sustainability, while limited focus on demand-side solutions and weak private sector engagement in job creation and talent retention reduce likelihood of impact.

► Perceived impact by surveyed ILO constituents of ILO achievements in youth employment, 2020–24 (% 'likely'/'highly likely')



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: To sustain its leadership role, the ILO should balance supply-side measures with a sharper focus on the active promotion of youth employment creation through targeted, demand-side interventions. This can be achieved through strengthening its work on cross-ministerial and comprehensive policy frameworks, based on social dialogue and youth engagement, and through the concrete application of newly developed tools.

Recommendation 2: For cohesive management and full realization of the YEAP results, the Youth Employment Unit should be authoritatively mandated to coordinate youth employment activities across the ILO and optimize resource utilization. To maximize delivery, the overlap between the Output 3.5 coordination team and IDAG should be addressed. To strengthen field delivery, results from the workforce gap analysis should be considered to address capacity needs in emerging areas in the field.

Recommendation 3: The ILO should complement the YEAP with an integrated results framework to forge greater institutional programming and strengthen results-based planning, monitoring and reporting.

Recommendation 4: To strengthen sustainability and impact, the ILO should explore avenues to leverage financial resources with its national constituents, enhance private sector engagement for job creation and talent retention, promote decent work and labour rights, and engage regional and global development banks to integrate the decent work agenda for youth into their financing instruments and technical assistance programmes. The ILO should continue maximizing global partnership platforms by prioritizing the development of value propositions, adopting a unified and tailored engagement approach, and assigning dedicated partnership staff across country, regional, and HQ levels.

QUOTES

► Voices from constituents

"Working with the ILO is beneficial, rewarding, and encouraging. The ILO should monitor the results of its projects, some of which need more time to achieve more tangible results."

► Voices from ILO partners

"The ILO has a critical mandate to work with government and look for different ways to activate the labour market and increase youth employment."

► Voices from ILO staff

"Youth unemployment is dynamic and changing. The ILO needs to remain proactive on the solutions provided to the constituents. Youth development requires a lot more than normative interventions, which may need specific skills on emerging issues, e.g., digital skills, and other sectoral skills. The ILO should regularly update its capabilities to remain a major player in youth development."