

Report by Deirdre Hughes and Graeme Smith

# Youth transitions: creating pathways to success





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**Education Development Trust** Highbridge House, 16–18 Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4RU  
T +44 (0) 118 902 1000 E [enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com) W [www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com](http://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com)



# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Welcome to Education Development Trust</b>                                       | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>About the authors</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Chapter 1: Strengthening connections between education and the world of work</b> | <b>10</b> |
| Employer engagement and employability skills  | 12        |
| Self-employment and entrepreneurship  | 14        |
| Career management, career adaptability, and/or meta-skills                          | 16        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Providing the right spaces and places</b>                             | <b>20</b> |
| Spaces and places   | 21        |
| National Systems' Strengthening   | 26        |
| Quality assurance of provision  | 28        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Key principles to shape policy and practice</b>                       | <b>30</b> |
| 1. Start early  | 32        |
| 2. Support teaching and learning  | 34        |
| 3. Embed careers firmly in the curriculum and school-to-work transitions            | 36        |
| 4. Encourage effective career and transition dialogue                               | 38        |
| 5. Engage employers   | 40        |
| 6. Utilise technology and labour market information (LMI)                           | 41        |
| 7. Making use of evidence to strengthen skills and create pathways to success       | 43        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Building back better</b>  | <b>44</b> |
| <b>References</b>   | <b>48</b> |

## Welcome to Education Development Trust

At Education Development Trust, we have been improving education around the world for over 50 years. We design and implement improvement programmes for school systems, deliver expert careers and employability services, and deploy specialists to provide consultancy services internationally.

Our work is informed by our continually refreshed body of research that focuses on the bright spots in education, from education authorities as diverse as those in Vietnam, Kenya, England, New York and Dubai. Bringing about real change that alters the aspects of a national system that – for many reasons – are not working so well at the time, requires knowledge and the ability to design and implement changes to any of the levers that can impede great educational outcomes. So, the ability to affect policy, practices, pedagogy, behaviour, funding, attitudes and more is a prerequisite for a company that can truly claim to transform lives through improving education. With highly informed agents of change operating in low- to high-income countries with their varying internal contexts, we not only design, but also show and enable – so when working with us, everyone involved, from policymakers to school leaders and teachers, is able to apply their new knowledge to drive sustainable system reform.

Our expert knowledge, programme design and implementation expertise are also deployed in delivering Ofsted-rated outstanding careers services in England, and in owning and managing a family of independent schools. We are a not-for-profit and we are driven by our values of integrity, accountability, excellence and collaboration.

## About the authors

**Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE** is an international careers expert and policy adviser, academic researcher/writer, trainer and freelance consultant specialising in the impact of careers, employment and skills policies to support the development of jobs and growth. Visit: [www.dmhassociates.org](http://www.dmhassociates.org)

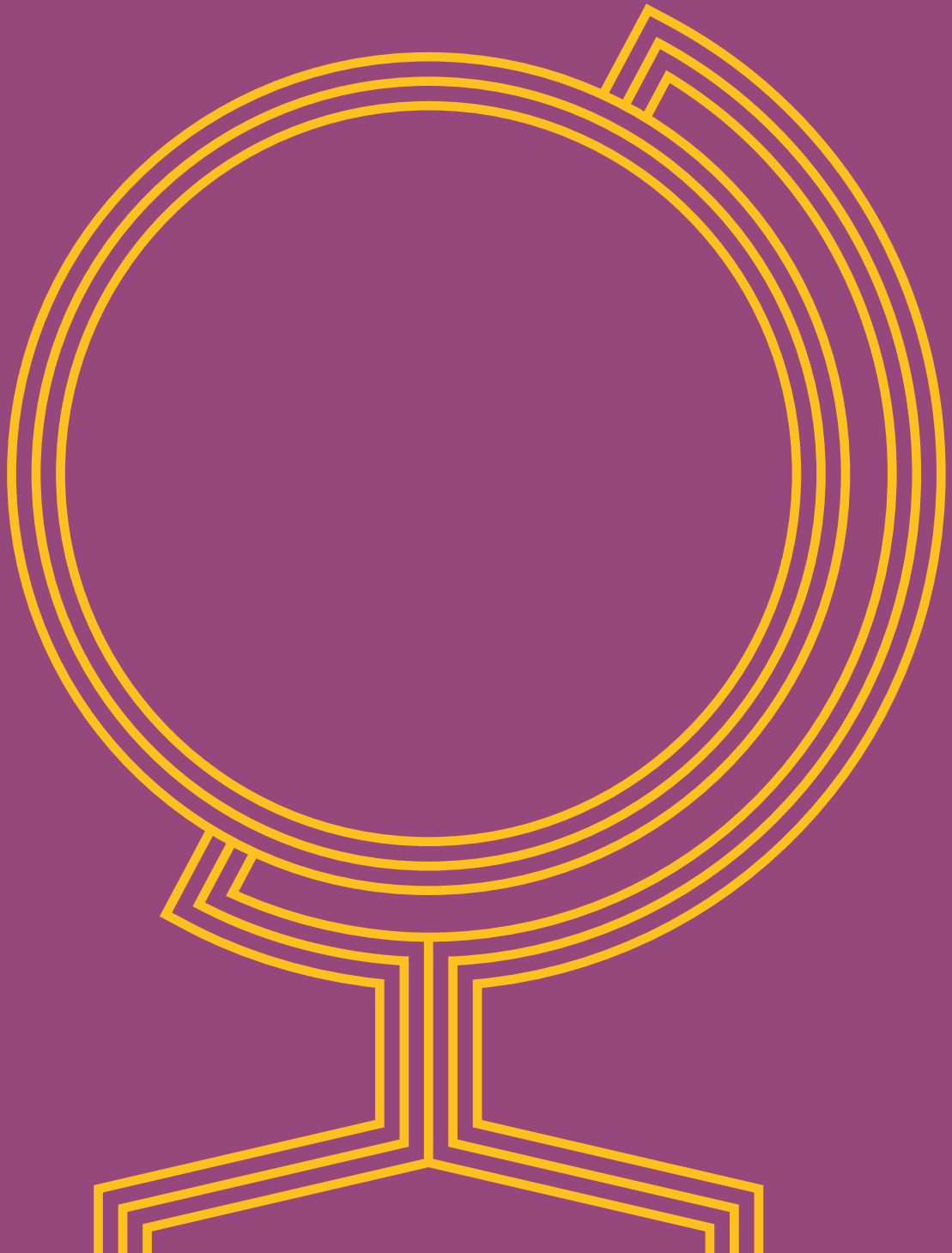
**Dr Graeme Smith** is a Research and Evaluation Executive at Skills Development Scotland. With a background in psychological research, Graeme is particularly interested in understanding the factors that influence young people's decisions, especially around their careers.

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# Introduction





## Around the world, young people face considerable challenges. Societies everywhere are undergoing a deep transformation.

Even before the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, policymakers were reflecting on response to many types of disruption: Industry 4.0, rapid technological advancement, the challenges of climate change, and – in some countries – an ageing population and workforce. Now, the Covid-19 crisis has created a new set of immediate and longer-term problems. At the time of writing, more than one in six young people had stopped working since the onset of the pandemic (ILO, May 2020), while those who remained in employment saw their working hours cut by an average of 23%.<sup>1</sup>

*“The pandemic is inflicting a triple shock on young people. Not only is it destroying their employment, but it is also disrupting education and training, and placing major obstacles in the way of those seeking to enter the labour market or to move between jobs.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Covid-19 crisis has created a new set of immediate and longer-term problems

The virus will almost certainly exacerbate existing problems faced by young people. Prolonged social isolation and stress are expected to increase the incidences of young people with mental health conditions.<sup>3</sup> The global economy is expected to contract sharply in 2020, shrinking by 3%, much more than during the 2008–2009 financial crisis.<sup>4</sup> Over the coming year, global youth unemployment is expected to escalate. Around the world, more than four in ten young people (aged 15–24) were employed in hard-hit sectors when the crisis began, and nearly 77% of this cohort were in informal jobs, compared to 60% of workers aged 25 and above.<sup>5</sup> New youth policies and innovative practices will be necessary to address a potential tsunami of youth unemployment and prolonged transitions between education and the world of work.

Other important challenges predate the health crisis. Technological change brings both problems and possible opportunities. New technology has the potential to eliminate entire categories of jobs but, equally, may generate entirely new jobs and innovations. New forms of work are emerging within unpredictable economies. For example, companies like Uber, Fiverr, YouTube, 99Designs, and TaskRabbit allow people from all over the world to provide on-demand services in a wide range of areas, from transport to financial services, legal consultancy, and software design. In around 60% of occupations, at least one third of the constituent activities could be automated.<sup>6</sup> This would entail substantial workplace transformations and changes to the future of work. In a context where work itself is becoming so unpredictable, we must consider how young people can make good decisions about the opportunities and choices available to them. Technology both creates new uncertainties and provides new resources that can be used to navigate the

<sup>1</sup>International Labour Organization (2020) <sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Lee (2020) <sup>4</sup>International Monetary Fund (2020) <sup>5</sup>International Labour Organization (2020) <sup>6</sup>Manyika et al. (2017)

complexities of the contemporary labour market, for example, by enabling new forms of access to relevant services and information.

In this period of accelerated change and challenge, individuals need both appropriate tools and the right kind of mindset to find purposeful learning and work opportunities. There are some promising signs: generally, children and young people worldwide have high aspirations and ambitions for their futures,<sup>7</sup> and many are overwhelmingly positive about change.<sup>8</sup> Yet, inequalities in life chances and living standards are widening. In 23 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), school-to-work transitions research shows that young people often face problematic and protracted transitions into work.<sup>9</sup> In places as diverse as India, the Middle East and North Africa, and Greece, many educated young adults struggle with what is often described as 'waithood'.<sup>10</sup> This can lead to frustration among youth and high rates of migration to new areas or other countries, with ensuing humanitarian risks.<sup>11</sup> In this context, developing young people's capabilities and motivation to learn on a lifelong basis is a global, environmental and moral imperative.

Globally, substantial skills gaps and skills mismatches exist. There are significant gaps between the goals of education systems and the needs of business. Puckett and colleagues provide examples of how skills mismatch affects two out of five employees in the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries.<sup>12</sup> The authors estimate (based on OECD 2016 data) that skills mismatch affects 1.3 billion people worldwide and imposes a 6% annual tax on the global economy in the form of lost labour productivity. At the same time, public spending on education favours children from the richest households, with the poorest 20% receiving less than 10% of public resources in education.<sup>13</sup> The result is that the most disadvantaged children and young people are less likely to receive the education and develop the skills they need to adapt and prosper in a changing world.

For too many young people, opportunities in life are determined by income and wealth. New pathways to success are needed, as traditional routes to good livelihoods are no longer enough. This paper sets out to provide key stakeholders with evidence-based guidance on the elements of effective school-to-work transitions – ranging from career-related learning in primary schools to meeting the needs of young adults up to the age of 25.

For leaders, teachers and career development professionals, a fundamental question is: how can children and young people be best prepared to succeed in their school-to-work transitions now and in the future?

Drawing on our review of 105 research reports, the report deals with schooling, employability, entrepreneurship, and career development dimensions and focuses on ways to:

- Keep more young people switched on to learning
- Encourage young people not to close down opportunities too early
- Broaden horizons and challenge inaccurate assumptions
- Create relevant experiences of and exposure to the world of work.

In this period of accelerated change and challenge, individuals need both appropriate tools and the right kind of mindset to find purposeful learning and work opportunities

<sup>7</sup> Alam & de Diego (2019) <sup>8</sup> WorldSkills (2019) <sup>9</sup> Alam & de Diego (2019) <sup>10</sup> Briddick, Sensoy-Briddick and Savickas (2019: 256); This term is used by economists who speak of the phenomenon of 'wait unemployment', or enduring long periods of unemployment, particularly by educated young people in countries with large public sectors. In a similar vein, many young people in Egypt and throughout the region experience "wait adulthood" or "waithood" as they negotiate their prolonged adolescence and remain single for long periods of time to try to save money to marry. <sup>11</sup> Hartung (2019: 8) <sup>12</sup> Puckett et al (2020) <sup>13</sup> Brown & Fore (2019)



Chapter 1

# Strengthening connections between education and the world of work



## In this chapter, we set out the rationale for strengthening connections between education and the world of work.

We draw upon recent international studies and highlight challenges and opportunities associated with raising the career aspirations of children and young people. We then briefly explore employer engagement, employability (which is notoriously complex in definition), entrepreneurship and career development activities, and how these manifest both within and outside of formal and informal schooling. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the evidence base associated with investment in careers support activities to produce improved educational, social and economic outcomes.

Attitudes and aspirations towards careers take shape when children are young. This has been demonstrated by robust research: a recent study examining the career aspirations of children aged 7-13 years old in New Zealand, for example, clearly show this to be the case.<sup>14</sup> In the study, around 7,700 primary and intermediate students from around the country drew pictures showing the jobs they would like to do when they grow up. The results showed the students considered a very narrow range of career choices at this age – more than 50% of drawings for both boys and girls showed just nine jobs.<sup>15</sup> There were strong connections between aspirations and disadvantage, with Māori children most likely to aspire to be sportspeople, but less likely to be interested in science and technology-related jobs, while children of Pacific Island heritage were more than twice as likely as others to want to be police officers. The report confirms: *'unconscious bias caused by a child's race, gender and socio-economic status can have an early effect on career choice.'*<sup>16</sup>

Similar findings feature prominently in UK and other international research studies.<sup>17</sup> For example, a UK survey of 13,000 primary school children showed that children's hopes and aspirations were frequently limited to the world around them and what they saw on TV and social media.<sup>18</sup> Only 1% of primary age children in this study said they had had a chance to meet a role model from the world of work to help them think about career pathways to success. Children need such opportunities to challenge ingrained stereotypes that they, their parents or carers, and their teachers often have.

In many societies, social norms can severely restrict access to learning and work, in particular for females or other marginalised and vulnerable groups. Girls with disabilities are among the world's most marginalised groups, as a result of social norms and cultural bias around gender and disability.<sup>19</sup> In general, women remain less likely to be in paid employment than men. With 48.5% of all women being employed outside the home in 2018, female global labour force participation rate is 26.5 percentage points below that of their male counterparts.<sup>20</sup> This disparity is highly variable, with some countries, such as Burundi or Guinea having more females than males in the labour force, and others, such as Algeria or Jordan, having fewer

A UK survey of 13,000 primary school children showed that children's hopes and aspirations were frequently limited to the world around them and what they saw on TV and social media

<sup>14</sup>Tertiary Education Commission (2020) <sup>15</sup>The nine jobs include sportsperson, vet, police officer, teacher, social media influencer, artist, doctor, military or firefighter and farmer  
<sup>16</sup>Tertiary Education Commission (2020) <sup>17</sup>Gottfredson (2005); Archer et al. (2013a); Crause, Watson & McMahon (2017) <sup>18</sup>Chambers et al. (2018) <sup>19</sup>United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (2017) <sup>20</sup>International Labour Organization (2018)

than 25% of adult females in the workforce.<sup>21</sup> In many countries, girls and women face barriers that prevent them from translating human capital investments into the same economic opportunities as boys and men. Women, more often than men, tend to work in the informal economy and spend more time than men on unpaid care and domestic duties.

A recent major international study by the OECD highlighted the mismatch between young people's career aspirations and jobs, and the likely impact this will have on the world economy.<sup>22</sup> This is based on the latest PISA survey of over 600,000 15-year-olds from 79 countries and economic areas. The report indicates that whilst the world of work has undergone huge changes since the first PISA survey (carried out in 2000), *'the career expectations of young people have shifted little over this period. Surprisingly, they have actually narrowed...their choices are heavily influenced by gender and social background.'*<sup>23</sup>

Other robust studies indicate that holding bias assumptions and having narrow aspirations can – and does – go on to influence the academic effort children and young people exert in certain lessons,<sup>24</sup> the subjects they choose to study,<sup>25</sup> and the jobs they end up pursuing.<sup>26</sup> A joint statement published by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, the OECD and other allied international organisations said:

*"When people in work cooperate with schools and other education and training providers, they help learners and jobseekers to better understand the working world in all its varieties. It allows access to useful experiences and to trusted, new information which can be expected to broaden and deepen career aspirations as people see for themselves what different types of work and work environments are like."*<sup>27</sup>

These major organisations argue that because of major structural changes happening in the labour market, whatever the provision of careers guidance in the past, there is need for more and better provision looking ahead.

A recent major international study by the OECD highlighted the mismatch between young people's career aspirations and jobs, and the likely impact this will have on the world economy

## Employer engagement and employability skills

In a post-Covid-19 setting, there are likely to be new problems promoting employer engagement and employability skills in schools, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education. Many employers – large, medium and small – will be preoccupied with business survival and productivity. Yet, as Stanley and Mann, alongside others, have pointed out, employer engagement and employability skills are important aspects of initiatives to make education more relevant to the world of work.<sup>28</sup> Stanley and Mann propose a model whereby employer engagement activities can be conceived through the lens of everyday teaching and learning. This may be:

- **Supplementary** – directly supporting conventional teaching and learning approaches to achieve established learning outcomes (for example, reading support programmes)
- **Complementary** – offering alternative means to achieve established learning outcomes (for example, mentoring programmes aimed at helping students to improve their attainment)

<sup>21</sup> World Bank (2019) <sup>22</sup> Mann et al. (2020) <sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.7 <sup>24</sup> Mann, Percy & Kashefpakdel (2018) <sup>25</sup> Dewitt & Archer (2017) <sup>26</sup> Rogers, Chambers & Percy (2020) <sup>27</sup> CEDEFOP (2019:6)  
<sup>28</sup> Stanley & Mann (2014)

- **Additional** – offering means to achieve learning outcomes additional to those found in conventional teaching and learning (for example, enterprise activities aimed at developing employability skills or entrepreneurial capabilities).<sup>29</sup>

Achievement of learning outcomes includes not only qualifications, but also the development of attitudes, skills and knowledge that go beyond most qualification frameworks. Done properly, employer engagement can improve the distribution of:

- human capital (supporting the development of technical and employability skills)<sup>30</sup>
- social capital (contributing to building confidence and networks)<sup>31</sup>
- cultural capital (shaping attitudes and identities).<sup>32</sup>

The OECD<sup>33</sup> highlights the importance of employer links to school-to-work transitions. Previously, Mann et al. had drawn on British longitudinal datasets to identify indicators of successful transitions in adult employment among teenagers, specifically related to teenage attitudes towards and experiences of the world of work.<sup>34</sup> Beyond this pioneering work, attempts to measure the impact and delivery of employer engagement in schooling have yet to be fully realised. The measurement of quality, variation among different types of employer activity, and interaction with other careers programme features often rely on blunt measures (e.g. self-assessed views). Activities at primary age and early transition from primary to post-primary schooling tend to be less well measured or evaluated than those at the age of 14-16 or during higher education.

Some societal and economic changes make transitions to work more difficult. In the UK, the proportion of teenagers working in ‘Saturday jobs’ has almost halved in the past 20 years as young people have turned towards earning cash online, rather than staffing tills, stacking shelves and delivering newspapers.<sup>35</sup> Only a quarter of 16- and 17-year-olds now do any conventional paid work, compared with 48% in 1999, according to the Resolution Foundation thinktank, which has identified a wider increase in the number of adults – now 3.4 million – who have never had a paid job. Some young people are going online to make money, with 2 million 15- to 24-year-olds signed up to the fashion trading site Depop, which claims its most successful sellers earn £2,000 a month – far more than the roughly £250 per month a typical teenager would earn from a single Saturday shift per week. Summer jobs and term-time temporary work are also in short supply.<sup>36</sup>

Employers frequently talk about the ‘employability skills’ that school leavers need to have and there are a range of different definitions of what these essential skills actually are.<sup>37</sup> Different policy drivers, economic climates and cultures influence the way in which employability is articulated in different countries.<sup>38</sup> Yorke and Knight, in their seminal work on ‘employability’, define this as:

*“A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation(s), which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.”*<sup>39</sup>

In the UK, the proportion of teenagers working in ‘Saturday jobs’ has almost halved in the past 20 years as young people have turned towards earning cash online

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. <sup>30</sup> Dewitt & Archer (2017) <sup>31</sup> Rogers, Chambers & Percy (2020) <sup>32</sup> Bourdieu 1986:1973 – Bourdieu (1986) breaks capital into three distinct types; embodied cultural capital, objectified capital and institutional cultural capital. He emphasised that cultural capital is intrinsically linked to economic and social capital. Access to economic and social capital allows greater access to cultural capital and Bourdieu (1973) observed that, as a side effect, cultural capital is often linked to social class and as a result reinforces social divisions, hierarchies of power and inequality within society. <sup>33</sup> Musset & Lurekova (2018) <sup>34</sup> Mann, Kashefpakdel & Rehill (2017) <sup>35</sup> Gardiner (2020) <sup>36</sup> Ibid. <sup>37</sup> CIPD (2020) <sup>38</sup> Tran (2015) <sup>39</sup> Yorke & Knight (2006:8)

It is important to take a broad view of the skills that young people need. Fettes, Evans and Kashefpakdel argue for young adults to 'put skills to work', emphasising that the quality and nature of the learning process is important in developing meta-cognitive strategies, career adaptability skills, and understanding of work environments.<sup>40</sup> For both primary and secondary pupils, this is heavily influenced by individual responses and perspectives on their experience of education. Many teachers and other commentators, such as teacher trade unions, argue that it is important to remember that education is not only about creating workers and employees, but should also aim to develop well-rounded citizens, equipped with the skills to live a happy, healthy and balanced life.<sup>41</sup> Although there are different perspectives on 'employability', it seems clear that skills development and acquisition play a key role in improving individuals' access to learning and work opportunities, as well as achieving inclusive growth and improved productivity – all critical for social and economic success. The potential benefits apply to both employers and individuals:

- For employers, a highly motivated and well-trained workforce helps to ensure profitability and competitive edge.
- For individuals, skills and some form of experience of work offer a route to increased opportunities, earnings, a livelihood and personal fulfilment.

Skills development and acquisition play a key role in improving individuals' access to learning and work opportunities

### Self-employment and entrepreneurship

Young people are increasingly becoming the focus for entrepreneurial and enterprise policy initiatives and enterprise education in schools. This emphasis increases the need to clarify the entrepreneurial dimension of careers and employability initiatives in order to effectively measure the impact these programmes have on young people's lives. It also raises a conceptual issue concerning the multi-dimensionality of the construct of enterprise and the career conversations that take place in schools and colleges with young people and their parents or carers. There has been some attention to this issue in the literature. Green, for example, suggests self-employment interventions for young people may be divided into three types of interventions and entrepreneurial assistance:

- Enterprise education
- Soft support (e.g. consulting, skills development, advice) and
- Hard support (e.g. microcredit, grants).<sup>42</sup>

There is some disagreement in the literature about the impact of entrepreneurship programmes. In one study, Huber et al. examined the impact of a five-day entrepreneurship education programme on primary school-aged Dutch students.<sup>43</sup> A total of 2,751 pupils were randomly allocated to control and intervention groups by class. The study found a significant positive impact of the intervention on the non-cognitive entrepreneurial skills of pupils (e.g. risk-taking, creativity and self-efficacy). By contrast, Oosterbeek et al. found little evidence of entrepreneurship education making a difference to college students' entrepreneurship competencies and intentions in their study of the Junior Achievement Student Mini-Company (SMC) entrepreneurship education programme (the European and American equivalent of the Young Enterprise programme in the UK).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Fettes, Evans & Kashefpakdel (2018) <sup>41</sup> Bousted (2018) <sup>42</sup> Green (2013) <sup>43</sup> Huber, Sloof & van Praag (2014) <sup>44</sup> Oosterbeek, van Praag & Ijsselstein (2008)





The ILO has further explored the nature of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ support.<sup>45</sup> ‘Soft support’ includes instilling the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to set up and run a business – for example, creating a business plan, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-awareness and creativity. ‘Hard support’ consists of microfinance loans or grants, both before and after start-up. These measures aim to assist the self-employed to overcome barriers to accessing financial capital to help with start-up costs.<sup>46</sup>

There are some complexities to the world of self-employment. Burchell et al. highlight the importance of distinguishing between “freely chosen and profitable self-employment, which is often associated with involvement in family business and with more educated young people, from the survival strategies of more disadvantaged young people.”<sup>47</sup> Sheehan and McNamara argue the two concepts have often been conflated, and both appear in connection with interventions and policies promoting training and leadership, coaching and mentoring, microcredit schemes and business start-up loans.<sup>48</sup>

In summary, self-employment and entrepreneurship programmes can be categorized into three types of interventions:

- Promoting an entrepreneurial mindset and culture among young people
- Providing careers information, advice, coaching and mentoring to young people who want to become self-employed entrepreneurs
- Producing solutions to any perceived logistical barriers to self-employment, for example by facilitating access to financial support and reducing bureaucracy.

Typically, the most effective programmes and interventions combine all three elements.

From a policy perspective, this requires a supportive environment that promotes lifelong learning and investment in skills, careers information, advice and guidance and personal development.

### Career management, career adaptability, and/or meta-skills

There is a growing realisation that in addition to the ‘academic skills’ that traditionally dominate school performance discourse, more attention must be given to ‘essential life skills’ in the education system. This will require greater experience of the world of work for both children and young people. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development argues strongly for schools to begin career guidance early and for it to include exposure to the world of work.<sup>49</sup>

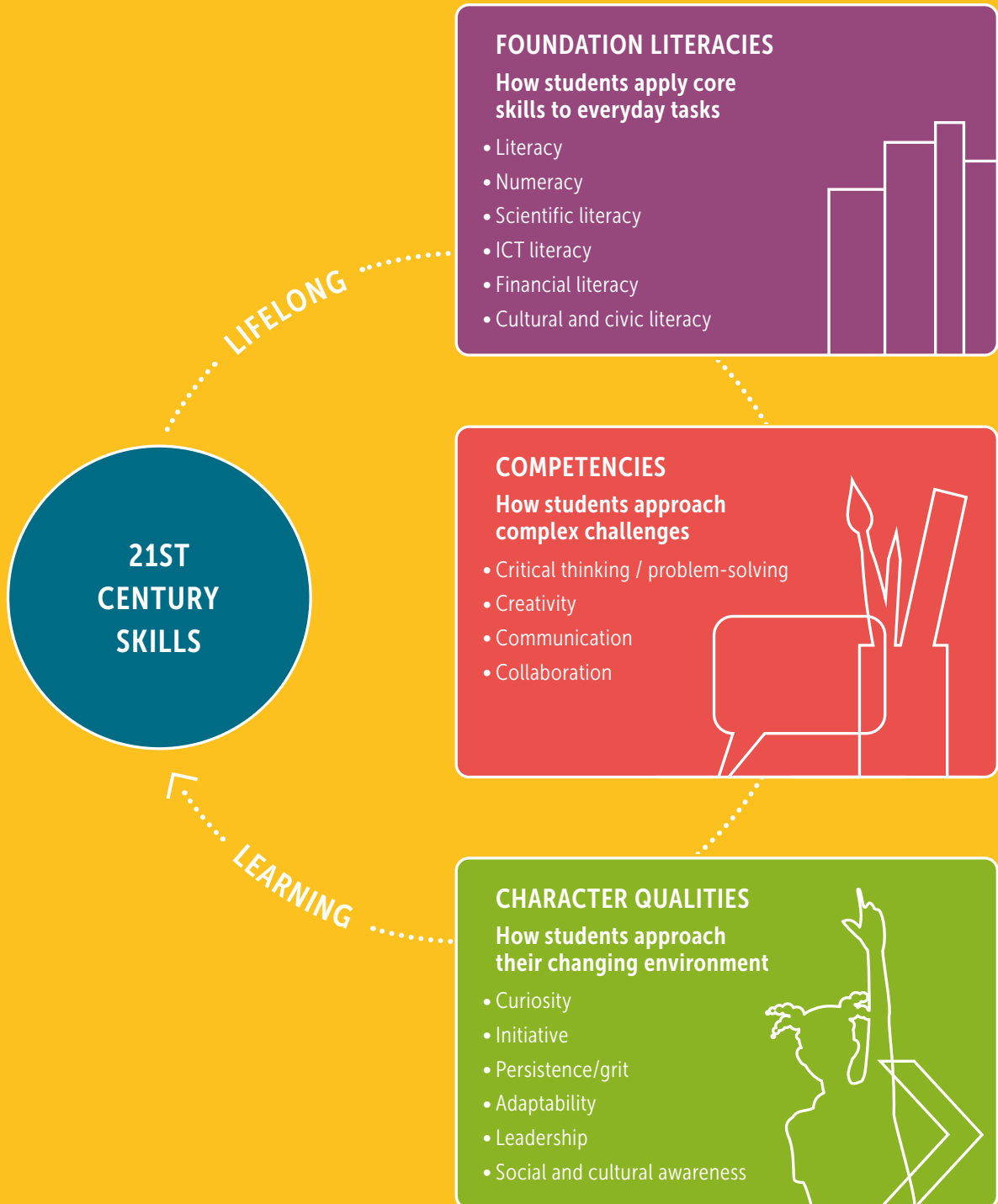
As part of this move towards greater engagement with the workplace, there are major philosophical and practical challenges. These include how best to design services that inculcate sustainable skills acquisition, and what roles key influencers, such as teachers, parents/carers, career guidance/counselling advisers, peers and others, should play. From the literature, we have identified a plethora of terms used to describe skills development needed for individuals to thrive in the contemporary world of work.<sup>50</sup>

The World Economic Forum sets out 16 skills for the 21st century (see Figure 1) and a variety of general and targeted learning strategies that foster social and emotional skills (see Figure 2).<sup>51</sup>

There is a growing realisation that in addition to the ‘academic skills’ that traditionally dominate school performance discourse, more attention must be given to ‘essential life skills’ in the education system

<sup>45</sup> International Labour Organization (2014) <sup>46</sup> Ibid. <sup>47</sup> Burchell et al. (2017:9) <sup>48</sup> Sheehan & McNamara (2015:11-13) <sup>49</sup> Musset & Kurekova (2018) <sup>50</sup> See for example CIPD (2018); CIPD (2020); UNICEF (no date) <sup>51</sup> World Economic Forum (2016)

# Students require 16 skills for the 21st century



# A variety of general and targeted learning strategies foster social and emotional skills



The term Career Management Skills (CMS) is frequently used in the context of lifelong guidance systems, policies and practices.<sup>52</sup> Across Europe, CMS is characterised as:

*“The term used to describe the skills, attributes, attitudes and knowledge that individuals require in order to manage their career.”<sup>53</sup>*

The term has been used in Scotland, where CMS is specifically linked to better understanding of self, strengths, horizons and networks and as a framework for careers guidance (see Figure 3).<sup>54</sup> The competencies within the framework are explained in the following terms:

- **Self** – competencies that enable individuals to develop their sense of self within society.
- **Strengths** – competencies that enable individuals to acquire and build on their strengths and to pursue rewarding learning and work opportunities.
- **Horizons** – competencies that enable individuals to visualise, plan and achieve their career aspirations throughout life.
- **Networks** – competencies that enable individuals to develop relationships and networks of support.

Skills Development Scotland and the Centre for Work-Based Learning in Scotland identified the meta-skills that people need, classified under three headings:

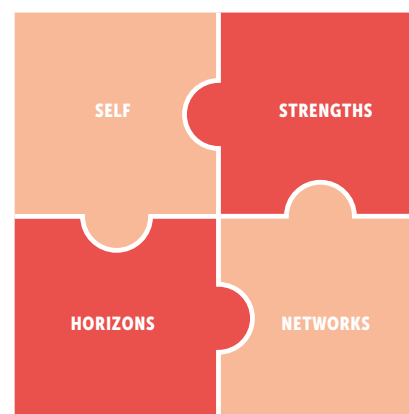
- **Self-management:** Manage the now
- **Social intelligence:** Connect with the world
- **Innovation:** Create our own change.<sup>56</sup>

For policymakers, managers and practitioners:

*“These skills and capabilities themselves are not new. In fact, they are ancient human capabilities that have enabled people to succeed throughout history. They have been called many things and classified in a range of different ways across the globe. The difference now is the imperative for us to increase the value that society places on these skills, so that they are held by more people and in greater depth.”<sup>57</sup>*

Hillage and Pollard suggest that one of the four main elements of employability is ‘deployment’ – the extent to which individuals ‘are aware of what they have got and how they choose to use it.’ They define this to comprise career management skills, job search skills, and ‘the extent to which they are adaptable to labour market developments and realistic about labour market opportunities.’<sup>58</sup> Being able to contribute to a strong, healthy and equitable society will be important issues in the lives of children and young people. It is essential that education, careers, training and employment providers work together to better prepare and support citizens for the deployment of effective lifelong learning and ongoing skills acquisition.

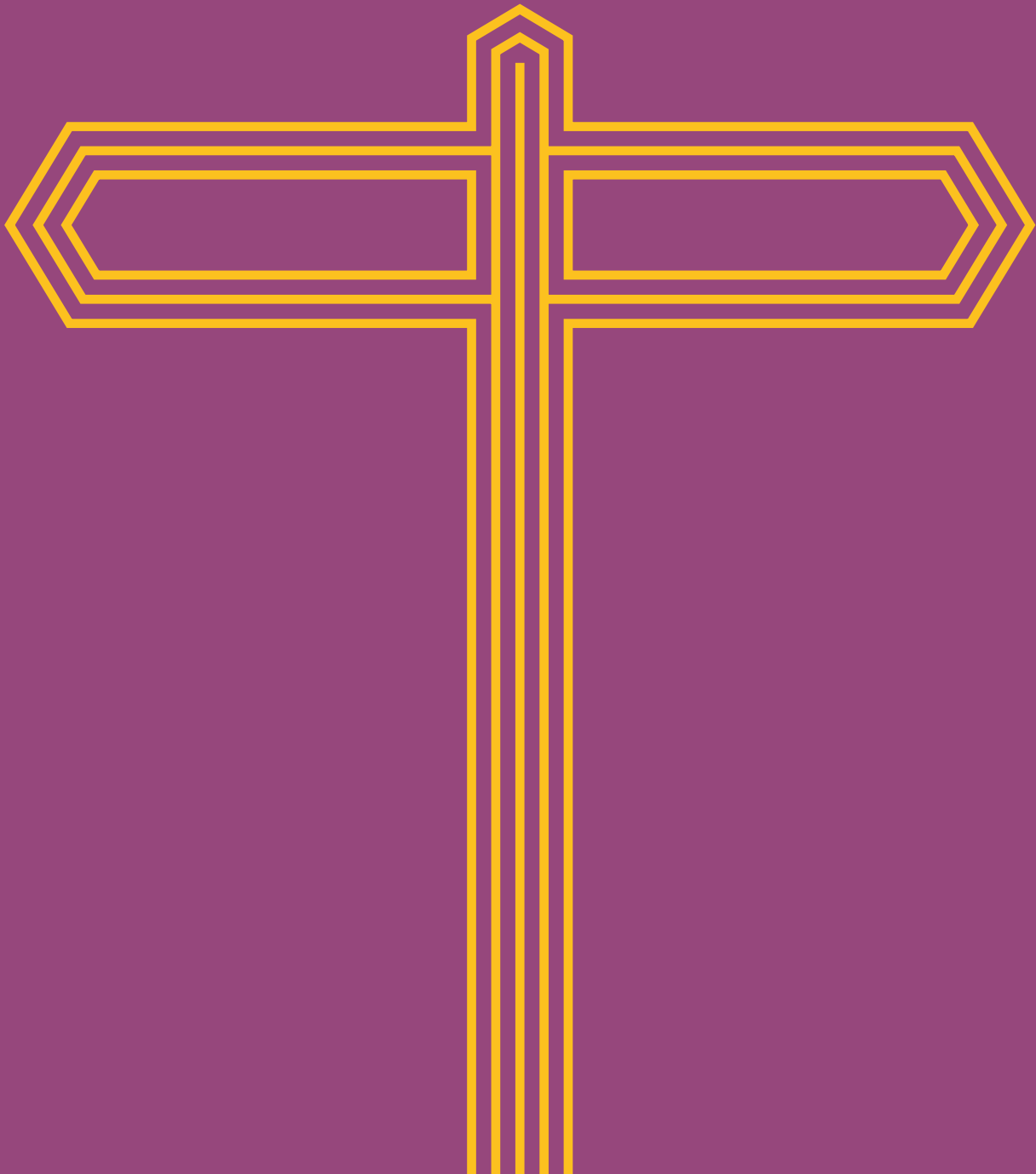
FIGURE 3: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND<sup>55</sup>



<sup>52</sup> Gravina & Lovsin (2012) <sup>53</sup> Neary (2017) <sup>54</sup> Skills and Development Scotland (2020) <sup>55</sup> Ibid. <sup>56</sup> Skills Development Scotland and the Centre for Work-Based Learning in Scotland (2018) <sup>57</sup> Ibid. p8 <sup>58</sup> Hillage & Pollard (1998: 12-17)

Chapter 2

# Providing the right spaces and places



# In this chapter, we argue for ‘spaces and places’ for children and young people to engage more in career dialogue to help smooth their transitions between learning and work on a lifelong basis.

We present solutions to creating pathways to success for children and young people – starting with career-related learning in primary schools and beyond, up to the age of 25. We also consider the need for the effective quality assurance of provision.

Research shows that prolonged periods out of work can have lasting negative impacts on wellbeing, health, income and future employment

## Spaces and places

The current economic crisis resulting from Covid-19 will have a greater impact on some groups than others. Young people, the lowest paid, and females are likely to be disproportionately affected by the crisis and the resulting worldwide recession. Research shows that prolonged periods out of work can have lasting negative impacts on wellbeing, health, income and future employment.

In this context, we argue for a ‘spaces and places’ response. The distinction between ‘space’ and ‘place’ was first highlighted by Harrison and Dourish.<sup>59</sup> They considered that it was not enough to provide people with ‘spaces’ for interaction; people need to interact in well-designed, conducive ‘places’. Drawing on insights from architecture and urban design, they argued that constructive human engagement happens when people meet in appropriate and distinctive ‘places’. Effective places can be either ‘bricks-and-mortar’ environments or digital spaces.

Any space and its properties (social, physical, procedural and technical) are a product of social processes, which in turn have to be understood when the aim is to facilitate change and/or transformation.<sup>60</sup>

The need for the right kind of ‘space’ was recently illustrated in England during the early stages of the Covid-19 crisis. There were growing concerns about rising youth unemployment, particularly in certain disadvantaged areas. There were few spaces for young people aged between 16 and 19 to access specialist, one-to-one or group-based careers advisory support beyond the local public employment service (DWP), which was overwhelmed with unemployment claimants. Young workers have been disproportionately impacted by the crisis. Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies highlights nearly a third of young workers are in ‘shut down’ sectors, compared with one in eight of those aged 25 or over.<sup>61</sup> As a result, young people and their parents or carers need to know where they can go to access local careers support. Figure 4 sets out some examples of promising practices at a national level in the provision of spaces for careers learning.

<sup>59</sup> Harrison and Dourish (1996) <sup>60</sup>Ibid. <sup>61</sup>Joyce & Xu (2020)

FIGURE 4

## Promising Practice in the Provision of Spaces for Career Learning

### In the Netherlands,

LeerWerkLoketten (Learning and Working Desks) provides an example of new spaces for career learning and support that are emerging at local and regional level, intended to provide open access to the community. These 'Learning and Working Desks' are regional offices based on local partnerships, supported by a network of educational institutions, businesses, municipalities, knowledge centres and the Employee Insurance Agency. They are open to all citizens looking to receive free advice on learning and working opportunities and employers with labour-related questions. They screen clients and provide guidance activities, validation services, support activities, education and training.<sup>62</sup>

**In Finland,** Ohjaamo One-Stop Guidance Centres exist to deliver integrated youth guidance. The centres provide information, advice

and guidance to young people in relation to any relevant service available to them. Co-locating different public services under one roof, involving users and stakeholders in designing services and creating new forms of 'public-private-people partnership', the One-Stop Guidance Centre model has a strong focus on collaboration between individuals and different agencies.<sup>63</sup>

**In New South Wales, Australia,** the Covid-19 lockdown has triggered greater use of web-based interactive guidance tools and services (e.g. video-communication with careers advisers/counsellors, YouTube-live or webinars with chat function, and facilitation). This new trend, in which digital spaces are created to reach young people, has rapidly gathered pace around the world – even in countries where such technologies had not previously been commonly used in lifelong guidance delivery.<sup>64</sup>

These online spaces have gathered momentum alongside personalised telephone calls for those most at risk of dropping out of education and training. At the same time, issues of safeguarding and of digital exclusion for vulnerable or disadvantaged young people also require local places for personalised conversations and support.

**In France,** the Ministry of National Education and Youth has launched the "Nation Apprenante" operation, in partnership with public audio-visual players, *France Télévisions*, *Radio France*, and *Arte*. The initiative seeks to promote distance learning and aims to offer quality content, directly linked to school curricula, in national and regional media.<sup>65</sup>



<sup>62</sup> Barnes et al. (2020) <sup>63</sup> Kettunen & Felt (2019) <sup>64</sup> Cedefop (2020a) <sup>65</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/operation-nation-apprenante-303174>





Private companies also have a role to play in the provision of the right spaces. For example, RBC, Canada's largest bank, is investing CA\$500 million (£288 million) over 10 years in the Future Launch programme<sup>66</sup> to help young people succeed in the emergent labour market. In parts of the UK, new Qdos career hubs<sup>67</sup> are emerging, driven by property development experts keen to create local spaces for young people aged between 11 and 18. Approximately 150 school pupils per day visit the career hubs, with private bus transport offered to schools within an hour's travel radius.

For children and young people to make sense of their transitions, a wide range of factors need to be considered in the design and development of appropriate and safe spaces and places that can offer support. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's earlier model of ecological influences, we present in Figure 5 an interactional relationship between the young person and their environment that can shape and influence transitions from schooling to the world of work.<sup>68</sup>

Clearly, there are several spheres of influence that can have an impact on a young person's personal development journey. These influences can range from the young person's home and family environment ('Microsystem'), the relationships they have with family, educational institution(s), friends/peers, home and neighbourhood ('Mesosystem'), the social capital they hold ('Exosystem'), as well as the wider economic backdrop and labour market situation that they find themselves in ('Macrosystem'). These influences are also interrelated and continuously create opportunities and/or barriers that can ultimately affect progression, achievement and attainment.

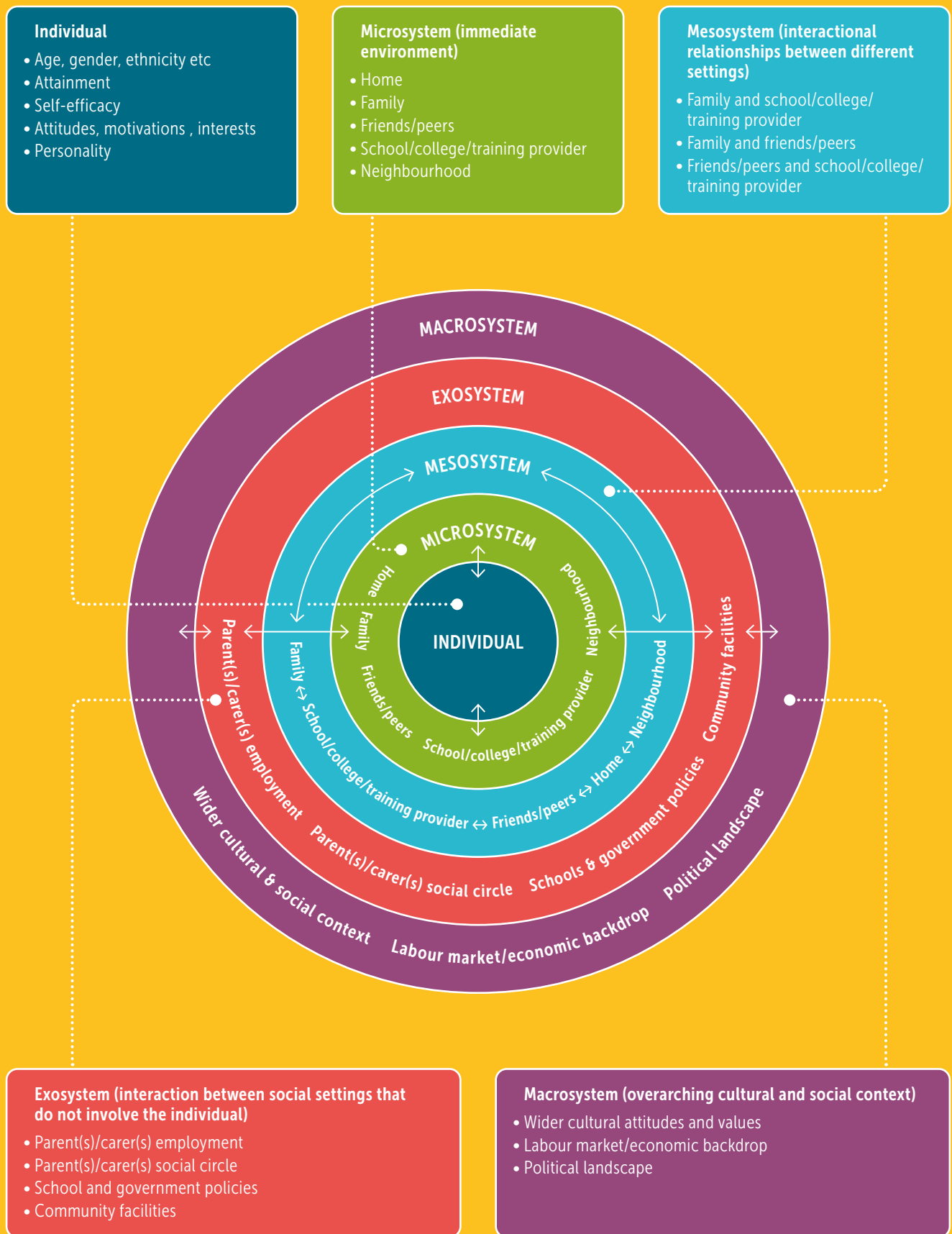
Therefore, spaces and places for youth engagement that facilitate meaningful conversations about learning and the world of work are important, especially in a post-Covid landscape. In the UK and further afield, there has been a growth in home schooling and online tuition which now testing the traditional boundaries of places for schooling that impact on children, parents and teachers (e.g. online courses, bite-sized digital learning opportunities, summer schools and online accreditation). Barnes and colleagues suggest using technology to engage and support parents in their child's learning and career development since this offers ways to communicate, disseminate and enable access to information.<sup>69</sup> The influence of friends or peers is also significant in terms of what young people value and experience. An absence of local spaces and places for some form of career dialogue can result in young people's line of sight to work and opportunity being diminished.

Mental health and well-being concerns demand new ideas for national, regional and local face-to-face and online support systems for young people within communities. Impact tends to be most effective when organisations, national and local, work collaboratively in ways that involve young people in co-creating and shaping their lives. A new placed-based community transitions model for youth provides a historic opportunity to address gaps in provision and achieve radical change in career and employability support services moving towards a more joined-up and evidence-based culturally-relevant approach.

Spaces and places for youth engagement that facilitate meaningful conversations about learning and the world of work are important, especially in a post-Covid landscape

<sup>66</sup> See <https://www.rbc.com/dms/enterprise/futurelaunch/> <sup>67</sup> See <https://qdos-career-hub.com/> <sup>68</sup> Bronfenbrenner (1992) <sup>69</sup> Barnes et al (2020) <sup>70</sup> Bronfenbrenner (1992)

# Spaces and places: Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological influences



Development of the right kind of provision for careers support requires careful planning, including:

- A shift from ‘silos to simplicity’, moving away from constantly layering up new initiatives, whereby children and young people – particularly those who are most vulnerable – often miss out, particularly those most vulnerable in local communities.
- An entitlement for all young people to have high aspirations, to be supported with their transitions, to make informed choices, and to find possibilities to differentiate themselves on their way to living a healthy, happy and prosperous life.
- Mechanisms for smoothing transitions, alongside an urgent need to better understand new qualifications, education, training and/or entrepreneurship pathways.
- An explicit, well-publicised careers support offer that includes an entitlement and access to high quality career guidance/coaching to address inequity and obvious gaps in transitions support.

### National Systems’ Strengthening

Governments have to tackle the challenges of diversity and fragmentation between and across both centralised and localised services. This can be challenging – the system-wide vision and implementation plan must be applicable to a wide variety of schools, colleges and other modes of education or training provision, as well as local family and community groups. It also has to be relevant to – and readily understood by – a range of different audiences.

Social and cultural awareness and equity are important themes. In Figure 6, we set out some examples of system- level policy intended to smooth transitions and create pathways to success for individuals, communities and economies.

In early 2020, CareersNet published a series of country-specific reports which set out youth policy developments and structures related to school-to-work transitions in countries across Europe.<sup>71</sup> Many of these reports advocate strengthening school-to-work transitions and lifelong guidance systems, in particular for those most vulnerable. They advocate strong cross-sectoral coordination between and across organisations to address the challenges and deprivations that exclude many children and young people from learning and/or work opportunities. There is some consensus that there is an urgent imperative to open up entry and re-entry points to formal education and/or training, and to develop frameworks for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning to capture and celebrate young people’s knowledge and skills acquisition.

**Governments  
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localised services**

<sup>71</sup> CareersNet (2020)

FIGURE 6

## Developing national policy to smooth transitions and create pathways to success

**In Australia**, 'Future Ready: A student-focused National Career Education Strategy' was developed in collaboration with a national group that brought together the voices of education, business and industry, parents and carers, career practitioners and youth. The strategy was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council.<sup>72</sup> It focuses on building students' skills and capabilities for the future, through a planned programme of learning, to prepare them for life beyond school; strengthening collaboration between schools, employers and local communities to improve student engagement with work environments, and support successful transition to further education, training and work; and students having the career management and navigation skills needed to make informed career decisions throughout their working lives.<sup>73</sup>

**Scotland's** careers strategy *Moving Forward* highlights the role that career education, information, advice and guidance services in Scotland can play in helping to address future skills demands and deliver inclusive growth. It acknowledges that everyone has their own unique career journey.<sup>74</sup>

This is 'a lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions moving towards a personally determined and evolving future.'<sup>75</sup> The Strategy sets out the need for a more co-ordinated approach between and across organisations in the careers system and highlights the following range of key enablers: data sharing and usage; alignment in services, including digital technology; and developing stronger links and referrals into and across the careers system, to provide a seamless learner journey.

**In Finland**, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) published its first report on the evaluation of transition phase from comprehensive education to upper secondary education in January 2020.<sup>76</sup> As part of a national taskforce, FINEEC has a strong focus on career guidance services and considers the process of leaving education and/or training, transitioning into work or alternative training and of entering individual learning programmes and future career plans. Early findings indicate models to support transitions should include better transfers of 'information and more localised and regional support mechanisms for young people.'<sup>77</sup>

**In Georgia**, one in five Georgians still live in poverty, and half of the population is considered vulnerable to falling into poverty. Social inequality in educational attainment is prevalent, with high intergenerational inheritance of education levels. A deeper analysis of the PISA 2015 results shows that students from the poorest 20% of households exhibit a significant skills gap across reading, mathematics and science, compared to the richest 20%.<sup>78</sup> Both poverty and inequality prevent people from reaching their full potential and contributing to socio-economic development – at an extreme level, this constitutes an important barrier to sustained economic growth. Vocational education and training (VET) could be one of the solutions for better use of human capital, specifically by facilitating youth transitions into work, reducing skills mismatches and alleviating poverty and inequality. Although VET alone cannot solve all the problems, in addressing these socio-economic challenges, it might be part of the solution. However, for VET to contribute properly, it needs to overcome two important barriers: (i) disparities in access and low participation in VET; and (ii) varying quality and relevance of VET provision.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) <sup>73</sup> Ibid. <sup>74</sup> Scottish Government (2020) <sup>75</sup> Ibid. p6 <sup>76</sup> Goman et al. (2020) <sup>77</sup> Ibid. <sup>78</sup> World Bank (2019) <sup>79</sup> Bardak (2020)

## Quality assurance of provision

Policymakers need to think about provision of places and spaces where young people can reflect on careers issues, but they must also consider approaches to the measurement of quality. A major issue for policymakers is how they are to achieve consistency and quality assurance, including what constitutes good policies and practices.

Approaches to quality assurance require the development of indicators, frameworks and benchmarks. Here, we consider some examples of promising practice in the measurement of impact. These have been developed as a guide to generate evidence on and improve understanding of children and young people's transitions into the world of work. We have selected four examples to illustrate and critique their potential.

### 1. Impact assessment framework for career-related learning in primary schools:

Working within a consortium context, Hughes has developed an impact assessment framework to capture the distance travelled by children in primary schools learning about the world of work. By combining pre- and post-assessment of children's exposure to career-related learning activities, including the identification of 'can do' skills, this approach creates an opportunity to examine gender stereotype trends and lessons learned for teachers and parents or carers. The development of an online 'Careers Log' that can be transferred to secondary schools is also considered.<sup>81</sup>

### 2. Indicators of Successful Transitions: Teenage attitudes and experiences of the world of work:

Mann, Kashefpakdel and Rehill completed an extensive literature review, combined with a schools pilot study, which explored the effectiveness of 'indicators' as a tool for identifying students (at all levels of achievement) requiring greater attention, and determining the quality of their experiences.<sup>80</sup> The team reviewed longitudinal data to identify indicators of adult economic outcomes linked to teenage work-related attitudes and experiences, in order to create a new resource for UK schools seeking to judge the preparedness of young people for the adult working world. Longitudinal data, primarily drawn from cohort studies, offers particularly and unusually high-quality evidence to inform practice. By making insights from longitudinal data more easily accessible, schools can be provided with a tool for use with pupils of the widest range of abilities and aspirations. Collating data in this way renders it possible to set out a range of indicators which collectively can provide new insights to school staff seeking to respond effectively to individual student needs.

**3. Benchmarks 'Good Career Guidance':** These benchmarks, developed by the Gatsby Foundation in the UK, provide a set of principles for ensuring high-quality careers provision.<sup>82</sup> The benchmarks are intended to act as a catalyst for change in schools and colleges in England, and are currently also being piloted in regions within Wales and Spain. Recent findings in England indicate the benchmarks have been successfully communicated to school and college leadership teams as a guide to what 'good' looks like in career guidance. A Compass+ online tool stores the results digitally. The benchmarks complement government statutory requirements.

A major issue for policymakers is how they are to achieve consistency and quality assurance, including what constitutes good policies and practices

<sup>80</sup> Hughes (2019) <sup>81</sup> Mann, Kashefpakdel & Rehill (2017) <sup>82</sup> Gatsby Foundation (2013)

**4. Framework for Intensive Support (Adolescents):** This framework is designed to inform and support anyone interested in working in an impactful way with young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), helping them to make successful transitions into meaningful learning and work. By adopting a theory of change process, originally developed by Dr David EK Hunter, a highly respected and experienced consultant specialising in social impact in the US, this framework focuses exclusively on improving educational and employment outcomes for young people who are NEET.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Hughes (2019)

Chapter 3

# Key principles to shape policy and practice





## In this chapter, we draw upon research and country-level examples to distil key principles that can be used when creating pathways to success for children and young people.

Children and young people need fit-for-purpose pathways to success. The international literature suggests that key features of effective provision are likely to include:

- **Holistic approaches** – Holistic approaches to effective provision will cover a breadth of the cognitive/non-cognitive, social, and emotional skills children and young people need to learn effectively, be successful in the world of work, and be empowered.
- **Enabling environments** – Effective provision will include positive, inclusive, safe and enabling learning environments for children and young people, regardless of their level of ability/disability.
- **Understanding of an initiative within a lifelong learning and lifelong guidance cycle** – Pathways to learning and skills development can be viewed as a dynamic and cumulative process from early childhood through adolescence to adulthood.
- **Inclusivity** – Provision should be accessible and contextualized to all learners, regardless of ability, ethnicity, linguistic background, social, or economic status.
- **Alignment** – Provision should be made in line with national priorities, the labour market, and the needs of children and young people and their communities, taking account of local culture and context.
- **Participation** – Strong provision will involve building capacity for meaningful participation and including service-user voice in the design, implementation, assessment and governance of skills development.
- **Responsiveness to social cohesion** – Effective provision will recognise the role of skills development in reducing the harmful effects of negative experiences on children and young people’s health and wellbeing.
- **Innovation** – Effective provision will harness the power of different technologies and innovations to support improved access, delivery, and monitoring of skills development programmes in an equitable manner.
- **Evidence-based practice** – Good provision will draw lessons from ‘what works’, generating and using findings about how children and young people learn and develop. Through robust monitoring and evaluation, evidence will be generated and used to support the design and development of transition support mechanisms.

Children and young people need fit-for-purpose pathways to success

Based on analysis of international practice, it is possible to go further and identify the following set of key guiding principles which policymakers should use when seeking to provide a foundation for creating pathways to success for all young people.

## 1. Start early

Governments need to take the early years of education seriously. Academic research from the British ASPIRES longitudinal project (2009-ongoing) highlights the need to start early in primary schools and link science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) with conversations about different job roles. The authors argue that providing examples of gender diversity is key to tackling stereotyping from an early age. There is a widespread need to strengthen the vital role that primary schools can play in raising children's aspirations and broadening horizons.<sup>84</sup>

Providing examples of gender diversity is key to tackling stereotyping from an early age

### FIGURE 7

#### Primary school interventions

The Department for Education (DfE) **in England** has invested £2 million to support careers-related learning (CRL) in primary schools. The national Careers Strategy highlights that 'there is no consistent approach across primary schools and limited evidence and best practice for schools to use when planning their activities.'<sup>85</sup> A strong appetite has emerged to learn more about what works so that children can develop positive attitudes about work from an early age. *Primary Futures* is the largest scale-up project, working with a cohort of 330 primary schools across the country, including several in designated high-poverty 'opportunity areas'.<sup>86</sup> Analysis from over 6,000 children who took part in events demonstrates a significant impact for children attending schools with a high proportion of children in receipt of free school meals.<sup>87</sup> This highlights the importance of the initiative in helping to support social mobility.

**In Japan**, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology introduced legislation for a 'Career Passport: MEXT model' to be embedded in Elementary Schools from April 2020 onwards.<sup>88</sup> The "Dig Into Myself" approach encourages children to reflect on their learning in each school subject and in daily life outside of school from an early age. Teachers are provided with a training manual and tools to support children's hopes, dreams and aspirations. When students transition from Elementary to Lower Secondary Schooling, evidence of their learning and self-reflection is transferred to help build continuity and smooth transitions.<sup>89</sup>

Career-related learning in primary schools should aim to inspire children and connect primary education with the world of work. The aim should be to increase children's understanding of the relevance of their schooling to a future world of work and to reduce gender stereotypes. These approaches can spark conversations that help broaden children's horizons, raise aspirations and open a world of greater possibilities to the children, their families and their teachers.

<sup>84</sup> DfE (2017:15) <sup>85</sup> DfE, (2017:15) <sup>86</sup> See <https://primaryfutures.org/> <sup>87</sup> Ibid. <sup>88</sup> Fujita (2019) <sup>89</sup> Ibid.



## 2. Support teaching and learning

Children and young people's transitions are sometimes problematic. Barriers that impede their participation and/or progression may include:

- **Emotional and health barriers** – Factors such as illnesses can prevent children from regularly attending school. The same can be true of family health issues, such as substance abuse by parents or carers.
- **Financial issues** – For instance, children and young people who are undernourished will find it very difficult to concentrate in school, training or the workplace. In some cases, there may be issues such as lack of access to equipment and/or learning resources due to household-level poverty.
- **Cultural and social issues** – In many societies, young people may experience discrimination based on their race or gender.
- **Barriers within the education system** – A curriculum that does not recognise differences in how children think and learn and teachers who attach low status to vocational education and training pathways can be barriers to successful transitions.
- **Lack of parental involvement** – This is often overlooked, yet evidence shows parents are the main influencers in young people's careers decisions.
- **Learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities** – Some young people have distinctive personal needs. Distinguishing between learning difficulties and learning disabilities is quite a complex issue. A learning difficulty does not affect general intelligence, whereas a learning disability is linked to an overall cognitive impairment.

Key challenges related to professional development include the diverse systems in which teachers work, such as public and private sectors, differing qualifications and training needs, and variations in access to continuous professional development focused on school-to-work transitions. A blurring of the lines of the role of a teacher, a teacher/careers adviser, and a teacher/counsellor often occurs.

A blurring of the lines of the role of a teacher, a teacher/careers adviser, and a teacher/counsellor often occur

### FIGURE 8

#### Support for frontline practice

**In Victoria, Australia**, lesson plans and resources are made available to educators to deliver quality career education and guidance programmes for students. Lessons are targeted at students from Year 6 to Year 10 but can be tailored to suit other age groups. Activities can be modified and tailored to suit the cultural and linguistic needs of the learners in local contexts using a 'How to Guide'. To support schools to deliver high-quality careers education, funding has been provided to assist more than 400 career practitioners to complete a one-year Graduate Certificate in Career Education/Career Development.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Victoria State Government (2019)

Meanwhile, the World Bank and the UK Government, in partnership **with the government of Georgia**, has launched the 'Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training' project. The project supports Georgia in raising the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) through improved teacher management and professional development. Current reforms have helped with upgrading VET infrastructure and modernization of vocational education programs. The performance of key staff, particularly teachers and principals, remains a pressing challenge in delivering these upgraded programs and benefitting from improved infrastructure and technology. The project aims to improve both the employability of VET graduates and the growth potential of the private sector, by better alignment of the skills of VET graduates with the demands of the labour market.<sup>91</sup>

**In the UK**, Inspiring the Future, an online platform with virtual webinars connects volunteers with schools via state-of-the-art technology.<sup>92</sup> Around 57,000 people have volunteered, and over 8,000 primary and secondary schools have signed up. The free programme aims to inspire and motivate young people by giving them a chance to meet and interact with role models from the world of work – from app designers to zoologists, apprentices to CEOs. These interventions have been proven to raise aspirations and improve academic attainment, especially among children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The charity behind the programme, Education and Employers, has developed interactive virtual sessions connecting role models from the world of work with young people in a safe and engaging way. It allows schools to access a national pool of volunteers who are willing to take part in career insight talks at both primary and secondary level, and to conduct mock interviews, among other activities. The programme is now being rolled out in other countries.

**Employer engagement, local labour market intelligence and skills frameworks can act as a catalyst for teacher and/or trainer skills development**

In many countries, there is a need to focus on the design and implementation of professional development programmes for teachers that equip them with insights from the evidence base on school-to-work transitions, and guidance as to how they can improve personalised learning, gender-responsive, and age-appropriate pedagogies. Employer engagement, local labour market intelligence and skills frameworks can act as a catalyst for teacher and/or trainer skills development. The professional development of leaders also matters.

<sup>91</sup> World Bank (2019) <sup>92</sup> Education and Employers (2018)

### 3. Embed careers firmly in the curriculum and school-to-work transitions

There is broad recognition that school systems are changing: policymakers have increased expectations of schools and colleges, often devolving decision-making and imparting a sense of urgency for improved learning outcomes to individual schools and trusts. These changes require educationalists, community agencies, businesses and individuals to work with uncertainty and ambiguity across organisational boundaries. Educationalists need to inspire others into whole-system thinking and recognition of shared problems. Strong leadership and management practices are essential to embedding careers in the curriculum. Moreover, the teaching and learning methods used in preparation for key transitions need to be engaging for pupils, and to make the world of work seem real and relevant.

Over recent years, a series of US and UK studies have used longitudinal data to explore the relationship between teenage thinking about careers and later educational, economic, or social outcomes.<sup>93</sup> While the studies do not focus on the impact of embedding careers in the curriculum, they do make a compelling point: after controlling for social background and academic achievement, it is clear that the way that teenagers think about their futures in education and employment has a significant impact on their employment outcomes as adults.

Embedding careers and enterprise within school-to-work transitions may require different measures depending on context. For example:

- **Prevention measures** are often aimed at keeping young people ‘switched on’ to learning, encouraging them not to close down opportunities too early, broadening their horizons and challenging inaccurate assumptions. These measures may include, for example, *using alumni*,<sup>94</sup> *enterprise measures*,<sup>95</sup> or *self-efficacy approaches*.<sup>96</sup> Such measures may also seek to prevent young people from ‘switching off’ or becoming disaffected in the first place—particularly those who are most at risk of ‘dropping out’—and taking action that engages young people, families and communities as a whole with education and skills development.
- **Integration measures** are aimed at developing approaches that inform and support young people in their transitions into learning or work, for example, by focusing on *cross-curricular themes*,<sup>97</sup> *work experience*,<sup>98</sup> *career exploration activities*,<sup>99</sup> or *mentoring*.<sup>100</sup>
- **Recovery measures** are aimed at re-energising or reconnecting young people to learning that meets their individual needs, for example, by focusing on *career maturity*<sup>101</sup> or *self-determination*.<sup>102</sup>

Teaching and learning methods used in preparation for key transitions need to be engaging for pupils, and to make the world of work seem real and relevant

<sup>93</sup> Hughes et al (2016) <sup>94</sup>Buckler et al (2015) <sup>95</sup>Peter & Kennedy (2012); Athayde (2012) <sup>96</sup>McCombe-Beverage (2012) <sup>97</sup>Henderson (1995) <sup>98</sup>Hillage, Kodz and Pik (2011) <sup>99</sup>Stebbleton & Diamond (2018) <sup>100</sup>Hooley, Matheson & Watts (2015) <sup>101</sup>Creed & Hood (2015) <sup>102</sup>Power et al. (2012)

FIGURE 9

### Country-level approaches intended to support effective transitions

**In Finland**, career education (guidance and counselling) is a compulsory element in the curriculum, comprising 76 hours of scheduled activities in students' timetables during grades 7 to 9. In addition, students are entitled to individual guidance and group counselling, as well as periods of work experience. In grades 1 to 6, guidance is embedded in the work of the classroom teachers. Guidance services are generally provided by school counsellors, in cooperation with group advisers. From early 2018, a new law on vocational education and training (VET) has required that each three-year programme features a compulsory module (25-30 hours) on the development of Career Management Skills (Law on Vocational Skills 531/2017). A personal competence development plan is also drawn up for every student. VET providers and their guidance counsellors are the main source of information and guidance for students, but the public employment service also produces labour market information, courses and guidance for young people.<sup>103</sup>

**In Ireland**, the National Centre for Guidance in Education published a 'Whole-School Guidance Framework' in 2017.<sup>104</sup> This described planning guidance or counselling services and competence development for students in guidance-related learning from the first year of secondary schooling onwards.<sup>105</sup>

**In Malta**, the Prince's Trust XL programme has been successful in helping young people re-engage by developing a sense of achievement. Prince's Trust XL works towards a qualification in personal development and employability skills. The curriculum is designed to complement academic programmes and helps promote whole-school learning.<sup>106</sup>

**In Pakistan**, the SOS Rural Support Programme initiated a project to help ultra-poor and vulnerable communities in 25 villages of Union Council Sehjra, Kasur district, to link them to resources for productive self-employment, and to enhance their quality of life.<sup>107</sup> A Livelihood Investment Plan included confidence-building and enterprise development training for young people. Confidence-building helped the beneficiaries by boosting their morale, while enterprise development training helped them to understand the pros and cons of running a business.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Cedefop (2020b) <sup>104</sup> CEDEFOP (2020c) <sup>105</sup> Ibid. <sup>106</sup> Ministry of Education, Malta (2016) <sup>107</sup> See <https://www.sos.org.pk/Person/RuralSupportProgram> <sup>108</sup> Ibid.

#### 4. Encourage effective career and transition dialogue

Discussions about careers and transitions need to be learner-centred. This is not always the case. Learner-centred dialogue requires the promotion of good governance and accountability mechanisms in schools, colleges, VET, including community engagement, as well as the participation of parents, children and adolescents. It is difficult to overstate the importance of getting this right. Having access to positive learning experiences and fair work are essential prerequisites to leading a good life. Both have a profound impact on individuals' health and mental well-being.<sup>109</sup> However, in many countries, there are doubts as to whether effective career and transitions dialogue is currently taking place in schools, colleges and VET environments. For example, when Winters et al. looked at conversations about placements in Dutch secondary vocational education, their research showed that it is not the student who is at the heart of the conversation, but the curriculum.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, they found that mentors in school and from work placements talk mostly to (65%) and about (21%) students, and hardly ever with (9%) them. Many students see no other choice but to rely on the promise that investment in education (i.e. certification) alone will ultimately pay off. This needs to be challenged if we are to engender hope, resilience and optimism for the future among young people.

There are doubts as to whether effective career and transitions dialogue is currently taking place in schools, colleges and VET environments

FIGURE 10

##### Supporting transition for vulnerable groups

**In British Columbia, Canada**, a hope-centred approach to working with vulnerable refugees in a multi-agency context has demonstrated how task-focused and project-based learning can help improve levels of optimism about life and work circumstances. The Hope-Action Theory (HAT) study adopted an experimental design in which proximal outcomes such as self-efficacy, hope-action competencies, job search clarity, and career adaptability were assessed, alongside distal outcomes including employment status, job-seeking activities, career growth, hopeful career state, work engagement, and job satisfaction.<sup>111</sup>

**In Nepal**, four out of five people live in rural contexts, and young people have fewer training opportunities than their urban counterparts. Women are particularly disadvantaged. UNESCO's Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are key to tackling this disparity. The centres are usually set up and run by local people and function outside the formal education system, providing lifelong learning and leadership opportunities to marginalised communities. In 2019, CapED strengthened over 300 CLCs, enhancing coordination with local government in line with the decentralisation of education, and training CLC leaders in management and fundraising skills.<sup>112</sup> Informed by its experience with CLCs, UNESCO is currently supporting the Government of Nepal to develop a lifelong learning policy framework. This will guide Local Education Acts and Plans that will allow provincial and local governments to deliver lifelong learning opportunities for the most marginalised and vulnerable people in Nepal.

<sup>109</sup>Robertson (2019) <sup>110</sup>Winters et al (2009) <sup>111</sup>Yoon (2019) <sup>112</sup>See <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/caped>





## 5. Engage employers

Employer engagement can offer young people a new perspective on the value of education. In today's volatile world, education systems will have to pivot to foster more employer engagement and entrepreneurship and offer better vocational training. Employers will also have to 'step up' and reach out to young people as part of their workforce investment plans. Evidence on the comparative efficacy of employer engagement activities to enhance attainment is limited. The issue of attracting employers to get involved in the delivery of school-mediated initiatives (such as enterprise activities, job shadowing, mentoring, work experience, and work-related learning) can be a major challenge in some geographical areas. Mann argues that, through engagement with people who bring an authentic experience of the uses of subjects of study in the working world, schools can challenge the assumptions developed by children, allowing them to draw richer, more informed connections between education and ultimate economic and wider success in adult life.<sup>113</sup> Some tried and tested solutions include:

Education systems will have to pivot to foster more employer engagement and entrepreneurship and offer better vocational training

- **Guest speakers:** Guest speakers are a key resource that education and training providers can use to inspire children and young people about possible futures, as well as broaden students' horizons to see the world outside of their classroom and local community. Percy et al. highlight that talks from guest speakers to students in high-poverty areas result in a particularly strong association with students' self-efficacy (students displayed 32% higher odds of self-efficacy with each extra talk) and confidence that "people like me" can be successful (students had 30% higher odds of being confident with each extra talk).<sup>114</sup>
- **Participation in career talks:** This has proven to be effective in changing the attitudes 14-to-16-year-old pupils have to their education. Kashefpakdel, Percy and Rehill adopted a robust methodological approach (randomised control trial) which demonstrated strong links between young people's engagement with the world of work through career talks and their educational attainment.<sup>115</sup>

The OECD demonstrates that in many countries, apprenticeships are seen as a vehicle for improving outcomes for young people.<sup>116</sup> It states:

*"International evidence suggests that apprenticeship systems can help to make school-to-work transitions easier for such youth. While many countries offer employers subsidies to take on apprentices with weak academic profiles or from disadvantaged backgrounds, there is little convincing evidence of the efficacy of such financial incentives."*<sup>117</sup>

They make the case for more personalised support to be available to tackle problems encountered by an apprentice whilst undertaking the apprenticeship.

<sup>113</sup> Mann, Rehill & Kashefpakdel (2018) <sup>114</sup> Percy et al. (2019) <sup>115</sup> Kashefpakdel, Percy & Rehill (2019) <sup>116</sup> OECD (2018) <sup>117</sup> Ibid. p.14

FIGURE 11

**Innovative approaches to employer engagement**

**In Ummul Mumineen Academy, Wales,** a key priority to the school is to break perceived barriers to Muslim girls' education outside of and within their communities. The school's approach is to provide enriching experiences or workshops beyond the classroom environment, whilst always having pupils' Islamic identity in mind. Pupils work closely with organisations to promote inclusivity and understanding of Muslim girls. For example, they recently collaborated with the South Wales Police force to create a uniform for Muslim female officers, and with the Welsh Rugby Union 'Jerseys for all' campaign. These experiences serve as an opportunity for pupils and community members alike to recognise and value difference when they encounter people with beliefs different from their own. Additionally, these experiences create a subtle shift in the perception of girls' education. Whilst recognising and valuing the Islamic identity of its pupils, the school is providing unique opportunities and visiting places that many female pupils would not usually get to experience.<sup>118</sup>

**6. Utilise technology and labour market information (LMI)**

Technology development and Industry 4.0 are changing skills needs, occupations and roles within different industries, making up-to-date labour market information increasingly important. The ILO defines labour market information as:

*"Any information concerning the size and composition of the labour market or any part of the labour market, the way it or any part of it functions, its problems, the opportunities which may be available to it, and the employment-related intentions or aspirations of those who are part of it."*

One key question is how technology can be most effectively used to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people. Collins argues that technology itself is unlikely to improve young people's learning, but the associated pedagogy can.<sup>119</sup> The rapid expansion of technology, including the growth of open data and mobile devices, including smartphones, apps, tablets and wearables (e.g. smart watches) has resulted in new methods of accessing online training opportunities, job-matching services, and different forms of LMI to support transitions and career learning. However, technology can also feed social exclusion, and without the means to access affordable devices and access support online, young people can become trapped in a cycle of disadvantage and vulnerability. Overcoming this barrier requires local spaces and places for youth engagement in learning/re-learning and a strong focus on digital skills development.

Local agencies often do not have sufficient LMI resources to meet individuals' needs. This can affect uptake for courses and contribute to economic skills shortages in the long term. There is potential, however, for different solutions to overcome these challenges.

**Technology can also feed social exclusion, and without the means to access affordable devices and access support online, young people can become trapped in a cycle of disadvantage and vulnerability**

<sup>118</sup> Estyn (2019) - For more information visit: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effectivepractice/raising-aspirations-muslim-girls-education-removing-perceived-barriers> <sup>119</sup> Collins (2019)

FIGURE 12

### Country level approaches to LMI

**In Canada**, the Labour Market Information Council undertook a series of in-depth discussions with young Canadians at the crossroads of high school and post-secondary education (PSE), in order to better understand the type of labour market information they needed about future job openings to support their decision to attend PSE, and to help them choose a programme and a career path.<sup>120</sup> They found that students wanted forecasts of future job openings to help them identify job prospects in their ideal occupation and to understand the level of competition they may face when joining the labour market. When considering data about future job openings by occupation, location, industry and training, the students preferred more detailed information on occupations. Their next preference was for information about job openings filtered by location. The students expressed a preference for receiving data on the expected number of new jobs tailored to the timeframe in which they expected to graduate from PSE.<sup>121</sup>

**In Scotland**, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) oversees web services such as 'My World of Work' and 'My Kids Career' which include LMI situated within an all-age national careers service. Scotland has an inclusive national careers service delivered by SDS, which operates alongside services delivered by other partners. The organisation has careers advisers based in every government-funded secondary school in Scotland, including SEN schools. For those not in school, there are centres in every local authority area throughout Scotland, in addition to an online presence and a telephone helpline. No groups are excluded from access to the SDS careers service. This includes those in employment who are seeking to change or progress in their career. The service offers offline and online career support, including a national Contact Centre and an online career management skills environment.<sup>122</sup>

**In France**, Bob Employi is a chatbot designed to assist with LMI searches, linked to career coaching via mobile phone. The chatbot uses a rules-based text-driven interactive questionnaire to gather basic information. This process is interwoven with the provision of facts about a chosen area at various levels of granularity, for example, "Did you know? Competition in socio-economic studies and prospects in Paris is fierce, 3 offers for 10 candidates." It asks users questions on their age, demographic and any disabilities, followed by the offer of coaching emails either once a week or once a month.<sup>123</sup>

**In England**, an online platform, 'Inspiring the Future', enables schools and colleges to connect with LMI and inspirational volunteers from the world of work quickly and easily. This seeks to transform the way in which young people get insights into careers, inspiring them to be ambitious.<sup>124</sup>

**In South Africa**, the Khetha Radio Programme operates as a multi-channelled careers service, supported by the Higher Education and Training Ministry, delivered in 10 languages to three million listeners sharing LMI and other careers information, advice and guidance.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Canadian Career Development Foundation (2020) <sup>121</sup> LMInsights (2020) <sup>122</sup> Skills Development Scotland (2020b) <sup>123</sup> See <https://www.bob-emploi.fr/> <sup>124</sup> See <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org/how-inspiring-the-future-works/> <sup>125</sup> See <https://www.careerhelp.org.za/content/khetha-radio-programmes>

There is a need to ensure that the most up-to-date information on industry demand is available nationally and locally to career professionals to help guide young people through their transition into the labour market. Use of technology and LMI tools and resources can be delivered in highly personalised ‘spaces and places’ for learning with the option of self-service or brief-assisted service using a bot, mobile device, tablet or website, with the option of more in-depth guidance and support delivered by a well-trained and impartial careers specialist. There is an urgent need to extend the body of research internationally, to embrace artificial intelligence (AI), and to develop new methods of co-constructing personalised LMI solutions in collaborative partnerships.

## 7. Making use of evidence to strengthen skills and create pathways to success

Compelling evidence justifies greater investment of time and resources in supporting youth transitions, thereby creating pathways to success. Academic research findings support the following key propositions:

- Holding biased assumptions and having narrow aspirations can, and does, go on to influence the academic effort children exert in certain lessons, the subjects they choose to study and the jobs they end up pursuing.<sup>126</sup>
- Higher levels of career decision self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of career indecision, openness to a greater range of occupations, better career adjustment, and rational career decision-making patterns.<sup>127</sup>
- Students who rated their secondary schools highly in terms of learning resources are more likely to have high aspirations.<sup>128</sup>
- Early interventions can have a lasting impact on children’s development and perceptions of different occupations and of the relevance of subjects in schools.<sup>129</sup>
- Childhood character traits of resilience, conscientiousness, self-awareness and motivation are found to be closely associated with educational attainment.<sup>130</sup>
- Careers talks increase young people’s motivation for learning. For example, in a randomised control trial, three career talks in the GCSE year increased students’ revision hours and the equivalent of one student in a class of 25 exceeded predicted grades by one grade following the talks, while exposure to ten career talks at age 14-to-15 reportedly increased earnings at the age of 26 by 8%.<sup>131</sup>
- Young people who remember four or more employer engagement activities tend to earn around 18% more in their early 20s than those who cannot remember any.<sup>132</sup>
- Schools with careers quality standards in the UK are associated with more young people achieving good GCSEs and improved attendance.<sup>133</sup>

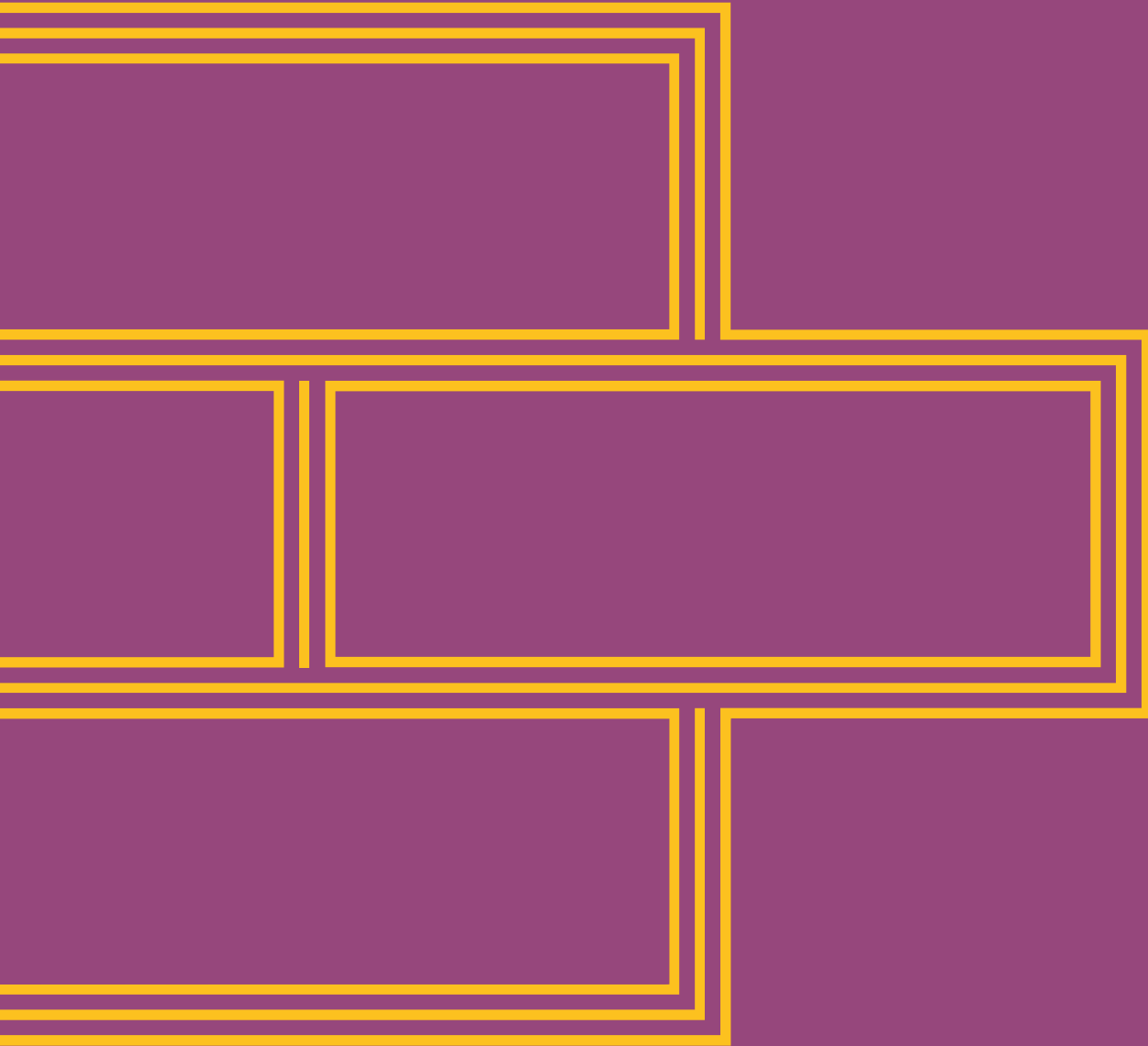
Debates around the nature and use of evidence in development policy and practice are far reaching. We recognise there is a need for greater consideration of the production and use of careers and transitions evidence worldwide, including invaluable lessons learned from low-and middle-income countries.

**There is a need for greater consideration of the production and use of careers and transitions evidence worldwide, including invaluable lessons learned from low-and middle-income countries**

<sup>126</sup> Bandura et al. (2001); Flouri & Panourgia (2012); Dewitt & Archer (2017); Gutman & Schoon(2013) <sup>127</sup> Brown & Lent (2016); Choi et al (2012) <sup>128</sup> Sammons, Toth & Syla (2016) <sup>129</sup> Howard et al (2016) <sup>130</sup> Kautz et al. (2014); Goodman et al. (2015) <sup>131</sup> Kashefakdel & Percy (2017); Kashefakdel, Percy & Rehill (2019) <sup>132</sup> Mann & Percy (2014) <sup>133</sup> Hooley, Matheson & Watts (2015)

Chapter 4

# Building back better



## We conclude with reflections on some of the transformative opportunities that policymakers should consider as they plan for the post-Covid-19 future.

There is an urgent social and moral imperative for governments worldwide to address the needs of young people. In April 2020, the International Monetary Fund released a report warning that Covid-19 could spark turmoil in countries around the world if people were left without jobs or money for food during and after the pandemic. The scope for dislocation is greatest for young people. Before the crisis, youth (aged 15 to 24) were already three times more likely to be unemployed than older people of working age, while 126 million young workers were in poverty worldwide (ILO, 2020). School-to-work transitions matter. Concerted government responses are needed to mitigate the social and economic effects of poor and protracted school-to-work transitions.

In this paper, the case has been made for the practical steps needed to provide pathways to success. These should take many forms: early career-related learning in primary schools, embedding careers education in the curriculum, alongside personalised support from trained careers professionals, encouraging career and transition dialogue through lifelong learning, 'hope-centred' and resilience-based coaching approaches, engaging employers through voluntary approaches (though this alone may be insufficient going forward), greater use of digital technology and LMI, close monitoring of digital exclusion, and greater use of the evidence base to strengthen skills and create pathways to success for all young people.

In a post Covid-19 world, governments will need to rebuild much of the social and economic fabric, and reform plans should include a national strategy for youth employment, bringing together public, private and third sector organisations to find solutions at local, regional and national levels. Within this context, we propose the following priorities for action:

- **Public investment in infrastructure with an emphasis on youth.** Such a strategy (linked to a green investment agenda) could act as a bridge to sustainable, resilient, and inclusive socio-economic growth over the long-term. With emphasis placed on youth employment, such green infrastructure projects have the potential to boost productivity, create jobs, and attract additional investment and buy-in from the private sector. A government-backed 'youth guarantee', promising young people exposure to and experience of the world of work, could act as a powerful incentive to stimulate demand from employers. Policymakers could, for example, establish a central register of infrastructure projects, create rules on public-private partnerships emphasising the recruitment of young people, and use such projects to monitor regional levels of youth engagement or disengagement.

Governments will need to rebuild much of the social and economic fabric, and reform plans should include a national strategy for youth employment, bringing together public, private and third sector organisations to find solutions at local, regional and national levels

- **Private investment in the provision of local spaces and places for young people to develop their knowledge and skills about the world of work.** There is scope for companies across the private sector to follow the example of RBC, Canada's largest bank, is investing in the future of young people, thereby making an invaluable contribution to building a more equitable society.
- **Third sector investment in community cohesion and engagement with youth.** Civil society organisations have the potential to strengthen the ties between adults, children and young people in local communities through the provision of volunteering opportunities, coaching and other outreach activities. Young people's opportunities for skills acquisition, along with their mental health and general wellbeing, can be enhanced in this way, contributing to improved work-readiness and positive mindsets.
- **Coordinated implementation of active labour market policies for unemployed young people.** In many countries, there is scope for closer working relationships between different agencies, such as public employment services, careers services, recruitment agencies, colleges and training providers, health and housing bodies and local government. By acting together, they can share and maximise their collective resources acting as strong advocates for young people.
- **Introduction of pro-youth tax and benefits measures.** Tax and benefits should be targeted at children, young people and families in a way that meets their basic needs and focuses on broadening their horizons and raising aspirations. Unemployment benefits and social safety nets are important features of the tax-benefit systems in OECD countries. Progressive measures already found in some countries emphasise investment in support for lifelong guidance, with professional training and quality provision assured for all young people.
- **Encouragement of part-time working among school-age young people to close the gap between schooling and the world of work.** Hughes et al. highlighted the strong evidence base supporting the contention that teenage part-time employment can form a very valuable part of the transition process.<sup>134</sup>
- **Improved access to vocational training.** This may include apprenticeships and traineeships and potentially the introduction of an employer grant for taking on young people.
- **Taking advantage of new digital technologies.** In the UK, the NESTA CareerTech Challenge has demonstrated how technology can be used in a way that combines individual skills assessment with access to LMI. There is significant scope for governments to move forward on this front with a relentless focus on young people's specific digital needs and behaviours.
- **Listening to the voices of young people.** Too many young people worldwide have experienced prolonged transitions between schooling and work. Governments need to listen and to understand the levels of frustration, anxiety and discontent caused by this situation. Governments should commission surveys of young people's experiences, hopes and fears. Cross-country comparisons could create a strong evidence base, enabling the development of tangible solutions.

Tax and benefits should be targeted at children, young people and families in a way that meets their basic needs and focuses on broadening their horizons and raising aspirations

<sup>134</sup> Hughes et al. (2015)



- **Designing and delivering a far-reaching and consistent communications**

**strategy.** Governments need to win hearts and minds. There is, in many countries, an urgent requirement to build broad public support for necessary investments, and to persuade the public that the government cares about youth and has taken practical steps to offer the right support in creating pathways to success.

Evidence such as that presented in this report, brings opportunities for a shared understanding of service design and delivery for public benefit. Of course, each context will have its own unique challenges to be overcome, with multiple stakeholders and potentially challenging circumstances. Ensuring a level playing field for young people is important in fostering greater social cohesion, addressing inequity and inclusivity and, in the longer term, ensuring both social and economic reform.

Making a difference to young people's lives requires effort and commitment.

As this paper indicates, creating pathways to success for young people comes in many different forms, at different stages in their lives. There is an urgent imperative to reach out with hope, optimism and practical support for young people, particularly those disaffected, disadvantaged or socially excluded. Globally, policy makers and practitioners in the fields of education, training, employment, health, housing, drugs, crime and disorder have an opportunity to come together to find agile and innovative solutions to bring about systemic change in youth transitions over the coming year(s).

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Education Development Trust Highbridge House, 16–18 Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4RU  
T +44 (0) 118 902 1000 E [enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:enquiries@educationdevelopmenttrust.com) W [www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com](http://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com)

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