

## Youth Employment

The World Bank youth strategy should be the beginning for a World Bank where democracy; transparency, human rights and good governance are the business of the day in the promotion of a social economy.

The youth strategy if it is to succeed must be preceded by a serious reform of the World Bank system and in this context we call on the World Bank to take into consideration the following:

- The reality in today's labour market is that young people do not have access to decent and productive work as stated in the UN MDGs. Young people find themselves in precarious casual jobs where they are forced to work in unsafe conditions, the informal economy, where access to social protection is constricted and where the fundamental human right to join a trade union is on a constant basis violated.
- A real evaluation of the positive and negative impacts of the existing policies of the World Bank on Employment and working conditions: e.g. trade, macro-economy and privatisation
- Decent and productive work is a pre-requisite for social stability and social integration and in turn a preventative measure for conflict

We believe that Youth Employment as an issue in itself must be approached and facilitated in a holistic manner and couched in a framework of social justice, equality, solidarity especially between the north and south and human dignity.

Thus when we speak about youth employment we are not just talking about unemployed youth but also about employed people. Furthermore it is about focusing on the most vulnerable groups among young people: young women (issues of equal pay, maternity protection and sexual harassment) migrants and people from ethnic minorities, rural youth and those with disabilities.

Job creation must focus on eradicating poverty therefore they must be quality jobs which allow for the respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work as outlined in the ILO declaration, reconciliation of family and working life, equal opportunities, life long learning and a living wage.

In this context, the Youth strategy requires a concrete and concise transversal approach, which integrates it into all policies and areas of work of the World Bank (e.g. health, education, economic policies, employment...) at all levels.

As part of this approach we would ask the World Bank to incorporate into the chapter on Youth Employment the 'next five steps' of the UN/ILO/World Bank Youth Employment Network as concluded by its second meeting recently held in July 2003.

This is vital in addressing the crucial issues of:

- Creating spaces for the participation and consultation of youth organisations in developing national action plans (NAPs) on Youth Employment not only as Implementing agents but also as actors in actually identifying strategies to address the issues and indicators to monitor such NAPs  
To strengthen this point we call upon the World Bank to advocate that governments should consult the national representative grass root based youth organisations, for example National Youth Councils (NYCs)

- Recognising the necessity of using the existing social dialogue and social partners -trade unions and employers-particularly their youth structures, in creating youth employment policies at all levels with governments.

Investing in quality education builds the foundation for every young person to contribute and participate in the labour market. This education must be affordable and accessible to all young people. To bridge the transition from school to work, education policies must aim to meet the needs of the labour market by creating new employers and a workforce for today and tomorrow. For example all schools should aim to provide basic computer literacy and an understanding of entrepreneurship.

Moreover, we cannot separate the question of youth employment and child labour in the fight against social exclusion. Addressing the child labour issue is the first step in providing equal opportunities for young people by taking them out of the vicious circle of poverty and on the path to decent and productive work.

In conclusion we as youth organisations at all levels are at the forefront of promoting youth employment issues and we will continue to ensure that youth in all parts of the world equally benefit from this approach to youth employment.