



# Transition of adolescents and young people from education to decent and productive work

**Latin America and the Caribbean**

PROGRAMMATIC GUIDANCE

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Transition of adolescents and young people from education to decent and productive work. Latin America and the Caribbean. Programmatic Guidance.**

Published in January 2026

This publication was developed by the Education Team and the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) Team of the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO).

Author: Yllka Gerdovci Cancel

General supervision: Italo Dutra, Regional Education Adviser, UNICEF LACRO, and Maria Emilia Numer, Adolescent Development Manager, UNICEF LACRO.

Design and layout: Isla Guedes Fonseca

Editorial coordination: Tania Gonzalez Veiga, Education Specialist, UNICEF LACRO

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge and thank our colleagues at UNICEF from the Generation Unlimited (GenU) team for their extensive and thoughtful contributions, in particular Thomas Michael Kaye, Jeetwan Tripathy, Jennifer Keane, Hana Sahatqija and Radhika Menon; as well as Ana María González Ruiz (PFP team) and Maryanna Nascimento (ADAP team) in LACRO.

This report was commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO) and prepared by an independent consultant. UNICEF assumes no responsibility for any errors. UNICEF has taken all reasonable precautions to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the material is distributed without warranty of any kind, either express or implied. Responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall UNICEF be liable for damages arising from its use. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

Permission to reproduce this work, in whole or in part, must be requested from UNICEF's Advocacy and Communications Section at [comlac@unicef.org](mailto:comlac@unicef.org).

# Contents

<b>4</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Before we begin: Key definitions</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>I. Building the case for transforming school-to-work transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean</b>
<b>12</b>	1. Education and labour market trends in Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>17</b>	2. Adolescents and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean: Perceptions and expectations on the transition from education to work
<b>18</b>	3. The potential of the business sector in driving inclusive and sustainable youth employment in Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>20</b>	4. What works for a smooth transition from education to productive and decent work: evidence from literature
<b>23</b>	<b>II. Programmatic guidance: Supporting the successful transition from education to decent and productive work</b>
	<b>1. PILLAR I: Strengthening Education System</b>
<b>25</b>	<i>Promoting a quality, accessible, flexible, relevant, inclusive and equitable student-centred secondary education system</i>
	<b>2. PILLAR II: Business Sector Engagement</b>
<b>28</b>	<i>Strengthening business sector engagement to expand opportunities for young people's access to decent work and entrepreneurship</i>
	<b>3. PILLAR III: Young people's Agency</b>
<b>33</b>	<i>Empowering adolescents and youth as agents of change and active participants in social transformation</i>
<b>37</b>	<b>III. Roadmap to advance the school-to-work agenda in the LAC region</b>
<b>37</b>	1. UNICEF's regional and country-level strategy for advancing the education-to-decent-work agenda
<b>39</b>	2. Programming Principles
<b>42</b>	<b>Annex 1: Action Plan to guide the development of national roadmaps</b>
<b>47</b>	<b>Annex 2: Promising strategies and programmes supporting the school-to-work transition</b>
<b>59</b>	<b>End Notes</b>

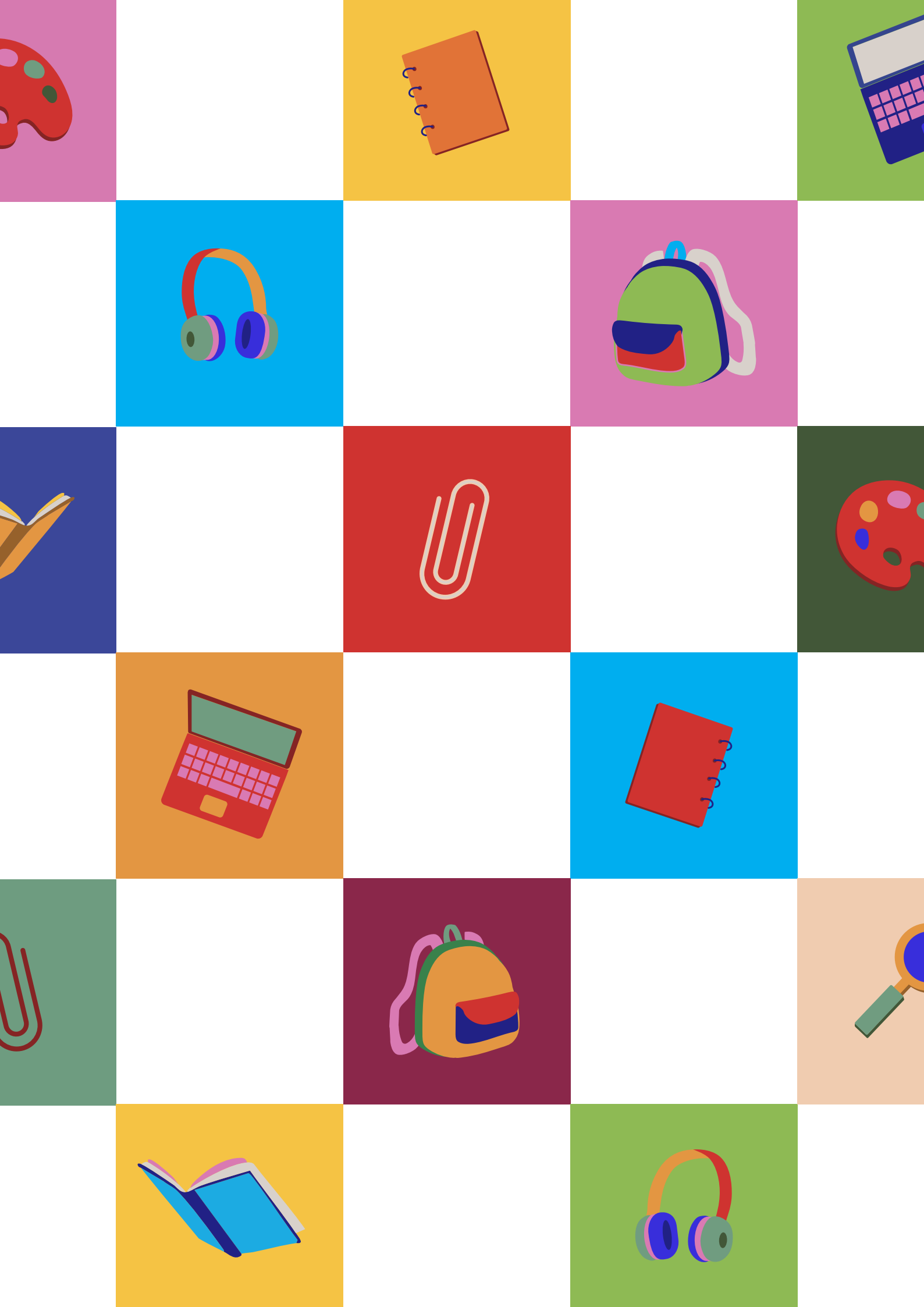


# Acronyms

<b>1MiO</b>	Um Milhão de Oportunidades (1MiO) A Million of Opportunities
<b>ADAP</b>	Adolescent Development and Participation
<b>B4R</b>	Business for Results
<b>C&amp;P</b>	Coordination and Partnerships
<b>CB</b>	Capacity Building
<b>CECONEU</b>	Centro de Comerciantes en Neumáticos del Uruguay - Uruguay Tire Traders Center
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DEI</b>	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GenU</b>	Generation Unlimited
<b>HAT</b>	Helping Adolescents Thrive
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INISA</b>	Instituto Nacional de Inclusión Social Adolescente - National Institute for Adolescents' Social Inclusion
<b>KPIs</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>LACRO</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MUNA</b>	Municipio Unido por la Niñez y la Adolescencia - Municipalities Together for Children and Adolescents
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>PAR</b>	Participatory Action Research



<b>RD&amp;A</b>	Research, Data & Advocacy
<b>SAT</b>	Tutorial Learning System- Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>UNAM</b>	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, National Autonomous University of Mexico
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNGC</b>	United Nations Global Compact
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group





## Introduction

Over the past decade, countries across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have made notable strides in expanding access to education and improving overall educational attainment. However, progress has been uneven, and significant barriers remain for many children and adolescents who continue to face challenges in accessing and completing quality education. Learning outcomes also vary widely, and education systems often struggle to equip students with the skills needed to navigate the transition from education to work. In a labour market that increasingly values digital, green and transferable skills, as well as literacy in emerging technologies, too many young people still lack the competencies essential for success.

Although youth unemployment in LAC is below the global average, employment opportunities are predominantly informal and often disconnected from young people's aspirations. Opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship are equally limited, as many young people face barriers such as limited business experience, inadequate market-relevant skills and restricted access to financing. These challenges highlight persistent structural gaps that constrain young people's potential to access decent, productive and meaningful work.

Navigating the transition to employment opportunities remains particularly difficult for young women, rural and indigenous youth, migrants, with disabilities and others from marginalized groups who face intersecting forms of exclusion and discrimination. Many adolescents express uncertainty about their futures and frustration with education and training systems that appear disconnected from labour market realities. This growing sense of disillusionment reflects deeper systemic issues, such as skills mismatches, weak alignment between education and employment systems and persistent gender and digital divides.

Addressing these challenges require a comprehensive strategy that strengthens the quality, inclusiveness and relevance of education while

aligning learning and training systems with evolving labour market demands. This strategy also requires empowering young people as active partners, fostering their participation, leadership and agency so they can help shape the policies and programmes that affect their education, employment and well-being. At the same time, the business sector must play a central role by advancing fair, inclusive and diverse workplace practices and driving sustainable and equitable youth employment across the region.

This programmatic guidance document outlines an ambitious regional and national agenda to strengthen the transition from education to productive and decent work in Latin America and the Caribbean. Developed as part of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO)'s commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and in response to the recommendations of the [2024 International Seminar on Innovative Policies for School-to-Work Transition](#) held in Brasília. The document offers UNICEF country offices practical guidance, evidence and tools to inform programme design and partnerships. By sharing innovations and promising initiatives from countries in the region and beyond, the document seeks to help country offices develop integrated strategies that support adolescents and young people as they move from learning to earning.

A strong youth agency lens is central to the guidance that follows: if the goal is a real transition from learning to decent work, education must be treated as an enabling system that expands adolescents' and young people's choices, voice, and power to act. This means strengthening formal education so youth can build the foundational, transferable, and work-relevant skills needed to navigate opportunities and constraints, while ensuring pathways are responsive to their realities and aspirations. At the same time, non-formal education is a core part of the solution presented in this document—offering flexible, youth-centred routes for out-of-school and working youth to re-enter learning, gain recognized competencies,

and remain connected to education and training as a platform for securing livelihoods. By positioning agency at the centre of system and programme design, the approaches outlined throughout the document help reduce youth disconnection and support more equitable pathways toward sustainable livelihoods and decent work.

The report is structured as follows. **Part I** comprises four sections: the first reviews education and labour market trends in the region, highlighting persistent inequities and emerging policy challenges; the second explores young people's perceptions, aspirations and barriers in navigating the education -to-work transition; the

third examines how the business sector and the green, digital, care and creative economies can drive job creation and sustainable growth; and the fourth reviews evidence on effective strategies that support these transitions. **Part II** presents UNICEF's programmatic guidance to strengthen the transition from education to decent and productive work. It outlines the strategies proposed under each pillar and highlights innovative experiences that can inform and inspire country offices in the design of their own interventions. Finally, **Part III** sets out a regional roadmap to advance the education-to-work agenda in LAC, detailing priority areas for intervention, key stakeholders and an indicative timeline for coordinated action.



## Before we begin: Key definitions

🕒 *This section defines key concepts that guide UNICEF’s approach to education, learning and the as well as the skills needed to support the successful entry into the world of work.*

### Education

---

UNICEF adopts a holistic, rights-based approach to education that empowers adolescents and young people for lifelong learning, civic participation and meaningful work. This value-driven framework promotes human rights, inclusivity and dignity for all learners, regardless of gender or background, and emphasizes active collaboration among teachers, parents, communities and adolescents to foster development and agency.

UNICEF advocates for a lifelong learning cycle, recognizing that skills development is a cumulative process that extends from early childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Every individual is a learner at every stage of life, with multiple opportunities to realise their potential. The approach is gender-responsive and equity-focused, prioritising resources for the most disadvantaged while improving learning outcomes for all. In this programmatic guidance document, “education” refers broadly to formal, non-formal and informal learning across schools, communities, workplaces and digital platforms.

### School-to-work transition for youth 15-24<sup>1</sup>

---

The school-to-work transition<sup>2</sup> is the process through which young people move from education to productive and decent work. This process is rarely linear: young people may combine study and work, return to education after employment or shift from part-time or informal jobs to full-time formal work. The transition plays a critical role in their integration into the labour market, shaping career trajectories and overall well-being. It is influenced by multiple factors, including education, skills, gender, family background, cultural norms, location, regulatory frameworks and the economic context.

The school-to-work transition includes two key phases:

- i. Preparing for transition:** This involves developing relevant skills for work, including the qualifications, knowledge, competencies, attitudes and values necessary for securing, maintaining and thriving in employment. Skills can be built through formal, non-formal and informal learning, both in and outside school, online, or through work-based experiences. This phase involves acquiring new skills demanded by the labour market and strengthening existing ones to enhance productivity.
- ii. Making the Transition:** This involves young people finding and connecting with productive and decent work opportunities and sustainable livelihoods where they can effectively apply their skills. Productive and decent work in this document refers to work with these attributes:<sup>3</sup>

(i) adequate earnings and hours; (ii) adequate and resilient market demand for product, service or job role; (iii) advancement prospects and trajectories; (iv) work safety; (v) productivity matched to skills; (vi) written contracts (for wage workers); (vii) compliance with relevant labour laws; and (viii) social security coverage, regardless of work status.

Both phases of this transition involve **supply-side** interventions that enhance the employability of youth by ensuring they have the skills for work and connect them to work opportunities as well as **demand-side** interventions to create quality jobs within the economy. The education-to-work transition is supported by critical linkages with labour systems, social welfare, youth engagement, business sector collaboration and health services, particularly in mental health.

## Employability

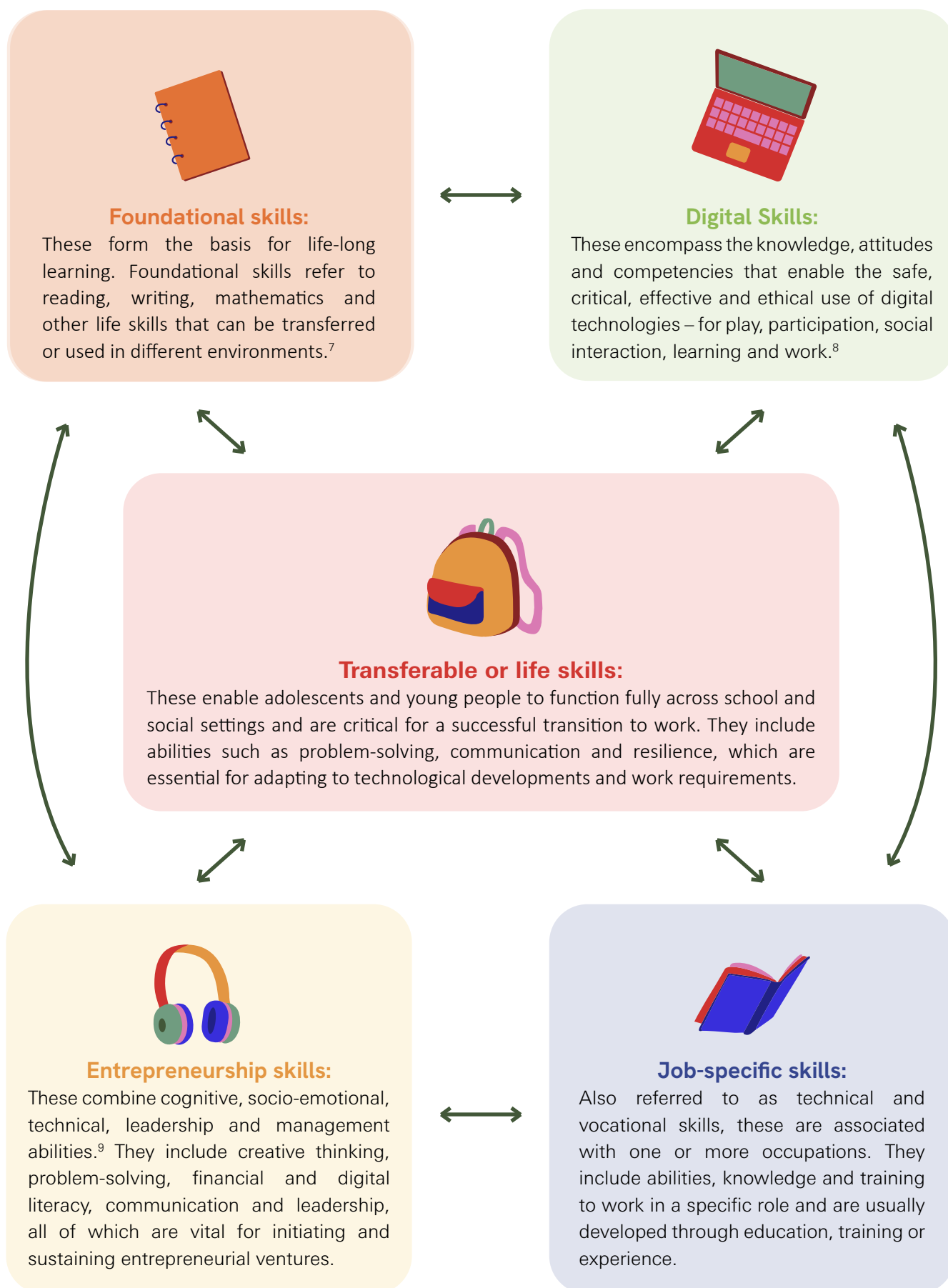
---

Employability refers to a young person's ability to enter, sustain and grow in the labour market while adapting to rapidly-changing environments and technologies.<sup>4</sup> It encompasses skills in networking, self-marketing and career navigation, alongside the ability to continually learn, innovate, assess options and understand workplace rights.<sup>5</sup> Employability is shaped by multiple factors: a foundation of core skills, access to education and training opportunities, motivation and capacity for continuous learning, as well as supportive environments that enable lifelong learning. It is essential for helping workers secure decent employment and navigate change effectively.<sup>6</sup>

## Skills for success in life and work

---

Young people rely on a combination of skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning. These skills are developed not only in educational settings but also through social interactions within families and communities. While there is no universally agreed definition of skills, UNICEF has developed a [framework](#) to promote greater coherence and consistency across its programming. This framework identifies four categories of skills and [12 sub-skills](#) that adolescents and young people need to shape their life projects, access decent work and contribute to their communities. In this guidance, entrepreneurship is presented separately as a key area of skills development for young people in the region.





# Building the case for transforming school-to-work transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean

## 1. Education and labour market trends in Latin America and the Caribbean

👉 *This section provides an overview of education and labour market trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting persistent inequities and emerging policy challenges affecting children and youth.*

### Key education sector indicators

Education is a basic human right and a cornerstone for human capital development and economic productivity. Nonetheless, systemic challenges continue to hinder progress across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Access to early childhood education (ECD) in the region remains uneven. In 2020, only 20 per cent of children aged 0–2 and 67 per cent of those aged 3–6 were enrolled in educational programmes. Coverage also varies widely across and within countries, with children from rural areas and low-income households facing the greatest barriers.<sup>10</sup>

The region has made notable progress in expanding access to education, with net attendance exceeding 90 per cent at the primary and lower secondary levels.<sup>11</sup> However, completion rates decline at higher educational levels and disparities are particularly stark among rural, low-income and indigenous populations. For instance, while 94 per cent of high-income students in the region complete lower secondary education, the rate drops to 60 per cent for students from low-income households.<sup>12</sup> Despite gains in enrolment, learning outcomes in the region remain poor. Foundational literacy rates are low, with only 39 per cent of 10-year-olds able to read a simple text,<sup>13</sup> below the global average of 51 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

Digital competencies are also limited, with just one in three adolescents on track to achieve basic digital skills.<sup>15</sup> Connectivity challenges further exacerbate these gaps, as only 36 per cent of young people in rural areas report having stable internet access.<sup>16</sup>

Quality gaps between public and private education further reinforce inequality. Public schools significantly underperform compared to private institutions and this deepens existing inequalities.<sup>17</sup> These deficiencies constrain children's learning potential and weaken the capacity of education systems to prepare young people for decent work, thereby perpetuating social and economic challenges.

Gender disparities persist despite advancements in female education. While girls outperform boys in secondary school completion across 16 LAC countries,<sup>18</sup> these achievements rarely translate into equitable outcomes in the labour market. Women remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, accounting for less than 40 per cent of graduates and only 13–20 per cent in information and communication technology (ICT) fields.<sup>19</sup> They are disproportionately concentrated in low-paying, informal jobs that are vulnerable to automation, and remain underrepresented in leadership roles, especially within the technology sector.<sup>20</sup> Migration, violence and mental health issues further compound challenges for marginalized groups, particularly migrants, children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth and indigenous communities.



## Key labour market indicators and future prospects

Insufficient learning outcomes and skills development, coupled with slow economic growth, continue to negatively shape labour market outcomes for youth across Latin America and the Caribbean. Although unemployment rates have improved in recent years, with youth unemployment dropping from 17.9 per cent in 2019 to 13.6 per cent in 2023, job quality remains a concern. Over half of young workers are engaged in informal employment,<sup>21</sup> with 70 per cent participating in low-productivity activities, primarily in trade, transport and food services, as opportunities in agriculture and manufacturing sectors decline.<sup>22</sup> Women face additional barriers, with labour force participation at 51.1 per cent in 2023, 24 percentage points below that of men.<sup>23</sup>

Among youth aged 15–29, the employment-to-population ratio for those in school is relatively high at about 30 per cent, and roughly 60 per cent of those not in school or training are working.<sup>24</sup> This suggests that many young people either combine study with work or leave school prematurely to help support their families.

These labour market patterns should be understood as **structural conditions shaping young people's options**, not as a reflection of individual failure or lack of effort. Many adolescents and youth are navigating constrained opportunities—limited access to quality learning and skills development, high informality, and weak demand for decent jobs—while also responding to household pressures that push them to combine school with work or leave education early to contribute to family income. In this context, young people are **disproportionately affected** by the way education, care responsibilities, and labour markets are organized (with additional barriers for young women), and the focus of the guidance in this document is therefore on changing systems and expanding real, supported pathways—rather than placing the burden of responsibility on youth themselves.

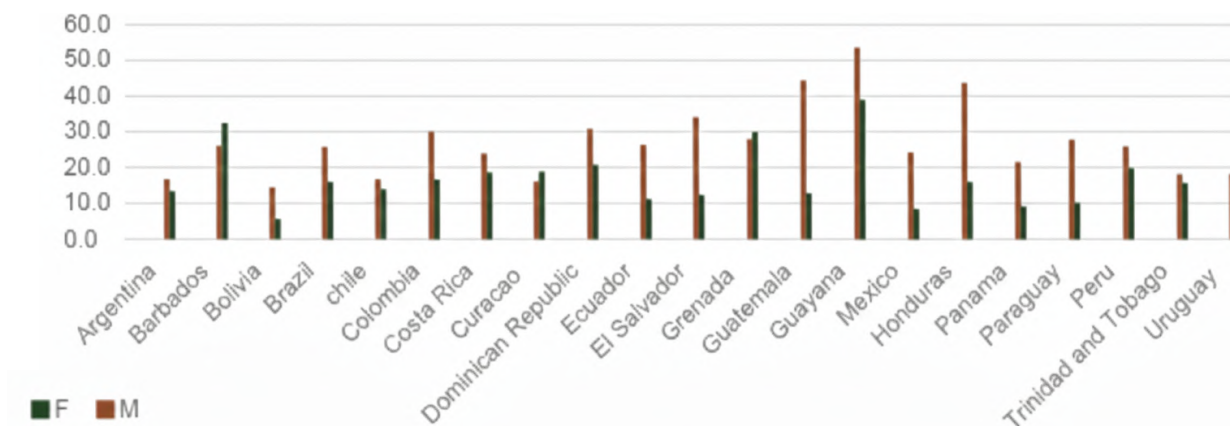


## Youth not in education, employment or training

The share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)<sup>25</sup> remains high across the region, with young women disproportionately affected. In 2024, 18.4 per cent of young people in LAC were NEETs: 12.7 per cent among men and 24.1 per cent among women.<sup>26</sup> Youth in this category are neither gaining work experience nor advancing their education or skills, leaving them at heightened risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Youth NEET rates vary substantially across LAC countries (*see Figure 2*). While rates tend to be higher in Central American and Caribbean nations and lower in Andean and Southern Cone countries, a largely consistent pattern across the region is that young women face significantly higher NEET rates than young men.

FIGURE 2. YOUTH NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) RATES, BY COUNTRY AND SEX (%)



SOURCE: WORLD BANK, WORLD DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS (ILO DATABASES, LATEST AVAILABLE)

## The transition from education to work

The school-to-work transition, defined by the ILO as the *“passage of a young person from the end of schooling to the first stable or satisfactory employment”*<sup>27</sup> is a critical phase that strongly influences young people’s lifelong employment prospects, earning potential, well-being and social inclusion. Unmet aspirations and unrealized potential during this stage can have lasting effects on the well-being of young workers.<sup>28</sup>

Several interrelated barriers hinder a smooth transition from education to work in Latin America and the Caribbean. While young people’s ability to access and complete quality, relevant education is essential for improving their prospects of securing productive and decent work, many children and adolescents, particularly those living in rural areas, belonging to ethnic minorities, or on the move, still face serious obstacles to completing inclusive, high-quality secondary education. Violence, lack of access to safe drinking water and inadequate sanitation facilities further undermine school attendance and learning. Moreover, even those who complete secondary education often lack foundational skills, such as literacy and numeracy, or transferable skills like problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity, that are essential for employability.

Gender-based barriers, including adolescent pregnancy, care responsibilities, stereotypes and discrimination, further limit adolescent girls and young women’s access to continued education, job training and decent work opportunities.

Across the globe and in LAC, young people face serious obstacles in their search for work. Many individuals struggle due to a lack of work experience, insufficient information, or networks to connect with job opportunities, as well as barriers to financing entrepreneurship. Upon graduation, many young people also confront a mismatch between their aspirations and the realities of the labour market, discovering that their skills do not align with employers’ demands.

Beyond these supply-side constraints, demand-side factors within the labour market also shape adolescents and young people’s transitions. High employment informality, limited job creation in high-productivity sectors and the predominance of vulnerable or low-wage work affect job quality and availability. These dynamics restrict the opportunities for young people to secure decent employment.

Addressing these systemic barriers requires a multi-sectoral and holistic framework for action that combines both supply- and demand-side interventions.

On the demand side, structural economic reforms, combined with investments in infrastructure and trade, are crucial to boost productivity, enhance competitiveness and support the creation of more and better jobs.<sup>29</sup>

Supply-side transformations are also necessary to equip young people with the skills, networks and protections they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world of work while advancing gender equality and inclusive growth. This involves ensuring that adolescents can access and complete quality, relevant education and acquire market-relevant skills.

This would help align education with the demands of the workforce and the realities of a technology-driven world.

Engaging the business sector is also crucial for bridging skills gaps, promoting safe, equitable and inclusive workplaces, and expanding opportunities for disadvantaged adolescents and young people. Equally important is the empowerment and active participation of adolescents and young people as agents of change, fostering youth-led innovation and solutions—especially in emerging green and digital sectors—to shape their own futures and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.



## 2. Adolescents and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean: Perceptions and expectations on the transition from education to work

🕒 *This section addresses young people's perceptions, aspirations and challenges in education and the transition to work in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting the critical need for policies and programmes that are both inclusive and responsive to their aspirations.*

UNICEF is committed to transforming education and skills development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring that adolescents and young people play an active role in shaping life projects aligned to their aspirations. At the core of this transformation is the recognition that adolescents and youth participation is not only a guiding principle but a fundamental right,

as enshrined in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Integrating young people's voices into the design and delivery of policies, curricula and programmes ensures that their transition from education to decent, productive work is tailored to their evolving needs and aspirations, empowering them to shape the solutions that will define their futures.

A [2022 U-Report](#) survey provided valuable insights into adolescents and young people's perspectives on the skills needed for the future.<sup>30</sup> The poll of 13–24-year-olds revealed a growing preference for self-employment and entrepreneurship, driven by uncertainty about their skills and future opportunities. One-third of respondents felt unprepared for business-sector roles, and half identified transferable skills as critical to achieving their goals. Financial literacy ranked as the second most important skill, especially for aspiring entrepreneurs navigating economic challenges.

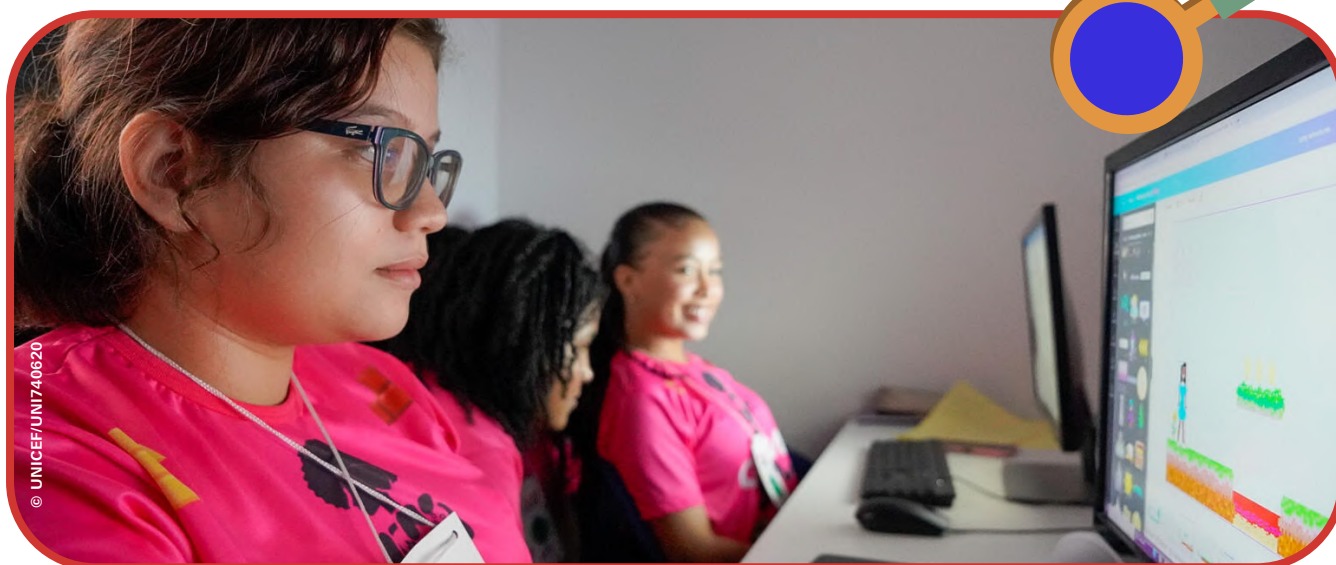
Findings also suggest that structural barriers influence young people's transitions to work. Anxiety about future job prospects is widespread, with over half of respondents doubting the alignment between job availability and their aspirations, highlighting the limited capacity of current education and training systems to meet labour market demands. Many expressed a desire for training and job opportunities that align with their interests, free from discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status.

During the international seminar on [Innovation in policies for school-to-work transition](#), focus group participants emphasized their aspiration for careers that go beyond mere survival and allow them to achieve personal and professional milestones, including opportunities in creative fields.

They called for genuine spaces for adolescents and youth to engage with the productive sector in identifying and addressing the barriers they face when seeking employment.<sup>31</sup>

Complementing these perceptions, a 2024 study explored the challenges and opportunities faced by young people aged 18 to 29 as they transition into the labour market across the region.<sup>32</sup> It also examined companies' perspectives on recruiting, attracting and retaining young talent. Based on interviews with 13,362 young people and 590 company representatives in 14 Latin American countries, the study found that 90 per cent of youth struggle to secure employment, primarily due to limited work experience (63 per cent). Economic pressures lead one in four young people to accept jobs outside their fields of study, while their main expectations when seeking employment focus on competitive salaries (29 per cent), flexible schedules (17 per cent) and opportunities for professional growth (16 per cent).

Together, these findings emphasize the critical need for policies and programmes that are both inclusive and responsive to young people's aspirations. Bridging the gap between education and decent work requires a systematic approach that addresses skills mismatches, promotes equal opportunities and ensures young people are actively involved in decision-making processes.





### 3. The potential of the business sector in driving inclusive and sustainable youth employment in Latin America and the Caribbean

🔗 *This section examines how the business sector and the green, digital, care and creative economies can drive job creation and sustainable growth in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

Latin America and the Caribbean holds significant potential for job creation through the transformation of its green, digital and care economies. By 2030, investments in these sectors could generate up to 3.5 million new jobs: approximately 700,000 in green industries, 1.6 million in digital sectors and 1.5 million in the care economy. Yet, persistent gender disparities are expected to shape these emerging labour markets, with men projected to occupy around 60 per cent of digital jobs and women 70 per cent of care roles, reinforcing traditional patterns.<sup>33</sup>

The region's biodiversity and resources offer unique opportunities for green growth. Expanding investments in water management, renewable energy and the circular economy could significantly boost formal employment while enhancing climate resilience. Similarly, digital transformation continues to accelerate, with internet access reaching 78 per cent of the population in 2022,<sup>34</sup> although rural populations still lag behind in achieving stable connectivity. However, limited infrastructure and insufficient digital skills constrain the adoption of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence.<sup>35</sup>

These gaps heighten vulnerability to automation, which could displace up to 22 per cent of jobs by 2027, while nearly half of all core job skills are expected to change within the same period.<sup>36</sup>

The orange economy, which contributes 2.2 per cent of regional GDP and employs around 2 million people,<sup>37</sup> demonstrates the creative sector's growing potential as a source of inclusive, knowledge-based growth. Nonetheless, it also faces structural challenges, including automation risks and skills mismatches, that threaten to limit its capacity to absorb youth talent. Employers are increasingly responding through reskilling initiatives and flexible work arrangements, yet these efforts remain uneven across countries and sectors.<sup>38</sup>

Progress toward diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is advancing, but barriers persist. Although 88 per cent of enterprises reported hiring youth aged 18–29 in the past year, 60 per cent struggled with retention, often due to limited experience, inadequate training and unmet expectations.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, few businesses align with the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), with only one-third targeting low-income, migrant or at-risk adolescents.

LAC now stands on the brink of significant transformation driven by investments in the green, digital and care economies. However, advancing in this transformation requires deliberate strategies to mitigate job displacement, close gender and digital divides and align education and training systems with emerging labour market demands.

Equally important is the promotion of inclusive workforce strategies that embrace diversity in gender, age, ethnicity and ability. This will help advance social equity and support innovation and productivity, laying the foundation for more equitable and sustainable development across the region.

### Box 1: Short definitions of green, circular, care, digital and orange economies

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a **green economy** seeks to enhance well-being and social equity while substantially reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Put simply, it is an economy that is low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive.<sup>68</sup>

The **circular economy** is a production and consumption model designed to optimize the use of resources, reduce the consumption of raw materials and recover waste by reintegrating it into the production cycle. It seeks to maximize the value of available resources through three core principles: reduce, reuse and recycle.<sup>69</sup>

The **care economy** encompasses both paid and unpaid care work, delivered through both the public and private sectors. It includes care providers and recipients, as well as the employers and institutions offering care services. Care work involves activities and relationships that sustain quality of life, nurture human potential, promote agency, autonomy and dignity, and strengthen the opportunities and resilience of both caregivers and care recipients.<sup>70</sup>

The **digital economy** encompasses the economic activities that arise from connecting people, businesses, devices, data and operations through digital technologies. It encompasses online interactions and transactions that occur across various sectors and platforms, driven by tools such as the internet, mobile technologies, big data and information and communication technology (ICT).<sup>71</sup>

According to UNESCO, the **orange economy**, also known as the creative economy, is an evolving concept that recognizes the potential of creative assets to drive economic growth and sustainable development. It encompasses the production, promotion, distribution, and commercialization of goods, services, and activities with cultural, artistic, or heritage content.<sup>72</sup>



#### 4. What works for a smooth transition from education to productive and decent work: evidence from literature

🕒 *This section reviews evidence on effective strategies for supporting young people's transition from education to decent work*

Training and employment support programmes<sup>40</sup> typically target less educated young people who are unemployed or underemployed and come from low- or middle-income backgrounds. Numerous evaluations across the region have consistently demonstrated positive effects on employment quality, as well as on participants' behaviours, expectations and non-cognitive skills.<sup>41</sup>

While apprenticeship<sup>42</sup> programmes are widely implemented, few LAC countries meet international quality standards. For instance, only Mexico has fully integrated the dual education model into its system.<sup>43</sup> Subsidized employment programmes, though effective in increasing hiring, face challenges such as deadweight effects. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship initiatives, including business plan competitions, are gaining traction and show promise in fostering job creation and profitability.<sup>44</sup>

Global evidence on education-to-work transition programmes shows mixed results. A UNICEF report shows that, overall, around 70 per cent of such programmes fail to significantly increase employment or earnings.

However, comprehensive interventions that tailor approaches to participants' needs, combine classroom learning with internships and integrate technical and life skills training tend to achieve better outcomes.<sup>45</sup>

Building on this evidence, a systematic review of 220 youth-focused labour market programmes highlights that combining multiple interventions, incorporating life skills and providing certifications improve employment outcomes, especially in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>46</sup>

In LAC, well-designed and context-specific training programmes, wage subsidies and entrepreneurship initiatives have proven effective in improving employment outcomes and earnings for youth. Expanding quality apprenticeships, strengthening public-private partnerships and promoting demand-driven approaches are critical to ensuring sustainable transitions from education to decent work. Together, these programmes highlight the importance of targeted policies that address structural labour market challenges and empower the most vulnerable young people to participate fully in the region's evolving economies.

## Box 2. Approaches to Support Youth Transitions to Work

A range of training and employment support programmes help young people build the skills, experience and confidence needed to enter and thrive in the labour market.

**Job-search assistance** programmes equip youth with practical skills to identify job opportunities, prepare CVs, attend interviews and navigate early employment stages. These services, delivered by schools, employment agencies, or NGOs, have proven cost-effective in improving job prospects.

**Career guidance and education** help individuals make informed learning and work choices through counselling, mentoring, skills assessments and labour market information. Career guidance fosters lifelong career management skills, including traditional, practical CV writing skills, job searching skills, and, most importantly, social and emotional competencies.

**Apprenticeships** are the most widely used method for helping young people transition from education to work. They combine on-the-job training with classroom learning, leading to recognized certifications. While formal apprenticeships are regulated and remunerated, **informal apprenticeships, which are** common in economies with high informality, lack contractual protection or certification. **Pre-apprenticeships** prepare youth for entry into formal training by strengthening foundational and soft skills.

**Internships and traineeships** provide short-term, practical experience in workplaces. **Internship** programmes are generally opportunities offered by employers to students interested in the industry, typically for less than 6 months. **Traineeships** are short-term opportunities for work experience and practice, where young people receive training and gain experience in a specific field or occupational area. They focus on building specialized skills and employability for graduates or vulnerable youth.

**Wage subsidy programmes** incentivize employers to hire or retain young workers by reducing labour costs through tax relief or partial wage coverage. These are most effective when targeted at long-term unemployed or disadvantaged groups and linked to training or retention conditions.

**Labour market training** develops job-specific technical and soft skills aligned with industry demand, often in partnership with employers. These programmes are primarily aimed at unemployed or underemployed individuals, especially young people, women and disadvantaged groups, helping them gain the competencies required for entry or re-entry into the workforce.

Finally, **self-employment and start-up programmes** empower youth, especially those facing barriers to formal employment, with entrepreneurship training, financial literacy and access to credit or grants, promoting economic independence and local job creation.



**Generation Unlimited (GenU)** is a global public–private–youth partnership, anchored in UNICEF, that aims to connect the world’s 1.8 billion adolescents and young people to quality education, skills, and meaningful employment by 2030. UNICEF plays a convening and technical leadership role, mobilizing governments, businesses, civil society, and young people themselves to co-create scalable solutions that bridge the gap between learning and earning.

By promoting market-relevant skills, digital and green skills, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities, GenU strengthens young people’s transition from school to work and supports pathways to sustainable livelihoods, particularly for the most marginalized youth, including young women. The initiative focuses on transforming education and training systems, expanding access to innovative skilling platforms, and aligning youth skills development with future labour market demands, contributing directly to the Sustainable Development Goals and a more inclusive, resilient future of work. You can find more information at the [Pathways to Prosperity report](#).





© UNICEF/UNI1953024/Alcantara



## Programmatic guidance: Supporting the successful transition from education to decent and productive work

🔗 *This section provides programmatic guidance to strengthen the school-to-work transition, outlining a framework built around three complementary and mutually reinforcing pillars that foster collaboration among key stakeholders, including young people.*

As outlined in previous sections, despite progress in expanding access to education across Latin America and the Caribbean, many children and adolescents still face barriers related to access, relevance and quality, limiting their preparedness for an increasingly complex world of work. Digital divides further deepen these inequalities. Although transferable, digital and green skills, along with foundational literacy in emerging technologies, are increasingly valued in today's labour market, many young people continue to lack these essential competencies.

While youth in the region are more likely to work than their global peers, much of this employment is informal, insecure and often mismatched with their educational qualifications.

Opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship are also constrained, as young people often lack the necessary business experience, market-relevant skills and access to finance needed to start and sustain their own ventures. Furthermore, many adolescents express uncertainty about their future skills and opportunities, reflecting widespread anxiety about employability and the limited responsiveness of current education and training systems to labour market needs.

These findings emphasize the importance of addressing skills mismatches, reducing gender and digital divides and promoting equitable opportunities for all young people. Achieving this requires deliberate demand- and supply-side approaches to strengthen the quality,

inclusiveness and relevance of education, align education and training systems with the demands of evolving labour markets and foster inclusive workforce policies that value diversity in gender, age, ethnicity and ability. Adolescents and youth can play a central role in identifying and leading solutions that facilitate their transition from education to employment.

UNICEF's programmatic approach in Latin America and the Caribbean responds to these challenges through a context-specific and evidence-based framework designed to meet the diverse needs of countries across the region. This framework is built around three complementary and mutually reinforcing pillars. **The first pillar** focuses on strengthening student-centred secondary education systems that ensure high-quality, accessible, inclusive and relevant education for all. This approach acknowledges the critical importance of aligning

education with the demands of the workforce and the realities of a technology-driven world.

**The second pillar** emphasizes partnerships with the business sector to bridge skills gaps, promote safe, equitable and inclusive workplaces and expand opportunities for disadvantaged adolescents and youth. **The third pillar** centres on the empowerment and participation of adolescents and youth as agents of change. By fostering spaces for youth-led solutions, including in the green and digital sectors, UNICEF can help create an environment where young people actively shape their own futures.

Together, these programmatic pillars form a comprehensive framework that fosters collaboration among governments, the business sector and young people, enabling a supportive ecosystem where all adolescents and youth, especially the most marginalized, can transition successfully from education to productive and decent work.

## PILLAR 1

### Strengthening Education system

- Quality Education
- Accessible and Relevant Education
- Inclusive and Equitable Education

## PILLAR 2

### Private Sector Engagement

- Closing the skills gap
- Safe, equitable and inclusive workplaces
- Employability, focusing on disadvantaged

## PILLAR 3

### Young People's Agency

- Meaningful participation in decision making processes
- Opportunities to become active agents in the communities
- Youth-led digital, green and orange innovative solutions at the local level

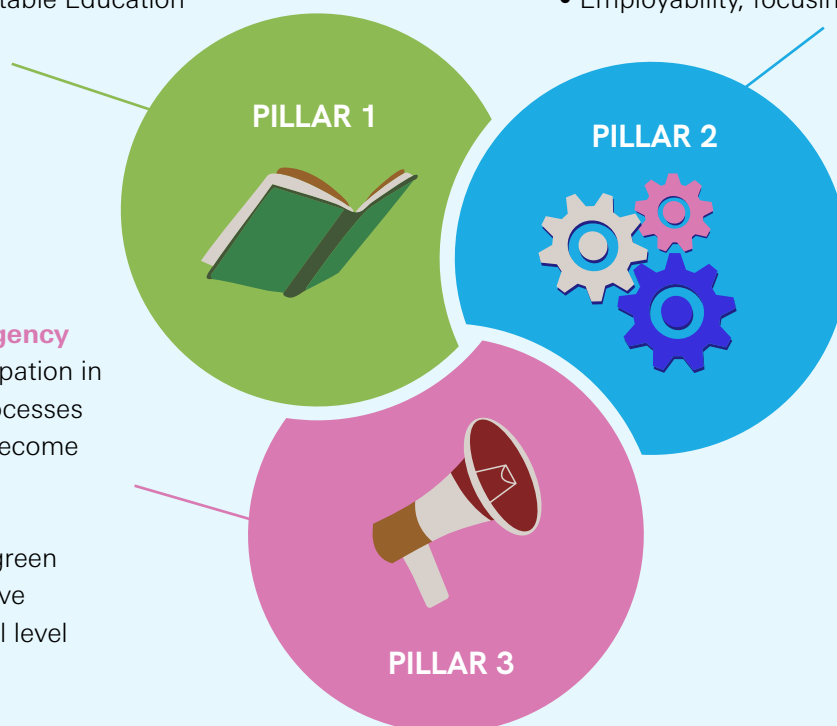


FIGURE 3: THE THREE PILLARS OF UNICEF'S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION-TO-WORK TRANSITION IN LAC



## 1. Pillar I: Strengthening Education System

🕒 *Promoting a quality, accessible, flexible, relevant, inclusive and equitable student-centred secondary education system*

Secondary education represents a critical stage in adolescents' development, shaping their skills, aspirations and readiness for life and work. In the region, students' learning outcomes remain uneven and education systems often fail to equip many adolescents with the competencies and transferable skills required for a smooth education-to-work transition.

For education to drive meaningful socio-economic progress, it must be high-quality, inclusive, safe, flexible, relevant and equitable. Achieving this requires a collaborative approach where key stakeholders, ranging from educational institutions and social welfare bodies to youth organizations and business sector actors, work in coordination. Academia and think tanks play a vital role in generating evidence and innovation, while adolescents must be central participants in shaping solutions that respond to their needs and aspirations. The role of social and traditional media is also essential for raising awareness, promoting accountability and driving positive social and behavioural change.

This pillar is conceived as a comprehensive approach to transforming secondary education into a system that is inclusive and responds to the needs and aspirations of all adolescents. It focuses on strengthening teaching and learning to make education more relevant to current trends, while promoting flexible and lifelong learning pathways that support access for marginalized adolescents. At its core, the pillar seeks to ensure that education systems equip young people with the skills needed for meaningful participation in society and the labour market, within safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.

To achieve this, **fostering strategic coordination and building partnerships** is essential. Drawing on its convening power and technical expertise, UNICEF can bring together education institutions, governments, civil society and the business sector through multi-stakeholder platforms that promote collaboration and synergies across sectors. Through evidence-based advocacy at regional and national levels, UNICEF supports governments in [reforming education systems](#)

with a strong emphasis on gender responsiveness and inclusion, while mobilizing resources and promoting sustained investment to ensure reforms are both transformative and sustainable.

The strategies outlined below translate these priorities into action, providing guidance across three main programmatic focus areas that country offices can adapt to their specific contexts and national priorities.

### **Programmatic focus area #1- Quality education: Enhancing teaching and learning**

- Support the review and adaptation of curricula to ensure alignment with emerging trends and labour market demands, improving relevance and learning outcomes.
- Strengthen the capacities of teaching personnel in secondary schools, including through training on innovative pedagogies, [digital learning platforms and tools](#), and new technologies such as AI.
- Advocate for evidence-based policies and programmes that promote work-based learning and strengthen the school-to-work transition.

### **Programmatic focus area #2- Accessible, flexible and relevant education: Promoting lifelong learning**

- Promote the integration of [multiple and flexible pathways](#) as a learning methodology to ensure education is relevant and addresses the diverse needs of learners from marginalized communities.
- Expand lifelong learning opportunities and leverage technology to promote equitable access to education for disadvantaged adolescents, particularly in remote areas. Bridge the digital divide with tools like the [UNICEF Learning Passport](#) implemented in [Costa Rica](#), [Honduras](#), [Jamaica](#) and [Mexico](#) and internet access initiatives.
- Engage adolescents and youth in the design of curricula and education programmes, while working with the business sector to align learning with labour market needs.



### **Programmatic focus area #3- Inclusive and equitable education: Promoting diversity and safety**

- Advocate for and design policies that create harassment-free, bullying-free and violence-free educational spaces, fostering safety and inclusion for all students.
- Encourage the enrolment of girls and other underrepresented groups in non-traditional education streams. Develop tools and resources for promoting gender equality and inclusion, such as the [UNICEF Jamaica training manual](#) on how to prepare youth with disabilities for meaningful work.
- Collaborate with families and communities to prioritize mental well-being in education and support policies that identify and prevent dropouts, with a focus on at-risk adolescents and marginalized young people. Tools such as [U-Matter in Jamaica](#) demonstrate how young people's mental health challenges can be effectively addressed.

## Promising initiatives and programmes<sup>47</sup>

The following examples illustrate promising initiatives developed in LAC and other regions. They aim to support country offices in learning from existing experiences and designing interventions that integrate proven strategies and draw on the best available evidence. **Annex 2** provides additional examples of initiatives related to Pillar 1, offering further insights to inform programme design and implementation.

### Technology as a game-changer

- [GIGA Initiative](#) (Multi-country): Connects remote schools to the internet, transforming teaching and learning in [Honduras](#), [El Salvador](#) and the Caribbean.
- [Digital and STEM skills for girls](#) (Multi-country): Empowers girls in [Bolivia](#), [Brazil](#), [Guatemala](#) and [Peru](#) with robotics, programming and self-esteem building tools.
- [The Media Center \(Brazil\)](#): Uses live video lessons to bridge urban-rural educational gaps, boosting student retention by 50 per cent.
- [Passport to Earning](#): P2E is dedicated to equipping young people aged 15–24 with free, in-demand, and certified skills, and supporting them to access pathways to employment, entrepreneurship, and advanced training. P2E has skilled 5 million young people, including 2.5 million young women, to complete courses focused on digital literacy, AI competencies, financial literacy, and general employability skills in eight countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines and Rwanda

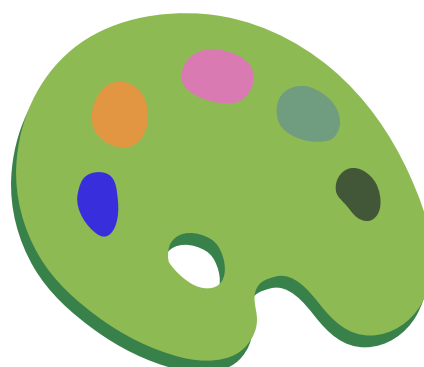
### Tailored programmes for equity

- [Flexible Programmes \(Argentina\)](#): [PLaNEA](#) is an example of initiatives offering certified education options in formal, non-formal and informal settings.
- [Flexible Learning Systems \(Honduras\)](#): Programmes like [Tutorial Learning System](#) equip rural adolescents and young people with academic and entrepreneurial skills.

- [Comprehensive Development Models](#): Peru's [Secondary Education as a Life Experience](#) fosters emotional well-being, inclusion and entrepreneurship.
- [Escuela Nueva](#): Colombia's [Escuela Nueva](#) (New School) programme links education to rural livelihoods, enhancing academic outcomes and life skills.

### Bridging education and employment

- [Career Guidance Initiatives](#): [Denmark's eGuidance](#) system and Morocco's [One Stop Careers Shop](#) initiative are examples to facilitate transitions of adolescents and young people to the world of work.
- [Business Sector Collaboration](#): Programmes such as Argentina's collaboration with Samsung's [Solve for Tomorrow](#), which provides labour market-relevant training, help bring businesses closer to education systems and create opportunities for their active contribution to the school-to-work transition.
- [Yoma \(Youth Marketplace\)](#): Yoma is a digital marketplace that guides, skills, and connects young people to opportunities. It places young people and their needs at the center of its mission by providing a unique digital identity that reduces fragmentation and enables them to navigate across numerous organizations and opportunities to learn, create impact, and earn.
- [imaGen Ventures](#): Over 15 million young people have accessed entrepreneurial skill building opportunities. The global initiative brings together partners to nurture a critical mass of young entrepreneurs dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing a better future globally.





## 2. Pillar II: Business Sector Engagement

- 🕒 *Strengthening business sector engagement to expand opportunities for young people's access to decent work and entrepreneurship*

The business sector<sup>48</sup> plays a central role in shaping the transition from education to work. As the main driver of job creation and innovation, it has the capacity to bridge the gap between education systems and labour market needs, creating pathways for young people to access productive and decent work<sup>49</sup>.

Yet, in Latin America and the Caribbean, persistent structural barriers, including skills mismatches, gender stereotypes and discrimination, lack of information or networks to connect to jobs and limited access to financing for entrepreneurship, continue to restrict young people's opportunities, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Box 3:

UNICEF's Business for Results (B4R), –an internal capacity-building initiative– has equipped country offices to effectively engage with the business sector across multiple modalities (income, core assets, influence, advocacy, and Child Rights and Business (CRB), to maximize programmatic results for children. Between 2019 and 2024, 20 out of 24 country offices in the region incorporated life and work skills development into their CDPs. In [2024](#) alone, UNICEF engaged with nearly 2,200 businesses and key stakeholders in the region, mobilizing \$15 million to expand UNICEF programmes, contributing to national policy reforms, promoting responsible business practices, and benefiting millions of children and families.



This pillar focuses on engaging business sector actors to expand learning and employment opportunities for adolescents and youth. Specifically, the business sector can play a critical role in promoting work-based learning, apprenticeships and job placement initiatives, while advancing inclusive and gender-responsive workplace practices. Engaging the business sector in policy dialogues and joint initiatives is key to ensuring that education-to-work pathways respond to current and future labour market needs.

The business sector can also support the design of demand-driven training programmes aligned with emerging opportunities in the green, digital, and care economies. Employers across the region highlight the importance of non-technical and transferable skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, and self-efficacy, as essential for workplace success. Strengthened collaboration between businesses, educational institutions, and entrepreneurship ecosystems can help equip young people with the life, technical, and entrepreneurial skills required for both employment and enterprise creation.

Moreover, inclusive business practices ensures that all youth, regardless of their background, can access opportunities, contributing to a more diverse, skilled, and motivated workforce. This approach not only drives sustainable economic growth but also strengthens companies' sustainability performance, creating both social and business value, and positioning companies as leaders in advancing the school-to-work transition. Beyond employment, UNICEF also supports the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems that empower young people to design and implement their own life projects.

This includes strengthening financial literacy, expanding access to digital tools and mentorship, and fostering youth-led innovation in sustainable and creative sectors. By combining business engagement with responsible business conduct, UNICEF helps ensure that companies not only provide pathways to decent work but also contribute to inclusive growth and social impact.

Through these efforts, the business sector becomes an essential partner in overcoming many of the barriers that hinder a smooth education-to-work transition for all youth.

#### Box 4:

Recognizing UNICEF's strategic and articulating role in the region, the "Ministerial of Education", held in Chile in 2024, was a landmark event where, for the first time, UNICEF facilitated the participation of the business sector to foster an unprecedented dialogue and explore opportunities for public-private collaboration to address the education crisis in the region. With UNICEF's support, young people raised their voices and delivered an [open letter](#) to more than 30 Ministers of Education, expressing their priorities and proposals for transforming education in the region.

UNICEF's approach under this pillar includes fostering strategic partnerships and collaborations by engaging business leaders, industry associations, chambers of commerce, and regulatory and governmental bodies, integrating the business sector into policy dialogues to address skills gaps and expand young people's access to decent and productive work. It also includes engaging in evidence-based advocacy by promoting stronger labour market information systems to inform career guidance and supporting policies that promote workplace diversity and inclusion.

In parallel, this pillar involves strengthening business capacities by providing tools and guidance to develop inclusive workplace policies and clear induction mechanisms that align expectations between employers and young employees, contributing to smoother and more sustainable labour market integration.

The following strategies offer a flexible framework that country offices can adapt to national contexts and priorities to translate these objectives into tangible results.<sup>50</sup>

### Programmatic Focus Area #1.

#### Close the skills gap

- Conduct business mapping in selected sectors to identify their size, location, and training offers, ensuring alignment with labour market demands and education-to-work transition strategies.
- Develop concise business cases highlighting the socio-economic benefits of investing in education-to-work transitions
- Strengthen partnerships with businesses to co-develop curricula and training programmes, while creating spaces for dialogue between the business sector and adolescents to address their needs and aspirations.

### Programmatic Focus Area #2. Promote safe, equitable, and **inclusive** workplaces that are attractive for young people

- Actively engage the business community to promote corporate policies and practices that provide decent work for young workers, in the with the [CRB Principles](#).
- Develop toolkits to help companies assess their policies and practices related to safety, inclusiveness, equity, and sustainability, ensuring workplaces are supportive of young people.
- Guide policy revisions for decent workplaces and provide integrated service packages with practical [resources](#) to assist businesses in adapting policies that promote flexibility, well-being, and safety, with a focus on young people, women, and indigenous youth.



### Programmatic Focus Area #3. Enhance employability by offering opportunities for life skills development, job-specific training, re-skilling and support for job-to-job transitions, particularly for the most disadvantaged

- Create models for collaboration between education institutions, business sector entities, and students, such as apprenticeships and skills training programmes.<sup>51</sup>
- Advocate for community development programmes and co-designed employment initiatives that integrate wage subsidies, labour market training and social entrepreneurship opportunities, focusing on empowering disadvantaged youth in green, orange, and digital sectors.
- Develop work-based learning programmes (e.g. internships, apprenticeships) to offer young people opportunities to obtain experience working.



## Promising initiatives and programmes

Below are some examples of promising and innovative experiences related to business sector engagement in expanding learning and employment opportunities for adolescents and youth. **Annex 2** provides additional examples, offering further insights to inform programme design and implementation at the country level.<sup>52</sup>

### Empowering young people with digital skills and tools

- **Oportunidades Únicas** (Unique Opportunities) (**Argentina**): A [platform](#) integrating corporate training, internships, and certified courses to prepare young people for adult life, emphasizing equity and gender inclusion.
- **Gamers in Action** (**Nicaragua**): A programme increasing digital programming skills among girls and young women, boosting their participation in the tech industry.
- **Passport to Earning** (**Brazil**) programme developed with Accenture and Microsoft offers digital certifications that empower young people with essential competencies for the future.

### Creating holistic education-to-work pathways

- **Jovenes con rumbo** (Young People with Direction) **in Mexico** enhances the transition to work for young migrants at risk of social exclusion through multi-sectoral partnerships offering mentoring, tailored skills development and on the job training opportunities.
- **Vidas en Trayectoria** (Pathways for Life) in Colombia combines partnerships with universities and companies to provide adolescents with training and practical experience. The strategy includes internships, mentoring, company visits, and a micro-certification programme.
- **Azem** (**Jordan**): Combines employability training, on-the-job mentorship and foundational skill-building, focusing on vulnerable groups such as women.

### Innovating with public-private partnerships

- **1MiO (Brazil)**: A public-private-youth partnership ecosystem providing over 512,000 opportunities for employment, skill-building and business ventures.
- **Connected to Learn (Peru)**: Partnerships with financial institutions to equip schools with technology-driven classrooms, benefiting over 14,000 students.
- **Training internships** in companies (**Uruguay**) are carried out in collaboration with [CECONEU](#), a business association providing relevant training and first exposure to practical work, helping the socio-economic reintegration of young people from [INISA](#).
- **Generation Unlimited (GenU)**: UNICEF's GenU is the world's first public-private-youth partnership bridging the gap between the world's leading organizations and young people to tackle the most pressing issues facing youth today. It harnesses the strengths of the public and private sectors, and taps into the drive and ingenuity of young people for addressing problems that are too big for any one sector to solve on its own.
- **Yuwaah (India)**: By fostering Public-Private-Youth Partnerships, YuWaah is driving innovative solutions that blend physical and digital solutions, creating pathways for learning to earning transition and encouraging active citizenship and youth-led climate action.



### Promoting green and inclusive entrepreneurship

- [Green Shark Tank competition](#) and [Green Skills Innovation Challenge](#): Programmes supporting youth entrepreneurship in green sectors through funding, mentorship and technical assistance.
- [Centennials Emprende](#) (Entrepreneurship for Centennials) (**Colombia**): Strengthens entrepreneurial mindsets in students through meaningful learning spaces and connections with the business sector.

- [BeGreen Africa](#): BeGreen Africa aims to help youth-owned green enterprises and start-ups that have the potential for growth and job creation but lack the capacity and funding to prosper socially and economically while speeding up efforts to combat the climate crisis.
- [EKYAN](#): The Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture & Nutrition (EKYAN) programme is equipping Kenyan youth, especially young women, with agribusiness skills and digital tools. By the end of 2025, EKYAN will have incubated 512 agripreneurs in 64 Centers of Excellence and 250+ schools, providing training and extension services to more than 50,000 smallholder farmers across three counties.

#### BOX 4. Green Jobs for Youth Pact: Roadmap for Latin America and the Caribbean

The [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#) is a collaborative initiative led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNICEF. It aims to promote a just transition and foster decent work for young people within a sustainable and inclusive economy. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pact seeks to create one million new green jobs and support the transition of one million existing jobs toward environmentally sustainable practices. Its regional targets also include greening 50,000 businesses, equipping 700,000 young people with green skills and training 300,000 youth who are not in employment or education. In addition, the Pact aims to support 10,000 young green entrepreneurs, with particular attention to vulnerable groups and policies that promote youth employment and sustainable growth.

The Pact's roadmap focuses on supporting green entrepreneurship and employment through coordinated action at multiple levels:

- **Policy, government and research**: Conducting national assessments and facilitating inter-ministerial dialogues to enhance policy coherence on green jobs and just transition strategies.
- **Business level**: Strengthening youth employment services, training entrepreneurs in green business creation and sustainable practices and promoting the development of green business models among young people.



### 3. Pillar III: Young people's Agency

🕒 *Empowering adolescents and youth as agents of change and active participants in social transformation.*

Young people under 24 account for nearly one-third of Latin America and the Caribbean's population. Despite their potential, many struggle to access stable, productive and meaningful work due to economic stagnation, insufficient job creation and systemic obstacles in the transition from education to employment. A significant share of young people remains unemployed or work in precarious or informal conditions.

Adolescents and young people today are increasingly vocal about their desire for meaningful participation in shaping their futures. Findings from the 2022 U-Report survey<sup>53</sup> highlight their calls for equitable access to opportunities – regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background – and for a genuine voice in decisions that affect their lives. Many express concern about achieving financial independence amid a persistent gap between their career aspirations and the limited opportunities available. Their concerns extend beyond employment, reflecting a broader demand for well-being and for urgent, sustainable action to protect the planet's future.

Building inclusive and impactful pathways for young people requires moving beyond tokenistic participation toward meaningful engagement and empowerment opportunities. Youth across the region require genuine co-creation of solutions in both public and private spheres that address the needs of the most vulnerable, including rural youth, women, indigenous communities, migrants and people with disabilities. Gaining the life and technical skills needed, in a supportive and healthy environment, alongside sustained pathways for career growth and leadership development, with a focus on co-creating solutions that ensure their productive inclusion in society should be central to policy development and programming for adolescents and young people.

UNICEF's approach under this pillar focuses on fostering youth participation, leadership and agency by building inclusive systems and platforms where adolescents and young people can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their education, employment and overall well-being, become agents of change to transform themselves and their communities.



Equipping young people to drive change and shape the future empowers them to influence the actions, decisions, and policies that foster progress and collaboration in a complex world. This involves working closely with youth organizations and networks to promote representation in policymaking, institutionalize youth participation and scale up opportunities to equip them with the right skills and become agents of change. It also includes addressing the social norms and barriers to provide equal opportunities to adolescent girls and young women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups.

To ensure participation is meaningful and transformative, it is essential to invest in capacity-building initiatives that strengthen young people's ability to express their views, advocate for change, and lead community-driven solutions including, at least, youth co-setting agendas, feedback loops on how their inputs are used, and shared decision-making power. Through mentorship, peer-to-peer learning and youth-led innovation platforms, adolescents and youth are empowered to develop digital, green and creative solutions to local challenges. At the same time, it is important to strengthen the capacity of policymakers, institutions, and the private sector to engage constructively with young people and act on their perspectives e.g. power-sharing, facilitation with adolescents, safeguarding, and budgeting for youth time.

This pillar positions young people as essential partners and changemakers driving inclusive and sustainable progress across the region. The following strategies provide a framework for translating this vision into action and can be adapted by country offices to national priorities and contexts.

### **Programmatic Focus Area #1: Meaningful participation in decision-making**

Empowering adolescents and young people as active contributors requires creating structured, safe and inclusive mechanisms for their engagement and building government capacity to institutionalize participation at scale e.g. youth seats in national skills councils, municipal youth boards on education-to-work, youth representatives in TVET governance.

- Strengthen government and partners capacity to meaningfully engage young people through training to adults – teachers, employers, policy makers - on adolescent participation standards, safe engagement practices, ethical considerations, and youth co-creation methodologies (co-designed or co-delivered with youth where possible).
- Support governments and partners to create or reinforce institutional mechanisms such as national youth councils, municipal youth advisory boards, adolescent participation frameworks, or inter-ministerial platforms that formalize how youth voices are integrated into public policies, budgeting processes, and service delivery.
- Organize youth-led dialogues with governments, private-sector actors, TVET institutions and employers to ensure that skilling policies, education reforms, and employability programmes reflect young people's priorities, barriers and aspirations.
- Use digital participation platforms such as U-Report to gather at scale, real-time feedback on skills programmes, labour market challenges, job-matching services and service quality, strengthening accountability and public-sector responsiveness, feeding into formal review cycles (e.g. annual education-to-work reviews, programme redesign), and having the findings shared back with young people.
- Invest in strengthening youth networks and social movements (e.g. core funding, governance support, safeguarding, and facilitation of intergenerational partnerships) to ensure systematic, diverse and sustained representation of adolescents (girls, rural youth, Indigenous youth, youth with disabilities, and other marginalized groups) in policy processes related to education-to-work transitions.



## Programmatic Focus Area #2:

### Active Youth-led action

- Support peer networks and youth movements that empower adolescents to identify challenges, mobilize peers, and design and implement solutions.
- Invest in youth capacity-building in areas such as leadership, advocacy, project management, climate action, digital skills, entrepreneurship, and social innovation directly linked to real decision spaces and funding (e.g. youth-led funds, youth seats in programme steering committees), so skills are applied immediately rather than remaining theoretical. For example, UNICEF's "Youth-Led Action" model emphasises training + mentorship + peer-to-peer models.
- Provide micro-grants, seed funding and mentorship for youth-led initiatives, ensuring opportunities are accessible to adolescent girls, rural youth, indigenous youth, and young people with disabilities. Evidence from youth-led programmes shows that bureaucracy is a major barrier for the adolescents we most want to reach and we need to pay attention to have youth-friendly grant design (simple applications, flexible reporting, possibility of multi-cycle funding for successful initiatives).
- Strengthen monitoring, accountability and learning systems where young people track their own progress, document impact, and feed insights back into policy and programme adaptation. Youth co-led MERL methods like Y-PARE, youth scorecards, youth-moderated reflection spaces and tools like the Youth Centrality Index methods are highly recommended.

### Programmatic Focus Area #3: Skills for life and work through innovation

- Promote the integration of project-based learning within the education system, embedding real-world, student-centred learning into formal curricula to strengthen students' agency and link it with pathways to employment, entrepreneurship, and vocational training.

- Support the integration of mentorship and apprenticeship components into national policies and programmes, ensuring that young people are connected with employers and industry professionals through structured, scalable systems that strengthen their skills and facilitate smoother transitions into the world of work. Youth Centrality and YPAT experience show that near-peer models are often more accessible and effective for adolescents, especially girls and marginalized youth so we recommend mentorship schemes combining adult mentors with near-peer mentors (slightly older youth).
- Strengthen career guidance and career development support by providing young people with information, counselling and tools to explore pathways, make informed decisions, and navigate transitions into further education, training, employment or entrepreneurship. Youth should co-design career guidance tools/content (including digital tools), as they are closest to emerging pathways (gig work, hybrid careers, entrepreneurship) that traditional guidance often misses.
- Expand opportunities for young people to develop digital, transferable and 21st-century skills through blended learning, micro-credentialing, and flexible training pathways that respond to evolving labour market demands.
- Expand gender-transformative skills opportunities for adolescent girls by addressing the digital, normative and safety barriers they face, and by promoting access to STEM, digital, entrepreneurial and life skills programmes that strengthen their agency and open pathways to education, training and decent work.

### Promising initiatives and programmes

The experiences described below draw on successful initiatives implemented in LAC and other regions to empower adolescents and youth as agents of change and active participants in social transformation. Additional related examples can be found in **Annex 2**.

## Promising experiences

- **MUNA Programme (Argentina):** Adolescents influence municipal budgets to prioritize investments in children's welfare. Over 38 municipalities now involve youth in budgeting, leading to increased resources for education, health and social protection.
- **Skills4Girls:** a global initiative to bridge the gap between the skills girls need to be competitive in the 21st century workforce. In Bolivia, girls are inventing solutions to real-life problems after receiving [Robotics Training](#).
- **ImaGen Ventures (Mexico):** A global youth-driven initiative from Generation Unlimited, adapted in Mexico to combine entrepreneurship training with climate-focused projects like the [Ovejas Ecofriendly](#) programme, which promotes sustainable sheep farming while reducing methane emissions.
- **Vidas en Trayectoria (Life Trajectories) (Colombia):** Equips youth with technical certifications, socio-emotional skills and career mentorship, creating pathways to further education and employment.
- **Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation:** A comprehensive toolkit to start or strengthen programmes for adolescents, in humanitarian and development contexts through activities that support their emotional and social wellbeing, build their skills and engage them in positive change.
- **UPSHIFT:** Empowering youth with training, mentorship and funding to design solutions

for local challenges. This programme has been successfully scaled across countries including Bolivia, Brazil, [Guatemala](#),<sup>54</sup> Nicaragua, [Paraguay](#) and Uruguay.

## Tools to develop skills for life and work

- **FunDoo (Jamaica):** A chat-based learning tool offering 21st-century skills training via WhatsApp, focusing on adolescents outside formal education.
- **Plan 12 – Learn to Transform (LAC Region):** a platform with key resources that prepares adolescents to become agents of change by developing transferable skills and inviting them to look critically at their own realities and take action. accompanied by podcasts and downloadable materials for skill-building.
- **U-Report:** A UNICEF tool for gathering youth insights on critical issues, influencing education reforms and other national policies.
- **Youth-led Action Initiative** empowers young changemakers through comprehensive support, including training, mentoring and financing. It utilizes a peer-to-peer cascade model to reach underserved communities and integrate mental wellness into its programming, fostering resilience and essential life skills.
- **Youth Centrality Assessment Tool:** This tool is designed to measure and enhance the inclusion of young people's perspectives in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### BOX 5. Mercociudades

[Mercociudades](#) is a network of 380 cities across 11 Latin American countries, representing over 120 million people. It fosters collaboration to improve the quality of life, strengthen local governance and promote shared policies. Key thematic areas include youth engagement, education, social development, science and innovation, economic development and gender equality. Due to its strong local presence and active partnerships with governments, the UN and the private sector, Mercociudades offers a strategic platform for scaling initiatives addressing education-to-work transitions. By collaborating with this network, UNICEF can support policy reforms, enhance local capacities and drive sustainable solutions for young people's education, employment and training needs.



## Roadmap to advance the School-to-work agenda in the LAC region

👉 *This section outlines a regional and country-level roadmap to advance the education-to-decent-work agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

UNICEF's regional and country offices in Latin America and the Caribbean are well-positioned to shape policies, foster partnerships and drive national ownership of the education-to-work transition agenda. This priority aligns with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and requires collaboration across governments, the private sector, civil society and youth.

Through initiatives like the International Seminar on Innovative Policies to Improve School-to-Work Transition (Brasilia, 2024) the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) is mobilizing key stakeholders to strengthen collective commitment to this transformative agenda. By leveraging global expertise and innovative strategies, country offices are encouraged to develop context-specific

roadmaps that address local challenges and opportunities, ensuring that education, labour and social protection systems respond to the aspirations of adolescents and youth.

### 1. UNICEF's regional and country-level strategy for advancing the education-to-decent-work agenda

UNICEF's regional offices act as hubs for partnership building, resource mobilization and knowledge dissemination. In line with its core functions and in response to country office priorities, LACRO will leverage its regional reach and perspective to advance the education-to-decent-work transition agenda.

This includes using evidence to inform policy dialogue, strengthening coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders and fostering cross-sectoral synergies. Particular emphasis will be placed on knowledge management and information exchange, both horizontally within the region and vertically between headquarters (Centers of Excellence), regional and country levels.

Strengthening national ownership of the education-to-decent-work agenda is key to ensuring its impact and sustainability. UNICEF country offices are strategically positioned to collaborate with governments, the private sector, youth organizations, families and communities to advance this agenda.

Drawing on their strong local presence and extensive experience, country offices can help coordinate national efforts to identify and overcome barriers, while promoting inclusive solutions that reflect the needs and aspirations of adolescents and young people.

Figure 4 below outlines the proposed process for country offices to collaborate with national counterparts in developing national roadmaps that strengthen the transition from learning to decent and productive work. This process responds to recommendations from the 2024 International Seminar on Innovative Policies for School-to-Work Transition on the Education-to-Work Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Figure 4: Key steps towards a national roadmap on improving the transition from learning to decent and productive work**



The Action Plan presented in **Annex 1** outlines concrete steps to guide the development of national roadmaps following high-level political commitment. Country offices are encouraged to establish a task force that brings together staff from education, ADAP, health, protection and private sector engagement to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach. COs should draw on global and regional initiatives, expertise and tools developed to advance the education-to-work transition. The scope, content and ambition of each roadmap will depend on the country's political, social and economic context, institutional capacities and the engagement of other development partners.

To optimize resources, a phased approach to planning and implementation is recommended. This will allow COs to prioritize actions that deliver the greatest efficiency and impact, with a focus on strengthening education, labour and social protection systems to better serve adolescents and youth. Leveraging innovative policy and programmatic solutions aligned with 21st-century developments is also essential. While earlier sections of this document highlighted relevant successful global and regional initiatives, **Annex 2** provides additional examples that can be used to inform and inspire country-level design.

## 2. Programming Principles

The following principles should guide the design, implementation and monitoring of initiatives designed to support the transition from education to decent and productive work. This list is not exhaustive but highlights key elements supported, where possible, by evidence and assessment findings:

### YOUTH AGENCY IN DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT:

Youth agency in design, implementation and assessment means that young people are recognized and supported as decision-makers at every stage of education-to-work programmes, not only as beneficiaries. Youth are engaged in identifying priorities, co-creating solutions and shaping delivery modalities, including face-to-face, online and hybrid options, so that interventions reflect their lived experiences and aspirations. Their participation in governance structures, monitoring processes and evaluation activities strengthens relevance, accountability and ownership, and helps ensure that initiatives promote human rights, equity and inclusion while responding to the diverse realities of girls and boys, including those facing discrimination or exclusion.

### HUMAN RIGHTS:

A human rights-based approach to education-to-employment programmes emphasizes the protection and promotion of young people's rights to education, decent work and participation in decision-making. It ensures that programmes uphold the dignity and agency of youth, aligning interventions with international human rights standards. This approach also involves advocating for policies that ensure access to quality education and fair employment, while promoting equal opportunities for all, particularly those facing systemic discrimination or exclusion.

### EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS:

To promote equity and inclusion, transferable skills development should be integrated across all learning environments. Skills acquisition occurs through multiple pathways, including formal education, non-formal and community settings, and the workplace, using diverse delivery methods such as in-person, online, hybrid or integrated models. Ensuring that all children and adolescents can access skills development opportunities requires cross-sectoral approaches that enhance coherence, efficiency and reach.





### **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS:**

Evidence shows that programmes designed and implemented through collaborative, multi-stakeholder partnerships yield stronger outcomes for youth employment. Joint engagement of governments, the private sector, civil society and youth organizations improves programme design, relevance and sustainability.<sup>55</sup> Global and regional experiences are proving that public-private-youth partnerships are a promising approach.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AGENDAS:**

Aligning interventions with national agendas and development priorities ensures relevance, sustainability and ownership. It strengthens commitment from governments and national stakeholders, enhances coordination and increases the likelihood of long-term integration into public systems. Alignment also maximizes the impact of resources by ensuring that programmes contribute to broader national and global goals — such as poverty reduction, inclusive economic growth and quality education for all.

### **NEEDS-BASED PROGRAMMING:**

Tailoring programmes to beneficiaries' specific needs, supported by profiling, personalized follow-up, counselling and continuous monitoring, enhances effectiveness and relevance. Profiling and screening are particularly valuable for entrepreneurship and employability initiatives, helping match young people's skills, aspirations and opportunities.<sup>56</sup>

### **MIX AND MATCH:**

Comprehensive packages that address multiple barriers faced by young people tend to be more effective. Programmes that combine classroom training with internships or work experience, job search assistance, counselling and life skills training produce stronger outcomes. Similarly, entrepreneurship initiatives that integrate skills training with access to finance, mentoring and technical support yield better results. Programmes targeting marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic minorities and low-income youth, are most effective when they combine technical training with social support services, including counselling and mentorship.

### **DURATION:**

Longer training durations (more than four months) show stronger positive outcomes than shorter programmes.<sup>57</sup>

### **CERTIFICATION:**

For young people, especially first-time jobseekers, formal recognition of acquired skills is critical. Programmes that provide certificates or recognized qualifications upon completion lead to better employment outcomes, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, initiatives that lack formal certification often have limited long-term impact, as participants struggle to demonstrate their competencies to employers.<sup>59</sup>

### **LOCAL RELEVANCE:**

Programmes should be adapted to the local economic, cultural and social context. This includes aligning skills development with labour market needs, local industry priorities and the specific conditions of urban, rural and informal economies. Accounting for regional disparities ensures that interventions remain relevant and responsive to local realities.

### **GENDER RESPONSIVENESS:**

Programmes must be designed through a gender lens, addressing the specific barriers and inequalities young women face in the transition to work. This involves challenging discriminatory norms, promoting equal opportunities and providing targeted support to empower women in male-dominated fields. Gender-responsive programming also requires measures to reduce the negative impacts of these norms and to promote equity in outcomes.

### **LIFE-LONG LEARNING:**

Skills development is a continuous process that begins in early childhood and extends through adolescence and adulthood. Individuals must have multiple, flexible opportunities to learn and realize their potential throughout life. The strong correlation between the education levels of parents and the outcomes of their children is a strong indicator of the importance of life-long learning.

### **DIGITAL, GREEN AND ORANGE TRANSITION:**

Programmes should focus on sectors with growth potential that promote a sustainable, creative and tech-driven economy, while ensuring inclusivity and fairness in access to opportunities, particularly for marginalised groups, to promote a just transition.

### **SOCIAL PROTECTION:**

Integrated and comprehensive social protection systems are essential to support young people, particularly those facing vulnerabilities, in their transition from school to work. Strengthening systems that combine unemployment benefits, social insurance and active labour market policies helps ensure economic security and equitable access to opportunities, enabling young people to move into decent and productive work.

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS):**

Integrating MHPSS into education-to-work programmes is vital for the overall well-being and success of young people.<sup>60</sup> As they navigate unemployment, uncertainty and social pressures, MHPSS helps build resilience, reduce anxiety and strengthen coping mechanisms. By addressing mental health alongside skills development, programmes can equip youth with the emotional and psychological tools needed to sustain employment, pursue personal growth and contribute positively to their communities. Flexible training opportunities should also be provided to reach young women and men in remote or underserved areas.

### **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH:**

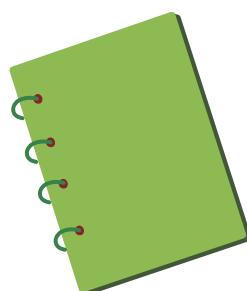
Raising awareness and providing access to information and tools that support young people's sexual and reproductive health is essential in education-to-work programmes. Initiatives should include community and school-based safe spaces, complemented by empowerment activities and engagement with families, communities and health professionals. These efforts enable adolescents, particularly girls, to make informed decisions, build life skills and protect their well-being.<sup>61</sup>

### **SYSTEMS APPROACH:**

Sustainability and scalability depend on strengthening the systems, processes and institutional capacities that support young people's transition to decent work. Embedding interventions within existing national frameworks and institutions enhances ownership, ensures continuity and allows successful approaches to reach a wider population over time.

### **EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING:**

The evidence base on effective education-to-work transition interventions remains limited. Incorporating results-based monitoring and planning for impact evaluations from the design stage is crucial to assess efficiency, effectiveness and long-term outcomes. Building this evidence will enable replication, adaptation and scaling up of proven good practices across the region.





## Annex 1: Action Plan to guide the development of national roadmaps

CoE, Generation Unlimited and Regional Office: proposed interventions and actions <sup>62</sup>	Relevant actors
<b>Communications and partnerships</b>	
Facilitate high level coordination and policy dialogue to promote a multi-stakeholder partnerships approach.	Government, private sector, youth
Encourage the establishment of cross-sectoral technical teams within UNICEF country offices, supported by clear business processes.	UNICEF internal
Promote and facilitate cross country learning and exchange of experiences.	UNICEF ROs, CO-to-CO, CoEs
Foster synergies and cross-border or subregional collaboration to design and implement joint programmes that strengthen the transition from education to work.	COs, country counterparts
Liaise and coordinate with other UN agencies (e.g., ILO, UNEP, UNGC, UN Women, IOM), as well as international and regional organizations (e.g., IDB, World Bank, Mercociudades, Cinterfor, Youth Green Pact), to build partnerships that advance the education-to-work agenda in the region.)	UN agencies, IOs, ROs and entities, CoEs
Identify and pursue financing opportunities from bilateral donors, private sector foundations and enterprises to support regional or multi-country programmes.	Private sector, Bilateral donors, Governments, Development Banks
<b>Technical assistance</b>	
Provide and facilitate access to technical expertise in the thematic area to support the design of national action plans, project proposals and related initiatives.	CoEs, GenU
Strengthen the capacities of country office teams and counterparts on school-to-work transition.	CoEs, GenU



Support country offices in conducting impact assessments of initiatives implemented in the region.	CoEs, GenU
Guidance on best practices to support impactful youth engagement.	GenU
Provide cross-functional HR support (e.g. examples of TORs, sitting on interview panels, etc.).	GenU
Provide direct support on building partnership proposals and Public-Private-Youth coalition-building.	ROs, GenU
Support in programme designing including adapting global programmes to CO contexts and supporting CO teams to design contextually relevant programmes.	CoEs, GenU
<b>Research, data &amp; advocacy</b>	
Engage actively in advocacy efforts for secondary education reform using generated data and analysis.	CoEs, RO, COs Academia, media
Strengthen capacities to collect relevant data and evidence to inform analysis.	CoEs, RO, CO, Academia, Stats departments, think tanks
Develop a business case (1-2 pages) highlighting the benefits of inclusive and equitable business practices that enable safe and decent transitions from education to meaningful work and life opportunities.	COs, with input from partners
Invest in visibility and outreach initiatives on UNICEF's engagement and role in advancing the education-to-work transition agenda.	COs, UNICEF and partners, social media, influencers.
Invest in knowledge management and information sharing, identifying and disseminating case studies and lessons learned from countries across the region.	CoEs, GenU, RO, CO
Support country offices in establishing nationally owned agendas on the education-to-work transition.	CoEs, GenU, RO, COs, national partners



Country offices: Proposed interventions and actions	Potential partners
<p><b>Proposed intervention 1. Provide technical assistance to support the establishment of a nationally owned and nationally driven agenda on the education-to-work transition.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct mapping of relevant actors.</li> <li>• Support the establishment of a national inter-institutional technical working group or committee.</li> <li>• Facilitate the convening of the working group, ensuring active participation from the private sector and youth representatives.</li> <li>• Support the development of clear Terms of Reference outlining the group's objectives, roles, responsibilities and expected results.</li> </ul>	<p>Labour/Employment, Education, social protection, social welfare, economic development, health</p>
<p><b>Proposed intervention 2. Develop a concept note and timeline for the formulation of a National Roadmap on the transition from education to decent work.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver orientation sessions on the education-to-work transition</li> <li>• Support the review of existing legislation and policies related to youth education, engagement, participation and employment.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance to develop an actionable concept note or Pre-Agenda with a preliminary timeline outlining the process for developing the National Roadmap on education to decent work transition.</li> </ul>	<p>Labour/ employment, education, social protection, social welfare, economic development, health</p>
<p><b>Proposed intervention 3. Seek government buy in and commitment</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate technical working groups to develop national plans and multi-sectoral engagement</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance and support to obtain high level political endorsement.</li> </ul>	<p>Country Ministry Technical groups engaged in Education, Social Policy and Youth</p>



### Proposed intervention 4: Develop a National Roadmap to strengthen the transition from education to decent work.

Support the technical working groups to develop the National Roadmaps on improving the education to work transition. For example:

- Help convene the meetings
- Coordinate the multiple stakeholders participating in the process
- Ensure youth are represented and actively engaged in the process
- Engage with chambers of commerce, business associations, industry groups and other employer organizations to secure active private sector participation, including from sector-specific MSMEs.
- Provide technical input to guide the development of the roadmap outline.
- Offer expertise, data, analysis and tools to support the drafting process.
- Provide insights and evidence from global initiatives, country experiences and lessons learned (i.e. education reform in Argentina, youth employment pact in Brazil, compensation funds in Colombia, and labour market integration of migrants in Mexico.)
- Conduct national and local assessments to identify green, creative and digital solutions on both the demand and supply sides (e.g., companies, service providers, public services).
- Undertake sector-specific studies (e.g., circular economy) to identify innovative pathways for youth entrepreneurship and self-employment.
- Map existing training and skills development opportunities (public and private) and support the creation of platforms to widely disseminate this information among adolescents and young people (through schools, employment offices, youth organizations, etc.).

UNICEF, Generation Unlimited and Country Ministry Technical groups engaged in Education, Social Policy and Youth

### Proposed intervention 5: Communicate and engage stakeholders

- Develop a clear communication strategy.
- Keep stakeholders, communities and other key actors informed throughout the process.
- Leverage media, social influencers and youth organizations to amplify messages and foster engagement.

Media, social influencers, NGOs

### Proposed intervention 6: Incorporate feedback and ensure flexibility

- Support national counterparts in establishing feedback mechanisms.
- Collect input from stakeholders, especially youth.
- Ensure the roadmap remains dynamic and responsive by adapting it to evolving needs.

Adolescents, young people, youth organizations



### Proposed intervention 7: Monitoring and evaluation

- Support national counterparts in establishing mechanisms for tracking progress and evaluating outcomes, including key performance indicators (KPIs).

Academia, statistical offices, researchers, media, social media



## Annex 2: Promising strategies and programmes supporting the school-to-work transition

This annex presents a compilation of promising and innovative interventions aligned with the three pillars of UNICEF’s strategy to support the school-to-work transition in LAC. It provides an overview of each initiative and includes links to sources where they are explored in greater depth. The objective is not to deliver a comprehensive analysis but to offer contextual information that can inspire country offices and guide them toward additional resources for more detailed insights.



### 1. Innovative and interesting initiatives aligned with Pillar 1: Promoting a quality, accessible, flexible, relevant, inclusive and equitable student-centred secondary education system

[Giga](#) is an initiative launched by UNICEF and ITU in to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information and opportunities. Working in collaboration with corporate and non-profit partners, Giga maps schools’ connectivity, develops sustainable financing models, builds digital infrastructure and empowers students to access high-quality digital learning resources. In [Honduras](#) and [El Salvador](#), the initiative is connecting schools in remote areas to reliable internet services, while in the **Eastern Caribbean countries**, it supports governments in enhancing the quality and speed of existing connections. By expanding digital access, Giga enables adolescents and young people to explore new opportunities, make informed choices and participate fully in the digital world.

UNICEF in LAC is actively implementing initiatives to strengthen girls’ [digital and STEM skills](#) and help them prepare for careers in non-traditional fields. In [Bolivia](#), girls from urban and rural areas are gaining competencies in robotics and computer science. In [Brazil](#), programmes challenge gender stereotypes by promoting body confidence and self-esteem. In [Guatemala](#), UNICEF supports social entrepreneurship among Indigenous adolescent girls and young women from rural communities, while in [Peru](#), training opportunities help girls and adolescents develop programming and web development skills. Together, these initiatives empower girls with knowledge, confidence and tools to shape their futures in a rapidly changing world.



The [UNICEF Learning Passport](#) is a flexible and adaptable virtual education platform designed to mitigate learning losses caused by school closures. One of its key features is its ability to function both online and offline, enabling greater access to learners in remote areas. In the region, this initiative was initially implemented in [Costa Rica](#), [Honduras](#), [Jamaica](#) and [Mexico](#). Other countries in the region are now adapting this strategy to include foundational skills and life skills in secondary school learning programmes.

The [Passport to Earning](#) is on a mission to prepare young people globally for a digitally-powered and rapidly changing world of work. This is done by providing free, market-relevant, certifiable skills, which position young people for advanced skilling and earning opportunities. In its first three years of implementation, P2E has leveraged technology; programmatic approaches; partnerships with governments, private sector, and youth; and learnings from the field to skill young people at scale. P2E is currently being implemented in Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Rwanda.

The [Empresarios por la Educación Foundation](#) (Entrepreneurs for Education) is an independent **Colombian** think tank founded in 2002 by business leaders committed to improving education quality. It generates evidence, promotes public policy reforms and leads advocacy efforts to raise national education standards. Its work focuses on teacher and school leadership development, strengthening school management and promoting bilingualism through tailored initiatives. The foundation also supports inclusive learning environments, such as the *Ola Escolar* project, and contributes to the development of Colombia's National Policy Framework for Inclusive Education. Through strategic partnerships with government and the private sector, it drives social and business mobilization to advance equitable and high-quality education.

In **Jamaica**, UNICEF actively works to support the rights of children and young people with disabilities. As part of this work, it collaborated with the government to adapt learning programmes

to better serve students with learning difficulties and strengthen support for the transition of young people with disabilities into productive work. [A Training Manual and Toolkit](#) was developed and adopted by the Ministry to prepare youth with disabilities for meaningful employment and active social participation.

To promote a multiple flexible pathway approach to learning, [UNICEF Argentina](#) supports the PLaNEA programme, which aims to transform secondary school and better equip adolescents for life and work. An assessment of the initiative revealed positive perceptions among school staff, parents and students regarding the new model. Moreover, the cost of implementation was found to be only 5 percent higher than that of a traditional secondary school. The initiative presents an opportunity to further strengthen collaboration with the private sector to enhance learning programmes and expand work-based learning opportunities for students.

Since 2018, UNICEF **Peru** has implemented the [Secondary Education as a Life Experience](#) model of Comprehensive Adolescent Development in 56 schools, supporting adolescents in vulnerable communities to reach their full potential. The initiative promotes emotional and physical well-being, cultural identity and meaningful learning while fostering democratic practices, healthy lifestyles and active participation. Its two main strategies focus on strengthening the capacities of educational actors and providing comprehensive school support. Between 2018 and 2020, schools in Loreto, Ucayali and Lima recorded significant progress, including higher enrolment, lower repetition and dropout rates, increased participation of girls and enhanced adolescent-led initiatives. The model also strengthened democratic engagement, parental involvement and the development of school-based entrepreneurship projects.

The Tutorial Learning System (SAT) in [Honduras](#) is a flexible education programme that equips adolescents and young people in remote rural areas with skills for life and work. Its curriculum combines subjects such as communication, mathematics, agricultural science, technology and community service to promote critical thinking, personal growth and sustainable community development.

By completing secondary education through this system, students not only earn academic qualifications but also gain entrepreneurial skills in sustainable agriculture, contributing to local economic resilience. A quasi-experimental evaluation in Honduras showed that SAT students achieved 45 per cent higher test scores at 10 per cent lower costs compared to traditional rural schools.<sup>63</sup> The programme's success is largely attributed to well-aligned teacher training and strong NGO-government collaboration, although scaling remains constrained by financial and systemic barriers.

In **Colombia**, the alternative lower-secondary education model for rural adolescents, inspired by the *Escuela Nueva* approach, promotes active, participatory and collaborative learning. It fosters coexistence, critical thinking and lifelong learning skills while linking educational content to rural livelihoods to better prepare students for productive futures. Evidence from a 2001 evaluation<sup>64</sup> showed that adolescents enrolled in *Escuela Nueva* schools outperformed their peers in mathematics, language and democratic values compared to those in traditional schools.

The UPSHIFT approach provides a dynamic pathway for secondary education reform by integrating project-based, skills-oriented modules that promote experiential and peer-to-peer learning. It helps students develop essential life skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, aligning with curricula designed to prepare youth for both immediate employability and long-term personal growth. UPSHIFT is particularly effective in reaching out-of-school adolescents and those in non-formal education, offering accessible opportunities to gain practical skills and engage in community innovation projects. By including UPSHIFT within both formal and non-formal education systems, UNICEF promotes a more inclusive model that supports the most marginalized young people. The recent UNICEF report on [Scaling UPSHIFT into Education systems](#) offers practical guidance for country offices, drawing on six case studies that capture best practices, lessons learned and evidence from successful implementation experiences.

[The Media Center](#) is an alternative secondary education model developed in Amazonas, **Brazil**, to reduce urban-rural disparities in access to education. It uses videoconferencing technology to deliver live lessons from Manaus to more than 1,000 classrooms in remote riverside communities, enabling two-way interaction between teachers and students. The programme has led to notable improvements in learning outcomes, with secondary school progression rates rising by 16 per cent and dropout rates falling by nearly half between 2008 and 2011.<sup>65</sup>

[Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow](#) is a global initiative designed to strengthen student interest in STEM by encouraging young people to tackle local challenges through problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity. Active in 33 countries and reaching nearly 2 million students, the programme fosters collaboration among students, teachers and school leaders to design innovative community solutions using Design Thinking. Participants receive mentoring from Samsung, social organisations and government partners. Since 2014, Solve for Tomorrow has expanded to 20 countries in Latin America, involving over 312,000 participants, advancing gender inclusion in STEM and supporting educators through a platform for Project-Based Learning, resource sharing and regional knowledge exchange.

Effective career guidance is essential for helping young people navigate choices about further education, training and work. [Denmark's eGuidance](#) system is designed to support students and adults with career management and skills development through a national platform offering comprehensive labour market information. The service is particularly popular with young people, who often use its online chat feature for career advice and guidance.<sup>66</sup>

In **Albania**, UNICEF helped develop career guidance guidelines, establish career centres and train school staff through the *Career Development Skills* package. These centres identify youth at risk of dropping out<sup>67</sup> through an [Early Warning System](#) and provide learning and life skills opportunities, with a focus on



empowering girls and encouraging enrolment in non-traditional VET programmes such as coding. Similarly, in **Morocco**, USAID's [One Stop Careers Shop](#) initiative is designed to support young people's transition from education to employment. It connects young people with labour market stakeholders, offering insights on employment trends and skill demands. The centres strengthen youth employability and serve as a key access point for information, mentorship and job opportunities.

Promoting a safe and healthy learning environment, [UNICEF Jamaica helps provide students](#) with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) through guidance counsellors assigned to schools. [You Matter](#) is another initiative, a counselling platform providing 24 hours mental health and psychosocial aid through chatline messaging. Building on its success, the initiative is replicated in **Trinidad and Tobago** with plans to expand also in the Eastern Caribbean states.

Launched in July 2020, [Yoma](#) (Youth Marketplace) is a digital marketplace where youth can build their futures by actively engaging in social impact tasks as well as learning to earning opportunities. Personal growth is incentivized with digital tokens that can be swapped for digital services or physical goods. And young people's successes are recorded on a verifiable digital CV, for sharing with potential employers. Yoma seeks to respond to the unemployment and well-being crisis by opening up opportunities to all young people – not just the better off. The platform offers concrete pathways from learning to earning that build young people's skills and connect them to livelihoods. Pathways are tailored to the individual and align opportunities with the young person's goals and potential as well as market demands.





## 2. Innovative and interesting initiatives aligned with Pillar 2: Strengthening business sector engagement to expand opportunities for young people's access to decent work and entrepreneurship

### Latin America and the Caribbean

[Oportunidades Únicas](#) (Unique Opportunities) is an initiative by UNICEF **Argentina** that fosters collaboration between adolescents and the private sector to promote skills development for adult life, with a strong focus on equity and gender perspectives.

The initiative establishes a collaborative platform to address the challenges of acquiring life skills and navigating the school-to-work transition. The platform brings together more than 40 training opportunities offered by ten leading companies, accessible through a single online portal. These programmes provide access to internships, work experiences and certified courses in areas such as digital and financial literacy, communication and teamwork. Part of the broader Generation Unlimited alliance, the initiative seeks to ensure that adolescents gain the critical skills needed to meet the demands of the 21st century.

UNICEF partnered with the telecommunications company Tigo in **Nicaragua** to strengthen digital skills, with a particular focus on girls, adolescents and young women.

Through the [Gamers in Action](#) programme, the partnership significantly increased female participation in digital programming initiatives, from 25 per cent to 40 per cent. More than 5,500 children and adolescents were trained on the safe use of the internet and on topics related to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially education and climate action, through joint activities led by UNICEF. The collaboration also promoted mental health, well-being and the responsible use of social networks among adolescents and young people.

UNICEF **Peru** partnered with Credicorp, one of the country's largest financial holdings, to support the [Connected to Learn](#) project, which promotes technology-driven pedagogical innovation in classrooms across urban and rural areas. Each classroom is equipped with modern technology and furniture for both teachers and students, creating more engaging and interactive learning environments. The partnership focuses on expanding access to education and strengthening digital skills in vulnerable communities. In its first year, the project improved learning outcomes for 14,652 students, representing 25 per cent of its overall target.

[One Million Opportunities \(1MiO\)](#) in **Brazil** is a collaborative Public-Private-Youth Partnership that aims to provide vulnerable adolescents and young people with access to decent work, income, and skills development. Co-designed by multiple partners, the initiative had created 512.870 opportunities for employment, business practices and skill development by 2023. Effective coordination among diverse stakeholders has been both a challenge and a key success factor. Strong ownership, reflected in the commitment of private and public institutions and youth organizations, has driven genuine collaboration to expand learning and employment pathways. Transforming business practices and organizational cultures is demanding, yet essential for a successful school-to-work transition.

Through this partnership, companies signing the 1MiO Term of Commitment actively contribute by offering training and employment opportunities to youth in vulnerable situations. In partnership with Accenture and Microsoft, UNICEF introduced the [Passport to Earning](#) platform, which aims to certify the skills of young people. This initiative provides access to over 40 courses focused on transferable, digital, entrepreneurial and job market-specific skills. The data gathered by the businesses partnering in the initiative can be instrumental for scaling and replicating the initiative across Brazil and potentially beyond.

Through its 1MiO initiative, UNICEF **Brazil** developed the [Guide on Prevention and Response to Violence Against Children, Adolescents and Youth: What Does the Private Sector Need to Know?](#) The guide offers business professionals clear information on types of violence, prevention measures and appropriate response protocols. This resource exemplifies how tools can help companies create safe, equitable and inclusive workplaces, attract young talent and support youth, particularly those in vulnerable situations, in making a just transition from education to employment while enhancing productivity and corporate responsibility.

[Jóvenes con Rumbo](#) (Young People with Direction) in **Mexico** supports migrant youth aged 15 and above who are out of school and at risk of social exclusion, helping them transition into formal employment. The programme combines digital, life and foundational skills training with job-specific courses delivered through public workforce agencies and includes mentorship and personalized transition-to-work plans. Implemented by NGOs in partnership with public institutions, the initiative achieved a 40 per cent job placement rate, with stronger results in northern states where employment opportunities are greater.

Its success underscores the value of multi-sectoral collaboration, tailored training and mentoring in improving employability among vulnerable youth. Although the implementation phase ended, the approach was adopted by Mexico's protection agency for young migrants, showing its adaptability and long-term relevance beyond the education and labour sectors.

[Centennials Emprende](#) (Entrepreneurship for Centennials), an initiative of Comfandi **Colombia**, is an entrepreneurship model for children and young people built around four learning pillars: learning to be, learning to coexist, learning to learn and learning to do. Through these pillars, the programme strengthens entrepreneurial culture and mindset across Comfandi's schools, particularly in grades 10 and 11. Since 2021, over 280 teachers have been trained in entrepreneurship and innovation methodologies, improving students' entrepreneurial competencies. Around one third of students have participated in events fostering innovation and problem-solving. Key to its success are the integration of entrepreneurship into education, strong links with the productive sector and the promotion of a school-wide entrepreneurial culture, demonstrating the potential of [Family compensation funds](#) as partners in improving youth life and work prospects in Colombia.

[Vidas en Trayectoria](#) (Pathways for Life) in **Colombia** supports students throughout their education and helps adolescents transition to higher education or the workforce.

The [strategy](#) strengthens basic, socio-emotional and employability skills while offering pathways to certification and employment. Key components include self-awareness and career exploration, literacy and technical training in areas such as audio production and creative expression and micro-certification programmes developed with academia and platforms like [Coursera](#), which may count toward higher education credits. The private sector helps identify certification needs and provides mentorship, company visits and entrepreneurship opportunities. This holistic model equips young people with the skills, credentials and networks needed for successful education-to-work transitions.

[Vocational Training](#) in **Uruguay** is a collaboration between UNICEF and [CECONEU](#), a business association in the tire industry with its own training centre. The initiative provides vocational training for adolescents serving custodial sentences at INISA (National Institute of Adolescent Social Inclusion) and more recently for youth supported by INAU (Institute of Children and Adolescents of Uruguay). Participants receive technical training and work placements with member companies, often their first experience of formal employment, with opportunities for hiring or inclusion in the association's job pool. Beyond professional skills, the programme helps young people build confidence, discipline and life competencies that support their reintegration and future prospects.

The World Bank Group (WBG) supports countries across Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening cognitive, socio-emotional and technical skills to enable smoother [school-to-work transitions, particularly for young women](#). Its programmes promote gender-equitable access to quality training and employment, aiming to reduce unemployment and improve living standards. In **Argentina**, the Youth Employment Support Project improved labour market access for vulnerable young women through inclusive hiring practices and childcare and transportation support. In the **Dominican Republic**, the Integrated Social Protection and Promotion Project expanded human capital via technical, vocational and life skills training, internships and apprenticeships.

In **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, TVET initiatives combined with childcare stipends helped women continue their education, while in **Saint Lucia**, the Human Capital Resilience Project encouraged women's participation in traditionally male-dominated fields by addressing key barriers such as childcare costs.

Private sector-supported initiatives are increasingly harnessing young people's ideas to advance green skills and promote sustainable school-to-work transitions through innovation. Examples include the [Green Shark Tank competition](#), (UNICEF and UNDP) and the [Green Skills Innovation Challenge](#) (Ashoka and HSBC), which provide youth with funding, mentorship and technical support to develop and scale green solutions.

## Global

In **Africa**, the [BeGreen initiative](#), implemented by Generation Unlimited, IKEA Foundation and the Tony Elumelu Foundation, offers young entrepreneurs seed capital, business training, peer mentoring and access to networks and virtual support. Additionally, UNICEF, ILO and UNEP have joined forces under the [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#), uniting employers, youth and governments to promote green education, employment, entrepreneurship and youth engagement.

In Kenya, the [Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture & Nutrition \(EKYAN\)](#) programme is equipping Kenyan youth, especially young women, with agribusiness skills and digital tools. By the end of 2025, EKYAN will have incubated 512 agripreneurs in 64 Centers of Excellence and 250+ schools, providing training and extension services to more than 50,000 smallholder farmers across three counties.

UNICEF **Jordan** implements the [Azem programme](#) under the From Learning to Earning initiative, providing young jobseekers with skills training, mentorship and on-the-job experience. The programme supports youth, especially women and other vulnerable groups, in transitioning into the workforce through foundational training in employability skills such as communication, teamwork and time management.

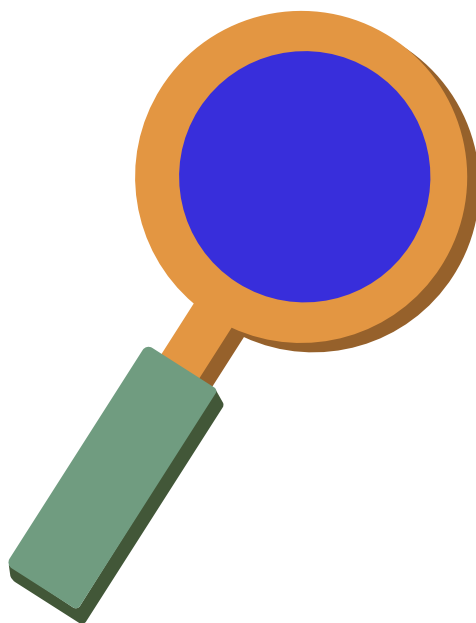


Participants then receive three months of on-the-job training during their first year of private sector employment, with ongoing UNICEF support to strengthen technical skills. Mentorship and transportation stipends further ease the transition. By partnering with the private sector, Azem equips young people with market-relevant skills and improves their access to employment, offering a holistic model to address youth unemployment. Through the broader Earning to Learning approach, UNICEF and international partners also promote education, employment and protection in contexts of forced displacement, leveraging [digital technology](#) for greater impact.

In **Egypt**, UNICEF signed agreements with private sector companies under the [Shabab Ballad](#) initiative, implemented within the Generation Unlimited framework. The initiative connects high school education and training with the labour market and entrepreneurship by offering skills development, career guidance and internship or work placement opportunities.

These partnerships aim to strengthen adolescents' and young people's life and job-specific skills. For example, leading insurance companies have committed to providing training programmes that build life skills, employability, entrepreneurship, financial literacy and digital competencies, along with career guidance to support young people in shaping their professional paths.

[Yuwaah \(India\)](#): By fostering Public-Private-Youth Partnerships, YuWaah is driving innovative solutions that blend physical and digital solutions, creating pathways for learning to earning transition and encouraging active citizenship and youth-led climate action. To date, Yuwaah has delivered significant results. For example, Yuwaah has supported more than 15 million young people with skills to embark on aspirational economic pathways by accessing job support and opportunities for work and apprenticeships. More than 58 million young people have been empowered to become active changemakers by leading and participating in social impact opportunities





© UNICEF Colombia/2024/Lopez

### 3. Innovative and interesting initiatives and resources aligned with Pillar 3: Empowering adolescents and youth as agents of change and active participants in social transformation

In Argentina, UNICEF supports the government in engaging adolescents in participatory budgeting, including budget monitoring and analysis. Working with the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers and the Argentinian Network of Participatory Budgets, the initiative has increased adolescent visibility and involvement in decision-making. Training manuals and methodologies were developed for government officials and adolescents from over 38 municipalities have taken part through forums, dialogues and digital tools. Continuous budget monitoring shows higher public investment in children. Building on this success, the initiative evolved into the *Municipio Unido por la Niñez y la Adolescencia* (Municipalities Together for Children and Adolescents, [MUNA](#)) programme, which partners with municipalities to prioritize children's rights through improved social protection, health, safety and local governance.

Strategic advocacy and collaboration between civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Government of **Nepal** have strengthened support for community- and school-based child clubs, while promoting greater adolescent engagement in local governance structures such as health and school management committees and citizen forums. Through the [Child-Friendly Local Governance strategy](#), adolescent participation has been formally integrated into local

planning processes via consultations known as *bal bhela*. These forums employ creative tools, such as risk mapping and visioning exercises, to capture the perspectives of adolescents (typically aged 12–18) on community priorities, ensuring their voices shape local plans and budgets. In Sunwal municipality, for instance, adolescent input directly influenced the inclusion of initiatives such as child rights training, the construction of girl-friendly school toilets, and awareness campaigns against child marriage and child labour.

FunDoo is a chat-based learning tool designed to empower and equip young people with critical 21st-century skills. **UNICEF Jamaica** is among the countries using [FunDoo](#) to support youth aged 14–24 with information on professional careers, health, mental health, climate change and gender-based violence. The initiative is as part of U-Report Jamaica's comprehensive youth services, which also include U-Matter, a mental health chatline and Yute Chatz, a platform providing information on sexual and reproductive health. FunDoo enjoys strong support from government and private sector partners and offers free nationwide access to its training programmes; young people can start simply by texting "FunDoo" to the U-Report Jamaica WhatsApp number.

Focused on skill development through short, interactive activities that deliver specific learning outcomes, FunDoo particularly targets adolescents not currently in education, employment or training. The initiative could be further strengthened by introducing a tracking system to assess its impact on participants' continued education and employability.

[ImaGen Ventures](#) is a youth-led initiative that develops entrepreneurial and innovation skills for social impact through non-formal education, mentorship and access to funding. Co-created and co-led by young people, it engages marginalized youth using digital tools and human-centred design, helping them build sustainable livelihoods and community-driven solutions. The programme connects young entrepreneurs with incubation and acceleration opportunities through partnerships with global accelerators, ensuring the scalability of promising ventures. Its flexible design allows adaptation to each country's priorities and resources. In **Mexico**, UNICEF's [imaGen Ventures programme partnered with Climatón](#), an initiative led by the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), to support climate-focused entrepreneurship. The *Ovejas* Ecofriendly project—one of the 2024 global imaGen Ventures winners—illustrates this approach, promoting sustainable livestock production and reduced methane emissions. Other examples of initiatives using this approach are found in [Egypt](#), [Bangladesh](#) or [North Macedonia](#).

[UPSHIFT](#), first launched in Kosovo, empowers disadvantaged youth to design and implement solutions to community challenges. Through social innovation training, mentorship and seed funding, it builds critical skills such as problem-solving, teamwork and resilience, enhancing both employability and civic engagement. The approach combines human-centred design with experiential learning, enabling youth to address real issues while competing for funding to scale their ideas. Its open-source toolkits make it adaptable across contexts and partners. Detailed [facilitation guides and toolkits](#) are open source and available for UNICEF and partners wishing to adapt and apply the approach.

In LAC, UPSHIFT has been implemented in **Bolivia**, **Brazil**, [Guatemala](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Paraguay](#) and **Uruguay**, engaging adolescents through non-formal education while also being integrated into schools to expand reach and sustainability.

The [Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation](#) is being implemented in Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama. A comprehensive toolkit to start or strengthen programmes for adolescents skills development, in humanitarian and development contexts through activities that support their emotional and social wellbeing, build their skills and engage them in positive change. In, for example, a nation wide network of youth had access to skills development in areas such as human rights, peaceful coexistence, participation and leadership in their local communities.

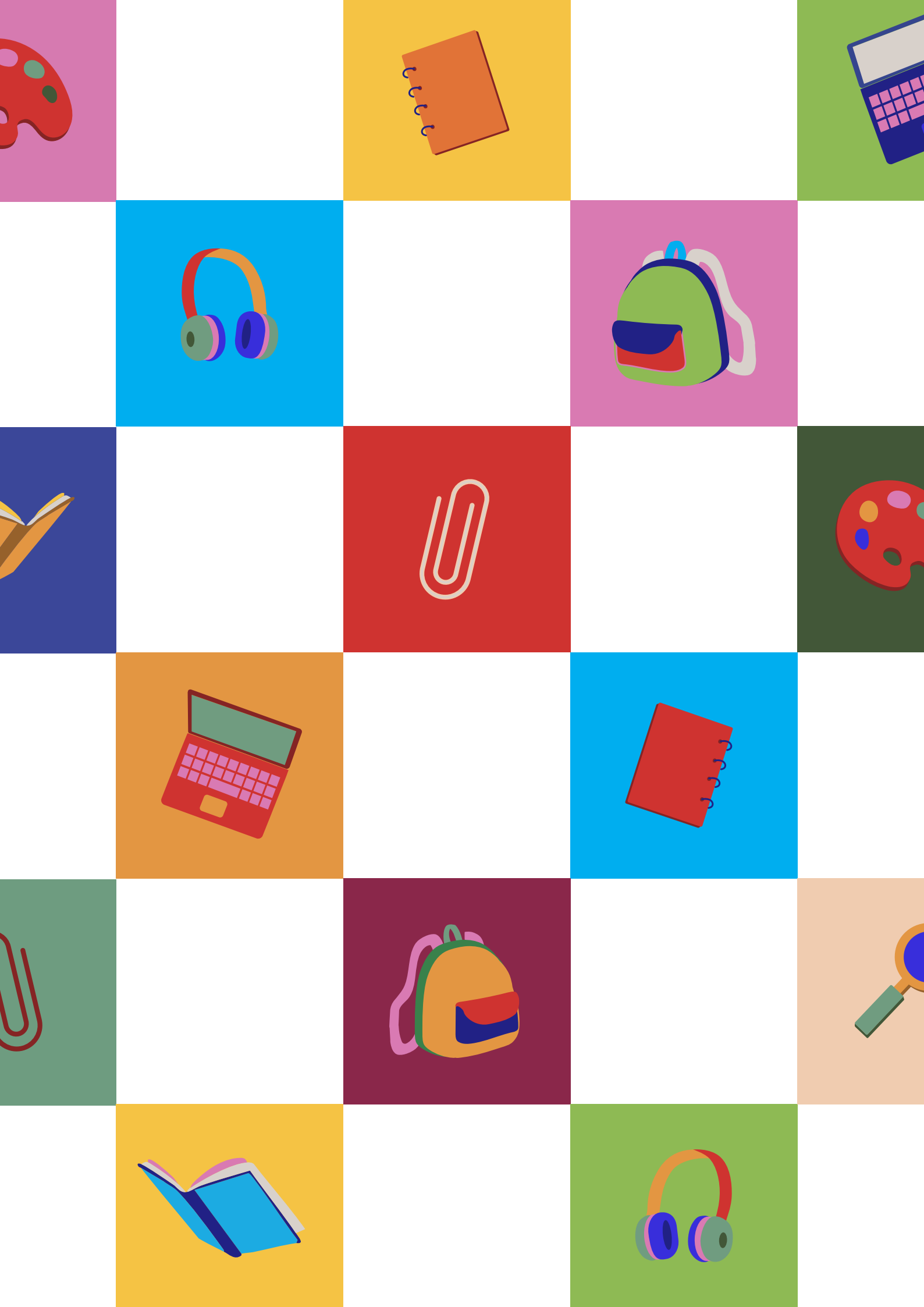
Building on the UNICEF Global Framework on Transferable Skills, [Plan 12 – Learn to Transform](#) is a youth-led initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean that strengthens adolescents' participation and equips them with the skills to become agents of change in their communities. The programme offers an online course guiding adolescents to design social impact projects, individually or in collaboration with peers across the region. It includes downloadable materials for offline learning, a facilitator's guide promoting project-based and student-centred learning and guided activities that build transferable skills and foster youth agency. The initiative also features a 12-episode podcast series, each led by young people and focused on a specific key skill.

U-Report is one of UNICEF's key platforms for amplifying young people's voices through surveys that generate evidence and insights on the issues that matter most to them. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Office used [U-Report to explore adolescents' and young people's views](#) on the skills they consider essential to achieving their life goals. Countries in the region have applied these findings to inform policies and reforms; for example, survey results on young people's opinions about education and desired improvements contributed to the [National Reform of Education Report](#) in **Jamaica**.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) in [Syria](#), **Jordan** and **Lebanon** engaged vulnerable adolescents, including refugees and displaced youth, as active researchers on issues affecting their communities. Supported by trained mentors from UN and NGO partners, the adolescents conducted interviews, led focus groups and collected data using digital tools. They analysed their findings with UNICEF and later received advocacy training to present results to stakeholders at different levels. This process not only built their research and leadership skills but also generated valuable evidence that informed more responsive and effective programming.

UNICEF's Youth-led Action Initiative empowers young changemakers to transform their lives and communities through training, mentoring, financing and peer networks. Implemented with country offices and partners, it builds long-term local support systems and adapts to community contexts. Using a peer-to-peer model, Champion Trainers return to their communities to train others through the Youth Action Guide, expanding reach to underserved areas. The initiative also promotes mental well-being using UNICEF/WHO's Helping Adolescents In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the approach is showing strong results, with inspiring experiences emerging from [Eastern Caribbean](#) countries.







## End Notes

- 1)** The focus on young people aged 15 to 24 is informed by research on adolescent brain development and the timing of their social role transitions, in particular, their transition to work. United Nations Children's Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 2)** Throughout this document, the terms "school-to-work transition" and "education-to-work transition" are used interchangeably, in a broad sense, to refer to pathways from learning in formal schooling and non-formal education/training into productive and decent work and sustainable livelihoods.
- 3)** United Nations Children's Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 4)** United Nations Children's Fund, Transitions from School to Work, UNICEF, New York, 2019. <<https://www.unicef.org/media/60366/file/Transitions-from-school-to-work-2019.pdf>>
- 5)** Brewer, Laura. Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2013. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_213452.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_213452.pdf)>
- 6)** Brewer, Laura. Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2013. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_213452.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_213452.pdf)>
- 7)** United Nations Children's Fund, 'Fundamental skills development: The steppingstones for a lifetime of learning and development', <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/fundamental-skills-development>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 8)** United Nations Children's Fund, 'Digital literacy for children: 10 things you need to know', <<https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/documents/digital-literacy-children-10-things-you-need-know>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 9)** United Nations Children's Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 10)** United Nations Children's Fund, 'Education in Latin America and the Caribbean at a crossroads', <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/education-latin-america-and-caribbean-crossroads>> accessed November 6, 2025.
- 11)** United Nations Children's Fund, 'Education in Latin America and the Caribbean at a crossroads', <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/education-latin-america-and-caribbean-crossroads>>, accessed November 6, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/education-latin-america-and-caribbean-crossroads>



- 12)** United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Access to quality and inclusive secondary education’, <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/access-quality-and-inclusive-secondary-education>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 13)** Learning poverty is defined as being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10. United Nations Children’s Fund, Shape the Future of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerate Foundational Learning. An investment opportunity for the public and private sectors. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama, August 2023. <[https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28\\_08\\_23\\_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28_08_23_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf)>
- 14)** United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Snapshot: Latin America and the Caribbean’ <<https://www.unicef.org/media/118316/file/Snapshot%20:%20Latin%20America%20and%20the%20Caribbean.pdf>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 15)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Shape the Future of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerate Foundational Learning. An investment opportunity for the public and private sectors. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama, August 2023. <[https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28\\_08\\_23\\_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28_08_23_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf)>
- 16)** Grupo de trabajo sobre juventud de la Plataforma de Colaboración Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, Segunda Encuesta de las Naciones Unidas sobre Juventudes de América Latina y el Caribe dentro del Contexto de la Pandemia del COVID-19: informe de resultados, Santiago de Chile, Naciones Unidas, 2022. <<https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6e86e9db-5728-4add-b622-c592e58deb3d/content>>
- 17)** Acevedo, Ivonne; Fernández, Raquel; Pagés, Carmen; Székely, Miguel. Education Inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Inter-American Development Bank, 2023. <<https://publications.iadb.org/en/education-inequalities-latin-america-and-caribbean>>
- 18)** United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Education is vital to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, Education data’, <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 19)** United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Education is vital to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, Education data’, <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 20)** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Gender equality and women’s and girls’ autonomy in the digital era: contributions of education and digital transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, Santiago de Chile, 2023. <<https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/417df610-b112-4254-a69f-d6282b3b1f2f/content>>
- 21)** International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024. Decent work, brighter futures, ILO, Geneva, 2024. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET\\_2024\\_EN\\_web4.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET_2024_EN_web4.pdf)>
- 22)** International Labour Organization, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024, ILO, Geneva, 2024. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmstp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40inst/documents/publication/wcms\\_908142.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmstp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40inst/documents/publication/wcms_908142.pdf)>
- 23)** Organización Internacional del Trabajo- Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, Panorama laboral 2024, OIT, Ginebra, 2025. <<https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/OIT-PANORAMA-LABORAL-2024.pdf>>.



- 24)** International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024. Decent work, brighter futures, ILO, Geneva, 2024. < [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET\\_2024\\_EN\\_web4.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET_2024_EN_web4.pdf)>
- 25)** Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) refers to the share of young people who are not engaged in any form of employment, formal education, or training activities. This includes (i) individuals who are not participating in education or training and are available and looking for work, as well as (ii) individuals who are not participating in education or training and are inactive (i.e., not available nor looking for work). The rate does not include unemployed students, employed students or inactive students (i.e., not available nor looking for work). Young people in education include those attending part-time or full-time education but exclude those in non-formal education and in very short educational activities. International Labour Organization, What does NEETs mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted? ILO, Geneva, 2015 <<https://www.ilo.org/media/443671/download>>
- 26)** World Bank, World Development Indicators. <<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators/Series/SL.UEM.NEET.ZS#>> Retrieved on November 6, 2025.
- 27)** Mehran, Farhad, Can We Measure the School-to-work Transition of Young Persons with Labour Force Surveys? A Feasibility Study, Work4Youth Technical Brief No.8, ILO, Geneva, 2016.
- 28)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>.
- 29) Maloney, William, et.al, Competition: The Missing Ingredient for Growth? Latin America and the Caribbean Economic Review April 2024, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2024. <[https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/3b61afbc-d799-4d78-8422-6d3c7934f832?\\_gl=1\\*135uabg\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTUyNzA1NDI1OS4xNzIzMTMyODc2](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/3b61afbc-d799-4d78-8422-6d3c7934f832?_gl=1*135uabg*_gcl_au*MTUyNzA1NDI1OS4xNzIzMTMyODc2)>
- 30)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Reimagine skills development: Voices of adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama 2022. <[https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2022-12/20221223\\_Ureport-skills.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2022-12/20221223_Ureport-skills.pdf)>
- 31)** United Nations Children’s Fund, International Seminar on innovative policies to improve school to work transition. Brasilia, Brazil. 2024
- 32)** Junior Achievement Américas, ManpowerGroup, Estudio Los jóvenes y el trabajo en América Latina. Desafíos y oportunidades 2024. <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67ce3b77cd1b8029b586e4a4/t/68374bc214e2e02572f562cb/1748454345294/alento+joven+y+empresas.+Desafi%CC%81os+y+oportunidades.pdf>>
- 33)** International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022. Investing in transforming futures for young people, ILO, Geneva, 2022. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_853321.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_853321.pdf)>
- 34)** Vantiva, ‘Digital Transformation in Latin America : 5 trends to know’, <https://www.vantiva.com/resources/digital-transformation-in-latin-america-5-trends-to-know/>, accessed November 6, 2025
- 35)** Garganta, Santiago; Gmyrek, Pawel; Winkler, Hernan. Buffer or Bottleneck ? Employment Exposure to Generative AI and the Digital Divide in Latin America (English). Policy Research working paper; Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group, 2024 < [https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099826507262419608/idu197096bf316be814a251b452145b5f0fd5aca?\\_gl=1\\*185brtp\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTQ2MTc3MDYzNS4xNzIzMTMyODU1](https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099826507262419608/idu197096bf316be814a251b452145b5f0fd5aca?_gl=1*185brtp*_gcl_au*MTQ2MTc3MDYzNS4xNzIzMTMyODU1)>



- 36)** World Economic Forum. The Future of Jobs Report 2023. Geneva, 2023. <<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/>>
- 37)** Inter-American Development Bank. ‘La economía naranja, a la vanguardia de la recuperación económica’ <https://blogs.iadb.org/trabajo/es/economia-naranja-recuperacion-economica/>, retrieved November 6, 2025.
- 38)** World Economic Forum. The Future of Jobs Report 2023. Geneva, 2023. <<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/>>
- 39)** Junior Achievement Américas, ManpowerGroup, Estudio Los jóvenes y el trabajo en América Latina. Desafíos y oportunidades 2024. <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67ce3b77cd1b8029b586e4a4t/68374bc214e2e02572f562cb/1748454345294/Talento+joven+y+empresas.+Desafi%CC%81os+y+oportunidades.pdf>>
- 40)**
- 41)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 42)** This report contains additional information on the apprenticeship programmes in Chile, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico and Colombia. Concha, Ximena, Velásquez Mario. Buenas prácticas empresariales en la gestión del aprendizaje de Calidad en América Latina. Herramientas Eurosocial No. 112. Madrid, 2022. <[https://www.oitcinterfor.org/sites/default/files/file\\_publicacion/BP\\_empresariales\\_AC\\_LAC.pdf](https://www.oitcinterfor.org/sites/default/files/file_publicacion/BP_empresariales_AC_LAC.pdf)><https://www.oitcinterfor.org/estudio-identificar-buenas-practicas-empresariales-gestion-del-aprendizaje-calidad>
- 43)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Reimagine Education and Skills Development for Children and Adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean Investing in Children and Adolescents as We Build a Next and Better Normal An investment opportunity for the private and public sectors. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama, 2021. <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/30071/file/Reimagine-Education-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-Investment-case.pdf>>
- 44)** S. Gontero, “Off to a good start? Inequalities and policy options for facilitating school-to-work transition among youth”, Project Documents, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023. <<https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/53e70216-d68d-456c-90d0-76b85c3366c6/content>>
- 45)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Unpacking school-to-work transition. Data and evidence synthesis. Scoping paper No. 02, UNICEF, New York, August 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 46)** Susana Puerto, Jonathan Stöterau, Michael Weber, and Chiara Curcio. Active Labour Market Programmes Improve Employment and Earnings of Young People. ILO, 2024. <<https://www.ilo.org/publications/active-labour-market-programs-improve-employment-and-earnings-young-people>>
- 47)** In the absence of available assessment reports, promising strategies and programmes are identified as those highlighted in one or more reports published by UNICEF and/or other organisations.



- 48)** The business sector includes all companies, from SMEs to large multinationals; multi-stakeholder platforms and industry bodies; business leaders, as influencers; and corporate and family foundations.
- 49)** According to ILO, decent work involves opportunities for work that are productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, rights at work, social dialogue, and better prospects for personal development and social integration. People including young people of working age, should be free to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and have the rights to equality of opportunity and treatment <<https://www.unicef.org/media/96136/file/Childrens-Rights-Business-Principles-2012.pdf>>
- 50)** UNICEF's Engagement with Business Programme Guidance for Country Offices help local teams focus on key areas where engaging with the business sector – beyond fundraising– can significantly advance priority programme outcomes for children. This includes partnerships, collaborations and initiatives that support a successful school-to-work transition for adolescents and youth. More information is also available on the regional Business Engagement and Children's Rights Sharepoint site here.
- 51)** UNICEF Egypt's partnership with Allianz is an example of a collaboration model to enable youth skilling. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Allianz Egypt First Private Sector Company to Commit to Support 'Shabab Balad' platform launched by UNICEF to enable youth skilling in Egypt'. <<https://www.unicef.org/egypt/press-releases/allianz-egypt-first-private-sector-company-commit-support-shabab-balad-platform>>, accessed November 6, 2025.
- 52)** UNICEF's regional Business Engagement and Partnerships report for 2023 and 2024 include some of these examples, providing more detailed information and updated results on the impact achieved.
- 53)** United Nations Children's Fund, Reimagine skills development: Voices of adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama 2022. <[https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2022-12/20221223\\_Ureport-skills.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2022-12/20221223_Ureport-skills.pdf)>
- 54)** United Nations Children's Fund 'UNICEF Guatemala ha implementado el programa UPSHIFT con jóvenes de municipios del corredor seco' <<https://www.facebook.com/unicefguatemala/videos/unicef-guatemala-ha-implementado-el-programa-upshift-con-j%C3%B3venes-de-municipios-d/908278053238965/>>
- 55)** Susana Puerto, Jonathan Stöterau, Michael Weber, and Chiara Curcio. Active Labour Market Programs Improve Employment and Earnings of Young People. ILO, 2024. <<https://www.ilo.org/publications/active-labour-market-programs-improve-employment-and-earnings-young-people>>
- 56)** United Nations Children's Fund, Unpacking School-to-Work Transition: Data and Evidence Synthesis. UNICEF, New York, 2019. <[https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper\\_2019.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Unpacking-School-to-Work-Transition-Scoping-Paper_2019.pdf)>
- 57)** Escudero, Veronica Escudero, et.al. 'Active Labour Market Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evidence from a Meta Analysis'. Journal of Development Studies, 2019, 55 (12), 2644 – 2661. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Bonn, Germany. 2017 <<https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/11039/active-labour-market-programmes-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-evidence-from-a-meta-analysis>>
- 58)** International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024. Decent work, brighter futures, ILO, Geneva, 2024. <[https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET\\_2024\\_EN\\_web4.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GET_2024_EN_web4.pdf)>



- 59)** Corbanese V., Rosas G. Jobs and skills for youth. Review of policies for youth employment of Cyprus. International Labour Office. Geneva, ILO 2014.
- 60)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Burnet Institute, Strengthening Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Systems and Services for Children and Adolescents in East Asia and the Pacific Region. UNICEF, Bangkok, 2022. <<https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/strengthening-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-systems-and-services>>
- 61)** Population Council. ‘Power, Voice, and Agency: Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Multiple Interventions for Evidence-Informed Contraceptive Decisions’. <<https://popcouncil.org/insight/power-voice-and-agency-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women-through-multiple-interventions-for-evidence-informed-contraceptive-decisions/>> accessed November 6, 2025.
- 62)** Support categories based on the key functions: Technical Assistance (TA), Research, Data & Advocacy (RD&A), Capacity Building (CB), Coordination and Partnerships (C&P)
- 63)** United Nations Children’s Fund, Shape the Future of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerate Foundational Learning. An investment opportunity for the public and private sectors. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama, August 2023. <[https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28\\_08\\_23\\_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/sites/unicef.org.lac/files/2023-08/28_08_23_Accelerate%20Foundational%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf)>
- 64)** United Nations Children’s Fund. A Strategic Framework on Alternative Education for Out-of-school Adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama 2022. <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/37706/file/Alternative%20Education%20Strategic%20Framework.pdf>>
- 65)** United Nations Children’s Fund. A Strategic Framework on Alternative Education for Out-of-school Adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama City, Panama 2022. <<https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/37706/file/Alternative%20Education%20Strategic%20Framework.pdf>>
- 66)** OECD, ILO, UNESCO. Investing in Career Guidance. Revised edition 2021. <[https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-07/investing\\_in\\_career\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-07/investing_in_career_guidance.pdf)>
- 67)** For additional strategies and tools to develop an Early Warning System for students at risk of dropping out, see United Nations Children’s Fund. Early warning systems for students at risk of dropping out. Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Switzerland. <[https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/2018-11/Early%20warning%20systems%20for%20students%20at%20risk%20of%20dropping%20out\\_0.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/2018-11/Early%20warning%20systems%20for%20students%20at%20risk%20of%20dropping%20out_0.pdf)>
- 68)** <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/green-economy/about-green-economy#:~:text=An%20inclusive%20green%20economy%20is, strategic%20priority%20for%20many%20governments.>
- 69)** United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Circular Economy. Vienna, Austria. [https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Circular\\_Economy\\_UNIDO\\_0.pdf](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Circular_Economy_UNIDO_0.pdf)
- 70)** <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/care-economy#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20care%20economy,care%20workers%20worldwide>



**71)** <https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/digital-economy>

**72)** [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/orange\\_economy\\_14\\_march.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/orange_economy_14_march.pdf), <https://investincolombia.com.co/en/resources/what-is-the-orange-economy>

unicef   
for every child

