South Asia: Regional Report
Compiling the Evidence Based on the Theme: Developing Skills in Youth to Succeed in the Evolving South Asian Economy
30. October. 2019
South Asia has the largest youth population in the world (289 million). Except Sri Lanka, all countries are in pre-dividend or Early-dividend stage. There is a limited time window to reap the demographic dividends. South Asia’s race against time to become rich before getting old.
Effective pathways for skilling youth to succeed is critical

1. Dynamic Labour Market data is one of the Significant challenges in South Asia

2. Systemic integration of foundational, transferrable and job skills at school and lifelong learning is largely broken

3. Employers have not fully embraced the value proposition of Skill Development ecosystem in South Asia

4. Skill Development interventions largely focus on large organised sector whereas the bulk of employment is in SME and informal sector

5. Inclusion is not integrated into the design of TVET programs across the core institutions and enablers (e.g. transport)

6. Aspiration for TVET system continues to low due to socio-economic- cultural reasons
We analysed the 4 elements in each of the 8 South Asia nations

**Employment/ Entrepreneurship System**
1. Wage Employment Sectors
2. Self Employment Sector
3. Entrepreneurship Sectors
4. Policies, Institutions, Sectoral Strategies
5. Impact of Globalization, Demographic Changes and Technology Advancements on the Employment/ Entrepreneurship system

**Societal System**
1. Demographic Profile
2. Cultural Norms
3. Degree of Empowerment of these segments
4. Impact of Globalization, Demographic Changes and Technology Advancements on the Societal system

**Education System**
1. General Education (school, college)
2. Technical & Vocational Education & Training (TVET)
3. Policies, Institutions, Funding Models
4. Technical Aspects of Education – Trainers, Content, Training infrastructure
5. Education/ Skills Training
6. Delivery Processes Impact of Globalization, Demographic Changes and Technology Advancements on the Education system

**Youth (Voice of Youth Survey)**
1. Youth Socio – Economic Profile
2. Barriers to their Growth
3. Life Aspirations
4. Status Based on Aspiration – Reality mismatch – Frustrated/ Disinterested/ Disengaged/ Hopeful
5. Magnitude of challenge at national level
1. Around 30 urbanised South Asian economic hotspots will drive over 80% of the wage employment opportunities by 2025.

2. Gradually shrinking primary sector and the resultant rural employment and entrepreneurship system would not be able to arrest this economic migration.

3. Structurally the growth story skipped the Manufacturing, putting the bonus of labour demand directly onto the service sector.

4. The share of the service sector in the overall employment would rise to 50% from the current level of 35-40% across SA in the next decade.
5. As both industrial and emerging technology adoption gains momentum, employment in large organized sectors would continue to fall with a decrease in output elasticity of employment.

6. The SME sectors in South Asia would continue to be the largest employer outside agriculture.

7. Cluster-based entrepreneurship like Self Help Groups (SHGs) in industrial, consumer and artisan products and Farmer producer organisations (FPOs) in agro and allied sectors are emerging as sustainable models in South Asia.

8. Employer model for skilling in the form of apprenticeship is emerging as key to addressing the employability challenge.

9. South Asia is a leader in freelancing online services and its share of global online workforce is expected to rise.

10. Technology platforms would organise some of the key unorganised sectors like maintenance, repairs, operations (MRO) and transportation services; vibrant start-up ecosystem of Agri-techs, Fin-techs and Health-techs.
1. Despite high enrolment rates, a significant amount of children remain out of school (31 million in the age group of 5-13).

2. Around 60 percent of girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively remain out of school.

3. There is a drastic increase in dropouts at the secondary level of education (40-70%).
4. The majority of youth with disabilities remain out of the school system (90 per cent in the developing world), which previews their exclusion from the labour market.

5. Student emerge inadequately prepared on foundational, transferrable and job-specific skills from the present education system creating a barrier in search for employment.

6. Support received in schools & colleges to facilitate employment is ineffective. (Only 3% of VoY respondents were placed into employment as a result of school support).

7. There are limited programs for NEET adolescents. Pathways linking formal and non-formal education missing, making alternative pathways less aspirational. Equivalency frameworks are in preliminary stages.

8. Limited career progression, lack of entrepreneurship modules and foundational skills; low recognition of certifications and social stigma make TVET less aspirational.
1. Tertiary education enrolment rates for Girls have increased over the years and are almost at par or higher than that of men.

2. STEM education stereotyped as men oriented, discourages participation from women, limiting their employment choices.

3. Once outside of wage labour, cultural norms and gender roles act as a barrier against her re-entry.

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Gender Inequality Index (GII)^

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Maldives</td>
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Female enrolment rate in tertiary education

- Bangladesh: Female 14.5%, Male 20.6%
- Bhutan: Female 8.9%, Male 12.1%
- India: Female 9.9%, Male 20.5%
- Maldives: Female 10.8%, Male 22.8%
- Nepal: Female 12%, Male 11.1%
- Pakistan: Female 9.8%, Male 15.1%
- Sri Lanka: Female 27.6%, Male 26.9%
4. TVET opportunities are often at a long distance that involves travel safety & transport costs or socially unacceptable boarding limiting female participation.

5. South Asia Contributes to about 62% of the NEET in the world.

6. With age, women-NEET rates increase more rapidly as compared to men-NEET rates and culminates at 2 times to 5 times that of men.

7. Youth with Disabilities are severely disadvantaged and excluded both from education as well as employment systems.

8. Typical societal norms such as early marriage, opposition to migration, safety concerns are some of the key determinants leading to significantly higher likelihood of women to become NEET.

9. Continued NEET status degrades accumulated skill, which in absence of pathways obstructs their re-inclusion into mainstream labour market and forcing them into disguised unemployment and thereby into disempowerment.
Voice of Youth Survey: Select Findings

UNICEF conducted the primary research and analysis to identify the aspirations, perceptions and attitude of the youth of South Asia towards education, skill development and employment.

The research was conducted through surveys, open-ended questions and Focus group discussions over social media and through in-person interactions and covered 32,587 completed responses from 8 Countries.

The data has been weighted to accurately reflect urban-rural and male-female demographics.

1. First Job: Critical event in the lives of youth as it serves as means of skilling in the absence of effective skilling ecosystem; leading to informal employment.

2. English language and computer literacy is viewed as a foundational soft skill for employability in South Asia.

3. Only 8% of SA youth are entrepreneurs by choice and there are many obstacles for would be entrepreneurs.

4. School dropouts in NEET are exposed to much greater risks (disengaged/frustrated).

5. Those pursuing education feel that the education systems are not delivering employment skills. They see value in TVET, but it is not aspirational in its current form & delivery.

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**Policy & Institution**

1. Establish clear pathways between general education and TVET to enable youth mobility between the systems
   - Open School Program, National Institute of Education (UNESCO Japan Prize 2017) - works with mainly farming communities, providing a range of options for those not having any recognised basic qualification (Sri Lanka)

2. Fast track vocationalisation of schools at lower secondary level
   - TVET Pathways integrates elements of vocational education in schools (Bhutan), Technical and prevocational studies constitute 20 percent of school curriculum (Sri Lanka)

**Technical Aspects of Training**

1. Build skilling strategy to support and attract investments in labour intensive sectors
   - Skills for Employment Investment Program’ (SEIP) - supports training providers to meet industry specific skill requirements; finance skills training among others. (Bangladesh)

2. Upskilling and certification of those engaged informal Sector By providing RPL(Recognition of prior learning):
   - STAR BRAC (Ustaad-Shahgird Model) formalises informal On-the-Job Training on a large scale (Bangladesh)

**Strategy & Funding**

1. Conduct nation wise regional studies to profile migration corridors and its related challenges, ensure social support for the arriving labour at destination, harmonise qualification standards across South Asian and major destination countries (GCC) to enable recognition of migrant skilled labour; ensure gainful employment of returning migrants
   - The South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project (SALM) promotes well-managed labour migration flows within and across South Asian countries by establishing migrant resource centres, protection in employment, labour market information among others. (ILO South Asia)

**Process**

- Promote entrepreneurship in informal sector by providing Bridge courses and access to finance.
  - CSI and Entrepreneurship Flagship program recently introduced to provide ‘end-to-end’ support for entrepreneurship (Bhutan)

- Intensive Career Counselling and aptitude test for empowering Youth eg. 0 day counselling at Generations programme Strengthen large scale youth-led community development by leveraging Skills
  - Vigyan Ashram – youth engagement through DIY/ Fablab to find innovative solution to community issues
**CSR initiative of Sanken Construction Pvt. Ltd. (Sri Lanka)**

Guaranteed placement along with an 8-year long counselling period, leading up to the trainees achieving 'Assistant engineer' position in the company with a diploma in construction engineering.

1. 100% placement
2. Provides jobs with average salary of $150/month (more than country average)

**Institutes of Zorig Chusum, Choki Traditional Arts (Bhutan)**

Structured competency based training. Graduates are accommodated in Craft Bazar; reflects successful placement strategy of placing the trained youth in sustainable self-employment.

1. 100% capacity utilisation of seats
2. Preserves and promote traditional art and craft of Bhutan

**Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) - Ustaad-Shahgird model**

Learners are work ready in six months and are nationally certified in vocational and soft skills (Entrepreneurial, rights and social issues, gender equality and financial literacy)

1. 95% apprentices are employed and 18,900 youth skilled
2. 8X improvement in salary after course completion

**Youth4Jobs Foundation**

Trains disabled youth while simultaneously working with the private sector to create an enabling environment for them to perform.

1. 16500+ PWD candidates trained
2. 15% increase in manufacturing productivity after hiring Y4J trained disabled youth
| Vocational training for promoting micro-entrepreneurship, Eye Mitra, India |
| Employment linked Training for YwDs, Seeing Hands, Nepal |
| Employment oriented training for YwDs Youth4Jobs, India |
| Empowering YwD with free vocational skills, Drakhtsho, Bhutan |
| Early exposure on entrepreneurial skills in schools and college, Loden SEED, Bhutan |
| Facilitating entp. to connect with mentors, investors and investors, Wadhwani, India |
| Enabling sustainable self-employment in handicraft, Zorig Chusum, Bhutan |
| Alternative pathway for out of school youth to resume training, Open School Programme, LK |
| Sustainable Vocational Training with placement guarantee PARFI, India |
| Imparts Life Skills, adult literacy, livelihood skills Nudge Foundation, India |
| Industry engagement with training providers to impart quality skills, MSIL, India |
| Redefines job roles to increase women participation Champa Maldives |
| Formalises informal On-the-Job-Training on a large scale STAR, Bangladesh |
| Livelihood generation for self employment, Tripura Bamboo Mission, India |
| Employment linked TVET training, Sports Councillor Program, Maldives |
| Soft Skills Training Package for Adolescents Rupantran, Nepal |
| Foundational and Life Skills Training LP4Y, India |
| Employment oriented training, upskilling, Generations Mckinsey, India |
| Supporting vocational training for mid career professionals USAID, Afghanistan |
| Vocational Skills Training TVET program, Afghanistan |
| Aspirational captive training model, CSR Sanken Construction, Sri Lanka |
| Apprentership based center of excelence in labour intensive industry, COEL, BD |
| Competency based captive employment model, Zero to Hero Program, Maldives |
| Empowering youth through free of cost OJT, Jetwing Youth, Sri Lanka |
| Industry engagement with training providers to impart quality skills, MSIL, India |
| Upskilling through digitally-enabled self-learning program, Ooredoo, Maldives |
| Providing globally recognised skills training, Trekking Agencies Association, Nepal |

THANK YOU