

Adolescent and Youth Skills Development, Employability and Entrepreneurship



Situation: what is at stake & why it matters

Zimbabwe faces a youth unemployment rate of 37.7% for those aged 15-24, with an additional 49% of youth classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) (ZIMSTATS, 2024).

Youth unemployment is exacerbated by a skills mismatch between what the education system provides and what the labor market demands. Female adolescents are particularly disadvantaged, facing barriers to STEM education and often dropping out due to early pregnancies and child marriages, further limiting their employability.

Additionally, outdated education systems and lack of technological infrastructure hinder the potential of young Zimbabweans to capitalize on 21st-century job opportunities. These issues fuel stress, substance abuse, and other social problems among youth.

UNICEF's response

UNICEF Zimbabwe is addressing these challenges through the Generation Unlimited (GenU) platform, a public-private-youth partnership focused on equipping youth with market-relevant skills and creating pathways to employment and entrepreneurship. Key initiatives include:

- **Learning2Earning Opportunities:** The Fairchance program provides adolescents with mentorship, internships, and entrepreneurial training.
- **Social Innovation Hubs:** These hubs foster youth-led innovation, providing resources and support for young entrepreneurs to address local and national challenges.
- **Youth Innovation Challenges:** Focused on climate change and ed-tech, these challenges promote creative solutions to pressing issues.
- **Policy support:** UNICEF works with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development, and Vocational Training (a newly established ministry) to enhance coordination and capacity for youth empowerment.

Generation Unlimited: Investing in Zimbabwe's Youth



Impact

In 2024, 15,248 adolescents and youth (6,450 female and 8,798 male) were reached through learning-to-earning programs. Of these, 14,363 (6,034 female, 8,329 male) gained mentorship, digital skills, and internship opportunities. 885 youth (416 female, 469 male) received entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, equipping them with crucial skills to launch businesses and improve employability

Specific gaps & needs

- Limited coverage: Especially in marginalized districts, interventions are not reaching enough young people.
- Outdated infrastructure: Many vocational training centers lack the modern technology required to prepare youth for today's digital economy.
- Capacity issues: The Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development, and Vocational Training needs technical support to improve program coordination and impact



Call to Action (How you can help)



- \$100,000: Support 4,500 youth to become job-ready and 5 businesses.
- \$250,000: Support 10,000 youth and 15 businesses, and set up 2 social innovation hubs.
- \$500,000: Support 20,000 youth and 30 businesses, and establish 5 social innovation hubs.
- \$1 million: Reach 50,000 youth, support 75 businesses, and establish 10 social innovation hubs.

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