



## International Conference on Innovations in Apprenticeships

## Concept Note

### 1. Background

Education across the globe has seen dramatic improvements in accessibility, quality and quantity. Globally, 83 per cent of lower secondary school age population are enrolled in primary or secondary school. From 2000 to 2013, the number of out-of-school children of lower secondary school age shrank from 97 million to 65 million.<sup>1</sup> The gross enrolment ratio for secondary school enrolment among both sexes stood at 41.3% in 1970 and increased to reach 76.4 in 2015.<sup>2</sup> While overall progress has slowed since 2007, the net enrolment rate for girls continues to grow.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this encouraging advancement in education, youth unemployment is at its peak. Today, over 40% of the world's youth are either unemployed or have a job but live in poverty.<sup>4</sup> There are 70.9 million unemployed youth worldwide and 16.7 per cent of working youth in emerging and developing economies live living in extreme poverty.<sup>5</sup> In economic terms, persistent and high unemployment and underemployment have important adverse, longer-term and scarring consequences for young people that extend through their job and life prospects. These include a higher risk of future joblessness or poor quality jobs, a prolonged period of unstable jobs and potentially depressed income growth.<sup>6</sup>

While many youth not finding a decent job, many employers do not find skilled workers they need. In fact, 40 per cent of over 42,300 employers surveyed in 43 countries and territories reported skills shortages, the highest proportion since 2007.<sup>7</sup> Other studies also corroborate this point: businesses are facing a serious problem in matching available talent with unfilled

<sup>1</sup> Globally, four out of five children of lower secondary school age are enrolled in school, UNICEF, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/secondary-education/> [accessed 27 March 2017].

<sup>2</sup> Gross enrolment ratio, secondary, both sexes (%), UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Bank Data, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR> [accessed 25 March 2018].

<sup>3</sup> Globally, four out of five children of lower secondary school age are enrolled in school, UNICEF, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/secondary-education/> [accessed 27 March 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Together, making a difference for young people everywhere, International Labour Organization, Youth Employment, [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/databases-platforms/global-initiative-decent-jobs/WCMS\\_487961/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/databases-platforms/global-initiative-decent-jobs/WCMS_487961/lang--en/index.htm) [accessed 22 March 2017].

<sup>5</sup> Global employment trends for youth 2017, ILO [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/global-employment-trends/WCMS\\_598669/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/global-employment-trends/WCMS_598669/lang--en/index.htm) [accessed 29 November 2017].

<sup>6</sup> The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, The Strategy Document 22 October 2015, International Labour Organization, <https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/Global%20Initiative%20on%20Decent%20Jobs%20for%20Youth%20Strategy%20Document%20Oct%202015.pdf>, pp.4 [accessed 22 March 2017].

<sup>7</sup> 2016-2017 Talent Shortage Survey, Manpower Group, <http://www.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage-2016> [accessed 23 March 2017].



## International Conference on Innovations in Apprenticeships

**NEW SKILLS AT WORK**  
 JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.


jobs.<sup>8</sup> Skills mismatch negatively affects youth, businesses and society at large by not tapping existing human capital and economic opportunities to generate decent jobs, alleviate poverty and improve living conditions.

Against the backdrop, policymakers have increasingly been promoting apprenticeships across the globe to address skills mismatch and youth unemployment. At the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference (2012), the ILO adopted a resolution entitled *the youth employment crisis: a call to action*. The resolution reiterated the importance of linking education, training and the world of work through ‘enhanced technical vocational education and training (TVET), including apprenticeships, other work-experience schemes and work-based learning’.

Although “apprenticeship” is a buzz word of policymakers today, learning a trade from a master craftsman is not a new method of skills development. Indeed, the history of apprenticeships dates back to the late Middle Ages. While keeping the essence of passing skills from an old generation to a new one through practical training on the job, apprenticeships have evolved responding to changing skills needs, advancement in technology and pedagogy over time. Indeed, history tells us that apprenticeships have continued to be relevant and effective thanks to their continued innovations in response to new economic, social, and labour market changes. Then, if apprenticeships are to continue their journey of evolution, what innovations will we witness given various contemporary challenges? Would they adopt themselves to the skills requirements of the fourth industry revolution, climate changes and sustainable development, labour migration and other social challenges such as increasing income inequality? This question has motivated us to convene an international conference and deepen discussions on initiatives at global, regional and national levels to facilitate such innovations.

With the funding support of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation,<sup>9</sup> the ILO, in cooperation the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)<sup>10</sup> and the Global

<sup>8</sup> *The Global Skills Landscape: A Complex Puzzle*, The Hays Global Skills Index 2016, <http://www.hays-index.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Hays-GSI-Report-2016.pdf> [accessed 23 March 2017]. *Laying the Foundation to Measure Sustainable Development Goal 4*, Sustainable Development Data Digest, <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/laying-the-foundation-to-measure-sdg4-sustainable-development-data-digest-2016-en.pdf> [accessed 23 March 2017].

<sup>9</sup> The ILO implements the development cooperation project: Skills that work: improving the employability of low and middle-skilled workers through quality apprenticeships (hereunder project) with funding support of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The project aims to facilitate knowledge exchange on good practices to promote quality apprenticeships through peer learning meetings, practical tools, and methodological guidance for analysing the non-market benefits of apprenticeship training (<http://www.ilo.org/skills/projects/stwp/lang--en/index.htm>).

<sup>10</sup> Over the last decade, the OECD team responsible for Vocational Education and Training has undertaken dozens of country reviews exploring the strengths and challenges faced by VET system. The team is also responsible for a series of

## International Conference on Innovations in Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship Network (GAN), invites ILO constituents, representatives of international and civil society organizations to an international conference on Innovations in Apprenticeships. The event intends to link century-old apprenticeships and today's challenges and explore innovations to apprenticeships.

### 2. Objective of the event

- Share and promote innovative approaches to apprenticeships responding to contemporary challenges
- Provide opportunities to deepen collaboration among key actors of apprenticeships at global, regional and national levels

### 3. Target participants

Primary target participants are government officials and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations from the G20 member states. The event also welcomes the participation of self-funding officials and social partners from non-G20 countries, representatives from international and civil society organizations, academic experts and practitioners. The expected number of participants is 100-120.

### 4. Date and venue

**04-05 July 2018, ILO HQs in Geneva**

Plenary Session: **Salle II (R3 South)**

Breakout sessions: Salle III, IV, VII, IX

### 5. Agenda

Please see the tentative agenda on our web site:

[http://www.ilo.org/skills/projects/stwp/WCMS\\_630379/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/projects/stwp/WCMS_630379/lang--en/index.htm)

### 6. Online registration

Please register your participation online: <https://goo.gl/forms/hEu4FtH2kgrZOkeh1>