

Education and Decent work

How and under what conditions do education interventions contribute to access to decent work for youth?

**Educaid.be
International
Conference**

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Concept Note



The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as “productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. Decent work allows us to progress from a professional perspective, to be understood in the workplace and gives men and women the same opportunities.

From early childhood to lifelong learning, quality education is considered crucial for gaining access to decent work. [SDG4](#) is seen as a catalyst for achieving [SDG8](#), which focuses on promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all.

However, [the ILO’s 2023 World Employment and Social Outlook report](#) paints a worrying picture of the progress made. And this, despite the fact that worldwide education levels are on the rise. Young people (aged 15–24) face severe difficulties in securing decent employment. Globally their unemployment rate is three times as high as that of adults. More than one in five – 23.5 per cent – of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Among them, young women and youth with disabilities experience additional hurdles in accessing decent work. Youth who do have access to work are often confronted with more difficult situations than adults. The report shows that all is not well in the world of work and that the status quo must be challenged and changed.

While these poor results cannot simply be attributed to education systems failing to play their catalytic role, they do trigger **critical questions**:

- Which education interventions are successful in smoothening young people’s school-to-work transitions and moving them into higher quality work, including through formal employment, rewarding entrepreneurship, ...?
- When designing interventions, which features should education practitioners and policymakers incorporate to drive positive outcomes for young people in the world of work?
- Which conditions need to be created – and by whom – to ensure that well-designed education interventions can have an optimal catalytic effect for all young people?

The 2023 Educaid.be Conference, held onsite (Brussels, October 17) and online, will inspire dialogues, debates and, we hope, future programmes, research, and/or policies. Through two provocative keynote speakers, an expert panel, and roundtables that zoom in on concrete cases, the conference aims to contribute to the understanding of how and under what conditions education contributes to access to decent work in the low-and-middle income countries; what the perspectives, strategies and approaches are for achieving it; and what good and inspirational practices are in place.

The conference will stimulate discussions around the local, national and international responses needed to focus on strengthening education systems. They must contribute to eliminating the discrimination faced by the most vulnerable and must be a channel for bringing about greater equity in the access to decent work.