



A Global Opportunity: Get Youth Working

State of Solutions, Gaps, and A New Global Initiative
to Accelerate Youth Employment

by Jamie McAuliffe

September 2018



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The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions' mission is to support community collaboration—including collective impact—that enables communities to effectively address their most pressing challenges. The Forum for Community Solutions works to accomplish this mission by pursuing four complementary strategies including: 1) building awareness by documenting and lifting up impactful strategies and stories of success; 2) mobilizing stakeholders through knowledge and network development; 3) removing barriers by advocating for effective policy; and 4) catalyzing investment by encouraging funder partnerships.

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Initiative to Accelerate Youth Employment

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About the Author

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Executive Summary

In 2018 we have the youngest global cohort in history. 1.2 billion people are between the ages of 15-24. In many countries, youth represent the majority of the population. But, this great demographic dividend is at grave risk of being unrealized. Some 350 million young people are under or unemployed and not in school and many developing countries, even while enjoying strong economic growth, are not able to come close to creating the number of jobs needed to meet the numbers of youth who are transitioning from school to work. Paradoxically, industries across the globe report millions of current and potential jobs are going unfilled because of a shortage of people with the right skills.

And now, new challenges are on the horizon. The fourth industrial revolution, characterized by an accelerating pace of technological change and a host of scientific advances that are occurring simultaneously, will dramatically affect the future of jobs and the nature of work itself in the years to come. Already we are seeing significant changes in many job categories and related skill requirements due to automation and the onset of artificial intelligence. These changes will have ripple effects for societies that are struggling to create job opportunities for youth today, let alone prepare youth and young adults for the jobs of tomorrow.

The global significance of this challenge is underscored in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal eight of the SDGs is to: "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" and several sub-goals specifically call out the importance of youth opportunity.

Inspired by the challenge to address the global crisis of youth opportunity, in 2017 the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions undertook a landscape research effort—supported by Prudential

Financial—to identify the most promising approaches to support global opportunity youth in their search for meaningful work. This report highlights themes and gaps in the global youth economic opportunity sphere, provides an overview of some of the existing models, partnerships, and initiatives, and presents a rationale for a Global Opportunity Youth Initiative that proposes a new approach to accelerating youth pathways into jobs and livelihoods.

"The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions and its partners believe now is the time to build collaborative partnerships with communities across the globe to support this generation of global opportunity youth with pathways to meaningful employment."

From more than 80 expert interviews and numerous studies consulted, it is clear that the field of youth economic opportunity is making strides, including establishing a solid base of evidence, increasing the number of significant corporate, philanthropic, and bilateral donors who are prioritizing youth opportunity, and accelerating innovation, particularly in the technology sphere.

Yet, despite this progress, the field of youth economic opportunity remains characterized by initiatives that remain small, fragmented, and disconnected from the broader ecosystem in which they operate. Only a few models and organizations have shown the ability to expand and positively impact thousands or tens of thousands of participants let alone the hundreds of thousands or millions that the scale of the global youth employment crisis demands. And, while more rigorous research has shown evidence

of effectiveness of certain interventions, there is great disparity in the quality of employment training programs and a need to prove the “business case” of the best models to demonstrate that investing in youth results in better business and social outcomes.

There is now an opportunity for the sector to evolve from a perennial focus on finding the next “silver bullet” single intervention or innovation. Instead, we need to consider approaches that draw on the best elements of different youth interventions. This means leveraging local strengths that are supported by donors in a more coordinated way and delivered in partnership with local government, education, and business stakeholders. This is the inspiration for the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative (GOYI) that has been shaped with a co-design partner group made up of the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, Global Development Inc., YouthBuild International, and Prudential.

Global Opportunity Youth Initiative (GOYI) will start with specific **community contexts and priorities**, be **collaborative in structure and implementation**, apply a **systems lens** to understand the jobs or livelihoods ecosystem opportunities most ripe for impact and scale, and ensure **youth voice and agency** is central to the design and implementation. GOYI’s fund will encourage greater donor collaboration and employ a mix of grants, results-based financing, and impact investment best suited to the needs of a community’s jobs ecosystem. And, from the outset, a global opportunity youth leadership cohort will be recruited and convened to inform the overall design and plan for the GOYI and become its initial ambassadors and champions back in their home communities.

In close collaboration with community leaders and based on the highest priority and most scalable opportunities, GOYI will identify effective models or policies for wider adoption, fill gaps by seeding new

innovations or adapting proven models from other markets, and have a priority focus of investing in local leaders and organizations. Examples of interventions and policy priorities could range from addressing skill gaps, supporting apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities, or nurturing entrepreneurial ecosystems where wage-related opportunities are limited. In relevant geographies, GOYI will identify ways to provide greater access to digital opportunities to prepare young people for the future of work and work with policymakers and local leaders to diagnose and address current and future implications of technology and automation in the youth jobs and livelihoods ecosystem.

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions and its partners believe now is the time to build collaborative partnerships with communities across the globe to support this generation of global opportunity youth with pathways to meaningful employment. Investing in these young people will be critical to spurring economic growth and will ensure that this generation of youth are prepared for their future—as workers, entrepreneurs, parents, citizens, and community leaders.

For more information about the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative, including plans for its announcement in 2018 and launch in 2019, please visit: <https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/global-opportunity-youth/>

Introduction

In 2017, the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions undertook a new learning effort—supported by, and in partnership with, Prudential and the Rockefeller Foundation—to identify the biggest gaps and most promising opportunities to provide support to global opportunity youth in their search for meaningful economic opportunity. Over the course of the year, more than eighty philanthropic, business, education, and government leaders were interviewed, a series of deep dive learning meetings were organized, and relevant reports were reviewed to consider the best ideas for a new global opportunity youth initiative. The fundamental conclusion was that significant progress was being made in the international youth employment arena, but most efforts remained small and unsustainable, funding was project-based and contributed to fragmentation, and yet, there was an opportunity to build on existing multi-stakeholder platforms and coalitions to achieve a scale commensurate with the global crisis of youth opportunity. In December 2017, a group of 20 leaders, representing public, private, and NGO institutions operating across four continents, gathered for two days at the Rockefeller Foundation Center in Bellagio, Italy, to consider a proposed framework for a new effort to tackle youth unemployment globally.

“While there continues to be an important focus on the 4.6 million opportunity youth in the United States who need better pathways to education and employment, globally the rates of youth unemployment are staggering, with a quarter of the world’s young people, some 350 million, under or unemployed and not in school.”

Based on the ideas that emerged from the Bellagio meeting, the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative was shaped with a co-design partner group made up of the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, Global Development Inc., YouthBuild International, and Prudential. This report summarizes the main findings of the landscape research that was conducted and introduces the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative (GOYI) that will be formally announced in fall 2018. (Note: this is the initial name of the new effort. Following a brand development strategy in fall 2018, the name either will be confirmed or changed.)

Background

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions together with a select group of funders and partners have recognized the striking need to accelerate solutions to the global crisis of youth unemployment. While there continues to be an important focus on the 4.6 million opportunity youth in the United States who need better pathways to education and employment, globally the rates of youth unemployment are staggering, with a quarter of the world’s young people, some 350 million, under or unemployed and not in school.

The global significance of this challenge is underscored in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal eight of the SDGs is to: “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” And, there are no less than three target indicators focused on youth:

- By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion

of youth not in employment, education or training.

- By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.

There are encouraging signs that more corporate and philanthropic organizations are stepping up and identifying youth economic opportunity as an important global priority. Just in the last several years, companies like Prudential, Accenture, JP Morgan Chase, Citi, Nestle, Manpower Group, McDonalds, Adecco, Fossil, Walmart, Microsoft, Google and Hilton have made important commitments to address global youth unemployment. Leading international foundations such as Mastercard, Michael & Susan Dell, and Rockefeller have made youth livelihoods a strategic pillar and organizations like YouthBuild International, McKinsey's Generation Initiative, Education For Employment, Harambee, International Youth Foundation, and a host of emerging social change organizations, are testing and proving new approaches to provide pathways from education to employment for unemployed youth.

And, there are emerging business-led coalitions as well as multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances that have been formed to highlight successful models, establish a stronger evidence-base, and build public-private partnerships.

Nevertheless, the field of youth economic opportunity is still emergent with many initiatives remaining at a small scale, fragmented, and in early stages of development. Only a small number have shown the ability to scale and positively impact thousands or tens of thousands of participants let alone the hundreds of thousands or millions that the scale of the global youth employment crisis demands. And, while more rigorous research has shown evidence of effectiveness of certain interventions, there is

great disparity in the quality of employment training programs and a need to prove the “business case” of the best models to demonstrate that investing in youth, results in better business and social outcomes.

Moreover, new challenges are on the horizon related to the fourth industrial revolution, characterized by a combination of an accelerating pace of technological change and a host of scientific advances that are occurring simultaneously and, together, will dramatically affect the future of jobs and the nature of work itself in the years to come. Already we are seeing significant churn in certain job categories and related skill requirements due to automation and the onset of artificial intelligence applications to a range of industry and service categories. These changes will have ripple effects for societies struggling to create job opportunities for youth today let alone prepare youth and young adults for the jobs of tomorrow.

“The impetus for this report was the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions’ recognition of the great challenge and opportunity presented by global youth unemployment and Prudential Financial’s interest in embarking on a learning journey to uncover the broader themes, trends, and existing gaps in global youth opportunity, as well as gain an understanding of the current state of solutions and opportunities to accelerate progress and impact for unemployed youth globally.”

Why undertake a landscape effort?

The impetus for this report was the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions' recognition of the great challenge and opportunity presented by global youth unemployment and Prudential's interest in embarking on a learning journey to uncover the broader themes, trends, and existing gaps in global youth opportunity, as well as gain an understanding of the current state of solutions and opportunities to accelerate progress and impact for unemployed youth globally.

The purpose of this report is not to produce a list of policy prescriptions for government and other decision-makers working to address youth unemployment in their communities nor to lay out an evidentiary base to advocate for a specific approach or theory of change. Rather it is an attempt to capture cross-cutting themes, significant gaps, and outline the array of models, partnerships, and other significant efforts currently underway in the field of global youth economic opportunity and, based on this, present a clear and compelling rationale for the establishment of a new way of bringing partners together to address the global crisis of youth unemployment.

This document is structured to accomplish several goals:

1. Highlight current themes and gaps across the spectrum of social change, funder, policy models advancing global youth opportunity,
2. Provide a graphic representation of the landscape of solutions with examples of:
 - promising models dedicated to addressing youth livelihoods globally, including business-led coalitions and initiatives,
 - private funders operating in the youth opportunity space,
 - multi-stakeholder platforms and coalitions

dedicated to addressing youth economic opportunity,

- a sample of government policies aimed at youth unemployment.
3. Introduce the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative which is a new effort by global and local partners together to accelerate progress in tackling youth unemployment globally.

Who are “global opportunity youth” and where are they concentrated?

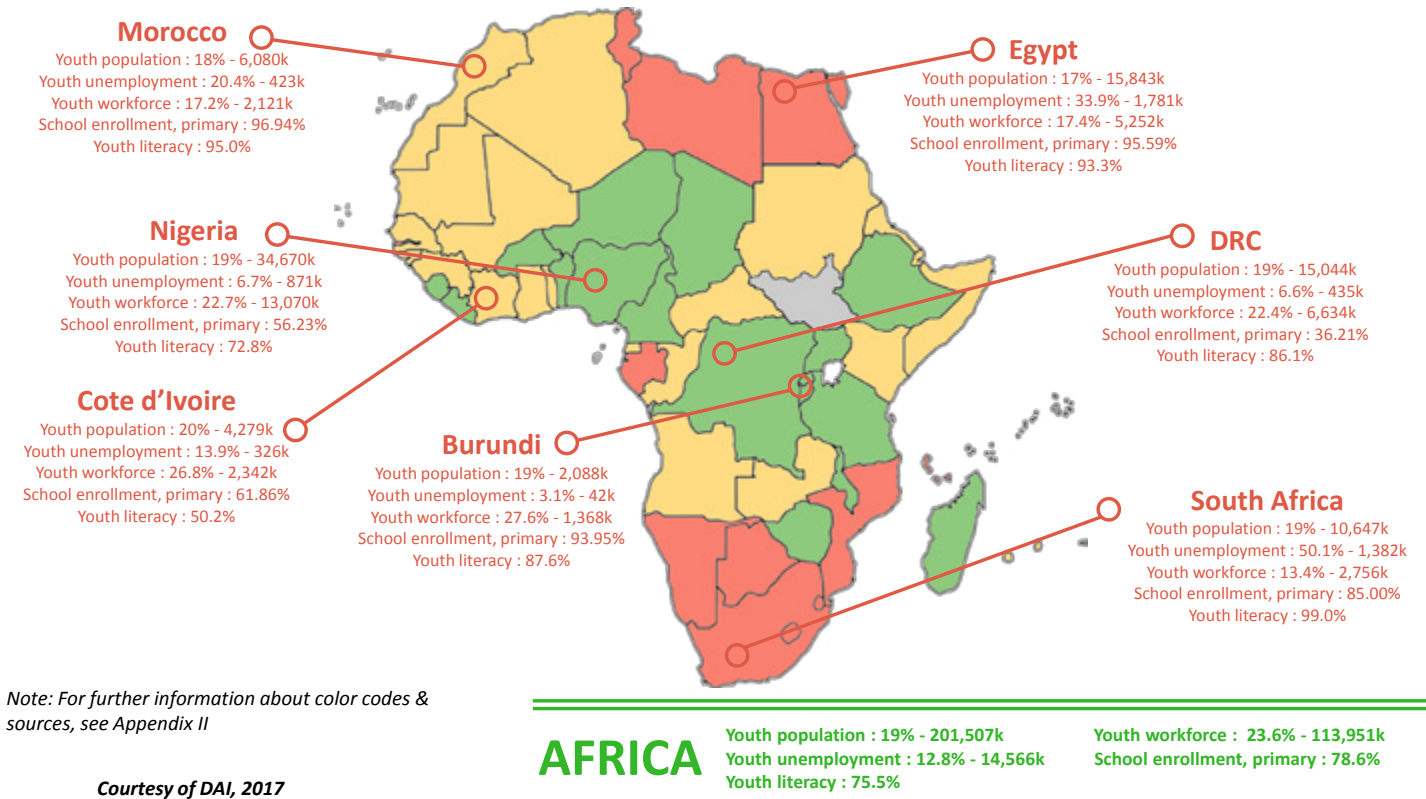
The starting point for this research was the global analogue to the opportunity youth population in the United States—namely, youth who are out of work and school. Globally, this population is often referred to as “NEETs” (not-in-school, education or training), “vulnerable,” “underserved, or “disadvantaged.” While the term “opportunity youth” is not widely adopted outside the United States, it is one of the few descriptors in use that emphasizes the positive assets young people have and the potential and hope they represent. For the purposes of this report, the terms “underserved youth,” “vulnerable youth,” “marginalized youth,” and “opportunity youth” are used interchangeably and refer to a population that requires support to access pathways to meaningful livelihoods.

When attempting to quantify the population of global opportunity youth, one quickly runs into a data challenge. While youth population statistics are well established, official national youth unemployment figures do not present an accurate picture of the scale of the global opportunity youth challenge. Specifically, they do not account for young people who are working in the informal sector, which represents the majority of youth in many developing countries. NEET data tries to provide a fuller picture of youth on the margins but even that data, in the aggregate, does not always provide a clear picture. As pointed out by Sara Elder

from the ILO¹, NEET rates are significantly higher in middle-income countries like Jordan and Mexico than in many lower income countries where most youth work in the informal economy and are therefore not counted as NEETs in the data. That said, below is a map of Africa with a cross-section of countries and corresponding youth data. In Appendix II there are additional maps to provide other regional overviews of youth demographic data.

In choosing the appropriate geographies to target

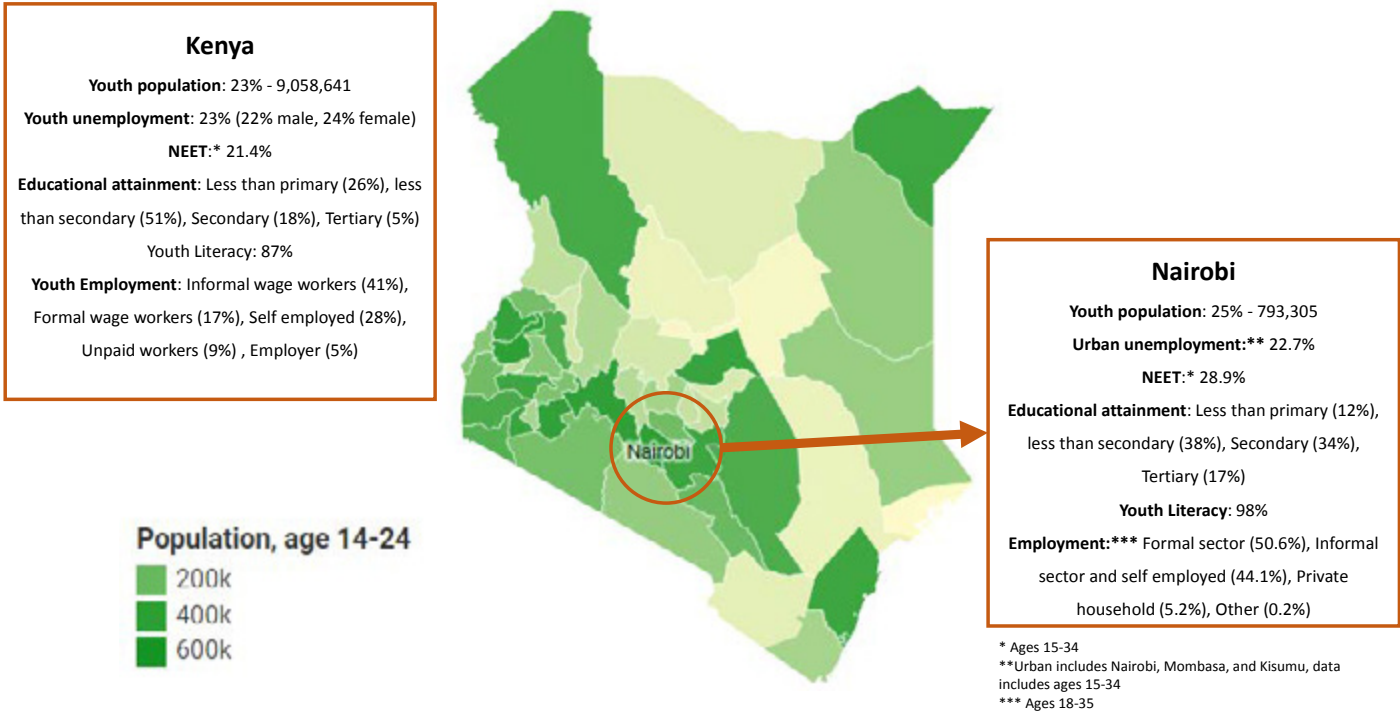
On the other hand, countries like Kenya, South Africa, and India have large youth populations and a large percentage of youth working in the informal sector as well as high rates of youth unemployment and require a mix of interventions and models specific to youth segments. Subsequently, GOYI will likely use a more expanded definition of opportunity youth which will include NEETs but also young people, from low-income communities, who are working in the informal sector and aiming to improve their incomes



the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative, different data sets will need to be referenced, especially at the national and sub-national level. For example, programs targeting the educated but unemployed will find huge need in countries like Jordan or Tunisia where the unemployment rate for university graduates can be twice as high as those with a secondary degree.

or transition to formal sector employment. On the next page is a map of Kenya with youth data for the country and for its capital, Nairobi, that provides a more nuanced view of the youth population. For example, we can see that formal sector employment (50.6%) is much higher in Nairobi than for the country at large (17%). But, it also illustrates some of the issues

with available data sets. The country-level youth data is for 14-24 year olds while the Nairobi employment data includes a wider age range (15-35), making direct comparisons difficult. Identifying and addressing relevant data gaps will be important to establishing a clear strategy in many of the targeted geographies of the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative.



Sources: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, National Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya, UNICEF, World Bank

Courtesy of Just Results, LLC

Chapter 1

Cross-Cutting Themes & Gaps in the Global Youth Economic Opportunity Field



Dozens of expert interviews and a review of recent research and reports related to global youth economic opportunity (see Appendix II and III) informed this landscape report. Outlined below is a brief summary of the findings from the sources consulted. Many of the identified themes are clearly being addressed by social entrepreneurs, businesses, and governments in certain places but need to be more widely recognized and incorporated into opportunity youth program design or included in any youth jobs and livelihoods ecosystem analysis and strategy. Some specific organizations are included in the summaries below and many of the identified models in Chapter 2 provide further examples. And, while significant gaps were identified, they provide clear opportunities for new actors entering the field and may stimulate new thinking about what is needed to advance youth economic opportunity. Indeed, these themes and gaps significantly informed the design of the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative.

Education and employment (supply & demand) must be integrally linked

In the last several years, research has backed up the experience of pioneering models like Year Up, YouthBuild International, Education For Employment, Harambee, McKinsey's Generation Project and others, that youth unemployment has to be addressed as both a supply and demand challenge. While supply-side approaches continue to predominate, more actors are taking up the call to better connect education to employment as one way to address the paradox of large numbers of youth remaining unemployed or underemployed while millions of jobs go unfilled.

Importance of national and sub-national strategies as context matters

While one can note common challenges related to youth unemployment across regions and countries,

most of the most promising solutions operate at the national or sub-national level. This is also where the needs of specific populations are better understood, whether it is the importance of helping women access employment, refugees secure an income, or connect youth in rural communities to opportunity. The sub-national level is also where public-private partnerships, especially within growing sectors, can make the most progress in addressing the specific needs of communities.

Perception of opportunity youth globally as a “lost cause” is still prevalent

Progress has been made in some countries (e.g., the United States-based Opportunity Youth movement) to influence employers' perspectives of out-of-school, out-of-work youth as an opportunity for talent investment. But, there is still much to be done to engage the private sector as champions for hiring opportunity youth and to work with employers to help identify skill needs and gaps, inform training curricula, and highlight and remove built-in biases and barriers to hiring opportunity youth. It is encouraging to see some multinationals and regional companies that are taking concerted action to support opportunity youth in developing economies and business-led coalitions accelerate business commitments and leadership on the issue. (See examples in Chapter 2 under “Employer-led coalitions”)

There is still stigma associated with apprenticeships and vocational and technical education in many countries

It has escaped few policymakers that the countries best able to weather spikes in youth unemployment during the Great Recession had well-established apprenticeship systems. Germany, Switzerland, Austria and others have developed decades (in some cases

centuries) old practices of government and industry partnering closely to provide technical and career learning and on-the-job apprenticeship training. Organizations like the Global Apprenticeship Network are establishing company coalitions in countries around the world to build new apprenticeship or on-the-job traineeships. Companies such as Adecco are dedicating significant resources to building apprenticeship programs in Europe. But, in many parts of the world, trades and apprenticeships are viewed as a poor alternative to traditional post-secondary schooling. Employers, governments, and educational institutions can work together to help change that perception.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities are critical aspects to the challenge of youth opportunity

Some encouraging evidence from the World Bank suggests that entrepreneurship programs in lower-income countries have short-term employment effects². But, most studies have not tracked participants long enough to establish whether their businesses survive, let alone thrive and grow. A more promising approach may be investing resources in existing small and growing businesses to create jobs and also working with the businesses to source opportunity youth, thereby truly working on both the supply (talent) and demand (job creation) sides of the equation simultaneously.

The technology revolution is creating new jobs and/or income opportunities for youth globally

There is a rapidly expanding number and diversity of digital applications, training operations, social media, and technology platforms. Micro-work models such as Samasource and Digital Divide Data and high quality software training providers like Andela and

Moringa are providing new pathways for youth in low-income countries where local job creation is anemic and global tech firms have unfilled opportunities. And, there is a growing number of technology applications (assessments, new talent matching solutions, online portals and skilling platforms) aimed at providing better information, access, or skills for jobs. Yet, most of the training and digital strategies are reaching a very small number of youth who are already at the higher end of the education and skills spectrum. One key challenge is to find ways to expand access to these platforms and build on-ramps for less educated, more disconnected youth.

Changing nature of work and life-long learning opportunities

There is increasing acceptance that we are no longer just faced with the question of how to prepare young people for today's jobs but, in fact, we need to think about the jobs of the future. As a recent WEF report put it, "Building a lifelong learning culture in the workplace entails moving from 'education to employment' to 'education for employability' and from 'job security' to 'career security'³." One commonly cited statistic from a U.S. Department of Labor report states that 65% of today's school-age children will be in jobs that do not exist today. How do we prepare young people for an even more uncertain and changeable job market? Many are beginning to focus on the importance of "learnability." For example, Manpower is developing an app to score individuals on their learnability, InfoSys emphasizes "learning velocity"—the process of going from a question to a good idea in a matter of days or weeks—and Knack is a company that offers apps that provided gamified assessments to help employers discover talent outside of the traditional credentialing systems. To date, however, most of the potential solutions are geared toward better educated, higher skilled workers in the developed world. The implications of digital

technologies—and potential solutions—are much less well understood in the developing world but attracting new attention from organizations like Accenture, Google.org and the Chan/Zuckerberg Initiative. And, while there is an intense debate about how dramatic the impact of automation and artificial intelligence will be on the labor market, few dispute that huge numbers of job functions and required skills will be affected by technology. This has ramifications for everyone involved in the education to employment continuum. Educational institutions need to rethink and retool their pedagogy—from early education through post-secondary—and become much more attuned to the needs of businesses and growing sectors and companies that will have to increase focus and investment in training and rapid reskilling of workers. Governments will have to make this a national strategic competitive priority and provide a mix of policy and legislative responses to create the incentives for the necessary reforms as well as help redefine how social insurance programs can best fulfill their purpose in the rapidly changing world of work.

Importance of youth segmentation, youth voice, and youth agency

Many programs, interventions, and funders fail to segment youth in a meaningful way. This means that some training and subsidized interventions may be ill-suited to the young people participating. Engaging youth in program design and regular feedback is an increasingly accepted—and needed—practice that both ensures youth agency in their own future and helps inform and improve programmatic design. At a global level, a range of annual surveys have been developed to capture youth perspectives to understand issues that are of greatest importance to them (World Economic Forum’s “**Global Shapers Survey**”), gauge their optimism about future economic prospects (Citi Foundation’s “**Pathways to Progress Global Youth Survey**”), and assess how countries around

the world are ensuring youth well-being (Hilton & IYF “**Youth Well-Being Index**”). In addition, there are increasing examples of directly involving youth in programmatic solutions, such as youth-led analysis and youth-led labor market assessments conducted by IREX and others to develop better datasets and improved understanding of the youth jobs ecosystem. And, youth-led movements (e.g. Kenya’s National Youth BUNGE Association and the Opportunity Youth movement in the United States) underscore the power and potential of young people when they are encouraged to self-organize and become changemakers in their communities.

“Many of the identified themes are clearly being addressed by social entrepreneurs, businesses, and governments in certain places but need to be more widely recognized and incorporated into opportunity youth program design or included in any youth jobs and livelihoods ecosystem analysis and strategy.”

Even the most effective (non-governmental) youth employment interventions are subscale

This is a great frustration for funders and practitioners alike. In part this reflects the way funding flows internationally to support youth-related programming and it also underscores the dearth of local government funding to support non-government run initiatives. For certain segments, like the demand-driven training organizations, it emphasizes the importance of continuing to prove the business case

to employers to unlock higher levels of employer contributions and build more sustainable business models.

“Progress has been made in some countries (e.g., the United States-based Opportunity Youth movement) to influence employers’ perspectives of out-of-school, out-of-work youth as an opportunity for talent investment. But, there is still much to be done to engage the private sector as champions for hiring opportunity youth and to work with employers to help identify skill needs and gaps, inform training curricula, and highlight and remove built-in biases and barriers to hiring opportunity youth.”

Global funding for youth employment is largely project and initiative-driven

International development agencies rely on requests for proposals that are often complex, based on time-limited project objectives, and often do not build long-term capacity, limiting scale and sustainability. A different approach could support community ecosystem strategies and organizational plans for growth to scale successful interventions. For their part, private funders often do not include sufficient funding for operational costs, let alone capacity investments that would help mission-focused social enterprises achieve greater scale and impact. This can result in a myriad of small, community-based organizations that, while often providing important services and very responsive

to the needs of their constituents, cannot build the necessary financial, programmatic, and evaluative systems that most international donors require. At the same time, more global-minded companies and funders are looking for partners with the demonstrated capacity and platforms to deliver at scale across multiple geographies.

Few global youth opportunity service provider partners exist

Several funders and multinational companies noted the absence of mature, global partners positioned to implement youth employment or livelihoods grant-making strategies across multiple regions. Unlike other fields such as climate change or education, youth-focused programs (apart from a select few, like the International Youth Foundation and YouthBuild International) have remained country-specific or regional, or are embedded in much larger development institutions that do not have a singular focus on and expertise in the needs of opportunity youth.

Youth program evaluations show encouraging results though more research is needed

There has been a marked increase in rigorous evaluation of international youth employment and entrepreneurship programs and policies over the last decade, though more research is needed. As the ILO-supported **What Works in Youth Development** site indicates, investing in youth can yield results but we need to learn more about the long-term effects of certain interventions. There are also significant unanswered questions about the specific combinations of programs that matter most and little evidence exists on the cost/benefit of youth interventions. The What Works in Youth Development site provides a very useful map of the existing evidence gaps and

opportunities to advance the state of evidence across different geographies and domains.

Few opportunities exist to bring together developed and developing world models and practitioners

Funders and experts who work in the United States and globally noted how little interaction there is between the two communities serving opportunity youth. There is ample opportunity for shared learning, collaboration, and building global communities of practice around common approaches. As one example, Robert Wood Johnson is supporting an International Youth Foundation-led project to bring the best examples of developing world youth models and practices to the United States. There is also an emerging coalition of demand-driven models, including U.S. and international organizations, that could be further leveraged. And, recently, several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have launched national youth service programs that could benefit from dialogue and learning with their North American counterparts.

Youth training programs lack consistent metrics

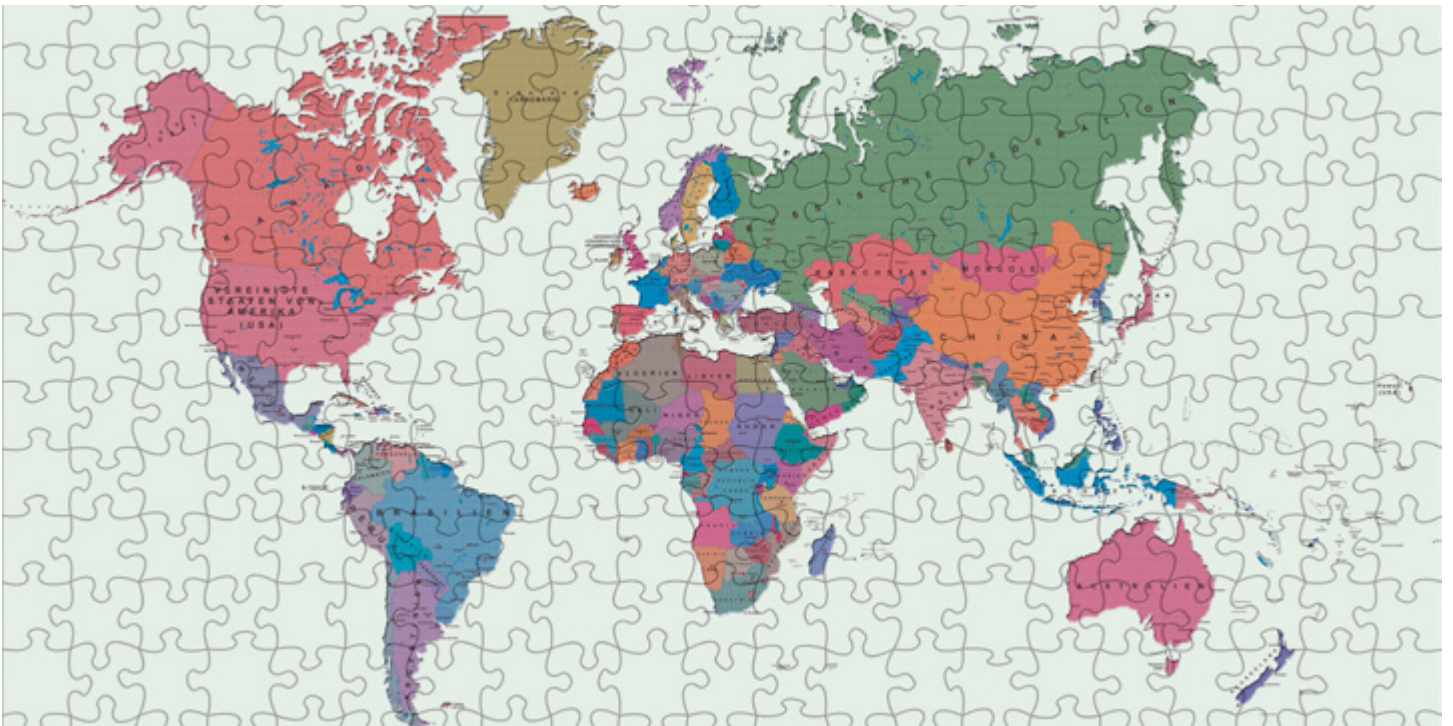
The lack of metrics does not allow for regular cross-organizational comparison and cost-benefit analysis and data-driven return-on-investment calculations. As a result, it is very difficult for funders, governments, or businesses to understand the relative quality and cost/benefit of training programs. McKinsey's Generation Initiative has put forward one proposal to move in this direction: a "cost per employed day" or CPED⁴ that would capture training costs over the number of days employed in the first six months post-employment, allowing for some cross-provider comparison and data to inform improvements in job retention.

Migration is both a potential solution and a huge challenge

According to the World Bank, some of the most promising evidence related to increased opportunity is linked to voluntary migration.⁵ At the same time, forced migration due to conflict or induced by climate-change or other factors translates into long-term refugee and displaced populations and a host of new challenges to be addressed. Many are discussing this issue, but few have launched concerted efforts to address the economic needs of migrant and refugee populations.

Chapter 2

Landscape of Approaches & Solutions to Youth Employment



The organizations and models graphically presented on the next page are segmented into several categories that reflect different trends that were identified through expert interviews and the literature review.

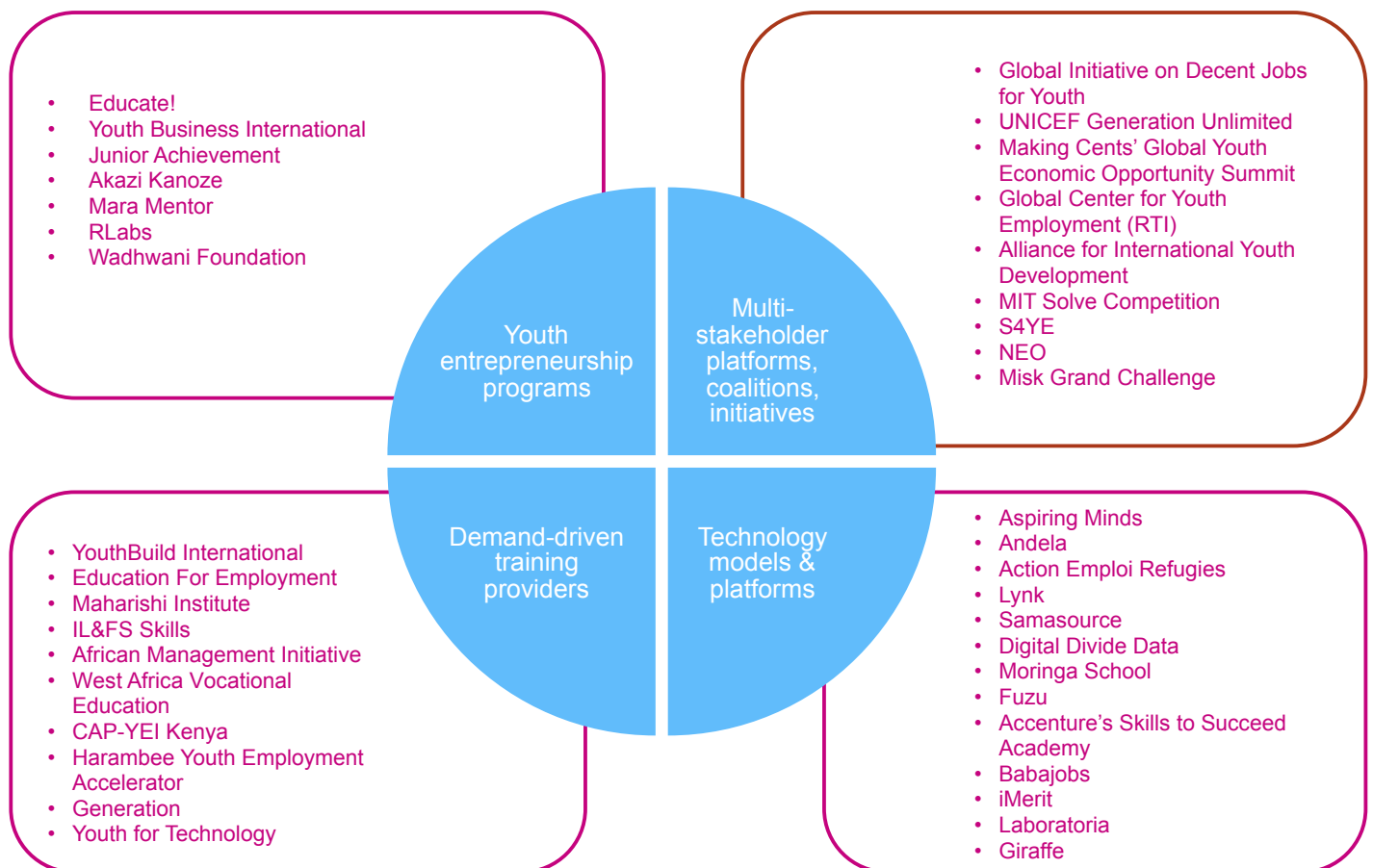
The graphics attempt to capture the number and diversity of organizations, models, and initiatives that are dedicated to advancing economic opportunities for youth. The list is not designed to be comprehensive. It is a small sample of existing models that were mentioned by several different informants as especially innovative, evidence-based, or otherwise illustrative of a growing trend in the sector. To limit the number, large international non-governmental organizations (e.g., Plan, IREX, Catholic Relief Services, FHI360, Save the Children) that have youth programming as one among many other program areas have not been included. Similarly, the numerous bi-lateral donor agencies that fund youth-related projects are not represented. For a more comprehensive resource platform of organizations in the global youth employment and livelihoods space, see Making Cent's Youth Economic Opportunities platform: <https://youtheconomicopportunities.org>.

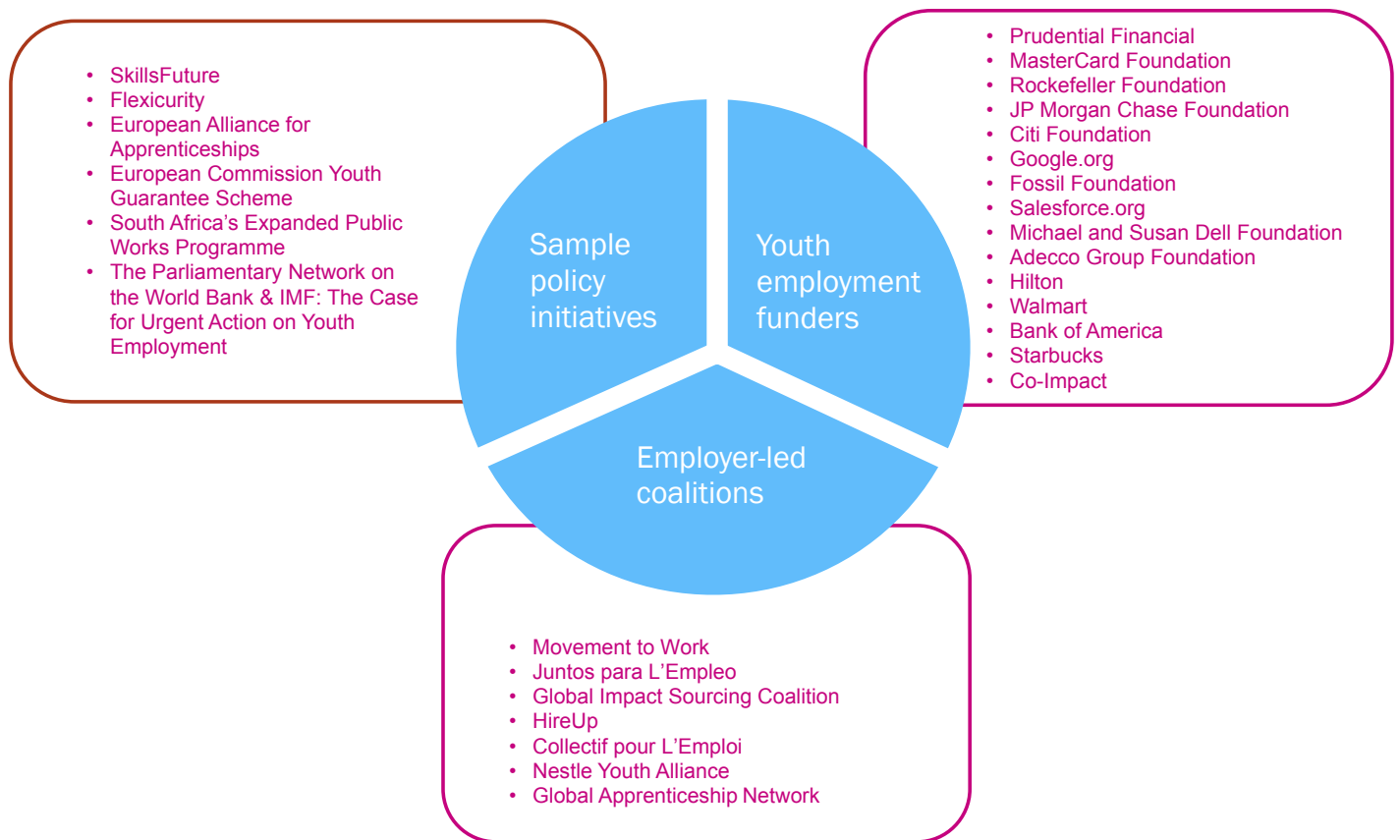
A large number of the initiatives in the graphics have been initiated in just the last several years and demonstrate the increased attention and momentum the youth economic opportunity sector is experiencing. While organizations dedicated to fostering youth entrepreneurship and demand-driven training have been around for some time, they are growing in number and sophistication. Technology platforms & models designed to address bottlenecks in the education-to-employment pipeline represent some of the most interesting (and potentially scalable) innovations but are relatively less proven with rigorous research.

Employer-led coalitions are gaining traction but still represent an untapped potential for engaging (and

challenging) business leaders to make more substantial commitments and investments in youth economic opportunity. And, finally, it is encouraging to see a growing list of private and corporate philanthropies that are identifying youth employment as a critical priority for their grantmaking strategies. Note that these organizations are almost all U.S.-based, or global, enterprises. There are also a number of European and other regional funders that are playing important roles in helping to shape the future of youth employment around the world.

Web links to the organizations, models, and initiatives outlined in the graphics on the next pages can be found in Appendix III.





Chapter 3

Global Opportunity Youth Initiative: A Place-Based, Collaborative & Systems-Change Approach to Youth Employment & Livelihoods



The models, organizations, coalitions, and policy solutions outlined in Chapter 2 provide a snapshot of the richness and diversity of solutions to advancing youth economic opportunity. However, as described at the outset of this report, the global youth opportunity field is largely characterized by time-limited initiatives and donor funding focused on short-term project and program gains that keep the youth opportunity sector fragmented, undercapitalized, and with varying levels of evidence of effectiveness. And, given the complex factors that affect the youth jobs ecosystem, the sector needs to evolve from searching for “silver bullet” single solutions to youth opportunity and consider more multi-faceted approaches that draw on the best elements of different youth interventions, leverage local strengths, are supported by donors in a more coordinated way, and delivered in an integrated approach in partnership with local government, education, and business stakeholders.

The Global Opportunity Youth Initiative envisions a design to advance economic opportunity for youth that is context or “place” specific, collaborative in structure and implementation, and uses a systems lens to understand the jobs or livelihoods ecosystem opportunities most ripe for change. The strategy is informed by the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions’ experience building a national coalition and community of practice to advance first jobs and/or reconnection to education for opportunity youth in the United States. Over the past five years, Aspen’s approach has been to support strong existing community collaboratives/backbone organizations focused on building and deepening education and employment pathways for opportunity youth in the United States. Twenty-four communities participate and develop their collaboratives to coordinate and implement programmatic and system-level interventions to improve youth opportunity. Youth voice and leadership are central to the local engagement as well as represented in a national community of practice.

The design is also informed by Global Development Incubator’s (GDI) work on systems change and multi-stakeholder initiatives in the international development sphere. More specifically, in 2017, GDI partner Alice Gugelev also researched and wrote a separate white paper, *Jobs & Livelihoods*, that came to many of the same conclusions as this report. Given the complementarity of findings and conclusions, GDI has become a close design partner and has helped shape the thinking behind the Global Opportunity Youth Initiative.

Lastly, the design principles draw on concepts that surfaced through the landscape interviews and research that has informed this paper, specifically: the need for greater donor collaboration and diverse funding mechanisms, the importance of youth voice and agency linked to a broader campaign for global youth opportunity, and anchored in a global youth opportunity summit. Supported projects will strive to work on both demand-driven strategies needed to build better linkages between employers in growing industries and best-in-class educational providers as well as nurture entrepreneurial ecosystems where wage-related opportunities are limited. In relevant geographies, we will find ways to provide greater access to digital opportunities to prepare young people for the future of work. And, the “North Star” youth outcome and impact goals will be anchored in the 2030 SDG goals.

Global Opportunity Youth Initiative— Core Design Elements

1. PLACE-BASED AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC

The youth opportunity eco-system is very context-specific and approaches that are effective in certain countries, states, or cities have less relevance in others because the structural economic factors are so different, as argued persuasively by Louise Fox.⁶

GOYI communities will be determined based on the following criteria:

- The number or percentage of youth, including NEETs, in need of support to access meaningful economic opportunity;
- Capacity of local education providers and clarity about where changes are required in the education/skills training sector to meet employer demand;
- Governments with a demonstrated commitment to reforming the education to employment/livelihoods value chain;
- Local partners with promising or proven models and capacity to implement and a diversity of communities, representing different eco-systems, that will enhance learning across the community of practice;
- Viable economic pathways that can be supported through some combination of training linked to employment or investments in entrepreneurship/livelihoods;
- Ability to get to a “tipping point” in the local ecosystem that could significantly shift the needle for the majority of young people in the community;
- A macro-economic and political environment (ideally with some local resources to match outside investments) suitable to effecting measurable change;
- Demand for a collaborative structure to accelerate what works, innovate and coordinate;
- Clear gaps and roles for international investors and grant providers;
- Outsized impact potential; i.e., the location has broader impact/influence.

GOYI will start with 4-5 communities to pilot test the new approach, gain confidence in the systems-change results that are tangibly benefiting global opportunity youth, and then consider building out

to a more significant number of locations that would enhance the global network and learning and reach a much greater number of youth across geographies.

2. A SYSTEMS APPROACH

The systems approach will start with an in-depth market analysis of youth economic opportunity along the education to employment/livelihoods continuum at the urban, peri-urban, or regional level and in close partnership with local anchor partner(s). The analysis will identify the most impactful opportunities to address gaps or inefficiencies, as well as strengths and existing assets, in the youth opportunity ecosystem. The assessment will consider the country and sector macroeconomic dynamics, extant government policies and regulations, and assess the growth potential—and talent needs—of key sectors. Based on the analysis, a local consortium will develop strategies that could range from growing demand for labor through financing and business development assistance for SMEs, to filling skill gaps to meet employer demand, to addressing market information or market clearing inefficiencies, as well as considering social entrepreneurship and citizenship opportunities that productively engage youth.

“The Global Opportunity Youth Initiative envisions a design to advance economic opportunity for youth that is context or “place” specific, collaborative in structure and implementation, and uses a systems lens to understand the jobs or livelihoods ecosystem opportunities most ripe for change.”

3. COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & A GLOBAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

The Global Opportunity Youth Initiative is premised on the idea that multifaceted challenges such as youth opportunity can only be successfully addressed with a multi-sector approach. As mentioned earlier, the traditional models of funding time-limited projects or replicating single intervention models have not resulted in the scale or impact we all seek. GOYI will draw on promising practice and learning from collective impact and other collaborative approaches to identify existing (or help form) local consortia of partners and stakeholders working together toward shared goals. Government champions will be necessary to spur commitments and action and the connection to a global community of practice will leverage cross-community learning and network opportunities. In this way, collaboration will be at two levels: in community to implement interventions for youth and at the global level to share good practice, mobilize resources and investment, and recruit transnational partners, particularly in the private sector. In other words, local collaboratives will be connected to a global network and learning community that can help create and accelerate greater access to and adoption of sound practice with communities determining adoption strategies based on their labor markets and local ecology of opportunity.

4. YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP AT THE CENTER

A widely accepted maxim in the Opportunity Youth field in the United States is: “nothing about us without us” an idea introduced by the disability rights community as a demand to center the expertise and leadership of people most affected by any given issue as participants to design solutions. For very pragmatic reasons, youth need to be involved in design and actively sought out to provide feedback on programs and services. Youth are, after all, the consumers of services who can provide the most

meaningful feedback on the efficacy of a particular intervention. They can also ensure that programs are designed to meet the highest order community needs. Just as importantly, in many countries where youth are a significant percentage of the population (if not the majority), youth leadership and youth agency are important aspects of building vibrant communities and an engaged citizenry with a voice in the political and social processes shaping their futures. GOYI will actively engage global opportunity youth from the design stage through implementation in the selected geographies. A global opportunity youth leadership cohort, developed and stewarded by YouthBuild International, will become local champions in their communities and convene regionally as well as at a first Global Opportunity Youth Summit to advocate for the policies and programs they believe will provide pathways to a brighter future.

5. SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG WOMEN

In addition to the youth target, a special focus will be placed on supporting young women’s transition to a viable economic livelihood. In many of the target countries, young women are significantly less likely to attach to the labor force and it is well-documented that increasing women’s economic participation directly correlates to stronger economic growth and a pathway out of poverty for them and their families.

6. DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUTURE OF WORK

As automation and artificial intelligence (AI) begin to dramatically affect the number and type of available or potential jobs across industries, governments are grappling with the impact on their economies and citizens. Selected cities will be expected to have some understanding of how the local labor market is transforming due to the impact of AI and automation and be proactively seeking to address the impact(s) of the “fourth industrial revolution” on young people’s economic prospects. At the same time, digitization and

increased connectivity are creating new pathways to economic opportunity in developing markets. Within our community-based approach, we will prioritize research and innovations that address the challenge and opportunity of accelerated technological change and identify the most promising and effective policy and programmatic responses. A place-based approach allows for greater adaptation to the local context. For example, in one location, there may be an emphasis on addressing skill gaps in growing digital sectors while in others we may focus on building a stronger base of digital literacy and tech entrepreneurship for micro-work or other tech-related livelihoods opportunities.

“Over the past five years, Aspen’s approach has been to support strong existing community collaboratives/ backbone organizations focused on building and deepening education and employment pathways for opportunity youth in the United States...Youth voice and leadership are central to the local engagement as well as represented in a national community of practice.”

7. FOCUS ON PROVEN SOLUTIONS AND COMMITMENT TO TRACKING AND EVALUATION

The landscape interviews and research confirmed that we are learning more and more about what is working (and what is not) to provide supports for youth to access meaningful employment or a viable livelihood. Yet, while there are an increasing number of rigorous evaluations that have been completed or are underway, evaluators and economists agree that more research is needed to unpack the specific

elements of interventions that lead to positive outcomes, conducted over longer timeframes, and designed to better assess the cost-effectiveness of certain interventions as well as the potential displacement effects of others.⁷ Furthermore, a commitment to data tracking is critical to the effective implementation of multi-stakeholder collaboratives to ensure stated goals and outcomes are achieved, partners held accountable, to enrich learning across sites, and to achieve a better understanding of the return-on-investment of different interventions in different contexts. A clear performance data tracking and research and evaluation process will be core to the initiative.

8. DONOR COLLABORATION, EMPLOYING FLEXIBLE FINANCING STRATEGIES

Many of the experts interviewed for this research agreed that the crisis of youth unemployment that exists in most countries across the globe calls for greater collaboration and coordination and an infusion of resources, deployed more effectively, to achieve greater progress. Funder coordination can achieve greater leverage, focus on systems level changes, direct resources to the most proven approaches, and consider “big bet” opportunities that could accelerate impact. In addition, there is a growing appreciation of the importance of employing different financing strategies along the spectrum of innovation grants and larger scale-up grants to big bets, results-based financing, and impact investing. GOYI will seek to employ different financial strategies that are most appropriate to the needs of chosen geographies, based on the market analysis of challenges and opportunities.

9. INTEGRATED WITH AND/OR BUILDING ON EXISTING INITIATIVES

As gleaned through the landscape interviews and represented in the Multi-Stakeholder Platforms, Coalitions, and Initiatives graphics in Chapter 2,

there are already a number of global platforms that have been established over the past several years to advance knowledge, evidence, partnerships, and interventions addressing youth economic opportunity. But, it was also widely acknowledged in interviews that there needs be better coordination and integration among the various platforms. Therefore, one of the foundational elements of GOYI is to find opportunities to integrate with existing entities, avoid duplication of efforts, determine ways to support and leverage their strategies, and identify specific aspects of the initiative that can be managed by partners.

10. CONVENING TO BUILD COMMUNITY, MOBILIZE COMMITMENTS, AND ACCELERATE MOMENTUM

Over the last decade, there have been any number of summits and gatherings to discuss the challenge of and potential solutions to youth unemployment, but few have included youth in the design and at the center of the summit. And, no convening we can identify brings together opportunity youth (and the organizations dedicated to supporting them) from developed countries such as the United States with counterparts in emerging markets. GOYI's convening strategy will: a) launch a global community of practice to advance knowledge and practice, b) have youth leadership at its core, and c) galvanize business and other institutional commitments to youth economic opportunity linked to the 2030 SDG goals. In addition, YouthBuild International, will lead an effort to organize the first global opportunity youth summit to galvanize new partnerships, commitments, and a sustained campaign dedicated to opportunity youth.

Appendices

Appendix I: Expert Interviews for Global Opportunity Youth Research

FUNDERS

- Steve Cumming, Peter Materu, Meredith Lee, Ann Miles, The Mastercard Foundation
- Lata Reddy, Shané Harris, Sarah Keh, Prudential Financial
- Alyson Wise, Laura Roberts, Mamadou Biteye, The Rockefeller Foundation
- David Rothschild, Charles Tsai, Fossil Foundation
- Alice Goh, Hilary Pennington, Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjima, Ford Foundation
- Brandee McHale, Florencia Spangaro, Citi Foundation
- Chauncy Lennon, Linda Rodriguez, JP Morgan Chase
- Florian Maganza, Google.org
- Gayatri Agnew, Walmart
- Frannie Lautier, (former) African Development Bank
- Jennifer Stedler, Salesforce.org
- Gul Rahman, Edmund de Rosthchild Foundations' Empower Families for Innovative Philanthropies Project
- Santhosh Ramdoss, Rahil Rangwala, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
- Angela Escallon Emiliani, Fundação Corona
- Olivia Leland, Co-Impact
- Daniella Foster, Hilton
- Ajay Kela, Wadhwani Foundation
- Global Economic Opportunity Summit
- Eric Johnson, Peter Joyce, RTI's Global Center for Youth Employment
- Bill Reese, Susan Reichle, Peter Shiras, International Youth Foundation
- Azita Berar Awad, Susana Puerto, Felix Weidenkaff, International Labor Organization
- Michael McCabe, Nancy Taggart, Lauren Greubel, USAID
- Evan Hochberg, United Way Worldwide
- Maria Eugenia Munaretto, Youth Employment Funders Group
- Carol Bellamy, Global Partnership for Education
- Rick Little, Founder, International Youth Foundation
- Andrew Stern, Alice Gugelev, Global Development Incubator
- Sara Monteabaro, Hala Hanna, MIT Solve Competition
- David Woollcombe, Peace Child International
- Laurence Chandy, Nicholas Rees, UNICEF

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODELS/ PLATFORMS

- Namita Datta, World Bank Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE)
- Anne-Brigitte Albrechtsen, Plan International
- Matt Hobson, (former project lead) S4YE
- Mattias Lundberg, World Bank
- Fiona Macauley, Equal Means
- Tim Nourse, Sarah Sladen, Making Cents and

GLOBAL BUSINESS COALITIONS/EMPLOYER DRIVEN INITIATIVES

- Shea Gopaul, Global Apprenticeship Network
- Jon Browning, Sara Enright, Global Impact Sourcing Coalition
- Jill Huntley, Lisa Neuberger, Nijma Khan, Accenture
- Bettina Schaller, Cynthia Hansen, Adecco
- Patricia McCall, Center for Economic Growth, INSEAD Abu Dhabi
- Paul Klein, HireUp, Canada
- Martin Chrisney, KPMG
- Meghann Glavin, Alicia Vermaele, Starbucks Coffee Company

PRACTITIONER MODELS/US OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IMPLEMENTERS

- Maryana Iskander, Nicola Galombik, Harambee
- Tim Cross, Sangeeta Tyagi, YouthBuild International
- Salvatore Nigro, Ghadeer Khuffash, Education For Employment
- Rebecca Harrison, African Management Initiative
- Robert Hawkins, World Bank
- Branka Minic, Future Work Consulting
- Amy Black, Results4Development
- Randall Kempner, ANDE Network
- Devang Vussonji, Dalberg Global Development Advisors
- Mona Mourshed, McKinsey's Generation Initiative
- Fay Hanleybrown, FSG Impact
- Shawn Bowen—Year Up
- Elyse Rosenblum, Grads of Life
- Nicole Yohalem, CCED Results
- Amy Barad, Tulane University
- Melody Barnes, Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
- Eshauna Smith, Urban Alliance
- Usha Ganesh, Intellectap
- Bentley Wilson, Africa Working
- Adam Grunwald, Lynk
- JB Schramm, New Profit's Learn to Earn Fund
- Alastair Fitzpayne, Aspen Future of Work Initiative
- Tom Ogletree, Liz Simon, General Assembly
- Clare Ignatowski & Bonnie Politz, Expert Youth Development Consultants
- Avnish Gungadurdoss, Instiglio
- Kristin Lord, IREX

Appendix II

MAPS

AFRICA – LAC – MIDDLE EAST – ASIA

Youth unemployment, workforce, school enrollment and literacy

“Youth” : person aged between 15 and 24

Youth population : % of total population – number, in thousands (k)

Youth unemployment : % of youth population – number, in thousands (k)

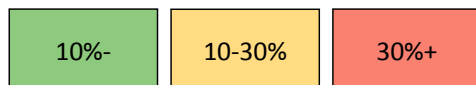
School enrollment, primary : net% *

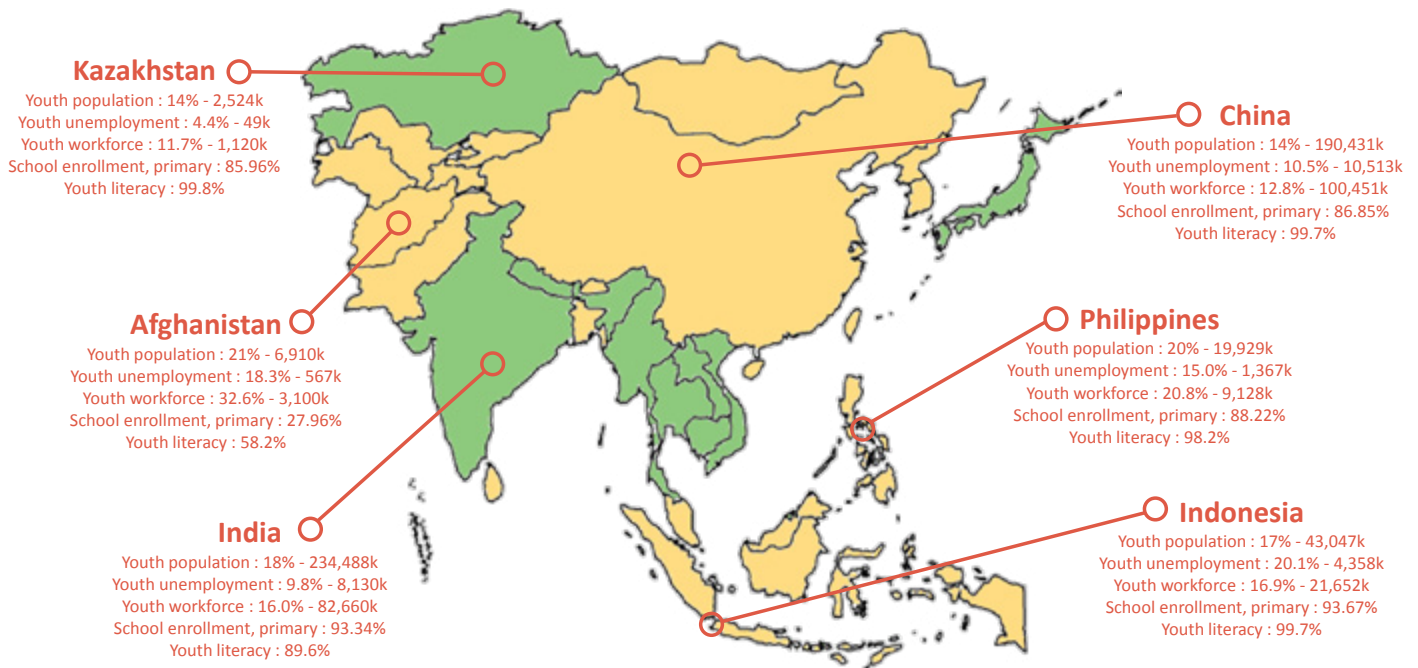
Youth literacy : % of youth population

Data from 2015, World Bank Database and ILO Database

* Data are from 1970 to 2015 for this indicator

COLOR CODE



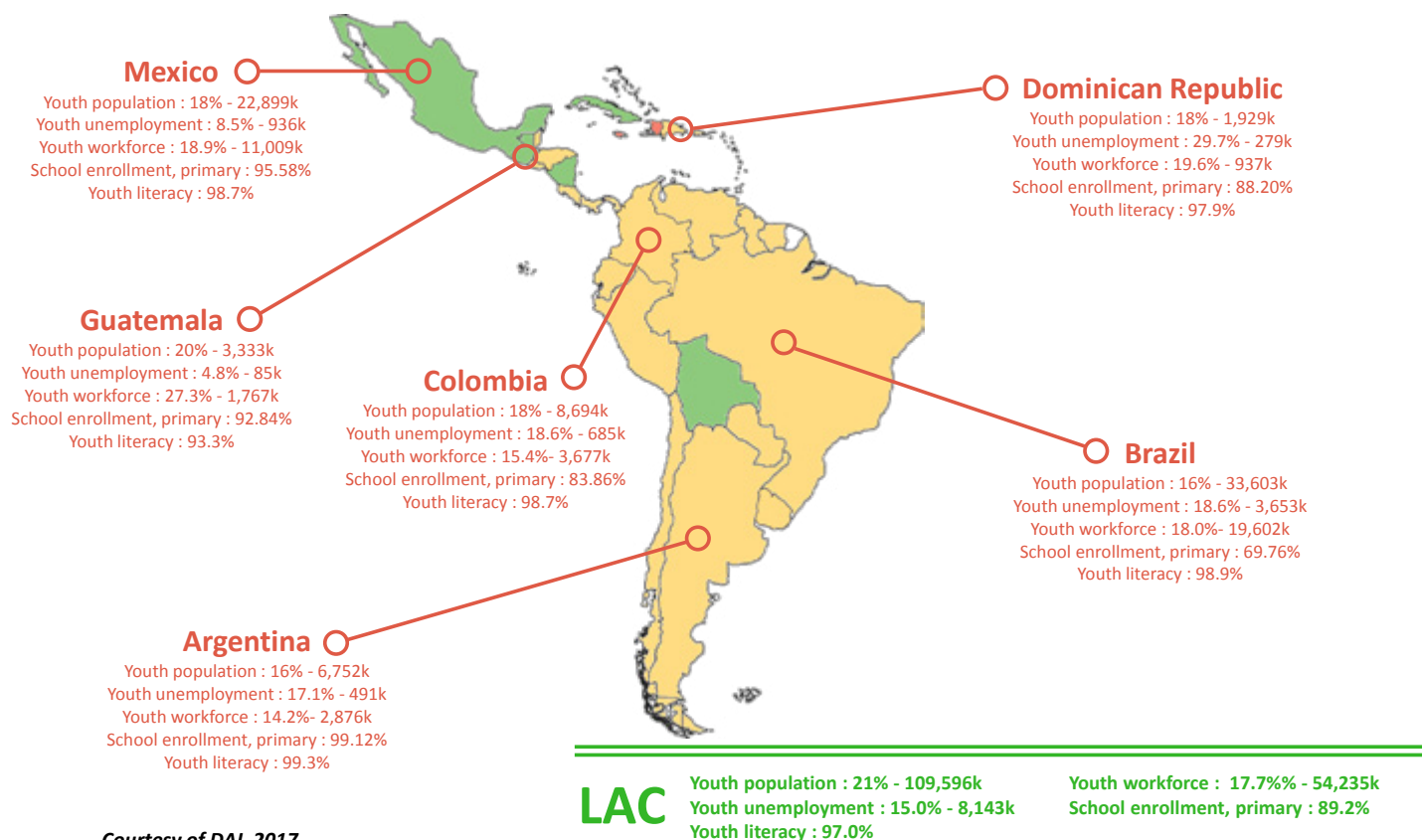


ASIA

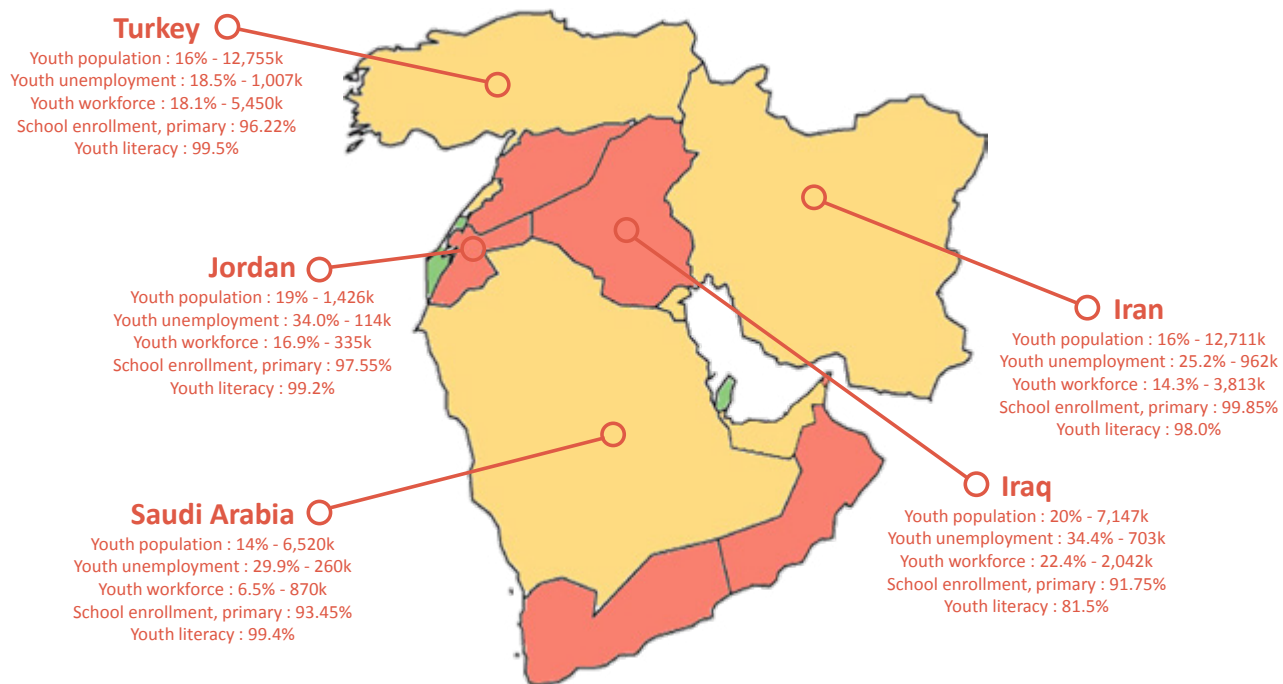
Youth population : 17% - 666,976k
 Youth unemployment : 10.7% - 31,736k
 Youth literacy : 88.9%

Youth workforce : 13.9% - 298,953k
 School enrollment, primary : 90.5%

Courtesy of DAI, 2017



Courtesy of DAI, 2017



Courtesy of DAI, 2017

MIDDLE EAST

Youth population : 16% - 48,042k
 Youth unemployment : 25.5% - 4,718k
 Youth literacy : 97.1%

Youth workforce : 14.1% - 18,511k
 School enrollment, primary : 94.1%

Appendix III: Chapter 2 Landscape of Approaches & Solutions to Youth Employment (Web Links)

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

- **Educate!**
- **Youth Business International**
- **Junior Achievement**
- **Akazi Kanoze**
- **Mara Mentor**
- **RLabs**

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS, COALITIONS, INITIATIVES

- **Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth**
- **UNICEF Generation Unlimited**
- **Making Cents' Global Youth Economic Opportunity Summit**
- **Global Center for Youth Employment (RTI)**
- **Alliance for International Youth Development**
- **MIT Solve Competition**
- **S4YE**
- **NEO**
- **Misk Grand Challenge**

DEMAND-DRIVEN TRAINING PROVIDERS

- **YouthBuild International**
- **Education For Employment**
- **Maharishi Institute**
- **IL&FS Skills**
- **African Management Initiative**
- **West Africa Vocational Education**
- **CAP-YEI Kenya**
- **Harambee Employment Youth Accelerator**
- **Generation**
- **Youth for Technology**

TECHNOLOGY MODELS & PLATFORMS

- **Aspiring Minds**
- **Andela**
- **Action Emploi Refugies**
- **Lynk**
- **Samasource**
- **Digital Divide Data**
- **Moringa School**
- **Fuzu**
- **Accenture's Skills to Succeed Academy**
- **Babajobs**
- **iMerit**
- **Laboratoria**
- **Giraffe**

SAMPLE POLICY INITIATIVES

- **SkillsFuture**
- **Flexicurity**
- **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**
- **European Commission Youth Guarantee Scheme**
- **South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme**
- **The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF: The Case for Urgent Action on Youth Employment**

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUNDERS

- **Prudential Financial**
- **MasterCard Foundation**
- **Rockefeller Foundation**
- **JP Morgan Chase Foundation**
- **Citi Foundation**
- **Google.org**
- **Fossil Foundation**

- **Salesforce.org**
- **Michael and Susan Dell Foundation**
- **Adecco Group Foundation**
- **Hilton**
- **Walmart**
- **Bank of America**
- **Starbucks**
- **Co-Impact**

EMPLOYER-LED COALITIONS

- **Movement to Work**
- **Juntos para L'Emploio**
- **Global Impact Sourcing Coalition**
- **HireUp**
- **Collectif pour L'Emploi**
- **Nestle Youth Alliance**
- **Global Apprenticeship Network**

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- 2 Kluve, Jochen, Susana Puerto, David Robalino, Jose Manuel Romero, Friederike Rother, Jonathan Storer, Felix Weidenkaff, and Marc Witte. *Interventions to Improve the Labour Market Outcomes of Youth Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services and Subsidized Employment Interventions*. Washington DC: World Bank, 2016.
- 3 *Realizing Human Potential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017.
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