

Next Generation

Education and Skills

What We Know Brief**May 2022**

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Next Generation research is driven by a desire to empower, and an understanding that in engaging with young people, and supporting their energy for positive change, we can all benefit.



Foreword

It's a pleasure for me to share with you the latest outputs from our Next Generation series.

At the British Council, we can see that young people across the world are active in transforming their own circumstances. Next Generation research engages with young people in order to support them in doing that. It does not look solely at the barriers facing them, nor does it view them simply as a way to drive the future economy of their country. A deficit approach to youth, or a purely instrumental one, is unhelpful and does not capture the true picture of their lives, and of their potential. Next Generation research is driven by a desire to empower, and an understanding that in engaging with young people, and supporting their energy for positive change, we can all benefit.

Next Generation has been running since 2009, and in that time we have listened to the voices of tens of thousands of young people from countries including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Vietnam, Myanmar, Germany, Colombia, Lebanon and the UK. Their insight has enabled colleagues working in those countries to ensure their programming is truly serving the needs of this vital demographic. We have also ensured the views of young people are shared with policy-makers and influencers locally.

These new What We Know briefs allow us to look beyond geographical boundaries and explore the themes that emerge time after time. We see that while there may be differences in their circumstances, young people across the world share similar views on areas such as education and employment, as well as on the challenges facing their generation. Their commitment to tackling those challenges shines through, as does their frustration that their voices are often missing from the conversation when policies that will affect them are being developed.

We still have a way to travel to ensure that this research is as participatory as it can be, that it reaches as many young people as possible, including those often excluded from public discourse, and that the findings are widely available and accessible.

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We reviewed the programme in 2020, and that review offered us a clear way forward, including on how we need to be more consistent in the data we gather, as well as being more creative in how we present the results. We view the three What We Know briefs as part of this renewed commitment to sharing common insights and engaging with youth organisations and policy-makers to support inclusive youth programming and policy-making.

At the time of writing, we have two new projects underway, in Pakistan and Indonesia, and we look forward to welcoming them to the Next Generation family. We are also embedding the Next Generation approach within our new global Young Leaders programmes, ensuring that all of our work with young people around the world is properly informed by their voices. Within and outside of the British Council, the examples of youth programming included as case studies in these briefs demonstrate how organisations are meeting the needs of young people. We hope that our Next Generation research continues to support this.

Beyond any one programme, I see Next Generation as absolutely central to our work in cultural relations. As well as actively listening to young people around the world, it enables those young people involved to enter into dialogue with their global peers. In seeking ways to co-operate on shared challenges, and through the exchange of ideas for solutions, this intercultural dialogue can help to build a better world. I will leave the final word to one of our Next Generation participants from Colombia, in a statement from 2018 that still resonates today: “I believe that all of us at some point dream of a country in peace, but peace is something that is built, by building relations to one another.”

Christine Wilson

Director, Research and Insight, British Council

Executive Summary

This What We Know brief explores the topic of Education and Skills from the perspectives of young people in Germany, Poland, Italy, Lebanon, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Vietnam as captured in research carried out by the British Council under its [Next Generation](#) programme. The research was analysed and summarised, and key findings presented and discussed by international groups of young people, youth practitioners and organisations and policy-makers at an online event in March 2022.

This brief contains an overview of relevant policy frameworks from major international organisations, summarises the key points of the research and presents some of the recommendations for action and next steps captured in the event's discussion groups. It is complemented by case study examples of inspiring programmes and projects connected to the themes of the research.

The research identified three key areas of primary importance to young people:

- **Quality of education.** There is a need to modernise the curriculum, systems, teaching styles and approaches to ensure education and training are fit for purpose.
- **Accessibility and equality.** Young people can experience exclusion from education and training systems and opportunities due to a variety of factors, including identity, socio-economic status, gender, disability and location.
- **Skills gap.** The knowledge and skills that young people have when they leave school, university or training do not always equip them for working life in the 21st century.

Reflections and recommendations both from the Next Generation research carried out and from the event discussion groups are highlighted. These focused on the need to involve young people in the development of education policy and to ensure their representation and voice at institutional level, strengthen gender equality throughout education and provide specific industry insights and evidence into the formulation of education and training policy to help address the identified skills mismatch.

Two further What We Know briefs are published in this series: Local and Global Challenges and Youth Voice (Political and Civic Engagement).



Next Generation Programme

The Next Generation programme is part of the British Council's commitment to exploring youth voice and choice. It aims to understand youth attitudes and aspirations, amplify youth voice and support better youth policy-making.

The Next Generation research examines the conditions that support young people in becoming creative, fulfilled and active citizens in their countries during moments of change. The research looks at young people's views on:

- education, employment, lifestyle and their hopes and fears for their country;
- their degree of international engagement and opinions on the wider world; and
- the values and beliefs that affect their lives.

The Next Generation research uses a mixed-methodology approach to gathering data. The methodology and sample size vary slightly to suit each country and are detailed in each report. Next Generation reports include:

- a desk-based literature review; and
- a national survey with a diverse segment of the young population covering both urban and rural locations.

Each country report also relies on additional sources such as interviews and focus group discussions and includes a Youth Task Force advisory board with young people, youth organisations and other key youth stakeholders. Next Generation reports also produce a series of recommendations supporting policy change.

Since 2016, the Next Generation programme has conducted research in countries such as [Turkey](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Zimbabwe](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). To see the full range of countries covered in the Next Generation portfolio, you can visit the British Council website [here](#).



It aims to understand youth attitudes and aspirations, amplify youth voice and support better youth policy-making.

Next Generation What We Know Briefs

To better understand and compare the aspirations and attitudes of young people from across the world, three What We Know briefs bring together findings and insights from our most recent reports and examine the global attitudes and opinions that young people have on Education and Skills, Local and Global Challenges, and Youth Voice (Political and Civic Engagement).

The What We Know briefs are based on a review and analysis of the latest Next Generation reports from [Germany](#), [Poland](#), [Italy](#), [Lebanon](#), [Nigeria](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Myanmar](#) and [Vietnam](#), and include:

- Desk research/literature review on the current global youth policy and strategy context relevant to the three identified Next Generation topics above.
- Case Studies of British Council and external policy and programming relevant to the three core Next Generation areas (understanding youth attitudes and aspirations, amplifying youth voice and supporting better youth policy-making).
- Reflections from three What We Know workshops that were carried out in March 2022 with a range of young people, youth organisations and policy-makers from across the world to discuss the findings identified from the Next Generation research, current practices and opportunities for action.

The table on the following page provides an overview of the samples used in the Next Generation countries analysed in this brief.

This What We Know brief focuses on what young people across the world think regarding their access to and quality of education and skills development, and how prepared they are for the working world.

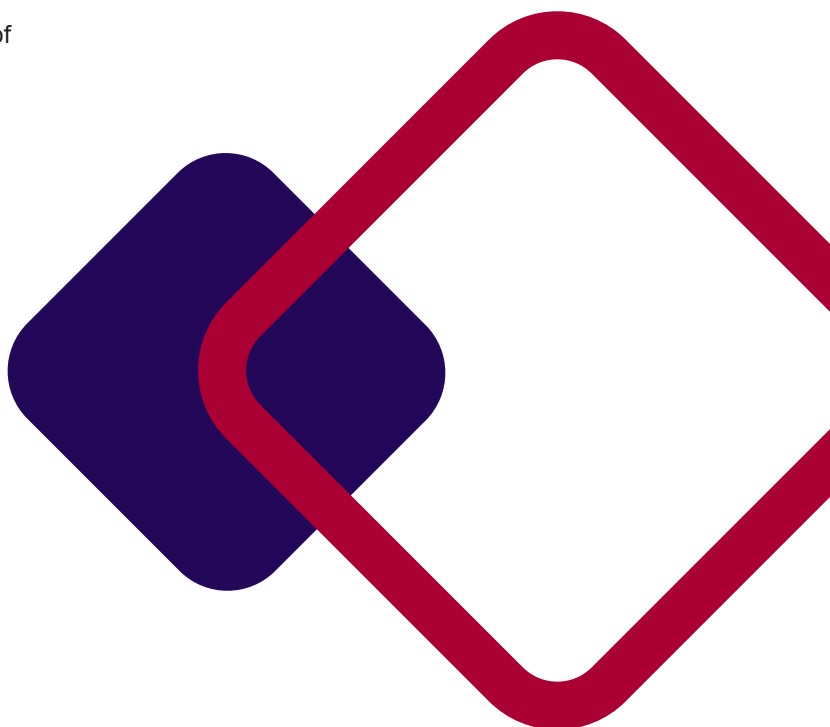


Table 1 Samples used in the Next Generation countries analysed in this brief

Next Gen Country	Year of Publication	Age of Participants	Scale of Data Collection
Ethiopia	2019	15-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2,332 survey respondents – 10 in-depth interviews (IDIs) (2 hours) – 8 workshops (6-8 participants each)
Germany	2019	18-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2,018 survey respondents – 24 digital diaries over a two-week period – 6 participants took part in qualitative follow-up to develop key themes emerging from their diaries
Italy	2020	18-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2,015 survey respondents – 5 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 10 participants each – 9 IDIs with young people – 2 interviews with heads of organisations – 13 IDIs with civic society stakeholders – 1 workshop with 35 participants
Lebanon	2021 (Next Steps) ¹	15-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 185 participants through 42 FGDs and 17 IDIs – 8 participants in key informant interviews (KIIs).
Myanmar	2019	18-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2,473 survey respondents – 10 FGDs with between 5 and 11 participants each – 20 KIIs – 5 one-day youth policy workshops with 20 participants each
Nigeria	2020	18-35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 5,001 survey respondents – 32 youth engagement workshops and IDIs – 237 online surveys – 18 online interviews – 24 participants' COVID diaries (3 diaries each)
Poland	2021	18-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2,000 survey respondents – 12 FGDs (92 participants) – Social media research of 17 Facebook groups
Vietnam	2020	16-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 15 stakeholder interviews – 1,200 survey respondents – 108 FGD participants – 20 IDIs – 1 validation workshop with advisory committee – 2 validation workshops with youth task force – 4 IDIs with young entrepreneurs

¹ This study reflects on the initial [Next Generation Lebanon report](#), published in 2020, that included 13 auto-driven photo elicitation interviews, 13 photovoice discussions with young people with 6-13 participants per discussion, and a survey involving 2,879 respondents, aged 15-29.

Policy Overview

Issues of education and skills are at the heart of policy initiatives of all major international organisations. Education is seen as the key policy platform to support young people in their development, and bridging the gap between education, skills and employment is seen as a major challenge in economic and social development across the world.

The **European Union youth policy** places an emphasis on both quality education and quality employment, with an added emphasis on levelling up (e.g. moving rural youth forward). Particular attention is paid to quality indicators (EU Dashboard of Youth Indicators) and assuring the quality of educational institutions and educational provision at all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary), as well as on recognition and validation of skills (e.g. technical and vocational education training (TVET), and certification systems such as Youthpass in non-formal education and Europass in formal education and employment). Furthermore, in line with its core mission and values, the EU promotes educational mobility for both pupils/students and staff, and supports cooperation between youth and educational institutions across borders). Addressing youth unemployment through training and skills development as well as employment opportunities such as the EU Youth Guarantee is at the heart of EU youth employment policy. Youth participation is a key underlying value and approach in most of those initiatives, including empowering young people to act and contribute to policy cycles in education and skills sectors, and supporting youth voice structures and representation (e.g. EU Youth Dialogue in the field of education and skills).

At the **United Nations**, education and employment are on the top of the UN World Programme of Action for Youth, and youth education and employment issues are embedded in core Sustainable Development Goal pledges including SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The **Council of Europe (CoE)**, although primarily not concerned with education and employment, pays a lot of attention to issues of inclusion, equality and anti-discrimination in education, including through human rights education and promoting inclusive approaches to education considering the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups, and countering hate speech and discrimination.

The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** has a clear focus on equity in education as a key factor in social and economic development of its member states as well as low-income countries around the world. The key issues OECD works on include resource equity (ensuring that pupils/students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to education), gender equality, proper resourcing of education systems, and lifelong learning. Finally, the issue of skills match is high on the agenda as a way of ensuring graduates are well equipped for the labour markets.

The **UK foreign policy agenda** has a key focus on girls' education: *"We will continue our efforts to ensure all girls have at least 12 years of quality education, using our aid spending and presidency - with Kenya - of the Global Partnership for Education summit in 2021 to make progress towards the global commitment to get 40 million more girls in developing countries into education by 2025".*

Findings

Quality of education: modernisation of the curriculum, methods and teaching

Young people globally are concerned with the quality of the education systems they are passing through at this critical stage of their lives. For instance, poor quality education was one of the top 6 challenges identified by young people in Nigeria and Ethiopia, while in Lebanon, many felt that public education has deteriorated. Education is, therefore, a key topic for young people, not only for their personal future but also for the benefit of society in general. This was most clearly expressed in Myanmar, where 75% of young people feel that strengthening education is an important priority for securing peace, and education makes young people significantly more optimistic about the future.

Next Generation research has identified issues around the curriculum, teaching methods, teacher training and policy support for quality education which are impacting standards, attainment, employment opportunities and ultimately, life chances.

Key issues identified by young people

- **Rigid curricula**, lacking flexibility and updates reflecting the current needs of young people, especially in the context of a changing labour market (see section 3 - skills gap). Young people in Germany and Italy, for instance, were concerned about the education offer being outdated and expressed a need to make it future-proof.
- **Formal approaches to teaching**, including a focus on hard skills that can be easily measured like literacy and numeracy, with less regard for soft skills and life skills such as economic literacy, sexual education, mental wellbeing and intercultural communication.

- **Outdated teaching methods**, lacking a technological edge and not reflecting young people's current needs and habits, e.g. in absorbing knowledge, using IT and media. Across all countries, young people demanded 21st-century skills. In Vietnam, even though education has progressed significantly as evidenced by PISA in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (widely known as STEM), progress has not been mirrored in skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving.
- **Lack of support for teachers**, including inadequate training, pay and conditions, that limits the potential to address curricular and methods issues noted above.
- In some countries, the **lack of appropriate resources** in education at all levels, notably in terms of infrastructure and teaching materials. In Ethiopia, for instance, while access has improved, the poor quality of education is underpinned by a severe lack of resources (including books, computers and laboratories), lack of practical experience and poor-quality teaching.



Case study 1



EDGE: English and Digital for Girls' Education

Policy / Programme: EDGE: English and Digital for Girls' Education

Dates: 2012 - present

Locations: Bangladesh, India, Nepal

Institutions: British Council

EDGE highlights the role of parents, community and girls' perceptions of their role and ability in fostering change, something which was discussed as a challenge to be addressed at the What we know - Education and Skills event. EDGE shows how education and employment sectors can be linked, and the potential benefits of tailoring education to the context and needs of specific groups.

Evidence Overview

Quality methods

- Context-sensitive design
- Peer-to-peer approach

NG-relevant impact

- Promotion of youth voice

Sustainability of results

- Sustainable employment of young people
- Community outreach
- Alumni network
- Leadership training
- Links with local networks
- Potential for mainstreaming into education, training and employment systems

EDGE aims to raise the visibility and value of girls' and women's contributions to their societies in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, to enable them to make more informed and independent life choices.

EDGE provides a safe space for marginalised girls and young women aged 14-19 to develop new skills from their peers including digital literacy, and then showcase these at fairs to the community and local businesses, which also helps generate parental buy-in. At the same time, cohorts of peer group leaders are trained in leadership skills to enable them to extend the opportunities available and offer the programme to a wider audience. Skills content can be adapted to suit needs in each context.

The programme is closely aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 4 Inclusive and quality education for all and Goal 5 Gender equality and empower all women and girls.

To date, the programme has reached more than 14,000 girls, as well as 17,000 parents, community and religious leaders, employers and industry representatives through the community English and ICT fairs. In addition, 1200 peer group leaders have been trained, delivering over 500 EDGE clubs, and more than 200 hours of training materials have been produced. Girls have demonstrated their new skills to audiences of over 1000 people at a time. Girls who have been involved in EDGE have since been able to return to formal education, find paid employment and improve their life prospects.

Further information on EDGE can be found on the programme [website](#) and on [YouTube](#).

Accessibility and equality in education

Next Generation research highlighted key global issues of accessibility and equality in education, with young people across the world flagging concerns, particularly with regard to gender equality, inclusion and diversity and opportunities for marginalised groups and communities. Issues around access, inclusion and equality, and the extent to which these are experienced by young people, also feature prominently in the What We Know brief focussing on Local and Global Challenges published as part of this series.

Key issues identified by young people

- **Financial barriers:** in most of the countries reviewed (except Germany), there are major financial barriers to quality education, especially at the tertiary level.
- **Marginalisation:** minority groups and voices are often suppressed in education systems, leading to exclusion and poor performance by these groups. This is especially so in Myanmar, where education is considered the main reason for discrimination. Groups that are consistently discriminated against include: girls and young women (see the next point for further detail), rural youth (especially prevalent in Lebanon and Vietnam), ethnic minorities (especially relevant in Nigeria), refugees (especially relevant in Lebanon) and young people with disabilities who face significant barriers to accessing education in countries like Ethiopia, Vietnam, Nigeria and Lebanon. Violence in the education system is particularly concerning in Vietnam, where 27% of students report being bullied every month.
- **Gender, gender-based discrimination and gender norms:** in many countries, restrictive gender norms and practices affect girls' and young women's ability to pursue an education of their choice. In Nigeria, the majority (64%) of women aged 15 to 49 in the North West have received no formal education, compared to 38% of men in the



Minority groups and voices are often suppressed in education systems, leading to exclusion and poor performance.

North West and 4.2% of women in the South East. Reports and comments by interviewees indicated that gender disparities in educational attainment within these states are attributable in part to norms and attitudes which deprioritise the importance of young women's education in preference to that of young men, and are considered particularly prevalent in (although by no means exclusive to) the North West. In Ethiopia, national enrolment rates in Grade 9 and 10 show a significant gender divide (41% for girls vs 56% for boys). Family pressure, lack of support and household responsibilities are quoted as the main reasons for such a divide. Moreover, young women are much more likely than young men to have dropped out of school. Of those who dropped out, young women were more likely to have left school because their families no longer wanted them to attend, compared to males (15% vs 4% respectively). Early marriage and pregnancy are the most quoted reasons for young women dropping out of school (27%).

- **Lack of due consideration for youth voice** and youth participation mechanisms in education (as noted above under Quality), leading to less inclusive approaches. More detail on this can be found in the Next Generation What We Know Brief focussing on Youth Voice (Political and Civic Engagement). Case Study 2 presents a project that fosters youth voice in inclusive education policy.

Case study 2



Voices into Action (VIA) Project

Policy / Programme: Voices into Action (VIA) Project

Dates: 2021 - 2022

Locations: Member countries of the 'European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education' (see [here](#))

Institutions: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Case study 2, Voices into Action, has grasped the opportunity in the EU Year of Youth to improve its ability to include learners and their families in decision-making processes, including to define its future work. These practices will also promote its members to support the inclusion of marginalised youth and youth voice.

Evidence Overview

Quality methods

- Participatory - inclusive of learners with and without special educational needs and their families

NG-relevant impact

- Promotion of youth voice
- Evidence-based youth policy

Sustainability of results

- Will inform Agency ways of working and programming

Voices into Action aims to find effective ways to promote the voices of learners and their families in decision-making processes, by analysing current policy and research evidence, examples of learner's voice in previous Agency work, and approaches used in Agency member countries. The 2022 European Year of Youth offers an opportune moment to address this issue, to contribute to their vision: "all learners

of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers".

Research into what works: The project has published an article on the evolving policy context on the inclusion of learners' voices in inclusive education policy debates and how it can be achieved.² It highlights existing evidence that learners' voices promote change in schools. The authors find that other policies need to be aligned with education, in order to enable learners' and families' voices to be included meaningfully in educational change. They note variance in participation with greater impact at local, than regional or national levels. Examples of promising practice are highlighted, such as the Agency's work to support youth voice in the development of new legislation to improve education quality, through consultation with learners and a moderator from the Ministry of Education to discuss views as well as possible solutions.

Toolkit for meaningful participation: A toolkit will be produced by the end of the project to help implement greater involvement of learners and their families, including step-by-step guidelines, tools, and examples of innovative practice to be disseminated to member states and through their website.

The project is ongoing and results will inform the Agency's and Agency member countries' future work.



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Click [here](#) for further reading.

Skills gap: insufficient links between education, the labour market and adult life

Young people around the world report that there is a mismatch between education and skills gained at school, university and through training, and the realities of the requirements of the labour market. Next Generation research highlights that concerns about the youth labour market are significant and widespread. Young people widely report insufficient alignment between skills required outside education (such as life skills and labour market skills) and what they are being taught in formal education systems and institutions, and the vast consequences this has on their life chances.

Key issues identified by young people

- **Supply and demand mismatch:** in many contexts, countries and sectors, young people note a mismatch between what education is offering in terms of skills development, and what is required in their lives, notably in work and employment, including ICT and financial literacy. This finding is consistent and strong across all countries analysed.
- **Future-proofing education:** even in countries where the education system is widely praised (i.e. Germany), young people note that the system is too stuck in its ways to accommodate rapidly occurring societal and economic changes that result in changing demand for different skills and abilities among youth. In most other countries, young people decry the lack of readiness of the education system to respond to the demands of the labour market and the lack of adequate preparation for what awaits them beyond school and university. As explained above, young people want to be trained in 21st-century skills.
- **Focus on formal education as a distinct form and skillset:** many young people feel that even when education offers them a lot in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, it does not connect well to ‘other realms’ outside education (e.g. family life, work life and civil society). As put by young people in Italy, the education system feels “disconnected from the real world”.
- **Soft skills gap:** many young people feel that schools focus too much on hard and formal skills such as literacy and numeracy without due consideration of soft skills. Young people demanded training in emotional intelligence and teamwork, which are skills that are required in private and public life. In Germany, young people feel they specifically lack financial skills, which has an impact on their financial security. In Poland, young people want to receive teaching about racial, religious, sexual and cultural diversity in schools, as a means of deepening sensitivity and tolerance in society.
- **Labour skills gap:** in both high- and low-income countries, young people are united in their concern for the education system’s ability to prepare them for the labour market. Young people remain the most vulnerable age group in the labour market and the cost of unemployment and underemployment at a young age is very high (both individual and societal).
- **Employment gap:** even in contexts where schools focus on employment and employability, this tends to be on more traditional employment. Entrepreneurship and the desire for self-employment are themes that appear strongly in the research. In Ethiopia, for instance, 75% of participants stated they would like to set up their own business, but youth felt particularly underskilled to become entrepreneurs. In Nigeria, there is a growing demand for entrepreneurial skills, which is being partly met through a growing ecosystem of tech and innovation hubs. These hubs offer a range of services to young people and aspiring entrepreneurs alike, including skills training, mentorship, incubation and accelerator programmes and access to workspaces. However, these opportunities are not embedded in the education system. Many young people across the board stated that academic-oriented curricula including STEM subjects do not fit this demand, as they are not based on a dynamic analysis of labour market needs and future demands. Case Study 3 addresses this issue further.

Case study 3



Work in Progress!

Policy / Programme: Work in Progress!

Dates: 2015 - 2023

Locations: Egypt, Nigeria and Somaliland

Institutions: Funded by the Dutch Development Agency; Implemented by Oxfam Novib

Case study 3 provides an impactful example of what works in developing entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for young people, and in particular young women. This supports the move away from traditional employment - for example in the public sector - and enables youth to address their business aspirations as highlighted in the above findings.

Evidence Overview

Quality methods

- Diverse and inclusive - targeting marginalised unemployed youth
- Participatory in implementation - leading to employment
- Participatory in evaluation - youth-led evaluation

NG-relevant impact

- Promotion of youth voice and youth research (evaluation)

Sustainability of results

- Sustainable employment of young people

Economic data shows that wealthier countries experience significantly higher entrepreneurship levels than many developing countries. Local Employment in Africa for Development (LEAD) is an initiative of the Dutch government which aims to increase the socio-economic prospects for young men and women by creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Under this initiative, four separate consortia of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborate with various international, national and local organizations to design and implement programmes in seven African countries: Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Nigeria, Mali and Somalia.

One of these consortia, the 'Work in Progress!' (WiP!) Alliance implemented by Oxfam Novib, aims to increase employment prospects for youth in Egypt, Nigeria and Somaliland through a variety of interventions including training, business development services, networking, assisting with access to finance, and influencing government and private sector policies. WiP! was launched in 2015 and is presently in its second four-year phase with a budget of €11.2 million.

Objectives and results

1. **Improve supply of skilled youth:** WiP! trained over 15,200 young people (of which 45% were women) in soft employability skills, ICT, digital design or other technical competences. Of these trained participants, 2,652 young people have found paid jobs or became self-employed (58% of self-employed were female).
2. **Develop market demand:** WiP! supported 373 small and medium enterprises and 346 start-ups which created more than 13,000 jobs in Nigeria, Egypt and Somaliland.
3. **Cultivate an enabling environment:** Different activities take place per country: In Nigeria policies were adopted to promote a business environment and employment for young men and women. There is a particular focus on gender in the workplace and on the awareness and adoption of circular business models. In Somalia, a national internship policy developed by the project was approved by parliament and is currently in the process of being adopted as legislation. In Egypt, the project is raising awareness of university students of opportunities in private entrepreneurship and connecting them to information, networks and services to access economic markets.

This project conducted a high quality youth-led evaluation. Further information is available [here](#).





Reflections and Recommendations

Next Generation reports

The following recommendations were identified in the Next Generation reports analysed and are directed to policy-makers, youth practitioners and organisations:

- **Increasing youth voice in education** - allowing young people more voice in the classroom through collaborative and participatory methods, as well as in reform and contribution to policy. This can be achieved at both the process level through consultation and the institution level through advisory boards.
- **Providing more and better resources for teaching** (teacher training, teacher pay, textbooks and online resources).
- **Reforming curricula** to be more skills-oriented and providing soft skills related to the job market and other areas of life.
- **Approach education as a holistic policy** not only in its educational role but also in its social and community-building role, allowing space for everyone.
- **Strengthening gender equality** at all levels of education: from admissions through methods, teaching and assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges for girls, compounded when girls faced issues of poverty, gender-based violence or pressure to marry. Large-scale efforts are underway to tackle this and other educational issues as they disproportionately affect lower-income countries, for example leveraging multilateral funding through the Global Partnership for Education.³
- **Enhance accessibility** for marginalised groups such as disabled and special educational needs youth, including through online teaching. However, while digitalisation may in some regards foster education accessibility, it could also exacerbate existing inequalities due to the digital divide.
- **Enhance youth participation** and youth voice in equality matters. There are some examples of good practice in including the voice of these groups in decision-making (see Voices in Action case study). Recommendations and reflections on how this could be done can also be found in the Next Generation What We Know Brief focussing on Youth Voice (Political and Civic Engagement).



³ See the [Global Partnership for Education website](#) for more details.

Next Generation What We Know Education and Skills event

The findings and recommendations from the Next Generation programme were discussed with 28 attendees on the 7th of March 2022 in an online event that involved policy-makers, youth practitioners and organisations and young people. The event was built around discussion groups based on a “trialogue” format, which is designed to bring together and provide an equal footing and voice for each of the three stakeholder groups. Equipping young people, youth practitioners and policy-makers with a safe space to propose, assert, reject or influence the discussion recognises each stakeholder group as an equal, so that no group’s voice has more sway or agency than the other.

The reflections and recommendations developed through the triologue discussions include:

- Provide **more opportunities for industry experience** and technical scholarships, and **develop platforms for young people to gain new skills**. This recommendation is closely linked to the persistent demand from young people that emerged from the Next Generation reports for curriculum reform. Young people want to have an education that prepares them for the job market, and thus emphasises soft skills and real-life experiences.
- More **evidence-based research and insight are needed from industry, businesses and educators** to identify and address skills gaps in the labour market. The implementation of this recommendation is key to addressing one of the main findings of the Next Generation reports across the board, namely the mismatch between the education that young people receive and the skills in demand in the labour market.
- **Intercultural skills** need to be given greater priority in the context of the international world of work. Fostering these skills would be aligned with one of the recommendations that emerged from the Next Generation programme around framing education as a holistic policy that goes beyond its training dimension and encompasses community-building and social cohesion functions.
- Closely related to the previous point, **foreign language skills** should be prioritised to overcome barriers to both domestic and international employment.
- **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills education are often undervalued and perceptions need to change** around their relevance and impact. This is completely aligned with some of the recommendations put forward by the Next Generation programme. For instance, in Ethiopia, it was recommended that TVET be rebranded to make it more socially acceptable and attract more young people to it. A mindset shift around TVET could also contribute to solving some of the problems identified by youth around the education system, most importantly the skills mismatch, while providing new avenues for accessing education opportunities.



Develop platforms for young people to gain new skills.



LSE Consulting

LSE Consulting is the consultancy arm of the London School of Economics (LSE). LSE is a specialist university with a global reach and an international intake of students and staff from over 148 countries across the globe. LSE has a long-standing, international reputation for the quality and depth of its research and teaching, which encompass the full breadth of the social sciences field: from economics, politics and law to sociology, anthropology, accounting and finance.

LSE Consulting forms a vital bridge between the academic experts at LSE and the wider world and it is one of the leading academic consultancies in the UK in the field of social and political research. It has over 25 years of experience in conducting projects for public and private companies worldwide. LSE Consulting has an outstanding track record of working with members of the School to deliver successful outcomes to clients, ranging from small-scale individual consultancy assignments to complex major projects involving large, interdisciplinary teams.



The British Council

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

The **Next Generation series** is part of the British Council's commitment to exploring youth voice and choice. It aims to understand youth attitudes and aspirations, amplify youth voice and support better youth policy-making. The reports focus on young people in countries experiencing a period of significant change, to ensure that young people's voices are heard and their interests represented in decisions that will have lasting implications for their lives.

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