

The power of youth: the driving force for change after covid-19

Department of Manpower & Employment

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Young people are our leaders of tomorrow. They will drive forward efforts to create a more prosperous, more equitable and more resilient future. Yet it is the young that have been among the hardest hit by the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Investing in skills, education, quality jobs and mental health will help them rejuvenate their educational and career prospects, empowering them to face the future with confidence and become the best they can be. Younger adults experienced some of the biggest declines in mental health, social connectedness and life satisfaction in 2020 and 2021, as well as facing job disruption and insecurity. The spike in unemployment as economies locked down during the COVID-19 pandemic underlines the disparity in outcomes by age group: the blow dealt to 15-to-24 year-olds was much harder than to older age groups.

While the feeling of disconnection from communal life became a widespread reality for many people during the COVID-19 pandemic, the young were consistently more likely to feel left out compared to older age groups at given stages of the pandemic. Engaging young people in the labor market is a matter of personal growth and development and also of economic growth and social cohesion. The resulting scarring effect on young people hits individual well-being and diminishes the productive capacity of economies – highlighting the need to invest in youth to create quality jobs and build confidence in their future prospects. Of the voting-age population across OECD countries, 34% is between the ages of 20 and 39.

This compares to 22% of members of parliament (MPs) aged under 40 (from 36% in Norway to 8% in France). Young participation in public institutions helps ensure public decisions take account of a plurality of views, which supports accountability of policy decisions while bolstering greater public responsiveness to all citizens' needs and preferences. And it can help build greater public trust.



Source: <https://oecd.org/coronavirus/en/youth>