



ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

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1. Problematic

There are a number of challenges to engaging business in supporting career and workforce development. Geographically, many countries experience a strong imbalance between the number of individuals seeking employment (demand side) and the number of occupations available (labour market supply).

Alternatively, some countries and regions (EU, Russia, Japan, United States) have rapidly aging populations and need to invest in a smaller youth population that will need to develop the skills necessary to replace these older workers. Other regions of the World are experiencing overpopulation (Africa, Middle and South Americas, Middle-East, Turkey) and in many lower income countries (i.e., Gross Domestic Product), decent occupational opportunities (ILO) are currently unavailable.

Opportunity structures within many national economies are subject to change much faster than ever before in history (e.g. re-industrialisation, role of shale gas, IT related developments). It means that employers are more often under pressure to find the right young candidate for a certain position at the right time and young job-seekers are in an unacceptable

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situation as they are preparing for jobs which might be not there in the future. The burden is also stronger in the vocational and adult training systems as well as on the national and transnational labour market matching services (such as private and state employment services).

In order to understand whether and how business is engaged in career and workforce development, each country was asked to reflect on three questions:

1. What are the formal and informal roles and mechanisms that single employers or national/ regional and local mechanisms play/participate in to support workforce preparation, workforce placement, and development of young people in your country.
2. What policies exist, if any, to support employer engagement? Please refer to occupational and labor market information, work experience, interventions in education and training institutions, and career guidance.
3. What are the challenges your country faces related to engaging employers?

2. Key Findings

Economic and social contexts varied widely among the represented countries. Finland and Denmark for example, have established national work-based learning models linking government, trade unions, and the employment sector.

Meanwhile, many countries struggle with getting employers to see the value and importance of engaging with schools and providing access to work-based learning opportunities. Some countries indicated a strong role for government incentives to engage the business sector to provide youth with access to career and workforce development opportunities but most lament the fact that even emphasizing “social responsibility” is not enough to motivate businesses to sustain their engagement.

Across the range of economic contexts, three themes emerged from the country team responses:

- 1) Employers engage in career and workforce development in a number of ways;
- 2) Many governments are seeking ways to incentivize employer engagement; and
- 3) There remains an open question as to why employers should want to engage in supporting the career and workforce development needs of youth.

Ways Employers Engage in Career and Workforce Development

In reviewing the Country responses, it is apparent that the employment sector varied in their range of engagement with some participating at what Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to as the macro level by shaping national policy. Examples of this type

of engagement include Estonia, United Kingdom, Austria, and the United States where the employment community participate in bringing awareness to occupational qualifications and/or help organize occupations around key clusters.

There are some examples of employer engagement at the meso system level. Bronfenbrenner refers to the meso systems as involving interactions between direct service providers (e.g., schools and youth serving organizations) and those in positions of authority to allocate resources to support direct service providers. Finland offers the most sophisticated examples of employers engaged in meso systemic interactions and describe a country-wide effort they refer to as a “tripartite” cross-sector collaboration model.

This model brings together the business community, trade unions, and public officials to discuss strategies for implementing their national Youth Guarantee Initiative. The Youth Guarantee as a common EU initiative promises that each youth will have the opportunity to engage in a work-based learning activity or other learning / working forms that are commensurate with their career goals.

Other examples of business participating in meso system interactions include New Zealand where business advocacy organizations serve to broker employer engagement with schools. The primary purpose of this arrangement is to increase access to work-based learning opportunities. In Saudi Arabia, employers (“private sector representatives”) participate in national discussions as part of a “board of career education and development (CED).”

There are a number of countries that described the ways that employers were engaged directly with schools and youth serving organizations, what Bronfenbrenner would refer to as micro system engagement. In Austria and Denmark –alongside with the existing macro mechanisms-, employers provide access to apprenticeship programs for students. In Denmark, students participating in vocational and education training (VET) programs spend 2/3rds of their time in a work-based setting and 1/3rd in a traditional school setting.

Strategies for Incentivizing Employer Engagement

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea described extensive government efforts to encourage business engagement with schools and youth serving organizations.

Governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia have established citizenship quotas in order to increase the percentage of the national workforce. For Qatar, these incentive efforts have resulted in the employment sector actively participating in the design and implementation of career and job fairs, internship

“Emphasizing “social responsibility” is not enough to motivate (most) businesses to sustain their engagement.”

programs and other talent development opportunities for citizens. Saudi Arabia has developed an incentive structure that encourages employers to allocate resources for career education and guidance as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

As a result, businesses are providing direct services to schools such as “mini-job” opportunities that provide youth with short-term experiences in the world of work. An entity in Saudi Arabia further classifies companies according to the percentage of Saudis they employ with Platinum signifying the best companies and Red signifying the lowest.

South Korea has encouraged business engagement by also creating a “social responsibility” expectation among businesses to engage in career development. The Government offers recognition through certifications and awards to employers making “education donations.” While over 60% of the businesses have participated, there is concern about whether their engagement will be sustained.

Business Motivation to Engage in Career and Workforce Development

A number of countries lamented that one of their biggest challenges is that businesses are not motivated to participate in providing work-based learning or other career resources.

Finland noted that when the economy was strong, businesses were willing to participate in their tripartite collaboration model. However, as the economy waned, so did business interest. Asia-Pacific, Nigeria and Tunisia indicated that lack of business interest was a major barrier.

For Tunisia, high unemployment rates are deemed part of the problem. New Zealand reported that they have few businesses big enough to support engagement with schools and youth serving organizations. Even countries with lower unemployment such as Canada

and the UK indicated lack of business interest in supporting these efforts as a barrier. Alternatively, the United States has a number of businesses who are interested but do not have the cross-sector coordination like Finland to coordinate business engagement.

3. Implications for Research, Practice and Policy.

Incentivizing Employer Engagement.

Many countries are seeking ways to “incentivize” businesses to become more actively engaged in career and workforce development. The process appears to vary from “softer” strategies that stress moral and ethical responsibilities – social responsibilities – while other countries are seeking more direct strategies through taxation.

“Quebec, Canada has enacted a “tax” system on businesses to encourage investment in on the job training and professional development. ”

Next steps for research could consider:

What are the various incentive strategies being used by countries to encourage business engagement?

- A cross national study could develop a taxonomy of incentive strategies to better understand their nature and implementation characteristics and to identify whether and how strategies being employed may vary according to the size of the national economy.
- Conducting a cross-national comparative case study of employers involved in these incentive

models to determine the challenges and potential of each model.

- Conducting a comparative case study of employers actively engaged in providing effective career and workforce development support to support youth development as a way of understanding the business culture and values that may contribute to their active engagement

Activating social responsibility.

Korea provides an interesting strategy for encouraging the business community to develop social responsibility for providing schools with career and workforce development resources.

While incentives such as certification and awards offer recognition and positive reinforcement for adopting schools, there is some concern that businesses are not embracing social responsibility as a core aspect of their business practice.

Next steps for research could consider:

What are the promising strategies for creating social responsibility strategies that increase business engagement in career and workforce development?

- Using mixed method strategies (e.g., ethnographic inquiry, comparative case study, attitude survey) to understand whether and how social responsibility strategies can be effective at soliciting employer engagement. For example, is engagement among businesses due to receiving positive attention or to avoid shame from not engaging in providing resources?
- Use of HLM strategies to identify which recognition models seem most effective under what contexts (e.g., business characteristics) that are associated with business engagement and facilitate a long-term commitment to supporting schools.

Imposing penalties to encourage business participation.

The Quebec Province in Canada has enacted a “tax” system on businesses to encourage investment in on the job training and professional development. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have enacted a quota system whereby businesses are encouraged to increase the percentage of employees who are citizens from their respective countries.

Recognition strategies such as those being used in South Korea embed a “penalty” component by identifying businesses that have failed to become certified or are not recognized as making adequate efforts in support of career development. Next steps for research could consider:

What are the positive and negative impact of using penalty strategies to engage businesses in career and workforce development programs and activities?

- Survey research methods could be used to evaluate whether employees in businesses that have received penalties maintain similar or differing attitudes toward engaging in career development compared to businesses that are meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Comparative case study methods could be used to interview individuals who hold leadership positions in businesses deemed as meeting and not meeting national expectations in order to understand their perspectives on career and workforce development.

Engaging Business in Cross-Sector Collaborative Strategies.

Innovations such as the Youth Guarantee in the EU encourage business engagement in multiple levels such as creating skill standards to provide direct services by working with schools to offer work-based learning opportunities.

The Youth Guarantee model also encourages the creation of cross-sector coordination between business, education, and labor.

What are the most effective models for engaging in Youth Guarantee strategies?

- HLM strategies could be used to study the conditions (business characteristics, economic contexts, etc) and potential impact (e.g., number of youth receiving work-based learning opportunities) of Youth Guarantee strategies across different regions in Europe.
- Comparative case studies could identify the characteristics associated with businesses that are effectively engaged in Youth Guarantee strategies.
- Implementing demonstration sites in regions that have yet to engage in Youth Guarantee strategies could be supported and studied to learn more about the facilitating and constraining conditions associated with effective implementation.
- Randomized control trial (RCTs) methods could be used to study/verify the outcomes associated with regions that engage in effective Youth Guarantee strategies.

What are the characteristics of businesses that actively engage in cross-sector collaborations?

- HLM strategies could be used to identify the conditions associated with businesses becoming actively engaged in cross-sector collaborations.
- Comparative case studies could identify the characteristics associated with businesses that effectively engage in cross-sector collaborations.
- Ethnographic methods can be used to study exemplary cross-sector collaborations in order to understand the implementation strategies that initiated and maintained the collaborations.

What strategies are most effective for gaining buy-in from the business community to engage in cross-sector collaborations?

- Comparative case studies can be used to learn about their perceived reasons for engaging in cross-sector collaborations.
- Action research methods can be used to engage researchers, policy makers and business leaders in the design, implementation, and evaluation of cross-sector collaborations.

Further Considerations.

The 2015 ICCDPP Symposium focuses on career and workforce strategies that support youth in making effective transitions into the world of work.

A number of questions emerge from the review of country papers and future research, practice and policy implications. These questions include:

“The Youth Guarantee model also encourages the creation of cross-sector coordination between business, education, and labor.”

1. Many countries struggle with ensuring that at-risk youth populations such as youth with disabilities, school dropouts, specific racial/ethnic groups make successful transitions into adulthood. To what extent does “business engagement” include provision of resources to support these populations?
2. Employer engagement is strongly associated with providing access to work-based learning opportunities.

While it is assumed that work-based learning provide positive career exploration opportunities (e.g. voluntary work, charity activities, summer camps etc.), how can we avoid using work-based learning as a means of pushing youth, especially those in vocational education programs into a more narrow range of occupational opportunities?

3. How can use of personalized, individualized learning plans be used to ensure that work-based learning opportunities are responsive to enabling youth to pursue their own career and life goals? Is there an optimal progression of work-based learning opportunities such that different age levels would engage in different qualities of these activities (e.g., job shadowing, service learning and paid employment)? What types of employers' engagement would be useful in your country? What are the balances?

“Is there an optimal progression of work-based learning opportunities?”

4. The research strategies described above encourage a range of research methods, some of which may be outside our skills to effectively implement. Rather than avoiding or devaluing questions that may be outside our skill set, what research disciplines should we partner with in order to effectively study these questions?

5. Funding is also needed to study these questions. Where do we find the funding necessary to answer these questions? Would foundations associated with multinational businesses (e.g., Ford Foundation), USAID, EU, WB/IMF, Asian Development Bank or US Federal sources be interested in an ICCDPP collaboration to answer some of these questions?

4. Business Engagement: Summary of Country Responses

Asia-Pacific (Taiwan, Macau, Indonesia)

Some employers offer internships, scholarships, and tours but such efforts only impact a relatively few youth. Universities work with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities. Lack of incentive is the primary challenge to engaging the employment sector. Macau reported that similar to other small states the diversity of occupations and jobs are relative

low and employers look for multi-functionality.

Austria

In Austria, 42% of the youth participate in dual-training “apprenticeship” program which combines a traditional vocational education with a three-year work-based learning opportunity. The employment sector is often working directly with schools and industry representatives serve in education leadership roles. Employers are also engaged in maintaining 200 occupational profiles that youth are able to use in guiding their career decisions. These profiles are available for youth via on-line (Job Compass) and F2F services of the Public Employment Service.

Canada

At the secondary school and post-secondary school levels several forms of work experience programmes are available for youth in Canada. However, Canadian employers are not eager to invest in training. Quebec province is an exception; here employers with annual payrolls at or exceeding one million dollars are required to pay 1% of the payroll for staff training. If they do not they are taxed on that amount. Based on the regulation it is a use or lose budget for employers. One study conducted by the British Columbia called the Employer-Youth Engagement Project found that even through youth must complete 30 hours of work prior to graduation, employers reported that these youth still do not possess the skills need to gain employment.

Denmark

The Danish VET system offers youth participating in these programs with access to work-based experiences. Students participating in VET receive 1/3 of their training in an education setting and 2/3 in companies as part of the dual education model. Social partners have strong influence on curriculum development in the VET system. It also means that young graduates from the Danish VET system already have 3-4 years of general and specific work experiences.

Estonia

Estonia is a small (population of 1.3 million) European country which is much further ahead with e-services than any other member states of the European Union. The dialogue of the supply and demand side in the labour market is facilitated by the government and the employment sector actively participates in cross-sector dialogues regarding occupational qualifications. The National Qualification Authority maintains the national occupational qualification system. The Anglo-Saxon (UK, IE) model-based sector skill councils – in 16 sectors- are the key forums of the dialogue.

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Finland

In Finland, the “Youth Guarantee” ensures that all youth and adults (up to 29) will have the opportunity to pursue a chosen career by being provided education and employment opportunities. Implementation of the Youth Guarantee occurs using a “tripartite” cross-sector collaboration model that includes business, trade unions, and public officials. The Government incentivizes business participation by subsidizing companies to employ youth and other target populations.

India

This chapter is not available yet.

New Zealand

Business advocacy organizations offer a unique “third party” strategy for connecting employers to the interests of supporting youth apprenticeships, career development programs, and to support systems that more effectively support policies and systems that positively impact youth. Two major business advocacy organizations work with business and the government to engage employers in career development. With 97% of the businesses being small and medium enterprises, there is a human resource challenge and no incentives for these businesses to participate in career development activities.

Nigeria

Several big companies provide a Management Trainees Development program for new employees and there is some push for other corporations to offer career development as part of their being socially responsible. The 1990 Labor Act does identify employer engagement but it is a challenge to sustain efforts across government changes. The YouWin programme was designed by the federal government to boost entrepreneurship skills development among youth.

Norway

This chapter is not available yet.

Qatar

Qatar is a very much developed small state in the Arabian Peninsula with a high-income level and advanced use of ICT. Qatar government has established a hiring quota system (Qatarization or Qatarisation) that motivates companies to become actively engaged in establishing talent pipelines between education and work. As a result, there is a well-established collaboration mechanism between the key employers of the country and schools, universities. The employment sector actively participates in the design and implementation of career and job fairs. , Internship programs and talent development opportunities within the companies are available.

Saudi Arabia (KSA)

There is a strong government emphasis on reducing the percentage of exPat employment by helping Saudi youth develop their interests and employability skills. The Saudis’ policy has four pillars; a) increase the number of private sector representatives serving on the board of board of the career education and development (CED) as a way of engaging the business community in national discussions, b) using Corporate Social Responsibility policies to encourage the business sector to increasing spending for career education and guidance, c) engage companies HR departments to provide and continuously update career information, and d) support service delivery for schools, and expand work-based on-the-job-training. Doroob is a free access web portal launched in 2014 that incorporates career guidance. Saudization,(see also Qatar policy), is an official programme which aims to get more Saudis in the private sector. One government sponsored work-based learning program is “Mini-jobs”. Mini-jobs provides youth with the opportunity to develop interests and motivation to pursue a career by offering summer jobs, part-time work and summer training before graduation.

Nitaqat classifies each private sector company in one of four bands based on the proportion of Saudis in its workforce (Saudization rate). The bands range from platinum for the best performers through green and yellow to red for the worst. Requirements vary from sector to sector and by company size. The quota for attaining green-band status ranges from over 6% in construction to 30% for oil and gas extraction and 50% for medium-sized banks and financial institutions. For large banks and financial institutions, the requirement is 65%.

South Korea

During the past two years (2012-2013), approx. 61% of employers have made "education donations" by providing time and resources to support their local schools. The Government has provide incentives by recognizing these efforts through certifications and awards. However, many companies have deemed these activities as temporary or one-off events or suspended donations after a couple of times due to their internal reasons. The lack of diversity and systematic structure is also pointed out as a problem with existing education donation programs

Korean employers support career education related activities by providing internship programmes and field work experiences for students. They also offer sponsorships for job experience day programmes, career camps and the further development of audio-visual materials for schools. Official Korean policy encourages companies to provide their resources (staff and materials) for schools.

In this context, employers who participate in students' career experience programs cannot only improve their corporate image but also cultivate the workforce needed by their industries and preemptively secure competent human resources. Therefore, employees should build partnerships with schools and actively participate in students' career experience programs, with the awareness that they are also the consumers of human resources.

Tunisia

High unemployment is felt to decentivize the employment sector to provide work-based learning or become involved in career development activities. Government provides funding to private vocational development firms to provide training in job settings for those occupations for which there is a labor market need. The lack of available new vacancies is a key barrier in Tunisia. Employers are not really engaged in career development and education. The government main tool is currently a wage subsidy. There is a perceived need to adopt a vocational training model similar to Germany.

United Kingdom

The key barrier against youth employment was identified by the UK Cabinet is the lack of work experience placement for young people. Only 15% of the employers offer apprenticeship. The Skills Committees have been playing an important role as negotiation forums between employers, schools and the government. Based on the on-line developments in career information provision labour market intelligence (LMI) for all is a mainstream policy. UK recognizes the need for more government incentives to engage businesses in offering work-based learning opportunities and a number of policy research papers have described the value of connecting youth to the world of work.

USA

The employment sector has been engaged with federal and state policy makers describing the skills needed to be employable across a variety of occupations that now have been organized around 16 "career clusters." Various apprenticeship, work-based learning models, and online career systems are underway in many states that allow employers to join with educators to provide work-based learning opportunities. One major challenge to employer engagement is the lack of cross-sector engagement that would enable coordination of services and activities.