



# GLOBAL & ONTARIO PERSPECTIVES

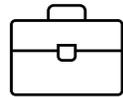
# Youth Employment: The Global Landscape

Youth unemployment rate is at an all time low, but young people worldwide continue to face significant employment challenges and disparities remain...



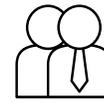
**12.4%**

Of youth globally remain unemployed<sup>1</sup>



**3.5**

Youth unemployment rate is 3.5 times higher than adults'. The gap is increasing<sup>1</sup>



**1 in 4**

Young people (age 15-24) are not in employment education or training (NEET)<sup>1</sup>



**2 X**

Young women are 2 times more likely to be in NEET status than young men<sup>1</sup>



**Young people who are not in employment, education, or training by 24 years old are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing poor physical and mental health, long-term unemployment, and lower quality of work.**

# Common Barriers to Youth Employment

With the tightening labour supplies and expected youth labor force growth in the next 25 years, it will be more critical than ever to address young people's barrier to labour workforce participation.

## Labour Market

- #1 Economic & geopolitical uncertainty affect **entry-level jobs most**
- #2 Rapid tech. advancements exacerbate **training-demand mismatch**
- #3 There are few pathways to **early work experience**
- #4 **Non-traditional work and job instability** are more prevalent among this age cohort

## Social

- #5 A large portion of unemployed youth face **multiple or complex barriers**
- #6 **Young women** disproportionately face barriers
- #7 **Rural / remote areas** have fewer job opportunities and training programs

## Support Sytem(s)

- #8 Support actors often lack insights to **proactively identify and support NEETs**
- #9 NEETs often **disengage with** education and support systems.
- #10 Supports are often **ill equipped to help and engage young people**

# ON Youth Unemployment Landscape (2025-2026)

## Current Situation

- Youth unemployment sits at ~14.2%, nearly 3x core-age adult rate
- Approaching post-2009 recession levels
- Recovery has stalled for ages 15–24 while rebounding for adults

## Key Gaps

- Inconsistent Youth Metrics,
- Limited Paid Experience,
- Insufficient Wraparound Supports

<b>Vulnerable Youth Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Newcomer, Disabled, Rural/Northern And NEET Youth</li> </ul>
<b>Drivers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer Entry-level Roles, Rising Skill Expectations, Automation, Disrupted Pathways, Limited Supports.</li> </ul>
<b>System Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Job Connection, School-to-work Programs, Municipal Initiatives, Federal Youth Programs</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize Indicators, Expand Paid Placements, Grow Apprenticeships/Micro-credentials, Strengthen Regional Alignment</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity Sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare, Trades, Retail, Food Services, Tech, Creative</li> </ul>

<b>Current Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2025, employment among youth aged 15–24 rose by 50,000 jobs (+1.8%), driven largely by part-time work.</li> <li>• Despite gains, Ontario's youth unemployment rate is among the highest in Canada</li> <li>• Record high in Ontario in 15 years, highlighting systemic issues in skill demand and job creation</li> <li>• Ontario added 67,800 net jobs in Q2 2025, short-term or part-time, limiting long-term stability for young workers</li> </ul>
<b>Key Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many youth jobs are part-time, temporary, or low-wage, offering limited career progression</li> <li>• Employers increasingly demand digital, technical, and specialized skills, while many young workers lack access to training</li> <li>• Urban centers like GTA see intense competition, while smaller communities face fewer opportunities</li> <li>• Job insecurity contributes to anxiety and frustration among young job seekers</li> </ul>
<b>Emerging Trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail, hospitality, and gig work dominate youth employment, but these sectors are vulnerable to economic downturns</li> <li>• Growth in tech, green jobs, and healthcare offers opportunities if training pathways are accessible</li> <li>• Calls for stronger youth employment strategies, including wage supports, internships, and targeted training programs</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario's youth unemployment crisis is a <b>warning sign for broader economic health</b>.</li> <li>• Without intervention, the province risks a generation facing <b>underemployment, wage stagnation, and reduced economic mobility</b></li> <li>• Strategic investment in <b>skills development, equitable access to opportunities, and mental health supports</b> is essential to stabilize the youth labour market</li> </ul>

# What Works in Public Employment Services?

Many countries have developed expertise in serving NEETs. Below are global practices observed in youth-focused Public Employment Services.



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