INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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School to Work Transition: A Concept Note

This concept note aims to analyse the pathways adopted in several countries to facilitate the school graduates and/or drop outs for smooth transition to the world of work through acquisition of skill training. The increasing pressure of unemployment among the youth in countries has necessitated adopting such a transitional framework. There are some successful evidences for such a smooth transition of youth from school to work across countries primarily in developed countries.

The main objective of this exercise is to develop a robust and recurring framework for analysis and promotion of the pace and quality of education to work transition in India, especially to benefit the youth particularly women from the under-privileged sections and those from smaller towns and rural areas.

The school-to-work transition is defined as the passage of a young person (aged 15 to 29 years) from the end of schooling to the first fixed-term or satisfactory employment. This transition is not always linear. Transition may be to a stable outcome or to a temporary outcome in terms of employment.

School-to-work transition outcomes of youth in low and middle-income countries are weak, showing 1 in 5 youth categorized as NEET (not in education, employment or training). Even among those who are employed, majority are engaged in the informal economy with a poor quality jobs. Even in Europe it has been seen that majority of the young school-leavers who find a job are in temporary employment. It is observed that the transition is often much shorter in many of the developed countries, particularly in countries where education and work-related training are strongly inter-linked. While in the case of developing countries this transition period is often longer and takes several years for youth to get a foothold in the labour market.

School-work linkages takes several forms. First, tightly coupled education and training/employer systems. In such a framework, there is strong linkage (dual system) with a strong linkages and substantial sharing and cooperation between providers and employers in education and training delivery. It has features of high labour market occupationalisation. Examples of this cases are Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Denmark. Second, tightly coupled education and training/employer systems with high levels of

in-school provision of education and training specific to particular occupations, agreed with employers. This has features of high labour market occupationalisation. Netherlands is a prime example of this case. Third, loosely coupled or decoupled education and training/ employer systems with strong market signals. This system has low degree of education and training provider linkages and employer sharing of education and training provision. Also, labour market occupationalisation are low and limited school involvement in employment decisions. Countries like Italy, France, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Ireland and England/Wales and Scotland are some of the examples of loosely coupled or decoupled education and training/employer systems with strong market signals. Fourth, is the loosely coupled systems with strong market signals and strong school placement function such as Japan. Fifth, yet another system is decoupled education and training/labour market systems with weak market signals such as USA and Canada.

There are some successful cases in developing countries; though these cases are not many, yet they provide useful experiences. Some of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) systems adopted by New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa have been influential in developing their own frameworks. The other important case is The National Dual Training System (NDTS) of Malaysia. In Korea where employers offer their employees training opportunities and receive government subsidies for the training provided and in Singapore, Special Education (SPED) offers special training pathways and work options for students with different disability. It helps graduates from SPED schools to transit successfully to employment.

There also some leading employability practices in *Brazil, Work and skills development for Africa's Youth*, A case of business linkages between MSMEs and large corporate companies in Zambia is yet another successful example. Effective school to work transition through career information and guidance for youth employment in Egypt is a success story. Reinforcement of skills for youth employment and rural development in Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe—an Africa Commission's concrete initiatives, is implemented by the ILO.

The Indian case is weak in transitional process primarily because of the lack of any robust system, and also because vocational education has long been regarded as a second-best option relative to general education. The vocational education content in the school system has not performed well so far. Youth unemployment rate in India is 2-5 times higher than other developed countries. There is significant difference in work participation rate between youth and adult in the country, unlike in advanced economies. This may reflect poor school to work transition in India compared to the other countries. The NEET youth share is also very high for India vis-à-vis other developed countries and it is least in Japan and Germany.

There is huge participation of private sector in the school to work transition particularly in United Kingdom and Germany, but in India there is not much participation of private sector or industry in the school to employment transition. Although apprenticeship system exist in India but that is also not successful even after several modification and encouragement efforts to private sector and industry. Private sector engagement is critical in successfully facilitating school to-work transition. We have seen this in countries that have historically integrated the participation of the private sector and other social partners in implementing TVET such as in Germany, UK and Australia. Clearly, there are lessons to be learnt from the successful cases and unlearn from our own experiences.