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# The Multi-generational and Aging Workforce

Challenges and  
Opportunities

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NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT

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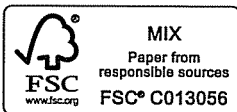
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## 4. Economic crisis, recession and youth unemployment: causes and consequences

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Terms such as *crisis* and *recession* are often used interchangeably, characterized as a negative shock, and generally associated with large-scale social dislocation or disruption (Mattias and Wuermli, 2012). The shock of unemployment may be related both to individual characteristics and to shared, more aggregate events such as economic crisis. Since 2007, between 30 million and 35 million jobs have been lost (ILO, 2011a). Many unemployed people have been out of work for over a year and have already lost hope of finding work. Furthermore, recession has affected youth unemployment, which has reached record highs worldwide (ILO, 2013). Global youth unemployment stood at 73.4 million in 2013, an increase of 3.5 million since 2007 and 0.8 million above the level in 2011. In 2011, youth unemployment in the European Union affected over 5.5 million young people, reaching a rate of 22.3 percent compared with 21 percent in November 2010. Countries experiencing the highest rates of youth unemployment in 2012 were Greece (55.3 percent), Spain (53.2 percent) and Portugal (37.7 percent), whilst the lowest rates were identified in Germany (8.1 percent) and Austria (8.7 percent). The situation is even worse in Eastern Europe (ITUC, 2012). The unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and FYR Macedonia affects 50 percent of the young population. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the rate reached 63.1 percent, that is, almost two in three young people are jobless (ILO, 2014).

Youth unemployment rates have also reached high levels in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. In Canada the rate of youth unemployment is 14.3 percent (OECD, 2013a). The overall unemployment rate for teenagers in the United States is 25.1 percent, whilst for black teenagers unemployment stands at 43.1 percent (Ayres, 2013). Rising youth unemployment and falling labor force participation contributed to a decrease in the global youth employment-to-population ratio to

42.3 percent in 2013, compared with 44.8 percent in 2007. Unemployment rates are often higher amongst ethnic minorities, high school drop-outs, and residents of poorer areas (O'Higgins, 2001). The global youth employment-to-population ratio is projected to be 41.4 percent in 2018. Thus, it would appear that around half of the younger population are predicted to be unemployed by this date (ILO, 2011a).

The United Nations define youth as the age group between 15 and 24, dividing in some countries into teenagers (15–19 years old) and young adults (20–24 years old) (O'Higgins, 2001) or emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). This definition is based on youth extending from the earliest acceptable school-leaving age and continuing up to the age at which most people will have completed third-level education (O'Higgins, 2001). According to the International Labour Organization, unemployment applies to those people who have not worked more than one hour during the short reference period but who are available for and actively seeking work (O'Higgins, 2001). Yet the definition of unemployment can also vary from country to country. In some countries, students who are actively looking for work are counted as part of the workforce, whilst in others they are not. The number of inactive youth, that is, those not actively searching for work and not part of the labor force or in education, can also exhibit quite a variation across countries. A study by O'Higgins (2001) reported some common features of youth unemployment despite the different rates from one country to another.

First of all, youth unemployment was identified as being higher than adult unemployment in almost every country for which data were available. In most of these countries youth unemployment was twice as high as adult unemployment and, in certain cases, even three times higher than the adult rates. Secondly, youth employment appears to be more affected by shocks hitting the aggregate labor market than adult employment. It seems that young people were undoubtedly badly hit by the recession albeit with much cross-country variation. Thirdly, the longer-term negative effects of extended unemployment are likely to be particularly severe for young people (O'Higgins, 2012). Failure during early experiences within the labor market may be difficult for young people to overcome, and may expose them to long-lasting "scarring" effects, especially those who are disadvantaged and who lack basic education. Problems relate not only to failure to secure long-term employment, but also to the extended difficulties in the search for work early on, which are likely to have long-term negative consequences for young people, creating an image of a lost generation of young people who become permanently excluded from productive employment (Scarpetta et al., 2010).

There are a number of factors that might explain why youth

unemployment rates may be higher than adult rates (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Duryea, 2012; Görlich et al., 2013). In the internal labor market, youths will generally have less specific human capital and general work skills relevant to the particular firm for which they work. Companies will have invested less in training them, and therefore the consequences of losing them have less of an effect relative to the loss of an adult experienced worker. Also, severance pay tends to increase with tenure, making it less costly to lose a young worker. Youth also face greater difficulties regarding entry into the labor market as a result of their lack of experience. Shorter job history and lack of access to business networks place them at a relative disadvantage compared to adults. Young people may also be more likely than adult workers to resign voluntarily despite the economic downturn, as they may wish to explore different opportunities before settling down into long-term employment. In addition, the costs of resigning are lower for them, they are less likely to have dependents whom they need to support, and turning to higher education is a more natural and viable option for youth than it is for adults.

Employment protection legislation (EPL) also affects youth unemployment, especially temporary (fixed-term) contracts, which are designed to reduce unemployment and create additional job opportunities, as well as to provide a realistic prospect of being subsequently offered a permanent position (Eichhorst, 2014). Although fixed-term employment may constitute an effective stepping stone for some categories of workers and jobs, many fixed-term workers, in particular the young, are trapped in a secondary segment of flexible jobs. They do not have a substantial probability of moving beyond the second barrier, that is, from a temporary to a permanent job. Many of the new jobs have been temporary jobs, which are mainly held by youth. Furthermore, during recession, many temporary jobs are generally the first to be lost, leading to more rates of youth unemployment. Indeed, during the recent great recession, youth, especially in Mediterranean countries of Europe, were hit particularly strongly, and temporary contracts have become the dominant contract type for young people.

Finally, the mismatch between the demand and supply of skills possessed by young workers is believed to contribute to higher youth unemployment rates. Skills mismatch characterizes countries of the developing world such as Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia. Skills mismatch, combined with a growing share of youth attempting to join the labor force, can create a situation in which many young people have difficulties finding work.

The economic crisis has affected not only native-born young people but also foreign persons in most OECD countries (OECD, 2013b). However,

immigrants in most European OECD countries were more affected by unemployment than the native population. In Spain, Greece and Estonia, immigrant unemployment increased by 20, 14 and 11 percentage points between 2007 and 2011, whereas that of the native-born residents increased by 12, 9 and 8 percentage points. In 2011, in Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Sweden, the unemployment rate of immigrants was above 15 percent. It was close to 22 percent and 32 percent in Greece and Spain, respectively. The unemployment rate for immigrants was more than twice the level observed for the native-born population in Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark. In some settlement countries (Australia, Canada and New Zealand) and in the United States, the unemployment rate does not vary much by birth status.

The study of youth unemployment can be widely understood at different levels using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Figure 4.1) (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). The bioecological model offers a conceptualization of youth unemployment as a set of nested and interconnecting environmental systems and processes,

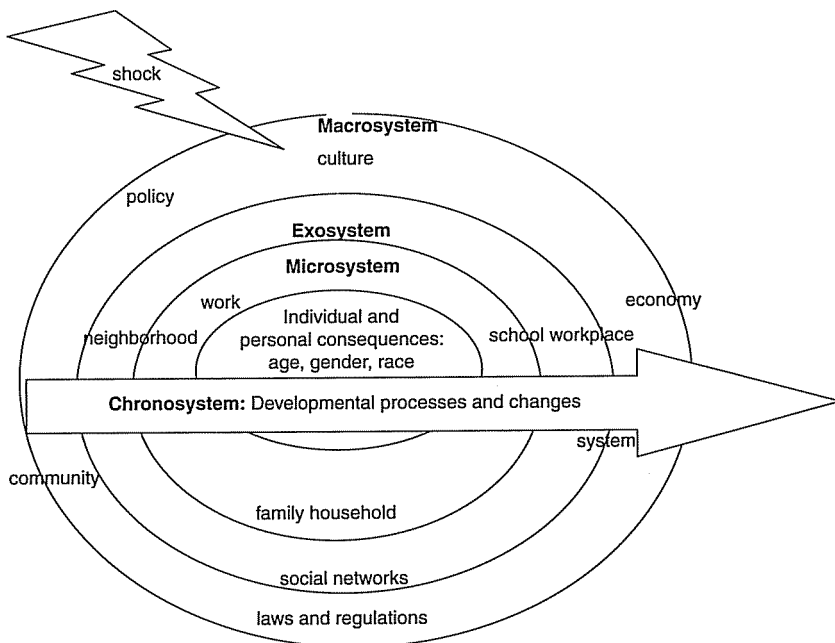


Figure 4.1 Bioecological model of youth unemployment (adaptation by Wuermil et al., 2012)

integrating concepts from different disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and economics. A chronosystem encompasses changes over time in the characteristics not only of the individual, but also of the environment in which the person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The time dimension can contribute to understanding the effect of exogenous events such as recession on the unemployment of young people and identify those more vulnerable and in need of attention at a particular point in time (Wuermli et al., 2012). Furthermore, individuals' lifecourses are embedded and affected by historical times and places that determine their experiences. Developmental processes are likely to vary according to the specific historical events that are occurring as the developing individuals are at one age or another.

Using the ecological model we can consider youth unemployment as occurring within a context of relationships in a complex manner. Unemployment is considered a negative life event that can trigger a biophysical stress reaction (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) and decreased physical well-being (Lucas et al., 2004). Long-term unemployment is associated with accumulation of stress and depletion of physical and psychological resources, leading in turn to the probability of illness, injury, disease or psychological distress or disorder (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and to worse physical and mental health later in life (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011).

*Microsystem* includes the relationships and structures with which young people have direct contact. Examples include settings such as family, school, neighborhood and workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The microsystem of a person is a space of "activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It is within this microsystem that proximal processes operate and sustain development. The *mesosystem* is a system of microsystems that comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and workplace, between workplace and neighborhood, etc.). There are connections among the different contexts within which individuals function. These connections include aspects such as the relationship of family and work experiences, and work experiences and neighbor or peer interactions. Effects of unemployment extend beyond the immediate impact on the young person by directly and indirectly affecting social and societal networks. The next level is the *exosystem*, which includes those environments that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives. Such settings

include workplace, neighborhood and community systems, social networks, and so on. The inadequacy of these exosystems in responding to mass youth unemployment has been highlighted in the failure to adjust to changes to the new economic structure (Crowley, 2011). One factor of the exosystem related to youth unemployment is the lack of demand, which affects young people's entry to the labor market, leaving younger workers rather than older workers redundant. Furthermore, youth are separated from their jobs through redundancy more often than older workers because it is less costly to lose them, and because they are less experienced than older workers (O'Higgins, 2001).

The *macrosystem* is the larger cultural context, which includes socio-political factors, belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards, and lifecourse options that are embedded in each of these broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The greater the economic recession, the greater the impact on youth unemployment. Laws and regulations, political economy, economic markets, and public policies of the societies within which the developing person is embedded have an impact on the coping practices of young people within the context of unemployment. One effect of youth unemployment is migration, which tends to be concentrated among the young. For example, more than 200 000 Greeks, most of them younger than 35 years old, have left Greece and are currently employed in other European countries. Germany and the UK are the most popular career destinations, absorbing more than 50 percent of migrating Greeks.

On a macro level, this movement is a clear brain drain. On a micro level, it is about pursuing opportunities elsewhere, that is, helping to develop the extrovert mentality and skills that the Greek labor market has failed to create (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014). In the USA, African Americans are usually concentrated into highly segregated neighborhoods where deep poverty, violence, substandard schools and unemployment are the norm (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). These phenomena are related to aspects in the macrosystem such as policies and practices that facilitate exclusion, discrimination and segregation and increase the stress of youth unemployment.

## APPLICATION OF THE BIOECOLOGICAL MODEL TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Next, we examine the consequences of youth unemployment on mental health, on the behavior of young people and on substance abuse. To illustrate aspects of the model we select literature relevant to developmental



and health psychology regarding the impact of unemployment on the subsequent psychological functioning of young people and on variables affecting their response to unemployment.

### **Chronosystem and Developmental Processes**

Research on youth unemployment views the transition from adolescence to young adulthood as a period of rapid development of individual, social and other identities (Mattias and Wuermli, 2012). For many adolescents, this period is characterized by the identity exploration in love and work (Arnett, 2005) and individualization by moving away and separating from parental images (Blos, 1967). It is an age of instability in terms of work and educational status, when adolescents experience an in-between feeling (neither adolescent nor adult) and have opportunities to make changes to their lives (Arnett, 2005). Unemployed young people who eventually expect to find work, and to become financially independent, experience not only economic strains but also negative effects concerning the development of their vocational and occupational identity, which occurs throughout adolescence and emerged adulthood (Mattias and Wuermli, 2012).

The development of an occupational or vocational identity is a salient developmental task of adolescence (Erikson, 1968), and workplace engagement provides the opportunity for young people to become self-directed and to increase their autonomy and responsibility. Long-term unemployment prevents youth from obtaining the early experiences and work skills that they need in order to develop their identity and self-regulation, and to master more complex planning skills later in life. These skills are developed in the workplace and rewarded highly by employers. Neurological research indicates that development, promotion and protection of these skills during a crisis are more important in early adolescence than in the 20s. Factors such as lack of experience and skills in adolescence have been said to be related to lower productivity in the labor market. Furthermore, unemployed young people become “permanently discouraged workers,” leading to low rates of participation in the labor force in future years (Duryea, 2012).

### **Mental Health among Unemployed Young People**

Most research considers that exposure to stress during adolescence may have particularly long-term effects (Baird et al., 2012). Previous studies have demonstrated that, when a person lives under the influence of one risk factor, the danger for his/her health is small. But, when a person confronts two risk factors, the danger quadruples, and, when the person

faces four risk factors, the danger increases geometrically (Masten, 2001). Adolescence and unemployment constitute two risk factors that seem to lead to a causal relationship between unemployment and poor mental health – the so-called causation hypothesis (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

According to the World Health Organization (2005), unemployed young people are more vulnerable to mental health disorders as a result of insecurity, feelings of hopelessness, rapid social change and risks to their physical health. Poverty, stress and the effects of unemployment on their future careers have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of young people (Bartley, 1994). An interesting feature of the bioecological model is that health during unemployment seems to be mediated by factors within a social context. The capacity for positive adaptation or resilience seems to be driven by a high-quality school setting and strong communities (Baird et al., 2012).

Research indicates a significant relationship between unemployment and mental health problems (Duryea, 2012). A review of the literature on the health consequences of the current and prior recessions in the United States indicated that, after controlling for previous mental health issues, job loss itself during recession leads to mental health problems, especially among young workers (Modrek et al., 2013). Many studies have examined suicide and have identified a significant increase during economic downturns across multiple populations. A reduction in suicides in young men in England and Wales was found to be related to a decline in three risk factors: unemployment, divorce and alcohol consumption (Biddle et al., 2008). In Thailand, following the 1997 economic crisis, rates of suicidal thoughts, severe stress and hopelessness rose significantly among adolescents (Baird et al., 2012).

In addition to suicide, there is significant evidence of a relationship between unemployment among young people and a rise in mental health disorders including depression and anxiety symptoms (Modrek et al., 2013). Longer durations of unemployment are associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms among young people in the United States (Mossakowski, 2009). Panel data from Indonesia following the Asian financial crisis indicated a dramatic rise in depression and anxiety symptoms among less-educated, urban and landless households (Baird et al., 2012). Evidence highlights a relationship between youth unemployment, mental illness and loss of self-confidence resulting in depression. Furthermore, the high stress of unemployment can lead to suicide, poor physical health and heart attack in later life (Sum et al., 2002).

National secular changes in the proportion of young people with mental health problems and national secular labor market changes were studied from 1983 to 2005 in ten European countries (Lager and Bremberg,

2009). The results of this study revealed an association between changes in the proportion of 15-year-olds with various symptoms (e.g., feeling low, headache and difficulties sleeping) and changes in the proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds not in the labor force. This suggests that changes in the national labor market situation for young people might have contributed to the deteriorating trends in mental health and that further research in this new area is needed. The effect of unemployment on mental health has also been examined with meta-analytic methods across 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies (Paul and Moser, 2009), demonstrating that unemployed persons show more distress than employed persons.

Significant differences are found for mixed symptoms of distress, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, subjective well-being and self-esteem. The negative effect of unemployment on mental health was stronger in countries with a weak level of economic development, unequal income distributions or weak unemployment protection systems compared to other countries. Meta-analyses of longitudinal studies and natural experiments endorsed the assumption that unemployment is not only correlated to distress but also a cause of it.

The growing unemployment and economic adversity of young people have an effect on the adoption of less healthy lifestyles such as smoking, and an increase in high-risk external behaviors such as alcohol consumption and drug abuse (Baird et al., 2012; World Health Organization, 2013). Findings from both animal research (Song et al., 2007) and a number of human studies (De Bellis, 2002) indicate that negative life events can lead to deregulation of major biological stress response systems, putting young people at increased risk of alcohol use and dependence. Several researchers support the position that alcohol dependence develops because alcohol relieves negative affect. According to the self-medication or tension-reduction hypothesis (Sher et al., 2000), individuals believe that alcohol reduces anxiety or stress and helps them to cope with negative affect. Laboratory and research studies provide support for the relationship between severe stress and drinking (Baird et al., 2012; Kidorf and Lang, 1999).

A study in Sweden indicated an increase in alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse, particularly among young men. In the United States, when the economy is weak, teenagers increase the use of marijuana and other drugs. Long-term unemployment is more consistently associated with illegal drug use, rather than alcohol and tobacco, in certain countries (Baird et al., 2012). In the region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, much vulnerability to drug abuse is related to high unemployment and poverty rates, particularly in rural areas. The expansion of the new market economies has also increased the vulnerability of young people across

class and income lines, as the expanding nightlife culture and increasing mobility within and among countries have heightened their exposure to a variety of new drugs (Merkinaitė et al., 2009).

### **Microsystem**

Research on the microsystem focuses on how family factors affect youth unemployment. Family factors are thought to buffer or moderate the impact of unemployment on young people. A study by Dimitrov (2012) regarding youth unemployment in Bulgaria indicated that social status and family background are related to youth unemployment. If one or both of the parents are unemployed, are inactive, have low education, are illiterate, lack skills and qualifications, live in poverty or belong to a particular ethnic group, this is likely to affect the young person. Young people growing up in poverty are particularly vulnerable to becoming trapped in the self-perpetuating cycle of adverse life circumstances and poor health (Redd et al., 2011). Parental long-term unemployment (especially of fathers) is found to have a negative impact on adolescents' subjective health, and this association remains even when the social class and financial strain are taken into account (Sleskova et al., 2006).

Moreover, financial hardship during recession limits adolescents' opportunities for further education and job training. Low income can force young people to shift their time from school investment to the labor market to help their families through recession (Baird et al., 2012). In addition, Redd et al. (2011) refer to data from studies that relate parental unemployment with behavioral problems in children, poorer self-esteem, increased probability of binge drinking, depression, and a higher occurrence of physical abuse of children. Family stress theory (Price et al., 2009) introduces the term *vulnerability* to denote the difference in families' physical and emotional responses to stressful events, such as unemployment of their members. As a moderator it denotes variation in a family's ability to prevent a stressor event or change from having negative consequences on its members. The resources are characteristics or abilities of individual family members, the function of the family system, and the community that can be used to meet the demands of a stressor event. Individual or personal resources include financial or economic well-being, educational status, physical and emotional well-being and health, and self-esteem.

### **Community**

Community includes those capabilities of people or institutions outside the family to which the family can turn for dealing with stress (Price et al.,

2009). Social support is one of the most important community resources for young unemployed people at high risk of social exclusion and with limited qualifications (Kieselbach et al., 2006). Studies by Kieselbach et al. (2006) revealed that low institutional support is a central vulnerability factor for all study populations regarding youth unemployment in European countries except Sweden. In the Swedish study some members of this group receive a relatively high amount of institutional as well as social support.

In all countries, it was observed that personality-related factors such as low self-esteem and poor mental health can increase the risk of social exclusion. In the Southern European studies, poverty and other social problems in the family of origin play decisive roles in the financial dependency and the lack of social support young unemployed people encounter. In all studies, low social support contributes to an increased risk of social exclusion. In the Italian, Greek and Spanish studies the emphasis lies on lack of support by the family, whereas in the Belgian, German and Swedish studies a lack of or decrease in social contacts is of prevailing central importance.

### **Macrosystem**

Youth unemployment has negative effects beyond obvious financial and emotional strains. It detrimentally affects not only the individuals concerned, but all societies too. In addition to being large in number, youth are energetic and courageous and pose new ideas that can change the social economic development if young people are well coordinated and involved in the economic activities of their country (ILO, 2011a). Youth unemployment and exclusion from the labor market have become a threat to the social, economic and political stability in most developing countries. Economically youth unemployment has led to labor market instability, increased welfare costs, erosion of the tax base and unused investments in education and training. In the Middle East, young people are voicing their discontent and insecurity. Likewise, "Los Indignados" in Spain spent much of the summer of 2011 peacefully protesting against high youth unemployment.

Discontented youth have also engaged in protests in other countries, such as Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom, sometimes with violent outcomes (Fominaya, 2013). A report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2008) noted that youth unemployment has also led to an increase in international legal and illegal migration as a result of individuals seeking work and wishing to achieve a better life elsewhere. Increased crime rates in some countries, increased drug use, moving back

home with parents, and mental health issues such as depression are all common consequences for a generation of youth that, at best, has become disheartened about the future and, at worst, has become angry and violent (ILO, 2011a).

Feelings of uncertainty due to economic crisis, and unemployment cause people, particularly young adults, to feel insecure, as they are unable to predict or control the world around them and what will happen to them in the future (Hogg, 2007). People prefer to identify with those groups that are characterized by high entitativity and are perceived as coherent entities, defined by characteristics such as similarity, clear boundaries, a common fate and a common goal. The perception of in-group entitativity promotes the vision of the group as an entity equipped with real intent, an ability to plan actions and to safeguard the security of its members, and the ability to protect them from external threats. These are precisely the conditions that may offer an explanation of the rise of right-wing nationalist parties in Europe (Greece, Sweden, Germany and Hungary) and national ideologies (Reese and Lauenstein, 2014). Societal turmoil is often associated with polarized politics, zealous partisanship, and extreme political ideologies and actions (Hogg, *in press*). Examples include the Great Depression of the 1930s, the extreme forms of communism and fascism during World War II, and the extreme forms of capitalism and communism characterized by an atmosphere of hysterical suspicion during the Cold War. In the African continent youth unemployment has greatly contributed to the high prevalence of civil conflicts in the region (Natrass, 2002).

Using data from the USA and UK as case studies, Bell and Blanchflower (2011) revealed youth unemployment has adverse effects that extend well beyond the present. The negative effects were focused on the delayed negative impacts of unemployment on well-being, health status and job satisfaction among young people. This brings stress to the societies and families who after high investment in youth education expect young people to be employed and hence contribute to the family and society growth.

To conclude, according to the bioecological model, youth unemployment is a multifaceted social, developmental and psychological phenomenon. Many studies give a clear picture that the unemployed youth experience leads to an increase in mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction and discontent with one's present life and feelings of hopelessness regarding the future. In addition, unemployment affects not just the individuals concerned, but their families and the society as well. These outcomes require further research for the development of policies and programs directed at youth unemployment.

Limited education and qualifications and lack of family and institutional support during a prolonged economic downturn increase the

vulnerability of youth to persistent and long-term unemployment. The challenge for policymakers is to implement policies that will effectively assist young people threatened by dismissal from their jobs, those who have already lost their jobs in such sectors as construction and manufacturing, and new labor market entrants. This in turn requires careful consideration of how skills development and other measures could benefit these young people by extending their access to a longer-term professional experience (Verick, 2009).

## EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS RELATED TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

In addition to research into how unemployment affects young people's transition to work and their health both in the present and in the future, there has been a parallel series of measures to tackle youth unemployment. In December 2012, the European Commission (2014) proposed the Youth Employment Package, which included the recommendation to launch the Youth Guarantee in every country, according to which member states should ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The Youth Guarantee program is associated with the need for structural reforms, including the development of vocational education and training systems. Over the last few years, many countries have undertaken reforms to improve apprenticeships to engage young people who have become disaffected with academic education (ILO, 2011b). Apprenticeships are an important way of improving youth employment.

However, governments should engage in greater efforts to increase the supply of apprenticeships, ideally making them at least two years in length, by supporting the development of "group training areas" to encourage employers to offer apprenticeships at a local level (Birdwell et al., in Nelson and O'Donnell, 2012). Some other labor active programs in European countries include programs regarding the provision of information, advice and guidance, new types of contracts for young people, employer incentives to hire or train young people, matching young job seekers with job opportunities, and providing young people with work experience (European Commission, 2011).

Youth policies regarding youth unemployment can be categorized into three types (Campos, 2013): a) preparing for transition, facilitating hiring, and offering better job opportunities; b) prolonging academic studies

and discouraging entry into the labor market; and c) regulating youth participation in the labor market and reconciling this with continued schooling. Active labor market policies, according to O'Higgins (2001), can include: educational policies or programs; *supply-side* policies, which change the characteristics of young people themselves, thus making them more likely to find work; *demand-side* policies that encourage employers to hire young people without changing their characteristics, for example through targeted wage subsidies; and *job-matching* policies, which concern the responsibility of employment services and institutions to facilitate the meeting between the supply and demand sides of the youth labor market.

In Australia (Jobs Australia, 2014) the National Partnership, with the Compact with Young Australians, was intended to encourage young people to gain the skills and qualifications needed to build a career. As an important factor for tackling youth unemployment, the Compact with Young Australians introduced: national consistency in the minimum school-leaving age; a requirement to participate in full-time education, training and/or employment until the age of 17; an entitlement to an education or training place for 15- to 24-year-olds; and strengthened requirements for young early school leavers to participate in education or training as a condition of receiving income support. In the UK, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) launched a program, "From Education to Employment," which examined strategies to support all NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people aged 16–24 (Nelson and O'Donnell, 2012). The NFER Research Programme focuses on three levels of intervention: national policy-level strategies; local policy-level strategies; and school-level strategies and parental involvement and support.

Effective national-level strategies, according to Nelson and O'Donnell (2012), include macro-economic funding for youth training and employment opportunities, fiscal stimuli to encourage employers to employ young people, and central responsibility and coordination for reducing the number of young people who are NEET. These strategies are consistent with the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Implementation of these strategies is not the responsibility of governments alone. Employers, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, schools, colleges and young people themselves also have a crucial role to play.

Research undertaken at the local community level has identified different levels of approach towards support of young people who are NEET. First of all, it is important to identify the early needs of young people who may find it difficult to make a positive transition to work. Those



young people who are likely to be NEET vary by different factors, such as: educational disadvantage; suspension or exclusion from school; affects of external structural factors (e.g., poverty, being a young parent, being in care or being a young carer); having disabilities or special educational needs; and having difficult personal circumstances (Horgan et al., 2010). It is particularly important in disadvantaged areas with families at risk to consider intervention needs early and certainly at the primary school level, in order to boost personal and social skills, and literacy and numeracy levels. The development of informal learning and volunteering opportunities is considered particularly beneficial for young people who have had a negative experience at school or lack clarity about their personal goals. The development of skills, qualifications and experience can support the transition to the labor market for the “poorly integrated new entrants” (Nelson and O’Donnell, 2012; OECD, 2013a).

Parental involvement and support with regard to effective youth engagement or re-engagement in the workplace are often overlooked. However, the role of parents and family is important because they influence not only young people’s attitudes towards education, but also decisions regarding engagement with other positive social and learning activities. Schools should provide regular information about children’s progress and on the schools’ expectations of parents, and provide greater advice and guidance to parents to help them support their children in making positive transitions (Nelson and O’Donnell, 2012).

Effective interventions are crucial with multi-stressed families (Walsh, 2006), particularly since these families usually have to overcome many problems that increase the likelihood of a specific, negative outcome for the young unemployed. The focus of programs has been on identification of risk factors before problem behaviors occur, as well as secondary (selected) and tertiary (indicated) efforts targeting youth at risk. For example, the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) intervention model emphasizes positive supports for all students, along with targeted interventions for at-risk youth.

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# The Multi-generational and Aging Workforce

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*'The Multi-generational and Aging Workforce provides a much needed comprehensive review of the causes and consequences of the demographic reality facing organizations of all types today. This edited volume presents an in-depth analysis and understanding of this demographic phenomenon.*

*Most importantly, the implications, opportunities and challenges facing organizations and management with respect to talent management, leadership development, organizational culture and performance, and many other topics, are thoroughly and insightfully discussed.'*

Mitch Rothstein, University of Western Ontario, Canada

The workforce is aging as people live longer and healthier lives, and mandatory retirement has become a relic of the past. Though workforces have always contained both younger and older employees the age range today has expanded, and the generational gap has become more distinct. This book advocates the need for talented employees of all ages as a way to prevent potential skill shortages and considers both the challenges and opportunities that these changes raise for individual organizations.

The expert contributors discuss benefits including greater employee diversity with regards to knowledge, skills experience and perspectives, as well as challenges involving potential generational tensions, stereotypes and age biases. They further place an emphasis on initiatives to create generation-friendly workplaces; these involve fostering lifelong learning, tackling age stereotypes and biases, employing reverse mentoring where younger employees mentor older employees, and offering older individuals career options including phased retirement, bridge employment and encore careers.

This wide-reaching book will be of use to academics, PhD students, human resource specialists, managers and government policy makers interested in the aging and multi-generational workforce.

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