

SHAPE7

CONSULTATION REPORT

JOBS OF THE FUTURE



ISSUE

Technological growth and demographic shifts are changing the nature of work. Young people between the ages of 15 and 30 are simultaneously drivers of change and the generation most affected by its consequences. Therefore, the views of today's youth are indispensable in identifying how to prepare for and manage future challenges and opportunities in the future of work.

WHAT WE DID

“Shape7” was an international collaboration between World Economic Forum Global Shapers’ hubs across the G7 community (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and the United States of America, as well as the European Union). Together, we hosted youth-led consultations in these countries on the G7 theme of “Jobs of the Future.” These sessions involved a diverse range of youth from the private, public, and non-profit sectors; education levels; backgrounds, and employment status. The input received from these consultations has been compiled into this report, including seven “Principles for action” that the youth of the G7 can strongly stand behind.

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

We believe that leadership must come from across all sectors. Accordingly, the Shape7 initiative focused on identifying principles that can serve as the basis for future action, and could be undertaken by the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Moreover, these principles can be implemented across the G7 community, regardless of the differences in cultures or systems

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

1. Reconceptualizing the relationship between employers and employees

Employment is a partnership between people and organization; career development requires each to invest in the other for mutual success.

2. Building skills earlier in life

Equitable and gender-sensitive access to experiential learning opportunities during core formative phases can help youth build the skills to think critically about their career paths before they enter the workforce.

3. Fostering a culture that rewards active and life-long learning

Regular training and retraining can equip workers with transferable and anticipatory skills to navigate diverse career opportunities and help build resilience in the workforce.

4. Empowering actors to plan and prepare for the future

Greater transparency regarding economic trends and corporate strategies can enable workers and companies to anticipate future needs and take steps to prepare for transitions before they occur.

5. Promoting human-centric innovation in the workplace

Enabling flexible ecosystems in the workplace can help maintain human interaction in tandem with future technological shifts.

6. Managing the ripple effects of change

Mechanisms for financial compensation, re-training, and safety nets (e.g., insurance) should evolve as new forms of work emerge, in order to address the indirect effects of innovation. This can help support innovators at risk of being caught between old support systems and new realities.

7. Sustaining diversity to create a competitive workforce

More diverse workforces with representation that leverages non-traditional knowledge, backgrounds, and skills of the most under-represented groups help our respective communities better navigate economic transitions and remain competitive in the long-run.

G7 THEMES

- Investing in growth that works for everyone;
- Preparing for Jobs of the Future;
- Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Working together on climate change, oceans, and clean energy; and
- Building a more peaceful and secure world

WHAT WE HEARD

Shape7 facilitated conversations with youth around four themes: 1) the concept of “career”; 2) the workplace of tomorrow; 3) education and skills development; and 4) fostering change.

Consultations were held in 12 cities across the G7 community, and included over 350 youth participants. Each city submitted a report on the discussions that took place during their sessions, which were then compiled to prepare this report and identify the seven principles for



action. This section summarizes the main themes that emerged throughout the discussions and ultimately influenced the seven principles for action.

Sub-theme 1



The concept of career

These discussions focused on elements of career trajectory and the skills that will be required to both compete and retain talent in the labour market.

Employee vs. Entrepreneur

Participants indicated that they were concerned about the increasing number of transitions they will undergo throughout their careers. While participants acknowledged that it is rare for an individual to spend their entire career with one employer, they recognized that they may also have to adapt to new fields of work. For example, instead of being an accountant to one or a number of companies their whole career, an individual may choose to start their own niche accounting business, build a start-up app that helps people do their own accounting, or switch to a data science role that lets them take advantage of their mathematical training.

Broader concept of "career"

For the participants, a career is not just about their paid employment history. Rather, they see their careers as involving all activities, paid or otherwise, through which they gain the skills and experience that empower them to be successful in the labour market. This includes formal employment (i.e. a “9-5 job”), a “side hustle” (e.g., starting your own business in your free time), and/or volunteering.

Compensation vs. Fulfillment

Shape7 participants indicated that they want more than a salary and benefits from their jobs/careers. They want to feel that their work makes a positive difference in their community, either locally, nationally, or globally. A career would thus aim to have a wider impact individually and collectively than simply fulfilling monetary needs.

Transition costs

Participants indicated that they would like to see their respective governments help reduce the costs or minimize the barriers they face when making career transitions. Transitions involve costs for all actors; workers have to support themselves and their families as they move from one opportunity to the next, employers must seek out new employees, and/or governments must deal with the economic pressures (e.g., lower productivity, negative repercussions from precarious work in the “gig” economy) that come from having increased numbers of workers in-between jobs or in the process of re-training. If young people are expected to regularly move between jobs, these costs will begin to accumulate. Participants identified a role for governments to help mitigate transition costs by better preparing youth through programs to support them during career transitions or enable opportunities for retraining.

Sub-theme 2

The workplace of tomorrow

These discussions focused on the role and effects that transformative technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence) are having in shaping workplace culture, organizational mission, and modes of work.

Social impacts of technology on the workplace

While technological growth has been and is creating new ways to work (e.g., remote login, shared working spaces), these shifts also change the way in which people interact with their co-workers. While new forms of work may offer greater flexibility, they can also isolate employees from each other and/or their employer. As a result, employees may feel less-connected to their employer/colleagues, valued for their work, or even abused. Shape7 participants voiced their concerns for such impacts and see a need for both employers and employees to seek a balance between flexible working arrangements and maintaining a positive work environment.

Beware the digital divide

Shape7 youth showed concern that the growing prominence of technology in the workplace will exacerbate inequities and/or create new ones. When premiums are placed on technological skills, those without them can find themselves subject to discrimination. In addition to older generations, participants recognized that new entrants (such as refugees and immigrants), lower-income groups, and women also experience discrimination in technology-centric workplaces. All actors have an integral role in breaking down barriers through increased access to training opportunities, countering discriminatory biases, and fostering cultures that embrace diversity and value human contributions in the workplace.

Leveraging human innovation

While technology largely defines future economic innovation and building the workplace of the future, Shape7 youth believe that technology's role is not to completely replace humans but to act as force multipliers. Participants fully recognize that certain types of roles, jobs, and tasks will soon be replaced completely by technology (if they haven't been already), but they were very clear that there are traits that humans possess that cannot be replaced by technology, such as creativity and interpersonal skills. As such, the Shape7 youth outlined a vision of the workplace of the future that is designed to facilitate positive interactions between humans and technology instead of working against each other



Sub-theme 3

Education and Skills Development

These discussions focused on upstream skills development as a means to address the labour market disruptions anticipated in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Re-training for all

in the economy of the future, traditional approaches to retraining will need to be re-calibrated, while opportunities need to expand to support individuals at all stages of their careers, including new entrants (e.g. newcomers such as refugees/immigrants, etc.), underemployed, and/or those looking to “switch gears.” As technology advances, employees across generations will need new skills in order to remain adaptable and competitive in the labour market and economy. This means that traditional approaches to re-training should be de-linked from job transitions. Shape7 participants recognized that employees/entrepreneurs will need to constantly update and expand their skill sets. The level of disruption caused by job transitions is higher if one waits until a job transition to “skill up.”

All sectors must invest in skills development



Shape7 participants called for an “all-hands” approach to human capital and skills development. The public, private, and non-profit sectors must all take responsibility for ensuring that individuals are equipped with the skills critical to jobs of the future. Placing the onus on individuals to seek out these skills exacerbates inequality between those with access to training opportunities, and those without. For example, entry-level jobs increasingly require the candidate to already have experience; however, not everyone has access to experiential learning opportunities necessary to enter the job market (e.g., unpaid internships). Additionally, leaving training up to individuals is inefficient for developing the critical mass of skilled labour necessary for future economic growth.

Don't undervalue soft skills

While participants understood and advocated for the importance of technological skills, they also recognized that workers with these skills may be vulnerable in the face of constant technological advancement. Thus, developing interdisciplinary skill sets can help make workers more adaptable to change. To this end, Shape7 youth recognized that technology cannot replace the need for strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Young people seek mentorship

Skills development is not just about formal education, whether it be in the classroom or online. Young people are looking to learn from their colleagues in the workplace because some lessons only come from experience. Additionally, mentorship can be a valuable mechanism for de-bunking outdated workplace myths and encouraging youth from under-represented groups to enter non-traditional fields/careers (e.g., women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; male nurses) by providing leadership examples.

Recognize international training and experience

Understanding that international experience is now a key competency, Shape7 participants highlighted the need to be able to pursue international education and internship opportunities, and know that these experiences will be recognized by employers. Shape7 youth also wanted to see governments provide increased support to young people pursuing such opportunities. Additionally, they indicated a desire to see employers recognize the education and work experiences of newcomers as valuable assets. While they understood that in some instances it can be hard to recognize international credentials, participants saw a need for mechanisms that allow individuals to demonstrate their competencies without having to completely restart their careers.



Sub-theme 4



Fostering change

These discussions focused on “enablers” of change; shifts in thinking that will help employers and young employees navigate the evolution of jobs and work environments.

When in doubt, ask

Shape7 youth indicated a strong desire to see increased opportunities for consultation. Within organizations, participants want to see employers put more effort into seeking the views of young employees when it comes to both strategic direction and intra-organizational dynamics. Participating youth felt that they bring diverse and innovative views to contemporary challenges, and can offer valuable input in addressing these challenges. Moreover, given that young workers expect to move between jobs/employers more often than in the past, the inclusion of youth in decision-making may help not only make institutions more adaptable, but also create a greater sense of youth feeling valued by the organization (thus helping boost employee retention).

Young and independent

Shape7 participants were clear that they want greater independence in their careers. Youth offered a number of suggestions for how to achieve this, including: decentralizing decision-making, creating the flexible conditions to allow young workers to work on side projects (e.g., Google’s 20 percent rule), and increased support to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities.

Education for change

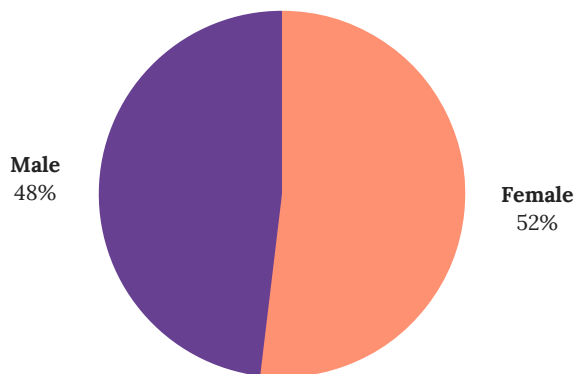
Shape7 youth see that the education systems in their respective countries can be a vital tool in creating change, rather than reinforcing existing systems. Participants envisioned three areas in which governments, as the primary actor in shaping education systems, can reform them to enhance inclusivity and better prepare youth to succeed in the economy. First, student evaluation procedures are outdated and exclusionary; poor performance in a subject early in a student’s career makes it less likely they will consider careers in that area. Youth would like to see student evaluation focus more on creativity and skill acquisition, and move away from mastery of rote repetition. Second, participants suggested using experiential learning opportunities (e.g., co-operative education, internships for credit) to expose youth to different career paths earlier in order to debunk traditional career-related myths (e.g., women do not belong in a given career field) and acquire valuable skills/experience. Third, education programs can be effective tools for breaking down barriers to economic success for under-represented groups. Providing financial and social support programs to people as they pursue educational programs will help them to overcome these barriers and access more economic opportunities.

Importance of support systems

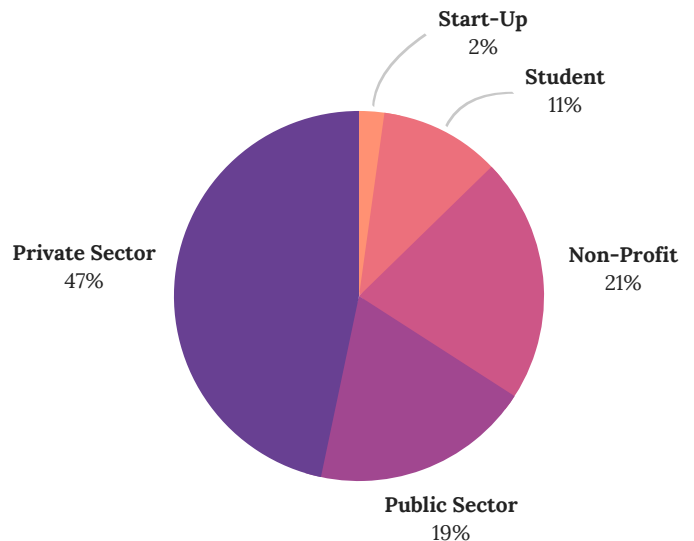
Shape7 participants observed that fostering innovation is more about technology and the freedom to create new ways of doing things. A key ingredient in supporting innovation that is often overlooked is having the right support systems in place to ensure that entrepreneurs/innovators are not vulnerable to gaps between emerging realities and old support systems. Traditional mechanisms like insurance (e.g., liability, unemployment), childcare, medical benefits, and pensions should be updated or replaced to reflect current economic and labour market realities (i.e. increased job transitions, more focus on small business and entrepreneurship, changing demographics). Going forward, youth indicated that they would like to see support systems adapted to provide increased flexibility so that more people can take advantage of them (i.e. greater access) and pursue new economic opportunities.

CONSULTATION DEMOGRAPHICS

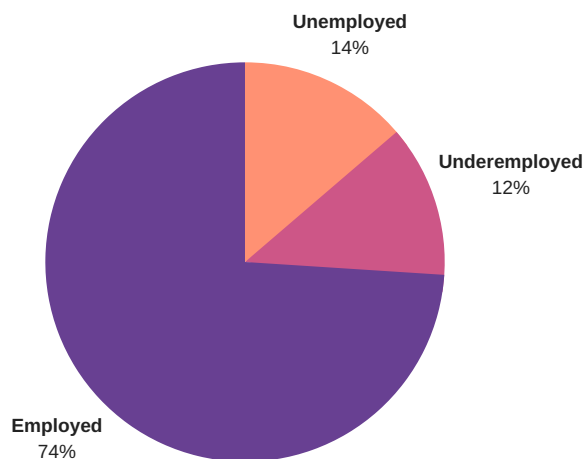
Gender



Employment Type



Employment Status



Total Participants:

350

Average age:

25

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