



## Socio-Economic Research and Applications (SERAP)

### Youth and Innovation: The Case of Guyana

**This newsletter highlights the importance of innovation driven by young people in Guyana based on existing research and publications. It describes potential outcomes from investment in human capital, the youth, and modern technology.**

The youth population in Guyana represents more than two-thirds of the population with an unemployment rate recorded at 31.4% in the first quarter of 2021. This high unemployment rate presents serious constraints for sustainable development in Guyana. There is a strong need for national authorities and young Guyanese to actively engage in technological innovation, so as to bridge the gap that will allow for the transformative progress of their country. An increasing number of young Guyanese wish to see an improvement in their country's economic and social conditions, to which they are willing to contribute. However, the growing population presents certain opportunities and risks simultaneously.

Building a fertile ground for innovation is an important step towards sustainable development driven by youths in Guyana. Advanced technology (ICT) provides a strong platform for global connection and opportunities. Currently, the proportion of youth that are not employed, educated, or trained, is estimated at 35.9 %. Therefore, it is crucial that young people, as the future of the country, are equipped with new skills that enable them to adapt to changing realities.

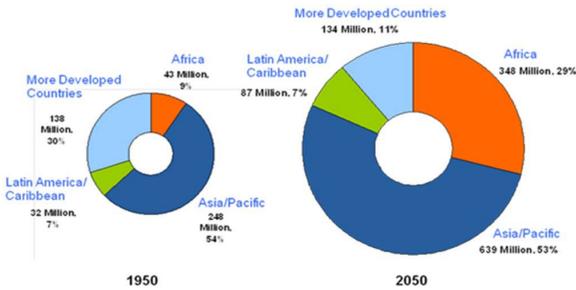
For instance, rising food prices and climate concerns rank among the top global priorities; the case is similar in Guyana. Young people have mobilized to confront this challenge. One example is the Green Valley Organic: it is a Youth Innovation Project based on the valued added production of sorrel. It is believed that sorrel powder has medicinal benefits and therefore has importance as a potential product of Guyanese origin. This innovation is expected to create employment for young Guyanese in the community, while other innovations are also expected and encouraged.

Youth leaders' coordination with the government and national policymakers and contribute to addressing current issues. In 2019, the national authorities assigned a \$1 billion budget for youth development to encourage innovation. The intention was to create regional youth councils and youth apprenticeship programs across the country. Under this budget, the government provides grants to entrepreneurial, socially aware young leaders who are cognizant of the issues or difficulties in their communities. In the long run, the government seeks to develop a solid ground for their country's development based on innovative solutions offered by Guyana's youth.

***SERAP connects peers, thought leaders, and practitioners across governments, diverse agencies, and academia to share ideas and experiences on Socio-Economic Research and Applications with inputs worldwide. To share papers, project news, interesting blogs, or upcoming events, please email us at [info@serapllc.com](mailto:info@serapllc.com).***

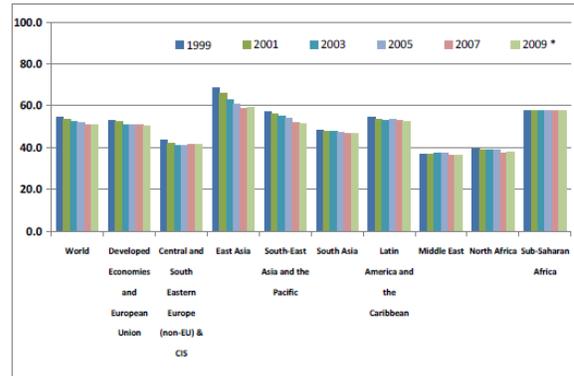
# Statistics and Factoids

## The World's Youth Population, 1950 and 2050



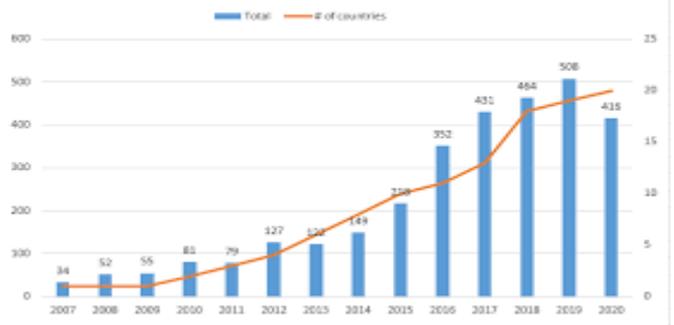
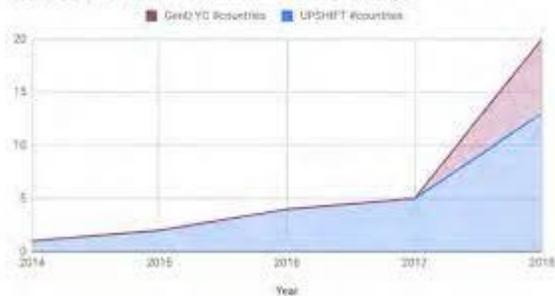
Source: UN Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision (medium variant)*.

## Youth labour force participation rates, by region (%)



\*2009 are preliminary estimates.  
Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, October 2009 (see Annex 4).

## Scale up of UPSHIFT and GenU Youth Challenge



## Keys Points on Youth Projects: Innovations and Recommendations

### \$45m granted to 30 youth groups and individuals through YIPoG

Forty-five million dollars were granted to 30 youth groups and individuals from across Guyana through the Youth Innovation Project of Guyana. The funds will go towards the development of innovative ideas to advance their communities, via Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, Mathematics or Spirituality (STEAMS)

### YIPoG 2018 – Unleashing youth innovation

The project, which was launched on April 13, under the theme “*Aspire, Inspire to Reach*” at the Racquet Centre, Woolford Avenue, is in keeping with the government’s plan to foster a ‘Green Economy’. Minister of Social Cohesion Dr. George Norton was present at the launch of the project and called on young people to take advantage of the opportunity being made available through the project.

### \$1.7 billion for youth programmes- Budget 2018

The government will be investing some \$1.7 billion on programs designed to ensure that youths attain the relevant skill sets that are required for the job market, either to become employable or manage their own operations. The total amount will be used to continue programs such as the Youth Innovation Project of Guyana (YIPoG), Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training (YEST), Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) and the Hinterland Employment and Youth Scheme (HEYS) program.

## Youth and Innovation Supporting articles



### Unleashing young people's creativity and innovation

Experts have formulated recommendations as to how youth work could narrow ‘the gap between the competences acquired by young people and the needs of the labor market’. First, a framework is needed to enhance the role of mentors, coaches, and trainers. Investment is needed in teaching and learning because the competence of youth workers is crucial if quality methods and tools are to be deployed. The context too must change: recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the formal education and in business sectors is required.

There is a wide lack of knowledge about non-formal learning processes and learning outcomes gained in youth work activities, and little agreement on how to assess them or explain them to other sectors. A common understanding must be built among all stakeholders, as only this can deliver the broad cross-sectoral cooperation and integrated approaches that will answer the unmet needs of so many young people.

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### Youth-led innovation: enhancing the skills and capacity of the next generation of innovators

The focus of this research is youth-led innovation, whereby young people instigate potential solutions to a problem, often one that they have identified or defined themselves, and take responsibility for developing and implementing a solution. Our report analyses the research to date on youth-led innovation and identifies evidence of impact. It highlights opportunities to participate in innovation increase young people’s likelihood to innovate in the future and what helps or hinders youth-led innovation. We offer proposals for encouraging more young people to take part in youth-led innovation, which were developed with focus groups of young innovators and organizations that work with them. Alongside this research, the National Youth Agency and Changemakers have produced a NESTA guide for practitioners on youth-led innovation<sup>1</sup> and illustrative case studies. [Read More...](#)



### Youth Skills and Innovation Initiative Closing the gap between business, youth, and the workforce of tomorrow

Recent trends show that by 2030, over half of the world’s young people – 825 million – will lack the basic skills needed for employment, according to a 2016 report by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. Access to gainful employment is vital to a community, and having meaningful work can substantially improve the lives of everyone in it. Regrettably, across the globe, half of the jobs on offer for young people are likely to be obsolete before those people have had the chance to graduate and enter the workforce. [Read More...](#)



### Innovation and technology for Youth employment

The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The 1.2 billion youth in the world in 2009 represent 18 percent of the world’s population. Globally, almost 90 percent of youth live in developing countries, especially in Asia-Pacific and Africa. The United States produces 70,000 graduates in engineering annually versus 600,000 engineering graduates in China. Today, U.S. students rank 25th out of the 29 developed nations for preparedness in math and science. The undesired decline in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students has led to an unfulfilled demand for ICT jobs and a very competitive environment for non-IT-related jobs.

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### Supporting youth-led innovation to achieve the SDGs

Nearly two years since the adoption of Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA 2015a), it is increasingly clear that the challenges facing our societies and economies will need the participation of all stakeholders and demographics.).

Among its repeated references to the importance of partnerships for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda convincingly embraces this notion, emphasizing the role of children and young people as “critical agents for change” (UNGA 2015a: para.51) and encouraging the UN Major Groups (including the UN Major Group on Children and Youth) to participate in the review of, and report on their contribution to the achievement of the SDGs (UNGA 2015a: para.89).

In order to move beyond statements of principles, however, it remains essential to assess the real extent to which young people worldwide are delivering solutions to sustainable development challenges at all levels, as well as to investigate (and learn how to overcome) the barriers preventing young innovators and problem-solvers from implementing their projects and bringing them to scale. [Read More...](#)



### Innovation in youth work

Youth work helps young people develop their human capital and strengthen their network and social capital, which are meaningful factors for a successful access to employment. During the "First European Conference on Youth Work (2010)" this area of education was defined as "the space and opportunity for young people to shape their future". Despite its clear benefits, today youth work faces many new challenges. According to the EU Youth Report 2015, 27 million young people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Youth IN-Work project was aimed at bringing together youth workers from different European countries to discuss together how to improve the quality of youth work and respond ever more effectively and creatively to the current needs of young people. It was aimed at gathering ideas to make youth work remains a space where young people of Europe can shape their future, with features of inclusion, participation, welfare, worthy employment, etc. It also aimed to improve cooperation between youth workers from EU countries and promote the international dimension of youth activities.

The Youth IN-Work project gathered in a 4-day meeting 24 youth workers, members of 12 organizations from 12 European countries, different in context, experiences, and methodologies in the field of youth work. [Read More ...](#)

### Youth led innovation is important for Guyana’s transformation

In April 2021, more than 11,000 youth leaders from around the world gathered for the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum.

ECOSOC is the UN’s foremost platform for listening to the voices of the world’s 1.8 billion young people. At the event, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said it was time for world leaders to “move beyond platitudes” about young people and commit to delivering a better future for them all.

Addressing Youth Forum delegates, the UN’s Youth Envoy, Jayathma Wickramanayake, said that the world’s 1.8 billion youth face issues “that no other generation has encountered,” including the climate crisis, conflicts, and systems of inequality that threaten young people's lives and futures. [Read More...](#)



### Skills and knowledge for youth employment

The Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) project seeks to strengthen youth’s access to justice and equip youth with market-driven skills and attitudes to improve their ability to transition to the workforce. SKYE is targeting a total of 1,500 youth beneficiaries who are not yet equipped for integration into the workforce; many are school dropouts and/or involved in the juvenile justice system. SKYE also provides capacity building support to local partner organizations, relevant government ministries, and the court system.

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