

# Policy Paper

## Sectoral youth employment opportunities

Perspectives from WB6 youth organizations

JULY 2022



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## TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction	5
2. Human Capital-centered policymaking	6
3. Why a sectoral approach toward employment?	7
3.1 Maritime economy	9
3.2 Cultural and creative sectors	11
3.3 Entrepreneurship and digital economy	13
4. WB6 youth perspectives towards sectoral youth employment	15
5. Opportunities and recommended next steps	17

## 1. Introduction

The Western Balkans 6 has become a sample for many socio-economic and political developments to be explored, delved into, projected, and analyzed. Mixing a troubled past with fast-driven reforms toward European integration has created many challenges for the region and the societies in it. Composed of a majority of the youth population, the region continues to provide limited opportunities, whereas a *joie-de-vivre* seems almost nowhere to be found among the region's youth.

The region has manifested different types of migration due to rising levels of unemployment and the lack of opportunities for quality education and skills development for young people. Representing among the biggest concerns for the region, youth unemployment is risking the productive potential of the economy and continuous social unrest.

Suggested evidence highlights that despite several attempts and interventions seeking to create employment opportunities, among the main reasons why respective institutions throughout the region have failed to attract young people as newcomers to the labour market, are a) the inaccuracy of information about the types of work that are available and needed, b) the difficulty of unemployed youth to access microfinance programmes such as start-ups due to their poor sustainability or their “project-based” lifestyle, and c) the gap in knowledge as to which education and labour systems are struggling in their ability to prepare young people with current and future job skills.

While in the process of developing the economy transforms, a sectoral approach when projecting and designing youth employment policies, would bring more targeted national/local policies and would ensure more social cohesion in the Western Balkans 6 induced by EU-supported projects, local public policies and foreign direct investments. Consequently, this paper aims to steer the discussion on how to provide youth with economic opportunities and employment avenues, and how institutions and youth organizations can work to promote such sector opportunities thus contributing toward a more enabling environment for youth.

This paper is part of the series of publications<sup>1</sup> by Connecting Youth platform in assessing the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans 6 - a large economic endeavour supported by the EU aiming at the region's recovery from

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<sup>1</sup> In 2021, Connecting Youth published the position paper “What's in for youth in EIP?”, which highlighted the need to further inform youth on EU-led development agendas targeting youth. The current paper was preceded by the policy paper “Youth Guarantee Deployment in the WB6: Institutional set-up and a perspective from youth organizations” published in May 2022.

COVID-19, human capital development and further harmonization of the region with the ambitious integration reforms.

As per tradition, the paper reflects on the direct input and the local perspectives of Connecting Youth partners<sup>2</sup> in WB6 on the ground nuance of employment policies impact and how to ensure we design authentic/context adapted and meaningful policies targeting youth.

## 2. Human Capital centered policymaking

Human capital plays an important role in the labour market. Needless to say, the better educated young people are more likely to find employment as they are more productive workers.

However, in less developed regions such as the WB6, evidence has shown that due to significant gaps between the labour market and education, unemployment remains prevalent even among educated youth.

The long-term cooperation strategy between the European Union and the Western Balkans 6 has been channeled through different pillars touching upon different areas of development for the region. The current Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans among others aims to

Research on the impact of human capital in economic growth in developed countries has shown that higher educational investments have had a significant impact on national economic growth. In general, the evidence suggests that a 1 % increase in school enrolment rates has led to an increase in GDP per capita growth of between 1 and 3 %. An additional year of secondary education, which increases the stock of human capital, rather than simply the flow into education, has led to a more than 1 % increase in economic growth each year.

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<sup>2</sup> Connecting Youth partners in the WB6 are: National Youth Congress of Albania, Youth Council of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovar Youth Council, High School Students Union of Montenegro, National Youth Council of Macedonia and National Youth Council of Serbia.

enhance human capital development for a knowledge-based society, innovation ecosystem and sustainable economy in the region. The only flagship on human capital development is in synergy with the EU Cohesion Policy which has set 11 thematic objectives supporting growth for the period 2014-2020 including Strengthening research, technological development and innovation; Enhancing access to and use and quality of, information and communication technologies; Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs; Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; and, Investing in education, training and lifelong learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the digital and green agenda, the crisis and the management of energy supplies throughout Europe, are putting human capital development at the center of policy decisions with a large need to create new and targeted innovative efforts to upskill and reskill the workforce. The urgency of skills supply in the WB6 is evident, yet what remains crucial is the awareness of skills acquisition and the institutionalization of the efforts in opening sectors to youth.

Except for Albania, the rest of the WB6 have large cohorts of upper secondary students enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes. Although a positive sign, the labour market relevance of certain VET programmes remains a challenge. Therefore, to address the skills shortages and mismatches, actions on several fronts are required including formal and non-formal education, structural and consistent institutional support when mainstreaming youth in policy-making, needs adapted VET training (such as agriculture, horticulture, transport, maritime, construction, service industries, food, clothing, etc.), encourage labour-boosting schemes such as Youth Guarantee, improving literacy skills, improving access to education for disadvantaged youth, improving access to new technologies in education and customized educational resources.

### **3. Why a sectoral approach toward employment?**

During the post-pandemic recovery, different sectors in the WB6 region thrived and boosted employment activities hence leading to a job market recovery. Industry, services, tourism, ICT and transport were among the sectors that boosted employment in the region.

Effective activation policies are aimed at giving more people access to the labour market, and consecutively providing them with good jobs. Among the

requirements of activation, policies are expanding employment opportunities, improving job readiness, and helping to find suitable employment.

According to World Bank Job Diagnosis, a multi-sectoral approach enables a more systematic method of finding possible solutions to jobs challenges. Opening different sectors and designing targeted sectoral policies for youth employment can respond to the gaps between labor market needs and workforce preparation and skills.

Most recently with the Economic and Investment for the WB6, the Youth Guarantee<sup>3</sup> scheme is being prepared for implementation, as a means to bring youth and the labour market closer together, while also investing in skills and preparation for the labour market. Throughout the region, successful examples of

involving sectoral stakeholders have been noticed, hence using the opportunity to explore sectors with potential as a source for youth employment.

In Albania and Montenegro, the institutional set-up has involved the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism, in charge of two sectors which could bring new employment opportunities for young people. Further, in Kosovo,<sup>4</sup> North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministries responsible for Culture, Youth, Sports and Innovation have been involved to ensure the policies/regulations and the implementation plan deriving from this scheme respond to the needs of young people outside the active workforce and prepare them to fit in the labour market.

Although Youth Guarantee seems promising for the region, carefully crafted and properly resourced implementation plans are needed to ensure the certainty of long-term benefits, including on-the-job experience and training, a balance between labour demand and supply, and job-seeking programs after completing the participation/involvement in the scheme. Implementation of such a scheme in the EU has demonstrated that high-quality outreach activities, especially by working closely with schools and the use of mobile teams to reach the remote and less connected NEETs, are key strategies for achieving the objectives.

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<sup>3</sup> Connecting Youth. (2022). Youth Guarantee deployment in the WB6. The paper can be accessed here: <https://connecting-youth.org/documents/CY%20Policy%20Paper%20-%20May%202022.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Furthermore, synergies with other flagships of the EIP are highly recommended to maximize impact. More particularly, EU-funded projects within IPA III should embed synergies with Flagship 8 of the EIP, which builds on the Digital Agenda aiming at strengthening digital infrastructure and digital skills development, and Flagship 9 of the EIP which supports SMEs. In a context of low scrutiny on public procurement and public-private partnerships in the region, what is really needed is a shift to more human capital development projects, which produce more economic and social progress on a larger scale in society.

Within the region, sectoral investments would bring several benefits toward employment; expanding the agricultural sector and the industrial sector would increase the labour force participation and resultantly the employment-population rate. Investing in secondary school education and tertiary education would impact youth productivity and lead to higher rates of employability. Further, investing and regulating policies on microenterprises can impact the set-up of formal enterprises thus impacting economy circulation and employability.

In the next section we will highlight some of the sectors that are a potential for youth employment:

### 3.1 Maritime economy

The maritime economy also referred to as the *blue economy* covers all marketable activities linked to the sea. The main maritime economic activities include tourism, maritime transport, fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing, maritime manufacturing, and other activities (such as extraction of crude petroleum, extraction of natural gas, extraction of salt, processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluscs, the building of ships, building/maintenance of sporting ships and boats, etc.).<sup>5</sup>

The maritime economy consists of sustainable and integrated development of economic sectors for healthy oceans and seas, hence providing a great development prospect for our region, more specifically for Albania and Montenegro. In Albania, the Adriatic-Ionian coast is among the most important zones due to its position, its closeness and linkage with highly developed marina countries (such as Croatia, Montenegro, Italy, and Greece), its natural values - biodiversity, and cultural/historical heritage. It represents among the main sectors contributing largely to

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<sup>5</sup> EUROSTAT. (2015). Maritime economy statistics - coastal regions and sectoral perspective. The link can be accessed here: [Archive:Maritime economy statistics - coastal regions and sectoral perspective](#).

economic growth and employment. Despite its so-far developments, there are still many spaces for more investments and innovation in this sector to make it more attractive for youth involvement due to its potential to create new jobs and ensure a more sustainable economic growth.

If developed strategically, the maritime sector can provide the following opportunities for youth involvement<sup>6</sup>:

- Culinary tourism and linkage with agriculture;
- Inland tourism includes visits to archaeological sites;
- Diving and hiking around coastal lands;
- Educational awareness trips;
- Developing marine research capacity for better maritime policies and reforms, etc.

Montenegro lies within similar opportunities when it comes to the maritime economy. Slightly different from Albania, Montenegro has strongly regulated the development of its maritime economy through several Strategies<sup>7</sup>. Among the main goals of such strategies that provide opportunities for youth involvement are:

- Application of ITS technologies in transport;
- Preservation of the coastal area for the development of sustainable tourism;
- Development of the local entrepreneurial infrastructure;
- Providing stimulating funding programs and increasing the quality of products;
- Developing capacities in research and innovation with the needs of the economy.

Another distinguished characteristic of Montenegro is the embedment of the maritime economy in education. Currently, there are several programs at the Bachelor, Master and PhD levels, directly linked to the maritime economy and its aspects.

Better promotion and new incentives for such programs, could increase youth participation and benefits from this sector. A concrete example of such efforts is the

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<sup>6</sup> The World Bank. (2021). Blue Economy: How Can Albania Benefit?. The document can be accessed here: [Blue Economy: How can Albania benefit?](#)

<sup>7</sup> BlueWBC.(2020). Sustainable development of Blue economies through higher education and innovation in Western Balkan Countries-BLUEWBC. The document can be accessed here: [Sustainable development of Blue economies through higher education and innovation in Western Balkan Countries – BLUEWBC Projec](#)

establishment of the Center for Excellence in Maritime Affairs (CEMA) - a partnership between Durres Port Authority, University of Durres, Cooperation and Development Institute and supported by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and the Albanian Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. CEMA aims to a) provide services regarding capacity building, skills development, and youth employment in the maritime industry; b) research, and advocate in the field of maritime transport and connectivity; and, c) serve as an innovation hub that will integrate public bodies and private capabilities towards digital, automation and AI application to real-life maritime and logistics problems.<sup>8</sup> In the near future, such cooperation can also contribute to a revision of the current curricula at the University of Durres in the maritime areas, which would provide the space for youth to have more modern and up-to-date information on maritime affairs, research and opportunities in the labour market.

### 3.2 Cultural and creative sectors

In the last years, cultural activity and creative sectors have been explored as sectors with potential as they merge both a business model meant to be profitable and also the non-profit part linked to self-expression and identity. According to Eurostat, cultural and creative industry activities accounted for nearly 3.7% of EU employment in 2015, contributing 4.2 % to EU GDP<sup>9</sup>.

While the development of this sector brings different profits among which a larger involvement of youth and women, and a bigger touristic attraction, the WB6 region is still in the early stages of profiting from this sector. The Economic and Investment Plan for the WB6 highlights economic opportunities deriving from these sectors and the potential of cultural tourism to expand throughout the region. Currently, IPA-funded regional programmes are being implemented across the region to boost culture and creativity and at the same time strengthen cultural cooperation within and with the region<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> CDI Albania.(2021). Center of Excellence in Maritime Affairs. The news can be accessed here: [Centre of Excellence in Maritime Affairs - CEMA - CDINSTITUTE](#)

<sup>9</sup> European Parliament. (2019). Employment in the cultural and creative sectors. The briefing can be accessed here: [Employment in the cultural and creative sectors](#)

<sup>10</sup> EU Art and Culture. The briefing can be found here: [Art and culture | WeBalkans | EU Projects in the Western Balkans](#)

The cultural and creative industries include several sub-sectors that offer the possibility of employment opportunities when complemented with targeted policies and strategies. These sub-sectors include advertising, arts, architecture, crafts, design, film and audiovisual media, games developments, as well as the agribusiness sector for textiles, fashion design, leather, furniture, food and even community-based tourism-related services<sup>11</sup>. Our region has seen successful examples of these sectors, that can be further developed to include more young people in the labour market:

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the past decade, cinematography developed into a modern and diverse sector attracting a national and international audience, thus becoming a sector with high potential of creating new jobs, contributing to social and economic cohesion and at the same time boosting culture as an economic spot<sup>12</sup>
- In Serbia, the Creative Industries sector is composed of small and microenterprises (23.8 %) and entrepreneurs (67.5 %) with a 7.58 % of broad GDP contribution in 2017. The leading domains of this sector with high potential for job creation are design and creative services including graphic design, followed by film and video production<sup>13</sup>;
- In Kosovo, the Innovation and Training Park in Prizren has transformed into a regional hub for entrepreneurship innovation, business, creation and skills development, and a source of innovative and successful ideas. It brings together and fosters synergies between the public and private sector, business and academia with the aim of generating new and better jobs, strengthening skills and practical knowledge, and boosting a sustainable business environment<sup>14</sup>;
- In Montenegro, cultural and creative industries are becoming fast-growing sectors, gathering 4.4% of the total number of employees at the level of Montenegro. Currently, it numbers 11 sectors with approximately 40 activities belonging to cultural and creative industries with estimated economic

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<sup>11</sup> UNIDO. (2013). Creative industries for youth. The paper can be accessed here: [Creative industries for youth: unleashing potential and growth](#)

<sup>12</sup> Nurkovic, R. (2015). Contemporary Development Of Creative Industries In Bosnia And Herzegovina. The document can be accessed here: [\(PDF\) Contemporary Development Of Creative Industries In Bosnia And Herzegovina](#)

<sup>13</sup> Mikic, H. et al. (2020). Creative industries in Serbia: Methodological approaches and economic contribution. The document can be accessed here: [\(PDF\) Creative industries in Serbia: Methodological approaches and economic contribution](#)

<sup>14</sup> ITP Prizren: [About - ITP](#)

effects<sup>15</sup>. The development of these sectors has also boosted cultural tourism - an effort that has brought thousands of tourists to the coast of Montenegro has exposed the local culture, art and music and has helped to boost the economy and generate jobs<sup>16</sup>.

Attracting and promoting foreign investments in this industry and regulating subventions or support for youth would further facilitate the sustainable job impact that this fraction of the economy portends.

### 3.3 Entrepreneurship and digital economy

This sector has become the most popular in terms of its potential for economic growth and inclusion of youth and women into the workforce and labour market. So far most of the investments in this sector have come from the support from the EU (including co-support from the World Bank and the EBRD), most recently materialized through the Digital Agenda for the WB6 and the Economic and Investment Plan for the WB6 and its flagship projects: Flagship 8- Digital Infrastructure, Flagship 9- Investing in the competitiveness of the private sector, and Flagship 10- Youth Guarantee.

While there have been different incentives and initiatives to regulate this emerging sector throughout the region, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia, remain champions when it comes to the maximization of benefits deriving from ICT development, the rise of startup-s, micro-small-medium enterprises development and the employment opportunities and economic growth deriving from these sectors. According to World Bank indicators the largest share of ICT-related exports to total service exports remains in Serbia (40%), North Macedonia (26%) and Kosovo (22.4%).

The ICT industry in Kosovo makes up a vibrant sector of the economy, contributing a significant share of the Gross Domestic Product, around 8-10% of Kosovo's GDP. According to the business registry of the Tax Administration of Kosovo, in 2015 a total of 571 businesses were registered in the ICT sector, employing around 3,000 IT professional programmers, hence becoming a sector with a lot of potential for young entrepreneurs and ICT-oriented youth. However, in order to ensure more

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<sup>15</sup> IPER. (2019). Mapping of cultural and creative industries in Montenegro. The document can be accessed here: [MAPPING OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN MONTENEGRO](#)

<sup>16</sup> UNDP. Creative Montenegro. The summary can be accessed here: [Creative Montenegro | United Nations Development Programme](#)

young people benefit from this potential sector, several challenges need to be addressed, including:

- Better harmonization between education and ICT sector, including preparation and skills enhancement of this sector's workforce;
- Better career guidance for young students/professionals wanting to enter the ICT sector, including presentation of opportunities coming from the ICT labour market, needed skills, how to acquire them, etc.;
- Institutional support when it comes to the export capacity of the Kosovo IT industry (including more information on global markets, latest developments in the IT market, etc.);
- Encouraging the work of certified schools in the ICT sector to provide training and on-the-job skills;

Similar challenges and opportunities can be found in Serbia as well. Young entrepreneurs, programmers and software developers in Serbia are witnessing among the biggest growing sectors in Serbia, whose market in 2016 was estimated at EUR 1.73 billion. Generating international visibility for the Serbian economy, this sector is strongly export-oriented, hence reaching a record of exports of EUR 900 million in 2017, surpassing the exports of traditional industries and being in close competition with the exports of electric machines and road vehicles<sup>17</sup>. Being among its top priorities, respective institutions in Serbia have put in several efforts to develop human capital, establish an innovative infrastructure and provide financial incentives for the ICT industry. Although the ICT sector in Serbia employs more than 20,000 employees, through better cooperation between government - business - academia, the opportunities for employment are still high, especially in the following areas:

- Internet marketing;
- Developing front-end, back-end and middle-ware components;
- B2B understanding;
- Creating tailored software and systems solutions, etc.

North Macedonia on the other hand has witnessed the rise of entrepreneurship, start-ups and youth and women's participation in business creation. The SME-s sector is being recognized as a dynamic driving force of overall economic activity in North Macedonia. A similar practice has followed Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, the over-complicated bureaucratic procedures hinder the development of the

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<sup>17</sup> Kleribrik, A., et al. (2018). The Potential of ICT in Serbia: An Emerging Industry in the European Context. The report can be accessed here: file: [The potential of ICT in Serbia - Publications Office of the EU](#)

sector and the capacities of young entrepreneurs to continue their activities. In both BiH and NM, while the governments have put several incentives in place to support the development of this sector, the international community including the EU, OECD and ILO have jumped in to complement the support offered to this sector. There is plenty of opportunities deriving from this area, however, the following are needed to ensure youth maximize the benefits:

- A partial replacement of the theoretical education with more practical knowledge and skills for building entrepreneurial ventures, start-ups, and starting small businesses;
- Creating better informing systems/services for students and aspirant entrepreneurs about the available support systems for starting or developing a business/start-up;
- Incentives to fill the market gaps between what is needed and what is offered. Currently, in North Macedonia, there is a demand for advanced skills in business law, entrepreneurial finance, intellectual property management, logistics and transport, product/service development and diversification, market research, internationalization as well as green business trends, etc..<sup>18</sup>

## **4. WB6 youth perspectives towards sectoral youth employment**

The work and activism of civil society organizations and in this case youth organizations throughout the region, have further encouraged and incentivized youth participation and involvement in different sectors as preparation to enter the labour market. Connecting Youth partner organizations have specialized and advocated for different skills acquisition through specialized training programs, hence making non-formal education crucial when preparing youth for the labour market.

Throughout recent years among the most notable initiatives on employment education, from the National Youth Congress of Albania (NYC), has been eco-entrepreneurship for you toward a green economy. As a very specific and innovative sector, it has sparked the attention and interest of many young people interested in entrepreneurship, sustainability and the development of

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<sup>18</sup> Dimitrova, M. (2020). Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in North Macedonia. The paper can be found here: [ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN NORTH MACEDONIA](#)

green/sustainable start-ups. Through training, focus groups and meetings with institutional stakeholders, NYC continues to inform youth, build capacities and share experiences toward the development of this sector by youth. In addition, as part of Tirana European Youth Capital 2022, NYC has two dedicated programs “Youth creates Economy and Innovation” and “Youth Develops Capacities” that directly support innovative ideas of young people through granting schemes, not only as part of youth organizations, but also as informal groups and individuals.

Through the Academy of Youth Policy, the Youth Council of FBiH is building the capacities of young people to create innovative solutions for different problems they face in their local communities in different sectors. Be it in the environment, agriculture, youth advocacy, etc. young people are being prepared by specialized mentors to formulate innovative solutions and target different needs in their municipalities. In this way, youth are being introduced to different levels of policy-making, the chain of policy development and community activism at the local level.

The work of the Kosovar Youth Council (KYC) targets high school students all over Kosovo. Throughout their recent activities, KYC advocates for quality education, a better school environment, the promotion of VET, and proper interaction between the labour market and the education system. In their recent work, KYC has implemented several activities in informing youth about labour market needs, building capacities of youth to find a job, self-employment, and guiding youth in the creation of social enterprises.

Similarly, the High School Students Union of Montenegro (UNSCG) enables the creation of a unique, safe, and confidential umbrella community of all student parliaments of Montenegro with the aim of promoting the importance of participation of high schoolers in decision-making processes in relation to all aspects of their education. Through their project “Action day”, UNSCG provides the opportunity for high school students to work one day in a place aligned with their educational profile and gain experience, as well as a better perception of what they will do in the future. Through this project, youth have the opportunity to receive a direct experience and create an authentic picture of their future profession.

Through their project “Social Entrepreneurship for Youth Employment”, the National Youth Council of Macedonia pushes for a more favourable environment for youth social entrepreneurship to reduce youth unemployment. In addition, NYCM successfully advocated for lowering the founding capital of 5.000 Euros to 1 Euro for starting a business. As a result of the advocacy, a new type of trade company was introduced in Macedonian legislation, titled 'Simplified Limited Liability Company,



which allows citizens to start a business with one 1 Euro, as per the example of Serbia and Bulgaria. NYCM continues to implement business accelerator programs for youth, provides networking opportunities for youth and the business sector, contributes to youth entrepreneurial opportunities and strengthens the employment prospects of young people.

The National Youth Council of Serbia continues to provide capacity-building activities for both the member organizations and the youth activities within them in the area of social entrepreneurship, youth work, media literacy, content creation, etc. Among the key programs implemented by KOMS is the Academy of Youth Policies which gives the selected participants the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience on youth policy, master the skills of advocacy and creating change in society, and apply the acquired knowledge in their local environments and beyond through blogs, street actions, research, etc.

## **5. Opportunities and recommended next steps**

The ongoing investments toward the Western Balkans could help to respond to two major concerns of the region when it comes to human capital: youth unemployment and migration. However, major projects coming toward the region in infrastructure, energy, private sector, and human capital need to be backed up with long-term policies to ensure maximized, multiple and long-term benefits for the citizens. Many analyses have shown the opportunities deriving when sectors are open, and youth is involved since the inception of respective development strategies. To cope with limited state administrations, resources and absorption capacities at the local level, stronger participation is needed from all social partners and economic partners. To respond to the current challenges when it comes to the inaccuracy or limited information about the types of work that are available and needed; the difficulty to access opportunities and the gap between skills and demand, the following recommended steps can bring some opportunities when tackling these challenges:

- Investing in youth labour market data, research and analysis for more authentic sectoral policy design: To ensure we are responding to the labour market gap, it is crucial to possess up-to-date and clear information on the current state of affairs, and labour market needs and sectoral job opportunities for youth. Youth organizations can play a crucial role when it comes to bringing accurate and on-the-ground information which can help

for better-targeted policies. Including youth can help the designing process of policies and ensure youth impact is mainstreamed in policymaking. Bigger support from the donor community is needed to ensure youth organizations have consistent skills and resources.

- Cross-sectoral institutional/stakeholders cooperation in policy and programme design: Institutions throughout the WB6 should include youth and start developing sectoral youth objectives within their sphere of competence. This is crucial when planning interventions addressing youth employment and designing targeted employment policies.
- Exploring less-mainstream or understudied sub-sectors and the means that could bring youth closer to actual employment opportunities: A stronger cooperation and partnership between specialized civil society organizations in the mentioned sectors throughout the paper and youth organizations, could bring more accurate findings and assessments on such sectors from a youth perspective. In addition, cooperation with specialized CSO-ss could ensure better identification of youth employment determinants as crucial to ensure what is brought to the labour market fits the needs and demand (eg. Job locations versus unemployed youth geographic concentration; using digital tools to promote jobs versus the scale of unemployed youth using or having access to technology, etc.).
- Supporting and investing in career guidance and counselling/advice: Young people especially at the high school level and university level can be further helped by accessing information and employment exchange services through educational institutions. Youth organizations remain the focal point when it comes to informing youth on different opportunities for non-formal education, employment, etc. Contextual and tailored cooperation between institutions, businesses, the donor community and youth organizations is needed to ensure that the institutional chain is strengthened and supported, and more young people can benefit from existing opportunities. Partnerships with the private sector would ensure education and training responds to the market needs.
- Employment boosting schemes and microfinance programs are encouraged to be followed by different sectors and respective institutions: Similar to grants for start-ups or subventions in agriculture, the same practices are recommended to be followed in the area of transport, green/climate, energy, tourism, innovation, etc. Such efforts can make these sectors more attractive for youth, can expose young people to new opportunities to be pursued

academically and professionally, and can complement institutional efforts when it comes to sustainable and green growth. Structural support from the international community in such interventions could ensure respective institutions throughout WB6 consistently foresee sectoral support toward youth.

- In support of the above, IPA and national project preparation cycle and related decision-making mechanism should include youth and foresee youth impact as an evaluation criterion for all projects submitted by the WB6, especially when it comes to green/climate/energy areas, private sector, digital and similar areas where youth is not often mainstream/included.



[connecting-youth.org](http://connecting-youth.org)

