Insight & Learning Question(s) Answered:

What are the key areas of information that are missing at a systemic level to generate broader change regarding youth unemployment? Why does measurement of success in this space seem so discordant between organizations? What needs to happen to create more harmony and comparability across initiatives?

Insight Byte:

The global youth unemployment space is a very fractured universe

Many organizations are working in this space, most of them with different twists (some smaller, some larger) on the same issue. The space is trying to work together as more of a coalition, but there are some key gaps that are not yet harmonized across all groups, particularly:

- **What are the macro, universal truths when working with youth (if any)?**
- **What is the common set of behavioral (i.e. workforce) skills needed for long term success/sustainability regarding employment?** Various frameworks were proposed such as...
  - ...Skills, experience, network (from Yellow Woods / Harambee)
  - ...The concept of “fluid intelligence”- i.e. the capacity to think logically and solve problems in novel situations, independent of acquired knowledge
  - ...Skills versus Disciplines (e.g. “coding” versus “computer science; from Microsoft “Computing at School” in the UK)
  - ...Building intrinsic motivation
  - A separate (and very large) question is how these are measured as many different methodologies exist within this sub-question

- **What does the universe of context-specific factors look like to address different cases?**
  (Or put another way: What are other common barriers that need to be overcome, and how significant a role does each play in maximizing success (i.e. how big a catalyst are they)?)
  - These could include factors like
    - Having a manager w/ similar socio economic background
    - Having a mentor
    - Available transportation (e.g. “one bus ride away”)

- **What causes the gaps between demand (the open positions) and supply (the available youth workers)?** Topics highlighted include:
  - Timeliness of information/ability to act: Skills in demand are changing faster than organizations can keep up
  - Developing “signals” (e.g. badges) for employers that reflect positively on the beneficiary
- Creating “proxies” to improve understanding of supply (e.g. behavioral preferences, cognitive learning potential tools)

**The need to “speak the same language”**

- Generally, it can be said that **demand is not being met** (at least on a large scale) and that **there is still a large gap in understanding supply**. Examples of what works are located in pockets: in anecdotes, in seemingly apples-to-pears initiatives, in research that is not organized in a cohesive way to understand the larger picture.

- **This creates an apparent Catch-22 scenario** by which it becomes nearly impossible to produce a common set of data to build an evidence base that can be analyzed and improved upon:
  - A robust data set to understand what works cannot be built without common measurement or indicators
  - Common measurement indicators cannot be built without an understanding of what works

- This points to a **specific need for action at the coalition level** to ignite a starting point to build a measurement methodology from which organizations can begin to measure and subsequently evolve the methodology. Such a methodology would need to have a pathway to iterate and improve it over time (i.e. not just launch it as a one-time event).

- In particular, such a measurement methodology would need to include:
  - Qualifications for sufficient evidence and research to determine a change in methodology
  - Decision point to classify what elements are universal and which are context-specific

- In building this measurement methodology, such a coalition should look to others which have taken on similar efforts, such as the **Sustainable Apparel Coalition and the Higg Index** (now in its second iteration).

**Taking Action: What can you do next with this knowledge?**

1. **Actions for the Global CC team**
   - Talk to Lisa, Jill, and Heidi about how the S4YE coalition might be able to develop such a measurement framework
   - Have a discussion with CC Leads on this topic to understand if this type of output from a coalition would be welcomed by our partners
   - Talk to Rosanne about focusing Accenture’s research efforts around these larger gaps

2. **Actions for the S2S practitioner team**
   - Read the conference’s highlights and key take-aways and the S4YE Flagship Report to familiarise yourself with the proposed working solutions to move the youth employment sector forward

*This Insight Byte has been brought to you by:*
*Matt Mooney, Performance Reporting Team, Corporate Citizenship*
*matthew.a.mooney@accenture.com*
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