

Forum : Labour

Subject : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labor market

Name of Citizen : Giovanni Grech

Family situation ○ Married / dating ● Single ○ With kids, if so how many :	Education level ○ Primary ○ Secondary ● University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

My name is Giovanni Grech and I'm a 22-year-old woman from South Korea, I am actively pursuing a graduate degree in Economics at Yonsei University. I feel directly concerned by the question of how young people can be empowered to thrive in the labor market of the future.

I'm not just an onlooker into this issue, rather I'm part of this generation that will unavoidably enter a labor market being re-shaped and reformed by the emergence of AI, the furthering and progression of automation and digitalization. Additionally, my studies in the field of economics have increased my awareness into the fact that just a degree will not and cannot guarantee me nor anyone a proper and successful career.

For instance, my discussions with other students at my university, more specifically about career opportunities, have shown me how many of us are already questioning ourselves with which of many skills will be sought after and valuable as long as AI continues to improve and consequently change the way in which companies will operate. My interests have led me to research data analysis and technology because of the deepening ties of these themes with economics.

One of my strongest positions has and always will be my belief that young people like me and my friends mustn't be expected to adapt to these changes we face but rather that we should have a voice in shaping the future of labor itself.

As a young woman from South Korea this has found a special place in my heart because South Korea is a country with a highly educated and technologically advanced young population, which makes the fact that many young people still face an intensely competitive labor market to find employment of a high quality a very important reality to face. One other stark revelation to me has been that the common pressure to attend a prestigious university to obtain proper qualifications can oftentimes create a notion that, that is the only path to success.

This more than convinces me that the preparation of the young population for future labor markets is obligated to involve more than simply obtaining academic qualifications, rather it must include and give us the tools and knowledge of practical experience, adaptability, and confidence.

2. What do you suggest at your scale?

I can only propose so much at my limited level, yet I feel obliged to raise awareness to the fact that we should bring education and the labor market to a point in which they are closer together than they currently are. Giving young people the tools and opportunities to develop practical skills before being pushed into the fierce labor market should become the norm.

I feel that universities, governments and companies should start joint partnerships in which students will be offered internships, career workshops, mentorships alongside the traditionally offered academic courses.

In my experience as an economics student, I feel that there would be enormous benefit in me being assigned assignments in which I am pushed towards analyzing real economic and business data for a company in place of strictly studying theoretical models in class, as those can only offer so much insight. I would propose that universities place an emphasis on the importance of skills in AI literacy and programming knowledge, especially to a student whose course of study is not computer science.

As with many of the world's issues it's not as straightforward as changing one thing and expecting the issue to resolve itself. Applying this logic to our topic, simply telling young people that they must learn more and work harder is not an effective method. Doing this places unnecessary pressure on young people and fosters a negative mindset in which the young person assumes all responsibility. Governments and universities must understand that they hold in their hands a responsibility to create these crucial opportunities for young people to gain experience and insight into a vastly different world to the one we grew up in.

I would support programs which incentivize companies to hire young students, for example through means of a paid internship and simple entry-level internships which would be comprised of thorough teacher/learner led training rather than expecting a young student to possess an absurd amount of knowledge only years of experience could provide.

All in all, I place my belief in young people's right to be given a stronger voice in discussions regarding the layouts and roadmaps of future employment policies which rather than anyone else will affect us most. I believe in our ability to pave the way for ourselves through active participation in initiatives in which students could directly communicate with policymakers and establish constructive relationships which ultimately would not only benefit the young people of South Korea but all young people entering the new age of employment.

The market of labor which my generation will enter will be different to the one previous generations have faced, which is why I undoubtedly believe in my generation's ability to not simply accept the circumstances of our future but instead to shape, mold and build it to the best of our abilities.