

# How the Private Sector is supporting youth employment during the COVID 19 pandemic

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*This Brief is part of the [Solutions for Youth Employment \(S4YE\)](#)<sup>1</sup> Knowledge Brief series focusing on the design and implementation of youth employment programs.*

*In this Knowledge Brief, we highlight different ways in which private sector firms in S4YE's network are launching new initiatives or adapting their existing programs to support youth employment in response to COVID-19. Based on recent and ongoing discussions with our private sector partners, we see five ways in which firms are stepping in to support youth in these difficult times: These include 1) Support for Digital Skill Building, Online Learning/Training and Employment for Youth; 2) Support to Build Resilience among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; 3) Support for Youth Focused NGOs; 4) Immediate Emergency Support to Public Authorities; and 5) Internal Measures to Ensure Business Continuity within the Organizations.*

### 1. Introduction – Impact of COVID on Youth Employment

The COVID-19 crisis has created high levels of uncertainty and a global economic shock with massive impact on public health, businesses and workers. Mandatory stay-at-home orders and social distancing are forcing **businesses to adapt and reshape the fundamentals of work.**

Youth, women, and other minority groups are disproportionately affected by the current situation. Youth were already at a disadvantage well before the pandemic outbreak, facing challenges in transitioning to the labor market. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a severe economic and labor market shock, with an increase in people unemployed estimated between 5.3 and 24.7 million<sup>2</sup>. The impact on youth employment is likely to be harsh, given that youth (15-24) are already 3 times more prone to be losing jobs than adults.<sup>3</sup> It is not just the number of jobs that young people are losing due to the pandemic, but also their lower levels of resilience due to the already poor quality of jobs that they have. 77 percent of employed young people have informal jobs mostly in the form of zero-hour contracts or work in the informal sector.<sup>4</sup> Such unstable types of work makes youth vulnerable to health-related hazards because social distancing in informal work is not always an option.

**Since the onset of the crisis, many young workers have been driven out of the job market due to a significant reduction in labor demand.** In particular, youth and younger youth in low-income countries have been hit hard as they are more likely to face substantial cuts in working hours and wages. An ILO

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<sup>1</sup> The S4YE ecosystem consists of a [Private Sector Advisory Council](#), a network of over 35 companies; a network [of World Bank youth employment projects](#) which have a combined commitment of 17.47 billion USD for 150 lending operations in 69 countries and a [Youth Advisory Group](#) to integrate youth voice into technical activities and decision-making. The fourth pillar of this ecosystem is the [Impact Portfolio \(IP\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2020), "Special Issue on COVID-19 and Youth" <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/04/YOUTH-FLASH-Special-issue-on-COVID-19-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> CDC (2020), "Coronavirus Disease 2019 Situation Summary." <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html>

survey<sup>5</sup> finds that approximately 17% youth reported to have been pushed out of the global workforce, representing one out of six young people that had to stop working since the outbreak. The survey also finds that young people in lower-income countries and young women are facing reductions in working hours, incomes, and productivity as compared to their peers.

**Job losses will affect their future earnings because of interruptions, lost productivity, and de-skilling associated with prolonged unemployment spells,** and missed opportunities to build human capital on the job.<sup>6</sup> Insights from past crises and economic recessions show that economic crisis severely impacts the less educated, women, young people (entry-level job seekers) while educated workers were relatively less affected.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the impact on the vulnerable youth could last for several years and lead to cyclical downgrading as the effects of recession shocks are strongest for young workers.<sup>8</sup>

Young people are our next generation to lead us in the future and therefore, it is critical at a time like this that both the public and private sector join hands and take urgent, targeted, inclusive and agile measures to support young people's opportunities and access to jobs.

## 2. How is the Private Sector Supporting Youth during the COVID Crisis?

[Solutions for Youth Employment \(S4YE\)](#) is a multi-stakeholder coalition, housed within the Jobs Group of the World Bank. It aims to provide leadership and resources for catalytic action to increase young people engaged in productive work. One of the four pillars of S4YE's ecosystem is a network of leading private sector companies that are committed to addressing the youth employment challenge. Through this S4YE PSAC (Private Sector Advisory Council), private sector partners learn, showcase, and support the scaling of innovative youth employment interventions.

**Since the pandemic, several S4YE partner companies have taken several rapid measures, by launching new initiatives or modifying their existing programs to support youth.** This knowledge brief highlights a few of these initiatives. Based on our recent consultations and surveys with our partner companies we see five ways in which the companies are contributing their resources and expertise to support youth, and health related institutions during this pandemic. Table 1 lists these initiatives.

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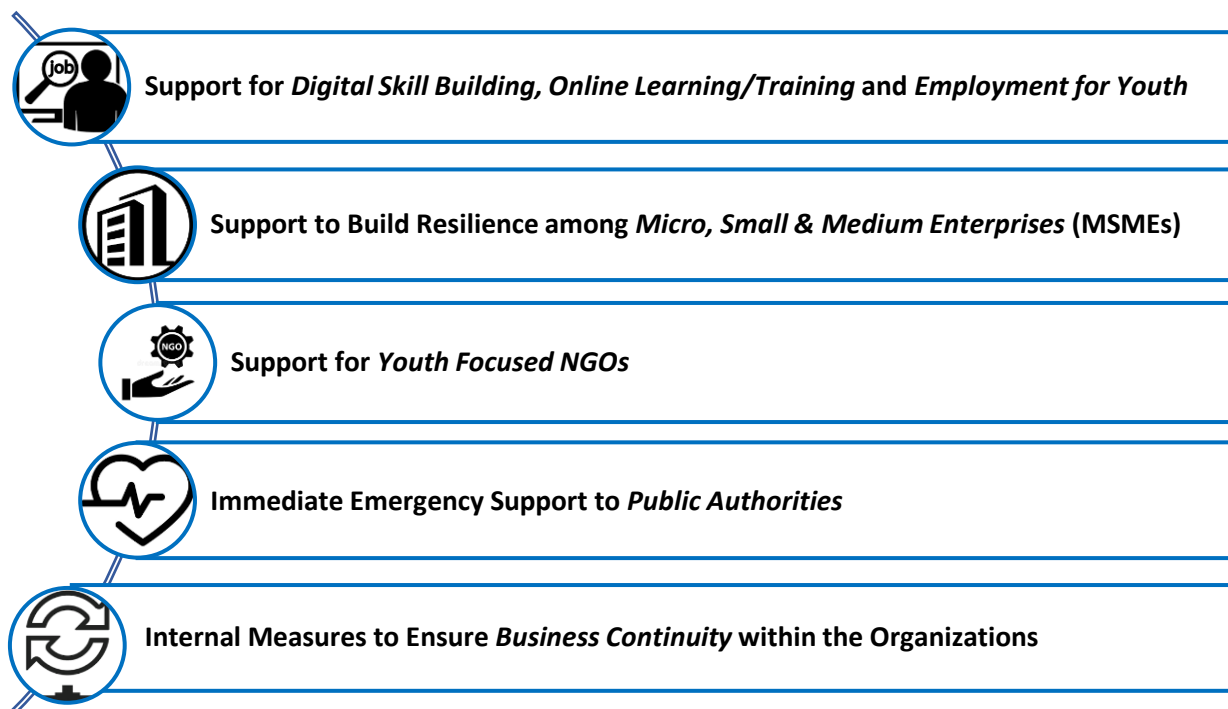
<sup>5</sup> According to ILO's *Youth and COVID-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-Being*, they received 12,000 responses from the youth (aged 18-29) from 112 countries between April and May 2020. The survey population represents students and working youth with a tertiary education, and those with internet access.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank Blogs (2020), "The impact of COVID-19 on labor market outcomes: Lessons from past economic crises." <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/impact-covid-19-labor-market-outcomes-lessons-past-economic-crises>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Oreopoulos et al (2012), "The Short- and Long-Term Career Effects of Graduating in a Recession" <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/app.4.1.1>

**Table 1: PSAC Partners’ Initiatives with Agile Approaches to COVID-19 Crisis**



### 2.1 Support for Digital Skill Building, Online Learning/Training and Employment for Youth






Several studies have already highlighted the importance of involving private sector in designing effective training programs. The private sector has a vital role in the design of effective youth employment projects<sup>9</sup>. **The private sector, as the creator and source of jobs, can play a key role in promoting youth employability by training and providing on-the job experience that help young people build relevant skills and knowledge.** Equipping youth with relevant skills that are consistent with the needs of the labor market remains a key instrument to support young people’s pathways to better jobs and a better future.<sup>10</sup>

Several S4YE private sector partners have changed their existing youth employment programs and launched new initiatives/programs to expand their services to help address the COVID-19 crisis in education and employment for vulnerable youth. Their support on the upskilling agenda for youth are grouped in five categories (Table 2).

<sup>9</sup> World Bank Group (2018), “Integration: A New Approach to Youth Employment Program.” Jobs Guide Issue 3. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31439/135323.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

<sup>10</sup> World Trade Organization (2020), “Helping MSMEs Navigate the COVID-19 Crisis.” [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/covid19\\_e/msmes\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/msmes_report_e.pdf)

**Table 2: Boosting Digital Skilling and Employment for Youth**

	Free Online Courses and Initiatives with Certification
	Training Platform for soft and hard skills
	Virtual Internship Programs
	Job Matching Platform between Job Seekers and Companies
	Boosted Connectivity and Networks

### 2.1.1. Free Online Courses and Initiatives – Some with Certification Programs

In March 2020, Coursera began offering a wide [selection of courses completely free to learners](#), enabling them to earn free certificates. Coursera also launched the [Campus Response Initiative](#) to provide universities and colleges with free access to more than 3,800 courses and 400 specializations from top industry and university partners. The Initiative has served more than 3,700 institutions, reaching more than 2.6 million students who gathered more than 24 million enrollments. In April, Coursera launched the [Workforce Recovery Initiative](#), which helps governments worldwide provide unemployed workers with the same set of free courses that are available in various languages and via web/mobile device. The Workforce Recovery Initiative has served governments across 100 countries, reaching more than 1 million impacted workers who gathered more than 7.5 million enrollments. Facebook launched [Facebook Blueprint](#) to provide free digital marketing courses and trainings through education-based programs and certifications. And [in collaboration with Coursera](#), the company recently established a free social media marketing professional certificate program to broaden employability in digital marketing sectors. Microsoft launched [Global Skills Initiative](#) to help 25 million job seekers acquire the digital skills through skill/job matching platform, free access to learning materials and contents, and certifications to increase employability. Since its launch in June, the Microsoft Initiative has trained more than 10 million learners globally across 231 countries and territories, with a large number of learners from U.S., India, UK, France and Canada for most popular courses, such as, software development, customer service and data analytics. With the growing trend of online courses, there has been a shift in delivering the online content in some cases. For example, through its Practical Business Skills platform, Visa is offering [online business education programs](#) to support small business owners, particularly those in emerging economies, through a variety of resources including very short (60-second long) animated videos that are easily accessible even on mobile phones, organized into learning paths and link watching business owners to more in-depth information on each topic. Such microlearning courses are built to upskill the entrepreneurs with financial and business knowledge, and help them make confident, informed business decisions in a fast-paced environment.

### 2.1.2. Training Platforms for Soft and Hard Skills

In addition to the virtual classes and courses, more comprehensive online training platforms for youth can help provide more holistic package of skills that are required to be matched with jobs in the market. Some platforms also include support to prepare for interviews and job matching services. With its continuous effort to bridge the digital skills divide for youth from low-income communities, [Avasant Foundation](#) is currently engaged with over 800 youth across the Latin America and Caribbean region providing workforce training, upskilling and digital skills development programs to strengthen the digital ecosystem, while providing free laptops and necessary tools to ensure that candidates are equipped to complete the training programs (Box 1). LinkedIn made several learning pathways free of cost on [LinkedIn Learning](#), an online training product with different courses. It offers complimentary packages with a collection of hard and soft skills to online learners, including students and individuals working from home. Coursera and Microsoft joined the Global Education Coalition curated by UNESCO to create a [Global Skills Academy](#), aiming to help one million young people with digital upskilling and building resilience through free access to employability-oriented training materials between 2020 and 2021. The collaboration between LinkedIn, Microsoft and GitHub is offering free access to [job-seeker tools](#) with [interview preparation](#) courses once people obtain skills and [certifications](#) through online classes (Box 2).

#### Box 1: Avasant Foundation's Digital Skills Training in LATAM

In Guyana, the Foundation introduced the [Digital Skills Training](#), a blend of in-person and online training, for 250 youths to provide opportunities for skills training, employment, and entrepreneurship. In addition to the training, the Foundation supports candidates seek job opportunities.

In the Bahamas, the Foundation recently launched the Digital Skills Training for upskilling and retooling the workforce affected by the 2019 hurricane Dorian and the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting 500 Bahamians to engage with digital technologies for learning and working.

In Jamaica, the Foundation executed training for the [Skills Development for Global Services Sector](#) to virtually conduct "train the trainer workshops" to equip 25 master trainers with a capacity to train 1,000 other trainers in digital skills. These trainers will train youth from high school to tertiary education to develop digital skills across Jamaica.

#### Box 2: LinkedIn, Microsoft, and GitHub's 3-Step

LinkedIn, Microsoft and GitHub developed a free learning path mapped to jobs via three steps by offering services, such as in-demand, discounted Microsoft certifications to validate skills, and tools for job search and interview preparation.

- First, they provide the online users with [relevant skill sets for 10 jobs](#) that are identified as having the greatest number of job openings as per LinkedIn's 2020 analysis. The jobs include software developer, sales representative, project manager, IT administrator, customer service specialist, digital marketer, IT support/helpdesk, data analyst, financial analyst, and graphic designer.
- Secondly, LinkedIn [helps users find the right role](#) by updating LinkedIn profile to stand out, setting up job alerts, and connecting or expanding their network to land a job.
- Finally, this free online service [prepares users for interviews](#) by sharing them with useful tips, courses, interactive tools and Q&A to ensure they ace the interviews and get hired.

### 2.1.3. Virtual Internship Programs

Despite the social-distancing and lockdowns, some S4YE partners continued to provide internship and mentoring programs virtually so that youth could continue to enhance their skills and increase their employability. Companies, such as Accenture, Microsoft and Nestlé, have offered virtual internship and mentoring programs to help youth upskill and prepare them for the job market. To provide an effective internship program, both Accenture and Microsoft designed their programs with a few essential elements – 1) Training remote interns to adapt to an online work environment; 2) Providing mentoring for every intern to support them throughout the program; and 3) Creating a sense of community among the interns to expand their networks, for instance through virtual trivia night and yoga classes. Accenture helped more than 1,000 young adults with virtual internship and learning experiences in 2020 to support them throughout their career life cycle with its program [Skills to Succeed](#). Microsoft virtualized its internship/apprenticeship program, [LEAP](#), to improve global employability in the technology industries. In addition, they are also providing soft-skill training to interns and the youth to make a smooth transition to an online work environment. Nestlé worked on a Virtual Internship guideline in collaboration with the Mexican and the Canadian markets to ensure young interns could benefit from high quality internships and meaningful experiences despite of the impact of COVID. Nestlé also [offered 2-month virtual internship programs to 100 unemployed youth](#) in East and Southern Africa Region, and launched [Nesternship in India, among other countries](#), to provide virtual working experience. Only in India, through the program 1,000 young professional and students were hired and upskilled across diverse functions and education during the lockdown period.

### 2.1.4. Job Matching Platforms

It is pivotal that young people find and land a job to leverage their skills learned from virtual courses and programs provided by private sector, especially in this time of very scarce job openings. Some tools and initiatives that help match employers with job seekers were already in place before COVID-19, but they have become even more relevant now and, in some cases, they are being scaled up and expanded as a response to the pandemic.

Informal economy workers hit hardest in low- and lower-middle income countries due to COVID-19, accounting for 77% and 94% of total informal employment in each income group of countries respectively<sup>11</sup>. Google has expanded its [Kormo](#), a job-matching app that has been operating in Bangladesh and Indonesia since 2018, to India in April 2020. The app matches urban youth seeking entry-level jobs with employers in service and informal sectors like food markets, street vendors, retail, and hospitality (Box 3). [Google was featured in one of the Insights from Private Sector Webinar series](#) to share its experience of creating Kormo to cater to the needs of emerging economies.

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<sup>11</sup> ILO Brief, “Impact of Lockdown Measures on the Informal Economy.” [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_743523.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743523.pdf)

**Box 3: Google's Kormo**

Kormo is targeted to help urban youth seeking entry-level and blue-collar jobs, mostly in the service and informal sectors where their job postings are not readily available online. Those young seekers usually have basic qualifications with post-secondary education and are smartphone savvy. Kormo comes with features - location-wise job listings, real-time tracking, fast updates on applications, in-app interview scheduling, a guide to build a digital CV, various local language availability, and visual contents to upskill users. Such features make it easier for job seekers to create and post a profile, search relevant jobs that match their interests, develop relevant skills, and eventually land the job.

Kormo also seeks to help employers maintain business continuity by bringing efficiency and reliability in the hiring process during these difficult times. Kormo features Remote Job Listing and Remote Interviews that have allowed both employers and job seekers to go through interviews and recruiting process safely. Facing a surge in grocery sales, local grocery store chains had to hire more staff to meet the growing rate of consumer spending. With Kormo, the companies like Shwapno and Meena Bazaar in Bangladesh could select their ideal candidates in much shorter period by using Kormo's "automatic shortlisting" to screen candidates fast and its "one-click interview invitation" to invite all short-listed candidates in just one click.

At zero cost for employers to join and participate, Accenture's [People + Work Connect](#) is designed to shorten the complex, lengthy cycle of unemployment. Created in 14 business days, the global effort—geared toward both sides of the jobs equation—is powered by an analytics-driven B2B [employer-to-employer] platform built by Accenture. The initiative launched with leading companies including ADM, Baxter, Marriott, Mondelēz, Nordstrom, ServiceNow, and Walmart, and now has approximately 273 companies fully live on the platform across more than 90 countries.

To further help job seekers find new jobs and discover potential career paths as fast as possible, LinkedIn recently launched [Career Explorer Tool](#) that matches a seeker's skills with jobs that the person may not have otherwise considered, based on LinkedIn's analysis on skills similarity. With such analysis, the Tool supports seekers to identify their skill gaps to make a transition to a new job and guides them through learning opportunities on LinkedIn Learning courses to help them gain the skills they need. In addition, the Tool provides direct links to job opportunities relevant to the target occupation.

Microsoft's [Global Skills Initiative](#) also provides job-searching tools to help people pursue new jobs through its collaborative partnership with LinkedIn and GitHub.

**2.1.5. Boosting Digital Connectivity and Networks**

Closing the digital gap by boosting and ensuring reliable connectivity and network is crucial to achieve inclusive growth for disadvantaged youth in rural and underserved areas. Currently, only 19 percent of the people in the least-developed countries are using the internet. In Africa, the regional average for broadband penetration still remains at 25 percent.<sup>12</sup> To tackle such challenges during COVID-19 pandemic, [Intelsat](#) announced to extend its partnership with [Mindset Network NPC](#) to ensure students, out-of-school youth and teachers across Africa have access to high-quality and free educational television and online content.

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<sup>12</sup> World Bank Blogs (2020), "COVID-19: We're tracking digital responses worldwide. Here what we see." <https://blogs.worldbank.org/digital-development/covid-19-were-tracking-digital-responses-worldwide-heres-what-we-see>



Similarly, Microsoft stepped up efforts to address the urgent need for connectivity solutions through its [Airband Initiative](#), which is focused on connecting rural and underserved communities to permanent broadband solutions. By expanding this program, Microsoft donated mobile Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless connectivity equipment to unserved and underserved communities around the globe, including to schools, libraries, homes, and medical facilities (Box 4).

#### Box 4: Microsoft's Airband Initiative

Nearly half of the world's population lacks any form of internet connectivity, leaving billions on the wrong side of the opportunity gap. Since its official launch in 2017, Microsoft's Airband Initiative has aimed to help close the digital divide and bring affordable, high-speed internet connectivity to unserved and underserved communities around the world. By July 2022, the program aims to expand broadband access to at least 3 million people in rural areas in the U.S. and additional 40 million people globally.

To meet these goals, the Airband Initiative involves partnerships with telecom equipment makers, internet and energy access providers, and local entrepreneurs. The Airband Initiative also focuses on bringing digital transformation to these newly connected communities across four key areas: healthcare, agriculture, education, and small business enablement. By September 2020, the Airband Initiative has helped expand high-speed internet access to nearly 14 million people in rural, previously unserved areas, including nearly 1.5 million people in the U.S.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the initiative has continued to connect rural and underserved communities to permanent broadband solutions. This is in addition to addressing the urgent need for immediate connectivity solutions during the crisis, including through donating hotspots and wireless connectivity equipment.

## 2.2 Support to Build Resilience among Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of many economies, representing 95 percent of all companies worldwide and accounting for 60 percent of employment.<sup>13</sup> They are major employers of women and young people, and a key driver of innovation.<sup>14</sup> **MSMEs are especially vulnerable to the pandemic's** because of limited financial resources and borrowing capacity, and because of their disproportionate presence in economic sectors affected by social distancing measures and transport.<sup>15</sup> Several S4YE **private sector partners have been supporting MSMEs by offering grants, free products and services, and innovative solutions to respond effectively to the pandemic.**

[Visa Foundation](#) announced in April 2020 its [commitment of \\$210 million](#) to provide immediate relief to NGOs on the frontlines of COVID-19 response efforts and to support small and micro businesses (SMBs), with a focus on women's economic advancement for the next five years. From the two commitments, \$10 million in grants were provided to NGOs across five regions - North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe; Asia Pacific; and Central Europe, Middle East and Africa. Through the Equitable Access Initiative (\$200 million commitment), Visa Foundation will provide \$60 million in grants to NGOs

<sup>13</sup> World Trade Organization (2020), "Helping MSMEs Navigate the COVID-19 Crisis."  
[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/covid19\\_e/msmes\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/msmes_report_e.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

committed to empowering SMB owners, with a focus on women's economic advancement and designate \$140 million to investment partners to generate social and financial returns for SMBs. In addition to Visa Foundation's efforts, in June 2020, Visa announced a global commitment to digitally enable 50 million SMBs worldwide to get local communities back to business in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its efforts, Visa will introduce a range of locally designed programs and solutions to enable SMBs to drive efficiency and sales through acceptance of digital payments. One example of how Visa helps consumers identify SMBs that are open for business during the crisis is through an online tool, [Back to Business Project](#). Additionally, for MSME business owners, Visa launched [Small Business Hubs](#), a centralized hub for MSMEs that provide small businesses with quick access to valuable resources, and with Visa networks that help them at every stage of the business cycle. It also expanded its [Practical Business Skills](#) platform, an online financial and digital skills education platform offering free resources for small business owners. Visa helps with insights for MSME growth through its newly launched [Visa Economic Empowerment Institute \(VEEI\)](#), a center of excellence for research and public-private dialogue on payments policy. VEEI recently published research paper, entitled "[Small Business in the Digital Age: Recommendations for Recovery and Resilience](#)" exploring the topic of how small businesses are faring in the increasingly digital world and what policymakers can do to support them.

Companies like Cisco, EY, Facebook, LinkedIn, Microsoft and SAP are offering free products and donating hardware to enable video conferencing and remote working solutions for MSMEs. For example, EY launched a free [Enterprise Resilience Tool](#) to help companies navigate the crisis and plan for recovery, and offered six months of free access to the [EY Finance Navigator](#) for early stage entrepreneurs to evaluate the financial impact of COVID-19 on their companies. Facebook, on the other hand, offers [Workplace from Facebook](#), a communication and collaboration app that helps people get work done. Facebook offers the technology for free to qualified NGOs and charities globally through its [Workplace for Good program](#). Separately Facebook administers the [Future of Business Survey](#) to SMEs globally in partnership with the World Bank and OECD for policymakers, institutions and nonprofits to get updated information on challenges faced by small businesses.

In addition to grants and free products/services, large corporate companies are helping MSMEs become more resilient by scaling up innovations to sustain themselves during the pandemic. Accenture built a [B2B resiliency platform](#) (Box 5) to shift workforce from companies winding down to those ramping up, and [provides innovative and provocative insights](#) to manage the impact of COVID-19 on businesses by giving advice and offering solutions on business strategies for recovery, new customer engagements, business resilience, enterprise profitability, and digitalization. Accenture also developed a quantitative Business Resiliency Quotient (BRQ) by assessing an individual company's own resiliency, and environmental ease of survival. Such resiliency indicators include a strong online footprint where customers can transact through e-commerce and e-delivery, instead of having to rely on a brick and mortar store footprint.

Avasant provides trainings and advisory services to small and medium businesses to help them adapt to challenging environment due to the pandemic by offering free research and advisory reports on its [Coronavirus Resource Center](#), as well as online fora and webinars led by industry experts to share knowledge and insights. Moreover, Avasant developed [Coronavirus Impact Index by industry](#) to analyze the effect of COVID-19 in workforce, operations, supply chain and revenue of 11 major industry sectors that spans from financial services to manufacturing and to public entities. Wadhawani Foundation established [Sahayata Initiative](#) to support SMEs and public health workers in response to the crisis. The Initiative has three components – 1) Business Stability Program; 2) COVID-19 Skilling Program; and 3) Public Health Innovative Program to focus on funding SMEs that provide medical supplies and ventilators,

provide grants to tech innovations that address COVID-19, and assist nurses and home-healthcare workers.

**Box 5: Accenture’s empowering MSMEs resiliency in COVID-19 world**

The pandemic has forced MSMEs to adapt to a new way of operating. Accenture is well-poised to help platform companies (i.e., Uber Eats, Instacart) who are ready to support MSMEs as partners in building resiliency and returning to business as usual. For instance, Uber Eats helps local restaurants struggling to quickly move to online ordering, pick-up and delivery by offering free delivery service for more than 100,000 independently owned restaurants across the US and Canada.

In order to have more platform companies supporting MSMEs, Accenture stepped in to help such platform companies with consultations to:

- Help identify the needs of customer retention and growth, and re-segment platform companies’ prospect and customer base with a data-driven analysis.
- Help create platform specific MSME guidance to drive their engagement and revenue by cultivating MSME’s digitization capabilities.
- Help create tailored outreach and retention campaigns to capture growth and new offerings for changing demand.
- Help launch virtual sales and service teams with personalization capabilities and managed services.
- Help identify new pockets of growth and churn signals by turning hidden data into insights and actionable outcomes.
- Help provide essential product insights and features that drive ongoing engagement as post-COVID world preparations.

**2.3 Support for Youth Focused NGOs**

In addition to grant funding, **several S4YE private sector partners have offered NGOs and non-profit organizations with reliable, temporary broadband connectivity in areas in need and free virtualizing services to continue connecting with their employees and volunteers.** For example, Intelsat has offered [FlexMove](#), a reliable, high-speed satellite connectivity, in areas in need and free virtualizing services to continuously connecting with their employees and volunteers. To support nonprofits and relief organizations with finding talent, LinkedIn has expanded its [Recruiting for Good](#) program to help organizations fill critical volunteer and full-time positions as COVID-19 response.

In partnership with [Junior Achievement](#), a youth-serving NGO, CEMEX has supported 120 young people from Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic to develop soft skills ranging from self-discipline to leadership and to managing personal resources. Since the start of the pandemic, the soft skill programs had to shift to online learning, and CEMEX made it possible to deliver such virtual format of the programs to much broader communities of young people in a number of countries. Facebook offered some of its products, including Workplace from Facebook, a collaboration app for companies, for free to government and emergency service organizations during the pandemic. It also gives its technology for free to qualified NGOs and charities globally through its [Workplace for Good program](#). Microsoft also supports its NGO partners through virtual learning resources and platforms (i.e., Teams, LinkedIn Learning). With its satellite fleet and connectivity infrastructure, [Intelsat](#) offered temporary bandwidth to support global NGOs, multiple humanitarian workers and mission operations across Africa and remote islands with better and reliable connectivity. Intelsat also helped customers quickly scale their existing

networks with temporary, no-cost capacity, and entirely deployed new networks to meet increased demand.

## 2.4 Immediate Emergency Support to Public Authorities

Several private sector firms have worked in collaboration with governments at local, national and global level. Microsoft made an initial \$1 million donation as [COVID-19 Response Fund](#) with Amazon and other Seattle-area companies to provide local nonprofits and community organizations on the frontline of the response to COVID-19 safety net during the crisis. Additionally, Microsoft has encouraged employee donations up to US\$ 15,000 a year to support such efforts through [Giving Campaign](#) throughout the pandemic situation by matching each employee's donations of time and money to 55,000 nonprofits and schools. As an immediate response to COVID-19, [Nestlé](#) established a partnership with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to provide urgent help for emergency services and support healthcare systems by donating CHF 10 million in countries in most need. In search for a safe, effective and globally accessible vaccine within 12-18 month timeframe, Nestlé also [donated CHF 1 million to support the global Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation](#). [Accenture](#) and the National Health Service (NHS) contributed to equipping staff (i.e., primary, secondary and social care workers and pharmacists) with enhanced communication and collaboration capabilities to help the NHS continue to deliver service while protecting its workers. In the course of supporting social issues through its [Build Back Better Social Impact Actions](#), CEMEX donated 1.7 million medical supplies/personal protective equipment and supported 332,000 food pantries for vulnerable populations internationally while helping clean and disinfect more than 400 hospitals and public facilities across the globe. As part of global relief funding, Cisco [committed \\$225 million](#), of which \$8 million in cash and \$210 million in-kind, to support global efforts and nonprofits in healthcare, education, government response and critical technology. Part of the funding was allocated to the United Nations Foundation's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund to manage the spread of the virus, and to heads of state, government agencies and enterprises through its Country Digital Acceleration program to deploy technology solutions promptly. SAP established a [€3 million COVID-19 Emergency Fund](#) to support vital needs of World Health Organization, the CDC Foundation, and smaller nonprofits and social enterprises working on the front lines to aid local communities in crisis.

Besides grants and donations, several private sector partners came up with creative tools and services to help healthcare organizations handle the crisis more efficiently. Facebook introduced new tools to help health researchers track COVID-19 cases. Its [Data for Good](#) program offers disease prevention maps and tracks spread, movement-range trends at a regional level to monitor high density areas through voluntary survey on Facebook. This tool helps create connected mobility for ambulances, paramedics, mobile command and test centers and portable connectivity for temporary clinic and test facilities, field hospitals, food and medicine distribution, and operational continuity. Avasant is currently conducting research for its upcoming [Healthcare Digital Services RadarView Report](#), which will highlight the recent trends in healthcare due to COVID-19 and leading technologies and tools that are transforming the healthcare ecosystem. The Report will propose solutions on telehealth, remote diagnosis and IoT sensor-based monitoring devices. [Intelsat worked with the United Nations Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#) to provide vital communication that helps connect the communities, governments, public and private institutions in the hard-hit island areas by COVID-19 pandemic and storm to mainland areas by donating telecom capacity. Microsoft's [Healthcare Bot](#), powered by Microsoft Azure, was introduced on the CDC website and other frontline organizations' websites to support the organizations to free up doctors,

nurses, other healthcare professionals by using artificial intelligence. The service is enabled by built-in medical intelligence with natural language capabilities to give people access to trusted and relevant healthcare services and information.

**S4YE's private sector partners have contributed assets and resources to provide governments and public institutions with real-time assessment on COVID-19 to help policy makers and citizens make informed decisions** based on a data analytics system that illustrates the trend of labor market affected by the pandemic. Supporting government agencies and public health systems with solutions on disaster assessment to COVID-19 crisis, Avasant [conducted research](#) to provide public sector organizations, including educational institutions with training and advisory services to help navigate the changing and challenging business environment during pandemic. [LinkedIn's Economic Graph](#) provides governments with stronger data and analytics so that they can better assess local economic needs and in-demand skills and jobs. Such data analytics help policymakers and citizens understand the trend of labor market impacted by COVID-19 and make informed decisions.

## 2.5 Internal Measures to Ensure Business Continuity

Business continuity and internal crisis management are vital in the advent of a crisis for any organization. The first reaction of several **private sector companies at the onset of the pandemic was to build internal resilience plans to keep their critical operations going and adapt their processes and strategies to the new environment.** On that note, a couple of S4YE's private sector partners shared their experience in coping with new norms to remain agile and adaptable through COVID-19. CEMEX established [a multidisciplinary COVID response team](#) to ensure business continuity by adopting more than 50 strict safety protocols to protect employees, communities and customers. Microsoft has a separate body, [Enterprise Business Continuity Management](#) (EBCM) program and team, across the organization to ensure effective business continuity. EBCM has continued to pay vendors and hourly service providers their regular wage during this period of reduced service needs while providing their employees with regular training and crisis management training, as well as remote learning resources. SAP has established a [Global Pandemic Task Force](#) to deal with local crisis teams and health authorities to provide clear guidance to its employees. As part of business continuity plans, SAP has allocated resources to help its employees working from home, and provided [online learning opportunities](#) through research studies, reports and virtual well-being awareness campaign to help their employees manage working from home efficiently. SAP has also tried to mitigate stress and depression within the company

As discussed above, S4YE private partners have implemented new innovative initiatives and adapted their existing programs to support youth employment since the onset of the pandemic. Yet, much more needs to be done. Access to reliable connectivity, online training and education programs, access to more and newly emerging work opportunities, COVID adapted business models, mentoring and support to handle emotional resilience are all critically needed. The pandemic is likely to invariably change the dynamics of the labor market. In addition to the initiatives led by S4YE private partners, other companies too have stepped forward to support youth during the pandemic. This brief note attempts to list a few examples with the hope that such information could lead to more collaboration, and hence more impact, among the different stakeholders in the youth employment ecosystem.

This S4YE Knowledge Brief was prepared by Jung Ryun (Sophie) Byun (World Bank) under the direction of Namita Datta (S4YE Program Manager). S4YE is a global program housed in the Jobs Group of Social Protection & Jobs Global Practice of the World Bank. This Knowledge Brief does not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank or each individual S4YE partner. For additional resources for youth employment, please visit <https://www.s4ye.org/s4ye-publications>.

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