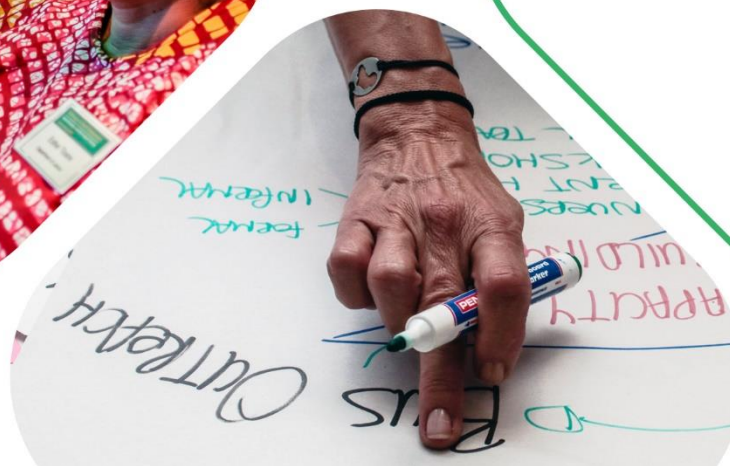
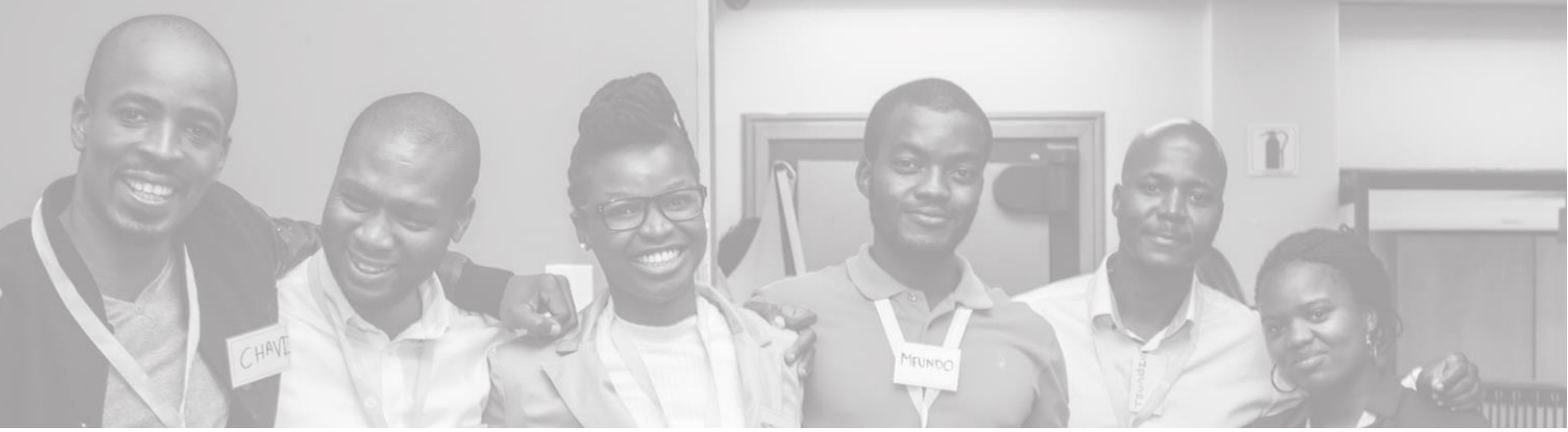


Pathways to Youth Employment - Apprenticeships and Work-based Training 6 - 7 April 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa

Conference Summary





Apprenticeships and work-based training are the building blocks of generations to come, we cannot fail them.

**Nkosi Sango
Patekile Holomisa**
Deputy Minister of Labour,
South Africa

The conference on **Pathways to Youth Employment – Apprenticeships and Work-based Training** offered a platform to discuss challenges and share and develop innovative ideas and solutions on how to build inclusive, future-proof labour markets that offer opportunities for all, including youth, women and other vulnerable groups.

Co-organised by the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN), the South African government, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with the support of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), G20, B20 and L20 and in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, the conference brought together 150 participants from the private sector, government, employers' federations, unions, international organisations, foundations, NGOs, educational institutions and youth.

Representing 20 countries, the majority of attendees came from South Africa (65%) and the region (Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe), followed by Europe, North and Latin America.



Moderated by Tsepiso Makwetla, News Anchor of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the first day of the conference offered presentations, panel discussions and workshops delving into the opportunities and challenges surrounding apprenticeships and work-based training. The second day focused on practical solutions to some of the challenges discussed and featured a visit to the youth employment accelerator Harambee and Design Thinking workshops.

This summary highlights some of the key takeaways and suggested solutions.



Of the working age population in the region is between 15-29 years old¹



Youth unemployment rate in South Africa¹



Unemployment rate among university graduates in South Africa²

Data Source: (1) World Bank & (2) Council on Higher Education South Africa

1. Widen access to opportunities

Limited access to apprenticeships and work-based training, due to factors such as lack of information, poor infrastructure, or financial hardship, is a major challenge in the region. High school graduates often lack information about apprenticeships and how to pursue them. As William Mzimba, Chief Executive Officer of Accenture South Africa, stated, “today, everything is about access: access to technology, access to jobs, access to people with jobs.” Most apprenticeships and work-based training take place in the informal sector, excluding apprentices from formal training opportunities and government support. Connecting the informal and the formal sector is important to give more people access to opportunities and increase transferability of qualifications and skills.

Women are often excluded from apprenticeships, especially once they have children, as childcare is either not widely available or affordable.

Solution: Consider logistical factors such as childcare and transport costs to provide greater access to training opportunities.

Apprenticeships and work-based training can come with relatively high costs and tax levies that employers pay are not always used in the most beneficial way for employers and apprentices.

Many apprentices have to travel far to get to work and travel costs in the region can be very high, leading to apprentices sometimes spending up to two thirds of their stipend or salary on travel.

Solution: Bring opportunities to people rather than expect people to come to the opportunities. For example, employers and government stakeholders could go directly to secondary schools to inform youth about their options and opportunities.

“We have to break down the barriers for different groups to be able to access opportunities - if you want to empower women, don't just look at the economic aspect, also make sure that child care is taken care of.”

Dorcas Onyango, Director Programs Implementation and Partnerships Management, The Coca-Cola Company

2. Prepare for the future

As jobs are changing increasingly fast due to disruptions such as technological advances and economic and demographic shifts, most of the workforce in the region is not prepared for the jobs of the future. Many programmes today train for jobs that do not exist anymore or are projected to disappear in the near future. Nazrene Mannie of Business Leadership South Africa reinforced that “we are still training for the past, we are not training for the fourth industrial revolution.”

Deputy Minister of Labour Nkosi, Sango Patekile Holomisa emphasised that “[government] policies need to prepare for technology that will enter into the workforce.” However, apprenticeships and work-based training programmes can be a tool to facilitate lifelong learning, which is increasingly needed as it is predicted that no worker will keep the same job throughout his or her entire work life. Necessary measures to adapt the workforce to tomorrow’s challenges, such as reskilling and upskilling, can be done through work-based training.

Solution: Set up partnerships between government and employers and develop digital training curriculums that equip youth with the digital skills required in the labour market.

3. Invest in basic skills


Often, candidates do not possess the basic skills needed to enter work-based training programmes. Mary Kawar, Director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Dar es Salaam Office pointed out that many young people want to enter into the apprenticeship system but do not meet the minimum qualifications. For example, as technology becomes more and more important for every job, the business sector increasingly requires basic STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills, but the education system is not preparing youth to an adequate level.

Aside from technical skills, employers emphasise the importance of soft skills, stressing that youth often lack these. Basic soft skills training can range from adaptability, communication, and conflict resolution.

Aligned with Harambee’s work readiness programme, Tom Ryan of the DesignThinkers Academy, believes that “if basic education is failing us, the people you want to put into the system are not ready. We need a bridging programme to prepare people to be ready, including soft skills.”

Once in a work-based training programme, it is important that soft skills training continues. Guidance, mentoring and role models were highlighted as critical, as well as supervisors and trainers who know how to train and transfer skills.

Solution: A pre-apprenticeship programme to bridge the gap between secondary education and apprenticeship.



Visit to the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator

On the second day of the conference, participants had the opportunity to visit the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator based in Johannesburg. Working with over 300 employers, Harambee assesses companies' requirements for entry-level jobs, then matches them with youth from underprivileged communities. To bridge the gap between requirements and candidates' skills and abilities, Harambee offers a work-readiness training to get candidates up to speed. Harambee is unique as it empathizes with disadvantaged youth and takes into high consideration their needs to succeed.

During the visit, participants spoke to some of the youth currently going through the programme. Their stories reflected the challenges discussed in the conference. Candidates expressed a lack of self-confidence as they do not know what they are good at. In addition, employers usually require prior experience, which most of them do not have. Coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, they also face the challenge of accessing training, developing basic soft skills from early onwards and lacking access to support networks to find work.

For more information, please visit <http://harambee.co.za/harambee/>.

4. Lift the stigma

In most parts of the world, including South Africa, apprenticeships and work-based training are seen as a second-rate track compared to university. Although university degrees are costly in the region and unemployment among university graduates is high, youth strive for a university degree since that is what they perceive as necessary to enter the labour market.

Apprenticeships tend to be associated with traditional trades, such as manufacturing or construction, and employers, parents and youth do not know that they also exist in future facing industries such as health care, IT and tourism. To improve the image of apprenticeships and work-based training, Fati N'zi-Hassane of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) suggested to put forward more examples of success stories from former apprentices.

Solution: Promote apprenticeships in future facing industries, such as health care, IT and tourism and leverage role models to get the message across.

I went to university because if you have a degree, employers take you seriously but it was not for me. When I did work-based training, I gained so many qualifications and skills but they were not recognized by employers because they come from a college.

Valentino Zondi, Event
Photographer, Umuzi

5. Keep it simple

The complexity of regulated apprenticeships can be a hindrance to employers and apprenticeship candidates. For example, setting up a new apprenticeship programme can be expensive and sometimes takes several years to implement. Therefore, it is critical to keep the model simple and applicable instead of aiming to replicate highly complex models such as the German or the Swiss one. There are different models of apprenticeship, and we often look to the gold standards in countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Austria where there is a long tradition of having apprenticeships.

“But we should not just cut and paste these models. The systems need to reflect local needs, educational programs and industry requirements. Apprenticeships can be offered to people of all education levels, by allowing high school students or graduates, those who hold Bachelor’s or Master’s Degrees, to pursue a work-based training experience. We should be thinking of innovative apprenticeships,” said Shea Gopaul, Executive Director of the GAN.

Florus Prinsloo, Technical Vocational Education and Training Lead from the Western Cape Government, agreed that apprenticeships do not have to fit a certain model, “to get to scale, we need to go beyond the idea that apprenticeships have to be long.”

Solution: Design new models of innovative apprenticeships and keep them simple and flexible, which will make them more attractive to employers and candidates.

6. Mind the generation gap

The cultural gap or difference between the young generation (“millennials”) and employers can lead to misunderstandings, challenges and conflict on both sides. The lack of mutual understanding, sometimes perceived as a lack of respect, can keep youth from seeking apprenticeships and employers from hiring apprentices. While some employers raised the concern that youth did not take their apprenticeships seriously, the youth felt that employers did not fully understand the perspective of youth, pointing to an opportunity for more dialogue.

“Employers do not put themselves in the shoes of youth to really understand what they need - to be productive and successful”, remarked Nokhanyo Yolwa, a young voice from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Nokhanyo also pointed out that insufficient stipends or salaries are a contributing factor to poor performance. In her own words, “If you pay me 2500 ZAR, and 2000 will cover just my transport to and from work, and 500 is what is left, then you will get a negative attitude at work”.

Solution: Facilitate dialogue between apprentices and employers. Raise awareness about the challenges and misunderstandings on both sides and generational differences that can lead to misunderstandings.

“Formal accreditation should not be overemphasized, qualifications should speak for themselves.”

Nick Louw, Director of Assessment and ARPL South African Department of Higher Education and Labour

7. Listen up!

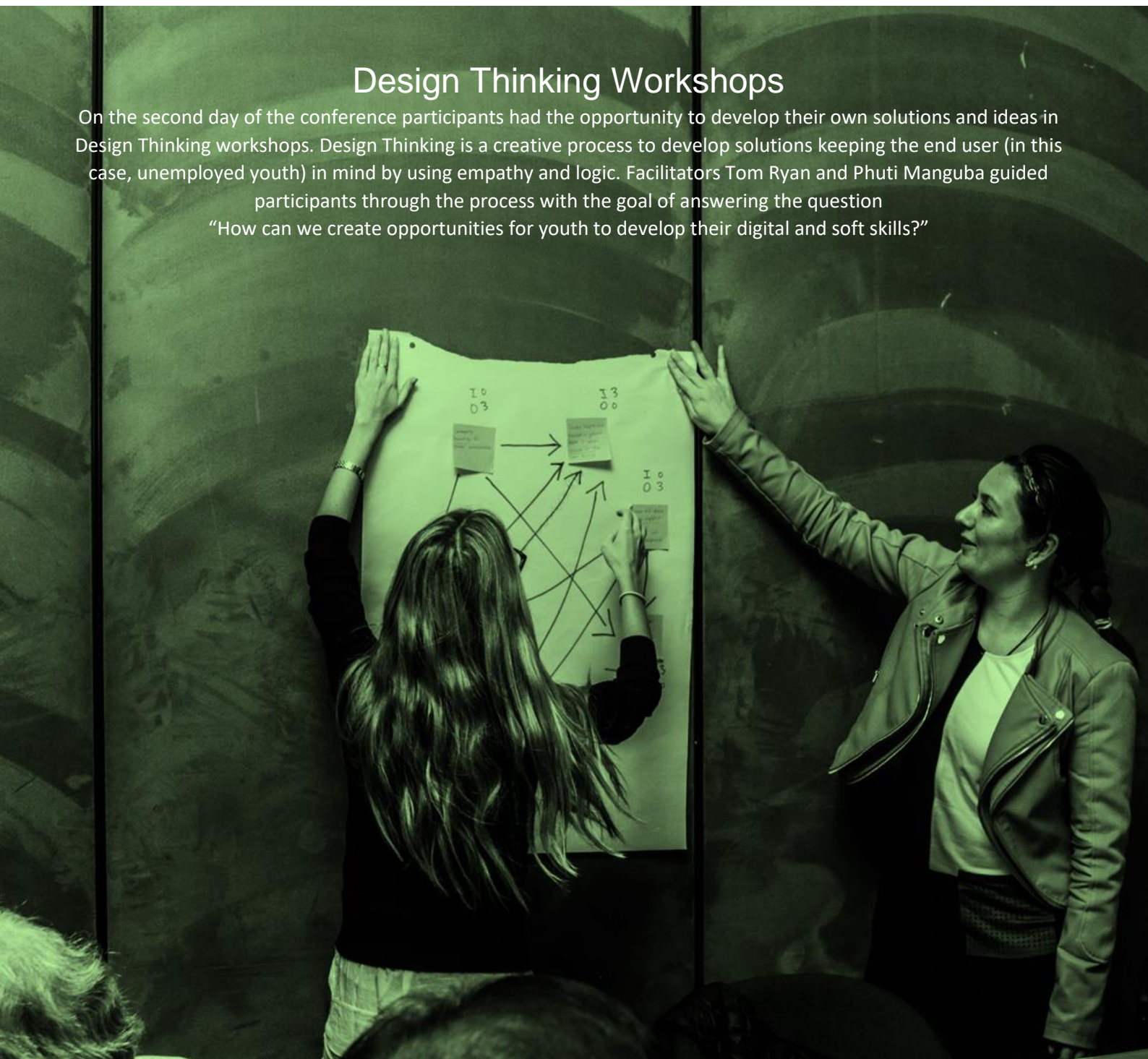
Empathy and the ability to listen and understand other stakeholders' point of view was a cross-cutting theme throughout the conference. This was seen as critical in building a well-functioning system that serves all partners involved. Stakeholders are often so detached from each other that practical solutions for all can be difficult to identify. The visit to Harambee and the design thinking workshops allowed participants from the various stakeholder groups to discuss and develop solutions to the many challenges in scaling up work readiness programmes.

A critical aspect of the conference was to bring together the many players and get them to co-design practical solutions that will serve all. The importance of dialogue and asking questions was emphasised as a key tool to generate increased understanding for other stakeholders.

Solution: To make apprenticeships more attractive, consult all parties but in particular youth about what they are looking for in an apprenticeship.

Design Thinking Workshops

On the second day of the conference participants had the opportunity to develop their own solutions and ideas in Design Thinking workshops. Design Thinking is a creative process to develop solutions keeping the end user (in this case, unemployed youth) in mind by using empathy and logic. Facilitators Tom Ryan and Phuti Manguba guided participants through the process with the goal of answering the question "How can we create opportunities for youth to develop their digital and soft skills?"





Digital Skills

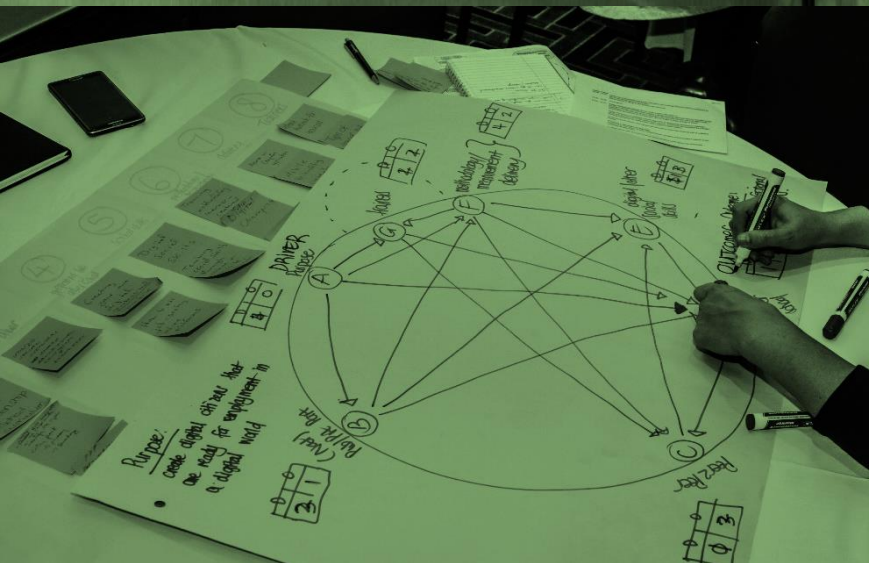
“Partnerships with employers in setting the curricula” and “providing access to technological support” were identified as the main drivers in creating opportunities for youth in digital skills. Providing access to technological support and platforms, which many large companies already have and building partnerships with them could increase impact. Thus, specific employers in this area need to be identified and engaged in a partnership. Employers and partners need to work together and be involved in the creation of the curricula as this will define the skills needed in their digital transformation journey.



Soft Skills

Family roles and engagement to reinforce self-esteem and confidence were identified as important in developing youth’s ability to work in teams and providing the good foundation for youth to be prepared to enter a work-readiness programme.

It was concluded that unemployed youth need to be mentored and feel part of the community or programme. A product of this workshop was the idea to create a mentoring programme for unemployed youth that facilitates a continuous self-organised learning process.



For more information on Design Thinking, please visit:

<http://www.ideou.com/>

<https://dschool.stanford.edu/>

<http://www.designthinkersacademy.com>

The way forward

Participants left the conference with a renewed sense of commitment to advocate for opportunities for youth, and apprenticeships and work-based training for all. Inspired by the conference, many said that going forward they will become champions for the issue, leveraging their networks to engage and scale up opportunities for youth. As a result of the conference, the GAN has received commitments to activities that will generate concrete outcomes.



Moringa School pledges to train 5,000 software engineers in the next 5 years and introduce over 20,000 people to software engineering.



The ILO pledges to lead the next G20 meeting in Argentina.



The GAN pledges to launch GNNs in 4 more countries in 2017/2018: Tanzania, France, Kenya and the Netherlands.



IOE commits to prioritise the topic of apprenticeship in the Social Partners' Summit.



Accenture commits to leading the exploration of setting up a South African GAN National Network (GNN)



On the side lines



BUSMARK

Site Visit

Site visit to Busmark, a company supplying buses, bus services and products to the Southern African market and beyond. Pictured above are Busmark's first two female apprentices.



NATIONAL NETWORKS

Breakfast

The GAN hosted a breakfast convening GAN National Networks (GNNs) to present aspirations, successes, and challenges. GAN Mexico announced the creation of an e-book for Apprenticeships for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Malawi shared highlights of the launch of the network in March 2017, where it presented a toolkit and a code of conduct for its members.



PUTCO

Site Visit

Site visit to bus company PUTCO which has a three-year Auto Electric and Diesel Apprenticeship Programme. They currently have 116 apprentices, the average age being 20-25.

We thank our partner The MasterCard Foundation, all the moderators, panellists, speakers and participants for making this event such a success! We would like to share with you the following:

[Official event photos](#)

[Official event Facebook Page](#)

[OECD Issues Paper](#)

[Conference Feedback Survey](#)

