



# APYouthNet Talk Show Summary #30

Brent Wilton  
(April 2014, Bangkok)



Guests: **Mr Brent Wilton**,  
Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers

Host: **Mr Matthieu Cognac**, ILO Youth Employment Specialist

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Available at: <http://apyouthnet.ilo.org/podcast/>



## IOE's Global Apprenticeships Network (GAN) and its challenges

The IOE established the Global Apprenticeships Network, a business-driven alliance to encourage and link business initiatives on skills and employment opportunities for youth. The IOE has managed to attract a number of major multi-national corporations, and members of IOE are interested in establishing national networks as well. Brent shared that the challenges faced, apart from youth actively seeking work, include re-engaging youth who had left the labour market and offer opportunities to them. He also added that the current youth employment crisis had shown structural problems with employment of young people for many years. He advocated the need to ensure that youths get the chance as countries cannot cope high unemployment levels, and this affects the sustainability of enterprises.

## On employers' inclination towards Hiring Experienced Staff

Whilst there are a number of companies which recognize the benefits of hiring young people, Brent explained that, companies face difficulties in taking additional risks nor hiring trainees and giving opportunities to unproven candidates because of economic crisis. The result is a preference to hire people with the required skillsets to drive growth. Governments can encourage the hiring of young people by introducing favourable policies. The perception of young people vary with country and culture, but this can be made consistent with soft skills taught in schools through mainstream education, or businesses to talk to young people. However, he stressed that "businesses are not charities", and partnerships with governments, education facilities, entrepreneurial skill training centres, and start-ups incubation centres can promote young people by capturing and testifying skills attained by them. This will be useful to business who are recruiting young people with relevant skillsets.

## On Decent Work

At the upcoming International Labour conference, Brent shared that members would try to identify useful tools and mechanisms that governments, trade unions and employers have used with success on the ground to help young people enter the formal labour market. He believed that there should not be an expansion of the informal economy and that governments should introduce barriers to limit this. He proposed a realistic look at labour legislation, and suggested that incentives can be provided to young people seeking formal employment and employers of young people.

## On the 101<sup>st</sup> International Labour Conference "Call for Action" to Tackle the Youth Employment Crisis

Brent believed that while the "Call for Action" gave a broad approach for constituents to act upon at the national level, he urged all stakeholders to engage not only in discussion, but also in its actual implementation, as "words are easily said; actions are a lot harder to do". While the discussion border on national circumstances with a general route map, the ILO has to follow up on the Resolution and encourage governments, workers, employers at the national level to take the issue forward.

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