



APYouthNet Talk Show Summary #31

Brendan Toomey
(May 2014, Bangkok)



Guests: **Mr Brendan Toomey**,
Vice President of Human Resources-Asia Pacific for Hilton Worldwide

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

Camera, sound, editing: **Mr Julian Hadden**



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

Opening Doors to One Million Young People by 2019

Brendan shared that the initiative announced at the 2014 World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting was "long overdue" and the global commitment aims to impact "at least one million young people by 2019". The focus is on better preparing youths and the new initiative hopes to open doors for them, connecting them to the extensive supply chain that Hilton Worldwide supports. As the travel and tourism industry is expected to generate 73 million new jobs by 2022, Brendan believes that Hilton Worldwide is more than capable to meet its target by utilizing its global network, expertise in skills development. With more than 4,000 hotels in Hilton Worldwide, he hopes to reach out to thousands of unemployed youth especially in countries such as China, Russia and India. In the next three years, 185 Hilton hotels is planned to open in the Asia-Pacific. With an estimate of 300 to 500 job openings per hotel, the region alone is expected to supply up to 100,000 jobs.

Alleviating the Youth Employment Crisis

"Research shows that many young people face a grim socioeconomic reality. More than 74 million are unemployed and nearly 290 million - more than a quarter of our planet's young people - are neither working nor studying." Given the projected introduction of 73 million new jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry, Brendan asserted that a combination of good business practice and corporate social responsibility can offer opportunities to young people while fulfilling the industry's needs. Brendan recounted his initial contact with the hotel and hospitality industry, as an unemployed 19 years old youth with no degree nor diploma. He had to knock on hotel doors before getting his first break as a busboy, clearing and setting tables before climbing up from the "bottom of the food chain".

Connect, Engage and Prepare

Careers@Hilton Live, Youth in Hospitality Month, which is in May, is a month-long awareness campaign where hotels connect with young people via job fairs, career guidance talks, and job shadowing to learn about careers in hospitality. Brendan shared that Hilton Worldwide hopes to target unemployed individuals, with each hotel in 94 countries across the world organizing different activities at different times. The initiative invites youth to listen to people with industry experience and knowledge. Hilton Worldwide also used social media platform such as Facebook and YouTube to explain their business and counter social stigma against the tourism and hospitality.

Training and Imparting Knowledge

In a new beautiful luxury hotel in Beijing, Hilton Worldwide hired team members including 100 young people from all around Beijing. This brought an interesting social dilemma as Hilton Worldwide learnt that they needed to house and feed their employees, educate them on the industry and provide training and skills development, before the new employees are skilled enough to deal with high-end luxury spenders. As long as young people have interest in the industry, Hilton Worldwide can provide people with little or no skills, education or background the necessary skills through their internal development mechanisms to make them employable. Coupled with a combination of NGOs, school alliances, key partners across the globe, Hilton Worldwide had developed a platform to build up knowledge through robust internal skills training programmes, whether in Food & Beverage or front office, front or back office.

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