



SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

University of Applied Sciences Burgenland

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DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

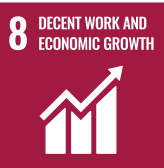


**Interpretation
of decent work and
economic growth**



Main goal: to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

In the countries of the global south, in particular, many people are unemployed or work under inhospitable conditions with only few rights. They are often poorly paid or not paid at all, have no regular working hours and are exposed to physical and psychological stress, and child labor is not uncommon. The UN is committed to fair pay and good working conditions for everyone. Employers should particularly support women, young people and discriminated groups. Economic growth should be decoupled from environmental degradation so that more jobs do not mean more environmental exploitation and/or destruction.



Source: [germanwatch.org](https://www.germanwatch.org)

Emerging employment challenges

Informal employment:

Employees are considered to have informal jobs if they are not subject to national labor legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits. In 2016, this was the reality for 61% of working people globally.

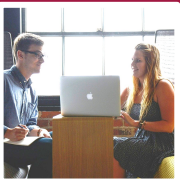
Sources: ilo.org and un.org



In Europe, a dual labor market is emerging, in which low-wage and temporary workers find it hard to transfer out of inadequate working conditions into the mainstream labor market.

Source: weforum.org

"In this discussion, it is important to also remember the dangers of having a large portion of youth being unemployed, underemployed or informally employed. They are our future, let's make sure they have a chance at decent and meaningful work!"



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Traditional employment challenges



Gender pay gap:

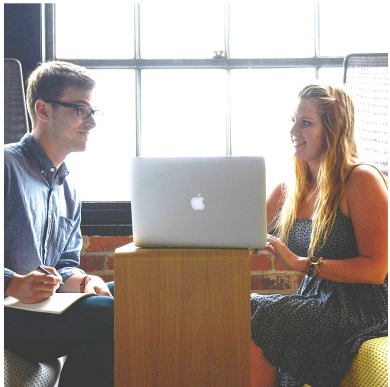
...is the difference between the average earnings of men and women.

Source: ec.europa.eu



Did you know that in the EU, women earn 14.1% less on average per hour than men?

Source: ec.europa.eu



"Can you imagine doing the same job as your male colleague, but getting paid less for it? Unfortunately, it is the reality. The current pay gap is visualized by the "Equal Pay Day." In 2021, in Austria, Equal Pay Day fell on the February 21 – meaning women worked 'for free' until that day in 2021."

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What does economic growth mean?

Traditionally, it means an increase in the economy of a country or an area, especially of the value of goods and services the country or area produces.

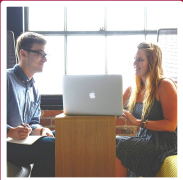
Nowadays, we are expanding on this definition to (also) mean supporting productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encouraging the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

Sources: imf.org and cambridge.org ([Definition economic growth](#))

Did you know that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 190 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world?

Source: imf.org

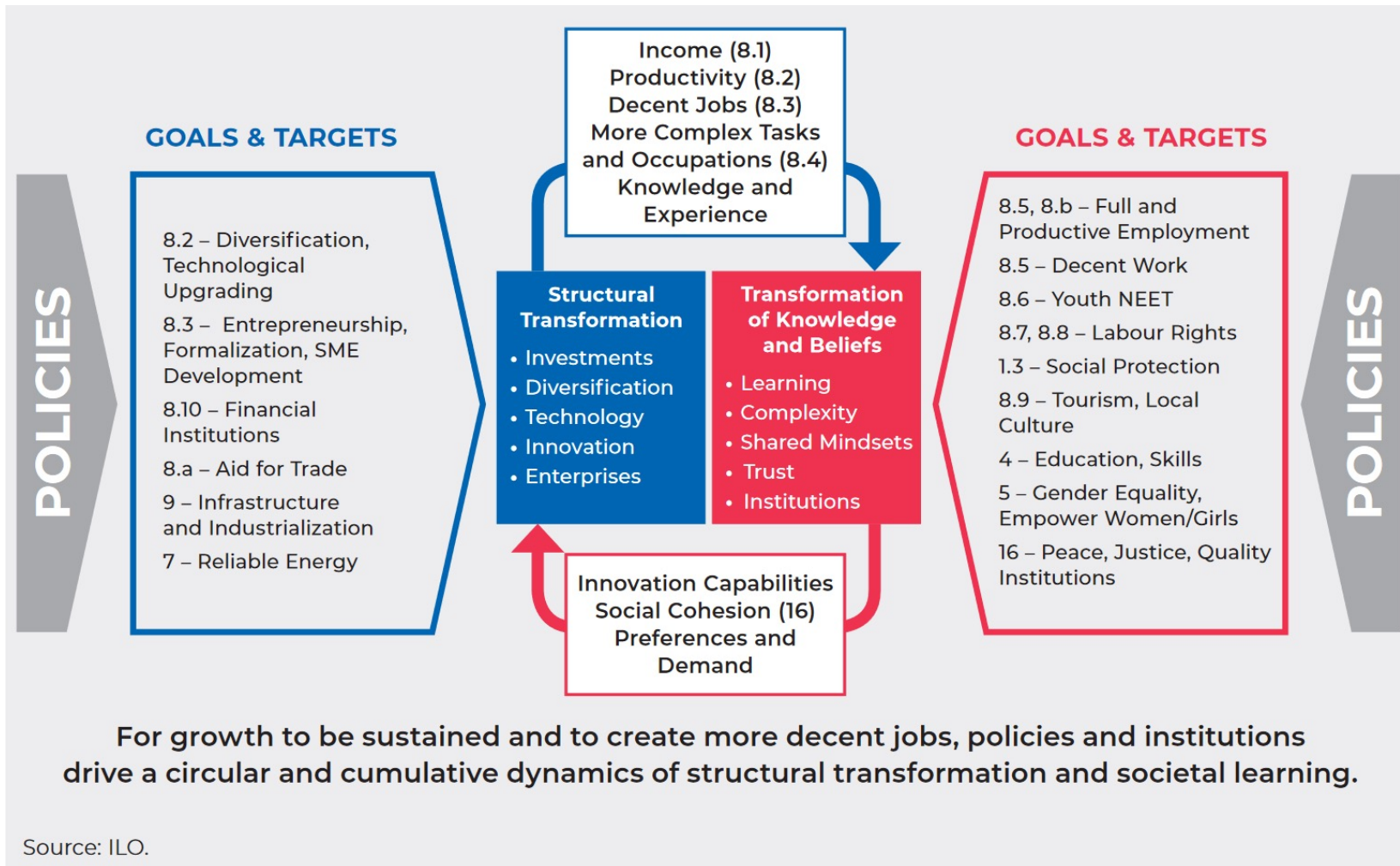
"I often hear the question: 'How is it possible to insist on economic growth in a finite system of resources, when you talk about sustainability? I perceive economic development to be a desirable consequence of new circular and sustainable innovation that takes us into depth rather than breath (more quality, less quantity)."



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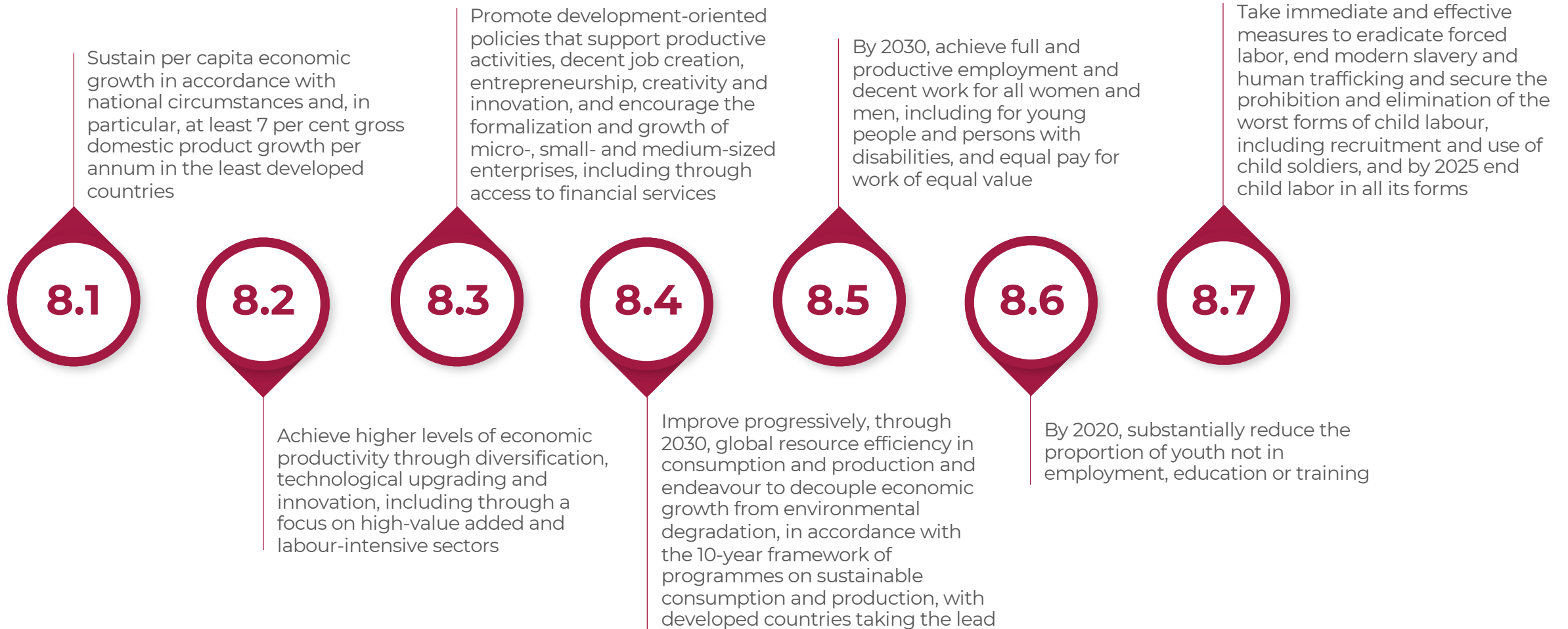
Model: virtuous circle of economic and social transformation



Did you know that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) just published research findings that say that 600 million new jobs need to be created by 2030 just to keep pace with the growth of the working age population?

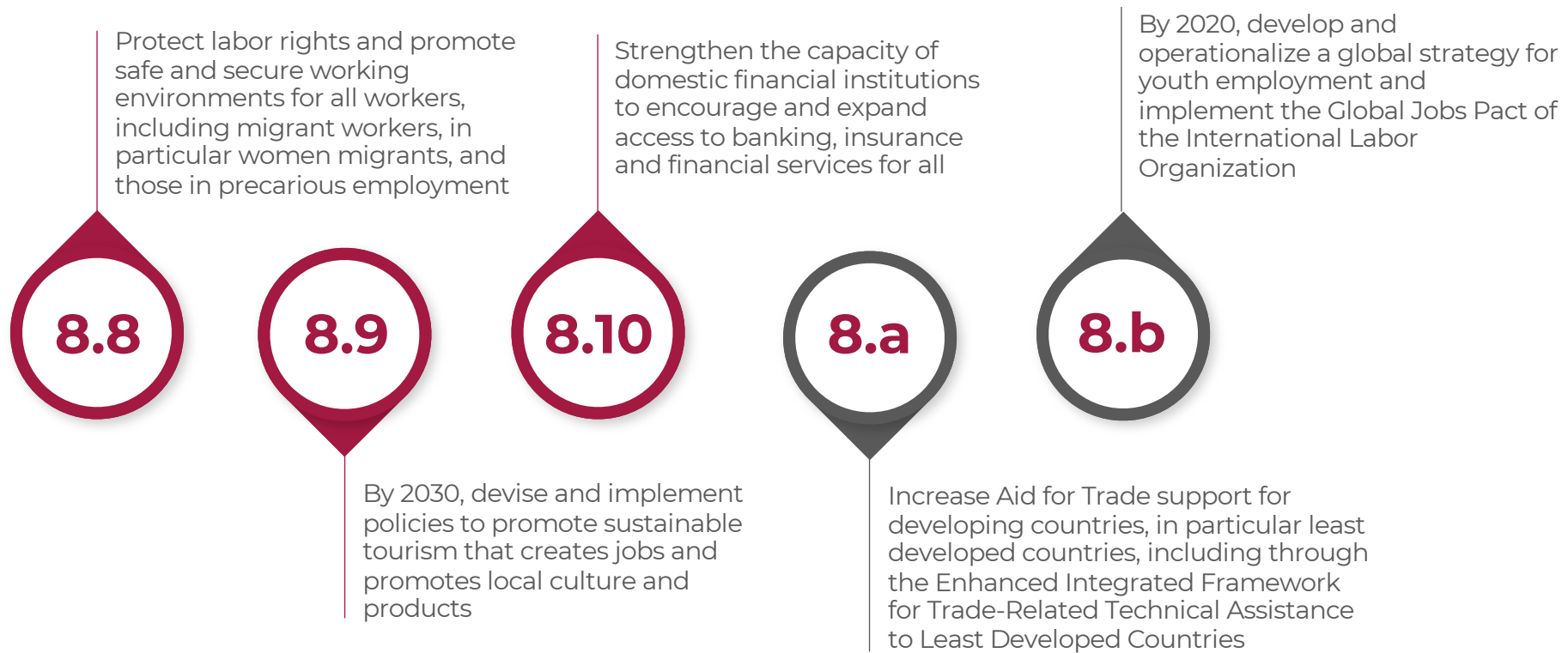
Source: [ilo.org](https://www.ilo.org)

Subgoals: targets and measures



Source: un.org

Subgoals: targets and measures



Source: un.org

Targets = Numbers, Measures = Letters

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DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**Current state of the
global economy
and labor market**

Report 2020

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020



Source: un.org

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021



Source: un.org

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

BEFORE COVID-19

GLOBAL ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS SLOWING DOWN



2.0% GDP PER CAPITA GROWTH (2010-2018)

1.5% GDP PER CAPITA GROWTH (2019)



DURING THE PANDEMIC 1.6 BILLION WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY RISK LOSING THEIR LIVELIHOODS

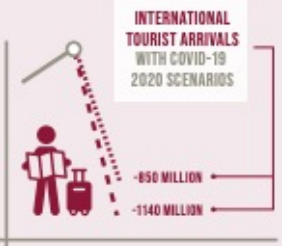
COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS



THE WORLD FACES THE WORST ECONOMIC RECESSION SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION

GDP PER CAPITA EXPECTED TO DECLINE BY 4.2% IN 2020

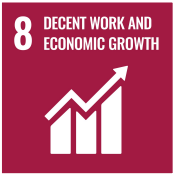
TOURISM IS FACING UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES



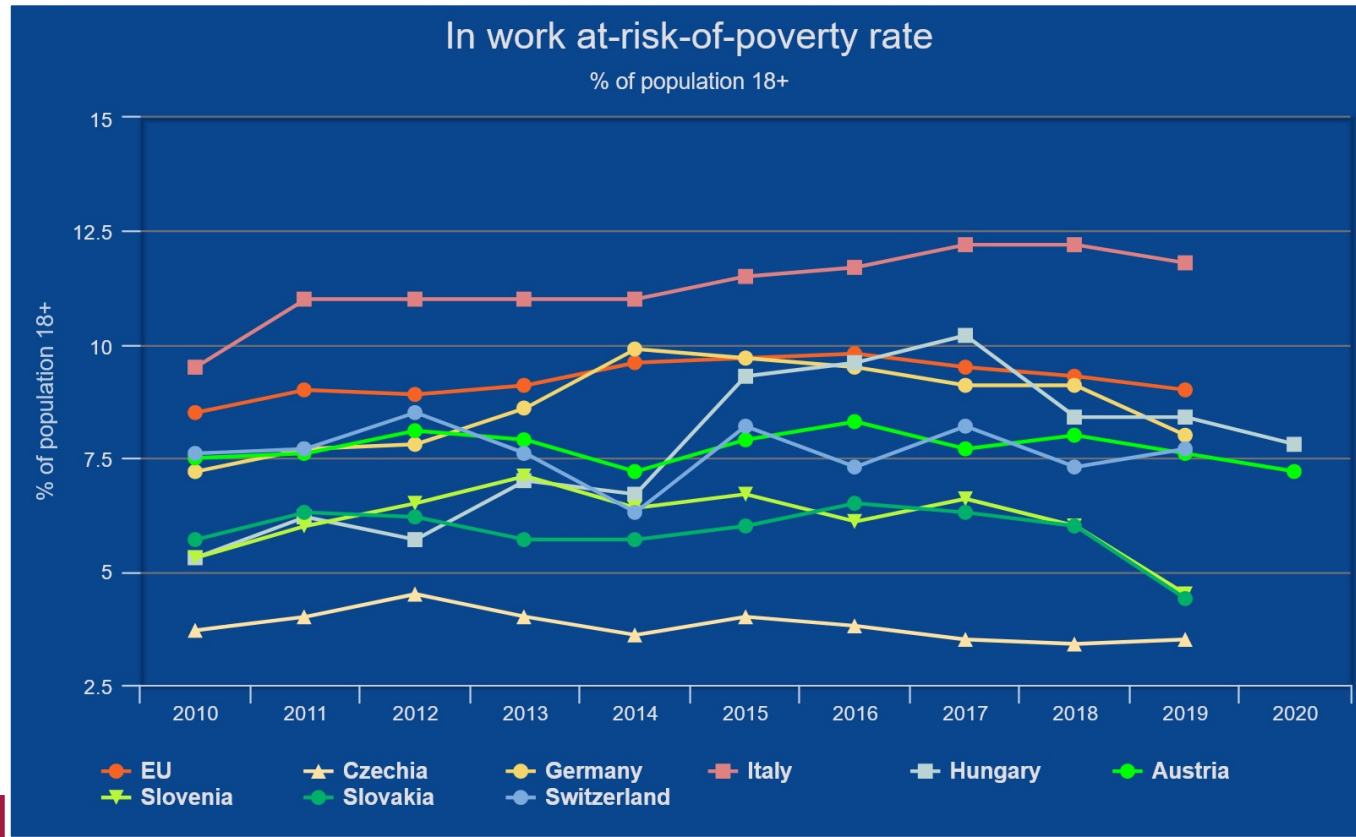
Source: un.org

COVID-19 COULD CAUSE THE EQUIVALENT OF 400 MILLION JOB LOSSES IN SECOND QUARTER OF 2020

Source: un.org



Some European statistics



Did you know that it is very easy to find a job and get well paid in the Czech Republic, whereas in Italy, it is 10 times harder to find and keep a job – and even with a job it is very hard to make a living there?

Source: ec.europa.eu

Source: ec.europa.eu



“A friend of mine is working as a social care worker, but still struggles every month to pay the bills for his young family. He uses the 13th and 14th salary (customary in Austria) for making extraordinary purchases like buying a washing machine. I am asking myself why these jobs – so important for a healthy society – are so undervalued? Why are we doing it this way, extremely short-sighted?”



Implementation in Austria as of 2020

Target	National indicators (selected)	Trend
8.3	TARGET: Decent jobs	✓
8.5	Gross annual income of employees in year-round full employment – gap between women and men	↑
	Unemployment rate	↘
	Employment rate	↗ TARGET
8.6	Young adults not in education, employment or training (NEET)	↑
	Early leavers from education and training	↑ TARGET
8.7	TARGET: No forced / child labour	✓
8.8	Accidents at work: not fatal	↑
	Accidents at work: fatal injuries	↑
8.10	TARGET: Access to financial institutions	✓

Source: Statistics Austria. 8-year trend 2010–2018 (if figures missing, at least 7-year trend) in 4 categories (↑↗↘↓) if there is a clear target (quantitative/normative); ✓ (part of the) indicator target achieved; • calculation of trend not possible. More information about methodological questions can be found in the National Indicator Report 2020.

- > Austria's GDP growth is consistently in the European midfield. In 2018, it was 1.9% per capita in real terms.
- > The employment rate in 2018 was 76.2%, only just below the national Europe 2020 target of 77%.
- > The proportion of young adults not in education, employment or training was 6.8% in 2018, well below the EU-28 figure of 10.5%.
- > The unemployment rate fell to 4.9% in 2018.



Did you know that according to Bertelsmann Stiftung's Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) project, Austria, Denmark, and Germany topped the list in terms of labor-market access, followed by Sweden and Finland?

Source: [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org)

Main issues to solve in Austria as of 2020



Increase of quality of life beyond consumption while conserving resources



Reduction of work hours (by 20% per week) while, at the same time, extending employment biographies



Increase of "paid" care and community work (versus unpaid volunteering)



Did you know that only 583 people used pension splitting in Austria in 2019 – a decision married couples can make about splitting their combined years of work that count towards their individual pension years (payments), thereby truly splitting child and other care responsibilities in the family?

Source: [pv.at](https://www.pv.at)

"It sounds very progressive. However, a male friend of mine just decided to take advantage of the parental leave option. It turned out that he will be the first man to do so in the history of the company of more than 250 employees!"



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DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**Potential
contributions
Learning activity**

Before thinking about potential contributions...

- Imagine an organization (business).
What is the core purpose of this organization*?
- Who are this organization's internal and external stakeholders?
- How do “the provision of decent work and the demand for economic growth” impact this organization (its purpose, its stakeholders, its operation, its viability)?
- What challenges and/or costs emerge from these “decent work and economic growth issues” upon this organization?
- On the other hand, what opportunities and/or benefits arise?
- With all this in mind, what contributions** might this organization make to reach SDG 8 within its sphere of influence via inward and outward actions?

* Meant here are all sizes, all types

** Consider contributions inside the organization (referring to everything that is a resource to the organization and is directly or indirectly controlled by the organization, for instance, human resources, know how, monetary and material resources) and the outside of the organization (referring to everything outside of the organization that it can influence but lies outside of its control, for instance, policy change, partnering with other organizations, etc...)



Potential contributions by educational institutions

The purpose of educational institutions is to educate and train for life and for particular professional interests.

In terms of SDG 8, the tasks for educational institutions are to prepare apprentices and students for understanding the complexity of living systems so that they can orient themselves in the current dynamic, for participating in an ever-changing labor market, and to equip them with a flexible skillset and a mindset that can stretch into the current dynamic; additionally, they might serve as a platform for innovations needed on the labour market.



Did you know that according to the World Economic Forum, 65% of children entering primary school today will be employed in jobs that do not yet exist? Upskilling could lead to the net creation of 5.3 million new jobs worldwide, by 2030.

Sources: [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org) and [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org)

Potential contributions by educational institutions, cont.

Potential inward actions:

- adjust educational programmes to identified and new needs on the labor market
- support graduates when looking for their first jobs (trainings, mentorship programmes, career development)
- implement internal work policies for decent working conditions (address gender pay gap and life-work balance, increase opportunities for minorities)

Potential outward actions:

- raise awareness by addressing the topic of decent work issues through campaigns
- consider partnerships with potential employers and other actors on the local labor market — for the benefit of graduates, but also to co-develop new policies
- Lobby for transparency of working conditions

Potential contributions by municipalities

The purpose of municipalities is to plan, manage, and improve public work and services to the community. In terms of SDG 8, municipalities have a role to play as a model-employers and as community builders for change.

Potential inward actions:

- be an ambassador of change as an institution: set transparent “decent work” employment policies and communicate the efforts
- train public service staff on the concept of decent work, so that they may not only replicate these ideas inside the institution, but also spread them among their communities and in their environments
- create platforms for promoting local work and/or job offers

Potential outward actions:

- co-develop strategies with other municipalities for promoting decent youth employment and women's economic empowerment
- co-create opportunities with partner municipalities to engage the community in innovating new ways of working
- collaborate with labor market agencies to support your community in adapting to a highly dynamic labor market



Did you know that the City of Vienna is the biggest employer in Vienna with about 67.000 employees?

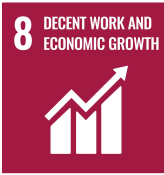
Potential contributions by corporations and other organizations

The purpose of for-profit organizations (ie business) is to provide a service in exchange for resources (ie money). The purpose of non-profit organizations is to impact society in a certain way — both need to generate and/or collect adequate resources to pay for their operations and activities and/or make profit.

In terms of SDG 8, the opportunities for contribution may vary greatly between different types or sizes of organizations, but their core contributions to society for reaching SDG 8 are for business and other organizations to create jobs for all ages and all abilities, to close any pay gaps, to offer decent work conditions, and to contribute to economic growth that is decoupled from resource use.



"I work for a multinational company and the supply chain of our products operates on a global scale. I think a lot about the impact we have everywhere and what we can and should do. Where does our responsibility stop?"



Potential contributions by corporations and other organizations, cont.

Potential inward actions:

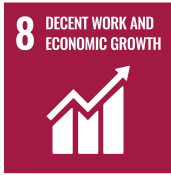
- innovate products and services that contribute to economic growth but are decoupled from use of resources (this includes the need for tracking material streams)
- invest, continuously, in the development of employees so that they may meet concurrent challenges on the labor market
- close pay gaps, address life-work balance issues, reduce working hours, engage employees in health-related activities, etc...

Potential outward actions:

- manage a sustainable supply chain (demanding decent work conditions and sensible use of resources from your suppliers)
- work closely with educational organizations to detect and adapt to the emerging landscape of work
- join collaborative efforts to end child and other forced labor around the world

"I just recently explored the holistic approach toward decent work through a company, where I was buying sustainable clothing. They had a full 'economy for the common good' report, where I could see how they challenge their suppliers on ethical behavior and have strict policies on how this is considered within their own supply decisions. I was impressed!"

Sources: sdgcompass.org and grueneerde.com





Activity: potential contributions by an organization of your choice

The purpose of xyz organization is to...

In terms of SDG 8, potential contributions by xyz organization might be:

Potential inward actions:

Potential outward actions:

How do inward and outward actions interact and impact each other?

Are partnerships necessary for the desired impact?





Activity: checking design of potential contributions

Returning to the opening questions:

- In which ways do my designed actions support the core purpose of “XYZ” organization?
- In which ways do my designed actions serve the internal and external stakeholders of “XYZ” organization?
- “What balance between costs vs. benefits (or challenge vs. opportunity) can be noticed for xyz organization concerning “decent work and economic growth issues”?”
- How do the designed inward and outward actions cohere and create synergy for xyz impact?



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**Reflection and
resources
Learning activity**

Reflection and some resources

- What is decent work to you?
- What is wrong with the economic growth model as we have understood and practiced it until recently? What should be put in place instead?
- How do decent work and economic growth issues impact each other?
- What are the biggest challenges in the European labour market (pre/post COVID)?
- What local organizations do you know that contribute, concretely, toward SDG 8?
- Thinking about your own employment history, when was work “decent” and what made it so?

Further Infos:

- [SDG definition of the UN](#)
- [ILO on SDG 8](#)
- [SDG Compass on SDG 8](#)
- [UN Development Programme](#)
- [Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System: Policy Innovations for a Green Economy](#)
- [Economic and Social Commission for Europe](#)
- [UN Capital Development Fund](#)
- [Article about “Living, working and COVID-19”](#)
- [SDG Report 2021](#)



Activity: SDG journey

- > Put your SDG glasses on and observe your environment under the SDG 8 umbrella for a week and explore your environment for evidence and/or violation of “decent work” policies and actions. Additionally, look for economic growth opportunities that are decoupled from use of resources.
- > If appropriate and allowed, take pictures of the found circumstances and catalogue the photos (begin making a scrapbook) — they will lead to a final assignment at the end of the series. Before you venture out, it might be a good idea to inform yourself about legal responsibilities when taking photos of people: [oesterreich.gv.at](https://www.oesterreich.gv.at) (If you are not in Austria, look for the regulations of the respective country!)

Possible resource for online scrapbook (free for classrooms and non-profits): [canva.com](https://www.canva.com)



“SDGs are universal, no matter what part of the world, they should guide every country. But how different are the issues you are exposed to in your country to those that people in other countries might face?”

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Sources

Slide 3:

- <https://germanwatch.org/en/node/14072> (download Arbeitsblätter)

Slide 4:

- <https://ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/download/papers/def.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/>
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/01/europes-employment-challenges/>

Slide 5:

- https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu_en

Slide 6:

- <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/>
- <https://www.imf.org/en/About>

Slide 7:

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- <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/sdg-2030/goal-8>

Slides 8 & 9:

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Slide 11:

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- <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/>

Slide 12:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/decent-work-and-economic-growth>

Slide 13:

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Slide 21:

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