To advance young people into Decent Work we need to address the lack of Decent Work for the majority of the workforce in the region. Asia Pacific has the highest gender pay gap, some of the lowest rates of union density, highest numbers of workplace deaths and injuries and extremely high levels of informal, exploitative work with little social protection or security. Women and young people are often in the most precarious employment.

We also need a regional solution to raising wages - one of the only ways to address inequality is to address the gap between capital and labour. To do that we need strong, independent and gender responsive trade unions. Where minimum wages exist, they often exclude domestic workers and other informal sector workers and don’t come close to the living wage required to support a family with dignity. The majority of women in the region work in the informal sector, with the single largest employment source and driver of migration being domestic work. Only 1 country (Philippines) in the region has ratified ILO convention 189 on domestic workers.

Unfortunately, the lack of decent job leads to large numbers of young people in the region to seek employment abroad. While this is seen to fuel nations such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Nepal due to high remittances, many of our young migrants are treated unequally and are discriminated simply because they are migrants. As we achieve Goals 4 and 8 in closing the gap of school-to-work to and sustain the economic growth of our countries, let us not forget that there are millions of migrants who move across our region whose rights to access social security or even healthcare in their destination countries are denied. Women migrants, who are mostly in domestic work, are particularly vulnerable to abuses and violence in destination countries. Many have no health insurance and even if they do, rarely would it cover sexual and reproductive health. In fact, migrants are deported due to HIV and Hep B, and women migrants can be deported immediately when they get pregnant. whose salaries are lower than the basic salary pay of the destination country, simply because they are migrants.