

POLICY BRIEF: YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Short to medium-term policy support for South Africa's young coal workforce

Simbarashe Mhaka

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Author: Simbarashe Mhaka, JUST SA Economist
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info@tips.org.za I +27 12 433 9340 I www.tips.org.za

Introduction

South African youth[1] make up nearly a third of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2025) yet they remain one of the most marginalised and at-risk age groups in the transition to a low-carbon economy. If not carefully managed, the transition to a low carbon economy risks exacerbating the significant, structural barriers young people in South Africa already face in the labour market.

Several structural barriers shape the realities of young people in the labour market and undermine their transition into stable, productive livelihoods in a low-carbon economy. Educational attainment remains a major barrier, with nearly half of young people (47%) holding only matric or less (Standardised Regional Development Indicators, 2024). Youth unemployment is also extremely high at 47%, while labour force participation is 49%, meaning only half of young people are active in the labour market, either employed or looking for work. Yet the absorption rate is only 26%, highlighting the shortage of opportunities even for those who participate in the labour market. Although young people often have fewer financial responsibilities, their lower incomes make it harder to withstand job losses. Administrative tax data shows that young coal workers aged 15–24 and 25–34 earn median real monthly wages of R3 812 and R21 937 respectively, compared to at least R50 384 for workers over 60 (Bhorat et al., 2026), highlighting significant wage disparities across age groups. The lower earnings by younger age groups reflect their limited capacity to save or invest.

Youth unemployment is high at 47%, while labour force participation is 49% – meaning only half of young people are active in the labour market, either employed or looking for work.

With young workers making up 51% of the coal mining workforce, a targeted support package is essential to address their unique vulnerabilities and the limited alternatives available to them as the transition unfolds. This policy brief draws on international experiences to outline short to medium-term policy support packages and institutional frameworks needed to assist young coal workers in South Africa through the transition.[2] The next section proposes a targeted support package encompassing compensation and exemption strategies in the short term, and transitional adjustment assistance (TAA) and adaptive support strategies in the medium term.



1 *Defined as individuals aged 15 to 34.*

2 *The policy brief is the first in a two-part series derived from the report titled "Building a Just Future: Policy Solutions for South Africa's Coal Workforce Transition – Insights from Global Experience." The second Policy Brief focuses on policy support for South Africa's older coal workforce.*

A support package for young coal workers in transition

Designing an age-responsive support package is essential for a Just Transition, as young workers face distinct impacts, transition needs, and labour market advantages and disadvantages compared to older workers. In addition, policy instruments such as early retirement are not suitable for young workers. In the absence of early retirement, young coal workers will be exposed to transition risks for much longer than their older counterparts. Importantly, younger workers often possess transferable skills and greater adaptability to move into alternative sectors, but they still require targeted policy support to fully realise these opportunities. This section outlines a transition support package for South Africa's young coal workforce, drawing on international experience and applying the framework developed by Green and Gambhir (2020). The framework identifies four transition assistance strategies: compensation, exemption, transitional adjustment assistance and comprehensive adaptive support (CAS), which are systematically organised across the short- and medium-term to address the specific transition needs of young coal workers.

Short-term package for young coal workers in transition

The sudden nature of retrenchments results in short-term (primarily financial) losses for workers. These losses include wages, overtime, and year-end bonuses, often stipulated in collective bargaining agreements. Mitigating financial losses will require a combination of compensation and exemption strategies. While both compensation and exemption strategies aim to restore workers to their pre-closure position, the former focuses narrowly on financial losses, whereas the latter addresses both financial and non-financial losses.

Compensation measures are typically passive, including passive labour market policy instruments such as unemployment benefits, welfare allowances, severance pay, and relocation subsidies. While most compensatory measures are unconditional, conditional approaches tie financial support to sustainable livelihood creation to reduce long-term dependency. For example, Germany's Ruhr Development Programme (Entwicklungsprogramm Ruhr), established in 1968, offered conditional allowances for workers enrolled in training, subsidies for reskilling costs, and unemployment benefits for up to 24 months (Furnaro et al., 2021). Similarly, Canada's 2018 Coal Workforce Transition Program provided a bridge-to-employment grant covering up to 75% of previous weekly earnings for up to 45 weeks and a relocation grant of up to CAN$5000 for workers moving at least 40 km for new employment (Hussey and Jackson, 2019). Both programmes demonstrate the value of pairing financial support with skills development and employment measures.

To mitigate transition risks for young workers at the point of mine closure, government together with mining companies can introduce initiative-taking voluntary redundancy packages well before closures. These packages encourage young workers to exit the coal sector early and transition to other industries, avoiding the disruption of reactive, involuntary retrenchments.

Poland and the Czech Republic implemented voluntary retrenchment schemes for coal mine workers in transition (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023; Del Rio, 2017; Śniegocki et al., 2022). In Poland, early transition measures included welfare allowances (1993) and other social benefits for young workers to encourage voluntarily exits from the coal sector before closure becomes inevitable (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023; Śniegocki et al., 2022). About 1600 workers benefited by the end of 1993 (Karbownik and Bijańska, 2000). While initial take-up was lower than expected due to limited compensation, consultations with trade unions led to the Mining Social Package (MSP). The MSP offered stronger voluntary exit incentives, including a lump-sum redundancy payment equal to 24 months of average mining wages and monthly welfare allowances of up to 65% of average pay for up to two years during retraining and job search (European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024; Śniegocki et al., 2022; Szpor and Ziółkowska, 2018). As a result,

tens of thousands of workers accepted the voluntary redundancy offer, though limited job search support and rapid implementation caused high unemployment in the area.

In 2020, Poland formalised a social contract guaranteeing all coal and processing plant workers affected by the transition a one-time severance payment of US$31 000 (approximately R535 000) (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023; European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024; Śniegocki et al., 2022).

In the Czech Republic, coal industry restructuring in the Moravskoslezský region began in the early 1990s. Severance pay was used to manage affected coal workers. This severance pay consisted of a lump-sum equivalent to 10 months' wages, an additional four months for workers in hazardous jobs, and a re-employment bonus of CZK1900 per month for up to 36 months to workers voluntarily exiting the industry. These incentives successfully encouraged voluntary exits, reducing employment at Ostrava-Karvina Coal Mines (OKD)[3] from over 100 000 in 1989 to under 50 000 by 1995 (European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024).

Applicability of compensation strategies in South Africa

South Africa has existing income support measures for displaced workers, including severance pay under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), and social grants. However, existing income and social protection support measures are limited in reach, duration, and adequacy (Montmasson-Clair, 2021a). For example, severance pay is insufficient given that it is only one week's wages per year of service while UIF support lasts up to 12 months, shorter than Germany's 24-month payout period. Informal workers and, in some cases, workers employed by a third-party service provider are excluded from these benefits. In addition, no relocation support exists in the current labour system, despite some coal workers being migrants.

A Just Transition comes at a high fiscal cost. Financing for worker compensation strategies can come from public funds, company contributions, worker contributions, and climate finance mechanisms (such as the Just Energy Transition Partnership). Mining companies are required under Regulations 46(d) and 46(e) of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act No. 28 or 2002 (MPRDA) to plan and budget for downscaling and retrenchment of workers. While this provides a starting point for funding a Just Transition, compliance, monitoring, and accountability remain challenging, underscoring the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms to hold mining companies accountable as well as additional government-financed compensation strategies.

The Just Energy Transition grants register shows by the end of September 2025 over US$3 billion allocated across six portfolios: electricity (US$2.60 billion), Just Transition Mpumalanga (US$181 million), Green Hydrogen (US$228 million), municipalities (US$195 million), skills development (US$140 million), and New Energy Vehicles (US$6 million) (The Presidency, 2025). While these allocations are critical for South Africa's transition, none of the funding is directed to financial compensation for affected workers. The government of Poland formalised compensation strategies through a social contract negotiated with unions, companies, and workers while South Africa lacks such a deal guaranteeing affected workers adequate compensation.

The absence of proactive and well-designed compensation strategies risks repeating the United Kingdom's (UK) reactive approach, which caused long-term dislocation. The consequences of a reactive approach in South Africa could be more severe due to limited mobility and high unemployment in coal regions. South Africa's structural socio-economic challenges highlight the potential role of voluntary, funded early-exit compensation programmes in easing the transition costs associated with mine closures.

3 *OKD is Czech Republic's only hard coal producer. It has managed 16 mines but has been affected by restructuring since 1990. The company remains operational, with extraction at its last active mine scheduled to end in January 2026.*

Implementation challenges may affect compensation policy, particularly around conditionality. As seen in Poland's MSP, financial support tied to employment seeking or retraining may not attract enough young coal workers with low education and job search experience. In addition, high structural unemployment and labour market uncertainties could result in poor uptake. Conversely, unconditional payout schemes do not guarantee that financial support will be spent on sustainable livelihood creation, highlighting the need to pair compensation strategies with strategies for self-development.

Medium-term package for young coal workers in transition

In the medium term, policy shifts from transitional income support toward sustainable livelihoods for young coal workers. The focus is on reintegrating workers into decent work or access to alternative non fossil fuel income generating opportunities. Transition support during this phase is in form of transitional adjustment assistance (TAA) measures while gradually introducing comprehensive adaptive measures. TAA supports adaptation to new systems (e.g. low-carbon economy) while addressing immediate financial losses. By contrast, comprehensive adaptive support addresses a broader range of economic and social losses, enabling more sustained adaptation to new system.

This section covers transitional adjustment assistance strategies which include both passive and active labour market instruments, as shown in Figure 1. The inventory of measures targeting youth include green skills training and reskilling, employment services (job-seeking support), self-employment support, redeployment, and social safety nets. These strategies aim to equip young coal workers with the skills, opportunities, and protections needed to sustain livelihoods in a transitioning economy.

Figure 1: Transitional adjustment assistance measures for youth cohort



Training young coal workforce in transition

Equipping young coal workers with in-demand skills for emerging low-carbon sectors is essential for a Just Transition. Skills development enhances both labour participation and absorption rates for displaced workers. Globally, countries such as Poland, Spain, Canada, and India have used training programmes to ease their transitions. In Poland, the government offered a once-off training opportunity under the 1998–2002 MSP and again during the 2020 Social Contract (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023; European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024; Śniegocki et al., 2022; Szpor and Ziółkowska, 2018). While the MSP achieved partial success, a once-off training opportunity was insufficient. Spain's 1997-2005 Plan for the Coal Mining Sector and the Alternative Development of the Mining Regions allocated about 7.6% of its funding to worker training (Del Rio, 2017; European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024), and its 2018 Just Transition Deal committed to five-year retraining programmes (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023).

Although early transition countries provided education and training, evidence on the specific types of training offered is limited. More recent transitions driven by climate change increasingly prioritise green skills to prepare workers for low-carbon industries. Global examples include the Energy Advisor Programme (Canada); Barcelona Energy Advice Points; Skill Council for Green Jobs (India); Wind Energy Training for Coal Miners (Romania); and the US Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) and Lithium-Battery Workforce Initiative (International Energy Agency, 2022; The lawphil project, n.d.; Kok, 2017). These initiatives aim to strengthen worker readiness and future-proof skills for clean energy jobs.

Evidence shows that training programmes are more effective when they reflect workers' preferences and abilities. The UK's experience serves as a cautionary tale of a top-down, reactive approach that failed to consider workers' preferences and abilities. During the UK's first transition, 60% of affected coal workers received no training, and the programmes offered were often mismatched with workers' abilities, poorly consulted, and delayed by up to six months after mine closures (Hansard, 1994; Rising et al., 2021).

Applicability of skills training support in South Africa

Mining companies in South Africa are required to develop Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) under the MPRDA, which outline how firms will support skills development for both mining and non-mining activities (DMRE, 2010). In addition, the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 aims to strengthen workforce skills through coordinated national, sectoral, and workplace training systems, including learnerships and funding mechanisms.

While this legislative framework provides a strong foundation, implementation challenges persist. These include weak compliance by mining companies, limited alignment between training and alternative employment opportunities, and poor coordination between public and private actors. In practice, training in coal sector often remain focused on mining specific skills, with limited attention to transferable skills. Although SLPs require transferable skills development, the training is often introduced too late either during retrenchment or closure and is typically based on worker preferences without sufficient alignment to future labour market demand. Strengthening this process requires offering workers a menu of demand driven training options, while allowing them to make informed choices based on their interests and capabilities.

Despite these challenges, existing institutional and firm level resources offer a valuable base for scaling just transition skills development. Mining companies contribute financially through SLP commitments and the Skills Development Levy, while many also maintain training committees, skills development facilitators, and infrastructure that could be repurposed. In some cases, this includes e-learning platforms, digital and physical training systems. Strengthening coordination, improving transparency and compliance, and pooling resources across companies, SETAs, and government can significantly enhance the effectiveness of these existing systems.

Beyond mining companies, several private and public initiatives are advancing green skills development. These include the Africa Women in Energy and Power programme, the South African Renewable Energy Technology Centre, [4] the Komati Training Facility, and Zimi Charge's Youth EV Learnership. In addition, Mpumalanga hosts one public university, three TVET colleges, and one CET college and several other training centres offering various non-coal skills trainings. While these efforts provide a strong foundation, limited coordination and funding constraints continue to restrict their scale and impact.

4 *Established at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Bellville campus in Cape Town offers specialised and accredited training for the renewable energy industry.*

The evidence suggests that relying solely on existing instruments is insufficient. Strengthening coordination and targeted financial support for both mining companies and private sector initiatives can improve the delivery and scale of training programmes. Government initiatives such as the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) skills development allocations, signal commitment to financing skills transformation but remain insufficient relative to the scale of the transition.

International experience reveals critical pitfalls to avoid in reskilling efforts. A once off training offered to mine workers in Poland proved insufficient and often misaligned with labour market demand (Śniegocki et al., 2022; Szpor and Ziółkowska, 2018). On the other hand, inadequate worker consultation and poorly targeted training reduced uptake by affected workers in the UK (Rising et al., 2021). These experiences highlight the importance of providing continuous, demand-led training that is also aligned with worker capabilities, preferences, and emerging economic opportunities. Strengthening worker involvement in training programme design can further enhance participation.

Supporting young coal workers to access sustainable employment opportunities

Once young coal workers acquire relevant skills, the next step is to support their transition into sustainable employment opportunities, including emerging green sectors. Accessible employment services are essential to shorten unemployment periods and reduce long-term dependence on social protection. Although few examples exist globally, experiences from Germany, Canada, and Scotland offer useful lessons on linking employment services to energy transitions.

Germany's Action Program Ruhr (1980) funded labour market centres to support unemployed workers during the transition. In Canada, the government of Alberta allocated CAN$40 million under the Coal Workforce Transition Program (2018) to finance career consultants and workforce planning tools (Hussey and Jackson, 2019). Similarly, in Scotland, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) operates as an independent public agency funded by the government. It supports displaced workers through the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment programme, serving as a one-stop shop for career guidance and re-employment services (Rising et al., 2021; Skills Development Scotland, n.d.)

In South Africa, employment services are provided through both public and private entities. The Department of Employment and Labour provides public employment services via the Public Employment Services and the Employment Services of South Africa initiatives. Unlike Scotland's independent SDS model, these entities operate within government structures. In the private sector, initiatives such as Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and Yes4Youth provide employment support targeted at young people. Both public and private employment services can be scaled up and tailored to assist coal mine workers affected by mine closures, supporting their transition into a range of sustainable employment opportunities, including emerging green sectors

Supporting young coal workers to become entrepreneurs

Beyond formal employment, some young coal workers may attempt to create their own livelihoods through small business activity. Entrepreneurship can offer a survival strategy and, under the right conditions, a pathway to economic mobility. However, starting and sustaining a business requires far more than enthusiasm; it demands an enabling policy environment and support systems that address South Africa's deep structural constraints.

International experience shows that business support can help workers in transition, though its relevance to South Africa is mixed. In the Czech Republic, a business agency created during coal restructuring provided loans, training and advisory services, while the Measures for the Restoration and Development of the Ostrava Karvina Agglomeration Act (1991–1992) offered two-year tax exemptions to new firms and additional incentives for job creation (European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024). Spain promoted entrepreneurship in coal regions

through subsidies, infrastructure investment, business training and soft loans (European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024). In China, the Shanxi Coking Coal Group's innovation centre helped create 26 businesses – 70% of them founded by former employees (International Energy Agency, 2023). Poland, however, illustrates the risks of providing income support without adequate business training. Many recipients of MSP programme funds struggled to start or sustain enterprises due to inadequate entrepreneurial support (Śniegocki et al., 2022). These examples show that small business support matters, but outcomes depend heavily on local conditions.

South Africa's context is far more complex. The country already has extensive small business structures. The Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA), formed through the merger of Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa), Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), and the Cooperative Banking Development Agency (CBDA), supports small and medium enterprises through integrated business development, financial assistance, and capacity building programmes to enhance their growth, sustainability, and competitiveness. Mpumalanga hosts the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency, the Provincial Co-operatives Development Strategy, and the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, which helps small businesses navigate barriers to establishment and growth.

Despite this impressive architecture, many South African small business initiatives remain ineffective. The small business landscape is shaped by a difficult macroeconomic environment (weak growth), high business failure rates, regulatory burdens and persistent structural exclusion (Department of Small Business Development, 2017). Entrepreneurship levels are low, and apartheid's legacy continues to constrain black participation in the economy. Black South Africans form the majority, but they have significantly low entrepreneurial uptake (Ngcuthushe, 2023). Structural disadvantages leave black-owned small businesses facing limited resources and collateral, weak entrepreneurial skills, poor networks and market access, township infrastructure and spatial barriers, intense competition by historically advantaged firms, and inadequate government support, all of which make it difficult to secure capital and build a stable client base (Ngcuthushe, 2023; Mtshali et al., 2017).

Small business challenges are not restricted to black-owned firms. South African small business in general struggle with rising costs, economic volatility, limited access to finance, compliance burdens, technology gaps, difficulties engaging institutions such as South African Revenue Service and the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, and complex registration processes (Botha et al., 2021). The result is predictable, entrepreneurial entry is low, and failure rates are high. South Africa sees roughly 11 newly registered firms for every 1000 working-age individuals, while more than 11 000 companies reportedly closed in 2022 (World Bank, 2026).

For these reasons, entrepreneurship cannot be assumed to be a straightforward or universally viable pathway for young coal workers in South Africa. Closing South Africa's entrepreneurship deficit and improving business survival rates, requires far more than basic business development services. Support must be targeted and realistic, and, in many cases, private sector led. Effective measures would include entrepreneurship education tailored to vulnerable workers, province-wide training centres, strong peer and professional support networks, and integrated programmes that combine human, financial and social capital. Enhanced coordination, timely regulatory processes, and business rescue mechanisms will also be vital. Only with such comprehensive interventions can entrepreneurship offer a meaningful livelihood pathway for young workers transitioning out of coal mining.

Redeploying young coal workers in transition

Redeployment occurs when an employer moves an employee from one role to another, often to avoid redundancy. Redeployment has been widely used as a strategy to manage workers affected by mine closures in countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, the Netherlands, and China.

In the Czech Republic, during the 1990s coal restructuring, some miners were transferred to operating mines or other companies within the same sector (Rečková et al., 2017). The OKD established an Employment Support Agency to facilitate job transfers (European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy et al., 2024).

In Poland, the government created the Mine Restructuring Company (SRK) to manage mine closures and safeguard infrastructure. The SRK was mandated to acquire unprofitable mines and restructure employment. Miners were redeployed to maintain decommissioned mines or transferred to active ones (Śniegocki et al., 2022).

In the Netherlands, Dutch State Mines, a state-owned entity, was transformed into a chemical company, preserving jobs and ensuring redeployment opportunities for workers from the former coal units.

China's transition also prioritised redeployment to minimise job losses. In 2016, the Ministry of Finance allocated €14 billion through the Industrial Special Fund to relocate displaced coal and steel workers. Shanxi province alone committed €300 million for job transfers as well as retraining, early retirement, and public service employment. That year, around 31 600 workers in Shanxi and over 726 000 nationwide were re-employed (International Energy Agency, 2022).

Applicability of redeployment in South Africa

Unlike Poland, South Africa currently has no central agency to manage redeployment, take over unprofitable coal mines, or oversee rehabilitation and repurposing. Poland's state-supported entity, SRK, absorbed unprofitable mines and reassigned workers. In contrast, South Africa relies on the legislative framework guiding mine closures, particularly Regulation 46(d) of the MPRDA, which requires companies to manage redeployment internally.

In compliance with Regulation 46(d), most coal mining companies include redeployment strategies in their SLPs and commit to following the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 and the Department of Employment and Labour guidelines to ensure fair opportunities to redeploy employees. These provisions aim to move workers internally to other mine departments or sister operations. However, these commitments are often unrealistic, given the sector's decline toward the 2050 net-zero target. Some mining companies do not specify where or how redeployment will take place in the long term, particularly considering decarbonisation targets.

Redeployment can be feasible when companies are also operating in non-coal mining or planning to diversify into other green sectors. Firms such as BHP Billiton, Glencore, and Exxaro also operate in chrome, manganese, and ferroalloys mining (BHP Billiton, 2003; Glencore, n.d.; Nozulela, 2025).

Similarly, Exxaro, Seriti, and Glencore are investing in green projects, which could create future redeployment opportunities and preserve jobs.

Despite redeployment being widely referenced in company SLPs, it faces several challenges. Transferring workers to other mining areas can create local equity tensions. Mines are legally required under the MPRDA to prioritise local employment to support host community development. Redeploying existing workers from other regions could therefore conflict with these commitments, particularly as many alternative mining operations are located outside Mpumalanga. Relocation distance and associated costs can also discourage workers from accepting redeployment. Furthermore, redeployment opportunities depend on available vacancies and skill alignment, making them more accessible to highly skilled workers.

Social protection for young coal workers in transition

As young coal workers transition, they are likely to experience income shocks and lose essential job-linked benefits such as housing and healthcare. In the medium term, comprehensive social protection measures form a key component of an adaptive support package.

International experience illustrates the importance of social support. In Poland, coal allowances were part of collective bargaining agreements and provided to workers and pensioners either in-kind (coal) or as cash equivalents. When the coal industry declined and mining companies withdrew this support, responsibility was transferred to the State Treasury, demonstrating government commitment to preserving worker benefits during the transition (Bhushan and Banerjee, 2023; Szpor and Ziółkowska, 2018). Later, when the government sought to phase out monthly coal allowances, a one-time CAN$3000 cash settlement was provided to ensure continued support for retirees (Śniegocki et al., 2022).

Similarly, in the Czech Republic, the government covered social costs associated with mine closures, including healthcare benefits, special bonuses for workers, compensation for lost earnings, and transport allowances (Rečková et al., 2017).

Applicability of social protection measures in South Africa

South Africa's collective bargaining agreements, governed by the Labour Relations Act, secure worker benefits such as housing, health benefits, and pension. However, worker-related benefits typically end once employment is terminated, and there is still no clear roadmap for supporting mine workers with these benefits after mine closure. Although legislation exists, such as the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act No. 130 of 1993 (COIDA) and the Constitution, these provide limited protection. COIDA covers work-related injuries and illnesses (Republic of South Africa, 1993) but does not address the broader health, economic, and social impacts of large-scale mine closures. The Constitution guarantees universal access to healthcare, food, water, and social security (South African Government, 2025), yet demand for these services will likely increase in an already strained economy. Existing social protection systems, such as the Social Relief of Distress Grant, have gaps in both coverage and adequacy (Montmasson-Clair, 2021b).

Conclusion

International experience offers valuable lessons to ease transitions for young coal workers, who remain among the most vulnerable. The following recommendations are drawn from global practice:

1. **Strengthen institutional arrangements for mine restructuring:** Strengthening the role of the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR) in managing mining restructuring or establishing a dedicated public agency can improve coordination of mine closure processes. A centralised entity could oversee mine closures, land rehabilitation and repurposing, attract investment, support alternative employment in mine affected regions, and coordinate workforce restructuring. Experiences such as Poland's SRK highlight how institutional strengthening can enhance the effectiveness of just transition frameworks.
2. **Develop a formal Just Transition agreement or social contract:** A formal transition arrangement, co-developed between government, workers, unions, and mining companies, can provide a shared framework for action. Such an agreement can define responsibilities, guarantee protection for affected workers, and link compensation policies with comprehensive adaptive support. Embedding this arrangement in legislation, supported by public funding commitments, can strengthen accountability and long-term policy certainty.
3. **Plan repurposing of coal-related assets in advance:** Early planning for the repurposing of coal assets can create new employment opportunities and improve the absorption of displaced workers. Integrating repurposing strategies into transition planning supports local economic development and reduces disruption at the point of closure.

4. **Prioritise proactive transition planning:** Reactive policy responses tend to increase social and economic costs. Introducing well-funded, voluntary exit packages at an early stage can encourage gradual workforce transitions and reduce adjustment pressures as closures approach.
5. **Strengthen support for entrepreneurship:** Improving the viability of entrepreneurship as a transition pathway requires both financial and non-financial support. This includes access to capital, business development services, and removing regulatory barriers that constrain small enterprise growth. A more supportive ecosystem can enhance the sustainability of small business development outcomes.
6. **Align training with worker needs and labour market demand:** Training programmes are more effective when they are demand led and aligned with workers' abilities, preferences, and emerging labour market opportunities. This improves uptake, relevance, and long-term employment outcomes.
7. **Enhance government and private sector collaboration:** Stronger collaboration between government and mining companies can support the co-design and co-financing of just transition measures. Shared responsibility in funding and implementation can improve policy effectiveness while reducing the financial burden on any single actor.

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