YOUNG PEOPLE CHAMPIONING POST-PANDEMIC FUTURES

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BIG 6 YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS

IFRC

WORLD YMCA

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD

SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

WorldYWCA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected millions of children and young people worldwide, with public health restrictions and socio-economic disruptions having a devastating impact on their education, mental health, career prospects, safety and personal development. For many, uncertainty and fear for the future is the 'new normal'. During these unprecedented times, it is more important than ever that governments, policymakers, academics, business leaders and civil society come together to find innovative ways of supporting communities and providing hope to younger generations. The pandemic has further highlighted and exacerbated the existing inequalities in our societies, with respect to access to resources, information and power dynamics.

Children and young people are among the hardest hit; girls and young women in particular have been disproportionately impacted. Due to lockdowns, millions are missing out on education, and those without digital access and a suitable home learning environment are particularly disadvantaged. Many young people are in temporary or informal jobs, and in sectors worst affected by the pandemic, resulting in high levels of unemployment and job insecurity. This, along with the disruption to their education, has left many facing an uncertain future. The mental health of many children and young people has been adversely affected by isolation, disruption to their normal routines, and worries about the future.

Lockdowns have seen an increase in gender-based and interpersonal violence and more children are living in unsafe homes with reduced access to support. More time spent online means that many are at increased risk of cyberbullying and abuse. With work, education and other activities shifting online, the digital divide has become ever more apparent. Millions of children and young people do not have access to digital technology or adequate internet connectivity at home, severely affecting their life chances and participation. Despite all these challenges, young people all over the world are and have been working towards providing support to one another and their communities in need.

It is now, more than ever that we are able to see the power and agency young people have despite the challenges they face. In response to these unique challenges, the Big 6 Youth Organisations has come together to issue a joint call to action on behalf of the children and young people that make up our movements. This paper focuses on the key challenges facing them as a consequence of the pandemic and the policy solutions that we recommend are implemented to overcome them. We are aware that the current pandemic will have a lasting impact on the youth of the world, which is why this is the time to take action to ensure young people are driving change rather than being impacted by it negatively.

We believe that policymakers must listen to children and young people and put them, their views, needs and experiences at the heart of the solutions. A healthy, vibrant and further strengthened youth sector is vital to ensure that young people thrive and overcome the challenges of the future with the support of those around them.

KEY CALLS TO ACTION FOR POLICYMAKERS

1. Ensure that **children and young people from diverse backgrounds play a direct, active and powerful role in making decisions** and **developing policies** that affect them and their future.

2. Ensure **equal access to healthcare** for children and young people, regardless of background or employment status, with mental health as a key priority. If suitable approved vaccines will be made available, ensure **free or low-cost vaccination schemes for vulnerable children and youth.**

3. Invest in more user-friendly, low-cost/high-efficiency systems to ensure children and young people have **inclusive access to education**, as well as in promoting **digital inclusion and online safety.**

4. Promote **digital safety and privacy as a fundamental human right,** ensuring and maintaining a **safe space for everyone** irrespective of race, region, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic background and any other attributes.

5. Prioritise upskilling and reskilling educational paths which promote skill development and vocational learning that will help **future-proof careers.** This includes competences around financial education, digital skills and civic skills.

6. Promote **active investment in building strong and resilient communities** as a core element of public policies and programmes, with meaningful engagement of young people in this process.

7. Ensure that **children and young people are at the forefront of COVID-19 recovery programmes and policies**, and that they are not disproportionately affected by budget cuts.

8. **Support youth serving organisations at all levels** (including grassroots organisations) during and after the COVID-19 crisis with increased funding or alternative funding schemes (including potential institutional support), ensuring the survival of the youth work sector.

9. Adapt national and local youth policy to the new realities of **digital and blended youth work.**

Policy Recommendations for
a Post-Pandemic World

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The job prospects of young people have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a disadvantaged 'lockdown generation'. Global figures from the International Labour Organization (ILO) [1] show that more than 1 in 6 young people have become unemployed since the beginning of the crisis, with over 40% of young workers employed in sectors that have been hit hardest. Adding to this, 267 million young people worldwide are estimated to not be in employment, education or training.

Many young people working in seasonal or temporary jobs, or the gig economy, are particularly vulnerable to having their hours or jobs cut, risking long-term underemployment or unemployment.

Those working in the "gig economy" are especially vulnerable in many countries due to the lack of healthcare protections as they are not considered employees and therefore do not have all the associated legal protections and healthcare provisions. According to the ILO, 77% of young people were in informal jobs when the pandemic began. [2]

Young migrants, refugees and young women are even more severely affected. Migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable due to a lack of social protection and their reliance on informal employment, and many young women are employed as care workers, making them more exposed to the virus. What's more, experts believe the downturn threatens to worsen racial inequalities which will in turn worsen inequalities for children and young people, as has happened in previous recessions. [3]

For many young people, this is the second major economic crisis that has occurred in their lifetime, and they have seen how it impacts careers, financial stability, and family life, reducing their trust in governments to support them when they are in need. This can lead to increased social unrest, rise of populist or extremist political forces, reduced civic participation all of which risk resulting in even lower economic growth.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Policy Recommendations

- **Introduce 'flexicurity'-focused [4] policies that generally tend to benefit young people.** These might include simplified legislation for remote and flexible work, a 'Kurzarbeit' [5] -style furlough approach where work is encouraged rather than discouraged, fiscal stimulus for re-hiring of young people who have been laid off or are facing unemployment or reduced hours.

- **Develop sustainable and youth-centred approaches to recovery,** spearheaded by governments and civil organisations, while also ensuring that young people can directly benefit from recovery funds.

- **Encourage intergenerational and diverse work environments,** offering both financial sustainability for all and a better on-the-job learning system, with special attention given to the **inclusion of vulnerable young people**. Special attention should also be given to young refugees and migrants, who in some cases are not allowed to work as they are waiting for their documents to be processed, which can take a long time.

- **Ensure equal access to healthcare** for young people of all backgrounds, including the unemployed or underemployed, As we for eventual COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.

Policy Recommendations for
a Post-Pandemic World

MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Loneliness, physical isolation and uncertainty about the future are leading to an unprecedented wave of mental health issues among young people, reflecting serious threats to the lives and wellbeing of young people. A report by the UK charity Young Minds [6] has revealed that 83% of young people polled said their mental health has been affected or severely affected as a result of the pandemic. Additionally, a U-Report poll by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts [7] showed that 86% of young people are worried about their future. Disruption of routines, rapid changes in lifestyles, and physical isolation are among the causes for increased depression and anxiety. The pandemic's long-term mental health consequences could easily exceed its immediate physical health and economic impact, putting young people's right to live fulfilled and safe lives at risk for years to come.

During national lockdowns, gender-based violence and domestic violence have been increasingly visible. Forced to self-isolate with their abusers, women, young women and girls, as well as people from non-binary and LGBTQI+ communities are disproportionately affected, resulting in trauma and depression as well as physical harm. COVID-19 has highlighted the risks and vulnerabilities that girls and young women face because of deep-rooted inequalities and traditional gender roles. It has made it harder, and in some cases impossible, for women to access essential services to protect them from gender-based violence and to support their sexual and reproductive health.

Additionally, girls and young women have less autonomy and decision-making power than boys and young men. During a time of economic uncertainty, girls are less likely to have their own needs meet. They are also more likely to be forced into early marriages, deprived of the opporunity to return to school and burdened with additional chores.

With increased time spent online due to remote education services and lack of physical interaction with peers, young people are now more exposed to violence in digital spaces than ever. The long term effects of cyberbullying and online harassment are linked to severe mental health issues. Additionally, this has put young people further at risk of cyber crime and other human right violations, like grooming and gaslighting.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy Recommendations

- **Increase funding for life-saving, youth-driven mental health services,** investing in local solutions, adaptive programming, and encouraging collaboration between non-governmental, public and private sector providers. There must also be greater acknowledgement of intersectionality, or the interplay between race, class and gender, when designing support services.

- **Increase access to online mental health and wellbeing services** and find new ways of promoting services so they can be accessed by all sections of society. These approaches should be designed with young people in mind, including the most vulnerable and those with less access to the internet and digital devices.

- **Invest in violence-reporting and monitoring services, and strengthen cyber laws and online harassment reporting schemes,** with a particular focus on prevention of gender-based and sexual orientation-based violence, as well as violence towards children.

- Increase regulation and add greater pressure on social media and technology companies to **ensure digital spaces are safe for all young people**, including on aspects connected to cyberbullying and online harassment. Additionally, encourage social media and technology companies to adopt "humane algorithms" which reduce addiction, anxiety and other damaging behaviours.

- **Provide safe and supportive spaces that help children and young people thrive and feel confident about the future.** Invest in youth spaces, organisations and communities that can be scaled up after the pandemic. Ensure that youth-centred communities foster peer-to-peer support, develop skills relevant for future employment, and build safe and trusted networks, so that all children and young people can reach their full potential.

Photo Courtesy @WorldScouting

Policy Recommendations for a Post-Pandemic World

INCLUSION AND INEQUALITY

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the shrinking of physical engagements and opportunities, thereby enhancing the use of digital spaces. Young people have resorted to digital spaces to share, speak, engage and mobilise. Their ideas are playing critical roles in not just managing the pandemic right now, but also planning for an egalitarian and just response to the pandemic for a better post-pandemic world. However, digital engagement leaves out huge swaths of society who are not digitally connected. Those without access to digital tools or the internet are completely left out of regional and national responses as all other avenues for engagement have closed.

With around 1.2 billion learners affected by school closures [1], the digital divide has directly impacted the personal and academic development of children and young people by rendering digital schooling impossible for those without access to the technological tools and equipment to continue their education.

The exacerbated digital divide has also had a direct impact on mental and physical health with many not able to access digital services to cope with their mental health challenges. Meanwhile, enhanced usage of digital spaces has highlighted the abuse and trolling that exists for young people and children. This abuse is worse for youth of colour, for young women and girls and LGBTQI+ and non-binary youth and youth from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The current pandemic and the response across the world is under-utilising the power of youth to full its capacity, thereby missing on the opportunities to engage in innovative solutions that could possibly disrupt traditional thinking and ways of addressing global crises. Digital spaces can be instrumental in reaching young voices and ideas like never before-without the need to travel or have budget available, digital engagements can be a great equalizer, but only for those with access. [8]

INCLUSION AND INEQUALITY

Policy Recommendations

- **Schools, colleges and training spaces need to develop a creative approach to ensure all young people are included.** It is imperative that institutions and education leaders come together to co-create an inclusive policy for moving into the digital world of education. Consultation with young people based on a human rights-based approach is core to this process.

- **Prioritise investment aimed towards reducing the financial burden of digitising schooling** through low cost solutions that ensure inclusive engagement. This must ensure all solutions are community driven and built on community realities and experiences, thereby creating bottom-up models of access and inclusion in the digital world.

- Actively engage y**oung people to harness their experience and expertise in development of low cost solutions** to the problems around digital inclusion. Ensure technology accelerates the process of community-generated evidence reaching policy-makers and decision-makers quickly and on a long term basis.

- **Ensure that the voices and daily realities of young people and children all over the world are actively taken into account by involving young people in decision-making.** It is imperative to ensure accountability around this so that tokenism is avoided.

- **Ensure a range of communication methods are available** to help children and young people access the services they need, overcoming barriers such as language, literacy levels and digital access.

- **Promote digital safety and privacy as fundamental human rights, ensuring and maintaining a safe space for everyone irrespective of race, region, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic background and any other attributes.**

Photo Courtesy @ifrc

Policy Recommendations for
a Post-Pandemic World

EDUCATION

The crisis in global education that governments, educators, policy makers and communities are grappling with is unparalleled in history. UNESCO estimates that 87% of the global student population has been affected by school closures [1]. The associated closure or reduced opening of youth development organisations and other support institutions has further restricted access to quality non-formal education and learning opportunities so vital in developing young people beyond the classroom. In total, approximately 1.2 billion students and youth have been impacted to varying degrees across the globe [2].

Educational disruption has a disproportionately negative impact on the health, well-being and life chances of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in society. When schools and other education organisations are closed, millions of young people receive little to no support at home. This is due to the wide disparity between online provisions provided by private and state schools, a lack of access to one-to-one tutoring, different conditions for home learning and parents and guardians lacking the confidence, time due to work pressure or educational experience to feel confident in providing sufficient support.

In many countries, millions of children will face long-term setbacks as a consequence of public health restrictions and have regressed significantly in their learning during the pandemic. The Sutton Trust, a UK social mobility think tank, estimates school closures will significantly widen the attainment gap and impact the poorest in all societies the most [3]. In many cases, it is girls and young women that are most affected, thereby causing systemic societal issues for the future. Whilst school closures are the key factor, the disruption has been exacerbated by: a lack of access to suitable internet and technology; hunger caused by the removal of vital food provisions from schools, local authorities or government agencies; lack of care and protection from potential domestic abuse; and lack of sufficient support or guidance from parents and/or guardians.

EDUCATION

Policy Recommendations

- **Invest in a flexible, digital-first and holistic approach to education** that combines effective classroom learning and quality, non-formal education and learning solutions. Over the next year, put in place high-impact interventions such as increased summer and holiday provisions, and tutoring and mentoring designed to bridge the gap and reverse the educational setbacks that have resulted from school closures.

- **Ensure vulnerable, disadvantaged and digitally-excluded children and young people are supported in their education.** Provide the required digital infrastructure, including good internet connectivity and access to technology particularly in low-tech and low-resource environments. **Ensure young refugees and undocumented migrants have free and equal access to education.**

- Review national and local guidance and policies to ensure that organisations can more easily and quickly mobilise an **effective 'education-first' disaster relief response** to the next pandemic or humanitarian disaster.

- **Encourage the development of a value-based education, with a focus on non-formal education and learning,** that's provided by youth organisations with a clear focus on the current impact on young people, including through increased grants.

- Leverage the transformative power and preventive role of non-formal education to address the root causes of current and future infectious diseases, through the development of knowledge, values and skills that empower people.

Policy Recommendations for
a Post-Pandemic World

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND VOLUNTEERING

Young people are volunteering around the clock to prevent transmission of the virus, communicate effectively with the public, help communities already affected by the outbreak to maintain access to basic social and protective services, and reduce the economic, social and psychological impact on people.

Many young people have been supporting their communities during the crisis by taking on key worker roles, volunteering to deliver essential supplies, provide social support to those in isolation, and fundraising.

The socio-economic effects of the pandemic will be felt across all communities, and is likely to become a food security and livelihoods emergency, in particular in countries already in crisis, but also for the most vulnerable everywhere. The further non-economic impacts from the pandemic will affect social protection mechanisms. In the absence of any means to engage meaningfully with young people (including through access to education) this will severely impact youth empowerment.

There are millions of volunteers around the world, many of whom have taken on new and more challenging roles in the past months due to the COVID-19 crisis. Volunteers risk their lives when they work in health and other crises, and volunteers themselves need to be protected. Many volunteers do not have access to basic health insurance, nor insurance to support their families should they be injured and unable to work or killed.

During 2020 there has been a surge of youth-led activism and protests across the world. With physical restrictions in place, children and young people have found creative ways to use digital platforms to express their views and mobilise others. It's essential that structures are put in place to harness their passion and commitment post-pandemic and ensure that all young people are able to participate.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND VOLUNTEERING

Policy Recommendations

- **Identify and invest in youth-led and youth-focused organisations** and support them to identify and assist vulnerable and marginalised communities and individuals.

- **Involve young people and young leaders in decision-making and planning at all levels,** in both policy-making and adopting youth-led solutions. Ensure the needs of children and young people, especially girls, are actively included in recovery programmes.

- **Invest in local capacities for preparedness and response** to public health emergencies and other crises, including sustainable institutional capacities. Ensure that **local actors can access relevant funds for preparedness, risk reduction and response, and are equipped with adequate training** and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in line with WHO recommendations to minimize their risk of being infected or spreading the virus.

- Create suitable policies so that **more children and young people can engage in online activism and volunteering.**

- **Give young people access to resources,** including mentoring, peer-to-peer support, and financial investment, so they are empowered to implement their ideas and test their own solutions.

Photo Courtesy @WorldYMCA

YOUTH SECTOR CAPACITY AND FUNDING

The COVID-19 pandemic has left most of the youth organisations and youth services in a vulnerable position, directly affecting the capacity of the sector to serve young people in communities hit by the virus. Among the effects we can identify:

- Temporary closure of physical facilities such as youth centers, community centers and youth hostels;

- Temporary or permanent reduction in staff, including youth workers, with a direct and severe reduction in capacity;

- Severe reduction in fundraising opportunities:

  - Sponsorships collapsed in many non-medical areas as companies struggled with the economic effects of the pandemic;

  - Donations from individuals have been mostly redirected to health and social care causes and have in general been reduced as economic uncertainty is diverting these funds to more urgent needs;

  - Some funders have suspended their payments or reduced the offered grants, leading to lay-offs in the beneficiary nonprofits;

- A "crowding in" effect is seen as nonprofits are flocking to the available government grants, which despite several disadvantages provide a stable source of income for the duration of the crisis. As available grants are insufficient in many countries and might even be reduced as governments struggle with historical debts, this leads to increased competition for the existing resources.

- Youth organisations which had reliable funding from income-generating activities have struggled dramatically, especially those in the hardest-hit areas (eg. youth hostels, outdoor activity centres, gyms, small shops etc.).

YOUTH SECTOR CAPACITY AND FUNDING

- Some organisations managed to swiftly transition to a digital environment either due to their agile processes or because they were already in a process of digitalisation. Others met severe difficulties and could not cope easily.

- A large gap now exists between youth organisations that managed to quickly digitalise their activites and those that struggled to manage and who were unable to do much activity at all.

- Middle-sized youth organisations are at considerable risk as funding is mostly redirected to large organisations who have the capacity and trust of funders, while small organisations rely on increasingly active volunteers and do not fully depend on large funding;

At the same time, the pandemic provided several organisations with an opportunity to rethink their activities and quickly adapt to the 'new normal'. From our direct experience we have noticed:

  - Increased solidarity within the youth sector and sometimes joint efforts in combating the pandemic;
  - Large-scale community interventions and mobilisation of volunteers to support those in need from the community (e.g. supporting elderly with food deliveries, distributing protective medical equipment and other essentials, fundraising for medical facilities etc.);
  - A resurgence of **digital youth work**, albeit in improvised forms in some cases;
  - New digital services for young people, teachers and parents;

The youth sector has proven and is proving that its services are essential for millions of young people worldwide. As such, we cannot allow it to diminish or fail in its mission to serve and empower young people and prepare them for a resilient life.

YOUTH SECTOR CAPACITY AND FUNDING

In order to strengthen the capacity of youth organisations to serve young people we recommend:

- Increase **financial support for the nonprofit sector** and particularly youth and non-formal education organisations to ensure (1) the ability to survive after the crisis and (2) the capacity to serve the new community needs in a post-pandemic reality;

- Support the youth sector and educational organisations in **providing counselling, skill development and re-skilling to affected young people;**

- Increase investment in developing **digital youth work** services offered by youth organisations;

- Increase **synergy between government, the youth sector** and the private sector in order to respond to the needs of young people in a sustainable way.

ABOUT THE BIG 6

Photo Courtesy @WorldScouting

Formed in 1996, the Big 6 Youth Organizations are an alliance of leading international youth-serving organizations. The 'Big 6' comprises the five largest youth movements in the world: The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), The World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), The World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and a leading programme for youth development, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (the Award). Together, the Big 6 actively involve in excess of 250 million young people, contributing to the empowerment of more than a billion young people during the last century.

ABOUT THE BIG 6

World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (World YMCA)

@WORLDYMCA

The YMCA is one of the oldest and largest youth-focused movements in the world. Founded in 1844, it now operates in 120 countries and reaches 65 million people. YMCA associations are strongly rooted in their communities and offer a variety of programmes and services based on local priorities and issues affecting young people and their communities, with a focus on inclusion for all. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, World YMCA supports the local and national associations to bring social justice and peace to young people and their families, regardless of age, gender, religion or socio-economic background.

World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA)

@WORLDYWCA

The World YWCA is a global movement that connects and mobilises the power of millions of women, young women, and girls from across regions, cultures, and beliefs to transform their lives and the world for the better. Our work is grounded in local communities and rooted in the transformational power of women, giving us a unique approach and the legitimacy to effect change and promote gender equality. We provide support and opportunities for women, young women, and girls to become leaders and change-makers who inspire and mobilise their peers. With a presence in more than a hundred countries, and over a century of experience fighting for women's rights alongside a network of allies, partners, and activists, we know that a collaborative, intergenerational approach that centres young women's leadership is vital to a progressive women's movement. The World YWCA movement works to realise the common Goal: By 2035, 100 million young women and girls will transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war; leading a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women.

World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM)

@WORLDSCOUTING

Scouting is one of the world's leading educational youth movements, engaging more than 50 million young people in over 224 countries and territories to be agents of positive change in tackling the most pressing social, environmental, and economic challenges facing our communities and planet. Scouting offers a unique non-formal educational experience that contributes to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potential as active global citizens.

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS)

@WAGGGSWORLD

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is the largest voluntary movement dedicated to girls and young women in the world. Our diverse movement represents 10 million girls and young women from 150 countries. For more than 100 years, Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting has transformed the lives of girls and young women worldwide, supporting and empowering them to achieve their fullest potential and become responsible citizens of the world. Our strengths lie in innovative, non-formal education programmes, leadership development, advocacy work and community action, empowering girls and young women to develop the skills and confidence needed to make positive changes in their lives, in their communities and countries.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) [1]

@IFRC

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organisation, reaching 150 million people in 192 National Societies through the work of over 13.7 million volunteers. It provides assistance before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people, without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinion. It tackles the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade and is committed to saving lives and changing minds.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (the Award)

@INTAWARD

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a global, non-formal education and learning framework. The Award is available to all 14- to 24-year-olds and equips young people with the skills they need for life regardless of their background, culture, physical ability and interests. Since its launch over 60 years ago, the Award has inspired millions of young people to transform their lives and find their purpose, passion and place in the world. By supporting mental health and long-term prospects; by giving them the tools to develop their resilience, adaptability, leadership and problem solving, the Award can help to equip young people to be ready for the world. Alongside quality formal and non-formal education, the Award can play a critical role in young people's development and help to build resilient communities.

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[3] Coronavirus recession threatens to worsen racial inequalities in youth unemployment, researchers warn (June 2020)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/news/nr/coronavirus-recession-threatens-worsen-racial-inequalities-youth-unemployment-black-lives-matter-1.890568

[4] Flexicurity (a portmanteau of flexibility and security) is a welfare state model with a pro-active labour market policy.The term refers to the combination of labour market flexibility in a dynamic economy and security for workers.

[5] Short-time working (German: Kurzarbeit) is a system of work-sharing unemployment insurance in which employees agree to or are forced to accept a reduction in working time and pay in order to avoid laying off any of their employees by instead reducing the working hours of all or most of their employees, with the government making up some of the employees' lost income.

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