



IMPROVING LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN

Unemployment, underemployment, and vulnerable employment have placed a massive strain on labour markets around the globe, especially in the case of youth. As many as 73.9 million young people, aged between 15 and 24 years, are unemployed throughout the world (see: *ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015*). Even among those who are economically active, many are in jobs with low earnings, high levels of insecurity and limited chances for advancement – and they lack social protection.

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FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:
International Initiative
for Impact Evaluation
(3ie)

Beneficiary countries:
Global

Timeframe:
2013 – 2015

Budget:
USD 81,133

THE RESPONSE

The ILO's Youth Employment Programme has carried out a global systematic review of youth employment interventions. The aim of the study is to provide policy-makers and practitioners with evidence-based recommendations on effective ways to support youth in the labour market. With financial support from the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), the review analyses the impact of skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment interventions.

It further examines the available evidence-based evaluation of youth employment programmes in a systematic and rigorous manner in order to fill knowledge gaps with respect to the relative effectiveness of youth-targeted measures in different contexts, and within various intervention types. This is the first systematic review of the impact of employment interventions on labour market outcomes of youth, which systematically identifies global evidence – on the basis of experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluations – of the main types of youth employment interventions. The review also examines the most relevant labour market outcomes along the causal chain, and synthesizes empirical evidence using a rigorous meta-analysis.

Evaluations of youth employment interventions were identified by means of a systematic search and selection process based on a variety of sources, including specialized databases, websites, dissertations and theses databases. Additional evaluations were conducted using reference lists and the tracking of citations in included studies. They also involved hand-searching key journals and contacting authors and experts.

Detailed information about the research design, interventions, characteristics of the subject samples, outcome variables, statistical findings, and contextual features were systematically extracted from the included studies, using a coding manual and coding tool with more than 180 variables. Additional information about inclusion criteria, search strategy, data extraction and review methodology is provided in the protocol to the systematic review. To ensure validity and dissemination of the findings across ILO constituents, employment practitioners, and academics, the study is registered with the Campbell Collaboration and backed by a policy influence plan.



RESULTS



More than 38,000 potential studies have been identified through a systematic search of sources, including databases, websites and study repositories, in English, Spanish, French, German and Portuguese. This comprehensive search aimed to ensure that published and unpublished studies relevant to the review question were included in the search process to minimize the possibility of publication bias and to capture empirical evidence for a large variety of different youth employment initiatives. The systematic screening process led to the identification of 113 studies of adequate content and methodological rigour to inform the review and statistical meta-analysis. These studies measure the impact of employment interventions on labour market outcomes for participants (compared to non-participants), based on a counterfactual analysis. Building on this information, the review analyses the relative effectiveness of different intervention types and key programme design features that have been in place since 1990.

The ILO carried out a meta-analysis, which estimates multivariate random effects models to analyse what triggers the success of youth employment programmes. Programme information – such as scale, target population, or the underlying incentive mechanisms – enable the study to draw lessons for policy design.

The 113 studies included in this review cover 105 youth employment interventions in 31 countries in the OECD, Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and South Asia. Some two-thirds of the evaluated interventions have a skills-training component. While more than one-third of those evaluated also include an employment service component, this is generally combined with other interventions – in most cases, skills training. Entrepreneurship promotion interventions that focus on youth are comparatively rare in the dataset – only 17 interventions have an entrepreneurship promotion component.

In view of the rapid rise of impact evaluations of youth-targeted labour market programmes, the review is one of the first to systematically synthesize the empirical evidence and to differentiate high-income countries and middle- or low-income countries in the main analysis. The review includes a large number of recently conducted experimental evaluations from developing countries, in particular from sub-Saharan Africa.

More information is available at: www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_327595/lang--en/index.htm



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BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The study answers fundamental questions regarding the context, programme type, design features and target groups of Active Labour Market Programmes for Youth, and provides sound evidence on the effectiveness of these programmes. It enriches cross-country overviews in research through its review and analysis of the impact of common youth employment interventions on labour market outcomes, and explores the factors contributing to results. It allows policy-makers and practitioners to find answers to the youth employment challenge and to learn about ideas on what works, as well as the evidence and reasons for these, so as to improve labour market outcomes for young people.