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Interventions to Improve Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: a Systematic Review of Training, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services, Mentoring, and Subsidised Employment Interventions

BACKGROUND

Problem

Policymakers and practitioners are seeking answers to the youth employment challenge; looking for ideas and evidence on what works, and why, to improve the labour market conditions of young people. Youth employment interventions such as entrepreneurship promotion, training and skills development, employment services, mentoring, and subsidised employment are considered common measures to improve youth labour market outcomes. Yet few overviews or cross-country studies review and analyse their impact on such outcomes or explore the factors behind their success among youth. Even though the number of studies contributing to rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMP) has increased over the past decade, many fundamental questions remain, particularly as regards to context, programme type, design features, and target groups.

- **The Role of Context:** Evidence of youth employment programmes is particularly scarce in the Middle East and North Africa, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, more evidence is needed regarding what interventions and design features are better suited for rural versus urban contexts, informal versus formal settings, and in post-conflict and fragile-states environments.

- **The Question of Programme Focus:** Most evaluations exist in the area of training and skills development, while evidence on other types of youth employment interventions such as subsidised employment, employment services, and entrepreneurship is relatively scarce. There is a significant knowledge gap on the effectiveness of combining different types of programmes, for example bundling up skills training, job search assistance, and mentoring.

- **The Efficacy of Various Design Features:** Little is known about the relative effectiveness of programme alternatives. There are several dimensions where policy choices can make a difference: design of the interventions; targeting mechanisms; length of exposure to the interventions; pedagogy; governance, management and administration; delivery channel (public, private, partnerships); delivery setting (in-classroom, on-the-job); and contracting, auditing, and payment systems to providers of services.

- **The Range of Beneficiaries:** More evidence is needed to understand how different types of programmes affect young people differently by age cohort, gender, level of education, and socioeconomic background.
**Relevance to policy and practice**

Addressing the youth employment challenge ranks high on the development agenda, with a view to improve the ability of governments – as well as civil society, private sector, and multilaterals – to diagnose and address the problems facing youth in accessing wage- or self-employment, using rigorous evidence. The current political and economic context makes even more imperative the need to provide evidence on what works and what doesn’t, why, and how to improve labour market outcomes of young men and women.

Policy makers are regularly asking for ideas on what to do to support youth in the labour market. Their requests come with an increased focus on evidence. During the 2012 International Labour Conference, governments and social partners recognised the need for more rigorous evaluation of youth employment interventions in order to review their effectiveness, and in particular asked the International Labour Office to strengthen the evidence base on youth entrepreneurship interventions.¹ The World Bank often receives similar requests for knowledge, technical and financial assistance from client countries.

Non-governmental organisations, donors, and employment practitioners in general are also looking intensively at how to successfully support youth. By synthesising the evidence on the relative effectiveness of different labour market interventions for youth, this systematic review will contribute to closing the knowledge gap in this field with a real impact on the nearly 75 million of young men and women that are currently looking for a job.

**OBJECTIVES**

The systematic review aims to investigate the impact of labour market interventions on labour market outcomes of young people. The review will be guided by the following questions:

1. What is the impact of youth employment interventions on labour market outcomes of youth? In particular, the review will look into skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, mentoring, and subsidised employment interventions.
2. How applicable is this evidence to countries in Africa? and
3. Which of these interventions are the most effective?

EXISTING REVIEWS

Existing reviews

**Betcherman et al. (2007)**: In 2007, the World Bank produced a review of labour market interventions for youth based on the information gathered by the Youth Employment Inventory (YEI, www.youth-employment-inventory.org), an online global repository of information on labour market programmes for youth. The review covered 289 studies, of which only one-fourth contained estimates of net impact and just one in ten had evidence on cost-effectiveness. Most evaluation evidence came from developed countries. A meta-analysis of the studies looked into factors that increase the probability of positive effects on employment or earnings of young people. The review, translated into French and Spanish, has served as the basis for technical assistance and policy advice worldwide and is still cited in the current debate about youth employment policies and programmes (see for example: Scottish Parliament, Finance Committee, September 2012; World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group – IEG-Report on Youth Employment Programmes, 2012; UK Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Research paper 101, February 2013). The study’s main limitations include an insufficient systematic search and risk of bias assessment of the literature, as well as no reflection on effect sizes. The quantitative analysis focused on the determinants of positive main labour market outcomes in the framework of a probability model.

**JPAL (2013)**: A 2013 review paper produced by the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab covered an array of youth interventions from education and health to labour market programmes. The paper discusses existing knowledge and gaps about policies focused on youth. It identifies unanswered questions and sets a research agenda that will be updated periodically. In the area of ALMPs for youth, the review looked into open questions around the effectiveness of employment services, training, subsidised employment, and public work programmes. There is very limited information about the search methodology behind the review but it’s clear that it builds on results from cross-country reviews and punctual, recent impact evaluations to identify and discuss knowledge gaps. The review does not contain a meta-analysis.

**IEG (2012)**: In 2012, the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group carried out a meta-review of evaluations of the World Bank Group’s youth employment projects. The review built on the YEI as well as on evidence from recent impact evaluations and focused mainly on the lessons for how to improve the Bank and IFC’s performance and delivery of projects in the youth employment field. There is limited information about the search process, no risk of bias assessment, or measure of effect sizes.

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* Link: http://www.povertyactionlab.org/doc/youth-initiative-review-paper
* Link: http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/ye_eval_0.pdf
Tripney et al. (2013): The Campbell Collaboration recently published a systematic review of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) interventions in low- and middle-income countries. The review summarised the available evidence on the effects of TVET interventions for young people in developing countries to inform policy, practice, and research. The review built on evidence from 26 studies of 20 TVET interventions with a rigorous search process, risk of bias assessment, and the statistical analysis of effect sizes. Tripney et al.’s review offers a slight overlap with the type of interventions and sample of studies that will be covered through this review; specifically as regards to ALMPs in the areas of vocational training, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship training in developing countries. In contrast to Tripney et al.’s, the review described in this title registration will include studies from any country, regardless of income level, and will disregard any training programme that is delivered in a formal education setting.

Reviews looking at ALMPs in general, not focused on youth: There are a series of cross-country studies that reviewed the impact of active labour market programmes with specific findings from youth employment programmes, including: Betcherman et al. (2004), Dar and Tzannatos (1999) and Card et al. (2010). The sample of programmes for youth is limited as well as the findings. Only Card et al. offer a relatively rigorous search and quantitative analysis and measures of effect sizes. Other studies with similar limitations include studies that looked at programmes implemented in OECD countries only, for example, Heckman et al. (1999), Kluve and Schmidt (2002), and Kluve (2006 and 2010).

Reviews of entrepreneurship interventions, not focused on youth: Cho and Honorati (2012) synthesised evidence from interventions aimed at promoting the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises in developing countries. While the review and corresponding meta-analysis does not focus on youth, it provides some insights on the effectiveness of the programmes when targeted at vulnerable populations such as youth and women. The review does not rely on a risk of bias assessment and the search strategy was limited to some central indexes, such as IDEAS and Google Scholar, and a snowball search.

Reviews looking at labour market regulations, not focusing on youth: A recent review by Nataraj et al. (2011) looks at the impact of regulations (such as minimum wages, firing rigidities, and various aggregate measures) on employment outcomes. The review does not look at programmes and while it discusses the inconclusive evidence of the impact of minimum wage policies on youth, it provides no insights on impact and effectiveness of interventions serving young people.

Ongoing reviews

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5 Link: http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/227/
6 Link: http://davidcard.berkeley.edu/papers/card-kluve-weber-EJ.pdf
7 Link: http://elibrary.worldbank.org/content/workingpaper/10.1596/1813-9450-6402
**Gonzalez et al. (2013)**: The review will explore the impact of business support services, both direct and indirect, for small and medium enterprises on firm performance in low- and middle-income countries. The review promises a rigorous search methodology as well as insights on the impact of such services in Africa, which will be of particular interest to this review. There is no mention of effect sizes assessment.

**Grimm and Paffhausen (2013)**: Similar to the above study, Grimm and Paffhausen propose to assess the direct or indirect effectiveness of interventions aiming at creating employment in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in low- and middle-income countries. It will identify both policies and programmes with credible causality of job creation and explore the context, environment, and circumstances that lead to such impact. The review will rely on a rigorous search strategy and will look into effect sizes on selected outcomes, namely, number of employees and/or its growth rate.

While both Gonzalez et al. and Grimm and Paffhausen will not focus on youth, there might be a number of youth entrepreneurship interventions and studies that will overlap with the proposed review.

The above-mentioned studies represent a wealth of information; however, they do not fill the knowledge gap on the impact and effectiveness of labour market interventions on youth at a global level in a systematic, rigorous manner.

### INTERVENTION

The review will search and examine studies from interventions classified under the following categories: training and skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, and subsidised employment. The training and skills development category comprises ALMPs outside the formal education system (and therefore does not consider Technical Vocational and Education programmes) that offer training to young people in order to improve their employability and transition into the labour market. Entrepreneurship promotion interventions aim at providing skills and capital (physical, financial, social) for self-employment. Employment services comprise interventions delivering job counselling, job search assistance, and/or mentoring which are often complemented with job placements and technical or financial assistance. Lastly, subsidised employment interventions look mostly at wage subsidies programmes or interventions aiming to reduce the labour cost for employers, as well as labour intensive programmes or public works which provide short term employment to youth as part of infrastructure or social development and community projects that are in some contexts delivered through public service or voluntary service programmes. The review will examine studies of interventions that are comprehensive and combine these interventions to any degree.

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*Link: http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/284/
*Link: http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/285*/
The review will not exclude studies based on the implementing agency or organisation that carried out the intervention, the date of implementation, status, duration, size, or funding mechanism. Accordingly, the review will cover youth ALMPs designed and sponsored by governments and donors, as well as those designed and implemented by the private sector and civil society organisations. As regards to length, youth employment programmes expose participants to services that vary from one day of training (such as INJAZ Egypt) to two years (such as the Wage Subsidy Programme in the Czech Republic). They will all be considered within the search process.

POPULATION

The population of focus in this systematic review are young people aged 15-35. It will not exclude young people based on place of residence, race/ethnicity, occupation, gender, religion, education, socioeconomic status, social capital, disability or sexual orientation. The review will select interventions implemented around the world that target only or mainly young people.

The review will be global in coverage, including interventions from all countries regardless of their level of development. In order to capture and account for contextual differences across countries, the analysis will stratify studies by level of development or income of the countries where the interventions took place.\(^\text{10}\)

OUTCOMES

The primary outcomes of interest for the review are:

1. Employment Outcomes
   a) Employment (empirical probability models)
   b) Unemployment (empirical probability models)
   c) Participation rate
   d) Hours worked
   e) Unemployment duration
   f) Quality of employment

2. Earnings Outcomes
   a) Earnings / Income
   b) Household income
   c) Consumption
   d) Salary and/or wage

\(^{10}\) Stratification will rely on the World Bank country clusters of income and development level.
3. **Business Performance**\(^{11}\)
   a) Profits  
   b) Sales  
   c) Number of employees and jobs created  
   d) Capital and investment  
   e) Business creation  
   f) Business survival

The systematic review will include studies that measure at least one of the above mentioned outcomes of interest. It will also analyse the effects on sub-groups of the population (by age, gender, level of education, disadvantaged/at risk/low-income youth, welfare recipients, location) for which the effect is estimated in selected studies. It will not include studies that focus only on intermediary outcomes and do not measure any of the above mentioned labour market outcomes. In addition, the review will only include outcomes of interest that measure the effect relative to non-participation in the programme.

The review will not consider net employment or general equilibrium effects as outcomes of interest. Nevertheless, the review will look at the quality of the evidence and showcase the very few studies of youth employment programmes that look into displacement or substitution in order to assess general equilibrium effects.

### STUDY DESIGNS

Eligible study designs include experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluations. This means prospective and retrospective evaluations that use a counterfactual analysis\(^{12}\). Based on the framework proposed by Duvendack et al (2011)\(^{13}\), the review will exclude high-risk of bias studies. The date of publication or reporting of eligible studies is 1990 or later. The form of publication includes (1) Peer-Reviewed Journal, (2) Working Paper, (3) Mimeo, (4) Book, (5) Policy / Position Paper, (6) Evaluation / Technical Report, and (7) Dissertation / Thesis. Eligible studies can be published in any language as long as they meet all other eligibility criteria. The search will be carried out in French, Spanish, English, German and Portuguese. The review will not exclude studies based on researcher’s allegiance (for example, institutional affiliation with funding, implementing or advocacy institutions).

Sample of studies that will be eligible for inclusion in the review:

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11 The reviews acknowledge there are a number of ongoing systematic reviews looking at business performance outcomes. Provided such reviews do not have a focus on youth, this review will consider them as primary outcomes of interest.

12 The review will include studies that count with a counterfactual analysis, that is, "a comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention". The counterfactual condition suggests a group of young people that resemble the program participants in all observable (and unobservable) ways, except for the fact that they do not receive/benefit from the program.

To answer the questions, what is the impact of youth employment interventions on labour market outcomes of youth, and, what interventions are the most effective, the review will look primarily into quantitative evidence. Qualitative evidence will be used when looking at the theory of change of each intervention type and when applicability of findings is assessed in the African context.
## Review Authors

### Lead Review Author

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Roles and Responsibilities

Content

Jochen Kluve (Lead PI) will lead the different analytical stages of the review, bringing in his substantive teaching and applied expertise on labour economics and findings from his research on and analyses of active labour market programmes. Prof. Kluve will be in charge of content-related discussions and coordinate the review’s data analysis and interpretation stages. He will in particular lead the meta-analytical work, providing substance on the underlying theory of change and the effect sizes on selected labour market outcomes. Prof. Kluve’s exposure to impact evaluation design and implementation ensure adequate understanding of concepts and easy abstraction of results from evaluative evidence. His country work experience and research in Africa are great assets to the study’s analysis on how applicable results are in the African context. A sample of his work includes the following two meta-analyses of ALMPs:

- http://www.nber.org/papers/w16173

Susana Puerto (co-PI) will provide extensive sector/thematic support to the review, examining the review parameters and the underlying logical model. She will also support the analysis of effects from the sample of studies, the interpretation of results, and the meta-
analysis work. She brings in her applied expertise in labour economics, youth employment, and evaluation as well as eight years of experience analysing youth employment programmes and providing advice to policymakers and practitioners on what works to improve labour market outcomes of youth. Over the last three years, Susana’s work has focused on youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa, leading and supporting numerous impact evaluation initiatives in the region and promoting evidence-base policymaking through capacity building for African policymakers and practitioners implementing youth employment initiatives. She now manages the Youth Employment Network, an inter-agency programme of the ILO, the World Bank, and the UN. Her experience with meta-studies is reflected in the following research papers:


David Robalino (co-PI) will support the team on the design and methodological part of the meta-analysis. He will be an integral part of the team for the analysis and the definition of policy implications of the reviewed programmes. As a Lead Economist and Leader of the Labour and Youth Team in the Human Development Anchor of the World Bank, and Co-Director of the Employment and Development programme at IZA – the Institute for the Study of the Labour – he can facilitate different platforms. He is also a co-founder of the Jobs-Knowledge Platform. Since joining the Bank, David has been working on issues related to youth, labour markets, and social insurance. He has worked in several countries in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. David has published broadly on issues related to labour markets, youth, and social insurance, and other related topics. Prior to joining the Bank, David was a researcher at the RAND Corporation where he was involved in research on health, population and labour, climate change, and the development of quantitative methods for policy analysis under conditions of uncertainty. David also served in the Presidential Committee for Social Security Reform in Ecuador. A sample of David’s publications can be found at:


Friederike Rother (co-PI) will support the interpretation of results as well as content-related work and discussions on interventions and labour market outcomes. She brings in her applied knowledge and expertise on labour economics and youth employment programmes’ design and implementation. Through her experience at the World Bank’s Social Protection and Labour Markets anchor, Friederike provides technical support on issues related to labour markets, job creation, economic growth, and youth employment. Prior to joining the World Bank, Friederike served as a policy maker at the German Employers’ Association. She also worked for the German Development Corporation GIZ. Her research work, particularly linked to young people, includes:
Systematic review methods

The four PIs will lead the problem formulation process, opening up the question and clarifying scope, concepts/terms, parameters, and variables of interest. The team will subsequently outline the review’s protocol and set adequate criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies. Jochen Kluve will provide his expertise on reviews and preparatory work for meta-analyses of active labour market programmes. In addition, it is worth noting that both Jochen Kluve and Susana Puerto have been invited to review systematic review applications in previous 3ie calls, which provides further familiarity with the standards of the grant organisation and the structure and features of the review methods.

Susana Puerto and Friederike Rother are responsible for protocol writing as well as data collection and evaluation ensuring recording of methodological details. Both team members participated and co-authored the assembly of the Youth Employment Inventory (YEI, www.youth-employment-inventory.org) between 2005 and 2007, which constructed a rigorous review methodology and coding protocol to ensure relevance and efficiency in the data collection and evaluation process (http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org/downloads/1.pdf). In 2007, the YEI compiled 289 studies of labour market programmes for youth. Today, the YEI has reached over 700 studies from various designs and level of rigor.

Statistical analysis

Jochen Kluve will take the lead of the statistical work, designing the econometrical model for the meta-analysis and its underlying logical model. If data allows, he will compare meta-analytic models for programme effect size. He will be supported by Susana Puerto and Jonathan Stoeterau in the statistical analysis and corresponding data cleaning and crunching. Jochen, Susana, and David Robalino will add their expertise in the design and implementation of impact evaluations of labour market programmes and in the design of meta-analyses of labour market interventions. Jonathan Stoeterau, on the other hand, will provide statistical support with the econometrical models and relevant tests for the meta-analysis and the determination of programme effect size.

Information retrieval

Friederike Rother and Susana Puerto will be responsible for the data collection and evaluation stages of the review and in relation to information retrieval, they will supervise the work of the research assistants in the literature search and information gathering from the studies. They will conduct team exercises to ensure all research assistants are working
with the same criteria. As indicated above, Friederike and Susana have direct experience with information retrieval after building the YEI dataset in 2005-2007. Today, they continue cleaning and maintaining the inventory, demonstrating strong co-ownership and leadership in the collection of information and its evaluation.

Jonathan Stoeterau, Felix Weidenkaff, and Marc Witte will conduct a literature search of impact evaluation studies not yet incorporated into the YEI and examine in detail the studies of programmes already recorded in the YEI, looking closely at the variables of interest for this review. They will also look at past reviews and meta-studies of youth labour market interventions. Jonathan has previously worked as an external evaluation consultant for the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), where he analysed individual-level employment effects of GIZ-supported educational reforms in Ethiopia by applying impact evaluation methods to a survey of university graduates. Specialising in applied econometrics through his graduate studies, he can build on strong methodological skills to assess the empirical foundation of impact evaluation studies. As an assistant on several research projects, he gained proficiency in managing large datasets and implementing econometric approaches in Stata. Felix Weidenkaff will provide his expertise in literature review and information retrieval directly related to the improvement and expansion of the YEI. He developed a spin off exercise of the YEI in Kenya and Egypt aimed at sizable country-level inventories of youth employment interventions that will allow further research on trends and investment in youth. He has contributed to analytical papers and literature reviews of women and youth entrepreneurship interventions. Marc Witte is a doctoral candidate in economics at the University of Oxford. His research is on labour markets in developing countries, with a special focus on technical training and youth employment in the informal sector. Having previously worked for the GIZ in Rwanda, the Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI) and the Ecologic Institute (Berlin), he does not only possess the necessary econometrical skills to contribute to the review, but also relevant policy-shaping and on-field experiences. The entire review team brings knowledge of five different languages, including English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German, ensuring necessary skills to retrieve and interpret key information from the sample of studies.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Selected work in progress and publications

Kluve, J. "Temporary work as an active labor market policy: Evaluating an innovative program for disadvantaged youths" [with C. Ehlert and S. Schaffner]

Puerto, S. “Building Better Entrepreneurs: Evaluating hard vs. soft skills for youth” [with P. Gertler, N. Fiala, S. Paruzzolo, and D. Carney]

**Publications**


Puerto, S. 2007. Interventions to Support Young Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean. World Bank (mimeo)


Puerto, S, and F. Rother. 2007. Interventions to Support Young Workers in OECD countries. World Bank (mimeo)

Rother, F. 2007. Interventions to Support Young Workers in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank (mimeo)


The review’s PIs have co- and authored reviews of active labour market programmes that have allowed for statistical rigor, contributing a series of meta-analyses to the labour
economics literature and more precisely applicable lessons on what works to improve labour market outcomes of youth. There has not been direct involvement with Campbell, Cochrane, EPPI-Centre, Collaboration for Environmental Evidence, Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, or the Joanna Briggs Institute.

**SUPPORT**

The systematic review team may need support from a librarian/information retrieval specialist to design and carry out the systematic search process.

**FUNDING**

*External funding:*

The systematic review is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) under 3ie’s Systematic Review Call 5.

*Internal funding:*

- Youth Employment Network
- World Bank

**PRELIMINARY TIMEFRAME**

Note, if the protocol or review are not submitted within 6 months and 18 months of title registration, respectively, the review area is opened up for other authors.

- Date you plan to submit a draft protocol: Mid September 2013
- Date you plan to submit a draft review: Mid March 2014
DECLARATION

Authors’ responsibilities

By completing this form, you accept responsibility for preparing, maintaining and updating the review in accordance with Campbell Collaboration policy. The Campbell International Development Group will provide as much support as possible to assist with the preparation of the review.

A draft protocol must be submitted to the Group within six months. If drafts are not submitted before the agreed deadlines, or if we are unable to contact you for an extended period, the Group has the right to de-register the title or transfer the title to alternative authors. The Group also has the right to de-register or transfer the title if it does not meet the standards of the Group and/or the Campbell Collaboration.

You accept responsibility for maintaining the review in light of new evidence, comments and criticisms, and other developments, and updating the review at least once every three years, or, if requested, transferring responsibility for maintaining the review to others as agreed with the Group.

Publication in the Campbell Library

The support of the International Development Group in preparing your review is conditional upon your agreement to publish the protocol, finished review and subsequent updates in the Campbell Library. Concurrent publication in other journals is encouraged. However, a Campbell systematic review should be published either before, or at the same time as, its publication in other journals. Authors should not publish Campbell reviews in journals before they are ready for publication in CL. Authors should remember to include the statement: "This is a version of a Campbell review, which is available in The Campbell Library".

I understand the commitment required to undertake a Campbell review, and agree to publish in the Campbell Library. Signed on behalf of the authors:

Date: 07.09.2013

Form completed by:
Susana Puerto Gonzalez