



The Youth Employment Network



Final Report

3rd YEN Lead Country meeting:

Establishing Benchmarks
for successful Youth
Employment Policies/
Programmes

Geneva, Switzerland
June 10, 2008

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Government:

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Contents

1. Background	3
2. Summary	3
3. Proceedings	4
4. Group Work: Benchmarking, Indicators and Processes:	8
5. Follow-up	9
Annex 1: Participant List	11
Annex 2: Evaluation by Participants	13



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1. Background

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) is an inter agency partnership which unites the UN, the ILO and the World Bank, pooling their experience and knowledge to find solutions to the global youth employment challenge.

In the past three years the YEN has focused on supporting lead countries in developing National Action Plans on Youth Employment (NAPs) - a vehicle to prioritize and operationalise youth employment. As countries embark on the implementation of their NAPs, policies and programmes, there have been a number of requests for guidance on establishing targets and means of measuring progress toward reaching these. The third meeting of Lead Countries was designed to initiate a discussion on benchmarking NAPs in order to monitor performance and identify some specific indicators that provide countries with targets to aim for.



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2. Summary

The meeting, which took place on June 10th, 2008, in Geneva, was organized by the YEN Secretariat with financial support from the UK Government. A background paper was prepared by the Secretariat to inform participants of some of the key issues in the area of monitoring and evaluation of youth employment initiatives. [Link to note](#)

The objectives of the one-day event were:

- To present examples of indicators used in measuring and judging the quality of NAPs,
- To initiate a benchmarking discussion among YEN Lead Countries, identifying the challenges and solutions,
- To define follow-up needed and possible inputs of YEN.

The meeting drew on the NAP development of a selected number of YEN Lead Countries. Representatives of the Ministries of Labour and technicians playing a key role in designing and implementing NAPs participated in this event. In addition, employment and evaluation specialists from YEN core partners – World Bank and International Labour Office provided key information to facilitate the discussions. (See Annex 1 for full list of participants)

The event allowed participants to exchange information on appropriate indicators for monitoring outputs, outcomes and impact; benchmarks for comparing performance and setting targets; and follow up needed in order to establish a regular peer review process.

3. Proceedings

3.1 Opening

Ms **Liz Tillett**, Head of the International Employment and Social Policy Division, Department for Work and Pensions (UK) welcomed the participants on behalf of **James Plaskitt**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. The opening address acknowledged that benchmarking, monitoring and measurement are crucial management tools in the deployment of youth employment policies.

It was highlighted that all Lead Countries, whether industrialised or in the process of industrialisation, have something to gain and something to learn about issues facing young people - issues that governments everywhere find difficult to address. But, by working together, sharing ideas, comparing successes and learning from each other, developing efficient methods to combat this difficult problem will be greatly enhanced. In this regard, the YEN has consistently brought youth employment to the attention of influential international fora and in doing so taken the issue to the top of the international agenda.

Mr. Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director of the Employment Sector, ILO and Steering Committee Member YEN, emphasised the need to initiate a debate on benchmarking as a tool for monitoring performance, sharing good practice examples, and identifying specific indicators. He reminded participants of the importance of establishing benchmarks for successful youth employment policies and programmes as well as determining the technical support required from the ILO, World Bank, the UN and the YEN Secretariat.

3.2. Panel 1: Benchmarking Youth Employment Policies and programmes: What are Countries Doing?

Benchmarking Youth Employment Policies

Mr. Andrew Thomas, team leader in Jobseekers Division in the Department for Work and Pensions (UK), presented a brief overview of youth unemployment in the UK between 1997, when it became a key government priority, and the present.

Drawing on the New Deal for Young People Programme (NDYP) and Flexible New Deal (FND), Andrew discussed how targets had been determined and benchmarks decided. Indicators of success included: more youth finding sustained employment; more in work and fewer claiming unemployment benefits; decrease in the number of young people moving between work and benefits; and a higher youth employment rate. Benchmarks had been established for each indicator. For example, in 1997 the government set the challenging target of helping 250,000 of the 400,000 unemployed youth into work. Monitoring and evaluation to determine whether performance benchmarks were reached, the



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impact of FND on youth unemployment and cost effectiveness are ongoing.

[Click here for Presentation](#)

Monitoring and Evaluating National Action Plans on Youth Employment (NAPs)

Dr Komara Djaja, Secretary of the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (Indonesia) provided an overview of the Indonesia Youth Employment Action Plan (IYEAP) 2004-2007, including the youth employment challenges, objectives and policy recommendations. An evaluation methodology was developed to assess the interventions, which included: a desk review, interviews with stakeholders, site visits and workshops. As a result, various successes and challenges were identified, which the Indonesia Youth Employment Network (IYEN) is addressing as they strengthen their capacity to revise and implement the IYEAP.

It was recognised that setting clear employment targets and incorporating them into medium term development plans and strategies would enable policy makers to measure progress made in creating sufficient number of quality jobs for youth. It was suggested that such targets may be measured using the following indicators:

- a reduction in the share of untapped youth (those who are neither in education nor in the labour force);
- a reduction in the share of underutilized youth (those who are unemployed or underemployed);
- an increase in the share of youth working in the formal sector; and
- an increase in the share of young women working in the formal sector.

[Click here for Presentation](#)

Measuring the Success of NAPs

Mme Venetia Sebudandi, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Geneva and **Mr Emmanuel Bigenimana**, Youth Employment Promotion Program, Ministry of Public Service and Labour (Rwanda) highlighted numerous indicators to measure the outcomes of their NAP ranging from: the rate of youth integrated into remunerating jobs in both rural and urban areas to the number of youth living below the poverty line; the rate of rural-urban exodus and delinquency to the existence of legal environment conducive to establishing business.

The presentation looked at specific output/outcome indicators for youth employment programs including: the existence of at least one office in charge of employment creation in each District; existence of a Youth Employment Fund; the number of Youth Training Centers established every year; the number of Youth trained and integrated in each profession each year; the number of enterprises created



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in each District; and the number of young graduates trained through apprenticeships.

Useful suggestions were made on establishing a benchmarking process among YEN Lead Countries at the national, regional and the Network level:

- a. National level: existing inter sectoral/inter ministerial national institutions could assume responsibility for following up and implementing the NAP. The reporting format would be established by YEN Secretariat.
- b. Regional level: establish the regional institutions to follow up on implementation and report back to the responsible national coordinator.
- c. Network level: all Lead Countries should complete the report and submit it to the YEN Secretariat, which would prepare an annual progress report for discussion by Lead Countries.

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Discussion

Several participants drew on programmes or policies in their own countries to demonstrate the range of issues to be addressed and the methods proposed to do so. Concerns were raised about the costs of programmes such as the New Deal (UK) and the need for cost-benefit analysis on major programmes such as this. Discussion included the issue of defining the age bracket for “youth”, whereby in countries such as Rwanda those up to the age of 35 were defined as youth, reflecting the impact of genocide on the country demographics. It was pointed out that, for statistical purposes, the UN system uses the age bracket of 15-24 and countries were encouraged to do the same for comparative purposes.

3.3. Panel 2. What should Benchmarking on Youth Employment look like?

Overview

Laura Brewer, Senior Policy Specialist, YEN Secretariat, commented on the role of the Secretariat in bridging the requests from the Lead Countries with the technical expertise needed. The issue of monitoring and evaluation of youth employment initiatives was a clear example of this. Indeed the World Bank’s Youth Employment Inventory (YEI), based on available documentation of 289 studies of interventions from 84 countries in all regions of the world, concluded that only one in 10 programs had an evaluation which measures both net impact and cost, demonstrating the dire need to address this issue. There has been an increasing demand for information, tools and methods to use in following up on NAP implementation. Such tools and methods are being produced by YEN core agency partners – ILO and World Bank. The Secretariat organised this meeting to bridge these key stakeholders.

The Role of Labour Market Indicators in Measuring Youth Employment

Dorothea Schmidt, Labour Economist, Employment Trends, International Labour Office, elaborated a selection of labour market indicators to measure youth employment outcomes and impact - on both demand and supply side. While supply side indicators are less available than demand side indicators, it is important to capture both. She emphasised that quantitative and qualitative methods are needed to assess the number and characteristics of jobs.

The participants were advised that an analysis of labour market indicators alone cannot tell you whether a positive value (for example, a decrease in youth unemployment rate) is due to policies or to other externalities. But often these are the only available indicators and aggregate data does give countries the trend data needed to monitor youth employment at the national level. The indicators chosen should be easy to understand and readily available. In almost every country Labour Force Surveys are conducted, so the data is available but capacity to analyse and interpret it is weak or lacking.

[Click here for Presentation](#)

Tools and Methods to Measure the Impact of Youth Employment Initiatives

Mathias Lundberg, Senior Economist, Human Development Network, World Bank, focussed on how to determine the effect of a specific program on specific outcomes. He noted that a clear goal, a diagnosis of the problem, and a solid theory of change is needed before the program begins in order to address the fundamental evaluation problems: determining whether the outcome is really due to the intervention (attribution); what you are comparing the outcome to (counterfactual); and is the outcome due to the intervention only.

It was emphasized that all methodological discussions of impact evaluation are fundamentally about how to define a plausible counterfactual; rigorous impact evaluation can be expensive (but doing the wrong thing is even more expensive) and not all interventions can (or should) be evaluated (have a package of projects, some amenable to evaluation).

[Click here for Presentation](#)

Discussion

Participants had numerous questions about the many LMI presented, their availability in their respective countries, and what each of the indicators was really telling us about youth employment. In addition, concerns were raised about the evaluation techniques available, from both an efficiency and costs perspective. These concerns were addressed in the afternoon workshops.





4. Group Work: Benchmarking, Indicators and Processes:

The participants were randomly divided into two working groups – one to look in more detail at labour market indicators, the other at monitoring and evaluation of youth employment projects. The aims of the groups were to elaborate on the morning presentations in the national context, identifying the challenges and ways of overcoming them; and to establish a regular benchmarking and peer review process in YEN Lead Countries on some of the indicators discussed.

4.1 Group A. National Labour Market Indicators Level

Group participants shared the youth employment challenges with regard to data collection and analysis in their respective countries. Common challenges were identified, namely:

- Capacity, costs and political constraints in obtaining, analysing and interpreting data;
- Interpretations in the national context, including definitions of terms such as formal/informal economy; and
- Political commitment.

In order to overcome the challenges identified, the group made concrete suggestions:

- Capacity building workshops to address data analysis and interpretation;
- Awareness raising, sensitising and dialogue;
- Establishing standard interpretation;
- Ensuring the youth employment indicators are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) for applicable countries.

This group was guided by a handout [<click here for handout>](#) that provided useful information on the source, advantages and disadvantages of the labour market indicators presented in Panel 2. These were elaborated by Dorothea Schmidt in relation to the issues highlighted by this working group. The group concluded by identifying four youth employment indicators that Lead Countries could realistically report on annually and would allow countries to establish benchmarks and compare across countries:

1. Youth unemployment rate (quantitative, demand side);
2. Youth employment to population ratio(quantitative, demand side);
3. Vulnerability employment rate(qualitative/quantitative, demand side); and
4. Educational attainment (qualitative, supply side).

See handout for definition and source of these indicators.

4.2 Group B. Programme/Project Level

While working group A discussed how to measure youth employment

performance at the national level, group B exchanged views on indicators as well as processes needed for monitoring the performance of youth employment projects.

To start with, Turkey and Senegal were selected to discuss possible indicators of success for youth employment projects and programs. These programs typically included apprenticeship programs, internships combined with wage subsidies, and advisory services as well as business incubators for young start-ups. A brief discussion on each program showed that they tend to focus on output reporting only (e.g. number of participants), but do not cover outcomes and impact.

It was then decided to select one program type as a case study and to come up with possible outcome and impact indicators as well as the challenges involved. The internship program in Senegal was chosen as the case study and participants tried to elaborate the minimum standards for monitoring and evaluation. Indicators should include:

- the number of jobs created compared to the number of internships provided (to be measured 6 and 24 months after the end of the internships),
- the increase in earnings of interns who benefited from this program.

Major challenges in monitoring outcomes and impact are:

- Difficulty to track youth twenty-four months after the end of their internships.
- Lack of willingness of interviewees to report on earnings and the confidentiality of alternative data sources.

An innovative way of getting the data might be to rely on other sources like household surveys and tax data or to pay candidates for reporting on their activities over time.

5. Follow-up

YEN Secretariat:

- Prepare a reporting template on NAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation for Lead Countries.
- Organise regional training/coaching for Lead Countries on using the reporting template.
- Prepare an annual NAP progress report for discussion by Lead Countries.
- Organise capacity building workshops on gathering, analyzing and interpreting labour market data.
- Facilitate a meeting of experts on monitoring and evaluation.



Annex 1: Participant List

Country/ Agency	Name	Position	Organization	Email
Egypt	Ms. Mervat WAHBY	Head, Central Department of Foreign Relations	Ministry of Manpower	Mervat2010@hotmail.com
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Annex 2: Evaluation by Participants

Positive comments	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased understanding of different indicators - making contacts/networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one day meeting is not enough to overcome all the difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - got international data comparison - got the experience of how countries like the UK reduce their unemployment rate - got youth employment indicators and measurements at the global level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - share more experience from developing countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commitment of some participants - good choice of contributions - sharing country experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - invite also people of the bureaus of statistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - country level youth employment information - enthusiasm for the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have less participants and go for the committed people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - open-minded, thoughtful participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perhaps a tighter structure, i.e. specific tasks such as "design a youth program from concept to evaluation"; might require a second day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lessons learned - best practices - to learn challenges to face - to learn challenges to overcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - get out of ILO and ILC (too much fluctuation) - more time for Q and A - more discipline on time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learned about benchmarking, indicators, evaluation, sources of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more concrete models for different level countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learned from each others experiences/team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agree that an off-ILO site and a concentrated effort will move some to focus on both 1. technical aspect and 2. cross country experiences would be more useful and productive than today's event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excellent presentations, really very informative - good insight into the sophistication of measures being taken by different states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broader coverage: not only monitoring and evaluation but also what action plans may include, more benchmarks examples - two day trip to a small rural hotel

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it was possible to actually find four useful indicators in such a short time: excellent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more time on evaluation process - handout for every participant about methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good food for thought - good presentations - huge demand for topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve group work: clearer questions to guide discussions - more time for questions (especially for the first panel)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excellent presentation by Dorothea: participants would have benefited for a couple of hours just with her for questions and answers - better understanding of what ILO is doing on youth and YEN specifically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - translation - knowledge sharing broke down a bit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thank you very much for organizing this meeting - it was good to share experiences - YEN should obtain the mechanism of mobilizing resources for implementation of NAPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more time for group work - more group work - get commitment to do some "homework" from participants - give countries more time to talk about their experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - much improved understanding of ILO indicators on youth employment and their limits as to what we can read out of those numbers - good examples of some countries' practices on youth employment: UK presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenters etc need to coordinate in advance in the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to different presentations and learn best practices and shortcomings in the benchmarking of NAPs - very impressed by the panellists: a real eye opener - it was a pity that Namibia could not attend the first two meetings of the YEN Lead countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time was too short for the panel and questions and clarifications were limited - lunch was not that tasty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring and evaluation is very important - Mattias' approach should be developed for youth employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - translation for those who need it - try to build a stronger community of all of us working on the same issues; how to keep thinking on the issues raised today



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