



The Youth Employment Network



Workshop Report

Measuring Results in Youth Employment

Experience from training
interventions

Amman, Jordan
January 20, 2009

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(NB: Links are labelled in red)



1) Introduction

In response to the urgent need of finding employment for a large number of youth, developing countries as well as public and private donors are investing considerable amounts of resources in youth employment programs. Nevertheless, too little is known about what works. Only rigorous monitoring and evaluation will provide the knowledge base required by policy makers and development practitioners to allow them to assess the effectiveness of programs and to make the right choices in program design and delivery.



On January 20th, 2009, YEN convened a workshop entitled “Measuring Results in Youth Employment: Experience from training interventions” in Amman, Jordan. The workshop brought together youth employment practitioners from the MENA region with specialists from YEN’s core agency partners (ILO, World Bank and UN). The objectives of the workshop were:

- a) To present concrete examples of training programs and their underlying logic models and impact indicators in youth training projects
- b) To initiate work on standard logic models, indicators and evaluation methods
- c) To gather input from participants for future events of the YEN Results Measurement series

2) Agenda

8:30 – 8:45	Introduction: Moderator <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Markus Pilgrim, <i>Manager</i>, Youth Employment Network
8:45 – 9:10	Case study 1: How does IYF’s employability program ENTRA 21 measure results? <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Susan Pezzullo, <i>Learning Director</i>, IYF
9:10 – 9:30	Case Study 2: How does Syria’s SHABAB program measure results? <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Yamama Al-Oraibi, <i>Project Manager</i>, SHABAB➤ Nader Kabbani, <i>Director of Research</i>, Syrian Trust for Development
9:30 – 10:10	Fishbowl session: Challenging the 2 case studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Mattias Lundberg - <i>Senior Economist</i>, World Bank’s Children and Youth Unit➤ Howard White – <i>Executive Director</i>, International Initiative for Impact Evaluations➤ Yamama Al-Oraibi, <i>Project Manager</i>, SHABAB➤ Susan Pezzullo, <i>Learning Director</i>, IYF
10:10 – 10:40	Coffee break

11:20 – 11:50	<p>Panel Discussion on: “Building on the Case Studies: How should the results measurement framework of youth training programs look like?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mattias Lundberg - <i>Senior Economist</i>, World Bank’s Children and Youth Unit, ➤ Howard White – <i>Executive Director</i>, 3ie - International Initiative for Impact Evaluations ➤ Alexandre Kolev - <i>Chief</i>, Employment and Skills Development Programme, International Training Centre of the ILO ➤ Myriam Swift, <i>M&E Advisor</i>, IYF
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:20	<p>Metaplan Brainstorming Session: “What are the concrete inputs you would expect from YEN facilitating your work on results measurement?”</p>

3) Presentation: How does IYF’s employability program ENTRA 21 measure results? [\[view PPT\]](#)

Intro

Entra 21 is a regional programme which began in 2001 in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its goal is to improve access to the formal labour market for low income, disadvantaged youth through employability and IT training coupled with job counselling and internship placements. Training delivery is outsourced to local providers. In the first 6 year phase, the Program had reached 19,649 youth in 18 countries, through 35 programs, for a total investment of \$USD 29 million. A second, 4 year phase began in 2007.

M&E design

Entra 21 places great importance on increasing knowledge about “what works” in the area of youth training and to this end ensures each project develops a plan for monitoring and evaluating. A standardized design ([see a typical Entra 21 project logic model](#)) for collecting programming results is used for each implementing organizations. The design focuses on collecting key data on output and impact but remains flexible to alternative approaches if impact evaluation is not possible.



Susan Pezullo

During the Phase I of entra 21, projects were evaluated by an independent consultant by comparing pre (baseline) and post test data collected from a representative sample of programme participants. In collecting the data, the sample groups partake in surveys combined with focus groups and interviews. Employers are also surveyed and interviewed. The post test data is collected 6 months after graduation.



Phase II of the Program includes experimental evaluations designs (i.e. Measuring impact by comparing data between a project (test) group and a control (comparison) group). Selection bias is avoided by attempting to randomise eligible youth and if that is not possible, quasi-experimental methods are used. In Colombia, for example, the eligible youth who did not complete the matriculation process were placed in a control group. Several other evaluations are underway which will involve control groups and in most cases randomisation is not possible due to an insufficient number of eligible youth. Several more evaluations will begin in this year and the hope is that for projects working at larger scale (1000's versus 100's of participants), randomisation will be possible.

Entra 21 allows its project managers flexibility in designing alternative M&E approaches when experimental designs are not feasible. IYF recognizes that it takes time to develop the capacity of project managers to handle more robust experimental designs.

M&E results

Based on evaluation data collected from 28 projects six to nine months after youth exited the projects, the Program achieved an average employment (job placement) rate of 54%, with a high of 82% in Brazil and low of 14% in the Dominican Republic. The majority of youth looking for work cited a lack of contacts and experience as the major impediments.

Rewards of M&E

- Entra 21's concentration on creating an evidence base has allowed it to make relevant and timely changes in improving programme delivery. This has included the adjustment of course curriculum in response to changes in labour market demand and the addition of a services to provide for a more rounded menu of support to the young beneficiaries.
- Collecting data on standard indicators across all Entra 21 projects and countries means data can be aggregated and evaluated throughout the entire programme leading to a larger sample and more solid evidence base of "what works".

Challenges of M&E

- A main challenge has been using the standardized evaluation design versus adapting the design based on unique features of projects and country contexts.
- Evaluation is expensive especially when using a control group which will double the costs versus a non experimental technique.
- Difficult to convince project managers of the importance of random selection which creates a problem of selection bias. Project managers often select beneficiaries who are most likely to succeed.

4) Presentation: How does Syria's SHABAB program measure results? [see PPT]

Intro

SHABAB is a Syrian NGO established in 2005 under the umbrella of the Syrian Trust for Development. The programme targets youth aged 15-24 in their



final years of secondary education or studying in post secondary institutions. SHABAB has 4 main objectives:

- a) Developing Key Skills: problem solving, taking responsibility, understanding the needs of others
- b) Creating Awareness of Business: awareness of the benefits of private sector work and or starting a business.
- c) Improving Employability: helping young people prepare for and look for work.
- d) Developing Entrepreneurial Skills and Support: identifying and nurturing young entrepreneurs.

The flagship product of SHABAB is ILO's Know About Business (KAB) curriculum, an A-Z guide on how to start a business. To date, SHABAB is delivering KAB training in 158 schools in 7 governates and has reached 31,065 beneficiaries.

M&E design

SHABAB recently completed a first phase evaluation of the KAB project. The evaluation concentrated on measuring perceptions of business (found on the outcome level of the KAB logical framework) amongst Syrian youth.

Self-administered pre and post training questionnaires were administered in 15 schools with 224 respondents. Based on responses to the questionnaire, four indices were constructed:

1. Participants' impressions about the role of small business.
2. Participants' attitudes towards entrepreneurship.
3. Participants' perception about difficulties and obstacles they might face while establishing their own business.
4. Participants' self-assessed knowledge about business (highest impact: 14%).



Nader Kabbani and Howard White

M&E Results

The programme proved to have a small overall effect on business perceptions among youth. The first three indices measured 3-4% higher in post administered results than pre results. One exception was the indice of participants' self-assessed knowledge about business, which increased 14%.

SHABAB acknowledged the lack of a control group is a restraint to attributing programme effects to the KAB intervention. A second phase evaluation that began in 2007 is using an experimental design with a control group and larger sample sizes. The focus of the evaluation is on tracking employment outcomes (status, sector, wage, etc) 2 years after programme completion.

Rewards of M&E:

- Persuasion tool with government
- Assists in appropriate allocation of resources
- Helps clarify priorities

- Modify programme according to findings
- Opportunity to be leader in the region
- Sense of fulfilment from witness results of efforts



Challenges of M&E:

- Attitude changes do not necessarily imply changes in behavior.
- It is essential to identify good proxies for entrepreneurship in the short run as well as track program impact in the long run.
- Effective M&E must be balanced against reasonable costs, for example quality issues in using self-administered questionnaires.
- Importance of a quasi-experimental design, even when selection is not entirely random. Selection criteria should be made clear.
- Dearth of outcome benchmarks and information about instruments for other countries / programs.
- No ability to track social impact. There are plans for an eventual national longitudinal survey of youth.

5) Fishbowl session - Challenging the 2 case studies

Following the presentations of the case studies, a group of M&E specialist convened a discussion circle in the middle of the workshop room. Two chairs in the discussion circle were left open for participants to join the inner discussion. The objective of this session was to provide feedback and analysis to the 2 presented evaluation frameworks. The discussions were moderated by Markus Pilgrim (YEN) who provided discussion topics to guide the proceedings.

General impressions on the programmes

As referred to in the [World Bank's World Development Report 2007](#), the Entra 21 project was seen as "promising but unproven". The programme has shown widespread results in youth job placement (40% across programme) though few results have been tested versus comparison groups.



Fishbowl Session

The SHABAB programme was complimented for its rigorous and carefully designed evaluation model. Participants recommended that SHABAB should develop its programme to provide for more complimentary employment services including access to finance and job search assistance.

General impressions on evaluations models

Both the SHABAB and Entra 21 approach to project evaluation show much potential though work still needed to be done to refine methodology. The SHABAB evaluation is innovative as it attributes the psychosocial development of youth to training programmes as well evaluating general perceptions of youth regarding business. Workshop participants commented that evaluating young people's perceptions on hope for the future can be a valuable indicator.



Logic Model

The logic models from the 2 projects were clear, providing a good causal chain between outputs, outcome and impacts. A suggestion was made to use a logic model in a flowchart style ([see example](#)) which clarifies the interrelationship between project components.

It was cautioned for the projects to avoid indicator proliferation. Projects should attempt to have a minimum of well defined indicators with solid monitoring plans in place.

Evaluation methodology

Youth employment interventions should make every attempt to randomize the selection of programme participants thereby eliminating selection bias. If this is not possible, then other quasi-experimental approaches such as modelling the selection process based on observable characteristics across the treatment and control group should be used.



Mattias Lundberg

Both SHABAB and Entra 21 chose non-experimental designs using pre test and post test project group comparisons. This design can provide an estimate of project impacts but is better used in isolated environments where there is no interference from other outside interventions. It was debated whether projects should strive towards “gold standard” evaluations where randomized control trials are used. Project managers argued that the gold standard is rarely feasible and that less rigorous approaches should also be accepted as evidence of impact. It was cautioned that the term “impact assessment” should only be used in evaluations which assess the net effect of a program by comparing program outcomes with an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of a program.

Both projects should consider using a vignette approach when designing survey questions. Vignettes are brief descriptions of hypothetical people or situations that survey researchers can use to correct otherwise incomparable survey responses. The vignette approach helps to eliminate interpersonal variation when using comparison surveys (e.g. scales of 1-10). For more information visit [The Anchoring Vignettes Website](#).

Cost

There is no rule specifying how much projects should be spending on evaluation. If a true experimental design is used (with baseline data, control group, and randomization) it can cost from \$500,000 to \$1 million. In general projects should try to spend 1-10% of total costs on evaluation.

6) Panel session - “Building on the Case Studies: How should the results measurement framework of youth training programs look like?”

Evidence of impact from youth training programmes

According to the World Bank’s [Youth Employment Inventory](#), there is little

evidence that youth training programmes are working. Of the 289 programmes analysed, only 14 programmes evaluated outcomes while 11 evaluated impact. Though it is unclear what is working, it seems we are learning and the evidence is growing.

Evaluation terminology

More important than using the correct terminology is getting the process right: mapping out channels through which the project inputs are expected to achieve the intended outcomes. This will help us identify missing or weak links in the causal chain.

OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) publishes a "[Glossary on Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management](#)".

Cost benefit analysis (CBA)

CBA involves weighing the total expected costs against the total expected benefits of a project in order to choose the best or most profitable option. Economists argue that all costs and benefits can be expressed in monetary terms. A typical measurement that could be used for a youth training project could be the cost of training one student for one year versus the benefit in terms of wage increase.

There exists very few studies of CBAs of youth development projects as it is especially difficult to measure positive externalities. Further research is needed in this area. Workshop participants were encouraged to engage in some form of CBA in order to justify the efficiency of their project. Ideally CBA studies should be designed before the project begins.

Recommended evaluation methods

Project managers wishing to conduct evaluations are often faced with severe knowledge, budget, time and data constraints. The challenge for Project Managers is selecting the strongest possible evaluation design in the face of these challenges. The following key evaluation components were recommended:

- 1) A carefully selected control (or comparison) group and pre-and post intervention comparison of the two groups.
- 2) A meaningfully set of indicators measuring project inputs, activities, outputs, intended outcomes and impacts.
- 3) A sound counterfactual using a plausible argument that observed changes in outcome indicators after the project intervention are in fact due to the project
- 4) Wherever possible randomized selection should be used for both groups although it was recognized that this is not possible in many settings.

The key is to produce a rigorous, evidence based evaluation. This can be achieved even with a relatively small budget and sample size.



7) Metaplan Brainstorming Session: “What are the concrete inputs you would expect from YEN facilitating your work on results measurement?”

Sharing lessons learned and best practice	Access to external consultants	Funding	Bridging field work with academics	Technical assistance/training
Online materials/examples	Information about partners and survey firms	Provide funding for programmes and evaluations	Advocacy to World Bank for reasonable M&E	Provide assistance in interpreting data
Examples of design and different levels of rigour	Information and consulting about impact evaluation methods	Lead by example: Fund thorough M&E for youth employment interventions	Bridging the gap of evaluation expectations between donors and implementing organizations	Regular and updated feedback on training needs of project staff from policy makers
Lessons learned in different countries				Training on key issues of M&E in youth employment
Samples of M&E methodologies				Connect with similar initiatives for mutual learning
Benchmarking/international comparisons				Make knowledge gained from YEN initiative available – share materials
Database of generic questions				Validated methods to measure changes in life skills/self perception





Sharing lessons learned and best practice	Access to external consultants	Funding	Bridging field work with academics	Technical assistance/training
Database of possible indicators				Define evaluation methodologies and procedures
Sharing of studies and literature				Encourage participation in YEN series
Facilitate field visits/ sharing best practice				Capacity building at the level of decision makers and implementing NGOs
Library of evaluations				Review and give feedback on our M&E plans
Facilitate forums to share experience in measuring similar projects				Compile evidence based methodology
Create subgroups to share best practices on specific models				Provide a "how to" guide on designing M&E
Build a network of practitioners				
Provide access to other experiences via virtual mediums				

Annex 1: Participant Feedback (Flashlight)

- Good level of interaction between presenters and participants
- Fishbowl method was practical and made good use of knowledge
- Fishbowl method should have allowed for more interaction between experts and participants
- Would have liked to see more global perspective/participants
- One of the case studies could have come from Jordan
- Good level of interaction and food for thought
- Very informative and high level of energy
- Great facilitator
- Appreciated flexible approach
- M&E topic creates anxiety because people feel they don't perform up to standards
- Large gap between experts and practitioners
- High level of quality contributions



Annex 2: Resources

- “Conducting Quality Impact Evaluations Under Budget, Time and Data Constraints” - http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/conduct_qual_impact_eval.html
- Research Papers from Mr. Howard White - <http://ideas.repec.org/e/pwh16.html>

Annex 3: Participants

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"Decent work for young people"



“Decent work for young people”

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