

Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth

Monitoring, evaluation and learning in labour market programmes



Overview



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Drew Gardiner coordinated the drafting of the guide and authored Notes 1, 3 and 7. Jonas Bausch authored Notes 4 and 5. Paul Berbée, Verena Bruer, Paul Dyer, Sonja Kovacevic, Susana Puerto Gonzalez and Felix Weidenkaff provided substantial technical inputs throughout. Matt Ripley authored several of the case studies and acted as penultimate reader. Copy-editing was done by Book-Now and typesetting by ITCILO.

Note 6, "A step-by-step guide to impact evaluation" is an adaptation of a chapter of the Global Partnership for Youth Employment's "Measuring success of youth livelihood interventions: A practical guide to monitoring and evaluation", authored by Kevin Hempel and Nathan Fiala.

Sangheon Lee, Director, Employment Policy Department, Sukti Dasgupta, Chief, Employment and Labour Markets Analysis Branch and Valter Nebuloni, Head, YEP, provided overall guidance to the production of this publication.

Questions or feedback on this guide can be submitted to YEP at youth@ilo.org





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Preface

In June 2012, the International Labour Conference of the ILO resolved to take urgent action to tackle the unprecedented youth employment crisis through a multipronged approach geared towards pro-employment growth and decent job creation. The resolution, entitled “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” (ILO, 2012a), contains a set of conclusions that constitute a blueprint for shaping national strategies for youth employment. The associated background report (ILO, 2012b) warns: “(M)ajor gaps in knowledge (on “what works” on youth employment) persist. There have been relatively few rigorous evaluations of youth employment policies and programmes, of their impact in the short and long term, and of their relative cost-benefit, including in developed countries. This needs to be remedied since lessons learned from evaluations can lead to greater programme effectiveness and better targeting of scarce resources. Continuous building of the knowledge base on country policies and programmes and the impact evaluations of the range of measures is a paramount priority.”

The ILO has responded to this call by making greater investments in efforts to develop the evidence base on youth employment. “What works in youth employment” is the ILO’s offer to constituents to assist them in the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their youth employment programmes and policies. The objective is twofold: (1) to ensure accurate measurement of youth employment outcomes and (2) to promote evidence-based youth employment interventions and programmes through policy dialogue. By building capacities to measure results, the ILO contributes to tracking progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic

growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The ILO’s work on results measurement in youth employment began in 2010 with the Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment. This action was complemented by the global “Youth employment crisis: A call for action” and its corresponding “Follow-up plan” (2012–2019), which appealed for improved assessment of interventions to support better youth employment outcomes. Then in 2013, the “Area of Critical Importance: What Works in Skills and Youth Employment” was set-up to provide financial and technical assistance for the rigorous assessment of youth employment. Regional approaches have since been established, including the Taqueem (meaning “evaluation” in Arabic) Initiative. Taqueem is a partnership between the ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as part of an IFAD-financed project titled “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa”. Through rigorous research, this capacity development and learning project aims to understand “what works” in the promotion of gender mainstreaming, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes across the region.

It is in this context that we have developed the present guide. It offers a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the topics of results measurement and impact assessment, their practical application in the youth employment field and how evidence created via results measurement strategies can lead to improved programming. It is our sincere hope that this guide will help social partners and practitioners to make informed decisions

in choosing the evaluation frameworks that benefit their organizations and youth-centred programmes and will contribute to enhancing the youth employment sector in general. If, in the future, we are able to draw more robust evidence from all the good work being undertaken to support youth throughout the world and the wide experience of the various actors,

we will also have a stronger voice for convincing policy-makers to scale up interventions that have proven successful. We look forward to the continued collaborative work of policy-makers, development practitioners and other stakeholders in providing tomorrow's leaders with the economic opportunities they deserve.

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Introduction

Investing today in the employment of young people means investing in the present and future of our societies.

Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

Young people are estimated to account for over 35 per cent of the unemployed population worldwide (ILO, 2017a). While the global youth unemployment rate stabilized at 13 per cent in 2016, it rose slightly to 13.1 per cent in 2017. The estimated figure of 70.9 million unemployed youth in 2017 is an important improvement from the crisis peak of 76.7 million in 2009, but this number is expected to rise by a further 200,000 in 2018, reaching a total of 71.1 million. More importantly, 39 per cent of young workers in the emerging and developing world – 160.8 million youth – are living close to or in extreme poverty, i.e. on less than US\$3.10 a day (at 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP)). More than two in every five young people in today's workforce are unemployed or are working but remain poor, a striking reality that is impacting societies across the world.

Despite this challenging situation, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, and their explicit focus on decent work, offers hope for young people making the transition to the world of work. The ILO and its constituents – governments, workers' and employers' organizations – are working towards global targets on decent work and inclusive growth. The interests of young people are strongly represented in the SDGs, specifically in Goal 1 on fighting poverty, Goal 4 on providing quality education and Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. The well-being of the most vulnerable young people

is explicitly addressed in the Goal 8.6 target, “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”. For youth employment practitioners, this group of excluded and marginalized young people is a focus of primary concern. The trajectory of this growing young generation will depend on their social and economic integration, their ability to live fulfilling lives and their participation in and contribution to society.

Taking effective action towards realizing these SDGs requires a systematic approach to measurement and evaluation. The United Nations (UN) community has laid out a results-based reporting plan, designed to assess and monitor the realization of the SDGs and the contributions of specific UN agencies and member States. In monitoring and evaluating SDG implementation, the Agenda 2030 document provides guidance for systematic and rigorous follow-up processes (UN, 2015). The Agenda 2030 document recognizes that the review process for the SDGs requires “enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes”.

This guide contributes to our collective efforts in moving towards fulfilling the SDGs and securing better youth employment prospects by promoting the implementation of effective results measurement systems in

youth employment programmes and interventions. With an extensive section on attributing changes to youth employment interventions, this guide fosters evidence-based policy and programming choices by equipping ILO partners and stakeholders with the tools to attribute their actions to positive youth related outcomes. Guidance on results measurement of decent jobs for youth is provided with the premise that, for jobs to be created, employment conditions to be improved and SDGs to be realized, we need more evidence on “what works”. And, more importantly, can we say “how” and “why” interventions work in order to inform future programme design?

Although knowledge gaps remain, we can safely say that the evidence base is stronger than it was 10 years ago and it continues to grow at an impressive rate. The recently released systematic review on “Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth” (Kluve et al., 2017) identified 113 rigorous evaluation reports to include in its meta-analysis, 74 of which have been released since 2010. The main findings of the review were also encouraging: Overall, youth employment interventions can produce positive job and income effects for young people. As global evidence increases, so will the effectiveness

of youth employment interventions, resulting in the creation of more decent jobs for young people.

This guide proposes a framework that links practical, implementation-focused measurement and monitoring to research-oriented impact evaluation. This is achieved in a series of seven “notes”, which lead readers through the key steps in diagnosing and formulating youth employment interventions, setting up a results measurement system and defining corresponding key youth employment indicators. It then moves on to providing an overview of the types of evaluation approaches available to measure youth employment outcomes, including non-experimental, quasi-experimental and experimental methods that encourage reflection on the challenge of attribution. The menu of evaluation methods available is then discussed and, finally, guidance is provided on how to ensure that the findings from evidence-based evaluations are taken up in dialogue and policy formulation processes related to employment and young people. The technical notes are supplemented by interactive case studies supplied at the end of each note, to be used as a complement to classroom based learning on this topic.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Objective

With this guide, we aim to equip readers with the basic set of concepts and tools needed to make informed decisions about how best to measure and evaluate the results of youth employment interventions. We review the entire life cycle of a youth employment intervention, starting with diagnostics and programme design, then moving on to setting up a monitoring system and measuring results. We seek to provide a clear understanding of the variety

of evaluation options available and the issues to consider in choosing the most appropriate method, given the learning objectives and operational context. Additionally, the guide describes how to manage an impact evaluation, if that is the assessment method of choice.

Our overarching goal is to strengthen the foundation of sound programming and policy-making by increasing the number of quality evaluations in the youth employment field, thereby facilitating the process of scaling up

and replicating successful interventions. We want to promote a perception of evaluation as a tool for both internal and external learning rather than as simply an accountability exercise. Using evaluation to learn about the performance of an intervention can facilitate adaptive management where problems can be recognized early and projects adjusted accordingly. Learning that is shared publicly can help others to select the most effective intervention models, ensuring that resources spent on youth employment are optimally used.

Learning tool

The guide can also be used to complement learners taking training courses on results measurement and what works in youth employment. From 2010 to 2017, the ILO has trained over 2,000 constituents on results measurement in youth employment using an experiential learning approach called “Evaluation Clinics”. This guide closely follows the learning modules and curriculum of the ILO Evaluation Clinics but provides learners with more in-depth information and tools to build on the knowledge gained in the Clinics.

Audience

While this guide is primarily a reference tool for ILO constituents, it can also be used by all those involved in the implementation of youth employment programmes.

The guide has therefore been drafted with the following organizations in mind.

Primary audiences

Governments: Particularly ministries and agencies which focus on employment, youth, labour market services and training. The information may be more relevant to agencies

and institutions which are directly responsible for delivering and monitoring different programmes, such as youth employment agencies, public employment service agencies and technical and vocational training institutes. It can be used to assist in designing new public employment programmes.

Employers’ organizations: Organizations representing the interests of private employers who offer youth vocational education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. They will be able to use the guide both to inform their advocacy on important legislative and regulatory issues and to offer value-added services and advice to their members, based on the latest research and evidence. Companies have an increasingly large stake in issues involving youth and making sure they are prepared with the requisite skills and attitudes to become the employers and employees of the future.

Workers’ organizations: Workers’ councils and trade unionists who are interested in the potential of youth employment interventions for realizing decent work for youth. The guide will be particularly useful in formulating programmes and interventions for evidence-based advocacy around key policy issues. Workers’ organizations have an interest in learning about the conditions under which employment, and in particular decent employment, can be increased.

Youth-led organizations: not-for-profit organizations working in the youth employment field whose staff and members are predominantly made up of young people. Most organizations use the UN’s definition of youth which is a person between the ages of 15 to 24.

Secondary audiences

Civil society: NGOs are one of the main implementers of youth employment programmes

in many countries. As the guide covers the full life cycle of a youth employment intervention, it can be used at every stage of a project. The focus on evaluation and evaluation methods allows intervention results to be translated into lessons to inform both follow-up projects and other practitioners.

Donors: Multilateral and bilateral development agencies provide a considerable share of the funding for youth employment programmes. Donors, who have a fiduciary interest in maximizing the impact of their grant funding and ensuring accountability in the use of resources, will be able to use the guide to set appropriate evaluation schedules, as well as to design and commission evidence-based youth programmes.

Researchers: Researchers conducting field research and liaising with programme managers and implementing organizations will find the information presented in this guide relevant for adapting standard research methods to local programme conditions. A context-sensitive approach to impact evaluation is presented that facilitates research design.

Key references

This guide complements existing materials on results measurement, applying them to the specific area of youth employment. It builds on the following works:

- ▶ *Measuring success of youth livelihood interventions: A practical guide to monitoring and evaluation* (Hempel and Fiala, 2011).

Authored as a contribution to the Global Partnership for Youth Employment, this work was used as the key reference document.

- ▶ *ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation* (ILO, 2017b) and *ILO Development Cooperation Manual* (ILO, 2015), which set out the overall framework for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation in an ILO context.
- ▶ *Monitoring and evaluation of youth employment programmes: A learning package* (ILO, 2013). This guidebook provides advice on monitoring the performance of youth employment programmes and measuring both short- and long-term outcomes.
- ▶ Practical toolkits that emphasize general monitoring and evaluation (e.g. Gosparini et al., 2003; Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Kellogg Foundation, 2017, 2004) and other publications that focus specifically on impact evaluation (e.g. Baker, 2000; Duflo et al., 2006; Gertler et al., 2016; Khandker et al., 2010; Ravallion, 2008).

Considering similar resources on the topic of monitoring and evaluation, our Guide is unique in that it is the only guidance tool that orients all elements of the results measurement life cycle to the topic of youth employment. These unique elements include a chapter advising practitioners on the appropriate youth employment indicators to select (Note 2); a list of challenges, and their solutions, that are specific to youth employment focused impact evaluations (Note 5); and a reflection on the existing body of youth employment evidence and advice on how this evidence can lead to policy change (Note 7).

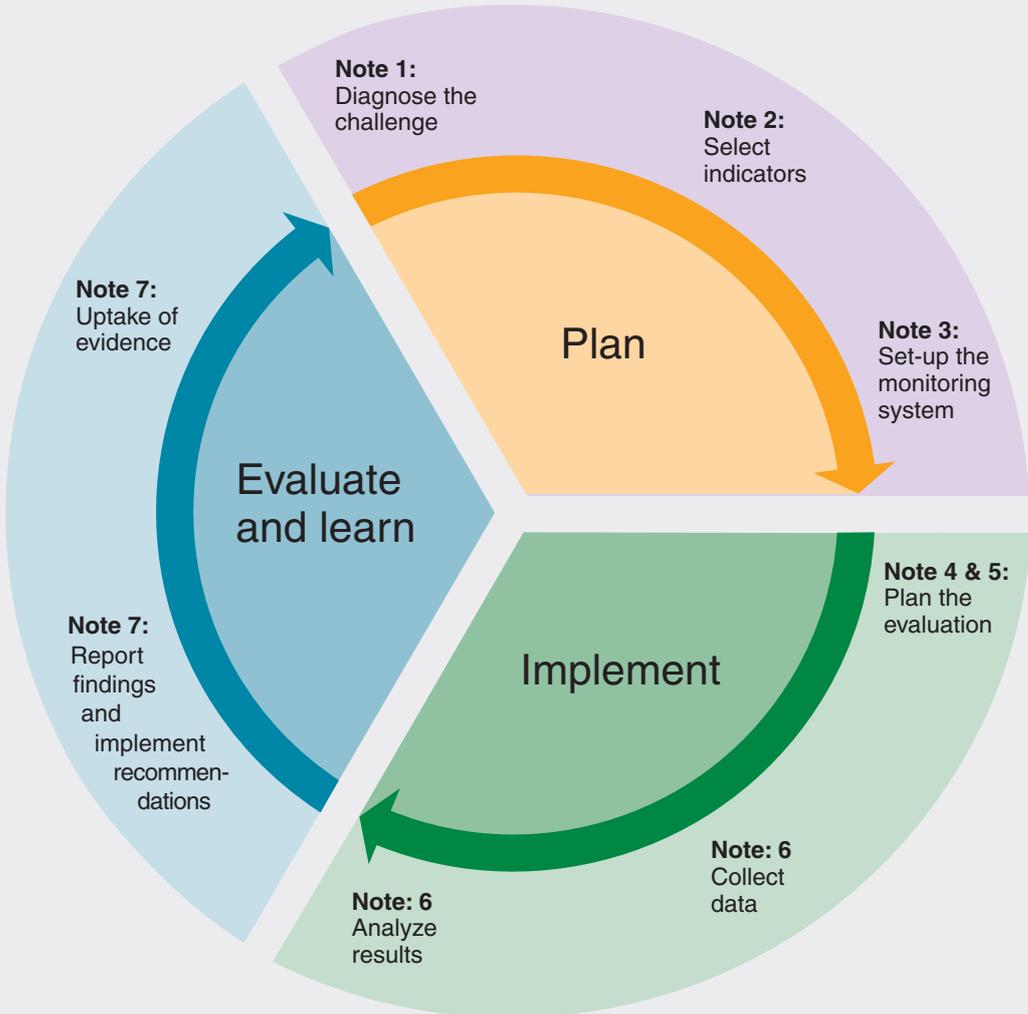
OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDE AND HOW TO USE IT

While the guide leads the reader through all stages involved in formulating youth employment programmes, starting with the diagnostic phase and closing with evidence uptake in youth employment policy formulation, the main thrust of the guide is on monitoring, results measurement and evaluation. Figure 0.1 sets out a simple results measurement cycle and the relating key elements of the seven notes.

The first note focuses on designing a youth employment intervention and establishing a solid theory of change as a basis for quality results

measurement. The second note covers labour market indicators with particular relevance for youth employment interventions, while Note 3 concentrates on setting up the monitoring system. Note 4 introduces readers to the importance of evaluation before presenting different approaches, including performance and impact evaluations. In order to address the challenge of attribution, Note 5 presents a number of different methods which can help decision-makers weigh the desired level of rigour with the feasibility of conducting the research. Note 6 guides readers through the step-by-step

FIGURE 0.1 RESULTS MEASUREMENT CYCLE



process of implementing a youth employment focused impact evaluation. The guide ends by offering practical advice on ensuring that evaluation evidence is taken up in policy formulation processes.

Although it is important to be familiar with all parts of the measurement process, it is not necessary to read the guide from beginning to end. Instead, each note is conceived as a standalone entity that can be read independently of the others, according to each reader's needs. Table 0.1 indicates which notes are most relevant to different types of readers.

Case studies

At the end of each of the seven notes, we present case studies detailing how different youth employment interventions apply results measurement strategies. The case studies illustrate the main points in each note and ask readers to apply the concepts they have learned to “real world” situations. The case studies are designed to complement classroom-based learning, as pedagogic exercises to be discussed in small groups with the assistance of an expert or facilitator in results measurement in youth employment.

While all of the case studies relate to youth labour market interventions, some of them are derived from experiences of the ILO in supporting organizations which are seeking to improve their results measurement systems and implement impact evaluation projects. Several of these case studies are drawn from organizations that were offered support under ILO's Fund for Evaluation in Employment, a technical and financial support programme for youth employment researchers and organizations in the Arab States and Africa regions.

The case studies are accompanied by an appendix “Answer key for case studies”, which is available separately from the seven note volume of Guide. This answer key appendix

is intended to be used by facilitators to assist in small group discussions about the case studies.

Overview of key terms

The guide addresses the effective monitoring and measurement of outcomes of youth employment interventions with a specific focus on impact evaluation. It is important here to make reference to four key terms which are used extensively throughout the guide: *results measurement system*, *monitoring*, *evaluation* and *impact evaluation*.

Results measurement system refers to the overall processes, plans, tools and resources that are used to determine whether a programme has been implemented according to the plan (monitoring) and is having the desired result (evaluation).¹ A results measurement system specifies:

- ▶ indicators to be tracked
- ▶ milestones (mid-stream) and end targets
- ▶ data collection tools
- ▶ the personnel who will gather, record and analyse the data and
- ▶ the types of reports that will be prepared, including for whom, why and how often.

The key activities of a results measurement system are *monitoring* and *evaluation*:

Monitoring tracks the implementation and progress of an intervention in order to support programme management. Monitoring:

- ▶ involves the collection of data on specific implementation and results indicators
- ▶ assesses compliance with work plans and budgets
- ▶ uses information for project management and decision-making
- ▶ is ongoing

¹ Also known as a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.

Table 0.1 Reader's guide

Note	Title	Description	Case study	Governments	Employers/workers	Civil society	Researchers	Donors
1	Diagnosing, planning and designing youth employment interventions	Guides readers through an employment diagnostic analysis as the basis for developing the theory of change then proceeds to programme design	Labour market diagnostics for the promotion of rural youth livelihoods in Zambia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Concepts and definitions of employment indicators relevant for young people	Reviews concepts and definitions of employment indicators relevant for young people in the areas of employment opportunities, employment quality, employment access and employment skills	Selecting indicators for the Northern Uganda Youth Entrepreneurship Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	Establishing a monitoring System	Presents the main steps in developing a results measurement system, including how to collect and analyse data.	Establishing a monitoring system for the Jordan Economic Growth and Employment Project	✓	✓	✓		
4	Enhancing youth employment learning through evaluation	Asks which type of evaluation best suits an individual programme. The answer depends on evaluation questions, the context and characteristics of the project, and available resources	Developing Terms of Reference for a mid-term evaluation of a youth employment project in Egypt	✓	✓	✓		
5	Impact evaluation methods for youth employment interventions	Presents the main features of an impact evaluation and focuses on finding a good comparison group to reliably demonstrate impact. Presents different (quasi-)experimental methods for conducting an impact evaluation	Assessing rural microenterprise growth through different evaluation methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	A step-by-step guide to impact evaluation	Moves from the conceptual to the practical level, describing the major steps involved in carrying out an impact evaluation and providing practical resources. These steps cover the entire process, from initial preparations to the dissemination of results	Survey design and implementation for Negdar Nesharek in Egypt	✓	✓	✓		
7	Evidence uptake in policy formulation	Helps readers to plan how evaluation results can be used to influence policy and improve programming. Communication of results and stakeholder engagement strategies are discussed	Uptake of evidence on the effects of skills training on young people's financial behaviour and employability in Morocco	✓	✓		✓	✓

- ▶ seeks to answer the question, “Are we doing things right?”.

Evaluation assesses the relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of an intervention to drive both accountability and learning. Evaluation:

- ▶ involves the collection of data on the design, implementation and results of a project
- ▶ focuses on the achieved results of the project relative to objectives (performance evaluation) or on the process of implementation (process evaluation)
- ▶ is periodic, usually conducted annually and at the completion of a project, and includes recommendations for follow up steps
- ▶ answers the question, “Are we doing the right thing?”.

An *impact evaluation* is a particular type of evaluation that attempts to attribute measurable outcomes on a specific population to a particular intervention. An impact evaluation:

- ▶ Answers the question, “What happened to the beneficiaries as a result of the intervention (as opposed to other contributing factors)”. This compares outcomes to the “counterfactual” – “What would have happened had there been no intervention?”.
- ▶ This causal link is established by comparing the outcomes experienced by participants with those experienced by a comparison group of non-participants.
- ▶ It is neither a requirement nor suited to all types of interventions.

Programme vs. project. Throughout the guide, we use the terms, “programme”, “project” and “intervention.” A *project* is a set of tasks executed over a given time period, with a defined scope and budget. The term *intervention* is used interchangeably with project. A *programme* usually comprises several

projects (focusing on different sectors, target groups or using different intervention combinations), all set up with the same overarching objective in mind. Throughout this guide, we focus primarily on youth-centred active labour market programmes but also draw on experiences from value chain and market development interventions.

Active labour market programmes

Active labour market programmes (ALMPs) are policy interventions aimed at increasing the employment probability of jobseekers in order to reduce aggregate unemployment, raise productivity and boost individual earnings (Auer et al., 2008, pp. 18–20). Unlike passive labour market policies (PLMPs), ALMPs exclusively target increased employment rather than other relief options, such as wage replacement. Both supply-side and demand-side measures fall under this category. Typical programmes on the labour demand side are public employment programmes and interventions designed to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship. Concerning labour supply, skills training is most prominent, this being the most common ALMP overall. Finally, ALMPs can also address market frictions by providing labour market information, offering employment services and registering vacancies (ILO, 2003, pp. 6–8). Good ALMPs are additionally characterized as those that encourage and allow for social dialogue; since collective bargaining mechanisms should not be compromised by incentives provided by ALMPs (ibid., pp. 3–5). Youth employment intervention types will be more extensively presented and discussed in Note 1.

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