



International
Labour
Organization

BOOSTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT THROUGH PUBLIC WORKS

**An ILO What Works in Youth Employment
Knowledge Sharing Event Report**

**29-30 June 2015
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment and vulnerable employment have created a massive strain on labour markets around the globe. It is a particular burden for young people. There are nearly 74 million young men and women aged 15 to 24 looking for a job. For employed youth, informality remains pervasive and transitions to decent and stable jobs are slow and difficult. In response to this challenge, the ILO has called for evidence-based action to improve labour market outcomes of youth. This call is encapsulated in the resolution and conclusions of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference in 2012 and subsequently embedded in ILO's Area of Critical Importance "Jobs and Skills for Youth".

With this commitment in mind, the ILO convened an inter-regional meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to facilitate knowledge exchange on "What Works in Youth Employment" and how to boost opportunities for African youth through public employment programmes. The meeting brought together ILO's tripartite constituents as well as partners from ministries of youth, agriculture, finance, planning and economic development, youth representatives, the African Union and the World Bank – in order to facilitate a stimulating discussion on evidence, good practices and lessons learned from public employment programmes and their potential to foster youth employment.

The meeting was organized by the Regional Office for Africa, the Youth Employment Programme and the Employment Intensive Investment Programme of the ILO, and led by experts and resource persons from the academia and research institutions. The discussions largely built on the structure and findings of the forthcoming paper entitled "Improving labour market outcomes of youth: A review of evidence from public employment programmes".

This report aims to capture the structure and content of the meeting as well as main conclusions arrived at during ensuing discussions. The report begins by briefly outlining the objectives of the meeting and composition of the participants. It continues with a narrative of sessions closely following the meeting agenda (see Annex I). The narrative is based on the power point presentations by resource persons and notes from the consequent discussions¹.

2. OBJECTIVES

The event intended to explore what works to boost youth employment through public employment programmes, a common public response intended to increase aggregate demand for labour in times of crisis, or in contexts where markets are unable to create employment at the required scale and unemployment is an on-going challenge. The objectives of the event included:

- Facilitation and promotion of the exchange of experiences and good practices on what works in boosting youth employment through public employment programmes;
- Fostering understanding of key components of public works programming for optimum impact on labour market outcomes, particularly among youth.

These objectives were presented by the ILO Deputy Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Dayina Mayenga, who emphasized the persisting challenge of youth unemployment in Africa in her [opening remarks](#).

¹ Power point presentations from the meeting are available on the meeting webpage, http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/events-and-meetings/WCMS_377792/lang--en/index.htm

3. PARTICIPANTS

The event targeted a diverse audience comprising the ILO constituents and other relevant stakeholders involved in designing and implementing youth employment or public employment programmes, or exploring the potential of public works to address youth employment challenges. The event served as an interactive forum for exchange and peer-learning of effective, replicable, and scalable solutions to support young women and men in the labour market.

- Policy makers: Senior Government officials from Labour, Youth, and Planning Ministries, involved with youth employment or public employment programmes' design and implementation.
- Social partners: Representatives of Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations interested in the role of public employment programmes in boosting youth employment.
- Development partners: Representatives from national and international organizations providing labour market services to youth.
- Resource persons and experts: Persons with extensive expertise on the subject, who presented evidence from a variety of contexts, guided the discussion and extraction of recommendations.

4. WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The event served as a platform for knowledge sharing and discussion on evidence and good practices from public employment programmes implemented around the world. In a series of interactive sessions the participants examined experiences around the following themes: eligibility and targeting; benefits, wages and working conditions; monitoring and impact evaluation; and harmonization across policies and public and private investments in youth employment. In addition, the participants presented selected interventions implemented in Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania (see Annex 3). The feedback received from 39 participants of the event was overwhelmingly positive. The participants found the event engaging and enriching, stating that their knowledge of the subject matter was strengthened as a result. Majority explicitly complemented on the relevance of information shared, and professionalism of the presenters. The varied workshop techniques applied ensured high levels of engagement among the participants, while the diverse background of participants and presenters enhanced the knowledge sharing experience.

4.1. The youth employment challenge in Africa

Oumar Diop, a senior policy officer at the African Union (AU) Commission and Susana Puerto, ILO's senior youth employment specialist, jointly presented an overview of the youth employment challenge in Africa. Youth labour markets in Africa conceal a stark contrast between an exceptionally high youth unemployment rate in North Africa (30.5 per cent in 2014) and a rather moderate youth unemployment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa (11.6 per cent). Gender disparities are strikingly high in North Africa and have a tangible impact on young women's access to jobs in the region. The challenge for African youth is therefore complex and points to the need for further investment in education and quality jobs.

Evidence shows that education is a core determinant of youth employment outcomes (Sparreboom and Staneva, 2014)². Yet in Sub-Saharan Africa over one-half of young workers do not have the level of education required to work productively on the job (Elder and Koné, 2014)³. Young people are highly vulnerable to poor quality jobs.

The complex challenge to boost productive youth employment can be achieved through a combination of improved employment and economic policies, education and training, labour market policies, promotion of entrepreneurship, and labour rights. This message is documented by “The youth employment crisis: A call for action”, an ILO Resolution calling for immediate, targeted and renewed action to tackle the youth employment crisis.⁴

In support to the call for action, the AU laid out a set of Youth and Women Development Objectives during the 2014 Ouagadougou+10 summit⁵ that state a determination “to reduce unemployment in our countries, in particular of youth and women, by at least two per cent annually over the next decade and also to halve the huge unemployment rate over the next decade”. Through complementary actions and policies the AU mainstreams youth and women employment, including through organizational results-based measures to demonstrate impact. The existing collaboration between African Union and ILO offers an opportunity to further explore what works, how and why, in boosting youth employment in Africa.

4.2. An overview of public employment programmes

Asfaw Kidanu, ILO’s senior employment-intensive investment specialist for Africa, presented an overview of labour-intensive public employment programmes. Aiming to maximize employment and income, the programmes seek an optimal combination of labour and capital to create or maintain infrastructure assets in a manner that is i) technically and economically feasible, ii) socially responsible, and iii) environmentally sustainable. Public employment programmes also have a potential to stimulate local entrepreneurship through training and increase private sector participation in infrastructure delivery. These programmes can foster research and development and lead to innovation in terms of technology choice, use of local materials, work organization, funding, procurement of works and services, etc.

Public employment programmes include:

- Rural and urban infrastructure development projects: construction and maintenance of roads and public buildings (health or education centres, markets, community halls, etc.);
- Urban low-income settlements construction;
- Environmental programmes, including climate adaptation works, slope protection, terracing, afforestation, flood protection, etc.;
- Disaster relief and reconstruction; and

² Sparreboom, T., Staneva, A. (2014). Is education the solution to decent work for youth in developing economies? : Identifying qualifications mismatch from 28 school-to-work transition surveys, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_326260.pdf

³ Elder, S., Kone, K.S. (2014). Labour market transitions of young women and men in sub-Saharan Africa, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_235754.pdf

⁴ Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_185950.pdf

⁵ The ILO’s calls for strong commitment to jobs ahead of Ouagadougou +10 Summit, http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/media-centre/WCMS_246045/lang--en/index.htm

- Agricultural works, including construction and maintenance of irrigation, water harvesting units and earth dams.

Kidanu illustrated the impacts of public employment programmes through several country examples. In China, a large labour-intensive cobblestone programme to improve rural roads accessibility has created over 5,000 km of paved roads in the Yunnan province alone, generating employment and stimulating the local economy.

In 2000, the Government of India launched the Rural Road Connectivity Programme to improve livelihoods of rural communities and jump-start the local economy. With local funding and the participation of various state governments, the programme provided all-weather roads to some 160,000 unconnected settlements.

Ethiopia's Universal Rural Road Access Project (URRAP) is a national programme aimed at linking 18,000 kebeles (wards). The programme has a budget of US\$ 2 billion and is set out to construct 72,000 km all-weather roads using the employment-intensive technique. The cobblestone project employed nearly 100,000 in Addis Ababa alone. Another flagship public works programme in Ethiopia is the low-cost housing development programme. As a part of the programme young people were trained in various competencies in five grades related to building construction. Young people were organized in business groups and linked to urban housing and transportation infrastructure development programmes. Some of the necessary conditions for the implementation of public employment programmes include:

- At the **macro level**: a clear understanding of the gaps and labour market barriers for the targeted population, as well as conducive policy environment. In order to be sustainable, a public employment programme should be linked to short, medium and long-term national development plans with allocated resources
- At the **meso level**: the necessary condition is a strong institutional set-up, appropriate technical and management tools, favourable procurement system and financing regulations. This should be complemented by capacity development of small and medium-sized enterprises, artisans and government officials, and coordination mechanisms across stakeholders.
- At the **micro level**: the necessary conditions include formulation, designing and packaging of projects, as well as establishing clear eligibility criteria and targeting mechanisms. A public employment programme should support and mentor small and medium-sized enterprises in registering companies, forming cooperatives and facilitating access to loans. Other necessary elements of a public employment programme include procurement of works and services in line with its objectives, implementation and quality assurance against a check-list, and monitoring and evaluation of works and services. Lastly, the programme should ensure careful recording of good practices, approaches and work methods for future replication or roll-out.

The presenter concluded by stating that public employment programmes can help boost youth employment, improving the livelihood of the community. However, to make the benefits of the programmes sustainable, they must be anchored in the national or local development policies and plans.

4.3. A review of evidence from public employment programmes

In his session, Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, ILO senior expert on employment-intensive investment, presented findings from a desktop review on existing evidence from public employment programmes globally. The review focused on programmes that have youth-specific data or evaluations and covered 15 countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The review finds that research and evaluations on public employment programmes that look specifically at youth and impacts on youth are limited. Most public employment programmes do not explicitly target young people as a group or monitor the participation of youth, while impact assessments generally do not examine the effects of an intervention on youth as opposed to non-youth groups. There are numerous questions that remain largely unexplored, for instance the factors that influence youth participation, the profile of the young beneficiaries, the impact on their skills development and employability, or the effectiveness of public employment programmes in fighting poverty among young people. Therefore there is ample scope to expand research to mend this knowledge gap.

Public employment programmes that are large in scale offer additional options for employment, thus stimulating competition in the local labour market and establishing a wage floor. It was also found that they can increase labour force participation, in particular for women who would have otherwise been inactive. There is evidence from such programmes in India and Argentina, where 23 per cent of programme participants had previously been outside the labour market. It is notable, however, that high levels of youth participation in public employment programmes is not an automatic outcome of making youth eligible. It often requires explicitly making youth a target group and by setting eligibility criteria based on age, introducing quotas for youth participation and clearly communicating that the programme is a youth-targeted initiative. There are a number of design features that could facilitate increased youth participation. These include the option to work part-time, offering work close to home, access to child-care, equal pay for men and women, and other. More evidence is required on how these measures affect the participation in the programme of different categories of youth.

Evidence from the review of public employment programmes globally shows that such programmes largely have a positive or neutral impact on school attendance. The positive impact on school attendance is ensured through careful programme design that does not permit the participation of school-aged youth. Public employment programmes can also have a positive impact on social cohesion through bringing people of different backgrounds together to work in conditions of fairness and equality. However, corruption and biased programming can have an opposite effect.

The presentation highlighted the importance of evidence in the design of public employment programmes and stressed the necessity to fill the existing knowledge gaps. Questions that require more evidence include the impact that education levels or different types of targeting have on youth participation in such programmes. How do young programme beneficiaries spend their income from public employment programmes? Which activities are more attractive to youth and which not, and why? Some of these questions are addressed in the following sections, while others may serve as a basis for further research and analysis.

4.4. Eligibility and targeting

Asfaw Kidanu presented on the importance of well-designed eligibility and targeting in public employment programmes, emphasizing the direct effect the design of the programme has on their success.

There are several types of targeting that can be applied in the programme design. **Demographic targeting** focuses on specific population categories, such as youth, women, persons with disabilities, landless persons, school dropouts, internally displaced people, migrants, etc. **Geographical targeting** focuses on recruitment of workers residing in certain areas, such as the regions with lower levels of economic development, or workers who live in proximity to the work site. **Community-based targeting** relies on the community to identify the most deserving beneficiaries of the state programme. **Self-targeting** mechanisms rely on the decision of individuals to take up a job or not once presented with working conditions such as a wage set at the same level as minimum wage, certain working hours, type of work, potential for growth, and the like.

Kidanu's presentation was followed by a panel discussion with experiences from the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India, Ethiopia's Public Safety Net Programme (PSNP), and the Kenya Youth Employment Programme (KYEP). While Kenya's KYEP explicitly targets youth, both skilled and unskilled, the programmes in India and Ethiopia do not, and rely on self-targeting and geographic and community-based targeting, respectively. In regards to eligibility criteria and participation, the KYEP programme in Kenya stipulates a quota of at least 30 per cent female beneficiaries. PSNP and MGNREGA rely on the communities/villages for the identification of eligibility criteria and selection of final beneficiaries.

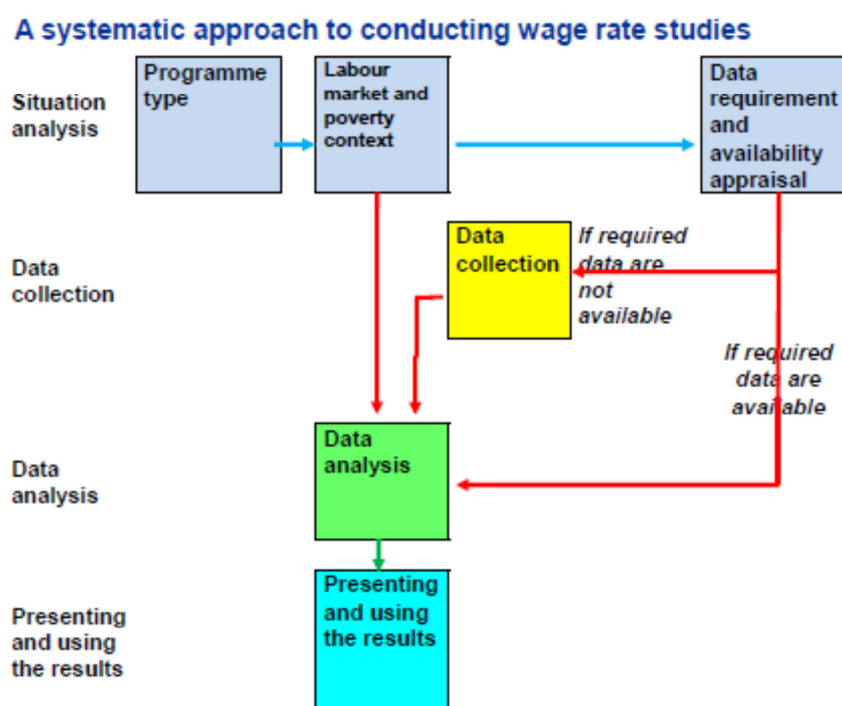
When it comes to youth participation in the design and implementation of these programmes, experts stress the role of organized youth groups in securing a continued dialogue between the target beneficiaries and the implementing agencies. This was echoed by a representative from the government of Uganda, where young people are involved in youth-targeted projects from the very inception – staying true to the motto “nothing for us without us”. Some argued, however, that it is preferable to have at least basic elements of programme design in place before involving youth. It was also suggested that expert-led focus group discussions with youth can be beneficial for the youth-targeted programmes. It was agreed that adjustments to the design need to be made throughout the programme cycle in order to accommodate the needs of different categories of youth.

4.5. Benefits, wages and other conditions of work on public works programmes: lessons for youth-targeted programmes

The session was presented by Kirit Vaidya of Aston Business School. The presentation looked into i) public works programmes' objectives, wage rate setting and issues related to young people's participation; ii) conducting systematic wage rate studies, and iii) questions and lessons for youth-targeted programmes on wage rates and other benefits based on evidence from some public employment programmes. Public employment programmes are defined by three primary objectives: i) employment (work for participants – unemployed or underemployed); ii) social protection through work (income/cash transfers for participants), and iii) public infrastructure investment (or providing social goods and services). The presenter emphasized that the balance between these objectives influences programme design, wage rate and the benefits. In addition, they enhance employment and livelihood prospects that are of particular importance for young people.

The wage rate at which work is offered affects the labour supply, the number of persons willing to participate and how much work they are willing to do (e.g. the number of days). Further, the wage rate and the number of days of employment offered determine the level of support provided to participating persons or their households. For a given budget, a choice also has to be made between providing more support for a smaller number of beneficiaries or lower level of support for a larger number. Since asset creation is the other objective of PWP, the wage rate should also provide sufficient incentive for participants to work productively. A systematic approach is needed to set wage rates on a balance of these considerations. Where relevant information on the scale of the programme required is lacking or it is necessary to consider options on wage setting in more detail, it may be necessary to conduct a wage rate study (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: A systematic approach to conducting wage rate studies



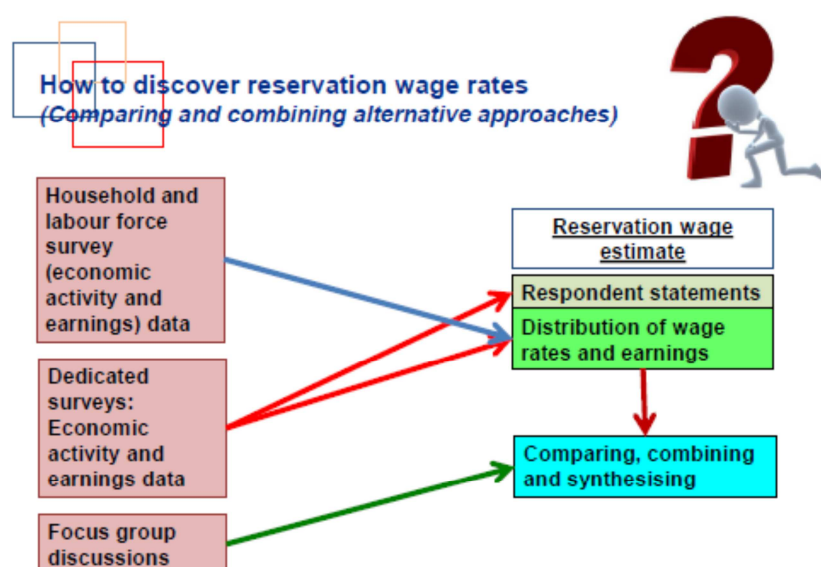
Source: Presentation on “Benefits, wages and other conditions of work on public work programmes: lessons for youth-targeted programmes”, Kirit Vaidya, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis_ababa/documents/presentation/wcms_381217.pdf

Programmes that are driven by the social protection through employment objective can be referred to as labour intensive since they aim to maximize employment for a given level of resources should set wage rates lower or at a level comparable with market wage rates to reduce impact on the labour supply for other economic activities. The programmes that focus on good quality asset creation or maintenance (referred to as labour-based) combine labour and light equipment for efficient work. Wage rates on such programmes need to be set in relation to prevailing wage rates with possibly an efficiency wage premium to ensure high productivity and good quality work. Employment guarantee schemes offering a given number of days of employment should set wages lower or comparable to market wage rates. For all types of programmes, the timing and amount of work can be set to reduce adverse impact on other economic activities. Public works programmes are relevant for both rural and urban youth. On India’s MGNREGA and Bangladesh’s Employment Generation for the Poorest (EGPP) programmes, household heads are the principal participants.

Hence, younger members of the households may work on the programme but the household head is rewarded for the participation. If the aim is to target youth to provide employment and ensure that they get the direct reward from the work, the programme design must enable this, for example by stipulating that a given proportion of principal participants are youth.

The reservation wage, the minimum pay accepted by an individual for the given work, was pointed out as a key concept for wage rate studies. The reservation rates can be established in several ways: i) through stated preference – use carefully designed questions to ask respondents what the acceptable pay would be; ii) using wage rate and earnings data from employment comparable to public works as the upper limit of the reservation wage for the individual, or ideally, iii) comparing and combining stated preference and actual wage rate and earnings evidence for the most robust results.

Figure 2: How to discover reservation wage rates



Source: Ibid.

Wage setting also requires an element of judgement. Evidence from regions such as Southern Africa and Middle East and North Africa reveal high reservation wage rates for youth in the presence of high levels of unemployment among young people. This may be explained by unrealistic expectations based on high formal sector wage rates, the lack of labour market experience and aspirations of the youth. Wage rate and participation studies for youth, whether exclusively targeting youth or as a part of a wider study, must make allowances for expectation and aspirations. Most importantly, the studies should include investigation of the benefits to participating youth or their households and the way earnings from public employment programmes are being used. In addition, the studies should explore the avenues of engaging educated and trained youth and enhancing the capacities of youth lacking education. Answering the question of whether or not the wage rate for youth in public employment programmes should be lower, Vaidya stated that minimum wages for youth in formal employment are sometimes lower and complemented by wage subsidies in order to incentivize employers to hire young workers and to compensate for their lack of experience. However, the presenter warned that this is not appropriate for public employment programmes with income support or social protection objectives.

Touching upon rural vs urban differences, Vaidya noted that PWPs are relevant in both types of locations. Rural PWPs tend to target the underemployed, unpaid or low-paid family workers in farming or other family enterprises. The PWPs in urban areas more often target the unemployed and the low-paid vulnerable workers. Apart from direct benefits, PWPs deliver wider benefits for young people. These include work experience, the value of being rewarded for work and gaining skills on the job. There are examples of young people developing and using supervisory and technical skills acquired through some public work programmes in Nepal, such as the Rural Access Programme (RAP) that has internships for young graduates with training and progression through levels of certification. Another example is the Karnali Employment Programme which is developing a training programme for community-level supervisors and social development personnel.

During the discussion on the conditions of work, one view put forward by a number of delegates was that public employment programmes should not be seen to be exploiting participants by paying too low wages. There was also the need to comply with minimum wage regulations and the earnings should provide adequate social protection. A representative of the Ministry of Labour in South Africa agreed that there must be compliance with statutory minimum wages and other employment regulations but in the presence of high unemployment and underemployment, the public works wage rate cannot be comparable with formal sector wage rates because of budgetary consideration and to avoid distorting the labour market. The general consensus was that a balance has to be struck taking account of all the considerations raised in the presentation and the resultant discussion.

4.6. Monitoring and evaluation

Shilp Verma, an expert on India's public works programmes, presented lessons learned from MGNREGA's monitoring and evaluation system. The programme upholds the "right to employment" act and guarantees employment placement within 15 days of registering. Work is provided to unskilled labour close to their place of residence and offers minimum wages or wages that are marginally higher than the set minimum wages. Provision of decent work conditions on the job is a prerequisite. The project endorses participatory work planning by local self-governance bodies and aims to create predominantly public, but also private, rural assets.

Since its inception in 2006-2007, MGNREGA has grown in size and scale: it provides more than 2 billion person-days of employment to nearly 50 million households on average each year. Roughly half of beneficiaries are women. Given the scale of its implementation adequate and transparent management of administrative logistics was made a priority. In an effort to achieve that, all MGNREGA data was made available online, where information on each individual employee can be accessed on the programme website. The data is intended to be updated in real time, though not all states and regions are able to maintain that feature due to staff shortage and connectivity issues. Verma elaborated on the use of information and communications technology for four critical processes, namely i) tracking field operations such as issuing job cards, work estimated, work completion; ii) Electronic Fund Management System – using digital signature keys; iii) mobile-based apps for field staff – work demand and allocation tracking and e-musters, and last but not least iv) e-payment of MGNREGA wages using biometric identification process.

Speaking of gaps in monitoring and evaluation systems, the presenter pointed out that once rural assets are created there is no tracking or follow up on the part of the state. The communities are not entrusted with the management and maintenance of MGNREGA public assets, which poses a risk to their long-term sustainability. MGNREGA work is often undertaken to maintain or renovate an asset

previously created in the framework of the same programme. Partly this is because MGNREGA is struggling to retain qualified engineers to work in remote, rural areas.

The ensuing discussion focused on the impact of the programme on the rural labour markets. The presenter explained that the implementation of MGNREGA has segregated the rural labour market into two distinct segments: the MGNREGA segment, which focuses on employment creation for disadvantaged men and women and is not efficiency-centric and the non-MGNREGA segment which continues to be highly efficiency-centric and employs mostly qualified young men.

Verma concluded with a summary of key achievements and shortcomings of the programme. Among the achievements of the programme, he cited i) the scale, scope and reach of the programme; ii) the establishment of a wage floor in rural areas which has especially helped landless agricultural labourers; iii) the reduction in the gap between male and female wages in rural areas owing to strict enforcement of equal wages under MGNREGA; iv) enhanced bargaining power; v) by provisioning work close to home, MGNREGA has attracted new entrants to the labour force, in particular women; vi) the programme has reduced migration to urban areas induced by push factors; and lastly vi) despite its size and complexity, MGNREGA has managed to maintain a fair degree of transparency. As to the shortcomings of the programme, Verma listed i) instances of systemic corruption, often reveal by the media, which have damaged the programme's image; ii) the lack of exit strategy planning; and iii) while there are several studies on the impact of MGNREGA at the village and district level, systematic impact assessment at the national level is missing.

4.7. Impact evaluation

Alicia Marguerie, a researcher and a PhD fellow from Paris-Sorbonne 1 – CREST, presented the short-term results from an impact evaluation of the Cote d'Ivoire Emergency Youth Employment and Skills Development "PEJEDEC". The programme was set up in 2012 to support the economic recovery following the post-electoral crisis. Through labour-intensive public works, the programme targets 12,500 youth aged 18 to 30 in all 16 localities in urban Cote d'Ivoire. The job involves working for six months in road maintenance for around six hours per day with a monthly payment of US\$ 100 per month or (US\$ 5 per day), paid directly to the beneficiary's bank account. In the framework of the programme, young people also get basic life skills training on HIV prevention and support, citizenship, hygiene, etc. – amounting to about 40 hours. A subset of participants receives additional training at the end of the programme on basic entrepreneurship skills and job search skills and sensitization on wage employment opportunities.

The strategic framework for the impact evaluation was to answer what the short-term impact of the programme on employment participation and earnings was and the changes in nature and quality of employment (time worked, work status or self- or wage employed, and wages). Furthermore, the evaluation of the short-term impact tried to establish how the beneficiaries use their income and what the impact on savings, expenditure, and work intensity was.

Short-term findings indicate the programme positively impacted on wage employment among the beneficiaries through more productive working hours, increased monthly earnings, expenditure and savings. The impact evaluation found a larger positive effect among young women: before the programme women earned US\$ 12 per month in wage occupations compared to US\$ 60 per month earned by men, on average. After the participation in the programme, women earned US\$ 114 per month compared to US\$ 116 per month earned by men. The programme was also found to have an

impact on young people's attitude and behaviour: they report higher levels of confidence in the future and emotional stability. Observations based on list experiments showed a positive spill-over effect on the community manifested in a decrease in physical assaults committed by the programme beneficiaries.

These early findings suggest this youth-targeted public employment programme represents a good economic opportunity in wage employment for young people.

4.8. Harmonization

Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song shared his thoughts on one of important aspects of public employment programmes – their harmonization potential across a range of institutions. Lieuw-Kie-Song spoke of the “trilemma” presented by such programmes, which is to address three objectives at once, namely the social protection, employment and assets and services production. Social protection intends to protect the vulnerable against risks through providing income security. The employment dimension intends to create employment with all its concurrent benefits, while asset and services must provide useful assets or services to the community. A public works programme therefore aims to strike the right balance between the three objectives within a specific context and manage the tensions that arise along the way.

There was a consensus among the participants in recognition of this trilemma and an exchange of experiences when these tensions required trade-offs in their own public employment programmes. The tensions manifested themselves at the institutional level in that there were often several ministries involved in a public employment programme and each trying to prioritize the objectives, over which their respective ministry has a mandate. One participant shared how such tensions were also apparent in their discussions with donors whose objectives and priorities differed from those of the ministries involved. Others noted how debate about what the wage rate stemmed from this trilemma of objectives, with some arguing for setting the wages based on employment legislation, while others advocated for setting wages based on social protection objectives. There were also those, who insisted that wage setting need to serve to goal of maximizing productivity. At the same time, participants highlighted that these multiple objectives were also the main reason why public employment programmes were popular as they allowed governments to hit “three bids with one stone”, which nonetheless required strong leadership and continuous skilled management.

4.9. Group work conclusions

Participants' valuable recommendations to maximize the impact of public employment programmes on youth employment touched on several points presented below:

- Increased employability of young people and facilitated access to jobs should be the primary objectives of public employment programmes. This should be achieved through skills development and enriching work experience through training.
- In order to be sustainable, the programme should be aligned to the national development agenda and respond to the national needs.
- Scoping of young people's interests, wants and needs is conditional for effective programme design. The programme implementation should be preceded by a baseline survey of identified beneficiaries, registering detailed data disaggregated by gender, age, disability, affiliation with a minority group, etc.

- Impact assessment needs to be based on data disaggregated by households, gender, location, age and skills level. It is important for the assessment to capture the effect of incomes and expenditure on the local economy. Measuring the changes in the employment rates in the locality where the programme was implemented will determine the success of the programme, as will measuring employability of its beneficiaries upon graduation from the programme. The assessment should also capture the impact of created assets on the community.
- Young people should be closely involved in all stages of the programme's lifecycle, including the determination of assets to be created by the programme, for instance youth recreational centres or ICT facilities. Ensuring understanding of the programme objectives by young people is paramount to securing their buy-in. Upon its completion, young people should be presented with the value of assets created by the programme, and beneficiaries formally acknowledged for their contribution.
- Men and women must be ensured equal access to the programme and assets created as a result of the programme, as well as provided tailored working conditions. For instance, offering an option of flexible working hours can be a way to accommodate young mothers.
- Benefits and working conditions in public employment programmes should be set based on a number of pre-determined parameters. For instance, young beneficiaries should be rewarded for pre-existing skills through differentiated compensation levels depending on their qualifications.
- It is important to establish processes in the design of the programme that impose regular revisiting of the wages paid by the programme.
- Strict adherence to rules and regulations on safety in the workplace is crucial.
- While a part of a public employment programme, young beneficiaries should be given an opportunity to profit from exposure to other trades and occupations in addition to the one, in which they are directly engaged.
- Targeting in public employment programmes should specifically address marginalized youth groups, such as migrants, persons with disabilities, victims of natural disasters, etc. Economic status should also be the determinant of inclusion in the programme with priority given to poor, landless, homeless youth. Public employment programmes may also target young people depending on their respective social circumstances, for instance orphans, HIV-positive young persons and youth-headed household – especially those headed by young women.
- Good governance practices should be promoted by the programme from the onset. Transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, as well as efficiency of resource utilization should be ensured throughout all stages of the programme.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

The ILO reaffirmed its commitment to further investigating what works in youth employment and what can be done to support the transition of youth into the labour market on the one hand, and improving the quality of jobs of young workers on the other. Knowledge sharing and mutual learning are one of the important channels of collecting, exchanging and vetting best practices. This knowledge-sharing meeting strengthened the ILO's understanding of the policy concerns of its constituents and areas that require further technical assistance and rigorous impact analysis. The ILO laid out the most immediate steps in the follow-up to the meeting:

- o The ILO will finalize the background report entitled "Improving labour market outcomes of youth: A review of evidence from public employment programmes" based on the discussion and conclusions of the meeting. This document reviews a series of public employment programmes around the world that targeted or benefited young workers. The paper attempts to capture good practices and lessons learned from these programmes to improve our understanding of what works in boosting youth employment through public employment programmes.
- o The recommendations emerging from the background research and the meeting conclusions will inform a policy brief on boosting youth employment through public works that will serve as ILO position paper on the subject.
- o All material from the event, including presentations and opening remarks by Ms Dayina Mayenga, Deputy Director of ROAF, have been made publicly available on the [event website](#).
- o In addition, the ILO commenced a review of effective strategies to boost labour demand of young people with a specific focus on the structural transformation in rural areas that translates into better opportunities for young Africans. A knowledge sharing event presenting the findings of this review is planned for the last quarter of 2015 and will target ILO's constituents and other relevant partners.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Public employment programmes are multi-dimensional in nature, enabling the achievement of both socio-economic and labour markets outcomes. Three tangible objectives of public employment programmes include: (i) employment promotion, (ii) income security and support and (iii) improvements in quality of life and market functioning through asset creation and the provision of services.

One of the key conclusions coming out of the meeting was that programme success relies strongly on the definition of objectives and subsequent implications on the design and implementation. Secondly, the private sector can and should play an important role in enhancing sustainability of the programmes and their impact on young women and men. The participants emphasised the importance of working closely with the young people to understand their needs and capacities, and of involving them at all stages of the public employment programme cycle.

Finally, the overarching conclusion of the thought-provoking discussions during the meeting was the need to strengthen the evaluation evidence of public employment programmes in order to inform the design and implementation of future programmes for optimal labour market outcomes for youth. The organizers, resource persons and the participants alike recognized the importance of

evidence in shaping policies and programmes aimed at boosting young employment. As aptly expressed by the Deputy Regional Director Dayina Mayenga in her opening remarks addressed to ILO constituents and partners, and reiterated in her closing remarks:

“Understanding what works is at the core of this Area of Critical Importance. It is an endeavour that strongly relies on evaluation evidence, using the most rigorous and appropriate methods that are consistent with the youth employment interventions we see and design nowadays. It is also an undertaking that builds on your questions and needs, aiming at a strong, coherent link between research and action.”⁶

⁶ See Remarks by Dayina Mayenga Deputy Director, ILO Regional Office for Africa:
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis_ababa/documents/statement/wcms_379167.pdf

7. ANNEX 1: Agenda

Day 1, Monday, 29 June 2015

8:30 – 9:00	Registration		
9:00 – 9:30	<u>Opening and welcome remarks</u>		
	Dayina Mayenga and George Okutho, <i>ILO</i>		
9:30 – 10:00	Round of introductions		
	Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>		
10:00 – 10:15	Presentation of the programme		
10:15 – 10:45	Coffee Break		
10:45 – 11:20	<u>The youth employment challenge in Africa</u>		
	Oumar Diop, <i>AU</i> and Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>		
11:20 – 12:30	<u>What Works for youth employment: Evidence from Public employment programmes</u>		
	Public employment programmes and their impact on youth employment in diverse country contexts.		
	Asfaw Kidanu and Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, <i>ILO</i>		
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break		
13:30 – 15:00	Marketplace I: On-going interventions to support youth through Public Works		
	Youth employment and/or public employment programmes presented by country teams.		
	Facilitator: Leyla Shamchiyeva, <i>ILO</i>	Country teams: Kenya, South Africa, Sudan	
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break		
15:30 – 16:30	Eligibility and targeting		
	Effective eligibility and targeting mechanisms in public employment programmes and lessons learned from youth-focused interventions.		
	Moderator: Asfaw Kidanu, <i>ILO</i>	Shilp Verma, <i>IWMI</i>	Country experiences
16:30 – 17:30	<u>Benefits, wages and other conditions of work</u>		
	Setting benefits and wages in public employment programmes and lessons learned for youth-targeted programmes.		
	Moderator: Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, <i>ILO</i>	Kirit Vaidya, <i>Aston University</i>	Country experiences
17:30 – 17:40	Debrief of Day 1		
	Quick evaluation of Day 1		
19:00	Cocktail		

Day 2, Tuesday, 30 June 2015

9:00 – 9:05	Opening Summary of Day 1 and Introduction of Day 2 Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>
9:05 – 10:30	Marketplace II: On-going interventions to support youth through Public Works National youth employment and/or public employment programmes presented by country teams. Facilitator: Leyla Shamchiyeva, <i>ILO</i> Country teams: Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 11:45	<u>Monitoring and evaluation systems in public employment programmes</u> Successful M&E systems in public employment programmes and lessons learned for youth-targeted interventions. Moderator: Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i> Shilp Verma, <i>IWMI</i>
11:45 – 12:30	<u>An impact evaluation of a Public Works Programme targeting youth</u> Preliminary findings and sharing of experiences from an evaluation of a youth-targeted public works programme in Cote d'Ivoire. Moderator: Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i> Alicia Marguerie, <i>CREST</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 14:30	<u>Harmonization and interaction across programmes</u> Exploring effective coordination mechanisms in the implementation of Public employment programmes. Moderator: Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, <i>ILO</i> Country experiences
14:30 – 15:45	Group work: Discussion Group discussions built around three key questions that emerged, with the view to extract policy / programming recommendations. Resource persons: Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, Asfaw Kidanu, and Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>
15:45 – 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 – 17:00	Presentation of recommendations Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Conclusions: What Works? Susana Puerto, <i>ILO</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Evaluation and closing of the event

8. ANNEX 2: List of Participants

COUNTRY	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	TITLE
EGYPT	FATHY	Khaled	Social Fund for Development	HEAD OF THE PUBLIC PROJECTS SECTOR
EGYPT	ALY ELBAZ	Ola Mostafa Mohamed	Ministry of Manpower and Migration	
EGYPT	ABDOU HANA	Keristina Ibrahim	Ministry of Manpower and Migration	
EGYPT	MANSOUR	Ahmed Said Ahmed	Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform	ECONOMIC RESEARCHER
EGYPT	OSMAN	Basmah	Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)	SENIOR ADVISOR
ETHIOPIA	TEHSOME	Fisseha	Ministry of Agriculture	SENIOR EXPERT
ETHIOPIA	ABATE	Demeke	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	SENIOR EXPERT
ETHIOPIA	FELEKE	Tista	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	JUNIOR EXPERT
ETHIOPIA	YIFRU	Zerihun	Addis Ababa City Roads Authority	HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
ETHIOPIA	KEBERE	Mesfin	Addis Ababa City Roads Authority	HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
ETHIOPIA	EGUALE	Abiy	Ethiopia Roads Authority	TEAM LEADER
ETHIOPIA	MOHAMMED	Saud	Ethiopian Employers' Federation	PROJECT COORDINATOR
ETHIOPIA	WOLDEYOHANS	Measho BeriHu	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, Foreign and Public Relation Department	HEAD

ETHIOPIA	FOLLO	Kassahun	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions	PRESIDENT
GHANA	AMUAH	Joseph Kingsley	Ghana Employers' Association (GEA)	DIRECTOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KENYA	WANYLKA TOLE	Liz	Ministry of Devolution & Planning	YOUTH OFFICER
KENYA	ONGERI ABUTA	William	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services	CHIEF EMPLOYMENT OFFICER & ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT
KENYA	NJUGUNA	Simon	Marithiano Youth Association (Langas, Eldoret Uasin Gishu County)	CHAIRMAN
KENYA	ATIENO	Evelyn	Federation of Kenya Employers	
KENYA	PANYAKO	Seth	Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU-K)	SECRETARY-GENERAL OF KENYAN NATIONAL UNION OF NURSES
RWANDA	GAHAMANYI	Vincent	Social Protection at Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA)	DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
RWANDA	MWAMBARI	Faustin	Ministry for Public Service and Labour	DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT AND STATISTICS
RWANDA	MUTAMULIZA	Janviere	Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda (CESTRAR)	
SOUTH AFRICA	TLOANE	Esther	Ministry of Labour	CHIEF DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
SOUTH AFRICA	JACK	Bev	Business Unity South Africa / IOE Africa	GROUP EXECUTIVE: HR
SUDAN	SAIFELDAWLA	Bashir Abdallah Mohamed	Ministry of Labor & Administrative Reform	GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF POLICIES, PLANNING & RESEARCHES
SUDAN	THORAYA	Hamed Farah	Ministry of Labor & Administrative Reform	DIRECTOR GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
TANZANIA	NGANGA	Joseph	Ministry of Labour and Employment	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES

TANZANIA	PAUL	Albina	Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF)	TASAF PROJECT OFFICER - PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM
TANZANIA	MKUDE	Oscar	Association of Tanzania Employers	ECONOMIST
TANZANIA	AHMED	SIHAM S.	Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA)	
ZANZIBAR	SALAH	Salahi	Zanzibar Employers Association (ZANEMA)	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ZANZIBAR	KHAMIS MWINYI	Mohammed	ZATUC	
UGANDA	KYATEKA	Mondo Francis	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR YOUTH
UGANDA	ANITE	Evelyn	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	MINISTER OF STATE FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS
UGANDA	KASEKENDE	Martin	Federation of Uganda Employers	
RESOURCE PERSONS				
FRANCE	MARGUERIE	Alicia	Paris-Sorbonne 1/CREST	PHD CANDIDATE, ECONOMICS
UK	VAIDYA	Kirit	Aston Business School	SENIOR LECTURER
INDIA	VERMA	Shilp	International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	CONSULTING RESEARCHER
ILO-SPONSORED OBSERVERS				
TOGO	MOTE	Hilma Kupila	ITUC-Africa	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN LABOUR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INSTITUTE
TANZANIA	KIAGA	Annamarie	ILO DAR ES SALAAM	NATIONAL COORDINATOR-JOB QUALITY
UGANDA	OPIO	Stephen	ILO KAMPALA	NATIONAL COORDINATOR-JOB QUALITY

GHANA	BENJAMIN-SAMPSON	Evelyn	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)	ASST DIRECTOR, GENDER AND YOUTH
SELF-SPONSORED OBSERVERS				
ETHIOPIA			World Bank (Addis Country Office)	PSNP COORDINATOR
ETHIOPIA	MDACHI	Maria	African Development Bank	SENIOR EDUCATION ANALYST
ETHIOPIA	OUMA	Nicholas	African Union Commission	THE YOUTH DIVISION REPRESENTATIVE
ETHIOPIA	DIOP	Oumar	African Union Commission	SENIOR POLICY OFFICER, EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS
ETHIOPIA	MELLES	Fantahun	ILO Addis	PROJECT COORDINATOR
ORGANIZERS				
ETHIOPIA	MAYENGA	Dayina	ILO Addis	
ETHIOPIA	GIRMA	Rahel	ILO Addis	
SOUTH AFRICA	KIDANU	Asfaw	ILO DWT/CO Pretoria	
SWITZERLAND	PUERTO GONZALEZ	Susana	ILO Geneva, Youth Employment Programme	SENIOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST
SWITZERLAND	SHAMCHIYEVA	Leyla	ILO Geneva, Youth Employment Programme	TECHNICAL OFFICER
SWITZERLAND	LIEUW-KIE-SONG	Maikel	ILO Geneva, Development and Investment Branch	SENIOR EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE INVESTMENT EXPERT

9. ANNEX 3: Country presentations

Public employment programmes from six countries were presented to participants during a session structured following the so called ‘marketplace’ or ‘round robin’ method⁷. The government representatives from countries presented key elements of the programmes they consider effective and opened the floor up to questions. The key elements of the programmes presented included the type of intervention and its objectives, the intended beneficiaries, the cost, delivery, monitoring and evaluation systems and challenges encountered in the implementation. The participants from Egypt’s Social Fund for Development presented the Emergency Labour Intensive Investment Programme (ELIIP). Ethiopia’s presentations included experience of public employment programmes such as Public Safety Net Programme (PSNP), Urban and Local Government Development Programme, Universal Rural Road Accessibility Programme and Integrated Housing Development Programme. The participants from Kenya introduced the key elements of the National Youth Service (NYS), Kenya Youth Employment Programme (KYEP), and Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO). The chief director of Employment Services of South Africa’s Ministry of Labour presented South Africa Expanded Public Works Programme, while Sudan’s Creating of Jobs Opportunities for Youth in Sudan through Labour Intensive Work was presented by a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Administrative Reform. The representatives from Tanzania presented the Youth Employment Creation Programme.

Among questions that concerned the participants in terms of implementation of public employment programmes were wage-setting techniques and the regularity, with which wages were revisited, in particular in context where no official minimum wages were stipulated. Another question that participants directed at the presenters was the benefits for young women who participate in public employment programmes. The issue of organizational safety and health in public employment programmes was also raised. The presenters were challenged to consider the extent, to which PEPs respond to technological progress as they normally capitalize on labour-intensive investments.

⁷ The details on the method can be found here <http://www.kstoolkit.org/Round+Robin>



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