



BOOSTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT THROUGH PUBLIC WORKS:

Conclusions of the ILO “What Works in Youth Employment” Knowledge Sharing Event

29-30 June 2015

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



International
Labour
Organization



What: Knowledge-sharing event

When: 29-30 June, 2015

Where: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Contact(s): youth@ilo.org



Context

Unemployment, underemployment, 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 75 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 a regional meeting for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to facilitate knowledge exchange on “What Works in Youth Employment” and how to boost opportunities for youth through public works programmes. The meeting brought together ILO's tripartite constituents as well as partners from ministries of agriculture, finance, planning and economic development, youth representatives, the African Union and the World Bank – in order to facilitate a stimulating discussion on good practices and lessons learned from public works programmes and their potential to foster youth employment.

The meeting was co-organized by the ILO's Regional Office for Africa, Youth Employment and Employment Intensive Investment Programmes and led by employment intensive investment experts, youth employment specialists and resource persons from the academia and research institutions.

Two-day knowledge-sharing event

The event served as a platform for knowledge sharing and discussion on evidence and good practices from public works programmes implemented around the world. 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.

Conclusions

Public works programmes are multi-dimensional in nature, enabling the achievement of both socio-economic and labour markets outcomes. Three tangible objectives of public works 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 young people to understand their needs and capacities, and involving them at all stages of the public works programme cycle.
- ✓ Finally, the overarching conclusion of the thought-provoking discussions during the meeting was the need to strengthen the evaluation evidence of public works programmes in order to inform the design and implementation of future programmes for optimum labour market outcomes for youth.

ILO's role

The ILO is committed 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. This knowledge-sharing meeting strengthened ILO's understanding of the policy concerns of its constituents and areas that require further technical assistance and rigorous impact analysis. At the same time, the ILO will continue to support constituents in the design and implementation of public works programmes that enhance youth employment.

As emerged from the event feedback form, the participants wish to learn more about public investment and employment programmes and have an opportunity to engage in a more complex debate around the public works programmes. All those interested are welcomed to participate in the upcoming **ITC Learning Forum on Public Investment and Employment Programmes** for a deeper engagement and development, due to take place between **28 September and 9 October 2015** in **Turin, Italy**. **The deadline for applications is 16 August 2015**. More information on this event can be obtained [here](#).

What's next?

The ILO will prepare an event report and finalise the background report entitled "Improving labour market outcomes of youth: A review of evidence from public works programmes" based on the discussion and conclusions of the meeting. The latter document reviews a series of public works

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 works programmes.

In addition, the ILO is commencing 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.

The event photos can be found [here](#)

The event was organized by the ILO's:

- ✓ *Regional Office for Africa:* addisababa@ilo.org
- ✓ *Youth Employment Programme:* youth@ilo.org
- ✓ *Employment Intensive Investment Programme:* eiip@ilo.org

Tags: employment, labour intensive employment, youth employment, employment policy, infrastructure, productivity

Regions and countries covered: Global, Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda

