

YEN Evaluation Clinic



19-20 July 2009

Hosted by the Syrian Trust for Development, Damascus

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Contents

- BACKGROUND 3**
- DESIGNING EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES..... 4**
 - Establishing causality 4
 - Menu of methodologies 4
 - Evaluating small employment programmes 4
 - Table 1: Menu of Evaluation Designs..... 5
- LIVE CASE STUDIES..... 6**
 - Table 2: Overview on Case Studies 7
 - Case Study 1: Jordan River Foundation’s Youth Career Initiative (YCI) 8
 - Case Study 2: Shabab’s Youth Business Clinic..... 10
- Annex 1: Results from Brainstorming Session: 12**
- Annex 2: Participants’ Evaluation 12**
- Annex 3: Agenda (includes presentations) 14**
- Annex 4: Participants..... 15**

Note:

This report is accompanied by a group website recently set-up by YEN to facilitate collaboration between Evaluation Clinic participants and to share knowledge on evaluations of youth employment programmes. Presentations, papers and access to resource people from the Evaluation Clinic are available through this site and will require sign up for access. An invitation to become a member to the site will accompany this report.

<http://yencclinic.grouppsite.com/>

BACKGROUND

An analysis of the World Bank's [Youth Employment Inventory](#) reveals that there is a severe lack of rigorous evaluation of youth employment interventions leading to a gap in the evidence base to support effective programme design and implementation. The study suggests only 15% youth employment programmes from developing countries provide evidence of net impact.

YEN organized a workshop on Results Measurement in Youth Employment in January where it was recommended to further increase YEN's efforts in the promotion of better quality evidence. As a result, "YEN Evaluation Clinics" were introduced. The Clinics provide hands-on experience on impact evaluation through the analysis of live case studies with a two-fold objective:

- a. To build the capacity of youth employment practitioners to design and implement rigorous impact evaluations for their programmes.
- b. To assist managers of selected youth employment programmes in exploring, designing, and drafting their evaluation plans.

On 19 – 20 July 2009 in Damascus, Syria, a YEN Evaluation Clinic was delivered to youth employment practitioners in the Middle East. The Clinic was hosted by the Syrian Trust for Development's Shabab Programme as part of the Global Partnership on Youth Employment and Employability sponsored by the World Bank.

The concept for the Clinic is unique in two ways. It provides an opportunity for evaluation specialists and academics to collaborate with field practitioners while allowing participants to apply evaluation principles to live case studies, providing for a practical learning environment. The live case studies analyzed during the Clinic were chosen by YEN's Evaluation Taskforce through a [call for proposals](#) launched in March 2009. Selected cases come from the Syria Trust for Development's Business Clinic Programme (a one stop shop for employability services) and the Jordan River Foundation's Youth Career Initiative (a training programme for disadvantaged youth in the hospitality sector).

DESIGNING EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

Establishing causality

The Clinic began with two presentations from Evaluation Specialists from the World Bank. Participants were introduced to the key steps in designing impact evaluations of youth employment programmes.

The main objective of an evaluation is to estimate *causality*, i.e. estimate the effect that a particular intervention has on the outcomes of its beneficiaries. The experts advocated for the use of “impact evaluations (IEs)” which is different from traditional evaluations in that IEs attempt to measure “what would the situation have been if the intervention had not taken place?” Since this situation cannot be observed, IEs rely on counterfactuals (or a group of non-beneficiaries) to have an idea of the outcomes without the intervention. The use of a counterfactual ensures that observed changes in outcome indicators after the intervention are in fact due to the intervention and not to other unrelated factors, such as improvements in the local economy or programs organized by other agencies.

The challenge then becomes identifying and constructing the appropriate counterfactual (also known as control group) that can be compared to the intervention beneficiaries (or treatment group).

Menu of methodologies (see table 1)

Participants were presented with a menu of possible evaluation designs that respond directly to the choice of methods used to build the counterfactual. Evaluation designs range from true experimental (or randomized) designs to non-experimental designs. When designing an evaluation of a youth employment project, the objective should be to choose the most robust design that is appropriate for the resources, time and data that is available.

In most cases, youth employment programmes will not have the resources or time necessary to design “gold standard” (randomized controlled) evaluations. Evaluators also face a magnitude of ethical and project design constraints which limit the possibility for randomized trials. An additional constraint is on data. Many youth employment programmes have limited resources meaning the beneficiary or sample sizes are small. Having a small number of beneficiaries means an evaluation could lack statistical precision and significance. Should experimental and quasi experimental evaluations be conducted with small sample sizes?

Evaluating small employment programmes

Participants were presented with examples of successful evaluations with small sample sizes using control groups. Examples came from the evaluation of the “Beautiful Serbia” programme which contained a sample of 288 individuals and from the evaluation “Supporting Women’s Groups in Rural Kenya” which contained a sample of 80 groups of women. It was agreed that though evaluations of small youth employment programmes could lack precision due to limited sample sizes, they should still be encouraged as can provide valuable inputs into programme design especially when results of several evaluations are combined.

Table 1: Menu of Evaluation Designs - (links to examples in blue – sign in required)

Evaluation strategy	How is control group constructed?		Stage of project when evaluation can begin	Time of observation	Example
Experimental design	Randomized	Lottery	Start	Pre , post and/or ex-post of control and treatment	“Training Disadvantaged Youth in Latin America: Jóvenes en Acción”
	Pipeline (or phase-in)	Those who will receive treatment in a secondary stage of project become control group	Start	Pre , post and/or ex-post of control and treatment	“Outside Funding and the Dynamics of Participation in Community Associations: Kenya”
Quasi experimental	Propensity score matching	Control group is matched to the treatment group by similar observable characteristics	Start	Pre , post and/or ex-post of control and treatment	“Youth Labour Training Programme: Peru Projoven”
	Instrumental variable	Control group selected based on exogenous variable (such as random incentive) which doesn't affect outcome of interest.	Start	Pre , post and/or ex-post of control and treatment	
	Constructed matched comparison	Control group is selected from existing labour market statistics	Start or end	Pre and/or post	“Beautiful Serbia”
Non experimental	Time series design	(No control group) – compare before and after outcomes of treatment (project group) only	Start	Pre and post test of a treatment group only	“Assessing the effect of Know About Business (KAB): Syria”
	Key informant or focus groups	Key stakeholders give summary judgment on whether outcomes can be attributed to intervention	End	Post only	

Most Rigor

Most resources

Least Rigor

Least resources

LIVE CASE STUDIES

The second portion of the Clinic allowed participants to apply theoretical learnings to live cases in the process of designing their evaluation plans. Of the ten¹ youth employment projects who responded to the competitive call for proposals, two projects were chosen to receive assistance under the Evaluation Clinic. Selected programmes from the Syrian Trust for Development and the Jordan River Foundation were chosen for demonstrating a relevant evaluation question, robust data and a focus on employment creation. Specific information on the selected projects is displayed in table 2.

Resource people and participants held live consultations with project staff from the two case studies. The goal of the consultations was to provide feedback leading to the finalization of evaluation design. The consultations covered three key areas:

- i) Objectives, expected impact and indicators
- ii) Selection of valid methodology
- iii) Data collection
- iv) Next Steps

¹ YEN would like to acknowledge ILO “Youth Employment and Migration” Project - Albania, Youth Employment Network-Democratic Republic of Congo, Streetkids International, Youth Business International, INJAZ Jordan and Youth Empowerment and Peace Building Organization - Sierra Leone for their proposals.

Table 2: Overview on Case Studies

	Project Inputs				Evaluation Inputs			
	Type of project	Number of beneficiaries	Start date	Evaluation completed in past?	Outcomes to be evaluated	Planned evaluation design	Randomization possible?	Available data
Case Study 1 JRF's Youth Career Initiative	Skills training in tourism industry	On average 20 are selected out of 90 applications	2007 (Global programme began in 1999)	Yes YCI programme in Brazil though no evaluation of net impact	-Labour market outcome -Quality of life	Comparison survey of treatment groups at 3 points in time: pre, post and 6 month post	Yes but not foreseen in original plan	Pre and post test surveys of treatment group only. Jordan national employment census
Case Study 2 Shabab's Youth Business Clinic	"One stop shop" for employability services (training, counseling and mediation)	-Pilot (2007-2009): 70 -Scale up (2009-2010): 1000	2007	No Evaluation completed of Shabab Know About Business (KAB) Programme though no evaluation of net impact	-Labour market outcomes -Positive Business perceptions -Community involvement -Business startups	Constructed matched control group	No (ethical reasons and no excess demand expected)	Pre and post test data from pilot project treatment group

Case Study 1: Jordan River Foundation's Youth Career Initiative (YCI)

YCI is a global initiative of the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) operating in 10 countries. YCI Jordan is implemented by IBLF's local partner: the Jordan River Foundation. The success of YCI relies on a strong partnership with the hotel industry which provide on-the-job training to disadvantaged young people. YCI Jordan is a small programme offering 6 months of life and vocational skills training for an average of 20 participants/year.

i) Objectives, expected impact and indicators

The planned evaluation of the YCI Jordan programme proposed to focus primarily on labour market outcomes, i.e. finding and maintaining employment, earnings increases, living standards as well as evaluating which components of the training were most useful towards finding employment. The consultation suggested that YCI broaden the scope of its objective to include other "knock-on" outcomes of the programme such as role modeling and attitudinal change. It was decided that the evaluation would measure four broad outcomes:

- 1- Labor market outcomes
- 2- Skills acquired by beneficiaries through different training components
- 3- Community outreach through "role models"
- 4- Attitudinal change in youth (in their interaction with their communities).

ii) Selection of valid methodology

Results of past evaluations of YCI programmes show high success in finding and maintaining employment. Past evaluations tracked participants up to 2 years after graduating from the programme and compared these results to baseline data. This approach to evaluation design shows a clear shift in outcome measurement over time (time series design) though it fails to measure net impact.

Acknowledging that YCI Jordan is a very small project, the emphasis was to find a pragmatic evaluation design that took into consideration constraints in data and resources while establishing causality between the training provided and labour market outcomes.

The large excess demand for spots (90 applications for 20 spots) in the YCI training provides ripe conditions for an experimental design. The recommendation is then to allow for a screening process that short lists twice the number of potential beneficiaries that will be finally selected, i.e. if YCI is planning to serve 20 people, the screening process should provide a group of 40 people with equal likelihood of being selected for participation. Both, hotels and YCI managers play a decisive role in the screening of potential beneficiaries. Once the short list of beneficiaries has been identified, spots into the project will be assigned randomly, so that each short listed candidate has a 50 percent probability of being selected. There are then 2 options for placing the control group:

- Control group would serve only data collection purposes meaning they will not be offered participation in any YCI trainings. To compensate for the discouragement effect, control group could be offered monetary incentives or credit for mobile phones (would also help with tracking survey via phone). The advantage to this option is the control group could be tracked for up to 3 years.

- Control group could be offered participation in the subsequent rounds of training (pipeline) though this would mean the control group could only be tracked for 6 months ex-post.

In both cases, applicants should be informed timely of the selection rules (i.e. one in two chance of getting into the project once short-listed).

iii) Data collection

The YCI Jordan evaluation proposed to collect baseline data prior to the training (pre), immediately following (post) and six months after training (ex-post) is completed. To facilitate the tracking of participants, it was suggested that YCI collect the names and phone numbers of family members and neighbors in addition to information on participants.

YCI had recently developed an ex-post survey and was still in the process of finalizing their baseline survey. It was recommended that YCI review the three surveys to ensure they are coherent allowing for comparison across observation points.

In the interest of reducing costs, YCI would complete data collection in-house. It was estimated that the total cost of the evaluation would be USD \$7,500 (\$20/survey, \$200/consulting day, 15% overhead).

iv) Next Steps

- Evaluation plan to be sent to YCI Global Team at IBLF in London for approval
- Funding options: raise additional funding from JRF or IBLF
- Add additional hotels sponsors to allow for increased participation
- Test pre and post survey instruments
- Resource people offered assistance in data analysis (Mattias Lundberg) and finalizing survey design

Case Study 2: Shabab's Youth Business Clinic

i) Objectives, expected impact and indicators

It was decided that YCB would evaluate the following broad outcomes and corresponding indicators:

- Labour market outcomes:** number of job applications, number of interviews, new jobs, and increased earnings
- Perceptions:** positive attitudes towards business
- Business outcomes:** number of business plans submitted to financial institutions, number of startups

The programme is a "one stop shop" for employability services, offering 3 different services (business training, job counseling and market mediation). Participants can choose to receive any or all of the services meaning each participant's range of services received will vary. The main challenge which arises in devising an evaluation plan for a multi component programme design is that it will be difficult to evaluate the differential impact of *each service and their possible combinations as this will result in a lack of statistical power* .

To solve this issue, BCP will perform a quantitative impact analysis of the effect of the program as a whole and ask for qualitative feedback about particular services. As BCP scales up, there will be larger samples at which point more rigorous quantitative impact evaluation can be undertaken.

ii) Selection of valid methodology

Young people interested in receiving services through BCP attend an orientation session organized by BCP staff. All orientation session participants will be asked to fill out a survey covering employment history, socioeconomic status and practical issues that could determine their entry into the programme.

It is expected that 20-30% of youth who attend the orientation session will register for BCP. A control group will be constructed from those who attend the orientation seminar but decide not to register for the services. Both treatment and control group will contain about 500 youth. In order to correct for a potential selection bias affecting the decision on participation, BCP will rely on instrumental variables that are expected to be largely uncorrelated to labor market outcomes. A "random encouragement" instrument was recommended to trigger participation without affecting labour market outcomes. This encouragement would include incentives of pens or notebooks distributed at orientation sessions as well as random recruitment phone calls.

Secondly, as BCP's services are primarily focused on University graduates, it was also proposed to market BCP services to as large an audience as possible thereby diversifying the characteristics of those that apply.

The discussion with experts helped BCP's project managers and evaluation team to refine their established methodology with improved strategies to minimize selection bias.

iii) Data collection

Baseline data will be collected at orientation sessions while tracking data will be collected one year after start of the programme. While the tracking survey has not yet been developed, the baseline is currently being tested in the field. The baseline survey contains 31 self administered questions.

BCP will use mixed methods in their evaluation design combining quantitative analysis on labour market outcomes with qualitative information collected via focus groups.

Data collection will be done by Syria Trust for Development's research team while data entry will be done over 4 months by a student team. Data analysis will also be done by the Research team using latest tools from SPSS. As a cost effective way of analyzing data, it was suggested to use [CSpro](#) from the US Census Bureau available free of charge. It was also cautioned to pay attention to seasonality when conducted the surveys, keeping consistent the timing that baseline and tracking surveys are done.

BCP plans to spend USD 15,000 on the evaluation.

Note on survey ethics: Evaluators should inform survey participants that all data will be kept confidential and that participation in the survey is voluntary and will not affect their participation in the programme.

iv) Next Steps

- Refine survey instruments and share them with resource people
- Test survey instruments and software for analysis
- Revise logic model
- Roll out evaluation in October 2009

Annex 1: Results from Brainstorming Session:

“What do you expect from YEN’s work on evaluations in the future?”

- Support in fundraising for evaluations
- Add one or two more case studies to Clinic
- Share knowledge thru papers and consultations
 - Project documents and ToRs for evaluations
 - A roster of evaluation experts
- Virtual Clinic: organize similar Clinics via online
- Clinics should cover other types of evaluations such as formative and process evaluations in addition to other qualitative techniques

Annex 2: Participants’ Evaluation

Participants were asked to state their opinion about the workshop and to come up with improvements for future YEN Evaluation Clinics.

a) Feedback on the workshop:

- Enjoyed the event, we came out with a good evaluation design, all questions were answered, good balance of presentations and discussions
- Outcomes and impact of our project are much clearer now
- Intellectually stimulating,
- I am impressed; we managed to achieve all objectives of the event, good No of participants
- Workshop was good as it provided and discussed practical examples, workshop room was not inspiring
- No of participants could have been higher
- Interesting workshop, not yet sure how to apply what I have learned, resource persons helped a lot
- I learned a lot on evaluations
- Cover more projects as cases for consultations, have also discussions on monitoring
- The event was very useful, it had too many presentations
- Damascus is a great place, fantastic opportunity to meet practitioners and other evaluation experts, No of participants and No of case studies good
- It was great fun!!
- I value the opportunity to talk to program people
- I would have loved to discuss evaluation questions of my program which was not selected as a case for live consultations
- Workshop should do more diagnosis. The event used interesting methods, e.g. fishbowl
- Very useful, learned a lot as a resource person
- Wonderful

- Very helpful
- Very constructive

b) Areas for improvement:

- Improve interaction among participants
- Circulate more case studies
- Also facilitate exchange on program issues
- Go for smaller break out groups, do more brainstorming
- Go for more participants and run three parallel live consultations on cases
- Discuss objective, expected impact and research question first; give presentation on overview of valid evaluation methods only once you discuss selection of a valid method
- Present more case studies on how to deal with small sample sizes and ex post evaluations
- Have more participants from programs and fewer discussions among resource persons
- Use Shabab and JRF staff as resource persons for future similar events
- Provide time to discuss other projects, mix participants of different levels, give final presentation on selected evaluation methods and explain them
- More examples
- Use more interactive methods, do not arrange chairs in lecture style

Annex 3: Agenda (links to presentations in blue – sign in required)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8:30 – 9:00	Registration/Check-in
9:00 – 9:15	Opening and Welcoming Remarks
9:15 – 9:45	Round of Introductions - <i>socio metric introduction</i>
9:45 – 10:30	A Real World Evaluation – Successful, Simple and Inexpensive, does it exist? <i>-Presentation of 2 examples of precise labour market programme evaluations that were achieved with small sample sizes</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:00	Menu of options - <i>Overview on methodologies for impact evaluations</i>
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Evaluation briefs - SHABAB's Business Clinic Programme & Jordan River Foundation's Youth Career Initiative
14:30 – 15:30	Parallel Live Consultations (Part 1): Objective, Expected impact and Indicators - Fishbowl
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00	Plenary discussion - <i>Collect and summarize findings from working groups</i>
17:00 – 17:30	Debrief and End

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
9:00 – 10:30	Parallel Live consultations (Part 2): Selection of Valid Method - Fishbowl
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:00	Plenary discussion - <i>Collect and summarize findings from working groups</i>
12:00 – 12:30	YEN's Evaluation Challenge - <i>YEN to present its plans to evaluate project under YEN Competitive Grant Scheme and Lead Countries</i>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Plenary: Data collection - <i>Panel discussion on data collection and analysis</i>
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee
15:30 – 16:00	Summary: What do the evaluation plans look like? - <i>Report on evaluation question, indicators, data collection and methodology for 2 projects</i>
16:00 – 16:30	Next steps - <i>What are the next steps for Shabab and JRF's evaluation?</i> <i>-What additional assistance is needed from taskforce?</i>
16:30 – 17:00	Event evaluation <i>-Flashlight evaluation</i>

Annex 4: Participants

<i>Name</i>	Organ	Position	Email
Resource persons			-
<i>Mattias Lundberg</i>	World Bank Children and Youth Unit	Senior Economist	mlundberg@worldbank.org
<i>Alexandre Kolev</i>	International Labour Organization (ILO)/International Training Centre (ITC)	Chief, Employment and skills development	a.kolev@itcilo.org
<i>Susana Puerto</i>	YEN	Technical officer	puerto-gonzalez@ilo.org
<i>Rita Almeida</i>	World Bank HDNSP	Economist	ralmeida@worldbank.org
<i>David Newhouse</i>	World Bank HDNSP	Economist	dnewhouse@worldbank.org
<i>Paul Duignan</i>	Massey University		paul@parkerduignan.com
<i>Drew Gardiner</i>	YEN	Technical officer	gardiner@ilo.org
<i>Markus Pilgrim</i>	YEN	Manager	pilgrim@ilo.org
Project Coordinators			
<i>Nader Kabbani</i>	Syria Trust for Development	Director of Research	n.kabbani@syriatrust.org
<i>Yamama Al-Oraibi</i>	SHABAB Project Manager/Syria Trust for Development	SHABAB Project Manager	y.aloraibi.shabab@syriatrust.org
<i>Manal Obieda</i>	Jordan River Foundation	Youth Initiatives Unit Manager	Manal_Obieda@jrf.org.jo
<i>Laila Samir Jum'a</i>	JRF	YCI Project Manager	
<i>Zeina Khouri</i>	JRF		zina_khoury@jrf.org.jo
<i>Iyad Yacoub</i>	Syria Trust for Development	Project Manager	i.yacoub.shabab@syriatrust.org
<i>Anas Dharweesh</i>	Syria Trust for Development	Project Manager	a.dharweesh.shabab@syriatrust.org
<i>Daniela Zampini</i>	ILO – Youth Employment and Migration, Albania	Chief Technical Advisor	zampini@ilo.org
Participants			
<i>Samia Bishara</i>	Jordan River Foundation		samia_bishara@pcsp.jrf.org.jo
<i>Mayyada Abu-Jaber</i>	Jordan Career Education Foundation	CEO	ceo@jcef.jo
<i>Rami Al-Karmi</i>	Shabakat Al Urdun - Netcorps Jordan	CEO	ralkarmi@ishabakat.org
<i>Asmaa Elbadawy</i>	Population Council, MENA, Cairo	Bixby Post-Doctoral Fellow,	aelbadawy@popcouncil.org

<i>Ms. Taghreed Al Waked</i>	Business Development Center	Director, Business Development and Enterprise Support	okayyali@bdc.org.jo
<i>Mohammad Alfoqha</i>	MOL Jordan		naseredin@yahoo.com
<i>Azza Hammoudi</i>	British Council Jordan	Regional Governance Manager	azza.hammoudi@britishcouncil.org.jo
<i>Noora El Wer</i>	Mahara Consultancy	Project Coordinator	n.elwer@mahara.jo
<i>Ms. Mais Alaswad</i>	Ministry of social affairs and labour - The Decision Support Unit		aswadster@gmail.com
<i>Ms Leen Habash</i>	FIRDOS	FIRDOS Special Projects Manager	l.habash.firdos@syriatrust.org
<i>Mr Zaki Mehchy</i>	The Syria Trust for Development	Research Analyst	z.mehchy@syriatrust.org
<i>Mr Mujahed Abdullah/Ahmed Al</i>	Public Corporation for Employment & enterprise Development, Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour	General Manager	acu-md@mail.sy
<i>Saeed Swaid</i>	SHABAB Programmer	The Syria Trust for Development	s.swaid.shabab@syriatrust.org
<i>Shawn ODonnell</i>	Intern	The Syria Trust for Development	odon0148@umn.edu
<i>Rudolph Abou Gebrael</i>	M & E Officer	ILO Beirut	abougebrael@ilo.org