

TAQEEM INITIATIVE

Egyptian Policy Lab: From Evidence to Policy

Report | 30 April 2015

Hosted by



Co-organized by



IDRC | CRDI

International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canada

Agenda

9:00 AM – 9:10 AM	Policy Lab objectives <i>Iris Boutros</i>
9:10 AM – 9:20 AM	Introduction to Taqueem Fund for Evaluation <i>Susana Puerto</i>
9:20 AM – 9:30 AM	Overview of evidence and knowledge gaps <i>Kevin Hempel</i>
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Discussion 1: Evidence and knowledge gaps on youth employment in Egypt
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Coffee break
11:00 AM – 11:10 AM	Overview of policy and action in youth employment <i>Iris Boutros</i>
11:10 AM – 12:10 PM	Discussion 2: The decision-making context
12:10 PM – 12:30 PM	Next steps

Participants

The Egyptian Policy Lab brought together 22 actors working in the area of youth employment policy making and programming: youth serving organizations, policy makers, academics, researchers, international organizations and the private sector.



Nihal El Megharbel
First Assistant, Ministry of
Planning, Monitoring and
Administrative Reform



Amina Ghanem
Executive Director,
Egyptian National
Competitiveness Council



Dr. Raafat Abbas
Head of the Technical
Office, Social Fund for
Development



Amal Mowafy
Chief Technical Advisor,
ILO



Farah Osman
Operations Manager,
Education for Employment



Hossam Allam
Chair of National
Employment Pact, Founder
of Cairo Angels, and
Managing Director of
Maintenance Services,
Hassan Allam Construction



Ayman Ismail
Co-founder, Nahdet el
Mahrousa, and Jameel
endowed Chair of
Entrepreneurship,
American University in
Cairo



Nathalie Milbach-Bouché
Regional Team Leader,
Inclusive Growth and
Sustainable Development,
UNDP



Magdy Amin
Association of Upper
Egypt For Education and
Development



Mervette El-Shamma'a
Advisor, Career Guidance,
Employment Promotion
Programme, GIZ



Natalia Menhall
Operations Manager,
Beyond Reform &
Development



Raed M. Sharif
Senior Programme Officer,
International Development
Research Centre



Shawn Powers
Senior Policy Manager, J-
PAL



Noura Kamel
Policy Programme
Manager, Silatech



Magda Samy
Chairman of Board,
Ebtessema Foundation



Paul Dyer
Knowledge Programme
Manager, Silatech



Iris Boutros
Senior Program Specialist,
International Development
Research Centre



Amr El Abd
Country Representative in
Egypt, Silatech



Abdel Rahman Nagy El
Helaly
Policy Manager, J-PAL



Kevin Hempel
Independent Consultant



Susana Puerto
Senior Youth Employment
Specialist, ILO



Felix Weidenkaff
Technical Officer, ILO

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. Despite the large number of employment promotion programs in Egypt, there is very little knowledge about which interventions work and which don't due to the lack of quality Monitoring and Evaluation
2. As a result, key stakeholders list the lack of information on what works as a key barrier, in particular in the areas of career guidance, skills development, and entrepreneurship
3. Stakeholders stress the lack of diagnostic information needed to design quality interventions, such as the motivations and expectations of youth, what sectors of the economy are growing, and future skills needs by employers
4. Moving forward, in order to influence the key stakeholders involved with the design of policies, to adopt local and international lessons learned, it is important to identify the right channels of communication

PART I: Objectives

The Egyptian Policy Lab was held in Amman, Jordan, on 30 April 2015. The Policy Lab provided a unique platform for policy makers, youth serving organizations, researchers, academics and private sector representatives to discuss the challenges and opportunities to strengthen evidence based decision making in the field of youth employment. The Policy Lab was co-sponsored and hosted by Silatech in the context of the Arab Youth Employment conference.

The Policy Lab came in the context of the Taqueem Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment, a technical cooperation programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO), that aims to improve labour market outcomes of young people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by strengthening evidence-based programming and policymaking. The Policy Lab was organized by the ILO in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a member of the Taqueem Council – an advisory body of research institutions working on youth employment in the Middle East and North Africa¹.

The Policy Lab was conceptualized as the starting point of Taqueem's policy engagement work to support the Government of Egypt and partners in designing and implementing integrated employment policy responses, drawing on the evidence base from rigorous evaluation of youth employment programmes.

[Taqueem Fund for Evaluation](#) | [Policy Lab - participant biographies](#) | [Arab Youth Employment conference website](#) | [Egypt: Youth Employment Inventory \(YEI\)](#)

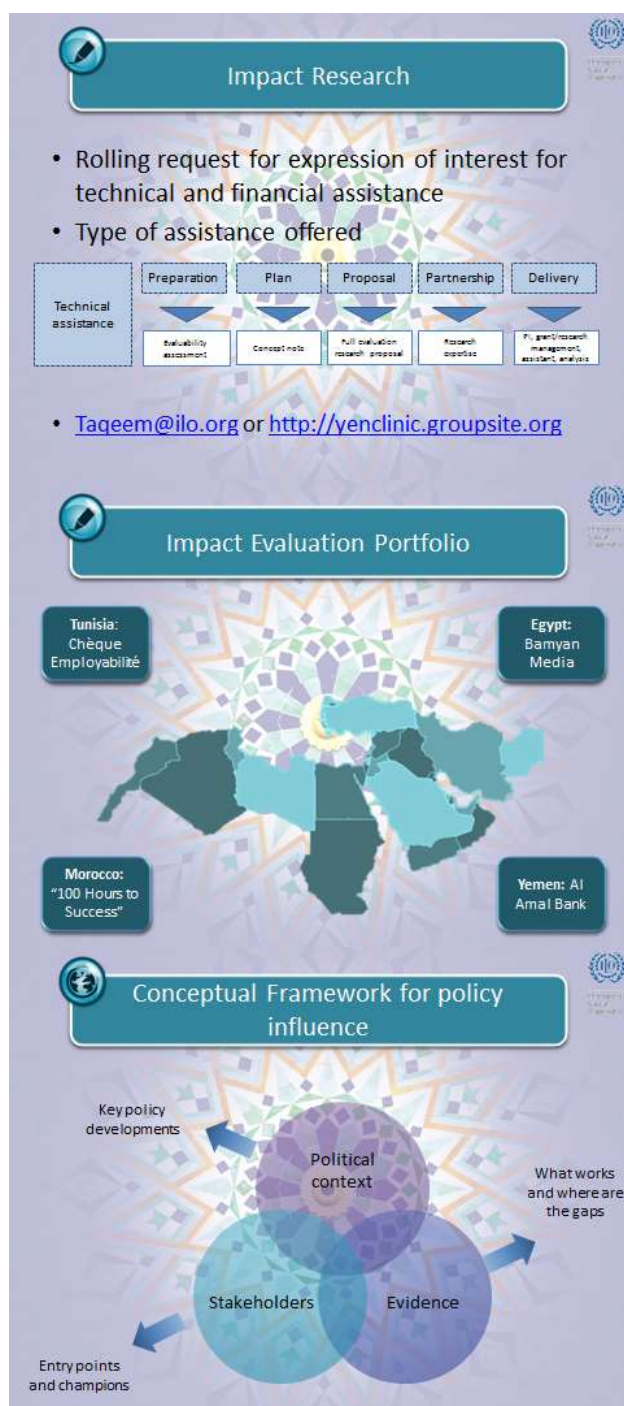
¹ The Taqueem Council includes members from the following institutions: World Bank, Silatech, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI), Centre de Recherche en Économie et Statistique (CREST), American University of Beirut, American University in Cairo, American University of Sharjah, and Swiss Academy for Development.

PART 2: Introduction to Taqueem Fund for Evaluation

Susana Puerto:



- ILO focus on what works in youth employment
- **Strategic approach** of Taqueem Fund for Evaluation: influencing policy through development of research (rigorous methodologies for measuring impact) and capacity development (supporting organizations such as Ebtessama Foundation in terms of M&E)
- ILO offers basic and advanced evaluation training.
- (Basic) Evaluation Clinics target different actors in the youth employment arena, including implementers and policy makers, and focus on the importance of measuring results
- Community of Practice: scope for more rigorous impact research



- Need to invest more in impact research to better advise constituents, particularly policymakers
- Focus on key knowledge gaps
- What is the evidence?
- What type/level of evidence is needed and how is it translated effectively into action?
- ILO provides different services and technical assistance according to the needs of organizations

- Impact evaluations supported by Taqeeem in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen

- Presentation of conceptual framework for policy influence
- Political context: What are key policy developments?
- Evidence: Identify knowledge gaps
- Stakeholders: How are decisions made?

PART III: Overview of evidence and knowledge gaps

Kevin Hempel

POLICIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN AMERICA			
PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT	SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED YOUTH	BUILDING SKILLS	IMPROVING SAFETY NET AND WORK SUPPORT
Expanding Preschool Access for Disadvantaged Children Hirokazu U. Goetz and Thane W. Harrison	Designing Effective Mentoring Programs for Disadvantaged Youth Philip B. Lerner	Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities in the United States Robert L. Lerman	Supporting Low-Income Workers Through Refundable Child-Care Credits James P. Ziliak
Addressing the Parenting Divide to Promote Early Childhood Development for Disadvantaged Children Anita K. Kuhl	Expanding Summer Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Youth Amy E. Schwartz and Sarah Lee Uhlal	Improving Employment Outcomes for Disadvantaged Students Harry J. Holzer	Building on the Success of the Earned Income Tax Credit Hilary Hoynes
Reducing Unintended Pregnancy for Low-Income Women Robert Goetz and Joanna Vonnor	Addressing the Academic Barriers to Higher Education Rudger Terry Long	Providing Disadvantaged Workers with Skills to Succeed in the Labor Market Bryan McCann, Lisa Perna-Johnson, and Jillian Buck	Encouraging Work Sharing to Reduce Unemployment Katharine G. Abraham and Susan N. Houseman
			Designing Thoughtful

- Other countries have been able to generate sufficient evidence on what works to address key issues such as poverty reduction, youth development, etc.
- Thanks to a sufficient number of studies and evaluations, researchers and policy makers can draw conclusions on what interventions are most promising
- Example: Policies to address poverty in America (US), an initiative by Brookings Institution
- Promising interventions based on robust research include increasing summer employment opportunities for low-income youth and expanding apprenticeships
- Other research institutes have started similar initiatives
- Example: Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy with a review of “Social Programs that Work”
- Another example: Child Trends, with a review of what works in the area of youth development

Social Programs That Work

Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy
A NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION

HOME ABOUT THIS SITE SOCIAL PROGRAMS REVIEWED RELATED RESOURCES WORKSHOP RCT COMPETITION

Employment and Welfare

The Interventions We've Identified Are Linked Below

Those found through an expert review process to meet the **Coalition's "Top Tier" evidence standard** are denoted "Top Tier" those found to require only one more step to meet this standard – e.g., replication of their studies, sustained effects in an additional well-conducted randomized controlled trial – are denoted "Near Top Tier". The other listed interventions have been found promising by Coalition staff but have not yet been identified by the expert panel as Top Tier or Near Top Tier – in some cases, because of study limitations (such as only short-term follow-up) that indicate the need for additional testing.

Top Tier Career Academics (small learning communities in low-income high schools, offering academic and career/technical courses as well as workplace opportunities). Randomized controlled trial shows a sizable positive impact on earnings of participants eight years after their scheduled high school graduation.

Near Top Tier Nevada's Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment Program for Unemployment Insurance (its elements, an online review of their UI eligibility and accelerated reemployment services). Randomized controlled trial shows a sizable increase in earnings and net savings to the taxpayer.

Catalina Self-Sufficiency Project (earnings supplements for low-income welfare recipients who find full-time work and reduce welfare). Randomized controlled trials show sizable increase in participant income work and reduce welfare).

"Top Tier" Standard
Interventions shown in well-designed and implemented randomized controlled trials, preferably conducted in typical community settings, to produce sizable, sustained benefits to participants and/or society.

"Near Top Tier" Standard
Interventions shown to meet almost all elements of the Top Tier standard, and which only need one additional step to qualify. This category includes, for example, interventions that meet all elements of the standard in a single site, and just need a replication trial to confirm the initial findings and establish that they generalize to other sites.

Child TRENDS

ABOUT US OUR RESEARCH DATABASE WHAT WORKS HISPANIC INSTITUTE

LINKS SYNTHESSES

We have synthesized what we have learned from experimentally evaluated programs in the LINKS (Linking Interventions to Nurture Kids Successfully) database into fact sheets and grouped them into three categories:

- Program Population**
Latino/Hispanic, African American, Older Youth
- Program Outcome**
Social-Emotional Difficulties, Early Language and Literacy, Acting-Out/Externalizing, Asthma Education, Obesity, Substance Use, Reproductive Health, Civic Engagement
- Program Approach**
Home Visiting, Summer Learning, Parent Involvement, Self-Sufficiency

PROGRAM POPULATION

- What Works for Disadvantaged and Adolescent Parent Programs: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Social Programs and Interventions
August 2012
- What Works for Male Children and Adolescents: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions
August 2012
- What Works for Female Children and Adolescents: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions
August 2012

WHAT WORKS

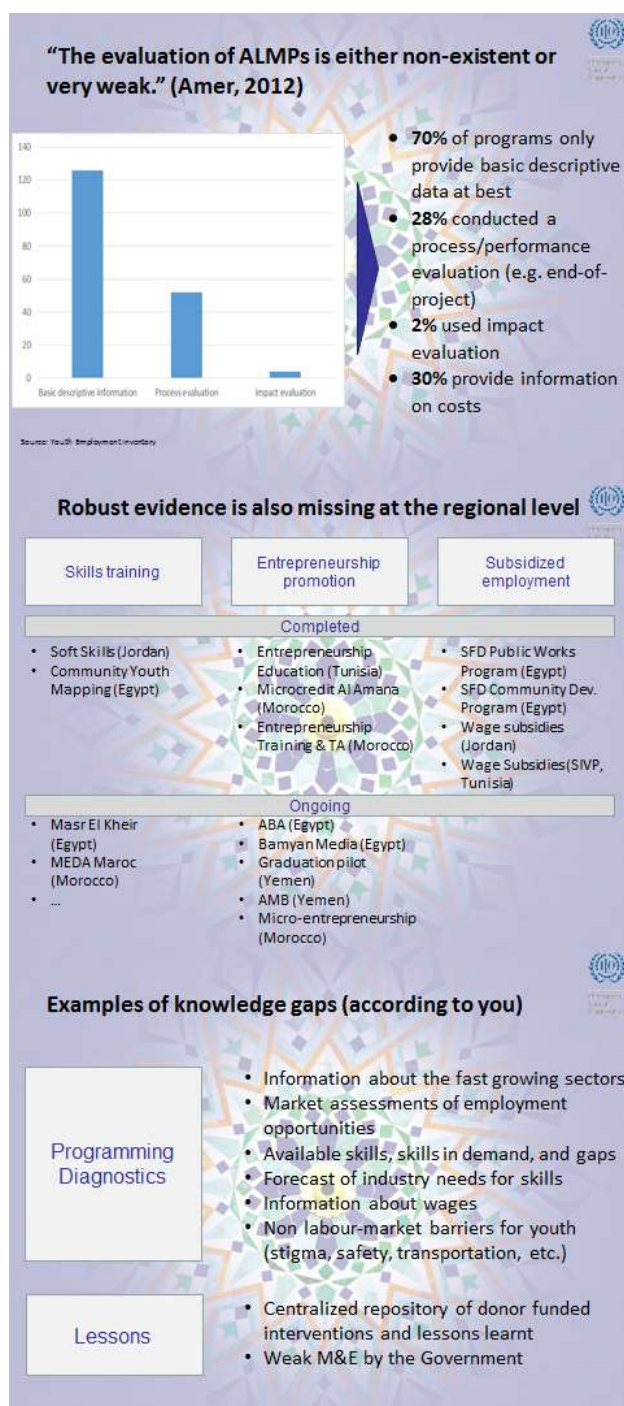
LINKS SYNTHESSES
LIST OF PROGRAMS
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FORM

SEARCH RESOURCES
Search by Keyword, Author

TREND LINES BLOG
Poverty's Perils and Persistent Toll on Young Children
Children are the poorest age group in the country, and among children, the youngest are the poorest.



- Knowing what works in the area of employment promotion requires us to know certain number of things about employment programmes, including placement rates, retention rates, and cost per beneficiary
- Presentation of key things to know (see slide)
- So where do we stand today in knowing what works about youth employment in Egypt?
- The ILO has compiled an Inventory of active labour market interventions targeting young people in Egypt: The “Youth Employment Inventory (YEI)”
- Majority of interventions focuses on skills training
- More than 180 interventions demonstrate that significant resources are being invested



- Despite the large number of past and current programs, we have very limited knowledge about how successful they are
- Majority of interventions only provides basic descriptive information.
- Only very few interventions have cost or evaluation information

- The lack of good information and relevant studies is not unique to Egypt, it is a challenge for the entire MENA region
- Only a very limited number of quality evaluations have been conducted in the region (see presentation)

- Prior to Policy Lab, we asked several key stakeholders about their main knowledge gaps
- In addition to the lack of knowledge about what works (lessons), a lot of information needed to design employment projects and programs is also missing (diagnostics), such as what the skills needs of employers are and which sectors of the economy are growing

Conclusions

- The majority of employment promotion programs implemented by public and non-public stakeholders lack strong M&E arrangements, and results tend to be weakly documented
- In particular, robust evaluations are extremely scarce (albeit growing)
- It seems currently impossible to draw firm conclusions about what works and what doesn't in the Egyptian context (no critical mass of quality evidence)
- Many knowledge gaps appear to be related to programming diagnostics (labor demand, skills needs, etc.)

Discussion: What are the most prominent knowledge gaps to inform programs and policies?

- Diagnostics (market opportunities, skills, barriers, etc.)
- Does work? Is ... effective?
- Concrete program design questions by type of intervention? (training, entrepreneurship, etc.)
 - What...?
 - How can...?
- ...

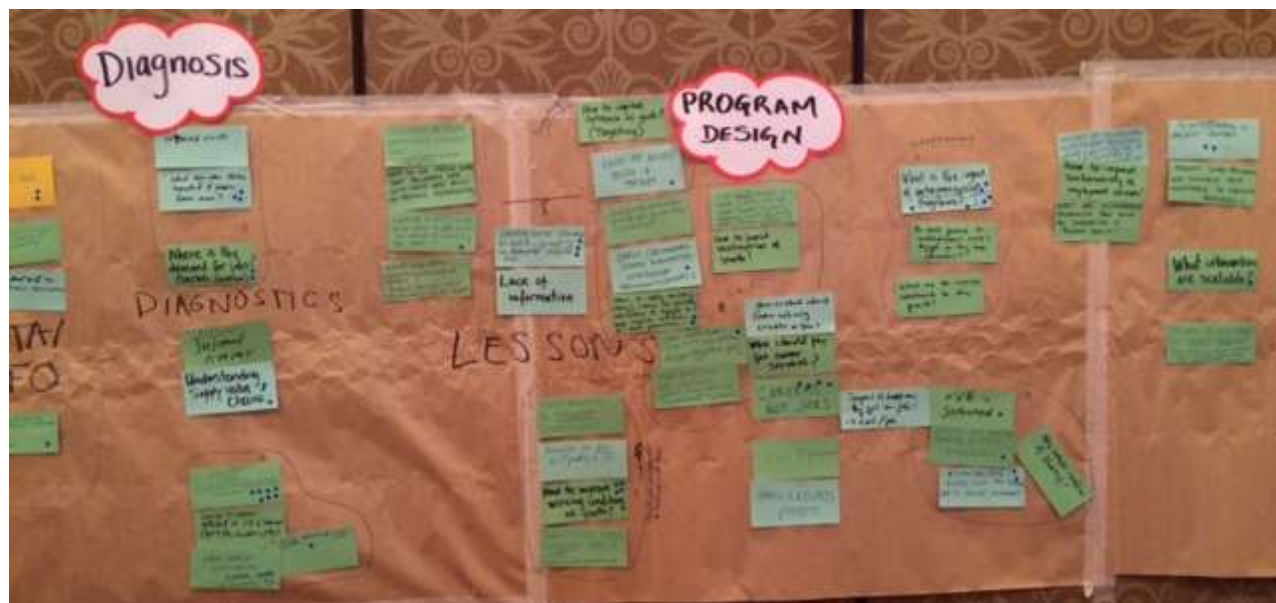
- In conclusion, due to the lack of quality evaluations of employment programs in Egypt and the MENA region, it is currently impossible to know what really works to promote employment, and we need to invest in better evaluation of programs and policies

- See presentation

DISCUSSION 1: Knowledge and Programme Design Gaps

METAPLAN

Participants were asked the question: What are the most prominent knowledge gaps to inform policies and programme design? Each participant received four dots (each vote is worth USD 1 million) to prioritize and allocate funds to research topics.



The following knowledge gaps have been identified as crucial gaps in both knowledge and programme design

Key areas of knowledge gaps	
Data and information	
▪ Access to data	How to improve access to available data on youth employment?
▪ Database of interventions	Need for a database/knowledge platform of youth employment interventions that is updated, used by all stakeholders and has national geographic coverage
▪ Labour market information	Need to provide more labour market information for young people which requires access to project development plans
Diagnostics	
▪ Motivation	What are the motivations, inspirations and labour market expectations of young people
▪ Skills needs	What are the skills needed five years from now?
▪ Labour	Where is the demand for jobs (sectors, locations)?

demand	
▪ Value chains and entrepreneurship	How do young entrepreneurs connect to value chains and industries, especially in the context of the informal economy?
▪ Social dimension	How does the local context influence the decision making of individuals?

Key knowledge gaps in programme design	
Quality of jobs	
▪ Working conditions	▪ How to improve working conditions of young people?
Skills	
▪ Career development	▪ How can programme designs be improved to provide careers rather than jobs for youth?
▪ Use of evidence on primary education	▪ How to apply existing evidence on primary education to Egypt to help improve outcomes for next generation?
▪ Internships	▪ What is the impact of internship programmes during secondary school?
Entrepreneurship	
▪ Impact of entrepreneurship interventions	▪ What is the impact of entrepreneurship programmes (opportunity-versus necessity-driven entrepreneurs)?
Targeting	
▪ Access to young people	▪ What are effective mechanisms to target and reach young people?
Sustainability and project design	
▪ Decentralization in project designs	▪ How to improve project design and delivery when delivery is outsourced?
▪ Scale of interventions	▪ Which interventions are scalable?
Monitoring and Evaluation	
▪ M&E practices	▪ What are effective M&E practices targeted at youth (responsiveness)?
▪ Impact assessment	▪ Exchange of data: moving from evaluation to impact assessment
▪ Government	▪ How can M&E arrangements of government initiatives be improved?
Consultation mechanism	

Key knowledge gaps in programme design

▪ Youth involvement in project design	▪ How to make youth an integral part in the design process?
▪ Government involvement	▪ How to involve government in the design process?
▪ Coordination and consultation	▪ What are effective coordination and consultation mechanisms?

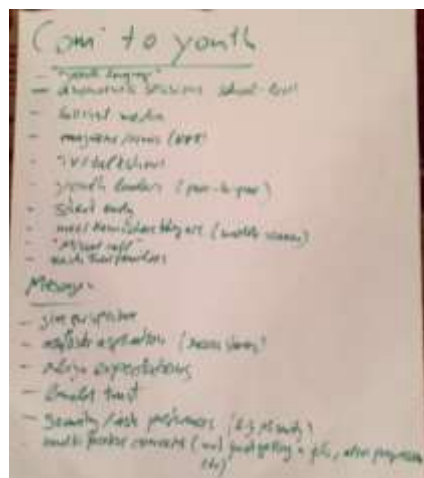
Summary:

- Diagnostics: Strong interest to better understand youth perceptions/motivations, labour market needs, and labour demand.
- Program design: A lot of emphasis by Policy Lab participants on
 - Skills development to better understand career development and skills mismatch,
 - Entrepreneurship (impact of different instruments), and
 - Successful Mechanisms to involve young people in the design of programmes.
- Moving forward, the Taaqeeem initiative will seek to address knowledge gaps in program design as this is within its mandate and focus.

DISCUSSION 2: How do we need to communicate with decision makers?

Participants were then asked “Who is making the decisions around policy and programme design?” and “How are those decisions being made?” Answers were categorized into five areas: youth, implementers, researchers, government and private sector.

Communication to Youth



Communication

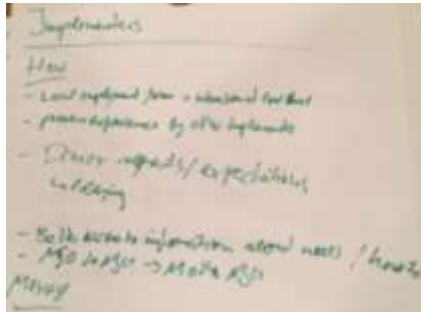
- “Youth language”
- Awareness sessions at school level
- Social media
- Magazine/comics (NEP)
- TV/talk shows
- Youth leaders (peer to peer)
- Start early
- Meet them where they are (mobile services)
- “Missed call”
- Reach their families

Messages:

- Give perspective
- Foster aspiration (success stories)

- Align expectations
- Build trust
- Security/risk preferences (e.g. job security)
- Multi-faceted concerns (not just getting a job, also progression etc.)

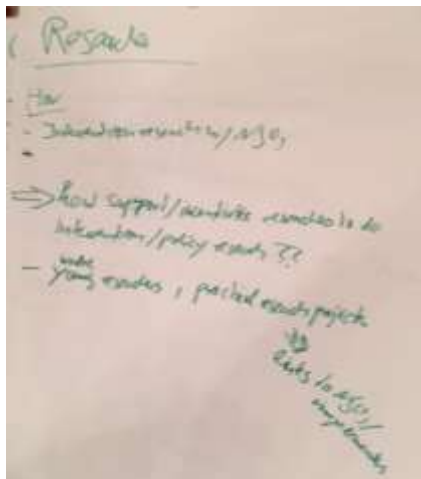
Communication to Implementers



How

- Local employment forum → interaction and local level
- Proven experience by other implementers
- Donor requests/expectations → lobbying
- Better access to information about needs/how to
- NGO to NGO / mother NGO

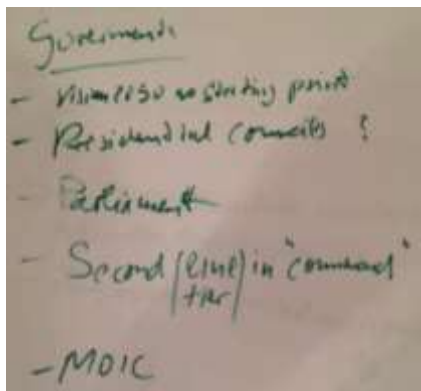
Communication to Researchers



How

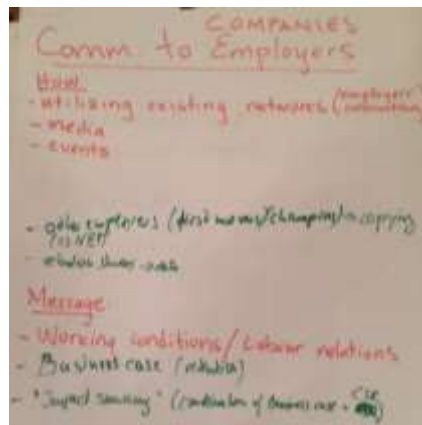
- Intervention research with NGOs
- How support/incentivize researchers to do intervention/policy research?
- Involve young researchers
- Practical research projects
- Links to NGOs/implementers

Communication to Governments



- Vision 2030 as starting point
- Presidential Councils
- Parliament
- Second line/tier in “command”
- MOIC

Communication to Companies/Employers



How

- Utilizing existing networks (employers' associations)
- Media
- Events
- Other employers (first movers/champions) → copying (as NEP)
- Retention studies → data

Message

- Working conditions/labour relations
- Business case (retention)
- “Impact sourcing” (combination of business case + CSR)

NEXT STEPS

The ILO's Taqueem Initiative has chosen Egypt as the first country to pilot its “Policy Influence Plan” (PIP). Below are the PIP's three specific objectives to influence policy and corresponding upcoming activities.

Objective 1: Dissemination of findings from the impact evaluations supported by the Taqueem Fund for Evaluation and other relevant evidence.

- **September/October 2015:** A policy, evidence and stakeholder review will be conducted which entails identifying and analysing the country level structures that drive decision-making, and documenting the country-specific policy history with regard to Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) for youth
- **Ongoing (deadline September 7 2015):** Evidence will continue to be built using rigorous impact evaluation methodologies including through an ongoing call for proposals granting up to \$650,000 in funding for impact and M&E research:
 - EN: http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_379231/lang--en/index.htm
 - FR: http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_379475/lang--fr/index.htm
 - AR: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/WCMS_379791/lang--ar/index.htm

Objective 2: Strengthening monitoring and evaluation practices of youth employment policies and interventions in countries of focus

- **Oct 2015 – Feb 2016:** M&E consultation workshop will be held with key implementing organizations in order to provide advice on results based measurement
- **October 2015:** M&E training workshop. The workshop is a 3-5 day event for 20-40 participants and should follow the participatory and action-oriented curriculum developed by the ILO and its partners.

Objective 3: Linking up with local evaluation institutions for anchoring of the Taqueem evaluation model, dissemination of impact evaluation findings, further use of data collected through impact evaluations and development of new impact evaluations

- **August 2015 – August 2016:** The ILO will engage in a new partnership with the Population Council Egypt as the local implementing partner for the Taqueem Initiative. The partner will contribute to capacity development and policy engagement and advocacy in order to increase evidence uptake.



CONTACT

Taqeem Initiative: What Works in Youth
Employment
International Labour Organization
4 route des Morillons
CH-12111 Genève 22
Switzerland
Website: www.ilo.org/taqeem
Email: taqeem@ilo.org