

Closing of Webinar: Public Works and Public Employment Programmes: What role in socioeconomic recovery?

Friday 21 Oct. 16h20

- It has been a very informative and insightful two days. I am sure that we could spend weeks discussing each of these fabulous presentations. And it's great that so many of you could attend. At peaks I believe we had over 115 participants.
- And given the attendance and interest, we really hope that will be able to continue to make this an annual event, and we hope that many of you will be able to present your new or continued research next year!
- Before actually closing and thanking everyone, I would just like to take us back to the **three key questions** originally asked by Sangheon at the beginning of the webinar yesterday:
 - 1- **How can Public Employment Programmes help to speed up the recovery?**
 - 2- **How can they help make the recovery more equitable?**
 - 3- **How can they make the recovery more transformative?**
- **Yesterday, we saw that they have played a key role in helping economies recover for the past 100 years** and that there are striking similarities with why the ILO engaged in PWP in the first place – to address mass unemployment, peace and social justice!
 - Unemployment and poverty are **key drivers for conflict**.
 - **Full employment** has been promoted since at least the 1940's.
 - The role of the Government as an employer of last resort especially for countries that are not creating sufficient formal jobs was highlighted.
 - But a really important point, in our view, is that it is not just the quantity of jobs, but the **quality of jobs** that is important and is essential when we are talking about a **human centred recovery**.
- **First on the Recovery.** Several presentations highlighted the wider economic effects, but also other effects like the environmental impacts (IUCN study), and different spill overs of these programmes. And these effects may actually be even larger than we thought!
- While we have always known that these programmes have an important multiplier effect, the paper on India from Paul really challenges us to think whether such effects could be present in other contexts as well and whether we have generally been underestimating these effects, which in turn has important implications for **speeding up the recovery**
- **Second on an Equitable Recovery.** Through the various examples over the 2 days, we have also seen that these **PEP** can transform the lives of the individuals who participate, whether through improving their psychosocial wellbeing (Rohingya Refugee Camps, France) and helping them make a contribution to society and addressing many of the social ills we face. **PEPs will be able to ensure that the recovery is more equitable.**
- The presentations from yesterday and today I believe really showcased the **intrinsic value of work** and really demonstrates, I think, what the ILO means by a **human centred recovery**, but also one that is contributing to the “humanitarian-development-(and if designed well, also the peace)- nexus”.
- **Third on the Speed of Recovery.** We have also seen that by directing these programmes, more broadly, but also into green and care sectors – yesterday's case of **Pakistan** and **South Africa** - they can support the transformation in these sectors and a **Just Transition** whether through enhancing resilience or supporting transitions to formality.

- **And what about the Future.** Kate's presentation today questioned the FoW and technological change, many of the presentations also showcased how job opportunities through PWP/PEPs can contribute to productive activities in different sectors, can also provide skills, dignity from the work offered and with the potential to address multiple challenges (economic, social, environmental) at the same time.
- The presentations today on the Austrian Job Guarantee also highlight the important task ahead of us to address unemployment, social inclusion, health and wellbeing, and together we need to ensure that the benefits (and impact) of public employment are known and to make these programmes part of a **social contract** where they can play this vital role of *really* ensuring that **no one is left behind**.
- And finally we have seen that despite many changes, and there are many trade-offs in the world of work, but public employment programmes will remain as relevant as ever, in both high income and low income settings – as history has shown.
- On a personal level, I am quite excited to finally see this webinar materialize, since many of us here today have been promoting and working on these issues for many years through the EIP and now through this Branch.
- What I think has clearly emerged from these 2-days is that these programmes can **speed up the recovery, make it more equitable, and contribute to a just transition**. The various presentation clearly pointed this way.
- So I would like to end by leaving you with just three words about **what the Socioeconomic Recovery should be about**. The three words are - **Fast, equitable and transformative** - let's make this possible for the sake of those who are the **most vulnerable and who still continuing to live in poverty**.