



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Youth Employment Programme (YEP) – TECHNICAL NOTES

# Employment services that work for young people

### Introduction

Helping young people<sup>1</sup> acquire quality jobs that transition successfully into modern careers is of primary concern. The global economy is experiencing rapid changes: the youth unemployment rate is three times higher than that of adults. Nonetheless, there are important variations across regions. The consequences of poor transitions into a changing world of work can be observed in: long-term unemployed young people in developed countries; unemployed university graduates in emerging countries; and those in low-productivity family farms in low-income countries.

Employment services are one of the most cost-effective mechanisms to link jobseekers to available work. These services can be delivered by public, private, and non-government providers to all unemployed and active jobseekers. Assisting young people, however, often requires a combination of mainstream services and targeted approaches for a successful transition into employment.

This technical note underlines that making employment services effective involves tailoring the types and nature of these services to the different needs and circumstances of young jobseekers in accordance with their readiness for employment, as well as their personal aspirations. While pertinent to all employment services, this technical note is specific to countries with emerging and low-income economies, often faced with tight budgets, more limited institutional capacities, and a less developed offer of employment services and providers.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the terms “youth” and “young people” are used interchangeably to characterise young persons aged from 15 to 24 years inclusive, unless otherwise specified.

---

## 1. Youth employment challenges

Connecting young jobseekers to their first job and ensuring a quality of employment poses different challenges than for adult workers. The latest collected data shows that young people are still three times more likely than adults to be unemployed (ILO, 2017). Evidence also shows that a poor set of first transitions into employment negatively affects a young person's long-term career and income. The latest labour market trends demonstrate an increase in different youth groups experiencing labour market difficulties and decent work deficits, although with strong variations across regions. These difficulties that young people are experiencing help to understand why labour market interventions by employment services providers require more refined and adapted instruments for diverse needs. Additionally, numerous drivers of change will have an impact on labour markets and in the supply and demand for labour in the future, such as: climate change; the sharing economy; robotics; rapid urbanization; and a prominent pool of young talents in emerging markets competing for qualified jobs in the global job market (WEF, 2016).

- **Global youth unemployment remains high and decent work deficits persist.** The ILO estimates that the total number of unemployed young people was approximately 66.6 million in 2017<sup>2</sup>. Young people are also more likely to work in informal jobs than adults (in developing countries, 19 out of 20 young women and men are working informally) and are twice as likely as adults to be in precarious employment (ILO, 2017a).
- **Varied demographic trends and their impact on the employment prospects for young people.** Opposite shifts in labour markets are taking place worldwide; on the one hand, developed countries are experiencing ageing populations, and on the other, developing countries have to deal with fewer quality jobs and outmigration. These shifts are impacting the younger generations and their prospects for decent employment; they also translate into different strategies and services to help young people transition into employment.
- **High rates of young people are among the working poor and/or in poor-quality work.** Extreme and moderate working poverty continues to have a disproportionate effect on young people in emerging and developing economies. In 2017, an estimated 16.7 per cent of these were living below the extreme poverty threshold, compared to 10.6 per cent of employed adults (ILO, 2017a). High rates of working poverty among young people can be a reflection of the greater probability of their being in temporary or part-time employment relationships; or new forms of employment associated with low wages, limited access to training, and low levels of social protection.
- **School-to-work transition.** For a successful transition between school and the world of work to take place, young people need to acquire certain skill sets and have professional work experiences that can help smooth the process into employment. Some transitions might take time, and also depend on the labour market demand and the availability of information and assistance on employment opportunities. On average, it takes 13.8 months for youth (aged 15 -29) to transition into a satisfactory job, according to the ILO school-to-work transition surveys (SWTS) (ILO, 2017a) -- hence the particularly important role of employment services at this stage in the life of a young person.

---

<sup>2</sup> ILO modelled estimates, November 2017.

- **Willingness to migrate, and labour migration.** Poorer quality available jobs -- as well as the changing nature of the global economy -- have rendered the global labour market more mobile across and within borders, particularly for young people. The ILO estimates that 70 per cent of the international migrants are under 30 years old (ILO, 2017a). In addition, labour market analyses from 29 developing countries found that young people are 40 per cent more likely to migrate to urban areas than adults (World Bank, 2015).
- **Rise of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) populations.** Equally troubling is the rise of a labour market phenomenon the NEET rate (ILO, 2015a); the latest data available show that globally, more than one in five young people are now in this group, and three out of four of those are young women (ILO, 2017a). The NEET population includes different vulnerable groups of young people, especially those who are discouraged and therefore not looking for a job anymore after several unsuccessful attempts.
- **Mismatch between skills supply and skills demand.** Skills mismatch represents the gap between the skills learned in schools and training institutions and the different skills needed in the labour market. Surveys repeatedly highlight the fact that employers cannot find the skilled workers they need. For example, according to the 2016-2017 talent shortage survey from Manpower, 40 per cent of employers report having difficulties finding staff; this is the highest percentage since 2007 (ManpowerGroup, 2017). Technological, socio-economic, and demographic developments are transforming job profiles, but also creating and destroying jobs in numerous occupations (ILO, 2017a).

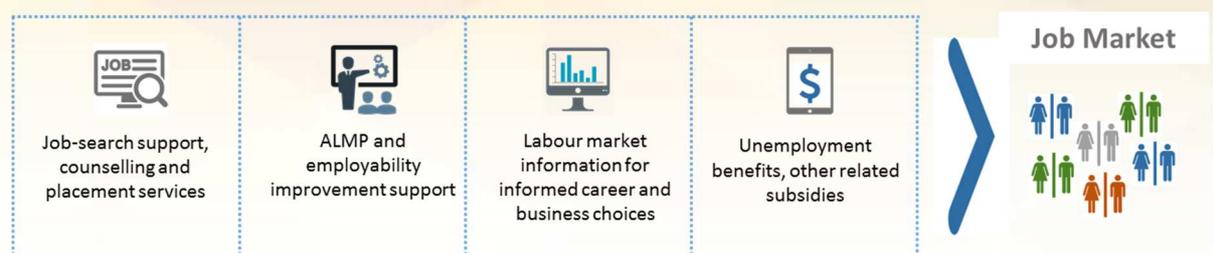
## 2. Employment services responsive to young people's challenges

Young people's profiles vary considerably in terms of age, gender, place of residence, civil status, income, skills and occupation, education and culture. In an increasingly competitive global economy, employment services need to be more accessible and readily available to young jobseekers with very different needs, including today's media savvy generation, and disadvantaged young people who often require a wider and extended range of services.

Employment services are designed to increase the promptness, efficiency, and quality of the match between jobseekers and available jobs. They are considered as the most cost-effective of the active labour market policies (ALMP), e.g., the cost per worker placed in a new job. Plenty of job matches happen, and should, without the intervention of an employment service; but impact evaluations have shown that well-run employment services can help jobseekers find a job faster, and often with better quality than if they looked on their own. This impact is understandably achieved in the short-term – a better job or job found more quickly -- while other interventions affect longer-term job prospects, such as education and skills training.

Ensuring access to employment services for everyone is the responsibility of Public Employment Services (PES). For the non-profit and non-governmental organization (NGO) sector, partnering with private employment agencies is a growing practice to improve accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of diverse groups in the labour market. The provision of employment services encompasses a wide range of interventions, comprising of job-search support, counselling, and placement services; labour market information for informed career and business decisions; a wide range of active labour market programmes to enhance (re)integration into the labour market; and unemployment benefits as well as other related subsidies (see figure 1).

**Figure 1. Mainstream services provided by PES**



Source: ILO, 2018.

Mainstream provisions of employment services can be oriented towards the needs of specific target groups, including young people. A targeted approach helps to understand differential transition patterns into employment, and the combination of services that can be used to effectively support them. The quantity and intensity of services provided will strongly depend on: the needs of the population groups requiring them, individual circumstances, and available resources (e.g., number and skill-mix of staff, funds, equipment, and infrastructure). Given the declining resources in many PES, it is vital to deliver services in such a way that individuals can be connected effectively with the labour market while avoiding duplication and waste.

### *Adapting employment services to young people*

PES are constantly seeking innovative ways to deliver more effectively to young clients. However, it is often a challenge to find the best means to reach young jobseekers, particularly those most in need of their services. Many young jobseekers might not be aware of the support that is available to them, and face a harder time in finding a job. Others become discouraged during the transition between school and employment, and might withdraw from the job search and services offered in their country.

It is crucial that young people feel they can rely on employment services providers to conduct an informed, organized, and more effective job search -- whether they are: just graduating from high school, university or a technical school; in transition between early jobs; or returning to work after family obligations. This can be achieved by making conventional employment services more accessible, including through online tools, social media platforms, and related activities that are modified or directed to serve young people particularly. The challenge of reaching out to them cannot be addressed by the PES alone. Multi-channelled approaches with the involvement of various partners and the young people themselves have shown positive results (ILO, 2014).

Table 1 reviews the core employment services, emphasizing whether youth-friendly adaptations are needed in the delivery of these services. In most cases, only minor tweaks are necessary, with the exception of multi-service interventions and active labour market programmes in which youth-specific models are particularly important to ensure development of core work skills. For low-income developing countries, resources for employment services are often scarce; in such cases, it is more effective to improve the core services and quality of job listings and pilot a strong youth employment programme, than to attempt to modify core employment services that have not yet reached a strong operational level.

**Table 1. Youth-friendly adaptation in the delivery of employment services**

Employment services	Mainstream provision	Youth-specific adaptation needed
Job-search support, counselling and placement services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Registration and self-services access on-line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Same as adults, but may consider Internet-based applications and kiosks in educational centres and meeting places of young people</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Profiling/needs assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Introduce some special parameters</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-line job bank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Same as adults, but may consider mobile and Internet-based applications, access/messaging via mobile devices</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career and job counselling: on-line or one-to-one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Trained counsellors for adapting support to young people</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job-search workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Workshops designed only for young people helpful</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-line training courses/information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Some tailoring to young people search helpful</li> </ul>
Labour market information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job fairs: on-site and virtual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Youth-specific, sector-specific and local fairs all relevant</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data/Statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Online accessibility of data of interest to young people (e.g. infographics)</li> </ul>
ALMPs and employability improvement support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career information/trends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Particular relevance to young people</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Different modalities of training and re-training, subsidized employment, geographical mobility, entrepreneurship and self-employment (...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Youth-specific, particularly appropriate for those in need of assisted and intensive support</li> <li>➔ Acquisition of core work skills crucial</li> </ul>
Unemployment benefits, other related subsidies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As per administrative rules and availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ As per administrative rules and availability</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Mazza, 2017.

PES have also developed more specific instruments to assess the distance of jobseekers from the labour market as a way to determine the type of support they might need. Drawing on existing practices, this note identifies three broad levels of service provision for young jobseekers using as a main criterion their readiness for the labour market. This segmentation is admittedly highly generalized, but it is intended to serve as a framework on how to best adapt employment services for young people -- particularly those in low and middle-income countries -- which employment service providers can use to apportion interventions for better success. Once profiled, the type, intensity, and timing of employment services and other complementary services for young people can then be more effectively targeted to what is needed for success in the labour market. As shown in figure 2, young jobseekers would be channelled towards **three different levels of support**:

- **Basic and self-managed level of support** for job-ready youth would be best suited for those who are most ready to be matched to existing vacancies, i.e. closest to the labour market. For example: the young people who have all the required technical, core work skills, and experience but lack only information on the labour market conditions and available job vacancies may be easily referred to self-service facilities and basic services, including job-search support and targeted recruitment.
- **Assisted services** for young people in need of tailored services and support to fix specific employability gaps. This group would benefit from a combination of basic employment services, counselling, and career exploration services as well as participation in targeted programmes ranging from up skilling and re-training, gaining meaningful work experience, or re-locating in more dynamic job markets.
- **Intense level of support** for young people who do not have the required skills sets to get hired, even in a job of basic quality. In such cases, a dedicated level of support and specialized services from providers other than employment services might be sequenced first or simultaneously to address the non-employment related barriers before basic employment services can result in effective job placements.

**Figure 2. Intensity and level of support to young jobseekers**



Source: Authors.

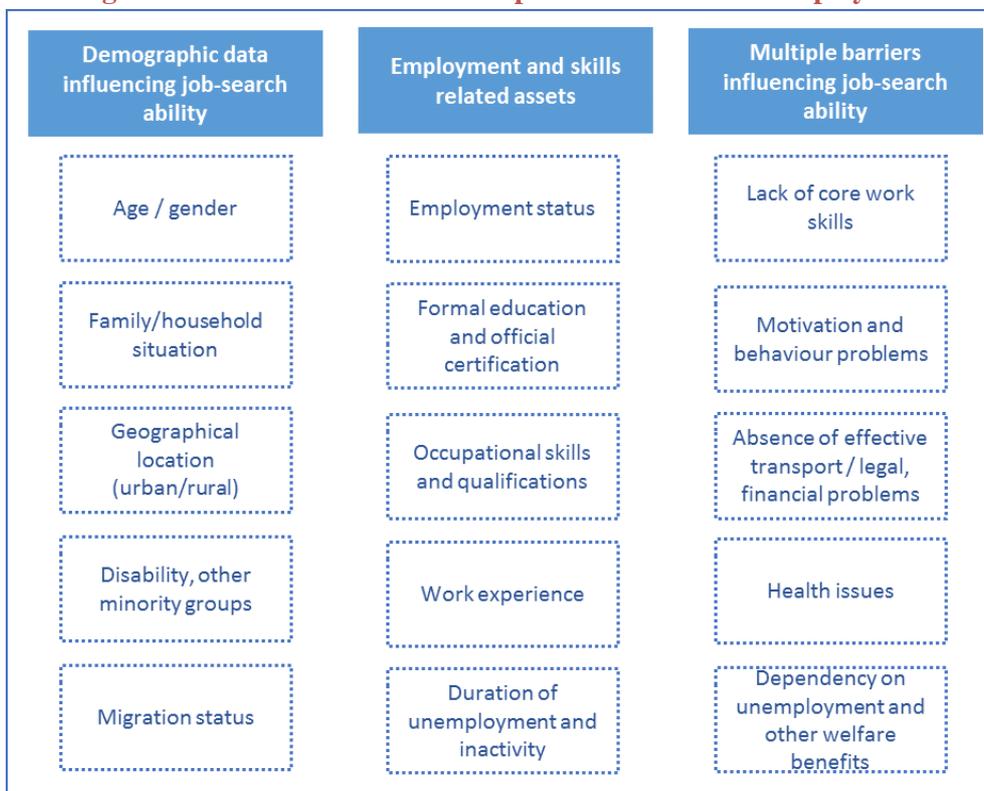
### 3. Proper sequencing and timing of services for young people: from profiling to tailored services

#### *Profiling young people by labour-market readiness*

The provision of employment services is generally arranged in relation to the readiness of jobseekers for taking employment. This approach is more customer-driven, and is usually supported by diagnostic and needs assessment tools such as profiling methods. Profiling -- in its many forms -- is used to diagnose how close a jobseeker (young or not) is fitting into the current job market. This can either be: a sophisticated (quantitative) computer-based inventory conducted by trained counsellors; a relatively rough (qualitative) approximation from a short interview; or a combination of both. The methods of profiling jobseekers differ greatly across countries but the objective is the same: to identify the assets and barriers to employment and segment clients according to the type of support they need for a successful transition into the labour market.

Diagnostic and needs assessment tools allow the PES to segment clients by category in order to tailor services to the needs of each group. Segmentation is often done by filtering specific data and information, including: 1) demographic data, e.g., age, gender, geographical local, civil status, family responsibilities, disability, migration status, or declared affiliation to minority groups; 2) employment and skills related assets, e.g., skills and qualifications, educational level, and work experience; 3) other non-employment related factors that might influence job-search ability, e.g. housing, health problems, lack of reliable transportation, or affordable child care services (see figure 3).

**Figure 3. Assessment of assets and potential barriers to employment**



Source: Adapted from ILO, 2018.

The type of data captured by profiling systems -- or during the initial needs assessment of clients -- varies significantly among countries. The analysis of data also responds to different parameters and policy choices. Some of them are based on administrative rules and eligibility criteria to access services, programmes, or benefits, while others are reliant on the judgement of the job counsellors, or result from a combination of both. In Mexico, only young jobseekers older than 18 years can participate in job training programmes on account of a policy choice to prioritize the return to the education system of young people aged 15-17 years to the education system (Avila, 2015); while in Germany, a combination of automated profiling tools and the counsellor's advice are the basis to configure an action plan fitted to the individual's needs.

As noted earlier, young people are a very diverse group, and job search strategies also need to address individual needs, respond to labour market conditions, and target those who are furthest away from the labour market to reduce the risk of prolonged unemployment, inactivity, and discouragement. It is equally important for this reason to also analyse young people's circumstances with a view to identifying at an early stage the **assets and barriers affecting ability to take up employment:**

#### *Demographic characteristics*

- Some demographic characteristics might pose specific barriers to young jobseekers. For example, it is crucial to distinguish between the youngest jobseekers (aged 15-24) and young adults (typically aged 25-29) as their circumstances change greatly over time. Many of them will start assuming more responsibilities, gaining autonomy and making important choices such as pursuing higher education, entering the labour market, raising a family, or a combination of these (Chacaltana, 2018).
- The difference between the sexes is equally relevant, given how much the opportunities available for education and work might vary among young women and men. Some barriers for young women might be less visible in regard to occupational segregation, job stability, wages, and career advancement.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) young people might also be at higher risk of experiencing a difficult labour market transition in contexts with strong stereotyped gender and societal roles.
- Stigma and false beliefs about the ability of persons with disabilities to work might also result in hiring discriminatory practices and a lack of job opportunities in the open job market.
- Young workers are also more prone to unemployment, informality, and other migration-specific work barriers such as: language and communication; restricted rights to work; lack of recognition of formal education; and credentials acquired in their country of origin (Corbanese and Rosas, 2017).

#### *Employment and skills related information*

- The entry points into employment vary greatly per country, but education continues to be a key determinant for young people's future pathways. Educational attainment is an important factor, influencing the job outcomes of young jobseekers. The ILO estimates that the average age to get a first job is 18 years, with differences depending on education levels (Ibid).
- In general, higher education levels show a positive correlation with employment and higher incomes. In some contexts, however, young people with a higher education might be more exposed to unemployment than those with lower levels of education.
- Possessing vocational qualifications, occupational skills, and prior work experience are positive signs for employers, indicating that the young jobseekers have acquired workplace skills. Hence the importance of carefully mapping employment- and skills-related assets and barriers.

### *Other barriers affecting ability to take up employment*

- Other barriers to employment that might not be obvious or visible without proper profiling relate to the lack of core work skills, motivation, and behaviour. Even if young people are available and willing to work, they might have experienced repeated previous job search failures, or became discouraged by the associated costs involved in taking up a job, such as: lack of affordable childcare, unreliable transport to the workplace, loss or reduction of welfare benefits (e.g. housing, disability or medical subsidies) (ILO, 2018).

### *Tailoring services to young people's needs*

While profiling enables an employment counsellor to better determine what a young jobseeker needs in order to be ready for a successful job search, tailoring services zooms into their individual needs. Tailoring is intended to respond to specific circumstances, interests, skills, and expectations in relation to the local labour market. The use of an individualized approach to employment service provision has a main objective: ensuring, as far as possible, that the support delivered is client-centred. PES have different approaches and capacities to tailoring services. Sometimes, it can be costly and complex to implement major reconfigurations to adapt service provision. Nevertheless, there are small changes that can have a positive effect on clients' experiences with an employment service provider. For example: allocating more counselling time to young people who are not ready for jobs; actively referring clients to services or programmes not available at the employment centre but delivered by local partner agencies that can help bridge specific employability gaps (e.g., apprenticeships, vocational training, evening classes, and talks in community centres to build self-confidence) or non-employment related barriers (e.g., social and health services). Nevertheless, even though tailoring services often engages additional resources, disinvestment in this area may result in higher costs.

In this regard, diagnostic and profiling tools are also helpful for planning service provision, allocating budgets, and improving the targeting and sequencing of interventions to those who need them the most. A recent extensive review of impact evaluations of young people's programmes supported by the ILO concluded that better profiling of needs, and channelling them into the more appropriate services or programmes using pre-screening and profiling tools have shown higher rates of employment and earnings results. This study also showed that the right incentives to both public and private providers -- and good design features -- achieved better employment and earnings results (Kluve et al., 2016).

### *Sequencing and timing of interventions*

When dealing with young jobseekers, profiling helps employment services determine: whether to concentrate on providing a basic level of support; whether supplementary services are needed to enhance employability; or whether to recommend channelling efforts back into education; or whether to first address non-employment related barriers (e.g. health and housing) if that would be in the long-term labour market interest. Too-early attempts at placement could likely lead to further discouragement for jobseekers facing complex barriers to employment; similarly, assigning a job-ready client to a case manager for a dedicated follow-up can lead to a misplacement of resources.

This is when the sequencing and timing of interventions become instrumental. The intervention of employment counsellors is fundamental to determine the relevance and utility of services to the client's goals, values, and needs. The sequencing of services and support should not be understood as strict linear trajectories; in reality, there are back-and-forth referrals, possible dropouts, and returns into programmes. The timing and sequencing of service provision would also be subject to individual circumstances and the capacity of the PES to provide coping mechanisms while the young people receive non-employment related support from partner organizations. The number of people in each of the three levels of services described

previously will vary widely among countries depending on the demographic structure of their population and labour force. When sequencing services, necessary modifications have to be made in order to deal with both short-term and long-term needs of the young jobseeker; particularly in the context where social protection mechanisms and unemployment insurance are not available (as is the case in most developing countries). Each country needs to set up its own criteria based on a thorough review of the labour market situation, employment policy objectives, available institutional capacities, and financial resources.

## 4. What works for young people at different levels of job-readiness

### LEVEL 1: Basic and self-managed services

Young jobseekers who are closest to being ready for a job need to know where the openings are, and how to improve their job-search skills to secure work. They also need to have information on what services and support are available to them to speed up their transition into employment. The offer of services for young people profiled at this level are a combination of self-services and basic employment services, including:

- Access to free job-searching tools and job banks
- Skills to improve job searches based on current situation and future aspirations
- Ability to write a résumé
- Way to apply for jobs and track applications
- Preparation for interviews
- Advice on how to handle the recruitment process
- Information on how to start a new job and keep it
- Referral to specialized services on entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Service readiness becomes fundamental to serve jobseekers in general and, in particular, to empower young clients to make decisions based on a menu of options. Services for nearly job-ready young people should support their autonomy and capacity to play an active role throughout the job-searching process. PES need to ensure that service organizations and delivery modalities allow jobseekers to obtain the services when they need them. International practice on how to connect young people to these services and adapt delivery modalities to their needs prove that multi-channel approaches are more likely to improve access and capture their willingness to seek and use the available services.

### *Interventions for job-ready youth*

Below are a number of examples on what works to ensure service delivery to job-ready youth. It should be noted, however, that the methods and tools used to provide for this category of young people can also apply to other categories of young jobseekers in need to tackle employability and non-employment related barriers. The timing and sequencing in tailoring these services makes the difference.

→ **Online job networks with mobile technologies:** Young people are likely to use online and social media to look for jobs. Diversifying channels to access job offers and information on the labour market might include smart phone applications and geo-location technology.

- Information and telecommunications technology (ITC) is proving to be an efficient method to reach out to a large number of jobseekers, in particular young people. The **Republic of South Korea** is extensively using a mobile application for the registration of jobseekers. **Peru** developed a similar tool to help young people find job offers with geo-location technology. This is also helping to bridge the divide across regions or between rural and urban areas, where availability of employment services might be limited.

- The **Arab States and Northern Africa** have been using private and non-profit online job networks which are engaging young people. Rather than compete, public employment centres are adroitly combining forces with online services, or making access easier through self-service centres run by PES. *Ta3mal* -- the first in its field -- is now the leading online youth employment network in the Middle East. Other examples include: *M-PESA: Kenya* and *Jobs Abu Dhabi*. *Souktel* is another leading Middle East and North African NGO and mobile service-ICT provider that sponsors the *JobMatch*, a platform for jobseekers among its development work. The World Bank studied *Souktel's JobMatch* programme in six African and Middle Eastern countries and found it had particularly positive impacts on higher wage placements, and better user rates for females such as in occupied Palestinian territory ([www.souktel.org](http://www.souktel.org)). *LinkedIn* recently started an Arabic language network for professionals with an eye to reaching 14 million users.

→ **Good Labour Market Information (LMI):** Young people need to be well informed about the labour market trends and employers' expectations. PES' investments in developing or providing access to timely and reliable labour market information have a positive effect on increasing transparency concerning occupational trends, wages, working conditions, and options for skills and vocational training. Solid LMI systems help job-ready youth and other jobseekers in general, to speed-up and expand access to job offers nationwide and sometimes also to vacancies abroad.

- **New Zealand's** public employment service has developed a sophisticated online tool in which careers are grouped and linked to labour market trends and to available vacancies, so that young people can see a direct link between current entry-level job offerings and the careers they build into (<http://www.careersnz.com/>). Also, in some countries, PES play a role in helping orient students well before they leave school.
- As a base, career development systems built by employment services typically use a strong labour market information system which shows national trends in employment. **Mexico** is following this sequence, developing first a very strong LMIS (*Observatorio Laboral*), which was made available on the national employment service's employment portal ([www.empleo.mx](http://www.empleo.mx)) and, from this foundation, are building an online career development tool.

→ **Career information and vocational counselling:** With more frequent job and career changes in today's job market, guidance is needed to enable young jobseekers to make informed career choices throughout their working life. This means a greater investment and importance for young people in an employment service's career information, career planning, and building links with educational and training institutions.

- Early career counselling – provided, for instance, in cooperation with schools -- can shorten or even prevent unemployment spells. In **Paraguay**, the National Employment Office carries out career guidance and counselling through talks with students in secondary education, most of whom are in the process of making decisions about their future careers (ILO, 2015b).
- Particularly for older youth, employment services are now finding a higher demand for targeting job search to building skills and careers overtime and particularly how education and training links to employment. **Sweden** developed an online tool that includes seven chapters (i.e. dreams and goals, information on the changing labour market, rights and responsibilities at work). Role models, like a popular young entrepreneur, are part of this guidance package to attract the young age group (ILO, 2014).

→ **Work-readiness and job-search training:** While the fundamentals of job search assistance are similar for adults and young people, existing job search workshops or the training of counsellors to work with young people can be modified to attract the interest and participation of the latter.

- The **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** has developed a work-readiness training programme for young people which provides 25 hours of face-to-face career guidance to secondary and university graduates seeking their first job. The programme includes modules on personal development, job search skills, communication, workplace behaviours, teamwork, leadership, as well as basic financial skills (ILO, 2014).
- In **Rwanda**, the Kigali Employment Service Centre offers an “Opportunity Scouting” training to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and secondary school graduates comprising of group-training, counselling, and field-exploration. The aim is to match the talent of the young people to labour market requirements and to help them establish a market-related career pathway while developing their capacity to independently search for opportunities that meet their needs. The trainees are also put into contact with TVET-related employers and training providers through expos (KESC, 2014).

→ **Job fairs oriented to young people and targeted outreach events:** Recruitment events and career job fairs oriented to entry-level positions, university graduates, and sectors with high demand for young people -- such as engineering and ICT -- can attract both specialized employers and young jobseekers.

- **Benin** organized Saturday fairs targeted to key sectors where employers were finding it difficult to hire skilled young workers. The events combined workshops and recruitment led by local employers with career advice, planning, and information on local training and entrepreneurship programmes (Andersen et al., 2015). **Jamaica** is using satellite employment stations frequently visited by younger demographics and mobile career fairs organized during events that attract them.
- **China’s** PES designates special months or time periods for activities for young people, for example aligning with university graduates when they are beginning to think about their transition to employment. **Mexico** organizes online job fairs for high-demand professions on a regular basis. **Cambodia** runs recruitment events specifically for rural workers.

→ **Multi-service centres and one-stop shops.** Employment service provisions throughout the developed and the developing world have sought to combine services in multi-service centres, often called “one-stop shops.” These offer ripe opportunities to connect to young people who might be more reticent to walk into a traditional employment centre.

- **Mongolia** sponsors youth satellite centres in its major universities so that students can seek assistance on a “stop-in” basis. Many PES in middle-income and developing countries such as **Jamaica** offer banks of computers stations for self-service in places frequently visited by young people (e.g., public libraries and training centres). These are widely used on the island.
- In **Germany**, youth employment agencies have been implemented nationwide since 2010. These one-stop shop agencies offer several services all in one place and, importantly, ensure the active participation of all relevant actors and partners in the field of youth employment. They actively work with the schools to reach out to those who left the education system (European Commission, 2017).

## LEVEL 2: Assisted services

Young people profiled at this level generally exhibit specific skills and employability gaps, although at different degrees. Their profiles typical range from tertiary education graduates with an incomplete transition from school to work, first-time jobseekers leaving school before graduating (either from secondary or tertiary education), to low-skilled and unskilled young people with prior work experience in the quest for stable jobs. This category of clients experience more difficulties entering the labour market, and are more likely to need

more regular contact with employment counsellors to gain the skills and experience needed before job-search support and placement services become effective.

At this level, the main objective of the provision of employment services is to give the unemployed youth the tools to fill gaps identified during profiling. At this level, young people will benefit from a combination of basic services and participation in active labour market programmes to: 1) adjust their competences to current demand; 2) develop the core work skills employers are looking for; 3) gain work experience relevant to the types of jobs they aspire to have; 4) undergo retraining and upskilling to improve their job prospects or 5) consider starting their own business.

Active labour market measures are particularly helpful to prevent prolonged unemployment spells and detachment from the labour market, and also allow for a more effective job matching. The role of the PES can be as the executor of active labour market programmes or as one of the providers delivering specific components of youth-specific employment programmes. This is where country-variation and institutional capacities come into play. In all cases, employment services are bringing labour market intelligence and contacts with employers to help lead youth programmes towards local labour market demand. In many other cases, PES supervise programmes contracted out to NGOs or private providers; research has generally indicated that specialist services attain higher placement results, particularly if strict pay for performance incentives is enforced. In other cases, PES play a referral role; they profile young people and assign them to the best suited combination of programmes and services.

The range of services and support systems of PES are often tailored to young people with specific skills and employability gaps. These include basic employment services plus a mixture of the following:

- Job counselling, career guidance, and vocational advice on occupational trends
- Support for early interventions in schools before young people's deficits become entrenched
- Help to develop an action plan
- Participation in active labour market programmes
  - Various modalities of training and re-training
  - Mobility and relocation
  - Wage subsidies
  - Temporary employment
  - Public work programmes
  - Entrepreneurship and self-employment
- Access to mentorships, apprenticeships, and youth guarantees (YG).

### *Interventions for young people with specific skills and employability gaps*

When tailoring support to this category of young jobseekers, employment counsellors need to find the right mix of services that better suit their needs. This is, however, not always straightforward. Fully assessing the type of services likely to suit young people at level 2 also involves a careful examination of labour market conditions to tailor interventions that can address context-specific factors and individual barriers. This is because the outcomes for labour market programmes are highly dependent upon the economic cycle and the prevailing type of unemployment problems. Active labour market programmes are also part of a more comprehensive strategy to address the cyclical pressure on the labour market. In any case, it is critical to keep a strong linkage between active labour market programmes, job-search assistance, and placement activities.

Examples of the mix of basic services and active labour market programmes most commonly used by PES to tackle specific unemployment problems in the labour market are listed below:

→ **Improve job-matching:** In emerging economies and developing countries, the mismatch is usually not just a problem of poor anticipation of market skills by education and training institutions, but also: poor articulation and knowledge of skills needs by employers, and poor market signals sent to young people about which careers to pursue. PES can provide information about changing labour demand, emerging new occupations, and the skills required by the hiring industries, sectors, and enterprises. A combination of information on labour market trends, vocational counselling and skills training can help young jobseekers and employers to adapt to such changes and improve the job matching process. PES can also better play a role to support early interventions in schools before young people's deficits become entrenched.

The inadequacy of labour supply and labour demand is expressed in qualitative and quantitative terms: the task of the PES is to promote active measures to improve matches between them. A labour market does not function optimally if there are scant workers with the skills required by a specific sector, or if there are workers equipped with the necessary technical skills but who are unwilling to take certain jobs -- preferring rather to wait for better working conditions; this creates hard-to-fill vacancies. Sometimes, there are workers who have the essential technical qualifications and are willing to apply for available vacancies but lack either relevant work experience or core skills that employers consider important.

In **Tunisia** -- as in many countries in the Arab States and Northern Africa region -- the majority of educated young people would rather queue up for formal jobs in the public sector than take jobs in the private sector or low-paid jobs (which are abundant) in the informal sector. This might seem contradictory, but employers frequently mention that it is difficult to find candidates who, while they may have the knowledge and abilities the job requires, are not able to demonstrate core work skills. Box 1 provides an insight to the approach taken by the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (ANETI) to address specific employability gaps which prevent unemployed youth with tertiary education from accessing jobs in the private sector.

### **Box 1. Building core work skills for unemployed youth in Tunisia**

In Tunisia, young people take an average of seven years to move from full-time schooling to full-time employment. ANETI offers a package of services to unemployed young people with tertiary education with the objective of facilitating the school-to-work transition while simultaneously helping employers to find candidates with core workplace skills. As a result of joint work with employers, ANETI identified ten core work skills, such as: self-esteem; stress management; leadership; team work; decision-making; negotiation; problem-solving; and innovation. As many as 88 employment counsellors were trained in four governorates to provide core work skills training to young people seeking employment through their local PES office.

Young people also benefit from group coaching services, entrepreneurship training, and individual follow-ups in the event that referrals to complementary services are needed before placement. To best benefit from tailored support, young people should have developed a clear professional project aligned with current demand. From January to December 2017, more than 1,200 young people had profited from core work skills training; about 15 per cent of them had a positive outcome. Either they found work, took additional training, or changed career paths. In 2018, ANETI will introduce "jobs clubs" in the same four selected governorates to strengthen the support provided to young people. There are also plans to expand this modality of services nationwide.

Source: ILO project *Jeunesse et employabilité : appui au programme FORSATI*, 2017-18.

→ **Upskilling and in-service training:** In-service training -- in combination with basic employment services -- is the modality with a more solid record of impact evaluations (Gonzalez-Velosa et al., 2012). These programmes are all focused on employing young people after the successful completion of training, and measure the outcomes in terms of placement and income. However, there are often limitations on the impact of short-term training programmes for young people -- or employment incentives in the absence of a changed economic dynamic -- which generate more suitable quality employment.

Linking regional development with labour market policies and local human capital development can significantly expand the base of local jobs available to young people. It is important to consider, however, that in regional development, considerations for this age group are only part of a larger economic development strategy to increase employment. In these types of interventions, the PES and private providers of employment services can focus service delivery in direct response to the evolving skills and employment needs driven by a regional development dynamic. Box 2 describes a case in **Mexico** of a public-private partnership that led to greater opportunities for young people as part of a regional development strategy to expand into luxury tourism. This case demonstrates that the support to young people comes in identifying the specific needs and skills for the private sector for new entrants, and adapting instruments and services to fit these needs accordingly.

### **Box 2. Mexico: combining short-term training for unemployed youth and regional development**

Riviera Maya, a tourist site in Mexico, did not have a PES office when the local Hotel Association of Riviera Maya (AHRM) started planning a major competitiveness strategy to enter the luxury all-inclusive tourism industry. All-inclusive luxury tourism requires not only volume but also higher-skilled workers at entry- and mid-levels (e.g., with adeptness in areas ranging from reservations to laundry services to air conditioning maintenance). As foreign investment was increasing, both the new and existing hotels could not hire the staff they needed locally. The AHRM felt that the younger applicants were not prepared, even though they graduated with vocational degrees in tourism. Their curricula were decades out of date, and the students did not know how to position themselves for jobs in a changing, more upscale industry. This tourist area also needed more modern and more efficient PES and other private providers to handle such a big increase in hiring.

The local government worked through public-private partnerships with AHRM, local schools, the Secretary of Education and the National Employment Service (NES) to increase the volume of hiring and upskilling. One important element of this partnership was adapting the teaching curricula to the needs of local industry, and the introduction of new training modalities, both for new entrants and current workers. In just five years (2010-15), both the PES and private employment agencies instituted the following changes as part of a regional development effort.

AHRM turned its business into a full service private employment service centre, with a range of diverse placement tools, including an industry electronic job portal encompassing a job bank, labour information observatory, and descriptions of hotel career paths and e-learning platforms:

- Its job bank grew from just hundreds in 2010 to placing 3,787 jobseekers, listing 25,208 vacancies in 2015;
- It standardized 103 job profiles with sector experts to advance hiring of new young people more quickly, using standardized job positions which are now in use throughout the industry;
- It produced an annual, regional Inventory of Skill Needs and Workforce Indicators.

The NES opened an office working in partnership with the expanded private agencies. At the national level, they also:

- Expanded their own new national employment portal (empleo.mx) to find workers throughout Mexico and listed the Riviera Maya AHRM private service icon on its national portal;

- Contributed training slots financed through its national short-term training programme (*Bécate*) to train both young people and adults for new positions in the hotel and related industries (e.g., transport and food service).

Source: Hotel Association of Riviera Maya, available at: <http://empleosenrivieramaya.com>

→ ***Self-employment and entrepreneurship for young people:*** Self-employment and entrepreneurship for young people is gaining even greater attention. This is because informal employment is reaching up to 90 per cent in some low-income countries, and the services and manufacturing sector is taking on new roles in home work and informality. Much still needs to be learned. Particularly in the case of poorly educated young people, there is a danger in seeing self-employment as an alternative to the lack of qualifications for formal work. For the PES, it is important to point out that successful entrepreneurship programmes need even more multiple services working together than for formal employment: access to credit, financial support and literacy, technical and market assistance, often for as long as two years. For this reason, it is crucial for the PES to work in cooperation with service providers specialized in entrepreneurship, and refer candidates interested in pursuing this activation path (box 3).

### **Box 3. Uruguay: Productive Investment Programme**

The Productive Investment Programme (Programa de Inversión Productiva, (PIP)) is implemented by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, (MTSS)) and La Dirección Nacional de Empleo (National Employment Agency, (DINAE)) in collaboration with local governments. The programme was launched in 2005 to help micro and small enterprises whose activities are connected with local development strategies. PIP targets individual and group enterprises owned by low-income entrepreneurs who face difficulties in gaining access to loan funding from commercial financial institutions. Applications for the programme are made by filling in a form online; the Centro Público de Empleo (Public Employment Center, (CEPE)) process applications, organize interviews with the entrepreneurs and determine the feasibility of project proposals. Once the project is approved, a loan is granted; this must be used to purchase equipment and/or machinery.

MTSS provides funds for the operation of PIP, while local government is responsible for administering the loans and ensuring that participants make repayments, including accrued interest. The repaid monies are recycled into a revolving fund administered by each provincial government for use in supporting new projects. This mechanism enables CEPE to secure funds and ensure the programme's sustainability.

Between 2005 and 2014, a total of 482 projects were supported, and the allocation of funds amounted to UYU 10,272,762.6 (USD 358,685.82). PIP has national coverage and gives preferential treatment to rural areas, which absorbed 45 per cent of the total budget available for 2005–14. Projects were financed in vocations such as dressmaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, gastronomy, horticulture, cheese production, beekeeping, maintenance of green areas, and automotive workshops. Men and women participate as entrepreneurs in equal numbers. To date, the programme has not been evaluated.

→ ***Geographical mobility:*** Employment services can help by reducing information gaps and also reducing the costs of relocating workers to take up a job by providing moving subsidies and facilitating skills adaptation and job matching. The major objective of this type of policy intervention is to address labour supply and labour demand imbalances in between regional areas within the country. Geographical

mobility programmes are often targeted to specific groups of workers (e.g., farm workers) or some economic sectors or industries that are both facing challenges to find qualified workers and making an important contribution to local development. In this regard, as a general rule, the new location must have a lower unemployment rate than the one in which the jobseeker currently lives. Relocating to find work should not only take into account labour market conditions but also, the individual situation of jobseekers. Some of them might be less willing to move -- for example, single parents with children. Young people, however, might have more flexibility to relocate to a labour market offering better job prospects (box 4).

#### **Box 4. China: easing barriers to geographical mobility of labour in response to demand**

Tianjin is one of the four most populated cities in China. This municipality has become a new growth pole and a hub of advanced industry and financial activity. However, in recent years, some emerging and labour-intensive industries have exhibited a significant increase in worker shortages, especially semi-skilled workers (e.g., assembly line workers, turners, fitters, and electric welders) as they cannot recruit enough workers locally.

To address recruitment challenges facing local enterprises, the local PES mobilized partners of different kinds, including PES in neighbouring provinces and private employment agencies. The participation of vocational training institutions and colleges in this effort also helped to adjust the skills of local unemployment graduates to open job vacancies and employer's medium-term needs. Together with local employers, training providers jointly run internships and short-term training programmes for workers and unemployed graduates from neighbouring municipalities. Following the placement of 50 students in a traineeship with an enterprise exhibiting labour shortages for a minimum of three months, training providers are compensated with 1,500 CNY per placement. After the successful completion of a three-month traineeship period, if the trainee is hired by the enterprise due to the partner's intermediation, a reward of 500 CNY is granted per person per month for a maximum of six consecutive months in employment.

Between 2012 (when this project was launched) and 2016, a total of 76,600 adult and young jobseekers were placed in enterprises registered with a Tianjin PES while facing shortages: A total of 51 per cent of them were placed by providers under procurement contracts; 21.5 per cent were referred and placed by neighbouring PES with cooperation agreements; and 22.5 per cent were trainees placed in enterprises by vocational education institutions and colleges working in cooperation arrangements.

Source: Avila and Tian, 2018.

There are other active labour market policy instruments utilized for young people. The two main ones are wage subsidies and public works offering temporary jobs, both of which are sometimes administered by a PES. These are typically single rather than multi-service programmes, and, in general, the impact evaluation record for disadvantaged young people is not as strong as it is for multi-service interventions, which have more programme oversight and are more specifically designed to lead to job placement at the end of service delivery (Gonzalez-Velosa et al., 2012.) These ALMP instruments are typically addressing a different type of employment problem: a crisis intervention, when large groups of young people are unemployed and a larger scale and volume of delivery are called for.

→ **Wage subsidies:** work by covering a percentage of a young person's (or adult's) salary for a given period, typically between three to six months, although some programmes can go up to a year. Many programmes

require employers (who benefit from the subsidy) to offer a contract to participants demonstrating good performance. Ideally, the programmes measure whether the young people who took part in the programme are placed in employment after the wage subsidy period is over. Wage subsidies require further research in terms of effectiveness for placement; one danger is whether they aid young people's placement by displacing adult workers (Kluve et al., 2016). PES that manage wage subsidy programmes for young people should be careful to monitor and evaluate the placement effectiveness of the subsidies, as these are typically expensive instruments compared to multi-service interventions and may not develop basic workplace skills (if this is needed). In **South Africa**, a country with high youth unemployment, a wage subsidy programme was set up to test its potential benefits. Employers who hired young people (between the ages of 20 to 24 years) were refunded 50 per cent of the wages for a period of maximum six months. When they traced back those who benefited from the programme a year later, they had a 25 per cent increase in employment probability. This declined to 10 per cent after two years of the programme (ILO, 2016).

- **Public works programmes:** have an important role to play in income support during a period of employment crisis and in keeping people connected to the labour market, but it should be noted that placement results are poor once the participants have exited the programme and this impacts early career stages (Gonzalez-Velosa et al., 2012). However, if the ultimate policy objective of these types of interventions is clear, their outcomes can have an immediate positive effect to activate the unemployed and help them to remain connected with the labour market. In **Cameroon**, a public work programme was put in place in 2013 with the aim of reducing youth unemployment by improving urban infrastructures. By the end of 2017, the project had employed 1,387 young people out of which 91 were hired by private companies after exiting the programme. They all received job search training, and by the end of the programme they were given the chance to access a loan to start their own businesses, if they were interested -- 1003 of them took the opportunity. They also received support to develop their business plans and short training on business management (Ngompe Mambou, 2017).
- **Multi-service interventions:** The impact of the 2008-09 economic crisis on young people and the resulting cuts in national budgets affecting labour market interventions led to the adoption of the Youth Guarantee by Member States of the European Union (EU) in 2013. This policy guarantees -- to all young people residing in the EU aged 25 and younger, within four months of unemployment or leaving formal education -- a good quality work offer equal to their skills and experience, and a chance to continue their studies or to undertake an apprenticeship or professional traineeship. The PES, in particular, have a central role in executing and supporting the younger generation in these guarantees by the public sector. Between 2013 and 2017, 18 million young people registered with national PES in the EU for the YG and 11 million of them have taken up an offer of employment, education, traineeship or apprenticeship (EC, 2017). The ILO, together with the European Commission (EC), implemented a two-year project in some of the countries with high youth unemployment rates to support the implementation of the schemes. The lessons learned and conclusions from that project include the need for inter-institutional coordination and partnerships, including among PES; coherence between the schemes and other employment and labour market policies to ensure better sustainability; and a balance between quantitative and qualitative targets of offers of employment, education, traineeship, and apprenticeships.

### **LEVEL 3 - Intense level of support**

Jobseekers in this category are unemployed young people severely affected by precariousness and exclusion, e.g., low-skilled persons and single-parent families living in poverty; school dropouts; unplanned teenage pregnancies; individuals with a health condition or behavioural problems (such as anxiety and depression); substance abuse or mental disability; gang-affiliated juveniles; victims of violence at home; ex-offenders; people with housing instability; recent foreign immigrants with low education and language barriers; and

members of groups facing discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. Even if willing to work, the young people in this group might have experienced repeated past job search failures or became discouraged and stopped searching. In most cases, they are likely to be inactive and -- when not registered with a PES – other partner NGOs and specialist providers in other government agencies may refer them to the employment office. The time investment and flexibility required to work with this group are far more consequential than what is needed for other categories of jobseekers. Closing the gaps in hiring outcomes for young people profiled at this level requires the provision of dedicated employment services in combination with additional services produced by other government agencies or specialist providers to tackle non-employment related barriers. These barriers can range from literacy and basic workplace skills to family responsibilities, long-term illnesses, substance abuse, housing, and financial-related constraints (ILO, 2018).

Partnerships are essential to effectively serve this group. The key is to ensure that jobseekers receive the necessary continuum of support from PES, and that they are referred to other government initiatives or specialist providers offering complementary services and support. Serving young people in need of an intense level of support would require multiple coordinated services or joined-up services, which are sequenced over a period longer than a year. There are a variety of arrangements to connect services, however: this delivery modality is largely dependent on the institutional capacities, resources and services available at local level (Ibid). The capacity to establish common or sequenced protocols for client’s referral between PES and partner agencies is essential to reach inactive or disaffected young people, and to keep them engaged and motivated throughout the intervention to reduce recidivism.

The type of services that PES will offer to young jobseekers with employability and non-employment-related barriers will require tailoring to develop needed core work skills, create regular work habits that contribute to keep a job, and remove non-employment related barriers. The main objective is to get young clients ready to access mainstream employment services. The delivery modality might involve the following possible streams of services to return to work, depending on the individual situation of clients:

*a) Employability services and referrals to social services and specialist providers.* The delivery of services is led by the PES for clients who have greater chances to return to work if supported by specialized employability services and the simultaneous mobilization of specific mechanisms of social aid, as listed below. The focal point of these interventions can also be a case manager from partner providers who will connect or refer clients to the employment office.

---

**Specialized employability services**

- Structured individual counselling
- Individual and regular follow-ups
- Life and core-work skills training
- Placement in voluntary work, part-time work, and mentoring at the work place
- Self-esteem programmes for young people.

**Social aid mechanisms**

- Welfare benefits (e.g. housing and subsidies for child care)
  - Microfinancing and non-refunded seed funds
  - Literacy and numeracy workshops, night schools
  - Conditional cash transference programmes, family interventions, clinical supervision of clients.
- 

*b) Enabling services and inclusion strategies led by social services and specialist providers* for clients facing complex non-employment-related barriers before employment services might be effective (e.g., drug and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation; back to school support and skills building; mentoring and peer

modalities; and homeless assistance programmes). These types of interventions work better when building on the strengths of the person and are adapted to a client's individual circumstances to help them acquire new attitudes and behaviours to limit recidivism.

### *Interventions for young people with employability and non-employment-related barriers*

Demands are increasing on employment services to support vulnerable young people facing employability and non-employment-related barriers. Integrated approaches, however, are still an area of development for many PES and other government agencies serving these groups of the population. Existing practices range from bridge programmes aimed at rebuilding self-esteem and developing key literacy and life skills to social, health, and re-integration interventions. They typically last more than a year, even if subsequent years are only to ensure follow-up support and programme monitoring.

- **Partnerships** are the most feasible way to implement comprehensive interventions for young people who fit local needs, whether they are between PES and non-governmental organizations, other government agencies, multilateral development organizations, or NGOs. A key element of success for such comprehensive interventions is the involvement of employers as main partners and the empowerment of target populations as agents of change (ILO, 2018). In this regard, employment services continue to be an important source of labour market information and vacancy information, even for comprehensive youth programmes. In the **Dominican Republic**, the PES takes part in the implementation of *El Programa. Juventud y Empleo* (Youth and Employment Programme, (PJE)), which targets youth at-risk. This constituency is one of the most vulnerable groups in the domestic labour market, as they are not only affected by high unemployment rates but have also dropped out of secondary school and are likely to live in low-income households where basic needs may be unmet (box 5).

#### **Box 5. Dominican Republic: improving job prospects for poor at-risk youth**

The PJE run by the NES of the Ministry of Labour of the Dominican Republic has been active since 2012. The main objective of this intervention is to improve the employability of poor at-risk young people (aged 16-29 years) who are out of school and lack a stable job. To better identify beneficiaries, the PES is using pre-screening mechanisms such as the “vulnerability index”, which improves targeting and helps employment officers to assess the level of support required by potential beneficiaries. The programme provides 75 hours of life skills training, including basic mathematics, communication skills, teamwork, conflict resolution, planning, and custom services. It also provides structured individual counselling and regular coaching for young people who might have been neglected or abused to develop self-esteem and socio-emotional skills for their own personal and professional development. In a second instance, the participants spend 240 hours in an internship with one of the 1,500 local enterprises that partner with the programme in expanding sectors and industries, including commercial services, hotels and restaurants, agroindustry, manufacturing, energy, and mining.

Following an impact evaluation to the programme, the number of hours of life skills training was doubled; the participation of young women was actively promoted. The country, in particular, has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Latin America and the Caribbean. Participation in the programme has demonstrated to reduce the chances of young women (aged 16-19 years) to become pregnant by 20 per cent, because their expectations change regarding going back to school; this is following skills training for job placement, and consequently, considering pursuing a professional career.

Source: (ILO, 2015d; IDB, 2016).

→ **Programmes contracted out to social services and specialist providers** are able to do more direct supervision of young people and seem to deliver positive results when coupled with interventions by public providers. Evidence shows that interventions for individuals with low qualifications work better for those in their 20s than younger people who may need more comprehensive interventions, such as further schooling (Kluve et al., 2016). Some training programmes for young people with work experience or transitions go up to age 30, even age 35, depending on the nature of the local youth unemployment problem. Particularly for low-income developing countries, the small and medium business sector which is the target of such programmes may be highly informal. Some programmes do permit informal firms to receive young trainees and, if possible, create incentives and support to informal firms to formalize these proceedings. Nepal’s Employment Fund (EF) programme demonstrated some remarkable results for a short-term youth training programme in a very difficult employment environment: it received a “Good Practices Award” from the ILO (box 6).

### **Box 6. Nepal EF for young people**

In 2007, following a devastating 10-year civil war, Nepal instituted -- on a mass scale -- a training programme for young people; the training was strictly conditioned on the trainees being employed at the end of the programme.

Placement rates were impressive, particularly given the mass scale of the initiative: 75,000 out of 100,000 participants were working post-training. Key features of the model included:

- *Contracting-out model:* Training is contracted out and providers are paid based on their success in training that leads to job placement;
- *Pay for performance:* Training providers receive a first payment based on the graduation of the trainees, typically after six months of training. The larger share of the payment is provided only after graduates are placed in jobs and earn an income above a pre-defined threshold;
- *Wide range of sectors using training:* Training spans 80 occupations including agriculture, garment, construction, electronics, and hospitality;
- *Focus on disadvantaged youth and gender:* The EF particularly serves women (more than 50 per cent) and more disadvantaged youth (more than 80 per cent) with both placement incentives and specialized counselling.

Source: Kluve et al., 2016.

→ **Support for displaced populations and refugees:** Recent developments linked to conflict, fragile settings, and natural disasters have driven PES to serve or intensify support for displaced populations within their own country and refugees who have been granted asylum in a foreign country (ILO, 2018). The government of **Jordan**, for example, together with the ILO and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has opened a job centre for refugees where they will be able to gain access to work permits and formal work opportunities, counselling services, information on labour rights, training opportunities, and job matching services. While not only serving young people, this is still considered a good practice for the most vulnerable groups.

→ **Alternative and residential schooling** may also be viewed as multiple coordinated-service youth interventions. While some multi-service programmes targeting them are financed by Ministries of Labour, PES are not systematically involved in delivering such full-day interventions, even with extensive public financing. However, employment services need to be able to identify -- whether by profiling or by consulting with local authorities and relevant stakeholders -- which are the youth populations needing such specialized comprehensive interventions. An important element to achieve expected outcomes, however, is the delivery

of basic employment services leading to effective placement in a job. In the **United States**, for example, the Intensive Residential Youth Offender Programme provides young people with residencies away from poor neighbourhoods, school learning, or high school completion, TVET, and job placement and internships in the final years of the programme. The Galpão Aplauso Programme, based in Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil**, targets highly disadvantaged youth using creative arts or sports to build self-esteem, basic literacy, and workplace skills. Young people from the poorest favelas in Rio are engaged in full-time programmes outside of their neighbourhoods and receive placement assistance afterwards in local firms. Impact evaluations have demonstrated very high rates of job placement post-programme (Calero et al., 2016).

## 5. Ways forward

Ensuring the right of access to decent work, self-employment, and opportunities for training -- especially for young people -- is one of the main challenges governments and societies face given the important economic, fiscal, and social costs that unemployment and inactivity entail. Despite the very different national dimensions, countries need to ensure that in the future, their workforce capacity will leverage inclusive economic growth and fair societies. Effective policy interventions are needed to guarantee that young people stay connected with the labour market throughout their working life, in particular, those facing vulnerability and at-risk of exclusion.

In this regard, the PES continues to be relevant in addressing market dysfunctions prevalent in the labour market to ease transitions into decent work and self-employment for jobseekers. **Compelling new roles** for modern employment services working in partnership for the young people of today include: helping redress hiring practices based on exclusive social networks; guiding young people to complementing human capital investments with jobs that build careers and skills; and helping improve the market-relevance of the education and training of today's young generations.

Contributing to the evolution of future labour markets based on effective demand implies **changing the way PES work with partners and relevant stakeholders**, including: private employment agencies; schools and training institutions; specialist providers from other government agencies; and NGOs serving target populations. PES and their partners are constantly testing methods and approaches to remain relevant by adapting mainstream services and ALMPs and active labour market programmes to the specific circumstances of young people.

Current practice shows that the following elements are systematically present in **successful interventions for serving young people**:

- Using multi-channelled approaches, which has proven effective in ensuring employment services are accessible and readily available to young jobseekers when they need them;
- Improving responsiveness and working relationships with employers in a skills-driven global labour market, which increases the number of relevant vacancies and services;
- Having in place diagnostic and needs assessment tools (such as profiling methods) enables more efficient service provision plan and allocation budgets; it also facilitates better targeting and sequencing of interventions according to clients' needs, while also responding to labour market conditions;
- Tailoring services for nearly job-ready youth should aim to support their autonomy and capacity to play an active role during the job-searching process;
- Sequencing interventions for those with specific skill and employability gaps works better if basic services are combined with participation in active labour market programmes; this should also involve

a careful examination of labour market conditions, as outcomes for these are highly dependent upon the economic cycle;

- Closing the gaps in employment outcomes for those severely affected by precariousness and exclusion requires the provision of specialized employment services in combination with social aid mechanisms and the intervention of specialized providers; partnerships have proven essential to effectively serve this group;
- Multi-service interventions should be guided by the availability of complementary services locally and the good performance of partners involved.

## Bibliography

- Andersen, T.; Feiler, L.; Schulz, G. 2015. *The role of employment service providers: guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs*. Vol. 4. (Luxembourg, ETF, CEDEFOP, ILO), available at: [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Vol.4\\_Employment\\_service\\_providers](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Vol.4_Employment_service_providers)
- Avila, Z. 2015. *Youth employment programmes supported by the Public Employment Service: Mexico* (unpublished).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Tian, G. 2018. *Good practices in using partnerships for the delivery of employment services in China*. Working Paper No 229 (Geneva, ILO).
- Calero, C.; Gonzalez Diez, V.; Soares, Y.S.D.; Kluge, J.; Corseuil, C.H. 2016. “Can arts-based interventions enhance labour market outcomes among youth? Evidence from a randomized trial in Rio de Janeiro.” (Bonn, IZA), available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0927537116303396>
- Chacaltana, J. 2018. *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture* (Third Edition) (Geneva, ILO).
- Corbanese, V.; Rosas G. 2017. *Profiling youth labour market disadvantage: A review of approaches in Europe* (Turin, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_613361.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_613361.pdf)
- European Commission (EC), 2017. *Social summit for fair jobs and growth: Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative*, Gothenburg, Sweden, 17 November 2017, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/social-summit-fair-jobs-and-growth-factsheets\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/social-summit-fair-jobs-and-growth-factsheets_en)
- González-Velosa, C.; Ripani, L.; Rosas-Shady, D. 2012. *How can job opportunities for young people be improved?* (Washington D.C, IDB), available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/5539#sthash.FqpJrRIK.dpuf>
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). 2016. “Using job training to prevent teen pregnancy in the Dominican Republic”, in *Development that works. Effectiveness Blog*, available at: [https://blogs.iadb.org/desarrolloefectivo\\_en/2016/04/19/teen-pregnancy](https://blogs.iadb.org/desarrolloefectivo_en/2016/04/19/teen-pregnancy)
- International Labour Organization (ILO). 2014. *What works on youth employment services for youth and why? Area of critical importance: jobs and skills for youth*. Mutual Learning Workshop, background paper, final report, (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Eventsandmeetings/WCMS\\_308728/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Eventsandmeetings/WCMS_308728/lang--en/index.htm)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015a Elder, S.: *What does NEET mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted*, Technical Brief No.1. (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_343153.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_343153.pdf)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015b. *Notes on public employment services in Latin America and the Caribbean: Paraguay* (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-santiago/documents/publication/wcms\\_429099.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-santiago/documents/publication/wcms_429099.pdf)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015c. *Notes on public employment services in Latin America and the Caribbean: Uruguay* (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-santiago/documents/publication/wcms\\_429110.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-santiago/documents/publication/wcms_429110.pdf)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015d. *Notes on public employment services in Latin America and the Caribbean: Dominican Republic* (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_policy/---cepol/documents/publication/wcms\\_426616.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/---cepol/documents/publication/wcms_426616.pdf)

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2016. *What works in wage subsidies for young people: A review of issues, theory, policies and evidence*, Working Paper No. 199 (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/working-papers/WCMS\\_466538/lang--en/index.html](http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/working-papers/WCMS_466538/lang--en/index.html)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2017. *Global employment trends for youth 2017: paths to a better working future* (Geneva, ILO), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_598669.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_598669.pdf)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2018. *Public employment services: joined-up services for those facing labour market disadvantage*, (Geneva, ILO).
- Kigali Employment Service Centre (KESC). 2014. *Strategic Plan 2014-2019* (Unpublished).
- Kluge, J.; Puerto, S.; Robalino, D.; Romero, J.M.; Rother, F.; Stöterau, J.; Weidenkaff, F.; Witte, M. 2016. *Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: A systematic review of training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, mentoring, and subsidized employment interventions* (Oslo, Campbell Collaboration), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_508938.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_508938.pdf)
- Mazza, J. 2017. *Labor intermediation services in developing countries: adapting employment services for a global age*. (London, Palgrave-Macmillan Press), available at: <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137486677>
- ManpowerGroup. 2017. *2016-2017 Talent shortage survey* (United States, ManPowerGroup), available at: <https://www.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage-2016>
- Ngompe Mambou, C. 2017. *Designing strong local strategies for better job skills*, seminar at the OECD/LEED Forum, Venice, available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDLEED/urban-special-employment-programme-in-cameroon-christoph-ngompe-mambou>
- World Bank. 2015. *Toward solutions for youth employment: 2015 baseline report* (Washington D.C., World Bank), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_413826.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_413826.pdf)
- World Economic Forum. 2016. *The future of jobs employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution* (Geneva), available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf)

## **Acknowledgements**

This technical note is the result of a joint initiative of the Youth Employment Programme Unit and the Employment Service and Labour Market Policies Group of the ILO's Employment Policy Department. It was prepared by Zulum Avila with guidance from Valter Nebuloni and Michael Mwasikakata, research support from Josée-Anne la Rue and inputs from Jacqueline Maza, External Consultant. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of ILO ■



## YEP Technical Notes

Drawing on international literature and relevant country cases, the YEP Technical Notes are meant to support decision-makers and practitioners who endeavour to ensure decent job opportunities and a better working future for young people.

These notes consider key issues pertaining to a given subject area, and offer orientations, technical insights and examples of interventions that work effectively in improving youth transitions into labour markets as well as their employment conditions.



*The ILO's Youth Employment Programme (YEP) supports national capacity to design, implement and evaluate context-specific youth employment policies and programmes. It operates through a network of ILO specialists and external partners, towards meeting national and global development goals.*

**Youth Employment Programme**  
International Labour Organization  
Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
[www.ilo.org/youth](http://www.ilo.org/youth)  
[youth@ilo.org](mailto:youth@ilo.org)