



Youth Employment and Migration

MDG-F Thematic Study: Key Findings and Achievements

Executive Summary

Background

Youth Employment and Migration

There are more young people in the world today than ever before, 1.3 billion of them living in developing countries¹. The global financial crisis and economic downturn have resulted in the largest cohort ever of unemployed young people around the world, with 80.7 million young people struggling to find work in 2009².

Youth unemployment is a global challenge that needs to be understood not only within the broader employment question, but for its consequences in terms of the increasing numbers of young people who migrate annually in search of alternative livelihoods and opportunities within their countries and abroad.

The MDG-Fund Youth Employment and Migration Sector Thematic Window

The formulation and management of integrated youth employment, social and migration policies is an area in which many countries have had little experience until recently. Against this background, the MDG-F YEM thematic window was conceived, to work with governments in improving the policy coherence of interventions targeting at-risk population groups, reducing the risks of poverty and vulnerability, and, in parallel, empowering young people towards economic and social mobility.

The MDG-F YEM thematic window responds and provides support to countries in complex operational environments where young people invariably experience multiple layers of disadvantage. While each of the 15 Joint Programmes (JPs) has been contextualized according to country situations, all have aimed to increase the chances of young people in gaining access to decent work, self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as promoting respect for youths' fundamental rights. The JPs have also promoted socially inclusive development and worked to improve the situation of migrants.

¹ Brookings Institute Report , Global Compact on Learning Series, *Taking Action on Learning in Developing Countries*, 2011. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/06/09-global-compact>

² ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, 2010 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_elm/---trends/documents/publication/wcms_143349.pdf

Achievements and Results

The study identified five main intervention/results areas, with institutional strengthening and capacity building activities cutting across all areas to trigger sustainable changes at national and local levels:

Heightened awareness on youth and employment issues

Targeted advocacy and communications campaigns have contributed to improving understanding among institutional stakeholders, social partners, the private sector and civil society on youth issues from rights-based perspectives (including poverty, gender, social inclusion and regional disparities), building consensus around youth targets and looking at how JPs can more broadly contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. Outreach has also raised awareness among the general public and direct beneficiaries -- including disadvantaged youth, migrant workers and women in low paid domestic work -- about basic rights and how to access essential services,.



Enhanced knowledge base on the challenges and difficulties facing young people

Research and analytical surveys have strengthened the knowledge base in several countries on the multi-faceted challenges facing young people in different regions and communities, the barriers to workforce entry for the most vulnerable population groups, and the connections and relationships between youth unemployment, migration and social inclusion. In this area, and as inputs to evidence-based policymaking, institutional capacities have also been strengthened in the formulation of new youth indicators and the collection and analysis of quantitative data. As a result, policy environments are becoming more responsive to the needs of young people.

Strengthened policy and institutional environments

Great strides have been made in embedding youth employment targets for the most 'at-risk' groups (including women, ethnic minority groups, migrant workers, returnees and the children of migrant families) within national development policies and planning frameworks. In certain countries, the support of the JPs resulted in the trialing of innovative programmes that increase access to social protection and/or improve the governance of migration, minimizing the risks and heightening the positive impacts of migration. Regional and local employment policies and

action plans were also reinforced in a number of countries, as well as the legal and administrative frameworks for new enterprise creation.

As a result of support from the JPs, policy intentions and priority setting have been transformed into measurable actions in the shape of Youth Employment Action Plans (YEAPs) in different countries. A great achievement is the real allocation of financial resources at national and regional levels to support these action plans, either through existing budgetary frameworks or through the creation of Youth Employment Funds, and the piloting of alternative models to finance youth employment interventions at the local level, such as solidarity remittance schemes.

The creation of new government departments, the formalization of inter-ministerial working groups and the facilitation of participatory, multi-stakeholder dialogue have also contributed to improving the coordination of actors with responsibility on youth issues and providing more coherent responses to youth needs, while minimizing the duplication of efforts. Coordination mechanisms have offered a space for young people, public institutions and civil society organizations to dialogue, to work together and to plan strategically. Indeed, the work on designing policies and action plans has been a vehicle to accord youth a louder voice in policy and programme development.



Tailored measures for young people (pilot projects)

In the first instance, targeted pilot projects have improved access to quality education and training opportunities for young people, including a better match between secondary education and vocational skills training and skills-in-demand within local economies. Working through Youth Support Structures, pilot projects have also facilitated the creation and validation of active labour market measures for young people with low levels of education or lacking in formal qualifications. Entrepreneurship training has contributed to the promotion of self-employment and enterprise creation opportunities, with opportunities explored in locally productive sectors and promoted through increased access to lending institutions.

Strengthened capacities to manage and deliver youth support services

The JPs have substantially contributed to strengthening key technical, functional and operational capacities within national institutions, government line ministries and departments, public employment services and regional and local governments with a mandate for youth, with training based on an assessment of institutional needs and priorities.

The explicit reinforcement of localized youth support services, such as One-Stop-Shops, Youth Employment Service Centres and Resource Centres, has diversified the types of assistance available to young people at the community level and opened up access to labour mediation,

counseling, psycho-social support, education, employability, and entrepreneurship and occupational skills training for the most vulnerable population groups. A significant achievement of several JPs is that, as a result of being trained as advocates, peer educators and service providers in their own communities, youth leaders and Councils have themselves become more active protagonists in efforts to support young people in disadvantaged communities.



Conclusions

Lessons Learned

The study examines some of the cumulative lessons learned over the three years of joint programme implementation in 15 countries. In the first instance, it looks at enabling factors for the formulation and implementation of youth, employment and migration policies and programmes that also contributed to their success and sustainability. As a body of work, the JPs have offered several significant lessons for the design of demonstration policies and pilot projects targeting vulnerable young people. Secondly, it looks at enabling factors with respect to the roll-out of tailored measures for young people. Thirdly, it provides an overview of the lessons learned from joint programming as a technical cooperation strategy at country level.

Recommendations

Finally, the study provides a set of recommendations: i) for shaping national policies and programmes to tackle YEM challenges; ii) for shaping technical cooperation interventions on youth employment, social and migration policies; and iii) for knowledge sharing and advocacy efforts.

Access to full report: <http://on.mdgfund.org/VLaTo4>