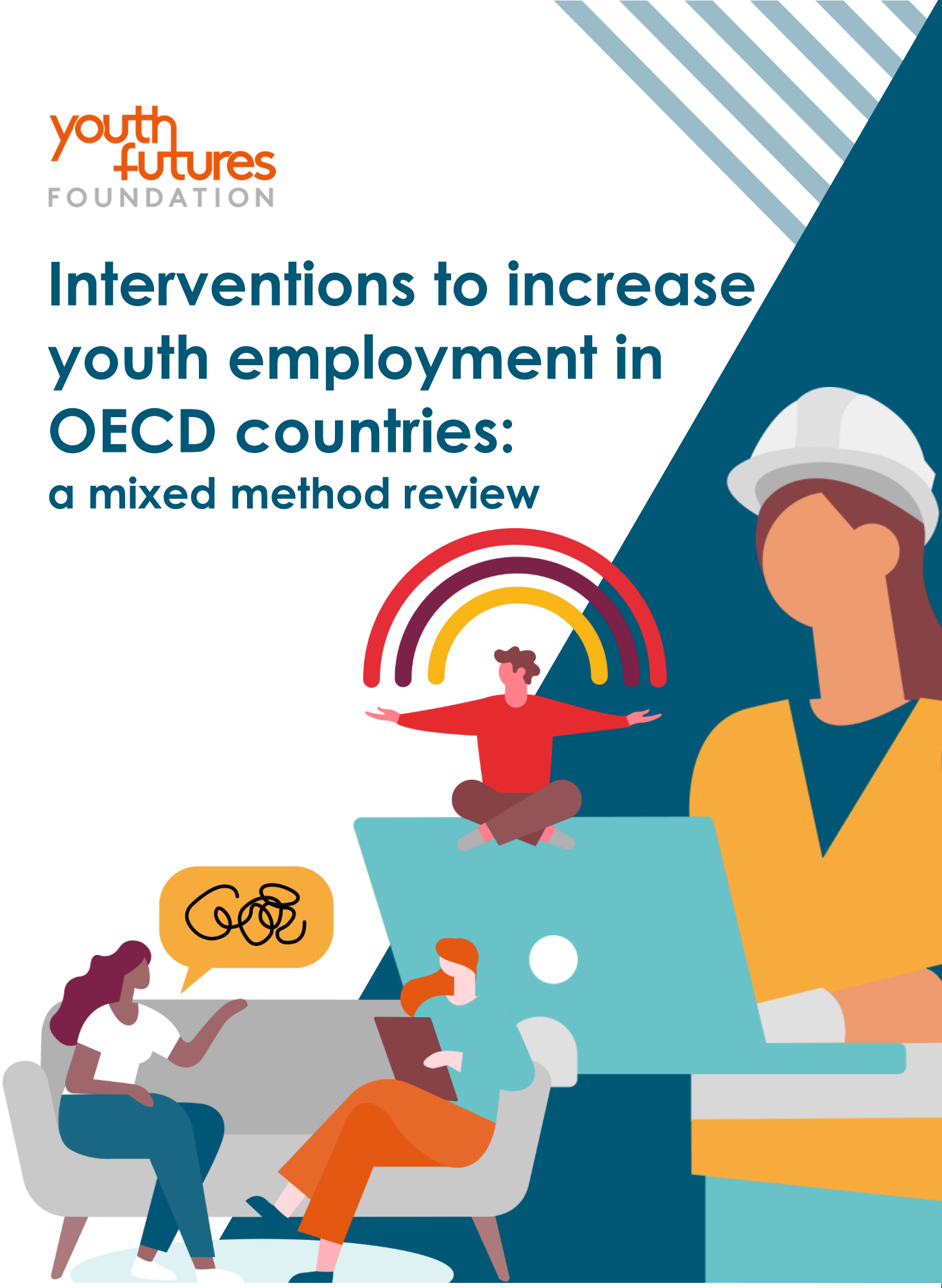
youth futures FOUNDATION

Interventions to increase youth employment in OECD countries:

a mixed method review



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Campbell Collaboration

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Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Howard White. Parts of the report are based on an earlier qualitative review by Robert Apunyo, Caroline Otike, Thomas Katairo, Martha Kyaterekera, Mary Baremirwe Bekoreire, and Verena Niyadurupola. Additional assistance was provided by Varsha Nair, Swati Mantri, Sujata Shirodkar, and Ratika Bhandari.

The Youth Futures Foundation would like to thank the internal and external reviewers who read versions of this report for their helpful input.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Youth employment as an international policy issue

Youth employment is a recognised policy issue across OECD countries. At their meeting in Turkey in 2015, OECD leaders agreed to the Antalya Goal of reducing the share of young people in their countries who are most at risk of being permanently left behind in the labour market by 15% by 2025. The most recent monitoring document stated that 12 out of the 19 OECD countries were on track to meet the Antalya Goal (OECD/ILO, 2023).

At the level of the EU, the Youth Guarantee is a political commitment made by the Member States to give every person under the age of 25 (or under 30, if the Member State so decides) a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education (EU, 2017).

To support the Youth Guarantee addition, the European Council established the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) with an approved budget of 6.4 billion euro. This consisted of 3.2 billion from a specific new EU budget line to be matched by 3.2 billion euro from European Social Fund (ESF) national allocations, to increase the EU financial support available to regions and individuals that were struggling the most with youth unemployment and inactivity (European Court of Auditors, 2017). The general objective of YEI is the 'sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training (NEET), including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.'[1]

37 YEI operational programmes are running in 20 Member States including YEI (out of a total of 187 programmes under the European Social Fund). In addition, 58 operational programmes are running in 20 Member States that include ESF investments under IP8.ii (access to youth employment) and that are not covered by the YEI (EU 2017).

In the United Kingdom there have been a succession of policy initiatives for over three decades, such as the New Deal for Young People (NDYP, 1988-2010) and the Youth Contract (2012-16), which are described in Chapter 2. The Youth Futures Foundation was set up by UK government in 2019 with a £90 million grant to support evidence-based approaches to reduce youth unemployment, especially for those furthest from the labour market.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176

1.2 Existing reviews

1.2.1 Quantitative reviews

In this section we review existing quantitative systematic reviews which assess evidence from the youth employment sector as a whole.

Kluve et al. (2017)

The first comprehensive review of global youth employment interventions was the 3ie-funded Campbell systematic review published as Kluve et al. (2017). The review includes 113 eligible impact evaluations, with a meta-analysis based on 2,259 effect sizes. Overall, the review finds positive effects of entrepreneurship promotion and skills training on both employment and earnings. Effects of employment services and subsidised employment were generally small and non-significant. The effects are larger in low and middle-income countries (LICs/MICs) than in high-income countries (HICs).[2] They are also larger for programmes which target disadvantaged youth, that is those with limited education or from a low-income background.

However, the effects sizes are small. The average effect from 105 interventions on employment is a standardized mean difference of (SMD, d) = 0.05 (95% CI: 0.03-0.06). This effect corresponds to a 3-6% absolute increase in employment compared to the comparison group (see Annex 2 for details of the calculation). The largest effects came from entrepreneurship (d=0.16 from seven interventions), followed by skills training (d=0.05, from 67 interventions). The effects are small and insignificant for employment services (d=0.01, 10 interventions) and subsidized employment (d=0.02, 16 interventions). Employment effects are greater in the medium (12-24 months) and long-term (more than 24 months) (d=0.05 and d=0.06 respectively) than the short-term (d=0.03). Employment effects are stronger for single sex interventions (female: d=0.08, male d=0.06) compared to mixed sex (d=0.04).

The overall effect from all interventions on earnings is d=0.05. Entrepreneurship promotion has the largest effect on wages (d=0.09, 12 interventions), followed by skills training (d=0.07, 60 interventions). There are small, insignificant effects from employment services (d=0.01, 8 interventions) and subsidized employment (d=-0.01, 9 interventions). The effect on earnings does not vary substantially depending on time of effect measurement (d=0.07, 0.06 and 0.05 for short, medium and long-term respectively).

[2] We use the 'country income' categories provided by the World Bank: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups.

Youth employment programmes as a whole do not have a significant impact on business performance (d=0.03; 95% CI -0.05-0.12), but entrepreneurship promotion alone does (d=0.10, 95% CI 0.0-0.19).

The authors suggest that interventions which combine supply and demand side interventions will work best. This conclusion is not based on evidence from such combined interventions, but the fact that skills development (supply) and entrepreneurship promotion (demand) are the two most effective interventions.

ILO review (Puerto et al., 2022)

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned a team from ILO and the World Bank to update the Kluve et al. (2017) review. This review was published as Puerto et al. (2022), referred to here as the ILO review.

The review adds an additional 115 studies to those in the Kluve review, including a total of 228 studies covering 220 interventions in 62 countries. Sixty per cent of these interventions are in low- and middle-income countries (L&MICs), with one-third from Africa (including North Africa). Nearly half (47 percent) of included studies are randomized controlled trials, with the remainder being non-experimental designs with an explicit counterfactual. Before versus after studies are not included. The reported outcomes are employment probability, earnings or wages, and business performance.

Across all outcomes, the overall effect size is SMD (d) = 0.08 (95% confidence interval, CI: 0.07-0.09). The effect is positive across all income groups and outcome categories. Youth employment interventions are found to be more effective in L&MICs than HICs. For Africa the average effect across all outcomes is SMD (d) = 0.10 (95% CI: 0.08-0.13).

There is variation in effects across interventions. Across all outcomes, the largest effect is on entrepreneurship promotion (d=0.15), followed by skills training (d=0.08). There are smaller effects from employment services (d=0.04) and subsidized employment (d=0.05).

At the outcome level, the largest effect is on business performance (d = 0.12 – reflecting a similarly high effect from entrepreneurship promotion interventions which are likely those for which a business performance outcome is measured), with smaller effects on employment and earnings (d = 0.07, and d = 0.08 respectively).

There is a substantially larger effect for interventions targeting women or both men and women (both categories had d=0.08), than interventions targeting only men (d=0.02), but there are only 22 studies of interventions targeting only men, and nearly double that (41) targeting only women. This effect is also found in the multivariate analysis which finds women-only interventions to have 0.01 SMD larger effect than either interventions targeted at men only or both men and women.

The authors conduct moderator analysis using meta-regression. They find that:

- In L&MICs multicomponent programmes are more effective than single component, but this is not the case in HICs. In the former, the additional effect for multicomponent interventions is d between 0.03 and 0.04.

- Adding soft skills to training programmes increases the effect size (d) between 0.01 and 0.05. But in Africa adding a soft skills component does not appear to provide additional effects.
- Providing certification has a significant positive effect compared to interventions without certification.
- Providing a monetary incentive to participate does not improve outcomes, and worsens them in some settings.

EU CIE study (Pompli et al., 2022)

This study is an analysis of 'counterfactual impact evaluations' – the term used by the EC for 'large n impact evaluation' study designs[3] – of the employment effects of interventions supported by the European Social Fund (ESF). It is not a systematic review since it is restricted to EU-supported programmes. Ninety-four studies were identified as suitable for inclusion in the analysis, providing 882 effect sizes. Many of these studies are not in English and so excluded from the ILO and Kluve reviews, as well as the Youth Employment Evidence and Gap Map (EGM).

Whilst being titled 'Meta-analysis of the ESF counterfactual impact evaluations' the authors do not employ standard meta-analysis techniques. The main approaches used suffer serious methodological flaws, which are briefly described below.

Nonetheless some main findings can be reported. The authors use the absolute ex post percentage difference in employment between treatment and control as their standard effect measure. So, if employment in the treatment group after the intervention is 66% and in the control group 60% this is an impact of 6% (or 0.06). They find an average effect across all programmes of 7.6%, which is equivalent to d=0.16.

The authors report average effects by intervention type which range from 1.7% for public employment to 14.6% for employment subsidies and financial aid. Vocational training has an effect of 6.0%, and other training 4.8%. Internships are slightly higher at 10.9% but mentoring is lower at 3.6%. The multivariate results from the meta-regression with employment probability as the dependent variable are broadly in line with these. The meta-regression also shows that single component interventions have a larger impact than multi-component interventions, though this effect is insignificant in the full model.

The average effect of d=0.16 in the EU study is larger than the effect found in the ILO Review (average treatment effect, d=0.10). But all of the included studies in the EU study are non-experimental designs. Systematic reviews generally confirm Rossi's Stainless Steel Law of Evaluation that the better the impact evaluation design the lower the effect size. Hence RCTs are more likely to find small or null effects than non-experimental designs. Around half the included studies in the ILO review are randomised controlled trails

[3] The term 'impact evaluation' is used here to refer to a quantitative study which measures the effect of an intervention on a set of outcomes. These are also called 'large n studies', where the n refers to the sample size (or 'number'). Relatively large samples – preferably in the hundreds – are needed to apply these methods. See the glossary in Annex 1.

(RCTs). The authors report that RCTs find a statistically significant lower effect than non-RCTs between 0.02 and 0.07 SMD (Puerto et al, 2022: 44).

The EU study presents four pieces of analysis: (1) the distribution of statistically significant effects; (2) the distribution of effects (the absolute percentage effect on employment), (3) a meta-regression using an ordered probit model based on statistical significance, and (4) a meta-analysis using the average effect size (difference in probability of employment) as the dependent variable. The first and third approaches are based on vote counting which is methodologically flawed, so the results are not reported here.

Vote counting, as the name suggests, counts the number of studies finding significant effects. From the perspective of the standard approach to meta-analysis used in systematic reviews, vote counting takes no account of the size or precision of the estimate, or the confidence in study findings as assessed using critical appraisal. In addition, a seminal paper by Hedges and Olkin (1980) demonstrated that the power of vote counting is less than the power of the studies on which it is based, and that the power tends to zero as the sample size increases. So, vote counting with a large number of included studies is very likely to find no effect when there is one. In the standard reference in the field, *Introduction to Meta-Analysis*, Borenstein et al. (2009) devote a chapter to the problems with vote counting. They state that the key deficiency of vote counting is its assumption that an insignificant effect shows that the intervention has no effect. But that is not true as significance depends on both the effect size and sample size, and so a finding of no effect may be the result of a lack of power.

It is particularly dangerous to base an analysis on statistical significance in the social sciences as effectiveness studies are notoriously underpowered. An analysis of over 60,000 effect sizes from 6,700 studies published in economics journals found the median power to be just 18%, not the 80% which is taken as the desired level (Ioannidis et al, 2017). That means there is an 82% chance of not finding a statistically significant effect when there is one. There is a more than 50% chance that three separate studies will find no effect when there is one. Meta-analysis, as usually defined and practiced, overcomes this lack of power by pooling samples. The logo of Cochrane, the organisation which has done most to promote the use of meta-analysis in health, shows the stylized forest plot from an early review in which the majority of studies showed no effect, but the meta-analysis showed a 40-60% reduction in neonatal deaths.[4] Tens of thousands of lives have been saved because the review relied on meta-analysis and not vote counting.

[4] See https://www.cochrane.org/about-us/difference-we-make for the story of the Cochrane logo.

Figure 1.1: The Cochrane logo

Finally, the authors of the EU CIE review (Pompli et al., 2022) commend the EU for the growth in rigorous impact evaluations, which previously had been rare for EU-funded programmes, and not supported in any systematic way. Whilst that had changed, they noted the limited range of outcomes reported, which were mainly restricted to employment status, and the reliance on non-experimental designs. They recommended that the Commission support the implementation of randomised controlled trials of employment programmes.

Some common findings emerge from the reviews. Skills training, such as vocational training, and entrepreneurship development, such as business training, have positive effects on employment and earnings, though the effects are not that large (Table 1.1). However, effects are lower in high-income countries compare to low-and middle-income countries.

Table 1.1: Effect sizes from different reviews

	ILO review	Kluve et al[5]
Overall	0.08	0.04
By intervention		
Skills training	0.08	0.04
Entrepreneurship promotion	0.15	0.14
Employment services	0.04	0.01
Subsidized employment	0.05	0.02
By outcome		
Employment	0.07	0.04
Earnings	0.08	0.05
Business performance	0.12	0.03
Male	0.02	0.06
Female	0.08	0.08
Both	0.08	0.04
By country income category		
High-income	0.06	0.02
Middle-income	0.10	0.08
Low-income	0.09	-

[5] Effect on employment for interventions [1] Calculated by converting d to an odds ratio, and constructing a 2x2 table assuming that control employment rate is 60%. See Annex 2 for details.

Entrepreneurship development is most effective followed by skills development. Other interventions – information and employment services – have smaller, possibly insignificant, effects. Single sex interventions are more effective than mixed sex.

Multi-component interventions are found to be more effective in the ILO review, but not so in the EU review. This question is not examined in the Kluve review.

Effects are larger in low-income settings and work better with the most disadvantaged youth (i.e. those with less education and from low-income backgrounds).

1.2.2 Qualitative reviews

There are no existing qualitative (or mixed methods) systematic reviews of the evidence from process evaluations for youth employment interventions in OECD countries.

1.3 The value added by this analysis

This report is a summary of findings from studies in the Youth Employment Evidence and Gap Map (EGM). The EGM is the largest repository of English language evaluations of interventions to increase youth employment. The current edition of the map contains 1,023 studies. This report summarises findings from these studies. In the case of impact (effectiveness) we rely on evidence from systematic reviews. For qualitative evidence we have conducted our own synthesis.

The value added of this review is:

- A mixed methods synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative literature.
- A broader outcome set than has been included in previous reviews.
- A more disaggregated analysis of specific interventions such as career guidance and mentoring.

Methods

This mixed methods review is based review of evidence from previous quantitative reviews, and a new qualitative review undertaken for YFF.

The qualitative review is based on the 80 process evaluation studies from high-income countries that are included in the most recent edition of the published Youth

Employment Evidence and Gap Map (EGM)[6]. Inclusion criteria, search strategies, approaches to critical appraisal, and other information about the development of the EGM can be found in its accompanying Technical Report (Apunyo and White 2024).

The primary studies reviewed here employed qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data is drawn from document reviews, key informant interviews, direct observation, stakeholder workshops, and focus group discussions and meetings. The studies typically employed a thematic analysis.

For the qualitative review, researchers piloted data extraction in three rounds of piloting. In each session, each study was independently coded by two reviewers. After each pilot session, the wider team discussed the results of pilot data extraction. Thereafter, data extraction was conducted in Microsoft Excel by pairs of reviewers who reconciled disagreements through discussion. Where the two coders failed to reach consensus, the matter was forwarded to a third reviewer for final decision. The saturation principle was applied on an intervention-level basis. That is data extraction was stopped when the saturation was reached for a specific intervention, that is when additional reports read did not generate new themes.

1.4 Overview of this report

Chapter 2 presents intervention design, first by the main intervention types and then some common design issues. Chapter 3 presents how the interventions are expected to work, that is the theories of change. The following chapters present the evidence along the causal chain. This begins with chapter 4 discussing eligibility, targeting and recruitment, with the next chapter discussing participation and retention. Chapter 6 presents evidence implementation, and Chapter 7 on outputs from interventions. The following three chapters - 8, 9 and 10 - present evidence on the impact of the interventions, first on skills and education, second then on employment and earnings, and finally on welfare outcomes. The following chapter discusses sustainability, and the final chapter presents implications for policy, practice and research.

[6] https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Youth-Futures-Evidence-and-Gap-Map-updated-January-2025.html

Chapter Two

Intervention design

2. Intervention design

This chapter describes the design of the main types of youth employment intervention. It then discusses some of the main design choices, which may well affect an intervention's impact.

2.1 Intervention categories and sub-categories

2.1.1 Training, upskilling and retraining and reskilling

Education and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Studies included under the heading 'education' are of school-based activities explicitly intended to increase employability. For example, the Young Professionals Programme in schools in England builds skills and knowledge to prepare Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils for the world of work through modules such as education and training, skills for life and work, and life and work experience - though the technical skills component of these modules are at a very basic level. 'Education' in this review thus does not include academic education and its contribution to employment and earnings. This is covered in the substantial literature on the returns to education.

Vocational training provides the technical skills required to do a job. This includes occupations traditionally associated with vocational training such as carpentry, metalwork and construction, but also professional qualifications such as accountancy and nursing. Vocational training may support social mobility by providing opportunities to enter careers to which the target group may not have otherwise had access. For example, the Year Up programme for disadvantaged youth in the United States provided six months training in software skills (word processing, spreadsheets and presentations) plus either (i) computer installation and maintenance; or (ii) investment management. They also received training on professional behaviour and business skills such as composing emails and conducting meetings (Roder and Elliot, 2011).

Vocational training is most commonly provided in vocational training centres, which can be separate centres, colleges or universities. In Germany, for example, there are over 300 occupations for which formal training is required to work in that occupation. The 1969 Vocational Training Act created a partnership between firms, the federal government and regional governments to provide certificates for qualified individuals

under the dual education model which combines centre-based training with work experience.[7]

McGuinness et al. (2011) assess the effectiveness of employment services in Ireland, including training programmes provided by the Irish Training and Employment Authority and commonly known as Foras Áiseanna Saothai (FÁS).[8] Since 1996, young people in Ireland aged 25 or younger who have been unemployed for more than six months (three months since 2006) are required to register with FAS who will seek either a work placement or suitable training.

In the United Kingdom, the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) for unemployed school-leavers aged 16 and 17 operated in the 1980s. In 1989, YTS was renamed Youth Training and made the responsibility of local training and enterprise councils. More recently, wage subsidies to firms to employ young people - such as under the New Deal and the Youth Contract - have included a requirement for vocational training one day a week (see NAO, 2002, on the New Deal, and NAO, 2014, on the Youth Contract).

Local programmes may also provide financial support for training e.g. the Liverpool Employment Gateway (Ray et al., 2018) and the Leeds City Region Employment Hub (Newby and Denison, 2022).

2.1.2 Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is 'a formal employment program that provides training to do a specific job. Apprentices sign a contract with the employer and learn specific skills during their apprenticeship' (Finch, 2018).

Historically, apprenticeships fell under guilds for the respective professions, who had an interest in ensuring a steady supply of suitably skilled labour. The apprenticeship alone does not constitute 'an intervention'. But governments may intervene in apprenticeships by setting terms and conditions for apprentices, setting standards for training, determining the level of qualifications for training with equivalence to other qualifications and by subsidising apprenticeships (e.g. Apprenticeship Grants in England).

Such government intervention has developed to varying degrees. Several European countries, most notably Germany, have apprenticeships based on the dual education system which combines attendance at a training course in a vocational training program with practical training in the workplace. Such systems are part of a tracking

[7]https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/en/education/the-german-vocational-training-system/the-german-vocational-training-system_node.html

[8] FAS operated from 1988 to 2013, being replaced in 2013 by the Further Education and Skills Service (SOLAS).

system in which children are divided into different education pathways as they enter secondary school. Children who have better academic performance are enter the academic channel intended for professional careers, and others the vocational track.

The benefits of dual education are said to be 'the development of a professional identity, greater employment opportunities, school-to-work transition, productivity gains and improved recruitment and retention for employers' (Chatzichristou, et al, 2014: 9). Apprenticeship is a well-established and respected career path. Chatzichristou et al., (2014) provide an overview of the dual education system across the EU, and how it changed following the global economic crisis of 2008/09.

The dual education model is the most formalized approach to apprenticeships. In the United States, apprenticeships for young people remain under their respective professions with no formal integration with the education system (Lerman and Rauner, 2011). Hence in the US, evaluations study schemes offered by employers such as Oai's (2017) assessment of an apprenticeship program operated by the Siemens Energy, Inc. in North Carolina which provided training in machining and industrial maintenance.

In France, apprenticeship combines classroom education (both on general and occupation-specific skills) and on-the-job training. They are intended for young people aged 16 to 25. Apprentices can be trained to work in a range of occupations including hospitality, hairdressing, baking, crafts and construction. Typically, apprentices spend one week a month at an Apprentice Training Centre (Centre de Formation des Apprentis-CFA) with the rest of the month with the employer (Zamora et al., 2018).

The system in England falls between Europe and the United States.

In England, apprentices have been provided by private firms for hundreds of years. Setting terms and conditions for apprentices goes back to the 16th Century (Box 2.1). After the repeal of the 1563 Statute in 1814, there was concern that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were put into 'blind alley' jobs such as errand boy which did not provide a pathway into secure, meaningful employment (Cowman, 2014). So there was a general call for apprenticeships. At the turn of the century around 20 per cent of young people were in apprenticeships. In recent times, state involvement in apprenticeships dates back to the launch of Modern Apprenticeships in 1993. Modern Apprenticeships were adopted to help address what was seen as the country's continuing shortage of skilled labour at the intermediate level (Harris, 2003: 5). The following decade saw frequent renaming of the different levels of apprenticeship (see Box 2.1).

More reforms followed the 2012 Richards' Review which called for more employer engagement in the apprenticeship system.[9] Minimum Standards were introduced, with

[9] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79cfb1ed915d042206b345/richard-review-full.pdf

these standards being set by employer-led Trailblazer groups.[10] A standard corresponds to a specific level of education: Level 2 (Intermediate), Level 3 (Advanced), Higher and Degree Apprenticeships from Level 4 (e.g. Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma) to Level 7 (e.g. Masters' degree and postgraduate certificate and diploma), with most standards referring to Level 3. The current list of standards is maintained by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.[11]

At the same time, the requirement was introduced that apprenticeships should last at least a year, providing 30 hours of employment a week, and that there should be vocational training which could be on site or off site. This training is often contracted out to local colleges or private firms.

There have been various subsidies for apprenticeships over the years. In 2013 there was a short-lived experiment with Advanced Learning loans to enable apprentices to pay part of the cost of their training. This was abolished after one year with just over 600 loans being made.[12] The current funding model is the Apprenticeship Levy, introduced in 2017. This is an annual charge on large firms (those with an annual pay bill over £3 million) of 0.5% of the pay bill. The funds from the levy are held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Firms can claim the funds back, plus a 10% government contribution, to pay for training. However, all funds unused after 48 months are no longer available for apprenticeship funding (going into general taxation rather than staying in the fund). Firms can nominate other firms to utilize up to 25% of their levy, so larger firms may support training in smaller firms in their supply chain.

Small businesses outside the levy can apply for a share of funding for training costs, rising to a 100% subsidy for firms with fewer than 50 employees. Maximum levels of funding are set, with employers liable if they spend over the maximum amount. The subsidy is for the cost of training only; it is not a wage subsidy.

[10] See Newton et al. (2015) for an early evaluation of the Trailblazer process.

[11] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/

[12] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/no-more-advanced-learning-loans-for-apprentices-after-low-take-up/

Table 2.1: Apprenticeships in England: a timeline

Date	Change
1563	Statute of Artificers Set conditions for apprenticeships: length of apprenticeship is seven years and a single Master takes no more than three apprentices at any one time
1814	Repeal of 1563 Statute
1905	Formation of Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Committee to promote apprenticeships and advice parents on seeking placements for their children
1968	Apprenticeships are called 'a farce' in a report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, stating that an apprenticeship 'provides less training than a properly constituted course lasting only a few months'.
1993	Launch of Modern Apprenticeships Focus shifted from time served to qualification gained. The Modern Apprenticeship was a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 qualification.
2001	Cassels Report: Modern apprenticeships: the way to work : the report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee
2001	National Traineeships introduced as level 2 qualification, intended as an entry route for apprenticeships.
2001	National Traineeships renamed Foundation Modern Apprenticeship. Modern Apprenticeships renamed Advanced Modern Apprenticeships.
2004	Advanced Modern Apprenticeships renamed Advanced Apprenticeships. Modern Apprenticeships renamed Apprenticeships. Pre-apprenticeships and Young Apprenticeships (for 14–16 year olds still in school) introduced as an apprenticeship entry route. Upper age limit of 25 for apprenticeships removed.
2007	First National Apprenticeship Week.
2009	Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Apprenticeship offer which meant all qualified 16 to 19 year olds who did not have one and wanted one were entitled to an apprenticeship. Never started and abolished in Education Act 2011.

2010?	Higher Apprenticeships introduced equivalent to foundation degrees or above. Young Apprenticeships ended. Payments started for small firms hiring apprentices aged 16–24.
2012	Richard Review of Apprenticeships Minimum Apprenticeship Standards introduced. Standards produced by industry-led groups under Trailblazers. Standards correspond to different levels of education: Level 2 (Intermediate), Level 3 (Advanced), Higher and Degree Apprenticeships from Level 4 (e.g. Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma) to Level 7 (e.g. Masters' degree and postgraduate certificate and diploma). Apprenticeships should last at least a year, providing 30 hours of employment a week with also separate guided learning
2013	Introduction of Advanced Learning loans to enable apprenticeships to take loans to pay half their training costs (first time apprentices have to pay).
2014	Advanced Learning loans ended after low take up.
2017	Introduction of Apprenticeship Levy. Levy on large employers to create a funding pool for apprenticeships. Smaller firms do not pay into levy but have to pay 5% of apprentice training costs.

Source: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/a-short-history-of-apprenticeships-in-england-from-medieval-craft-guilds-to-the-twenty-first-century/

Traineeships and pre-apprenticeship programmes

Pre-apprenticeship programmes are offered to youth thought to be not yet ready for an apprenticeship. An example is the 'Entry to Employment' programme (2002-2010) in England, which offered flexible programmes of vocational training, social skills development, and support to job search and work placement to young people, in preparation for apprenticeships, other Level 2 learning, or employment (Spielfhofer et al., 2003.

Meanwhile in Australia a variety of qualifications which serve this purpose. In 2009 the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) developed principles for pre-apprenticeships, and the federal government allocated A$20 million to fund 4,000 pre-apprenticeships (Karmel and Oliver, 2011).

Traineeships may also serve as pre-apprenticeships. Traineeships in Wales offered three strands to support pathways into training and employment: (1) Engagement: for young

people facing barriers to further education or employment and with no clear career path, with a focus on acquiring basic skills and qualifications; (2) Level 1: enhancing the vocational skills of young people who have a chosen occupation through work placements, community and voluntary work and centre-based learning; and (3) Bridge-to-Employment for young people who have a clear occupation focus and already acquired some qualifications, possibly through the Engagement strand. The young person is placed in a Traineeship with an employer who should then offer them employment once the traineeship is completed. The first two approaches were intended to allow young people to then move to apprenticeship, with the third - Bridge to Employment - intended as an alternative pathway (Egglestone et al., 2018).

Shared Apprenticeships

Variations in the design of apprenticeship programmes include Shared Apprenticeships, which have been used for example in the construction section in England since 2010.[13] Shared Apprenticeships allow the apprentice to work with several different employers, and so gain a wider range of work experience than they would with a single employer.

2.1.3 Life skills training and development

There is no agreed universal definition of life skills. International organisations have offered various definitions which are quite general, sometimes to the point of tautology. An often-cited definition is that of UNICEF "as psychosocial and interpersonal skills that are generally considered important". This report adopts a similarly broad definition so that life skills can include basic skills in literacy and numeracy, practical skills like financial literacy, interpersonal skills and support to job search such as interview technique development. Many of these, especially interpersonal skills, are sometimes called 'soft skills'. This flexibility allows the life skills training programmes to be tailored to their participants, their context, and their purpose.

The Youth Employment EGM (see above) includes studies of interventions which offer a range of different life skills training. For example:

- A programme in Latvia provided training in foreign languages, computer literacy, project management and business operation, and driving (Dmitrijeva, 2008)
- The Gateway stage of the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) in England included training in basic skills, which comprised a compulsory full-time course involving job search activity and addressing "soft" skills such as punctuality, team working and communications skills (NAO, 2002).
- The Youth Opportunity Grant Initiative in the United States included activities to develop group and leadership skills through activities such as sports and recreation,

[13] https://www.makethefutureyours.uk/what-is-a-shared-apprenticeship-scheme

and community service, as well as direct teaching of basic skills (in this case, maths and reading) (Jackson et al., 2007).

- *Yo Puedo* was a conditional cash transfer programme in San Francisco which included a life skills programme covering goal setting, advocacy skills, assertive communication, listening skills, as well sexual and reproductive health topics (Minnis, 2014).

Life skills training and development may be included in programmes in various ways:

- Direct teaching of life skills. All four examples given above, including the NDYP in England, included life skills training. In addition, projects supported by the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF, a DfES-funded programme to re-engage hard-to-reach young people aged 13-19 which ran from 1999-2002) tended to focus on life skills. Areas covered included interview technique, job application skills, computer skills, literacy and numeracy (Golden et al., 2002).
- Building life skills as the main focus of the programme through relevant activities. For example, the Essential Life Skills programme in England was a one-year programme (from summer 2018 to September 2019) for children and young people aged 5 -18 years old which provided extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, debating and information technology (IT) with the intention of building skills such as teamwork and resilience (Cutmore et al., 2020).
- Building life skills as part of a broader programme. Providers for Welsh Traineeships found that participants needed support in many areas, which included providing advice on matters such as budgeting or healthy eating (Egglestone et al., 2019).
- Life skills as a by-product of the intervention's main activities. The Liverpool Youth Employment Gateways (YEG) included a budget of £500 per participant, which could be spent on anything which might help entry into employment. Participants had access to an online platform to help allocate these funds, and were encouraged to use the platform to manage their own funds (Ray et al., 2018).

2.1.4 Support to employment

Support to employment covers activities to assist a young person in their search and application for employment. It usually covers advice and information, as well as development of job search skills and may also provide direct practical support such as a transport subsidy to attend interviews.

The NDYP, which operated in England from 1988 to 2010, assisted young people aged 18-24 who had been unemployed for at least six months. It began with a four-month Gateway period in which the participant could receive the following support to employment: (i) an explanation about the New Deal; (ii) development of an Action Plan based on an assessment of their career history and goals and aspirations; (iii) direct help with job search and development of job search skills; (iv) career advice and referral to

career advisors; (v) dealing with personal issues such as homelessness or a criminal record; (vi) referral to appropriate training courses; (vii) assistance in accessing benefits; and (vii) preparing for the Options stage of New Deal (these are described in more detail below) (Hasluck, 2000).

A similar approach was used in the Welsh traineeship programme. Providers offered young people training alongside support in areas such as CV writing, job applications, numeracy, reading, writing and interview technique (Egglestone et al., 2018).

Disadvantaged young people are cash constrained and often cannot afford transport to go to interviews, or possibly to buy new clothes if needed. Some interventions provide help with this. A notable example is the Liverpool YEG programme, mentioned above, which included £500 per young person to be used as was thought best to support obtaining employment. This might be for help getting to interviews or jobs, such as covering transport costs or buying a bicycle. But the funds could also be used to solve the 'first month problem' when a new employee no longer receives benefits and so has no cash to pay rent and other bills (Ray et al., 2018). The intervention in Liverpool also included support with improving job search skills, enhancing CVs and job applications, coaching in interview techniques, access to an enhanced range of employment and training opportunities, and good quality job matching.

Examples from other countries include:

- A French job-assistance program sought to help young people access apprenticeships. The main activity in the programme was meetings with caseworkers, in which information was provided on local training centres and available job vacancies. Funds were also available for transport costs or relocation costs (Zamora et al., 2018).
- In the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia the PIPOL programme included new registrants receiving orientation and a needs profile (Pastore, 2020).
- The Summer Youth Employment Programme in Ohio, United States, provides participants with job readiness training as well as assistance in completing the paperwork for the proposed employment (Atwell, 2023).
- Under the National Employment Action Plan in Ireland, young people identified by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) were referred to the national training and employment authority (FAS), for an "activation interview". The activation process included job search assistance, as well as possible referral to employment or training opportunities (McGuinness et al., 2011).

Individualised plans

An important part of the job support process is often the development of an individualised plan toward meeting career goals, such as the Action Plan under the NDYP mentioned above. The plan included identification of skills gaps, and the training and other activities such as work experience, voluntary work or apprenticeships which can help achieve employment goals. Provider engagement with a young person in the Welsh traineeship typically comprised: (i) an informal interview during which a needs assessment is undertaken; (ii) induction into the programme; (iii) development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP); and (iv) monthly reviews as the young person engages with the programme (Egglestone et al., 2018).

Similarly, young people referred to FAS under the National Employment Action Plan in Ireland would work with their Employment Services Officer (ESO) to produce an Action Plan which would include steps such as being 'referred to a job club, training course or a Community Employment (CE) scheme' or 'a vacant job or on placement via a job subsidy scheme' (McGuiness et al., 2011: 15).

Another example is PIPOL in Italy, listed above, in which an individual action plan (PAI – Piano di azione individuale) was prepared which outlined which interventions were planned for the participant (Pastore, 2020).

The Transition to Work (TtW) Programme in Australia began with a 28 day period in which a pathway to employment was identified and a corresponding Job Plan developed (Henderson et al., 2021).

In addition to career goals, the individualized learning plans produced by participants in the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) included plans for entering employment as well as personal, social and educational goals (Byam, 2002).

2.1.5 Labour market information systems

Labour market information systems, which provide information on the expected demand and supply for labour broken down by types of occupation and possibly skills, can serve several purposes. Information on labour demand usually comes from surveys of employers, though more innovative approaches may be used from online job advertisements.[14]

Under a 'national manpower planning model' common in the 1960s, governments could plan education and training provision based on expected labour demand. Firms can use labour market information at the national or local level to plan their

[14] Developing experimental estimates of regional skill demand (ESCoE DP 2021-02) - ESCoE : ESCoE

training and recruitment strategies. Most relevant to this review is the use of labour market information to inform careers services for young people.

Careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is, as the names suggests, an employment service which provides a young person (i) information about employment and training opportunities, and the pathway to achieving the agreed goals, (ii) advice that takes into account the young person's own aspirations and possibilities, and (iii) guidance on the practical steps required, which are often formalized in an individual action plan (see above).

The 1973 Employment and Training Act established, for the first time in England and Wales, a national career guidance service, delivered through local education authorities (LEAs) and available to all young people. It was set up as a service to young people, rather than educational institutions. However, in practice almost all LEAs chose to operate it through schools and colleges, basing their staff in offices, town centres and other community settings but conducting careers interviews with young people on school and college premises. The careers service was replaced by Connexions which ran from 2000-2012. Connexions is described in more detail below. Connexions was in turn replaced by the National Careers Service (NCS) in 2012, which is also described below. Unlike Connexions, NCS is not intended for young people below 19.

Connexions was a government initiative between 2001 and 2012 to reduce social exclusion among young people in England by providing information, advice and guidance (IAG) primarily around post-compulsory educational routes and careers[15]. In line with the New Public Management approach embodied in the *Modernizing Government* White Paper of the New Labour government, Connexions had outcome-based targets, such as reduction in the number of young people who opt out of education, employment and training. In principle, Connexions had a dual purpose: both to focus on disadvantaged young people and to provide a service for all young people aged 13-19 (and 20-24 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities who are yet to make the transition to adult services). It was intended to guide choices so that young people would learn the skills they need to make a success of their adult lives and prepare for their future careers. Each young person was assigned a Personal Advisor (PA) to provide guidance and support. This service was intended to go beyond the scope of the careers services that Connexions replaced by providing guidance on other issues which may be barriers to education or employment such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and youth offending. In practice, Connexions focused on the primary target group of disadvantaged young people, it not being practical - or necessary - to extend the full range of services offered by Connexions to the whole population (Hoggarth and Smith, 2004).

Forty-seven Connexions partnerships were established across England between April 2001 and April 2003. The management boards for each partnership included a wide range of agencies providing help to all young people, to provide a single integrated

[15] See NAO (2004) for an early assessment of Connexions.

youth support service. Partnerships commonly included organisations such as social services, youth offending teams, careers companies, youth services, local authorities and drugs action teams. To ensure that young people were not 'falling through the gaps', Connexions aimed to maintain a comprehensive tracking system for young people aged 13 to 19.

The duty of the central government to provide career guidance support for young people, set out in the 1973 Employment and Training Act, remained in place with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills moving responsibility from the former private careers companies to the 47 Connexions partnerships covering England.

It consists of a central unit based at the Department for Education and Skills (the Department), together with 47 local partnerships which are coterminous with the local Learning and Skills Councils. Schools continued to have an important role. The Department developed national policy, provided the partnerships' grant funding, and monitored their performance. The nine Government Offices for the Regions monitored and supported Connexions locally on behalf of the Department. Local authorities may choose to have members on the management boards of Connexions partnerships

The National Careers Service is intended primarily for adults, not children and young people. However, children and young people can access NCS online or by phone. The main provision is through schools and colleges. This system thus misses out those who are not in school, including NEETs. The shift from Connexions to NCS, thus went from a system focused on disadvantaged youth to one which made very little provision for them.

Examples from elsewhere include:

- Ireland's PIEL project backs the European Employment Services (EURES) initiative designed to promote mobility of workers within the 28 EU member states and a select few other countries. EURES functions as a recruiting platform benefitting both employers and job-seekers by creating an open portal where those hiring and those looking for placement have access to the larger European job market. This recruitment strategy encourages free movement of workers within this geographical space and bridges important skill gaps in the Irish and larger European economy (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018: 39).
- An intervention for vocational education students with disabilities in the United States included employability counselling in addition to employment services such as job clubs, job interview preparation and providing contacts (Izzo et al., 2000).
- The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) intervention was implemented for young people with mental ill-health issues in Melbourne, Australia. The activities included vocational assessments to gather information about a young person to help with identifying suitable employment options; searching for career-related opportunities that suit the person's interests, skills, and preferences (Simmons et al., 2023).

Career guidance can be an important part of mentoring interventions. For example, the Career Entry Guidance program (CEG) was a six-month mentoring programme for low

performing school drop-outs intended to assist young people make better professional choices (Boockmann and Nielen, 2016). And a national mentoring programme for visually impaired college students in the United States included career planning amongst a range of issues which were discussed (O'Mally et al., 2016).

2.1.6 Private sector development and financial support

The main focus of youth employment interventions in high-income countries is on improving employability through training and work experience. As well as the skills needed to work in specific sectors, this may also include learning and development for entrepreneurship or starting a business. Studies show that most youth do not have business interests or knowledge, but this can change with exposure to effective programmes. Doucet et al. found that of 27 inner city high school graduates (aged 18-20) in Los Angeles70% started a business and intended to pursue an entrepreneurial career following an entrepreneurial knowledge and skills program. Miller reported similar findings among 30 low-income youth, aged 13–18, in South Bend, United States, who following an after school entrepreneurial course and business camp began microenterprises such as garden irrigation and car repair. Needham reported that 42% of 19 former trainees in inner-city Detroit, aged 18–30, had started their own businesses and 47% were business majors in college.

Qualitative data also showed improved knowledge in marketing, financial planning, and accounting. In Boston, Nakkula et al. found that among 268 low-income high school students, those who received entrepreneurial training and practice had significantly higher scores for starting and leading entrepreneurial activities compared to control youth. The majority of underserved youth (83–95%) in Rockford who had completed a six-month urban gardening program with business and nutrition workshops reported gaining knowledge on how to start and run a garden exchange, job preparedness, and supporting job search. Supporting the demand for employment in the private sector, including support for young people to become self-employed by starting up their own business, is not so common especially in the more developed countries.

A review of support to self-employment found that the country with the strongest focus on this area is Spain, where self-employment programmes account for one-quarter of the budget spent on active labour market programmes (Marjolein, 2017). The other countries in which support to business start-ups are important are Poland, Croatia and Slovenia, followed by Estonia, Greece, Bulgaria and Slovakia.

These programmes typically combine loans or start-up grants as well as business mentoring. Business mentoring may be on specific topics such as bookkeeping or marketing, or help in developing a business plan.

Examples of such programmes are:

- The Prince's Trust (United Kingdom) offers workshops to interested young people aged 18 to 30 who are not in compulsory education and are unemployed or are only working part-time.[16] At the workshops they start to develop business plans, being assigned a mentor. Mentoring is accompanied by business skills training. Start-up loans of £500 to £25,000 are offered, or grants in exceptional circumstances. Impact evaluations of support from the Prince's Trust are reported on in Meager et al. (2003) and Koutsoukos et al. (2005). The results of these studies are reported in chapters on impact below.
- The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) provides business development support for youth with innovative entrepreneurship projects. This support includes grants and micro-finance. The Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme has extended grants for start-ups available to unemployed youth (15-29 years old). Young people can also apply for general schemes such as the Labour Fund. Previously unemployed entrepreneurs can receive up to 600% of the national average monthly salary. The business has to be operational for at least 12 months, otherwise the grant must be repaid (Trojnarska and Halabisky, 2015).
- The *Fare Impresa* (Doing business) programme in Italy provided a loan guarantee for a period of 16-120 months. The guarantee could cover up to 80% of the value of the loan (Mariani et al., 2017).
- The Youth Investment Programme in Portugal, provided business skills training and mentoring, loans and subsidies (Escria, 2015)
- FNIYES included the First Nations and Inuit Youth Business Programme which offered business advice and counselling, mentoring and advisory support and financial support of either a CAD3,000 loan or CAD1,500 equity (Byam, 2002).

2.1.7 Wage subsidies and work experience

Interventions before the New Deal[17]

The Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was started in England in 1978. YOP offered six-month work experience placements to unemployed young people. The scheme was equivalent to a wage subsidy since the participant received a training allowance from the government rather than being paid by their employer. Following YOP was the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) introduced in 1983. YTS was a one-year work experience, extended to two years in 1986. It was available to all young people aged under 18 whether they were employed or not. YTS was then succeeded by two programmes: Youth Credits (YCs) in 1991 and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) in 1995. Both of these

[16] https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/support-starting-business

[17] This section is based on Maguire (2022).

also included government-subsidised work experience, which was combined with off-the-job training, and participants were paid a training allowance directly by the government.

But prior to the New Deal, youth wage subsidies were comparatively poorly funded in the UK accounting for a small share of the budget on active labour market programmes - for example just 1% in 1996 compared to the EU average of 10%. The schemes also generally had low take up (Martin, 1998).

New Deal for Young People (NDYP)

The NDYP was introduced in Great Britain in 1998 by the new (and New) Labour government elected the previous year. It adopted the 'workfare' approach - that is the requirement to be in training or employment to continue to receive benefits after a period of assisted search - actively seeking employment approach which had begun under the previous Conservative administration, specifically the Community Action Scheme introduced by the Major government in 1993, which was replaced by Project Work in 1996 intended for those who had been unemployed for at least two years. NDYP was the first workfare programme aimed specifically at young people.

Following pilots in twelve pathfinder areas, the New Deal was rolled out across the UK from April 1998. Unlike earlier programmes, the workfare approach meant that NDYP was mandatory for youth aged 18-24-year-olds who had been claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) for at least six months.

NDYP followed a structured, three stage process:

- Gateway: participants are assigned a personal adviser who gives support to job search or referral to appropriate training. Additional services were added over time, such as support to job search skills (see above). If the person is still unemployed after four months they move to the second stage - Options.
- Options: There are four options: (1) full-time education or training for up to one year whilst remaining on benefits; (2) Voluntary work for six months, being paid a wage at least equal to the benefits they were receiving; (3) Join the Environmental Task Force for six months, also with a wage equivalent to benefits; or (4) Wage subsidy to an employer for six months, with training for at least one day a week, with pay greater than benefits plus a training subsidy. Over time a more flexible approach was developed so that participants could combine different options. Young people who have not entered regular employment at the end of Options go to the Follow Through stage.
- Follow Through: An additional four months of support to job search. If the young person was still unemployed at the end of this period they re-entered the Gateway stage.

The New Deal was replaced by the 'Flexible New Deal' in 2009, but that was disbanded the following year.

Youth Contract (YC)

The YC programme was for young people aged 16-24 years who were NEET. YC included a number of schemes:

- Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds: Payments of £1,500 were made available to employers with fewer than 50 employees that took on young apprentices.
- Work experience: Placements were made available for 16-24 year olds through Jobcentre Plus who have been claiming JSA for at least 13 weeks.
- Support for 16 and 17 year old NEETs: Payments of £2,200 were made to providers who took on 16 and 17 year olds not in education, employment or training, with low or no qualifications, as well as those from other disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Sector-based work academies: Some 18-24 old JSA claimants were offered a mixture of training, work experience, and a job interview at a local firm through Jobcentre Plus.
- Extra support at Jobcentre Plus (JCP): 18-24 year old JSA claimants were offered weekly rather than fortnightly signing on meetings at the Jobcentre Plus.
- Funding for localised Youth Contracts: Localised Youth Contracts were available in Leeds City Region, Liverpool and Newcastle. The cities designed their own local schemes using national funding.
- Wage incentives: Payments of up to £2,275 were available to employers who took on young people (aged 18-24) claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for more than six months. Enrolments for this scheme ended on 6 August 2014.'[18]

For schemes run by private sector (including voluntary sector) providers, Youth Contract used a payment-by-results model, so that providers were paid for meeting performance targets, such as the number of young people trained or entering employment.

The wage incentive component of the Youth Contract was implemented across England, Scotland, and Wales from April 2012. It provided a subsidy to employers taking on unemployed young people aged 18-24. The job is expected to last at least 26 weeks with the incentives paid at the end of that period. Small businesses could claim an interim payment after eight weeks.

Work Programme providers supported delivery of wage incentives alongside JCP staff. Work Programme providers are responsible for identifying 18 to 24 year-olds on their books who would benefit from wage incentives, ensuring jobs are eligible and for marketing the incentive to employers.

The wage subsidy component of the Youth Contract ended in 2014.

[18] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06387/

Kickstart

The Kickstart Scheme was introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in 2020 and ran until 2023. Its aim was to address a predicted rise in youth unemployment associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, and to reduce the number of young people who found themselves in long-term unemployment.

Kickstart provided funding to employers to create new six-month job placements for young people aged 16 to 24 who were on Universal Credit (UC). Kickstart covered 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage (NMW) for 25 hours a week, associated employer National Insurance contributions, and employer minimum automatic enrolment contribution. An additional fund of £1,500 per job placement was aimed to support employers with setup costs and training.

Accessible to employers across private, public, and voluntary sectors, initially there were three routes to Kickstart. Employers could:

- Apply directly to the DWP if they created 30 or more jobs;
- Collaborate with other employers to reach the threshold, or
- Work with an intermediary organisation as a 'gateway'

However, from January 2021 the rules changed, allowing all employers to apply directly to the DWP. Successful applicants could add additional job placements to their agreement, recruiting young people through JCP, with job descriptions submitted to local JCP for candidate referrals. Gateways played a dual role. They liaised with employers to maximise Kickstart placements, offering advice on managing new employees. Simultaneously, young people received six-month wraparound employment support during their placement, facilitating their transition to sustained employment post-Kickstart. This collaborative approach aimed to ensure effective implementation and support employers and young people.

As part of Kickstart, employers were expected to offer careers advice and help young people to set goals, supporting them to find long-term work. Following completion, the job placement could be filled by a second candidate. As a training subsidy addressing youth unemployment, Kickstart was short-lived. It was intended to conclude on 17 December 2021, but an extension until March 2022 was announced in October 2021. This aimed to accommodate ongoing demand, with the last referrals occurring in March 2022.

Youth wage subsidies and work experience in other countries

Examples of youth wage subsidies and work experience in other countries include:

- Youth Practice in Sweden was a subsidized work program designed for short-term unemployed youth (aged below 25) with a high school diploma. To be eligible, the young person should have been engaged in a four-months job search. Both public and private employers were eligible, with employers contributing only a small part of the wage. Other conditions were that the job should be additional, and the young

person allowed 4-8 hours a week for job search. (See Larsson, 2003; and Dias et al., 2012).

- FNIYES included work experience for example as teaching assistants (Byam 2002).
- The Job Connection programme in Ontario, Canada paid participating individuals a minimum wage for undergoing pre-employment training through the programme. Once the training was completed, they were placed in a wage subsidised job. Employers hiring these participants received a placement incentive through which Ontario's Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development covered 75 to 100% of the wages (Bancroft, 2017: 26).
- The New York State's After-School Employment and Training Program integrates work experience and training by employing individuals in local businesses where they receive a series of training (Harris-Madden, 2017: 59).
- The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) in Ireland provides a minimum 3-month work placement for unemployed youth with a lack of work experience. Here, they are given an opportunity to pick up relevant work skills and organisations that subsequently hire these youth are eligible for subsidy through the JobsPlus Youth programme (Jeffrey et al., 2020: 76).

2.2 Selected design issues

2.2.1 Who is responsible for delivery?

Youth employment interventions may be delivered by a public employment service (in countries that have this type of institution), another part of the government at national, regional or local level, public or private employers, or specialised providers which may be either non-profit or for profit. The arrangements vary over time and place. In Germany, for example, vocational training is provided through universities. In the UK this is the case where a degree is a necessary qualification. For example, nursing became an 'all graduate profession' in 2008 (and earlier in Scotland and Wales). But lower level vocational training in the UK has for some years been offered by further education institutions and private providers, and many youth interventions are run by charities using government or other funds. Other youth services, such as Connexions, have also been provided by private companies. Charities may well also complement the employment search services provided by Jobcentre Plus (JCP).

For example, under the Neighbourhood Support Fund the English Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provided £60 million over three years to fund over 650 projects located in 40 disadvantaged areas in England. The projects were to be delivered by local voluntary and community-based organisations. These local organisations were overseen by three national level Managing Agents (MAs): the Community Development Foundation (CDF) in partnership with the Community Education Development Centre

(CEDC); the Learning Alliance Charities (Community Service Volunteers, NACRO, Rathbone Community Industry, the YMCA; and the National Youth Agency (NYA) (Golden et al., 2002).

Youth interventions often use a partnership model which brings together different agencies. For example, the National Careers Service will liaise with colleges and training providers as well as JCP and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) (Bowes et al., 2013).

Where multiple agencies are involved in an intervention, it is important to be clear who is responsible for what, with a clear authority responsible for delivery. The evaluation of partnerships in the National Careers Services notes that "written agreements can help to make clear roles and responsibilities, but these must be balanced with the need for a pragmatic, flexible approach where partners feel like part of the same team and are willing and able to adjust the way they work in order to achieve wider objectives" (Bowles et al., 2013: 35).

When responsibility is devolved there still needs to be oversight and monitoring, and possible support. For example, under the Essential Life Skills programme (ELS) in England, a nominated worker in providers was paid for by the programme, and DfE offered a range of support, including a funded Head of Delivery although this individual oversaw the Opportunity Areas (OA)[19] programme as a whole and not just ELS. Providers also worked with OA partnership boards on the design of projects (Cutmore et al. 2020).

Two broad approaches were developed at the OA level: (1) devolving funding to the school or college level through direct grants; and (2) commissioning external providers to deliver activities for pupils. Some areas developed a hybrid model combining these two. The Liverpool YEG programme was delivered by the local authority in two areas and by a contracted provider in the other two (Ray et al., 2018).

2.2.2 Using existing systems

A general principle, not just for youth employment interventions, is to use existing systems where possible (see below). But at the same time, it is important not to overburden agencies with additional responsibilities without providing the additional resources they require. As described above the experience in the UK is a mixture of the two, using local bodies for delivery but often creating partnership bodies to oversee programmes.

The Youth Contract builds on much of the support already available to young, unemployed people, particularly through the Government's apprenticeships offer and the back-to-work support provided by JCP, the Get Britain Working measures and the Government's main employment programme - the Work Programme. JCP district managers and advisers have the flexibility to judge which interventions will help

[19] Opportunity Areas were 12 designated areas of especial deprivation.

claimants at the most appropriate point in their job seeking journey, tailoring this to individual needs.

Delivery of the NDYP programme in Great Britain was executed through 142 local delivery units which allowed for enough flexibility to accommodate local labour market needs and the personalised requirements of the individuals participating (NAO, 2002: 23).

Shared Apprenticeships were piloted in Wales in two sectors, construction and engineering. In the construction sector, the scheme was run by an existing employer network. This allowed the scheme to get up and running quickly at the planned level. This was not the case for engineering, where the start got delayed by a year, take up was lower than planned, and a much larger share of apprentices did not complete their apprenticeships (Rose and Costello, 2014).

Using existing systems may have some problems. Any additional responsibilities mean additional work and appropriate resources are needed. But even if such resources are provided, they may not be accommodated into the system. The evaluation of Connexions reported that "in some school settings, PAs are not treated as an integral part of the pupil support systems and are often marginalised" (Hogarth and Smith, 2004: 8).

The approach of relying on existing local governance structures may also run into problems if the project areas do not coincide with the relevant administrative units for programme management. This was the case with the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in England. In YEI, the EU used its own Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) which it had devised for statistical purposes and which had different boundaries to the 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that were responsible for YEI at the local level (Atkison et al., 2017: 20).

One problem in not using existing systems is that there may be a lack of awareness of or trust in the delivery agency. NDYP contracted private agencies as 'Work Programme providers'. The evaluation reported that:

> *Providers were aware that there was some scepticism amongst employers about dealing with a third party, with some employers asking Work Programme providers for a DWP contact to speak to about the wage incentive. This was because they felt more comfortable checking the terms and conditions with the DWP directly. (Jordan et al., 2013: 15)*

2.2.3 National funding for local delivery: balancing top-down and bottom-up approaches

The model of a national fund for activities delivered locally is common in youth employment interventions. For example, the New Deal for Young People was delivered through 142 local Units of Delivery (NAO, 2002). The Youth Futures Foundation currently

uses a similar approach with its Connected Futures grants programme, which makes funding available for local areas to develop and deliver initiatives that are relevant to their context. There is a balance to be struck between the central concept and local adaptation, and a balance between allowing flexibility but giving clear guidance. Flexibility comes across in process evaluations as being highly valued, but at the same time a lack of guidance is also sometimes raised as an issue.

As a general principle (i.e. not just from the youth employment approach), local delivery from a national fund needs to have clear guidance from the centre on the intended purpose of the funds as well as on ways of working. The challenge is to get the balance right between guidance which is vague or unclear and that which is over or unnecessarily prescriptive.

A well-known example of national guidance with local delivery in the youth employment sector are the Gatsby Benchmarks for career guidance. The benchmarks themselves are very short statements - a 'stable careers programme' and 'experiences of workplace' - but each benchmark is supported by a more detailed explanation.[20]

The Connexions service issued the Connexions Framework for Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review (APIR) to help Personal Advisors manage their relationship and support to young people. But the evaluation found very low usage rates of the APIR. Even where it had been used, this was typically with just one or two people as required by the PA Diploma Programme (CRG Research, 2002). Factors inhibiting its uptake included lack of awareness and support from managers, lack of alignment with existing systems and procedures, and insufficient time and resources. Nonetheless, PAs did recognise the advantage of having a common, systematic approach.

A case where the balance appears not to have worked well was the EU-funded YEI support in Scotland, where there were difficulties in agreeing on activities which were acceptable to the Commission. The evaluation states that, 'there will always be inherent challenges in the implementation of projects and programmes that have been subject to detailed design at the European level as it is unable to reflect on local circumstances' (Graham, 2018: 84). The author goes on to say that 'A more appropriate approach would have been for the Commission to define the high level policy objectives then allow for Managing Authorities, in partnership with others, to design the finer detail of their programme but within that wider strategic framework. This would ensure a much stronger strategic fit with local policy and a closer alignment with current delivery (ibid: 84).

In contrast, in the process evaluation of the first years of the EU-supported Youth Employment Fund in England, there were comments that the guidance was sometimes not clear or too vague, and that the DWP was not always helpful in providing clarifications. But many respondents appreciated the flexibility that a broad guidance gave them. A commonly noted exception to this flexibility was that some of the specific

[20] https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance

requirements – most notably, *not* being allowed to include interventions for those at risk of being NEET – which were unduly restrictive (Atkison et al., 2017).

It is common - and again, this is a reflection on interventions in a range of policy areas - that guidance is necessarily developed and improved over time from a learning process about what is needed and appropriate, though piloting may help pre-empt some of this learning period.

An example of evolving standards comes from apprenticeships standards. The employer-led development of apprenticeship standards under Trailblazers began in 2013, and by the time of the first evaluation in 2015, 187 Standards had been published and a further 160 were under development. Initially, small businesses found the cost of attending meetings to discuss the standards prohibitive, until the guidance was amended to allow for transport costs to be reimbursed. Different standards took a different approach to recognition of prior qualifications, so the guidance was tightened to ensure a more standardised approach. But at the time of the evaluation some uncertainties remained. Although the guidance stated that standards should be reviewed every three years it was unclear who was responsible for this. And as it was a very decentralized approach, different groups worked on Standards for similar types of jobs (Newton et al., 2015).

Guidance may be set out how funds may be used, where they may be used, by whom and who are the eligible target population. Such guidance is necessary to help ensure the funds are used as intended. On the other hand, restrictions may limit the use of funds, such as the example already mentioned of YEI funds not being allowed for activities targeted specifically to youth at risk of becoming NEET. Another example is from the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) in England which provided a subsidy of £6,500 per job but had many difficulties engaging private sector employers because jobs had to have an element of community benefit (Fishwick et al., 2011).

The FJF was also a case where guidance was too little and too late. Evolving guidance was seen as 'moving goal posts' rather than providing clarification:

> *Some LAB [local accountable bodies, responsible for delivery] staff felt that guidance and requirements from DWP took too long to be issued to Jobcentre Plus. JCP advisers were not briefed on the precise nature of FJF soon enough and this delayed the process of filling jobs: "JCP Advisers were asking the LABs for information about FJF instead of the other way around." … Some LABs felt that DWP guidance changed over time, and that there was a sense of 'moving goalposts'. For example, some areas assumed that the bid they submitted was approved in full, as no detailed feedback was given other than its approved status. However, a number of areas proposed aspects to their delivery that were subsequently prevented from being implemented. One example was not being able to deliver pre employment support as part of their FJF offer. DWP released frequently asked questions bulletins on a regular basis and this became the method of communication on how FJF could be implemented.* (Fishwick et al. 2011: 23).

Flexibility may manifest itself in various ways, such as (i) having a menu of options to offer young people; (ii) customised approaches according to individual needs, which may be developed into the individual action plans mentioned above; (iii) local agents being able to adapt the programme to local circumstances. These items are picked up below as success factors in implementation.

2.2.4 Multicomponent interventions

Youth employment interventions are typically multicomponent, which can mean either that there are a range of activities under a single programme, or that a specific young person receives multiple services from the same intervention. These are not mutually exclusive. The most common approach in Europe, including the UK, is a service which makes an assessment of the young person's skills and aspirations and then a referral to either work or training, possibly with additional support from the transition.

The expectation is that there is a synergistic effect between the components, so the joint effect is greater than the effect of either alone, or indeed the summative effect of the two. This means that if an intervention is multicomponent at the individual level this fact is expected to moderate the effect of the individual components.

An example of multiple components being offered within a single programme is the Youth Contract in England. As described above, the Youth Contract covered: (i) Apprenticeship Grant for employers of 16-24 year olds; (ii) work experience through placements for 16-24 year olds who have been on benefits for at least 13 weeks; (ii) Payments of £2,200 made to providers who take on 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and who have low or no qualifications, and those from other disadvantaged backgrounds; (iv) sector-based work academies involving training, work experience, and a job interview at a local firm; (v) extra support at JCP for 18-24 year old JSA claimants; (vi) funding for localised Youth Contracts in Leeds City Region, Liverpool and Newcastle; and (vii) wage incentives.

Some of these components are themselves multicomponent. Firms receiving wage subsidies also have to provide off-the-job training. Under component (ii), cash payments to providers can mean providers offer training, work experience and employment services such as help in developing CVs and preparing for interviews as well as the provision of uniforms and travel costs incurred when attending interviews (Jordan et al., 2013).

Interventions can be multicomponent when they provide a broad offer to ensure that they have ways to engage participants who have different interests. For example, Entry to Employment (E2E) - a programme for 16-18 years olds in England facing challenges engaging with the labour market - included:

- Group building for confidence and social skills such as paintballing and team-building exercises
- Vocational training such as computer skills
- Basic skills support in numeracy and literacy
- Counselling for family and mental health issues
- Support to employment such as CV preparation, interview technique and help with job search
- Work placements (Spielfhofer et al., 2003).

An intervention may also be multicomponent as there are multiple providers receiving funding and they offer different activities. The evaluation of the NSF in England reported the activities offered by 665 projects which were:

- job-related skills development (60% of projects);
- recreational, outdoor pursuits, sport or residentials (58% of projects);
- individualised learning programmes (50% of projects);
- community health, sex education, and drugs education (48% of projects);
- ICT (44% of projects);
- Arts (44% of projects).

Most NSF projects (92 per cent) offered more than one activity (Golden et al., 2002: 7-8).

Single component interventions may in fact mask activities which make the intervention a de facto multicomponent intervention. For example, apprenticeships provide training both on and off-the-job, work experience, and mentoring.

2.2.5 Layered approaches and creating pathways into employment

Many countries in Europe have adopted a 'pathway approach'. Young people not in employment, education or training need to participate in a series of different interventions to follow a pathway from school to further training to work experience and work. Individualised plans prepared in consultation with advisors can support this process, such as was offered by Personal Advisors under Connexions, and the Gateway stage of the NDYP. Similar individualised approaches to assisting and supporting young people by providing tailored approaches exist in other countries such as Germany and Poland (EU, 2017).

But countries differ to the extent to which there is a clear 'pathway to employment', and in how this integrates (or otherwise) with compulsory education. In the German system, children are separated into academic and vocational 'tracks' when entering

secondary school, i.e. at age 11.[21] The vocational stream includes apprenticeships which combine work experience with off-the-job training, and thereafter a link to employment. The United Kingdom does not have the same clear transition pathway from school to higher-level vocational qualifications to employment. This has changed to some extent with the conversion of some jobs, such as nursing, to degree-only professions, and the establishment of degree equivalence for apprenticeships in professions such as law and accountancy. But the lower end of the apprenticeship system which is of most relevance to the most disadvantaged does not have this same natural progression. An evaluation of Modern Apprenticeships (MA) in England found that "MAs are not currently fulfilling their potential to act as a true vocational pathway: rates of progression from FMAs to AMAs, and from AMAs to higher education, are disappointing" (Harris, 2003: 10).

Some interventions seek to overcome the lack of structured pathway into employment with 'layered approaches'. Young people can enter the intervention at the appropriate layer and then move through them. Traineeships in Wales adopted such a layered approach with three layers: (i) Engagement, intended for young people furthest from the labour market, providing assessment and basic skills training; (ii) Level 1, for young people who have a career focus but need further training before trying to enter the workforce; and (iii) Bridge to Employment for young people ready for work, providing additional training and a work placement which is expected to lead to employment. The evaluation reported that

> *The structure of the programme, separated into strands, is also widely welcomed. Providers identify that both Engagement and Level 1 are critical to the offer as Engagement on its own would be considered insufficient to progress many young people into employment, whilst Level 1 offers a step up in terms of qualifications and activity and introduces a need for more commitment from the participant* (Egglestone et al., 2019: 25).

2.2.6 Timelines and duration

The duration of a programme is usually an important moderator for its effect. Most training and work placement programmes last six months or more, though some specific training courses may be shorter. For example:

- The First Nations and Inuit Youth Work Experience Program in Canada offered a 6-9 months job placement for unemployed and out-of-school young people, particularly those from First Nations and Inuit communities (Byam, 2002: 3).
- Australia's TtW programme (see section 2.2.4 above) supports young people at risk of long-term unemployment through 12 months of intensive pre-employment

[21] There are thereafter limited possibilities for transferring, and there are also schools offering entry to either academic or vocational training at the tertiary level.

training, education and other services and activities to tackle individual barriers to employment (Henderson et al., 2021: 30).

- The Wider Horizons Programme (WHP) in Ireland had an element of vocational training, personal development, work experience and conflict resolution. Young people underwent the programme for a period of 20 weeks (Wallace Consulting, 2013: 5).
- Siemens Energy, Inc. in North Carolina and the Central Piedmont Community College jointly runs an apprenticeship programme for young people in high school and community colleges. Selected candidates initially receive a 6-week paid internship at the company. A final set of candidates are selected after the internship and these individuals join the 4-year intensive apprenticeship programme (Oai, 2017: 8,9).
- The National Guard Youth Challenge (YC) programme in the USA was directed towards training and mentoring high school drop-outs to help them get back into education or join the workforce. The programme had 2 main components: a 20-week residential programme and a year-long mentoring process. The Job Challenge (JC) programme was an expansion of YC. It included an additional 20-week residential training phase. After completion of the residential aspect, both the YC and JC provided participants a year of mentoring to help mould their personality, develop confidence, gain life skills and also complete a high school diploma or GED (Berk et al., 2021: xi).

The Youth Job Connection Programme in Ontario, Canada has three main elements: developing a client service plan, a period of pre-employment training, and job placement. The training element lasts a minimum of 60 hours. It helps participants improve their job readiness, develop job-specific skills and gain career development skills. The final leg of the programme is the job placement. Participants are placed in a wage-subsidised job for at least 6 weeks and up to 26 weeks (Bancroft, 2017: 26).

The after-school employment and training programme in New York integrates work placement and training. Young people taken into the programme receive 6-weeks of employer-informed job readiness and soft skills training (Harris-Madden, 2017: 10).

2.2.7 Time and place

Interventions need to be at an appropriate time and place for the intended participants. For youth who are furthest from the labour market, a school setting is unlikely to be the most appropriate.

The evaluation of ELS reported that 'where families did not have a particularly positive relationship with the school, it was a challenge to get them on board with school-based ELS projects' (Cutmore et al 2020). Furthermore, for some families with multiple children at school, there was reluctance to engage due to the need to make multiple trips to and from school, if the activities were not absorbed within the school day. For example, one survey respondent noted that:

> *"in term time there are sometimes logistical issues about children staying after school and parents/carers being unable to pick them up later due to looking after other children at home… it's difficult as their home lives are complex and there are competing demands on parents/carers"* (Cutmore et al., 2020: 36).

2.2.8 Consulting stakeholders on intervention design

Consulting stakeholders can enhance relevance and the likelihood of their engagement with the intervention in the intended manner.

In the UK's Kickstart programme, various stakeholders were consulted to make informed decisions at the intervention design and implementation stage. The groups involved included Employment Related Services Association (ERSA), Youth Employment Group, British Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Movement to Work, Business in The Community as well as a number of national level employers (Davies, 2021: 24).

The YEI in England had some level of stakeholder consultation at the design level. The European Commission facilitated flexibility in YEI regulations to suit the local English context. Stakeholders such as the UK's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), local partners, European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) sub-committee representatives and European Social Fund Division (ESFD) members were able to come together to develop the programme. ESIF were able to shape local programme calls by inserting its strategies and details. There was variation in the involvement of local partners across areas, but those involved were positive about their role in designing the programme.

> *We had very good experiences and valued our conversations with [DWP]. They were very responsive and we were able to have frank conversations … We were able to test our ideas to understand if this was what DWP was looking for (Atkinson, 2017: 37).*

Local Enterprise Partnerships often provided strategic inputs, but in some cases were further involved in design, mediating between the local delivery partner and the DWP throughout programme development. Leading partners for the programme in different areas also held workshops to engage potential local partners in a discussion on YEI provisions and analysing the good and bad in existing initiatives *(Atkinson, 2017: 39)*.

The NDYP in the UK has made use of initiatives that facilitate employer participation in the design and delivery of the government's Welfare to Work programmes that includes NDYP. For instance, the employer-led advisory group - the National Employment Panel - and JobCentre Plus has worked jointly with employers from several industries to help in the design and development of programmes based on demand (NAO, 2002: 44).

Evaluation of the Youth Employment Gateway in Liverpool, Youth Employment Initiative in South West Scotland, and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in Ireland and the Student Apprenticeship initiatives in England did not report any information on stakeholder engagement.

Chapter 3

How are youth employment interventions meant to work?

3. How are youth employment interventions meant to work?

Youth employment programmes may be functionally classified as:

- Supply side interventions which improve the employability of young people, mainly through skills development (including soft skills), but also by supporting job search.
- Demand side interventions which increase demand for young people in the labour market. Wage subsidies are a main policy here, but this group also includes self-employment programmes, public works, regional economic development and procurement policies (the latter two are rarely youth-specific so that there are not many studies in the map in these policy areas).
- Matching supply and demand, with interventions that seek to match the location and skills of the labour force to the needs of employers. This includes labour market information systems, careers information, advice and guidance, and job fairs.
- Labour standards interventions to improve terms and conditions and working conditions. Minimum wage legislation is included in this group.

Interventions in each of these four areas have some common elements in their respective theories of change, so this chapter is organised as above.

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Approaches to theory of change

There are two approaches to the theory of change. The first is derived from a log frame approach, which means that it sets out the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes expected of an intervention. To be a theory of change rather than a log frame, the causal processes or mechanisms should be identified along with any assumptions necessary for those causal processes to operate as expected. The second approach is to call on theory from the relevant field, such as economics or criminology, to explain why an intervention should be expected to work.

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. A log frame-based approach can call on theory as required, most usually with respect to causal processes. This joint approach, which is used here, overcomes the drawbacks of relying on just one approach. Relying on theory alone will miss out some of the more obvious, if less academically challenging, parts of a theory about how an intervention works, such as the intended participants must have heard of the intervention and want to take part. These are important assumptions; the next two chapters are devoted to these issues.

But relying on a log frame approach alone often under-examines the linkages from one stage to another. There is an implied automaticity that one stage leads to the other, without adequately understanding the causal mechanism. The discussion below seeks to uncover the central causal mechanism or mechanisms for each intervention.

We also refer to key concepts in the youth employment literature. These include concepts related to the key assumption that the contribution of the intervention is additional. That is that the outputs and outcomes achieved by the intervention would not have happened in the absence of the intervention. The question of additionality is explored in the labour economics literature with reference to three concepts: deadweight loss, substation and displacement. These are:[22]

- Deadweight loss occurs when the jobs 'created' by the intervention would have been created anyway, or the young person would have anyhow found another job (including self-employment).
- Substitution occurs when young people supported by the intervention are employed rather than other young people, so there is no net effect on total employment.
- Displacement is when jobs are lost in businesses which do not benefit from the intervention because of the competitive advantage given to firms which do benefit.

Deadweight loss and substitution can occur with any supply-side, demand-side or matching intervention. Displacement is most likely with wage subsidies, though beneficiary firms may enjoy a competitive advantage from a better-skilled workforce.

Final key concepts are 'creaming' and 'parking'. Creaming is where those least in need are selected for interventions as they are the most likely to succeed. Those furthest from the labour market are left unaided. It increases the likelihood of deadweight loss as the young people selected are also those who would most likely have succeeded without assistance. For example, in the discussion of support to young people to support new businesses an evaluation states that 'it may be attractive for PES counsellors to select those applicants for start-up incentives that seem the most likely to succeed. Whether this creaming is really happening is unknown, but the deadweight effects that occur could be partially caused by this phenomenon' (Marjolein, 2017).

Parking is where young people are in training, a job placement or an employment support programme from which they are not benefitting. A study of the UK and Germany suggests that parking is most likely to affect those farthest from the labour market (Greer et al., 2018). This is more likely with output-based incentive systems which reward numbers in a programme. These young people are not counted being NEET, although they are not engaged in meaningful employment, or on track for being so.

[22] This description is based on Maguire (2020).

3.1.2 High-level theory of change

The broad framework for the theory of change is provided by the log frame categories of inputs, activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and final outcomes. This report broadly follows the structure of this theory of change.

In most general terms, inputs are money, people and ideas. Their specific form depends on the intervention. In many cases, e.g., careers guidance or training, money is used to pay for the people who deliver the services. But in other cases, the money goes directly to young people (e.g., training allowances or a support to employment fund), or to employers (e.g. wage subsidies). The money and people are used to implement the interventions (based on ideas), that is, to undertake activities in line with the intervention design. Chapter 2 above provided an overview of the design of the most common interventions, along with a discussion of some common issues in design features (which may act as moderators for an intervention's impact).

For the intervention to take place, it needs participants. For that to happen, the eligible population should be defined, and there needs to be a mechanism to identify (target) them, and a strategy to recruit. These issues are discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 4). These activities are intended to create awareness and so encourage participation. The ways in which this is done and how successful they are is discussed in Chapter 5, which introduces the funnel of attrition which demonstrates that the numbers benefiting from an intervention are frequently far lower than believed by a programme planner.

Having recruited participants, the programme needs to be implemented as intended, though there should be room for learning-based adaptation. Chapter 6 reports on implementation experience, and the barriers and facilitators which arise.

The activities produce outputs (Chapter 7). These are the number of events held, participants trained and so on. In developing countries, the range of outputs may be greater, for example including new training centres, revised curricula and so on. But in developed countries these things often exist already as part of 'the system', and interventions work within the context of this system rather than try to develop it. Systems change interventions, which have been explored in another report (Orlando et al, 2024) are generally about ways of working rather than infrastructure.

Outputs are intended to lead to outcomes (Chapter 8). It is at this stage that causal processes drawing on economic theory are most likely to be relevant. For example, one reason why a short-term subsidy will lead to long-term employment relates to information asymmetry about a worker's productivity. Employers may be reluctant to employ young people as they do not know how productive they will be, so are unwilling to pay the going rate. But if the employment is subsidised they may take them on. If the young people turn out to be productive, employers are more willing to keep them on at the going wage.

Outcomes are divided into intermediate outcomes (e.g. skills gains), employment outcomes (e.g. employment status, wages) and welfare outcomes (Chapters 9, 10 and 11). Chapter 12 explores sustainability and Chapter 13 implications for policy and research.

3.2 Supply side interventions

The key assumption for training and support to employment interventions is that the demand is there to absorb the young people who are trained. At times of poor economic performance, this assumption may not be satisfied. Existing employers will be reluctant to take on new employees, and conditions are not likely to be conducive for young people to start their own business. In such circumstances demand-side interventions such as public works or voluntary work will be the more appropriate intervention, but that requires a government committed to a counter-cyclical spending pattern, whereas governments tend to spend in good times and cut in bad.

3.2.1 Vocational training

Vocational training includes any intervention with the purpose of increasing employment-relevant technical knowledge and skills, either training centre based, job-based or a combination of the two. The theory of change with respect to skills acquisition applies also to apprenticeships, although additional causal mechanisms come into play for apprenticeships, which are listed below.

The economics of vocational training is simple: enhancing a young person's skills (human capital) will increase their productivity and therefore their earnings. However, earnings will be lower during the training period, and possibly for a while afterwards, than if the young person had entered employment directly instead. But after a time, the training enables them to be on a high income trajectory, as they are both more likely to be employed, and employed in higher paying jobs. This is the basis of the returns to education literature, which is not included in the map. A recent review concludes there are positive returns to vocational education, but notes the risk of being trained in skills which may no longer be in demand given technological change (McNally et al., 2022).

For this causal mechanism to operate there are the following assumptions:

- **That the training is appropriate**. Appropriate means that the right skills (to help a young person get or progress in work) are being taught, which requires that course content and curriculum are up-to-date. This assumption is intended to be met by the required curriculum for qualifications or training standards. A secondary assumption is that those setting curriculum or standards are aware of what employers want, which is best done by involving employers in this process, as happens in England with Trailblazers setting apprenticeship standards.
- **The training is of good quality**. Good quality means that the trainers are available and appropriately skilled, and that any necessary resources and equipment are also available. This assumption cannot be taken for granted.
- **The young person acquires the skills being taught**. A proportion of those trained may not become sufficiently skilled to become employable.

The main causal process for these interventions is that skills acquisition will increase employability, either because those skills are in demand by employers or they equip youth to start their own business. As stated above, the key assumptions are that the young people actually acquire the skills, and that these skills are the ones needed. These assumptions cannot be taken for granted: employer complaints that graduates don't have the right skills is a common finding in evaluations.

In principle, there are five types of intervention under vocational training which go to support this causal process: (1) establishment and maintenance of training centres (TCs); (2) curriculum development; (3) recruitment and training of trainers; (4) identification of, and agreements with, private sector providers either through TCs or OTJ (who may be responsible for recruitment and training of trainers), and (5) the training of youth. Most developed country interventions focus on the last two of these, operating within the context of the system providing the first three.

In addition, the target population need to be aware of the training, and willing and able to attend it. Both of these assumptions may be addressed by design features such as social media promotion and outreach to increase awareness, and transport subsidies or stipends to encourage participation. A single project may offer one or more of these as components of a multi-component intervention.

Four inputs are required to ensure that youth are trained:

- **Funds:** These are used to provide financial support to institutions to buy supplies and equipment, recruitment training and payment of trainers (ToT), printing of certificates for young people, and the dissemination of labour market information (Ahmed, 2016).
- **Qualified trainers:** Trainers help in skills acquisition, for young people and sometimes by training other trainers (ToT). Trainers also help in the supply of labour market information and in awarding certificates to trainees (Ahmed, 2016; Alexander, 2018).
- **Venue and equipment:** Especially in hard skills training, the necessary equipment is crucial for trainers to pass on the skills to the young people (Ahmed, 2016). This also includes the venue, generally a training centre or place of employment, where training takes place.
- **Young people with necessary prerequisites:** For example, basic mathematics and literacy, may be required for training to be effective.

Training young people is meant to lead to increased levels of different types of skills. This may include any or all of soft skills (discussed below under life skills), vocational skills, or business skills (discussed under self-employment) (Harris-Madden, 2017). Trained young people after finishing training receive certificates from the institutions which help to improve their access to jobs, either as apprenticeships, internships or paid jobs (Cherukupalli, 2019). Certification of a course acts as a signal to employers of the quality of the training undertaken. In England, apprenticeships must meet the Trailblazer standards, a list of which is maintained by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical

Education.[23] The involvement of private sector companies in the design and delivery of training helps ensure the demand for its content, and allows employers to informally vet potential job candidates, as occurred in the Youth Employability Skills Network in Macedonia (Balestino, 2016).

We expect these intermediate outcomes to lead to improved education and increased youth entrepreneurship rates which in turn improve young people's employability.

For the above theory of change to stand, the following assumptions should be met:

- Young people have the appropriate profile for the training (e.g. skills, career interests).
- Young people are aware of the training and are willing and able to be trained.
- Training occurs at a suitable time and place for the target participants.
- Trainers are knowledgeable and have the right skills to pass on to the young people.
- Participants acquire the intended skills.
- There is sufficient funding from the government or other sources to support the different activities.
- The skills gained are demanded in the labour market (or)
- There is adequate demand for the goods and services being supplied by youth-owned and operated enterprises.

3.2.2 Life skills training

The evaluation of the Essential Life Skills programme in England states that 'the rationale for intervention was based on a growing body of evidence that links non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-efficacy, emotional and social skills with improved educational, labour market and wellbeing outcomes. The evidence also suggests that extracurricular activities can play a role in building these skills' (Cutmore et al., 2020: 9).

A common framework - used in an OECD study of social and emotional skills and life outcomes - identifies the 'Big Five' - Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience - each of which is said to be associated with positive outcomes in a range of domains including employment (Chernyshenko et al., 2018). The OECD study presents evidence that non-cognitive skills are particularly important for those with low levels of cognitive skills, who are likely to have the most difficulty obtaining sustained employment (ibid: 22).

[23] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/

3.2.3 Apprenticeships

The theory of change for apprenticeships is the same as for vocational training, but with the following additional components:

- An apprenticeship has a pathway to employment, both through a recognised qualification for a specific occupation, and because the employer of the apprentice will likely keep them on post apprenticeship.
- An apprenticeship allows the employer to get to know the young person (they can 'reveal their type') so they do not face uncertainty of not knowing the young person's productivity were they to hire them without the prior experience of apprenticeship.
- The apprenticeship, unlike centre-based training, provides both work experience and workplace experience. Work experience refers to learning job-specific skills. Workplace experience refers to acquiring the skills necessary to function in the workplace such as punctuality, communication, and appropriate dress code.

3.2.4 Support to employment

Support to employment (also known as 'activation programmes')—such as assistance with job searching-can improve employment outcomes in the following ways:

- **Signalling of marketable skills:** Assistance with CVs and interview techniques enable young people to more clearly signal their relevant skills and experience.
- **Raising the profile of young people:** Interventions may include general campaigns to encourage hiring of youth or targeted communications to businesses for the same purpose.
- **More effective job search behaviour through mindset changes and soft skills development:** The provision of labour market information, mentoring, professional orientation and work placements can induce mindset changes in young people. Such changes include increased motivation and self-confidence, more realistic expectations about job prospects, changed priorities, reduced fear of interviews and work, increased efficiency and perseverance in job search, more clarity, and a more positive outlook towards the future (McCoshan 2002, Cook 2012, Dexis 2013, ILO 2015, Graham, 2018, Ray 2018, Cherukupalli 2019). These mindset changes resulted in youth searching for jobs more actively and effectively.
- **Enhanced impact through effective targeting of disadvantaged groups:** A wide range of the evaluated interventions specifically targeted vulnerable or at-risk groups, such as, youth with disabilities, young women, or displaced people, aiming to reduce their barriers to employment and young people involved with the justice system (Cook 2012, Ogada 2012, Andrew 2015, Balestino 2016, European Commission 2016, Berk 2021). These interventions are intended to contribute to wider impacts beyond the

employment domain, such as reduced crime and violence, reduced emigration, and increased gender equality.

In addition to the above mechanisms for a positive effect, job search assistance, training, or work experience programs for unemployed workers, may initially have a negative effect on employment. This is called a "lock-in effect" which occurs because participants spend less time and effort on job search as they are engaged in the intervention.

3.2.5 Workfare

Workfare is not an intervention but a means of delivering interventions which has been applied to state-run youth employment interventions in many countries since the 1990s.

The core of the theory of change is to alter the incentive system to encourage young people to enter work or training. A systematic review of reducing the duration of unemployment benefits (though not restricted to youth) found a small but significant effect on people leaving unemployment (Filges et al., 2018). There is also what has been called the 'threat effect' or motivation effect: 'individuals are motivated to avoid the obligation of programme participation and, thus, cease claiming benefit and re-enter the labour market' (OECD, 2007).

3.3 Demand side interventions

3.3.1 Wage subsidies

The simplest explanation for the working of a subsidy is that by lowering the cost of youth labour, demand will rise. However, that is not a plausible explanation for how youth wage subsidies work as the subsidies are temporary. A short-term subsidy of six to 12 months is not likely to offset the transaction costs of the application and onboarding a new employee.

The more likely explanation as to why youth wage subsidies work in moving young people into unsubsidized employment (sometimes called "the stepping stone effect") are related to asymmetric information - that is, the employer doesn't know if the young person will be a good worker or not. Surveys show employers often prefer someone more experienced than typical beneficiaries of a youth wage subsidy. The wage subsidy overcomes this problem in two ways. First, signalling: the fact that the young person has been chosen for a subsidy may (possibly incorrectly) signal to the employer that the person has been selected on account of suitability for employment. Second, once employed the young person has the opportunity to 'reveal their type'. If they are a good worker, the employer learns this and is willing to keep them on.

A further explanation is that the young person acquires the necessary skills and experience to be a worthwhile employee during the period of subsidized employment. The wage subsidy is in effect subsidizing on-the-job training (and the programme may require off-the-job training also), so the young person becomes an attractive employee by virtue of these skills and experience and so is more likely to be retained by the employer, or can more easily find another job.

The assumption here is that the above happens. Not all young people will turn out to be good workers, or have an aptitude for the task, or they may decide the job is not what they want to do after all.

A subsidy is a clear cost to government which foots the bill for the subsidy. However, from an opportunity cost perspective, government may otherwise have to pay benefits or subsidized training, very possibly for a longer period than the duration of the subsidy. Hence there is already a possible cost-saving there. The benefit-cost ratio is shifted further in favour of wage subsidies if the young person is retained by the employer. The benefits include the other social benefits of a young person being gainfully employed.

Wage subsidies involve a direct benefit to employers. The challenges of creating awareness of the intervention and persuading employers to take part will generally be greater than for interventions targeted directly to young people. Unemployed young people engage with the public employment service providing a natural referral mechanism which is used by many interventions. This is not the case for employer-oriented interventions. This issue is discussed further in the following two chapters.

3.3.2 Public works

Public works provide short-term employment which is additional to existing demand in the labour market. This is the direct effect. There may be indirect effects through three channels: (i) on-the-job skills development in the public works activities, which includes workplace skills; (ii) work experience as a signal to employers; and (iii) assets created by the public works may enhance the productivity of local enterprises and so increase their employment.

Deadweight loss may arise for public works if the young people employed would find alternate, equivalent employment in the absence of the intervention. There should be no displacement, though it might be the case that government funded public works directly employing young people may undertake tasks which would otherwise be contracted to the private sector. And the work, pay and conditions are such that public works self-target to the more needy (see Chapter 4), and so avoid creaming.

3.3.3 Self-employment (private sector development, loans and grants)

Interventions to support self-employment provide business skills training, mentoring and access to finance in the form of grants or loans. Business skills include skills such as bookkeeping and preparing a business plan, which would not have been part of general education. The logic for providing grants and loans is that being unable to access startup capital is a particular constraint for young entrepreneurs, most plausibly because they cannot provide collateral.

There is potential for deadweight loss here as there is, after all, an alternative source of capital. This deadweight loss is said to be high, with about 60-70% of finance going to businesses which would have been able to borrow from elsewhere (Meager et al., 2003: 59). This deadweight loss can be reduced by targeting those young people who most likely do not have alternatives, which will usually be the most disadvantaged. But there is a trade-off here, as interventions will seek to fund the most viable businesses - but those are the ones which are most likely to attract capital from elsewhere. As, Meager et al. write, 'attempts to target the schemes more closely on the most disadvantaged individuals within the eligible populations have the effect of reducing dead-weight, but at the cost of also reducing survival rates significantly (unless very high levels of ongoing support and training are also provided)' (ibid: 59). They report that displacement is also high, as subsidised businesses are typically set up in service sectors with low entry costs or other barriers to entry, and so are in competitive fields with low margins in which the subsidy can allow the supported enterprise to undercut existing enterprises.

The details of the causal mechanisms that lead from input to impact for support to businesses are as follows.

Funds can be used to hire trainers and mentors, or to provide funds or support in-kind directly to businesses operated by young entrepreneurs. Funds pay for salaries, procurement of supplies and cost of premises. Upfront funding is especially important since cash flow difficulties can be expected in the initial period. Hence, both theory (and evidence in Meager et al., 2003) suggest that a larger upfront payment is more effective than an equal value payment spread over a period of time.

Training provides skills development. Mentoring provides skills and practical advice, e.g. on business registration and tax. Mentors can also help with access to business networks.

A further employment effect will occur if the business is successful so that it takes on additional employees. Young business owners may be more likely to employ young people than are other businesses; the hiring practices of startups led by young people is an area where further research is needed.

For the funds to be effective:

- Affordability of sufficient funds to facilitate training activities and provide business funds. Grants are of course the most affordable, but the logic of loans is to provide a

discipline that the business realises a return, and so to create a self-financing revolving fund.

- Technical staff with relevant skills are available to conduct the business skills training. Experienced business-people are commonly used as mentors to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills.
- There will be a favourable regulatory environment so that new and small businesses are not unduly encumbered by paperwork.
- There is a conducive economic environment for conducting business. There is a risk of a 'fallacy of composition' here. Training one young person to offer, say, electrical repair services, means they can possibly set up a viable business. But training a dozen young people in the same skills in the same geographic area means that the majority will likely fail.

3.4 Job matching interventions and career guidance

3.4.1 Job matching and careers guidance

Job matching is meant to help young people attain employment aligned with their skills and aspirations. Job matching is more proactive than providing information as possibilities are presented and discussed (careers counselling), or the youth given the opportunity to explore a range of careers (career and job fairs), as well as additional services to help prepare for employment and assess the young person's aptitude for different jobs (e.g. aptitude tests). The central causal processes are that young people need guidance to navigate the choices they face on the job market, and that assistance can be needed to make an initial connection with employers, as both employers and potential employees lack the information or system to make appropriate matches. Intensive job matching can overlap with support to employment and other interventions, including job clubs, mock interviews, school-to-work programmes. For example, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in Scotland used mock interviews for confidence building and discussing employment options with youth (Graham 2018).

Implementation of a job matching intervention requires key inputs such as labour market information, funds and trainers or job matchers.

Like other interventions, job matching requires funds. Financial inputs facilitate the provision of means to provide job information and careers advice to young people through job fairs, job clubs, school-to-work programmes, mock interviews and other means. Trainers, counsellors, or job matchers deliver information to young people both through face-to-face fora, job exchanges, and online platforms. These mechanisms make job information, such as on available vacancies, the skills and competencies

expected by employers and career prospects in different jobs both for the local economy and further afield available. This means, of course, that relevant information should be available to those providing job matching services.

The provision of career guidance can lead job seekers to update their beliefs on wage expectations, improve awareness of relevant local skills and jobs, and better career paths. The likely impact would be an improvement of young people's employment chances and, consequently, a change in their employment status.

Communication with stakeholders (local training providers, employers, and job seekers) through job fairs brings employers and job seekers into common spaces and facilitates rich interactions. Putting prospective employees and employers in common spaces can ensure that the labour market information provided to young people translates to an overall increased access of labour information for youth. Communication with stakeholders can result in generation of up-to-date information on the job market, as an output. This can lead to improved awareness on relevant local skills among employers.

Support to international migration may also be seen as a form of job matching, though it also falls under labour policies and labour standards when countries encourage temporary outward migration to gain remittance income, but also provide services to protect their overseas workers.

Support to international migration can also fall under job matching as public and private providers of overseas jobs act as a labour exchange, matching applicants to positions. At the same time, migrant expectations must be managed as the demand may be for manual positions while prospective migrants are more highly-skilled. For example, Buginom de Moreta and Cela (2012) found a significant mismatch between the skills of by Albanian migrants and the jobs they obtained in various Western European countries, because Albanian migrants were employed mainly in low-status jobs (e.g. in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, or elderly care), regardless of their qualifications.

The successful implementation of job matching interventions relies on a number of conditions, such as:

- Local labour market information should be available and accessible to those organising job matching interventions. Labour market information is a basic input to the implementation of job matching interventions either to provide to job seekers directly or to identify employers to invite to career days or job fairs.
- There should be no major mismatch between job expectations among young people and what is realistically available. Mismatched expectations can impede the effectiveness of policies that aim to match workers to jobs, especially if young people have unrealistic expectations about the type of job or pay they will get, so do not take up available opportunities. Conversely, in countries without minimum wage policies, workers may be more willing to lower their expectations and take up available employment vacancies.
- Employers are willing to engage in job matching interventions rather than stick to their own processes.

3.4.2 Labour market information systems

These interventions involve providing information to either employers or future market entrants (in this case young people). They include labour market information systems (LMIS), digital service and SMS coaching, social media campaigns and awareness campaigns, and information to improve access to services and markets and, in turn, value chain development. The central causal process is that information informs choices to take actions by governmental and non-governmental agencies, employers and potential employees which result in increased employment. Key assumptions are that the information is correct, timely, useful and not already known by those who receive it.

The inputs needed are funds, information, and stakeholder network. Our discussion focuses on information provided to young people.

Funding is used to acquire equipment (e.g., computers, stationery) and to pay service providers (e.g., trainers, coaches) to provide the information and communicate with stakeholders. The funds may be provided by the government, non-government organisations or private firms.

Information provision may be done directly or indirectly through diverse ways such as establishment of centres of information (Aigner, 2013), capacity building of labour market institutions and counselling (Aigner, 2010), and providing MSME business development services which include information on markets etc. (Alexander, 2018). The information may be provided through digital platforms, or through channels targeted to particular audiences (De Moretta and Cela, 2012).

The information provided can relate to interventions or to general market trends (for policy-makers to inform appropriate provision of relevant training and other interventions).

It may be demand-oriented (for employers to improve their hiring efficiency), or supply-oriented (for young people to understand what skills are in demand in the labour market). This information is important as it helps young people identify the skills that may be required in the future for specific jobs as currently familiar occupations, job tasks and titles change with time. This helps them become aware of future job opportunities, existing TVET options and allows them to make better career choices that match their interests, aptitudes, and abilities, thus eventually leading to potential employment.

A caveat to these interventions is that the accessibility of accurate, timely and relevant information often plays a small role in young people's decisions about the careers they wish to undertake. Young people's career choices are influenced by different factors, including individuals (family members, friends, teachers/trainers and many others), external sources (such as the broadcast and social media), as well of course as their own aspirations and preferences.

LMI for youth needs to be provided by well-informed trainers who need to be recruited, hired, and trained first before they can convey information to youth. If there are too few trained personnel, skills shortages will result; if there are too many, they will not find work in their chosen field. Trainers make it easier for young people with different needs to understand this information and make sense out of it. Good communication with stakeholders is important to reduce the mismatch between demand and supply which is caused by deficient information from both employers and employees (Alexander et al., 2018). Communicating with stakeholders helps youth to know what qualifications and skills are needed for vacant job positions, and employers to improve their hiring efficiency (Belal, 2015). In the long run, this could help reduce the job search costs and time for both employees and employers.

Once youth have been provided with the relevant information and they have clearly understood it, the logic model of the intervention suggests that they are well-equipped with knowledge and self-efficacy and believe in their capabilities. With this, they are more able and likely to be employed.

Finally, all the above inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes lead to young people being aware of and clearly understanding the labour market, which in return results in an improvement in youth employment.

For the above theory of change to operate, the following assumptions should be met:

- No significant slowdown of economic growth takes place. This means that the economy should either be stable or growing, which in return affects labour demand and supply.
- Job requirements are sufficiently stable for demand forecasts to be accurate.
- Young people are able to meet skill demand they learn through the provided information.
- There are job opportunities for young people.
- There are sufficient data about employment and unemployment indicators and trends.

3.5 Labour standards

This section covers a broad range of interventions in the policy sphere. This includes support to policies for youth employment, institutional capacity building to agencies engaged in youth employment-related activities, and support to the development and implementation of labour standards.

The central causal processes are that the appropriate policy environment is necessary to support youth employment, that agency capacity matters for design and

implementation of interventions, and that labour standards can improve the quality of employment.

The presence of strengthened institutions (with effective capacity on the side of the personnel and at the institutional level) amidst a favourable policy environment further leads into long-term outcomes of improved employment levels, increased financial security and earnings and reduction in NEET levels.

Institutional capacity building of training and employment requires financial inputs and favourable policy environments to promote strong training institutions that promote youth employment. For example, education systems require adequate infrastructure, human resources, and equipment. The funds awarded enable the purchase of the necessary equipment, and hiring and training trainers. An intermediate outcome is the strengthening of education and training institutions, with the ability, for example, for planning and enforcing curricular standards.

Labour standards can be broadly defined as adherence to national labour policies, relating to child labour, minimum wages, and also policies regarding national and international migration. Labour standards more narrowly defined refers to workplace conditions with respect to working hours, break periods, health and safety and so on.

The interventions for labour standards broadly defined include support to the development and implementation of labour policies, including supporting stakeholder engagement in this process. Stakeholder engagement is expected to result in the intermediate output of increased knowledge on youth employment and migration by all the relevant stakeholders. This has the short-term outcome of improved capacity in addressing youth unemployment and managing migration, with the long-term outcome of a reduction in NEET levels

On the flip side, effective supervision or monitoring of policies by the relevant stakeholders is expected to lead to compliance and adherence to policy standards. This is expected to contribute towards favourable working conditions, and protection of labour rights which results in improved working conditions in the medium term and the long-term effects are increased job security and earning levels. A strong education system with effective policies, an effective monitoring system and a relevant and standardised curriculum results in improved employment outcomes such as highly employable graduates with both hard and soft skills. In the long-term, this leads to an improvement in youth livelihoods.

Drafting and redrafting policies on employment require resources that include funds, policy advisors, and labour market information. The development of comprehensive policy drafts leads to an enhancement in policy capacity (by implementers and overseers). The presence of formal policies improved labour standards. The presence of effective legislation further enhances and increases the capacity of institutions to protect the employment rights of workers notably, increasing access to social protection, enabling decent working conditions and the protection of youth from any form of exploitation.

Interventions may train employers with respect to labour standards, and labour inspectors in ways in which they may better do their work, as well as reforming labour standard systems e.g. to introduce international standards nationally. For labour standards to matter there also has to be an effective enforcement mechanism. Of course, the informal sector, which accounts for a large share of youth employment in some countries, falls outside such standards.

However, the realisation of the expected changes at different stages of the causal process relies on a number of assumptions. They include among others:

- The existence of quality monitoring is key in ensuring adherence to the existing migration and labour policies and standards by the private sector and training institutions, as well as the delivery of a quality curriculum by the training institutions. The absence of strong legislation and a strong monitoring system by governments lead to complacency by both educational and employing institutions.
- Institutional technical and financial capacity of employers and partner institutions to undertake and sustain related activities. It is assumed that both employer and partner institutions such as community-based organisations (CBOs), private sector institutions and donors have adequate knowledge on labour and migration policies and labour standards. In addition, it is assumed that there are adequate resources to facilitate capacity building trainings and purchase the required equipment and all necessary materials and resources. In Jordan, for example, Buginom de Moreta and Cela (2012) reported challenges of low wages, and transportation.
- That there is the willingness and ability to enforce policies including labour standards.
- The influx of new populations may increase the numbers of at-risk out of school and out of work youth. If a country experiences high immigration this will include youth immigration, which mat means the available job opportunities may not match the quantity and quality of demand for jobs.
- Strong ownership by the government. To achieve the desired impact, it is assumed that there will be government buy-in and political will to provide a favourable regulatory environment and support to the training and employing institutions.
- No significant slowdown of economic growth. Economic constraints in the country and globally such as inflation, recession and credit crunch have a significant negative impact on the expected results across the process chain.
- Youth awareness raised on safe migration. Lack of adequate information on the associated benefits and risks can expose youth to migration risks, including arriving in countries where the employment prospects are not as good as they hoped, and they have no or limited access to training.

Chapter 4

Eligibility, targeting and recruitment

4. Eligibility, targeting and recruitment

4.1 Principles

Interventions need participants. Hence, the issue of who is eligible to take part, the targeting of these planned participants, and how they are recruited are an important part of intervention design.

In developed countries, there are systems in place which frequently provide the context or means for this process. The category of NEET is widely used, and the target group for interventions is often young people who are NEET or at risk of being so. Since the rise of workfare, young people who are NEET may well be required to utilise employment services and attend training, or be eligible for a wage subsidy. The arrangements for referral and recruitment vary between countries and interventions.

In addition, in Europe most countries have well established, state-supported apprenticeship schemes. These have developed over many years (see Chapter 1), and are a recognised career pathway for young people. The choice to enter into a technical vocational training via apprenticeships for social class C professions is often made early in a young person's educational career by the choice of secondary school. For example, in Germany, children entering *Hauptschule* or *Realschule* are expected to pursue vocational training upon graduating from school. Only children selected by a *Gymnasium* are eligible to take the *Abitur,* which permits entry to university.

The situation is different in anglophone countries. There are apprenticeship systems, but these have been more subject to policy changes over the years. In the USA, with less government involvement, apprenticeships are generally a private sector initiative.

Youth employment interventions are, by their very nature, not open to all people. They are intended for young people, with the definition of young varying by country and by intervention. The eligible population may be further restricted in various ways, such as by sex, geography, education or wellbeing.

For example, the randomised evaluation of a vocational and employment training program for juvenile offenders in the USA delineates the eligibility criteria as young people who are: (a) age 15–18 years, (b) involved with the juvenile justice system for committing a crime (c) referred by a judge to either MST, MDFT, or FFT treatment programs that work towards preventing young people entering out-of-home placement services, (d) identified as having substance abuse issues or are at high risk of developing it, and (e) interested specifically in undergoing a vocational training in the building trades (Schaeffer et al., 2014, p. 135).

Closely related to eligibility is targeting. There are three aspects to targeting: who is the target group, how are they targeted, and the targeting performance. Eligibility and

target group are not quite the same thing. All young people may be eligible for an intervention but there may be a target that, say, 50% of participants are female. Often young people from low-income backgrounds are a primary, but not sole, target group.

The targeting mechanism and recruitment are also closely related, but again they are not the same. The targeting mechanism is how the target group is identified, whereas recruitment is the process by which they are enrolled into the intervention including any activities undertaken to encourage their participation. The targeting mechanism and recruitment are only the same thing in the case of self-targeting.

This chapter presents evidence from the included studies on these three issues: eligibility, targeting and recruitment.

4.2 Eligibility

Young people are of course the main eligible population for youth employment interventions. The definition of 'young people' varies between interventions, as it does between countries. For example, the wage subsidy provided under the Youth Contract in England was available to support young people aged 18-24 (Jordan et al., 2013). The Youth Opportunity Program - a USA-based career preparation and life skills training program - was for those aged 18-21 years. The Australian government's TtW programme was open to young people aged between 15-21 years (Mulas et al., 2018; Dixon et al., 2014; Henderson et al., 2021).

Programmes are also designed to accommodate diverse groups of young people who might need different support, recognising the need for separate eligibility and referral mechanisms. The TtW programme in Australia is open to three different groups of young people aged between 15 and 21 years, with a separate eligibility criteria for each group. The three groups are early school leavers, disengaged youth, and young people referred by a Jobactive provider. The programme has a distinct referral mechanism and target number for each group (Henderson et al., 2021: 33).

Other eligibility criteria for programmes may relate to:

- **Education:** This criterion may require the intended beneficiaries to not currently be in education, or may also provide specification of the necessary education level. For example, vocational training courses provided by the Turkish National Employment Agency were open to young people aged 15 and above with at least a primary education. Further, participants had to meet additional educational qualifications based on the training course they wished to opt for (Hirshleifer et al., 2014). Alternatively, in order to restrict the programme to those with greatest need, eligibility may be based on a maximum level of education; e.g. support for 16-17 year olds

under the Youth Contract in England was available to young people who were NEET with no more than one GCSE.[24]

- **Employment status:** Eligible youth may be required to not be currently working. The evaluation of an Individual placement and support (IPS) program that assists people with severe mental illnesses in UK, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Bulgaria and the Netherlands to find jobs was open to participants who had been unemployed for the past one year (Latimer, 2008).
- **Age:** Kickstart, a wage-subsidy grant for employers in the UK, is designed to create employment for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 years (Davies, 2021: 18). Youth had to be between 15-29 years to be eligible for the Youth Job Connection programme in Canada (Bancroft, 2017: 25).
- **Nationality:** Youth looking to participate in the Job Corps training programme had to hold a legal U.S. residency to be eligible for the program (Blanco et al., 2014).
- **Other groups:** eligibility may relate to other characteristics; e.g. support for 16-17 year olds under the Youth Contract in England was available to young people who were NEET and had been in care or released from custody for a criminal offence.[25]

4.3 Targeting

There are three aspects to targeting: who is the target group, how are they identified (the targeting mechanism), and the targeting performance.

Aside from youth, common target groups are youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (low income or little education), educated youth (secondary school or university graduates), young women, youth in marginal communities e.g. indigenous youth, ex-combatants, and youth with disabilities. For instance, the Growth with Decent Work for All: National Youth Employment Program and Pilot Implementation (UNJP-YEM) programme in Antalya, Turkey targets young women as well as vulnerable young people from migrant populations (Mourshed, 2011). The Kickstart scheme in the UK was open to 16-24 year olds supported by Universal Credit, but it primarily targeted those at risk of long-term unemployment (Davies, 2021: 46).

[24] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-contract-16-and-17-year-olds/youth-contract-provision-16-and-17-year-olds

[25] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-contract-16-and-17-year-olds/youth-contract-provision-16-and-17-year-olds

Targeting mechanisms can be classified as:[26]

(1) **means testing** whereby eligibility is determined on the basis of income. For example, the YouthBuild programme in the United States is open to youth from low-income families, where low-income is defined as less than 80% of the median income in the local area (Miller et al., 2016).

(2) **indicator targeting**, which can take one of three forms: (i) categorical targeting; (ii) 'proxy means test', and (iii) geographical targeting. These are as follows:

> (i) categorical targeting which targets based on observed characteristics. This approach is inherent in youth employment programmes since they target a specific age group. Other categories commonly used are (a) sex, with target percentages for the share of young women; b) education level achieved as many interventions target those with either minimum or maximum educational attainment, and (c) employment status, as interventions often require participants to not be in wage employment. In addition, some interventions are targeted at business owners.
>
> In youth employment programmes in the UK, the most common eligibility criterion is that the young person should be NEET. Similarly, support under the EU's Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was exclusively for youth who are NEET. Additional conditions may specify that the young person has been unemployed for a certain period of time, such as six months, and may also include a maximum level of education. The MOMENTUM programme in Ireland targeted those aged less than 25 years, who were recipients of unemployment allowance or benefits for a minimum of 12 months (Department of Education and Skills, 2020). The NDYP Programme in the UK targeted unemployed youth and specifically those who had been long-term unemployed – (a minimum of 18 months) (Reenen, 2003).
>
> Programmes may also target other indicators such as gender or race. For example, some programmes run by the Princes Trust in the UK target women and ethnic minorities.
>
> Indicators may be used to make an index to assess eligibility or needs. Two examples are:
>
> - For New Zealand's Youth Service: NEET (YS) programme the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) targets high-risk young people by calculating a risk score for all 15-17 year old school drop-outs and assessing their probability of applying for benefit when they turn 18. This information is communicated to the local level YS providers who reach out to the identified youth and try to spark their interest in the programme (Dixon and Crichton, 2017: 17).

[26] The categorization is from White (2017) based on Devereux (2017).

- To implement the Youth Guarantee scheme, the Italian government has introduced a standard NEETs profiling procedure based on a vulnerability coefficient for each young person (low, medium, high or very high). The index is based on personal characteristics, (such as age, gender, educational background, work experience, etc.) as well as the characteristics of their place of residence (profile of the local production system, regional or provincial unemployment rate, etc.). This profile helps job centre advisors identify the most suitable service/offer for the individual. Job centre workers supplement this quantitative assessment with qualitative profiling as the basis for a personalised service agreement (European Court of Auditors, 2017).

(ii) 'proxy means test', which takes other indicators such as, housing quality or asset ownership, as a proxy for income poverty.

(iii) geographical targeting, usually to poorer areas. This approach is common in many of the included interventions which are not national in scope. The Essential Life Skills programme in England was provided to the 12 'Opportunity Areas' (OAs), which were 12 areas considered to have extreme deprivation. Some of these OAs made grants to schools with a formula which gave greater amounts to schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils (Cutmore et al., 2020). Similarly, New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program is open to all city residents within the 14-21 years age bracket, but the program targets disadvantaged pupils by working via community-based organisations (CBOs) functioning among primarily low-income communities situated in the city's boroughs (Leos-Urbel, 2014, p. 893). The EU's YEI was targeted at areas with 25% youth unemployment (aged 15 to 24), which biased the allocation of resources against countries with a school leaving age of 18 or above. Geographic targeting is also used in the allocation of the EU's YEI focuses on regions where youth unemployment is highest (EU, 2017).

(3) **Nomination targeting** may be: (i) self-targeting which is used in any programme practising passive recruitment, i.e. the intervention is advertised and eligible applicants enrol. Such self-targeting is usually biased against the most disadvantaged who may be less well-informed, and less likely to have the skills and confidence to apply. The exception is when the programme is designed this way to ensure the self-targeting is oriented towards the more disadvantaged. This approach is common in public works programmes, mainly in developing countries; wages on these programmes are often low so only those who cannot get a higher income by other means apply. The Tús programme in Ireland provided participants the option of referring themselves to the programme (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 27); (ii) community targeting in which 'the community' (usually community leaders) are asked to nominate eligible youth, which may then be screened by the project for eligibility. The FNIYES in Canada was devised to support the entry of youth from the First Nations and Inuit communities into the labour market. The programs included here are often operated through funding directed to First Nations and Inuit communities and organisations who then identify eligible participants (Byam, 2002).

Table 4.1: Examples of targeting mechanisms

Mechanism	Examples
Means Testing	YouthBuild, USA
Indicator targeting	New Deal Programme in the UK Young people who are NEET e.g. Youth Contract wage subsidy in England; and programmes supported by EU's Youth Employment Initiative. Princes' Trust targets women and young people from minority ethnic groups
Proxy means test	Eligibility for free school means, e.g. Essential Life Skills in England (Cutmore et al., 2020).
Geographical targeting	EU's Youth Employment Initiative targeted to areas of at least 25% youth unemployment (European Court of Auditors, 2017) Summer Youth Employment Program in the US (Leos-Urbel, 2014)
Nomination targeting: community-based	First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy in Canada (Byam, 2002)
Nomination targeting: self-targeting	National Guard Job Challenge (JC) for justice involved youth in the United States (Berk et al., 2021). The European Employment Services (EURES) platform to promote mobility in Europe (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018).

Some issues in targeting are:

- Verification: Indicator targeting requires verification of eligibility status. In England, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are used for indicator targeting to reach disadvantaged pupils - this was done in the Essential Life Skills programme which ran

from 2018-19 (Cutmore et al. 2020). In the evaluation of the YEI in England, a common comment among stakeholders was that the eligibility requirements specified were not realistic for the target group as some of these groups may lack a permanent address as well as the access to licence, passport or other important identity documents (Atkinson et al., 2017).

- A related issue is whether data systems are in place to support identifying the eligible population. Many interventions target young people who are NEET, who can in theory be contacted through benefits systems. However, not all NEET young people are in receipt of benefits In practice, many countries have difficulty in identifying all NEETs. The self-evaluation of the EU's YEI states that 'a common challenge across Youth Employment Initiative programmes was reaching young people not in employment, education or training. Since many of these young people were often not registered as unemployed, identifying the target group often required active canvassing and encouraging individuals to register' (EU, 2017: 22). In Ireland, for example, all unemployed people aged 18 or over receive a basic income of at least Euro 100 a week per person without children so that not many bothered to register with the Department of Social Protection (European Court of Auditors, 2017). Determining eligibility for the Liverpool YEG programme was hampered by the fact that Jobcentre Plus was not required to share claims data which would have verified unemployment status (Ray et al., 2018).

- A multicomponent project may have different targeting criteria for different activities. The JC programme added to several existing YC programmes in the US had 2 distinct aims: open up YC's target population to more justice-involved youth who might face additional barriers to employment and education and provide residential occupational training to the selected participants (Berk et al., 2021).

- Mismatch between targets set for specific groups and the actual presence of these groups on the ground affected recruitment. For example, the YEI intended for young people NEET in England had targets set for both men and women, but they had difficulty recruiting women into the program as the actual NEET population in the area were largely men (Atkinson et al., 2017).

Targeting performance can be formally measured as Type I and Type II errors. Type I errors are the percentage of the target group who are not included in the intervention group, which is a function of both targeting accuracy and the scale of the programme. Type II errors are the share of the treatment group who do not meet the eligibility criteria. None of the evaluations included in this review report this data. Some do report the absolute numbers of the target group reached or their share in total participants. For example, the evaluation of Essential Life Skills in England reported that 'Half of all recorded participations were by disadvantaged pupils, which in many cases surpassed providers' expectations' (Cutmore et al., 2020).

Success in targeting requires explicit attention to the issue. To this end, the targeting mechanism may be part of the project design such as, the National Guard Job Challenge (JC) Program for high school dropouts in the US, which was introduced by expanding the Youth Challenge (YC) programme to target more justice-involved youth.

Enrolment to the JC programme took place from within the YC cohort itself, but programme staff made use of several strategies including identifying justice-involved individuals from the YC cohort, having targeted interactions with individual participants in the YC programme, and encouraging them to apply for the JC programme (Berk et al., 2021).

4.4 Recruitment

Once the target population has been identified they still need to be recruited to the intervention. An evaluation of youth employment programmes stated that 'Effective outreach is one of the main challenges in youth employment policy… it was difficult to identify and reach potential candidates for youth employment operations' (EU 2017: 60).

Recruitment may be done in various ways:

- **Referral:** which is the common mechanism in developed countries in which the welfare service will refer those claiming benefits to the public employment service. Indeed, the welfare agency and public employment service are often the same agency. The public employment services may in turn refer a young person to another provider, which may be the required entry route for the programme. For example, participants in the Liverpool YEG were referred by staff of JCP (Ray et al, 2018). However, relying only on JCP for referrals was seen to be a constraint. Respondents in the evaluation would have liked to be able to use a broader range of referral channels. These were used informally but the referral had to go back to JCP for the official referral to the programme, which lengthened the processing process and deterred some young people (Ray et al, 2018). Providers under the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) worked with schools and colleges for referrals, with 18% of participants being referred to the NSF project by their school or other education service (Golden et al. 2002). Recruitment for programmes aimed at disadvantaged or at-risk youth also rely on referral of participants from legal bodies. The Garda Youth diversion Project in Ireland was introduced to help young people involved in crime or at-risk of it by providing them multiple pathways out of such circumstances including education, training, and employment. The programme is implemented by local community-based organisations and youth are referred to the programme by Garda Juvenile Liaison officers (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018: 48). Similarly, in the YC programme for at-risk youth in the USA, staff mentioned building and maintaining relationships with the justice system, especially networking with the local judges, the juvenile justice department, and family courts to help with outreach and recruitment (Berk et al., 2021: 13).
- **Work through existing channels:** the implementer may partner with agencies already working with the intended target group. This has the advantage that that agency is already known and may be trusted by members of the target group. An example of this comes from Youth Contract in which Work Programme providers partnered with JCP staff to deliver wage incentives. Work Programme providers were relied on to

identify eligible young people on their books who could benefit from wage incentives, as well as being responsible for marketing the incentive to employers. Another example is the Essential Life Skills programme in England in which the responsible local agency identified organisations who already had specialised experience with these groups, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or attending Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) (Cutmore et al., 2020). In the FNIYES programs, the administration and management of programs is decentralised to First Nations and Inuit communities and organisations. This provided scope for adapting the program based on community needs to ensure more young people can be supported via the program.

- **Outreach:** Project staff may visit places where young people gather, such as schools and colleges, youth centres or public spaces where young people meet informally. Over half of participants in NSF were attracted to the NSF project through direct contact with project staff (Golden et al., 2002). The JC programme for at-risk youth in the USA had a target of ensuring at least half of the participants were justice-involved youth. To achieve this aim, JC staff undertook diverse recruitment strategies including promoting JC alongside YC marketing, targeted outreach to individual YC participants and their families, identifying and focusing on court-involved young people among YC participants, involving current JC participants in recruitment, and connecting with YC post-residential staff who work with older batches of YC participants (Berk et al., 2021: 22).
- **Promotion:** Advertising through social media and other channels.
- **Friends and family:** In NSF, Informal methods of referral, such as word-of-mouth, emerged as an important means of engaging this group (Golden et al., 2002).

These approaches can be combined. In addition to receiving referrals from JCP, the Liverpool YEG also placed its own staff in JCP offices:

> *Providers found that it was helpful to have YEG advisers located in JCP offices on particular days/times in order to strengthen the links between YEG and JCP, resulting in a smoother referral process. By being present at job centres, YEG advisers were able to clarify the eligibility criteria for the programme and to discuss the progress of YEG participants directly with JCP staff. This created an environment which encouraged JCP staff to refer young people on to the programme. (Ray et al., 2018: 32).*

The evaluation of YEG identified effective ways of improving referral rates which had been used such as:

- maintaining a database of all new claimants and when their eight-week eligibility criteria would be met;
- pre-referral of potential participants to YEG after five weeks of a claim, which allowed YEG providers to identify potential participants and prepare them for referral in advance;

- YEG staff delivering group information sessions at JCP for potential participants to provide information about the programme;
- mandating attendance at the first YEG meeting (to prevent drop-out between referral and the first meeting); and
- Improving awareness of YEG among JCP staff by YEG staff distributing leaflets and organising regular meetings to discuss the programme and to respond to any queries (Ray et al., 2018: 32-33).

Issues which can arise in recruitment:

- Successful recruitment requires sustained engagement with target groups. For instance, in the YEI programme, staff encountered hurdles in sourcing identity documents of eligible participants and had to put in additional time and effort to keep interested participants engaged while these documents were obtained (Atkinson et al., 2017).
- Recruitment for First Steps, an internship placement programme for those most marginalised in Ireland, was sluggish due to difficulties in getting organisations to commit to taking in young people with low education or long unemployment spells and preferably provide them an additional certified training. Cutting down the work week and building closer relationships between participants and organisations involved in the programme based on designing a plan of progress for the young people coming in did not generate an uptake in participation. Though the programme was stalled, this gave the opportunity to involve smaller organisations or companies which were more willing to take in participants and provide the required training (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 39).

Chapter Five

Participation and retention

5. Participation and retention

5.1 The funnel of attrition

Participation matters. An intervention cannot have an impact if youth do not participate. For impact evaluations, low participation rates show up as a large difference between the intention to treat (ITT) effect and the treatment of treated (ToT) effect. The former measures the average impact on the treatment group regardless of whether they took part in the intervention or not, and the latter the average impact just on those who actually took part. The ITT is necessarily less than the ToT, as the former is 'watered down' by those assigned to the treatment who do not take part and so there is zero impact on them.

Lack of participation reduces programme impact. Hence understanding participation is an important, though often neglected, evaluation question.

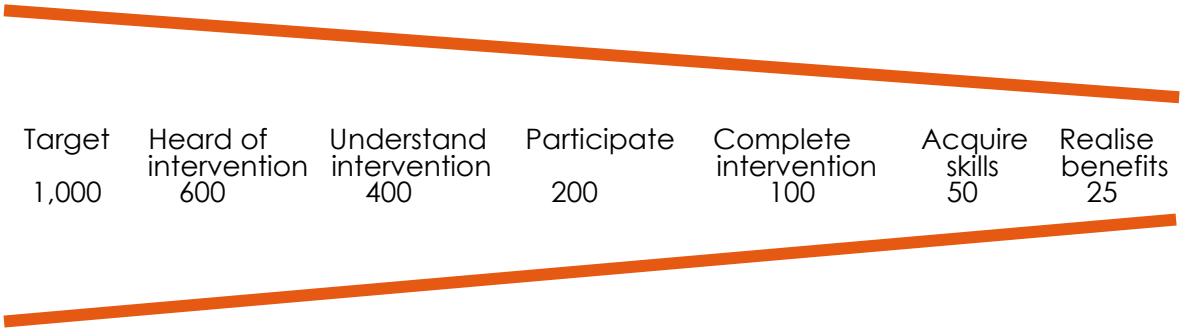
A useful way of thinking about why effect sizes are less than expected in general is the funnel of attrition (White, 2014). The funnel shows how effects diminish from one stage of the causal chain to the next.

The funnel is also usefully applied to examining why fewer people participate in interventions than the project designers expect. For a young person to take part in an intervention, they have to be aware of it and have sufficient knowledge to know if they are eligible and how to apply. They have to perceive participation as worthwhile, and the time and location of the activity have to be suitable. They then have to complete the activity, have the required change in attitude, skills or behaviour and be able to benefit from that.

For example, in the TtW programme in Australia, around 77% of young people referred began the programme and the rate of referrals converting to commencement increased with time. Reasons for not continuing with the programme included finding it unsuitable - especially its requirement of intense weekly participation - going back to education or finding a secure job. The voluntary aspect of the intervention also meant that some participants never showed up for their appointments with service providers (Henderson et al., 2021).

The completion rate in the JC programme in the USA was quite high (89% in one location and 93% in another). Among the few who left JC, which was a residential programme, the primary reasons given for leaving were that they found the programme too controlling or too difficult because they spent long periods away from family and friends (Berk et al., 2021: 51). Also in the United States, 73% of those referred to the YouthBuild programme enrolled and 50% graduated (Miller et al., 2016). The most common reason for not participating or completing was transport (32%), followed by having another job (23%), conflict with staff or other participants (22%), scheduling conflicts (20%), moved away (20%) being asked to leave (19%) and health or family issues (19%).

Figure 5.1: The funnel of attrition for a vocational training programme



Source: Authors

Figure 5.1 shows a hypothetical example will illustrative data of the funnel of attrition. Suppose a vocational training programme operates in an area with 1,000 eligible youth. Of these, under two-thirds have heard of the intervention. Of those who have heard of it, one third do not have sufficient information to know if they are eligible or interested in the programme. Of those that do have this information, one half decide it is worthwhile to participate, of which one half complete the programme. A common weak link in causal chains is to assume that training or education works perfectly – everyone learns what they are intended to learn, within the time available on the programme. This is not so. Of those who complete, one half acquire the intended skills. These may be necessary, but are not sufficient, to obtain employment – one half of those who acquire skills obtain wage employment.

Hence, only 2.5% of those in the target group (and 12.5% of those who take part) benefit from the programme. The treatment of the treated effect of those who enrol in the training is 0.25 (50 out of the 200 who originally participated obtain employment), but the intention to treat effect is just 0.05 if all 1,000 are taken as the intended to treat group. There is a very good chance that a random sample of 100 youth from the treatment group will find no effect.

The general neglect of the issues of awareness, understanding and motivations for enrolment is a major shortcoming in evaluations in general, which has implications for both accountability and learning. In impact evaluations, it means that the average ITT is very misleading. On the one hand, it is the correct statistic to report as it is the effect an implementing agency will obtain if implementing the same programme. But the average is misleading as the benefits are very unevenly distributed. Hence the need to explore heterogeneity to understand which young people the intervention is best suited for, to inform targeting and design in the future. From a learning point of view the opportunity is missed to learn how interventions may best appeal to young people.

5.2 Promotion and outreach, awareness and understanding

As mentioned above, evaluations in general do not discuss in any detail the awareness of intended participants of the programme. More commonly discussed are the promotion efforts made by the implementing agency.

Interventions usually use multiple channels for promoting awareness of the programme. The evaluation of the Welsh Government's Traineeships programme between 2015 – 2019 reported that the three most common routes for participants to find out about Traineeships were family members or friends (24%), schools and/or careers teachers (24%) and Careers Wales Advisors (23%). Other sources of information were college or university (7%), employer (5%) and JCP (5%) (Egglestone et al., 2019).

Lack of awareness is noted as a problem from insufficient information being provided. For example, a lack of understanding of the Liverpool YEG, because of limited explanation by the person making the referral, was given as the reason for participant disengagement, often after the first meeting with programme staff (Ray et al. 2018).

Similarly, the evaluation of the TtW programme in Australia reported young people coming into the programme knowing very little about the service despite being referred to it. The primary reason was the lack of specific information about the programme provided at the point of referral. Hence, participants didn't differentiate TtW from any other job provider service (Henderson et al., 2021: 59). Although their awareness and understanding of the programme grew over the course of the engagement, the likelihood of being less sceptical of the programme and responding positively to the referral would have been greater with a better understanding of the programme (Henderson et al., 2021: 59).

The evaluation of the JC programme in the US provides a detailed account of the promotion and recruitment strategy, which included frequent targeted outreach efforts with the YC cohort and their families. The study reports that, as a result, YC participants mentioned hearing of the JC programme several times from staff and participants in both programmes (Berk et al., 2021).

An EU-level expert focus group highlighted three principles for outreach, generally agreed by the participating Member State representatives, namely: local ground work to assess the nature and extent of the challenge and potential solutions geared to the local context; using qualified outreach staff; and identifying innovative communication, or 'interception' channels to identify and reach potential participants (EU 2020: 159).

For instance, a study of the YEI in England presented co-location of staff members with other relevant services, such as JCP offices, as well as early intervention and family centres as a successful way to increase engagement among young people. Staff stated that this enabled them to establish continuous contact with select groups like single

parents or homeless youth and gradually develop a sense of trust among young people to be able to get them to engage with YEI (Atkinson et al., 2017).

Connexions offered its services through several channels to improve outreach. In addition to locating in Job Centre Plus offices, Connexions services had their own high street shops, centres or 'pods' in community spaces such as a library, school, youth centre or other such venue which were staffed at particular times, and a bus or van for mobile provision in hard to reach areas, notably rural areas, but also some urban settings where access to central venues is difficult (Hoggart and Smith, 2004).

But outreach strategies may not reach all intended members of the target group. The evaluation report of Europe's Youth Guarantee and YEI notes that low participation of vulnerable groups in certain countries like Spain and Poland was the result of a 'creaming effect', i.e., engagement was focused on those already close to the labour market. In response, in Spain, a new strategy was put in place to raise awareness through NGOs that already work with these vulnerable groups. Also, the report notes that many countries lack the capabilities to identify young people who are NEET and to monitor their engagement with programmes. Instead, program staff resorted to targeting young people who are already attached to the Public Employment Services who were not necessarily those most in need (European Commission, 2016).

In Bulgaria, concerts were organised and adverts were placed on fast food trays to reach young people. Staff also visited public places where young people gather, e.g., in parks or shopping centres. EU 2017 Member States also invested in developing the experience and skills required to reach the 'hardest to reach' young people, working with professional youth workers who represent local organisations, promoting cooperation between the various bodies involved, especially 'vertically' (e.g. from local level to the public employment service), going beyond traditional outreach channels. One example is in Germany, where ESF funding successfully supported tailored activities such as support chains and dedicated preventative systems of assisted transition from school to work through systematic multi-party cooperation (EU, 2017).

The implication of these examples is that outreach is a task requiring explicit attention, with intervention design features supported by dedicated staff with the appropriate skillset.

Depending on the programme design, it may be important to ensure awareness among related stakeholders, notably employment services (such as Job Centres Plus in England) and employers. Awareness of youth employment programmes amongst employers is often low. A survey of employers found that a reasonable percentage (55 percent) were aware of NDYP, but far lower percentages were aware of Six Month Offer (17 percent), Future Jobs Fund (15 percent) and Young Person's Guarantee (15 percent) (Shury et al., 2012).

Awareness does not just mean knowing about the scheme, but having sufficient knowledge to play their role. In the case of the Youth Contract wage subsidy in England, Work Programme providers who were responsible for identifying eligible youth felt they had insufficient time and information to develop marketing materials (Jordan et al., 2013: 11). Similarly, TtW staff (Australia) noted low referral rates from jobactive staff.

Limited understanding of TtW amongst these staff, as well as the absence of a contractual requirement for them to refer participants to TtW, was emphasised as the reason for the low referral (Henderson et al., 2021).

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was responsible for the marketing of the Youth Contract wages subsidy and chose to go for no-cost marketing. Surveys showed low levels of employer awareness. So, at the time of the evaluation, DWP was piloting paid-for marketing at the regional level such as local press and radio advertising, public relations (PR) activity in regional and industry press, email marketing and social media activity (Jordan et al., 2013).

The Work Programme providers for the Youth Contract wage subsidy were also engaged in promotion. They used a variety of means to inform employers about the Youth Contract subsidy including face-to-face meetings, cold-calling employers, mailing leaflets, emails, briefing potential employees about the subsidy and putting it in their CVs, open days and social media. One Work Programme staffer mentioned that their 'town is quite multicultural, so I have devised one in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, as there are quite a lot of employers whose English is their second language' (Jordan et al., 2013: 12).

Youth Contract staff also encouraged 'self-promotion' of the wage incentive by claimants to employers. To support this, the claimants were given information packs prior to their interview with an employer (Jordan et al., 2013), as well as putting the subsidy on their CV. The success of self-promotion by candidates was asserted by one respondent:

> *'A few clients did not have this on their CV and after I put it in, I had calls about it from employers, so it does work. I have this guy with no experience apart from school and as soon as we put the wage incentive on his CV, he got three interviews.'* (Jordan et al., 2013: 14)

5.3 Participation numbers and rates

As is clear from the funnel of attrition, the number of participants is likely to be less than the number targeted, and of those participating not all with complete. For example, the EC Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) had 2.7 million participants by the end of 2018, out of the target of 3.9 million youth. (Jeffrey et al., 2020: 75). Since its launch, the Italian Youth Guarantee programme has revised its target beneficiaries from 1,230,000 to 560,000 and finally to around 2.5 million young people. Evaluation of the programme reveals that only 28% of the 2.5 million have registered and joined the platform opened by the programme (Barbetti, 2015).

In contrast, the NSF in England surpassed its target during the three-year pilot. NSF projects supported more than 50,000 young people in their projects which was 5,000 more than the target. Moreover, these participants were NEET or at risk of being NEET: over half (55%) were low achievers at school, one-quarter long-term non-attenders, and 25 per cent had contact with the justice system (Golden et al., 2002).

Recruitment does not ensure retention. Completion of apprenticeships in England has historically been low. An evaluation of Modern Apprenticeships found that fewer than one quarter of apprentices completed all the requirements of their framework (Harris, 2003). This is far below European levels, which are typically around three-quarters. Completion rates in England did temporarily improve to those levels, but have fallen again over the last ten years to just over half (53% in 2021/22).[27] In addition, there is limited progression from one stage of apprenticeship to the next. There is not an assumed 'natural progression' as seen in countries where apprenticeships are integrated more fully into the education system (Fuller et al., 2017).

Non-retention may particularly affect the more disadvantaged. The Youth Services NEET programme in New Zealand is targeted at high-risk youth aged 16-18 years who are considered vulnerable to negative life outcomes as indicated by dependency on benefit payments. The proportion of high-risk youth enrolled initially was high, at around three quarters of participants. But their share fell to about half. The evaluation reports that close to two-thirds or more of high-risk young people eligible for YS in different regions declined participation or remained uncontacted by the programme. (Dixon and Crichton, 2017: 22)

In the Bulgari-funded jewellery-making entrepreneurship project among youth in Colombia, implementation staff noted taking additional measures to ensure equal participation from girls and was successful in getting comparable registration from girls and boys. But this did not convert into sustained participation, as many girls dropped out of the programme after the initial registration. Evaluators observed that often, equal registration does not result in equal participation as programmes remain *gender unaware* in the absence of gender-specific analysis of what girls need to be able to participate effectively (Koumarianos et al., 2017).

Insufficient information about the programme is another contributing factor to young people dropping out. The lack of sufficient programme information shared during the time of referral was an important reason for disengagement from the YEG programme, especially after the initial registration by participants. This alongside previous bad experiences with similar programmes contributed to low motivation among potential participants (Ray et al., 2018).

Some programmes do manage high retention. Average attendance in the Essential Life Skills programme in England was nine out of ten sessions attended (Cutmore et al., 2020). And non-completion is not necessarily always a bad thing: About one-third of youth obtaining jobs through the wage subsidy Future Jobs Fund in England did not complete the whole six months - but nearly two-thirds of those left to take a different job (Fishwick et al., 2011: 30).

[27] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1304654/apprenticeship-achievement-rate-england/#:~:text=In%202021%2F22%2C%20just%2053.4,65.1%20percent%20in%202018%2F19.

5.4 Barriers to participation

The reported barriers to participation in youth employment interventions include poor targeting, young people lacking interest in certain vocations, irregular funding, hard to reach areas (remote areas) and low stakeholder participation.

5.4.1 Inappropriate targeting of young people

The targeting mechanism used may result in some high need groups being excluded from the intervention.

A review of Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIPs) in seven countries found that two of them focussed on a narrower sub-population, thus excluding a large share of the intended eligible population. In Italy, young people had to have provided a declaration of immediate availability (DID - *Dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità*) before registration, or they were not counted amongst eligible NEETs. In Ireland, the approach used excluded some important groups of NEET such as unemployed students, inactive self-reported students, carers, and people who were inactive due to disability (European Court of Auditors, 2017).

Under the NEAP (Ireland), current JB and JA claimants who had a previous unemployment spell and received an intervention at that time were not eligible for a NEAP intervention in their current spell of unemployment. This represents an additional substantial group of jobseekers – in excess of 25 per cent of new claimants – that was excluded from NEAP assistance. This practice of excluding those with a previous history of unemployment would appear to run counter to the underlying rationale of activation policies, namely, to assist those most likely to encounter difficulties in the labour market to find work (Guinness et al., 2011).

There was a widespread view amongst respondents for the evaluation of Traineeships in Wales that those most in need of the services offered under the Engagement strand for difficult cases were not necessarily the ones being accepted for the programme as providers were reluctant to take on "more challenging individuals" (Egglestone et al., 2019).

Two studies from the UK reported issues regarding eligibility criteria for interventions funded by the EU's YEI. While local authorities in the West of Scotland proposed to target young people still in school who were at risk of becoming NEET which they had established as a priority, the European Commission objected to this approach on the grounds that interventions had to be for those already NEET, so school-based interventions were not eligible for YEI support (European Commission 2016, Graham, 2018). The definition of NEET that was adopted excluded young people who were on the verge of dropping out of education and also those in temporary employment. The exclusion of such vulnerable groups of youth potentially reduced the overall impact of YEI (European Commission, 2016). Elsewhere, such youth were in the target group – for

example the USA's National Guard YC/JC Program targeted youth who were at high risk of dropping out of school (Berk et al., 2021).

Eligibility criteria were often restrictive in terms of age, citizenship, criminal background and gender. One programme in the USA excluded participation of young people based on citizenship. It also excluded youth with a serious criminal background (Berk et al., 2021). Youth programmes may require participants to avoid contact with the justice system, and to abstain from drugs and sometimes alcohol to stay enrolled in the programme.

The disengaged youth eligible for TtW in Australia had to have a minimum 13 week gap from school. TtW providers emphasised that this was a major reason for low participation as such a long gap meant that young people were no longer motivated to participate in TtW. Having the possibility of involving them at an earlier stage would protect them from becoming completely dependent on other welfare institutions with no scope of breaking this cycle of dependence (Henderson et al., 2021).

Similarly, South West Scotland's YEI targeted the 16-29 year old NEET population. But as the economy recovered and unemployment figures fell, those initially targeted by YEI were not heavily dependent on the intervention. Instead, many who moved into more unstable jobs, part-time employment or non-graduate positions (for graduates) would have benefited from YEI's support. But restrictions and inflexibility in the definition of NEET prevented YEI from supporting this vulnerable population who were at risk of being NEET (Graham, 2018: 8).

5.4.2 Weaknesses in the referral process

Lack of communication, including data sharing, can be a problem in the referral process, especially if the welfare system and public employment service are under separate agencies. About 25 per cent of job seekers were missed by Ireland's NEAP, which the evaluation suggests was a result of the lack of integration between the DSP income maintenance data system and FÁS labour market system (McGuinness et al., 2011). Difficulties were encountered in establishing eligibility under the Liverpool YEG as the public employment service (JCP) was not required to share claims data which would have verified unemployment status (Ray et al., 2018).

Other reasons identified for differences in referral rates between offices under the YEG were (i) staff turnover, so new staff were not aware of the programme; and (ii) varying management support for the programme.

Simple referral is not sufficient for many young people. It was felt that young people with complex needs who completed the Engagement strand of the Welsh Traineeship programme needed support beyond that, but which was beyond the time and resources available. Similarly, a Welsh Government official stated that it was not their role to go 'to a young person's house, getting them out of bed ... some food, getting them on a bus, getting them to a provider' (Egglestone: 2019: 41)

5.4.3 Lack of interest among young people

Certain jobs or training paths may also not be of interest to young people because they are seen as low status (see below), or because the young person lacks confidence or has a negative attitude towards the programme - possibly based on previous experiences. The evaluation of Essential Life Skills in England comments that 'ELS Barriers linked to young people typically included confidence and negative preconceptions about extracurricular activities' (Cutmore et al., 2020: 6). Lack of confidence may be induced by setting. A young person commenting on their work experience work assignment under the Entry to Employment programme in England stated that they 'thought it was going to be really posh, because downstairs are proper offices and that' and that he had found it rather intimidating' (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 20).

Young people may also not engage if the means for doing so are not appropriate. Respondents in the evaluation of the National Careers Service in England said they would not use the telephone service as they did not like to speak on the phone (Bowles et al., 2013: 46).

Loss of interest in on-going projects was one barrier. Participants' disengagement with proposed activities in the Liverpool YEG programme is reported to have occurred after the first meeting due to the insufficient marketing of the program to beneficiaries (Ray, 2018). These barriers were reported to have led to absenteeism and late arrival of beneficiaries at training venues.

5.4.4 Low status and stigma

Young people, or their parents, may be reluctant to take part in interventions because they feel that they are a low status activity, possibly with stigma attached.

An example comes from the Essential Life Skills project in England for which the evaluation reported that respondents highlighted the stigma of being targeted for free activities, with a programme worker quotes as saying 'participants feel singled out and objectified as people - they become something that a thing is done 'to' rather than a person something is done with, this can make them suspicious'. Furthermore, since the intervention was school-based, having to stay at school outside of school hours was seen as a "punishment or something that is undesirable" (Cutmore et al., 2020: 37).

Low status because a programme is seen as an inferior option was also an issue for Traineeships in Wales. The evaluation found that schools were often unwilling to promote the Traineeships as:

> *...schools and parents considered the programme to be the least preferable destination for young people when compared to sixth form and further education provision. Consequently, providers felt that schools were often reluctant to promote Traineeships, leading to a low level of awareness amongst*

the target groups and people who might influence their decisions (Egglestone et al., 2019: 37).

It is also mentioned that 'some providers believe there is a stigma around Traineeships, with negative perceptions linked to young people who had misbehaved at school' (Egglestone et al., 2019: 53). The low status of traineeships was reinforced by the fact that traineeships earned less than the regular employees they were working with (Egglestone et al., 2019).

5.4.5 Lack of interest by employers

A survey of firms found that the large majority of the directors surveyed (84%) stated that their organisations did not employ apprentices under the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme. The main reasons were that they preferred to take on staff who were already qualified (29%), had their own training arrangements (19%) or that their activities were not covered by an existing framework (19%).

Directors also reported barriers to using MAs if they were interested. These included being unable to find young people with the suitable skills and the possible costs. Some felt they may take part if they had more information or there was more help with costs, but a substantial share (18%) said it simply didn't apply to them.

One reason for this lack of interest is that employers do not consider that the eligible young people have sufficient skills or work preparedness. The evaluation of the EU's Youth Guarantee comments that a high proportion of organisations commented that a barrier to achieving objectives was 'the low education level of participants' (EU 2017: 33).

Firms may also not take part because they are insufficiently aware of the details of a specific programme, which is exacerbated by the proliferation of short-lived interventions. The evaluation of Traineeships in Wales reported that 'providers described increased challenges in engaging employers to offer placements. The lack of awareness of Traineeships as a brand/programme of support and the unfamiliarity of the offer was felt to impact negatively upon levels of employer engagement' (Egglestone et al., 2019: 53).

In the NDYP programme in the UK, employer participation was limited by insufficient programme knowledge and awareness among potential employers. Additionally, they applied the same recruitment standards for NDYP participants, not taking into consideration that these young people might need special support to address the additional barriers to employment they face. Many employers also considered the wage-subsidy provided by the programme to be too low and the added training and paperwork in NDYP to be cumbersome (NAO, 2002: 29).

5.4.6 Hard-to-reach young people and areas

Issues presented include young people with complex needs, and problems for young people in rural areas where there are few firms or training facilities, and public transport is poor and possibly not affordable. Coastal towns are recognised as a growing area of concern, where such jobs as are available are often seasonal and do not offer a career path beyond low paid employment.

The evaluation of Traineeships Wales reported that providers were reluctant to take on more challenging individuals. Employers also had concerns about such young people:

> *Poverty is the biggest challenge. They don't eat properly, they don't have presentable work clothes and can't afford the travel costs. The domestic situation at home is usually highly dysfunctional so they require emotional support. (Employer)* (Egglestone et al., 2019: 48)

A specific problem which many programmes cannot address is that youth without family support - such as care leavers - cannot afford the first month of work. They lose benefits once they start work, so they will not have money for rent or transport to work. This issue is raised in the evaluation of Traineeships in Wales:

> *They will not have the money to get to their placement for the first week. This is a barrier until they get into employment. There needs to be something more at the beginning to support them even just getting to the centre for the first week. We will fund them but we don't get funding for that, even things like lunches that first week are a concern for our learners.* (Provider) (Egglestone et al., 2019: 70-71).

As documented below, where such funds are available, this is a facilitator.

5.4.7 Lengthy or bureaucratic application processes

A lengthy or overly bureaucratic application process could be a barrier for both young people and firms.

Under the Liverpool YEG, applicants had to wait eight weeks for the application to be processed, during which time the young person's enthusiasm for the scheme could be diminished. There was also a large amount of paperwork to be completed at the initial meeting, which advisors thought undermined their ability to constructively engage the participant. It could also be hard to prove eligibility against the bureaucratic requirements, especially as the public employment service (JCP) was not required to share claims data which would have verified unemployment status (Ray et al., 2018).

Similar issues were raised in the evaluation of Welsh Traineeships. One provider commented that:

> *It makes participants jump through hoops unnecessarily and some have to travel over to their nearest CW office and can't afford it. But with CW you can wait for*

> *three weeks for a guidance interview and three weeks for the referral form. Research has shown a need to engage with youngsters immediately after they leave school and if it takes too long many of them will get lost* (Provider) (Egglestone et al., 2019: 40).

Providers were required to refer young people back to Careers Wales, even if that provider would provide services to the young person. On the other hand, other providers thought Careers Wales played an important role in giving young people advice about their options. 'I'm a big fan of the referral process, young people ought to have advice – it shouldn't be self-referral' (Provider) (Egglestone et al., 2019: 40). A specific module under the Traineeships, ALS, was seen as having a particularly burdensome administrative process, and so was used little (Egglestone et al., 2019: 49).

Another case is Ireland's Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) where unnecessary paperwork and a large reporting burden deterred participants, as did repeated follow-up questions. The evaluation report states that:

> *When dealing with vulnerable young people one must be aware of their sensitivity and the level of form filling required can be a hindrance as opposed to a benefit. The requirement for follow up contact with the young person to capture if their situation has changed within four weeks and 6 months can prove problematic i.e. trying to get a response to progression questions being asked* (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 31).

The lengthy process involved in employing youth via Kickstart was a barrier to participation, especially from potential employers. Delays in the entire process, from approving job vacancies, advertising it and finally matching a claimant to the job have hindered the progress of the scheme. In certain cases it took several months for jobs to be advertised after the initial application from the employer had been accepted (Davies, 2021: 39).

5.4.8 Costs of participation and conflict with other programmes

Young people perceived that calls to the National Careers Service in England were not free, especially from mobiles - and the messaging on this from NCS was not clear - which discouraged them from using the service (Bowles et al., 2013: 46).

One reason identified for the reduced uptake of the Kickstart scheme among young people was the continuation of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the UK. Though Kickstart was due to begin at the close of the Job Retention scheme, the latter programme was extended because of Covid, which created employment for youth who would otherwise be engaged by Kickstart (Davies, 2021: 38).

5.5 Facilitators of participation

This section provides findings on practices that promoted participation of youth in employment interventions. The practices concern targeting and recruitment, and activities and intervention design features which encourage participation.

5.5.1 Effective recruitment

Recruitment and awareness strategies focused on young people are effective in generating greater participation in programmes. This includes adopting strategies promoting the programmes in areas young people frequent or working with other service providers that revolve around youth.

Young people were referred to the Liverpool City YEG programme through the public employment service, JCP. An evaluation of YEG observed that establishing a strong relationship between YEG and JCP staff ensured a trouble-free referral process. Approaches such as having YEG staff at JCP offices to discuss YEG provisions and evaluate the progress of participants helped create a healthy atmosphere at these jobcentres, where JCP staff felt more invested and proactive in referring participants to YEG (Ray et al., 2018: 32).

Ireland's SICAP programme staff employed multiple approaches to reach those most distant from the labour market. This included diverse marketing strategies via social media, publicity fliers, the larger print and news media as well as door-to-door outreach, joint efforts with allied agencies and ensuring strong connection with the state department for social protection and other programmes also funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 32).

Some providers in the TtW programme employed a rewards and recognition based strategy to ensure participants completed the programme and reached their goals. As a provider remarked:

> *"We have a reward-based system. So, depending on how well they engage, what they're willing to do outside of the appointments, they can earn rewards and things like that from us. It's nothing major, it might be just that we'll give them $10 or something in credit and you say get a job and the more they're willing to help themselves they'll buy into that."* (Henderson et al., 2021: 71)

5.5.2 Reaching disadvantaged groups

Many evaluated interventions specifically targeted vulnerable or at-risk groups, such as young people involved with courts, those with disabilities, and early school leavers, with the aim of reducing their additional barriers to employment (Schaeffer et al., 2014;

Balcazar et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2021). For instance, the YC/JC programme in the USA organised around soft skills training was exclusively for youth with criminal background and school dropouts (Berk, 2021). The PIEL initiative in Ireland supports the SICAP which targets both disadvantaged individuals and communities namely, unemployed or low-income people, individuals from disadvantaged regions, individuals with disabilities, single parents as well as those from Traveller and Roma communities (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018: 43).

Traineeships in Wales were intended to provide pathways to employment for those not yet ready for apprenticeships, i.e. young people further from the labour market. Respondents to the evaluation commented that:

> *The key strength of the programme is that it provides a safety net for those who are falling through the cracks of the mainstream education system. It provides an achievable progression route and an opportunity to develop skills that the participants wouldn't normally have. It offers a chance for someone to completely transform their lives. (Employer)*

> *I think it's really good that we can provide a scheme for young people leaving school who aren't ready for higher education or employment, it does fill a gap…(Employer)*

Many programmes adapted their targeting strategies to better engage specific groups of marginalised participants. TtW providers talked about modifying their engagement process to better suit youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and indigenous communities. This included employing indigenous staff, partnering with indigenous communities and putting in place separate facilitation groups for indigenous participants, as well as hiring specialist staff with diverse skill sets such as knowledge in different languages (Henderson et al., 2021).

5.5.3 Working with organisations already engaged with the target population

Effective partnerships with other providers, especially providers already working with young people in programme areas, is highlighted as particularly important for external providers. External providers often needed these partnerships with schools so that they could identify and recruit pupils, and secure the engagement of parents.

5.5.4 Customised and flexible programmes

Participation is facilitated by services and activities being customised to the needs of each young person, which requires a flexible approach. This process often involves an assessment with the young person and so their suitability for the programme.

For example, the Traineeship programme in Wales included 'an assessment of each individual young person's needs, interests and aspirations, and, if appropriate, … a judgement about their suitability for the Traineeships programme' (Egglestone et al. 2019: 34). In national level programmes like the SICAP in Ireland, where the focus is on disadvantaged individuals and communities, the flexibility in local delivery allowed implementers to give precedence to local needs—the specific marginalised areas, communities and individuals (Department of Education and Skill, 2020: 30).

The Essential Life Skills Programme in England is an example of taking a customised and proactive approach to communicating with participants and their parents, so they could select from the range of activities available. Support was also available for participation costs, including transport (Cutmore et al., 2020).

Evaluation of YEI in the UK also cited flexibility in service delivery and having the scope to modify support based on the needs of the young people as supporting participation and enabling effective implementation (Atkinson et al., 2017).

Similarly, the evaluation of the Entry into Employment (E2E) programme in England commented that 'of greatest importance to many of the young people was the question of whether programmes had been tailored to suit their needs, abilities and interests' (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 26). Examples from E2E are a young woman who was helped to pursue a Duke of Edinburgh Award through mountaineering, and a young man who asked for 'more IT sessions and a little bit of literacy' to help with his job placement (Spielhofer et al., 2003).

The evaluation of the Liverpool YEG states that one-to-one adviser support played a key role in building participants' confidence and motivation, providing support in job search and in job applications, and delivering a personally-tailored package of support to address participant barriers and work towards their aspirations' (Ray et al., 2018: 93). The same programme provided a fund which could be used for any purpose needed to support the young person transition into employment, such as 'mobile phones to call regarding vacancies, new clothes for interviews or transport costs (including buying a bicycle where public transport was poor), ID certificates, training courses, driving lessons, equipment for self-employment such as camera or sewing machine, and living expenses during the first month of employment' (Ray et al., 2018: 52). One of the youth workers commented,

> *It's good to have … the flexibility that we have got with the funding, because never in any other programme that I've worked on have I been able to do stuff like that scenario with that young girl, where we could reimburse her, pay her personal electricity. Because she was going to have nothing to live on. Basically, if we didn't do that she could not take that job … because she couldn't fund herself for a month.* (YEG adviser) (Ray et al., 2018: 51).

A similar approach was noted by TtW staff in Australia, where flexibility in the TtW service model allowed staff to accommodate the diverse needs of participants—some needed support with counselling while others needed help getting a licence or finding the right training for a job. Flexibility in partnerships developed with other support services and in

the kind of support offered to individuals (personalised to their needs) was identified as a major strength of the programme.

> *We ask the young people – the consultant who runs that asks them, 'Write down what you want from this on a bit of paper' on the first session, he'll take that away and then revamp the activity-based on what they want to get from it. So, we've got lots of different ideas of course of pre-employment stuff, resumés, speaking to employers, but we'll let them dictate the direction it's going to go. So, it feels like they have a part to play in that, which helps with the engagement as well' - TtW provider* (Henderson et al., 2021: 70).

TtW also developed services and activities for young people from different backgrounds and with different needs, such as those with mental health issues, those from different ethnic backgrounds, and indigenous participants. For the latter, one provider explained they had,

> *developed Yarn Up where we get community elders and mentors together … once the stress of the initial period is out of the way, the first things we do for our Indigenous cohort is TtW Final Evaluation Report 2021 | 92 book them in for a Yarn Up session. And that's about inclusion, it's about the elders and the communities being part of the journey. And we softly, softly talk a little bit about the provider and about what our role is in the journey. And then we call each of them up and say 'Which way?' which we call Which way yarns. So which way do they want to go?* (Provider) (Henderson et al., 2021: 91-92)

5.5.5 Attractive activities

Providing activities which appeal to young people encourages participation. Appealing generally means engaging ('not like school'), useful in obtaining a job or informing training or career choices, being treated with respect (e.g. having a role in determining activities), and with a social aspect.

This point is illustrated by the following interventions:

- **Neighbourhood Support Fund (England):** 'Young people chose to participate because they were interested in the activities projects were offering, wanted to learn and progress on to a job or further learning or gain a qualification, and were interested in meeting with friends and new people' (Golden et al., 2002: iii). A survey found that '60 per cent of young people wanted to find out about their future options and, in a second survey, 37 per cent thought involvement would help them to get a job. Young people continued to participate in NSF because the projects provided social support and the opportunity to meet with their peers (Golden et al., 2002: v). In addition, the project had:

  > *an atmosphere and approach that differed from the formal school setting. Involving the young people in the decision-making and running of their neighbourhood project helped to maintain their commitment and develop their*

skills and was a factor in maintaining their engagement with the project' (Golden et al., 2002: v).

- **Essential life skills (England):** Programmes mostly provided sports, outdoor adventure and arts. Activities also provided opportunities for social interaction:

  so it boosts your confidence and helps improve your teamwork skills and it's also a place that you can express yourself and relax and enjoy yourself. I went on some of the trips and it basically just gives you the opportunity to do things you wouldn't normally. On residential we went on the high ropes and mountain biking and on the boats and it's a place you can relax and not get judged for stuff (Cutmore et al., 2020: 53).

- **Transitions to Work (Australia)** included guest speakers, such as sports people, were attractive, and provided a social setting for young people to engage with each other:

  Guest speakers are definitely a big drawcard. St Kilda Football Club – we went there last week. That was a big drawcard. Connecting with other young people is huge for them – they'll speak to another one and say, what's the next session you're coming to? Can you look at my résumé? How come my résumé looks like that? So, quite often it can just be about connecting with other young people who are in the same space as them, so yeah, I don't think anything works better than the next thing. (Provider, staff group discussion) (Henderson et al., 2021: 87)

5.5.6 Sustained participation of young people at project implementation

Some studies reported innovative strategies used to motivate sustained youth participation. These strategies included: having gender inclusive environments at training venues, using role models as trainers, proper scheduling of training activities, using sports as a vehicle for motivation of youth, team building, fostering respect and improving communication with training venues.

5.5.7 Capitalising on the desire of employers to help the local community

One way to attract employers to support an intervention can be their desire to help the local community. The evaluation of traineeships in Wales reported that employers typically described their reason for participating in the programme as a desire to help young people in their careers generally. For example:

I wanted to increase our community involvement and give back to the community. It made economic sense as it gave us a cost effective solution to

recruitment. It would allow us to train staff and embed them in our culture and I felt it was important to provide young people with vocational opportunities. (Employer)

We wanted someone new and fresh to work here. Also, we wanted to help out young people with work experience and our existing staff with their work load. (Employer) (Egglestone et al., 2019: 56).

5.5.8 Training for staff

The Kickstart scheme undertook training for its work coaches and gave them guidance in discerning the right candidate for the subsidised jobs under the programme. This, alongside the flexibility in the eligibility criteria, allowed the scheme to reach its intended target - those at risk of long-term unemployment - and to not wait until they were unemployed for a while (Davies, 2021: 48).

5.6 Strategies for increasing participation

From the above discussion, there are a number of implications for strategies to increase participation.

Diversify recruitment strategy: Instead of relying on a single channel to mobilise participants, use multiple recruitment channels. Often programmes depended solely on employment service providers like JCP and Jobactive to refer participants to employment programmes. In the case of YEG in Liverpool city, staff stated that even when they were able to reach out to potential participants through other outreach mechanisms, participants had to be sent to JCP to initiate the referral process (Ray et al., 2018).

Clear communication about the programme: Several programmes noted that lack of sufficient and clear information about the programme among participants, especially at the initial stage, was a cause for reduced participation and disengagement from programmes. Clearly delineating the programme features, differentiating it from other employment programmes and providing participants with enough details to make informed choices can contribute to improved participation. For example, YEG staff used multiple strategies to engage and re-engage participants - initiating YEG group information sessions at the beginning of the programme at JCP offices, informing participants of the YEG budget early on in the programme and providing them with examples of how budgets were utilised, providing participants different support options and adapting it as per their interests (Ray et al., 2018: 36).

Awareness among other stakeholders: Apart from participant awareness and engagement, it is also important to ensure awareness among other stakeholders like

employment service providers, referral organisations, and other partner organisations that play a role in garnering engagement for the programmes.

Adapting eligibility criteria: Eligibility criteria should be responsive to external changes that might have an effect on participation rates. The Springboard programmes under PIEL in Ireland were initiated to re-skill and up-skill unemployed youth. But with the decline in Ireland's unemployment rate and the persistence of skill gaps in certain select sectors, the programme eligibility was expanded to include employed individuals and those coming back into the workforce (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018: 35).

Over-recruit: Not all those recruited to a programme will take part so it is advisable to recruit at least 20-30% more young people than there is capacity for on the programme.

Location: The location should be physically accessible - as close to the intended participants as possible and on public transport routes. Schools are often not a good setting for disadvantaged young people because of negative associations.

Detailed assessment of a young person's skills, interests and aspirations: A detailed upfront assessment process which reviews the options available can help facilitate sustained engagement.

An attractive offer: the intervention should provide something which appeals to the intended participants. Not all young people like the same thing.

A customised and flexible approach in which different support and levels of support and activities are given to different participants.

Pay transport costs or provide transport

Provide childcare facilities to facilitate participation by female participants (this is a finding from African studies; no instances were found in the OECD studies).

Chapter Six

Implementation

6. Implementation

6.1 Barriers

Implementation often lags behind the planned rate of implementation. For example, for the YEI, progress on implementation has been below the targets set in the operational programmes, both in terms of financial implementation and number of participations. The EU average financial implementation rate reached 52% by the end of 2018 (EU 2017: 22-23). This section lays out possible reasons for such lags.

6.1.1 Project delays

Project delays can derail project implementation schedules, often leading to missed deadlines or partial implementation of activities. The reported issues include slow disbursement of funds, lengthy procurement processes, and limited timely availability of financial resources for implementation activities. Factors associated with delays are listed below.

Lengthy payment processing times. For instance, in the UK, the YEG's payment processing times for the participants' budgets resulted in lengthy delays for participants starting courses or meant that they had to pay upfront and get refunded later (Ray 2018). In addition, the YEI in Scotland, UK experienced delays in finalising the YEI Strategic intervention due to difficulties attributed to a perceived lack of clarity about the way in which cost and audit rules as well as participants eligibility criteria would apply. 'This caused challenges both in the commitment of YEI South West Scotland funds and delays in the YEI Strategic Operations getting off the ground locally and gaining traction' (Graham, 2018: p. ii).

Mismatch in funding timelines. Tied to this problem was the issue of programme timing which often caused funding delays. Funding institutions often follow timelines that may not be aligned with the timeline of the programme and as a result, may affect the implementation of the programme. In FNIYES, First Nations communities received the First Nations School Cooperative Education Program Funds as per the Canadian government's fiscal year, which was different from the school fiscal year that determined the timeline of programme delivery. Funds coming midway through the school year meant that staff faced difficulty in implementing the programme effectively (Byam, 2002).

Roadblocks to YEI implementation included delays in appointing the authorities for the programme. In France, this delay meant that calls for proposals went unanswered, with beneficiaries often missing out on these calls (Resa, 2016: 31). Payment processing times for the participant budget, which could result in lengthy delays for participants (e.g.in starting a course) or mean that they had to pay upfront and claim the costs back (Ray et al., 2018).

YEI implementation met various delays. By the end of 2018, only France, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia had met the 2018 milestone targets set at the beginning of the programme. Despite action taken by the European Commission to facilitate the implementation of the Initiative in the early stages, Member States experienced delays in implementing the Initiative in 2014 and even in 2015, as they decided to first ensure compliance with *ex ante* conditionalities including set up of monitoring systems that complied with the Regulations and national legislation, before initiating the work (Jeffrey et al., 2020).

6.1.2 Insufficient lead time

Insufficient lead time means that organisations are not properly prepared and information about the programme may not reach intended participants. The evaluation of Future Jobs Funds noted that:

> *A longer lead-in time for a programme of this scale would no doubt enable partners at the local level to implement processes and ensure all mechanisms are in place before a 'go live' date. On the other hand, organisations could have been better prepared to respond to exceptional economic circumstances, such as sudden increases in unemployment, and therefore acted within short timescales. In line with this, it is important that DWP can enable flexibility and accept local decisions on delivery in a 'hands off' manner. This includes giving Jobcentre Plus districts the flexibility to work with local partners to design programmes and related guidance that reflect local need.* (Fishwick et al., 2011: 23).

Insufficient lead time can result from the timeline for the project itself being too short. The Essential Life Skills programme in England ran for less than two years, and the Neighbourhood Support Fund for three years (it was intended to be a pilot). In this time providers have to design programmes, have funding approved, and then set up and implement the programme. The evaluation of ELS commented that 'the short timescales for initial design and implementation caused some challenges. In some instances, compressed timescales were seen as compromising the effectiveness and efficiency of design and implementation, suggesting that a focus on ensuring adequate lead-in times would be beneficial in future programmes' (Cutmore et al., 2020: 5).

Inadequate lead time is also related to rushed implementation. In the case of Future Job Funds it was reported that 'there was a connection between the speed of implementation and the fact that "some young people were not properly prepared for the application and interview process." They went on to say that "DWP must ensure that JCP has the necessary resources and support to provide this service."' (Fishwick et al., 2011).

6.1.3 Poor communication and co-ordination

Issues discussed around poor coordination included; government agencies working independently though working towards the same outcome, lack of coordination in the youth sector both between government agencies and non-governmental agencies, and lack of communication and information sharing among key players. The problem can be exacerbated by having a very large number of organisations involved in a single programme.

An example comes from the Youth Contract:

> *Administratively there were two main problems. In the first few weeks there were some instances of out of date forms being issued whilst an amendment was made. Second, the lack of a return address on the form meant that employers were confused about where it should be sent. From the Work Programme provider perspective, these issues raised the possibility of employers' negative perceptions about taking on young, unemployed candidates and the wage incentive scheme. Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme providers were also concerned about the potential damage to the Work Programme provider's relationship with the employer, particularly for newly formed relationships with employers* (Jordan et al., 2013: 41).

Lack of data sharing is a common problem. Private providers may not know which young people are eligible for certain interventions if the welfare agency will not provide the required information. This has happened under the Liverpool Employment Gateway (Ray et al., 2018: 33).

6.1.4 Lack of complementary services

Lack of complementary services can hinder effective implementation. A list of possible areas where this may occur includes housing, the availability of quality training, flexible provision of basic education services, long waiting lists for services such as counselling, and generally limited support for young people with disabilities (Ray et al., 2018: 11).

6.1.5 Lack of administrative and technical capacity

Managing a system to deal with young people, and engaging directly with young people, can be demanding in terms of administrative capacity and having sufficient appropriately skilled staff. For example, the management of YEI-funded programmes required working within the EU-determined eligibility criteria for young people not in employment, education or training under the YEI. It also needed intensive stakeholder engagement as the successful implementation of projects under the regional programmes depended on cooperation between multiple governance levels and bodies. (Atkinson et al., 2017).

In the Liverpool YEG participants valued the time and advice from their advisers. But as the programme expanded, then the advisers had a heavier caseload with participants expressing disappointment that the adviser now seemed too busy for them (Ray et al., 2018: 38).

Another aspect of lack of capacity may be having staff who may lack empathy with the issues that young people face, or who simply have obviously different backgrounds from the majority of their clients which makes it harder to build trust. A respondent to NAO's review of Connexions commented that

> *One of my small complaints about Connexions is the composition of the staff. I sometimes feel it's not necessarily geared to the clientele they deal with. For instance, I would say that Connexions is probably 80% female whereas the client is probably 80% male*.

This perception is confirmed by a survey of the profile of Connexions staffing in 2003, which found that three quarters were female and one in ten Personal Advisers were from ethnic minorities (National Audit Office, 2004: 31).

A final example of lack of technical capacity is from the Modern Apprenticeship in England. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) described 58% of work-based training providers as inadequate, with the result that too many young people are simply not receiving the quality of vocational training they deserve (Harris 2003: 9).

6.1.6 Insufficient project funding

Inadequate or delayed funding, or a lack of any funding, can potentially derail implementation of planned activities. This often resulted in partial implementation of projects and premature closure of projects. In addition, a number of projects were unable to hire sufficient staff on a long term basis and reduced training activities to remain functional. Shortage of funds in the Job Challenge programme led to hiring less staff and this prevented them from providing participants one-on-one counselling or monitoring them in smaller groups. It placed additional strain on staff to play multiple roles and compelled them to bring in workers from the other closely-connected Youth Challenge programme (Berk et al., 2021: 32).

Although Euro 6.4 billion was to support meeting the Youth Guarantee of all NEETs up to age 25 receiving an appropriate offer within four months, an assessment found that this was not being done partly because 'it is not possible to address the whole NEET population with the resources available from the EU budget alone' (European Court of Auditors, 2017: 08)

Funding delays were sufficiently significant for YEI England to be responsible for failures to meet targets (Atkinson et al., 2017). The delays also led to some loss of funding as some counterpart local funding was 'decommitted' given the time lags involved. This was a bigger problem in Scotland, where the EC's repeated refusal to fund the proposals put

forward by the government resulted in the Skills and Training Agency pulling out its counterpart funding (Graham, 2018).

6.1.7 Inadequate monitoring and reporting of programmes; inadequate data

A review by the European court of Auditors stated that poor data quality means that there is often little information about the status of NEETs. Hence:

> *Weak quality of data hampered the assessment of Youth Guarantee results…In France, for instance, where the national authorities are not able to report on the situation of NEETs after they have left the scheme. In addition, the French monitoring system does not cover all potential Youth Guarantee providers. For instance, offers provided to school drop-outs by the Ministry of Education through the Réseaux Formation Qualification Emploi are not included. A similar situation occurred in Portugal, where offers provided to NEETs by the Ministry of Education were not reported.* (European Court of Auditors, 2017: 49-50)

In contrast, Italy had established an integrated database to allow such tracking:

> *In 2014, Italy set up an electronic system to manage the Youth Guarantee scheme. It is designed to register and subsequently check the NEET status of the programme participants in a single database. The data entered in the system containing information on the employment status of the participants also includes information provided by the provincial departments and job agencies. This system is also linked to the database of the Ministry of Education, allowing for a check on the educational situation of the persons concerned. Weekly reports on the number of registered NEETs and offers made are published in the monitoring section of a specific Youth Guarantee website.* (European Court of Auditors, 2017: 50)

The Court of Auditors also noted that baseline data is often weak or missing entirely. This can lead or contribute to overstatements of programme 'impacts':

> *As an example, let us take the case of a NEET flagged to participate in a one-year training programme aiming to provide a qualification designed to help him/her join the labour market, and let us suppose that, after six months, and without completing the training and obtaining a certificate, the person in question leaves the measure, for instance, to accept a two-month job offer in a completely different field. The Commission guidance suggests that this person should be counted as not having completed the YEI intervention, but as having received an offer upon leaving the intervention and as having taken up an offer within four weeks of completing the YEI measure. The indicator would then attribute the job offer to the YEI intervention, although this is not actually the case.* (European Court of Auditors, 2017: 58)

Such reporting anyway substantially overstates programme impact as it is based on a factual analysis rather than a counterfactual one.

One significant implementation hurdle in the Italian Youth Guarantee Plan was that only some regional areas within Italy were identified for substantial and consistent monitoring of territorial progress. Many regions also were not able to determine their funds or provide information on the costs of implementation (Barbetti, 2015).

FNIYES required communities to report on the implemented programmes to corresponding government departments overseeing the programme delivery. Many First Nations and Inuit communities stated that the reporting requirements were unreasonable and often, the information collected through the process was not in line with the needs of the community. This meant that some communities provided elaborated information, while some failed to do so. Uneven reporting compounded by insufficient and poor quality reporting meant it was difficult to gauge the quality of program implementation at the national level (Byam, 2002).

Lack of a unified data system tracking information of participants in the JC programme, the services they accessed and their progress following participation, hindered programme evaluation across regions. JC in Michigan collected information via YC (another associated programme) data system itself, but this often did not work as the details asked via YC did not have much to do with JC services. Other regions were inconsistent with their data tracking and gathered limited information. In addition to the lack of coordination in data collection between different JC regions, there was no data linkage with YC programmes or proper guidance on the data gathered and the progress assessed. This hampered efforts in understanding participant experiences as well as managing and reporting on the data collected (Berk et al., 2021: 24).

In England, some staff responsible for administering the Future Jobs Fund within the lead accountable bodies (LABs) felt that the monitoring requirements from DWP were more onerous than they had first envisaged. Other areas, however, felt that monitoring was relatively 'light touch', especially when compared with ESF programmes of a comparable scale. LABs and employers who had not run programmes with central government departments found data protection requirements challenging to meet. Having put these processes in place, it is likely that this will be less of an issue in future, although DWP might consider providing greater support to small and medium-sized organisations to meet their data security requirements (Fishwick et al., 2011).

In Wales, monitoring was raised as an issue for the traineeships programme. Broadly, Welsh Government officials and partners felt that the commissioning and management of the programme had gone well. However, one respondent stated that some issues in contract management still needed resolving to ensure the quality of provision. This was due to any monitoring only being at a high level to ensure adherence to the terms of the contract, rather than, for example, the extent to which they are building relationships with other providers and looking at what they are actually delivering.

> *I think the failure has been in actually holding providers to account for what they said they were going to deliver, really. (Welsh Government official)* (Eggelstone, 2019: 30)

6.1.8 Lack of flexibility

Flexibility is generally seen as a good thing, since it allows programme workers to adjust their engagement with a young person to that person's needs, desires and circumstance. So, a lack of flexibility can be a barrier to effective delivery. For example, NAO surveyed the Local Delivery Units for the New Deal, reporting that '81 Units (68 per cent of those responding) pointed to the need for greater flexibility within the programme' (NAO, 2002: 10).

A study of Modern Apprenticeships stated that they are hampered by a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that fails to provide adequate flexibility. The delivery of one of the MA's central components, key skills, is a particular cause for concern (Harris, 2003).

The Leeds Employment Gateway was supported by the European Unions' European Social Fund (ESF). The evaluation noted that the programme was 'bound by the rigid requirements demanded of an ESF funded intervention that were robustly enforced by DWP's own contract management function. At times this resulted in the centre being perceived by Hubs as "inflexible"' (Newby and Dennison, 2022: 11).

6.1.9 Location constraints

Being a residential training programme, Job Challenge faced some challenges due to its location. Participants had to be transported between the community or technical colleges they received training in and their residential facility. Since Job Challenge was connected to Youth Challenge, this required coordination between the two programme staff and in regions where the two programmes were located at a distance, difficulties arose in service delivery. All this also added to the costs in running the programme (Berk et al., 2021: 30-31).

6.1.10 Lack of planning and incomplete programme development

Piloting and adequate lead time can help better planned programmes. This includes also understanding of the target group. The review of EU youth employment programmes by the EU Court of Auditors notes that:

> *none of the Member States visited had performed a comprehensive analysis of the NEET population including a skill mismatch analysis. In Portugal and Spain, for instance, the YGIP was based only on the statistical data for NEETs provided by the national statistical offices, such as age distribution, qualifications and gender* (EU Court of Auditors: 46).

Inadequate planning and lack of piloting will lead to implementation problems. For example, the Kickstart programme in the UK was launched step by step, where the initial

focus was on developing a mechanism for employers to notify vacancies. Other service elements, processes and administrative intricacies were taken up gradually. This created numerous challenges: initial programme management data was entered manually and hence vulnerable to human error. In one case, this led to an error in the number of approved vacancies listed. Programme rules were under development even after the launch and led to confusion among stakeholders about how Kickstart works. This confusion was compounded by inconsistency among Kickstart officials about programme details and their inability to address basic questions from the stakeholders. Since the initial focus was only on employers being able to register vacancies, there were problems at the other end i.e., work coaches at job centres had difficulty filtering out the available jobs to match them with young people with the right skill sets or in the relevant sectors (Davies, 2021: 31).

6.2 Facilitators

6.2.1 Government commitment and support

The UN Joint Programme on Youth, Employment and Migration (UNJP-YEM) programme in Turkey executed together by the UN and Turkish authorities greatly benefited from the ownership shown and experiences shared by Turkish ministries, research networks and civil society organisations in the country. ISKUR, the national employment agency, also provided fiduciary support to the vocational training programmes initiated under UNJP-YEM and overall displayed strong commitment towards the programme (Mourshed, 2011: 36).

6.2.2 Collaborations and partnerships

Good cooperation and partnerships are often important to success. Stakeholders involved in youth employment policies emphasise the importance of cooperation at local and regional level, to both identify young people not in employment, education or training and to run programmes efficiently. Efficiency could be further improved by building up the capacity of programme authorities and social partners, as provided for in the proposed regulation on European Social Fund Plus (Jeffrey et al., 2020).

Some projects/interventions benefited from collaborations and partnerships through strengthening of their institutional capacities, information sharing and ownership.

The delivery of the SICAP in Ireland through the Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC) was an excellent example of government and local community involvement. LCDC's structure facilitated this smooth coordination, having almost significant representation from the community and voluntary groups, the local government body as well as state organs (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 30).

Partnership and cooperation were also mentioned in several YEI evaluations and in the public consultation as crucial aspects to support implementation. For instance, in the Brussels-Capital Region, cooperation between Actiris and other partners improved access to support for young people with a low level of qualifications or those living in jobless households (Jeffrey et al., 2020: 101).

In Tús - a work placement programme in Ireland - the Department of Social Protection (DSP) recruits eligible individuals present on the live register and the local development company provides placement in community, voluntary and non-profit organisations in the area. A crucial factor in implementation success has been the established strong relationships with the DSP and the local organisations. Clarity from the DSP, smooth referral process and clear contracts to identify eligible young people were some of the favourable factors (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 26). In SICAP too, the evaluation noted that program delivery benefitted from partnerships with local community implementers who had experience running similar programmes.

> *"The Partnerships existing strong links within the community and strong links with other agencies provided a strong foundation for delivery."* (Department of Education and Skills, 2020: 31).

ILO's support to Portugal's Youth Guarantee programme was successful largely due to ILO's ability to be an effective 'broker' and bring together local and central authorities in charge of youth-related policies in Portugal. It also put in place a monitoring system for the programme that helped highlight the achievements of the initiative and consequently, brought in more funds for the programme (ILO, 2018: 56).

The Job Challenge programme in the USA benefited hugely from its partnership with community and technical colleges. These colleges helped build the training courses and provide academic/career counselling to the participants. The financial aid available to these colleges were also mobilised for many of the programme requirements such as educational training of the students (Berk et al., 2021: 39-40).

Implementation of project activities through local organisations, such as local constructors, career centres, colleges, and NGOs, frequently strengthened institutional capacity, thereby fostering the sustainability of interventions. The UNJP-YEM programme in Turkey, jointly implemented by the UN (through the ILO, IOM, FAO and UNDP) and the Turkish National Employment Agency (ISKUR) enhanced coordination between institutions and strengthened the capacities of local governmental institutions and ISKUR through training sessions to help these institutions address unemployment among young women and vulnerable migrant youth (Mourshed, 2011: 30).

6.2.3 Flexibility

Offers tailored to individual young people, particular places and/or labour markets are most beneficial in the long term. Individuals furthest away from the labour market benefit greatly from tailored and intensive guidance and support. A significant proportion of

young people targeted by youth employment actions are not job ready, and require preparatory and ongoing support to help them make the transition to successful employment, qualification or labour market inclusion (Jeffrey et al., 2020).

Programme design and implementation flexibility allowed those implementing to tailor the programme according to the needs of the target groups. The FNIYES programmes had flexible guidelines permitting First Nations and Inuit communities and organisations to adapt the program provisions as per the needs and priorities of the young people in their communities. One of the programmes, the Co-operative education and Work Experience Programmes, focused on creating jobs and educating the youth about entrepreneurship instead of connecting them to work placements. In one community, the programme was modified to specifically target at-risk youth, which eventually had a positive effect on the high-school dropout rate of these students (Byam, 2002).

A positive aspect identified in the delivery of YEI in South West Scotland was the way it was designed to accommodate participant-specific needs and had the flexibility of providing a diverse range of support to meet the distinct needs of the Scottish youth (Graham, 2018: 18).

Emphasising flexibility, TtW providers in Australia noted:

> *We're not meeting with them one-on-one just to update a job plan, we're meeting them just to talk to them, and see how they're going in the facilitation, what are they like about it, what they don't. Are they learning? What would they like to see? So we're just re-evaluating. And really opening their mind to different things. (TtW provider)*
>
> *... we have the ability to provide more intensive support means that we can get feedback from the clients on what they actually want to get from the service and what they actually want from activities, and then direct our servicing around that. (Ttw Provider)* (Henderson et al., 2021: 72)

6.2.4 Strong management & administrative capacity, clear programme roles

In Turkey's UNJP-YEM programme, efficient management arrangement between implementing authorities facilitated the successful execution of the programme. The presence of a UN coordination committee, a National Steering Committee, a Programme Management Committee as well as clearly differentiated roles for the different UN participating organisations, the Turkish Labour Ministry, ISKUR and other national and local level governmental authorities ensured no overlaps in responsibilities and facilitated smooth programme functioning (Mourshed, 2011: 33-34). The JC programme in the USA also had a clearly differentiated staff structure, where some staff planned and monitored the overall programme, while others took care of routine management and worked directly with the participating young people (Berk et al., 2020: 31).

Good governance was widely seen as essential to the success of the YEI interventions. This is illustrated in Sweden, where the high quality implementation of the operations (the competence of staff, and low staff turnover) was regarded as a major success factor (Jeffrey et al., 2020: 100).

6.2.5 Timely funding

In the TtW programme, staff stated that upfront funds available to them through TtW allowed them to fund training and education of the participants. Even simple aspects like covering travel and uniform costs of participants could be actioned by programme staff and were acknowledged as crucial in ensuring efficient implementation of service.

> *"We will fund interview clothes, work uniforms, some basic tools, phone credit. There's been a couple of times where we've, in combination with a couple of other providers, funded taxi trips for a month for a person to get to work, so we will cover a certain percentage of that. Public transport fees. We pay for driving lessons. We pay for people to go for their probationary licence test. We do fund quite a bit up to a certain point." (Henderson et al., 2021: 71)*

6.2.6 Good relationships with trusted adults

Disadvantaged young people may rightly feel that 'the system' is not for them, and so lack trust and be unwilling to engage with official programmes. Having a good relationship with a trusted adult can provide a bridge which supports the young person's entry into, and navigation of, employment services and employment. An evaluation of Connexions (working with at risk young people) states that 'the largest body of evidence…concerns the vital importance of building trust and rapport with young people at risk' (Hoggarth and Smith, 2004: 120). Similarly, the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Support Fund in England notes that 'critical to the success of the NSF project was the ability of the project workers to build a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the young people and the support given as they made the transition to mainstream provision' (Golden et al, 2002: v).

The evaluation of Entry to Employment (E2E), a training and employment support programme for the most disadvantaged youth in England, stated that the '[provider staff member] actually gets to know the person and talks about their family, so it's a lot better'. One interviewee also emphasised the additional support he received for his learning: 'I thought boring work again, but it's not. It's better in every way, because if I can't do something there's someone to help me' (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 20).

In TtW in Australia a smaller caseload allowed for a detailed one-on-one meeting between the caseworker and each participant. Regular and intensive meetings helped the worker assess the participant's progress and personalise the programme delivery according to their needs.

Chapter Seven

Achievements (outputs)

7. Achievements (outputs)

Intervention outputs - such as numbers trained - are an important step in the causal chain toward impact. Yet, many evaluations provide detailed analysis of outcomes achieved, but specific project output data such as the number of participants supported, training sessions held, businesses incubated, and so on are often poorly reported. Sometimes, the data obtained is incomplete or inconsistent. For instance, in the YEI, the evaluators noted that output data collected from the project managing authority survey, data from stakeholder interviews and the information from individual country level evaluation surveys did not always match (Resa, 2016: 22). Here we provide some examples of outputs from the included studies.

7.1 Programmes established

The FNIYES in Canada was developed as an exclusive strategy to prepare First Nations and Inuit youth for the job market. The strategy began with 3 programmes but then expanded to run 5 different programmes - First Nations and Inuit Summer Student Career Placement programme, First Nations and Inuit Science and Technology Camp Program, First Nations Schools Co-operative Education Program, First Nations and Inuit Youth Work Experience Program, and First Nations and Inuit Youth Business Program.

YEI in South West Scotland established 14 strategic operations across the region and programme implementation took place through these units led by 11 Lead Partners. Activities undertaken included initiatives to remove employment or education barriers, incentives for employers, mentorship, job-specific training prior to recruitment, counselling, guidance in job search and similar initiatives (Graham, 2018: 3

The Job Challenge (JC) programme in the USA targeted court-involved young people and provided them with a residential occupation-focused training. Under the JC grant, 3 residential JC programmes were set up successfully in Georgia, Michigan and South-Carolina (Berk et al., 2021: 3).

7.2 Participants engaged/trained

The YEI supported a total of 6522 NEET young people in Belgium, 31638 in Greece, 32194 in France, 19376 in Hungary, 6810 in Ireland, 153160 in Italy, 8513 in Latvia, 6634 in Poland, 40709 in Portugal, 2414 in Sweden and 70 in Slovak Republic. In Greece, Latvia, Portugal and Poland 50% or above supported by YEI were women and across the countries involved 77% of those under YEI were 15-24 year olds (Resa, 2016: 24).

The YEI in South West Scotland engaged 7,924 individuals with 2618 completing the programme. YEI was able to engage 45% of its target population and 18% of them completed the programme (Graham. 2018: iii). 59% of those engaged have been men and 41% women (Graham, 2018: 47). The 3 JC programmes in the US were able to engage a total of 905 young people, which was slightly above the target set at 900 youth (Berk et al., 2021: 21).

The New Deal for Young People received more than 600,000 young people as participants and 18% were part of the programme more than once. This was often because of some young people experiencing 6 months of unemployment following their prior participation in the programme (NAO, 2002: 13).

7.3 Participants employed

Studies may report participants who went onto employment as an impact or a result. This figure may be reported in a number of ways, such as 'current employment status', 'working after four weeks', 'got a job offer', 'entered work or education', and 'employed after a year'. But these are purely factual statements, rather than a counterfactual one, these numbers cannot be attributed to the programme. They can, however, give an idea of programme scale. And the factual information can also be a useful guide when looking at impact evidence. For example, if a large proportion of participants went onto further training or education this can help explain reduced impact on employment if only that was measured. And if figures are reported for some time after the intervention that may give some indication of the impact trajectory.

The main aim of the Australian Government's Community Development Employment Projects Program (CDEP) for indigenous young people in Australia was to provide them the skills, training and experience to enter the workforce and transfer out of CDEP's assistance. Overall, the percentage of CDEP participants moving out of the programme and joining the active workforce was low. During the evaluation time period, the highest placement occurred between 2007-2008, which was 11% of participants and only 3% stayed in the job post 26 weeks (Napaltjarr, 2009: 23).

In Italy, 35% of all those who completed a YEI intervention remained employed after 4 weeks. In Greece 15.6% of NEET young people who were supported received job offers and in France 52% of those accommodated within YEI experienced a positive outcome in terms of gaining employment or moving into education or training (Resa, 2016: 24).

YEI in South West Scotland was able to ensure that 52% of those who completed the programme received an offer of a positive outcome i.e., an opportunity in employment, education or apprenticeship/training. This was 14% of the target set by the programme and 18% of the young people engaged by YEI. 75% of the completing young people were in such a positive position after leaving the programme. 6 months after exiting the programme, 35% of its target population was with education or training and 7% were employed. (Graham, 2018: 50, 51, 53, 54).

The CDEP programme also supported businesses with potential by providing the participants with the necessary business skills and guidance. Only a small number of businesses were created in the evaluation period and their progress remained inconsistent. 25 new businesses were created in the first year, 2005-2006, 5 between 2006-2007 and only three in 2007-2008. Evaluation of CDEP has little information on the progress of viable indigenous businesses and documents no jobs created through these businesses. Regular collection and analysis of this data can be crucial in providing vital information on whether indigenous businesses survive in the long-run and if they don't, what are the reasons for it (Napaltjarr, 2009: 29).

Kickstart in the UK created employment for young people through a wage-subsidy grant for employers. Although it recorded significant job vacancies, there were some challenges in getting young people to fill these. Evaluation of the scheme noted 96,700 job starts of which 16,000 individuals left the job before the six months of the programme were up (Davies, 2021: 33).

UK's NDYP programme was able to achieve a minimum of one period of employment for 339,000 participants, with 72% of participants leaving for sustained unsubsidised jobs and 6% leaving for sustained subsidised jobs (NAO, 2002: 14).

7.4 Apprenticeship and training

The Siemens Energy apprenticeship programme in North Carolina was a four year long on-the-job training. Apprentices got a total of 6400 hours of training at the company plant and 1600 hours of classroom teaching via the program linked community college (Oai, 2017: 44).

The Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce Strategy (DYW) included a family of apprenticeship programmes - the school-based Foundation Apprenticeship (FA), the Modern Apprenticeship programme (MA) and Graduate Apprenticeships (GA). The evaluation of DYW recorded a total of 27,178 Modern Apprenticeship starts and 278 Graduate Apprenticeship starts between 2017-2018. In 2018 alone 1500 students were enrolled in an FA programme, with FA established in 25 out of the 29 schools in Glasgow and all 18 schools in Fife (Swinney and Hepburn, 2018: 40, 22).

The JC programme in the US provided a wide array of training and services to the enrolled young people. An overwhelming number of enrolled young people - 97% - received education services, 87% were equipped with industry-recognised certifications, 73% of the young people involved received occupational training, 75% got training to help become job-ready and 91% were recipients of other support services. Among the occupational training services provided, maximum participant sign ups were to receive training in welding (22%) and certification to be a nursing assistant (23%). From the young people who began the occupational training, 76% finished with a credential. JC also provided employment services, such as counselling, job-search guidance and trips to get workplace experience (Berk et al., 2021: 37, 42, 43).

Since the United Nations Joint Programme on Youth, Employment and Migration (UNJP-YEM) programme in Turkey involved multiple actors, it set up a National Technical Team (NTT) composed of representatives from 11 institutions, including Turkish government authorities, to prepare a National Youth Employment Action Plan (NYEAP). A capacity development workshop was conducted in Turin for the national staff in collaboration with ILO Turin. The workshop was to equip them to design an action plan addressing unemployment. An expert team consisting of members from different UN agencies were formed to provide some policy guidance and give relevant feedback to NTT members. Additional support to NTT was provided through a feedback workshop which discussed the draft NYEAP and related issues (Mourshed, 2011: 48).

UNJP-YEM also developed relevant research models, methods and tools such as, an occupational outlook tool, a competitiveness analysis and sector scan, a labour market analysis tool, and quantitative and qualitative research resources to guide local and national institutions in monitoring youth unemployment and migration (Mourshed, 2011: 42). Associated statistical training for ISKUR - the Turkish government employment agency - and the Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Board (PEVTB) was conducted. A migration and employment network training was given to NTT (Mourshed, 2011: 48).

7.5 Employer engagement

One key aim in Scotland's DYW strategy was to facilitate the close collaboration between employers and the larger education sector. The intention was to use the expertise of employers to build a relevant curriculum and ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills required to form a strong workforce. DYW put in place a network of 21 regional level groups that are employer led and are working towards fostering a strong employer-education relationship (Swinney and Hepburn, 2018: 46).

Another initiative under DYW - Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI) - worked with employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises to help them employ targeted groups of young people. In the 2016-2017 period 550 young people were supported through SERI (Swinney and Hepburn, 2018: 48).

In the Kickstart programme the authorities were able to get employers sufficiently interested in the grant and register vacancies. At the end of July 2021, 180,000 job vacancies were recorded against a target of creating 300,000 vacancies by the end of the scheme (Davies, 2021: 33).

The NDYP programme in the UK was similarly successful in engaging employers. The evaluation stated that at least 90,000 employers had joined NDYP and particularly noteworthy was that many employers had previously not been part of a government scheme (NAO, 2002: 29).

Chapter Eight

Evidence of skills development

8. Evidence of skills development

This is the first of three chapters presenting evidence of impact. This chapter is concerned with skills development, the next with employment, and the third with welfare outcomes. This evidence is taken from systematic reviews of effectiveness studies. Preference is given to reviews which apply meta-analysis. We exclude reviews which report results only for low- and middle-income countries.

The development of both hard and soft skills is a mediator for the employment effect of many interventions. Soft skills– (also called 'social', 'life' or 'non-cognitive' skills) can be developed directly through training or indirectly by group-based activities. Technical skills, which includes business skills, are developed by training or work experience.

Only a small number of reviews report skills development, which appears to be a rather large gap in the literature. The global reviews of Kluwe et al (2016) and Rodriguez et al. (2022) do not report skills outcomes. Table 8.1 provides an overview of reviews which report skills outcomes. These are mostly narrative reviews using vote counting. Most reviews do not report effect sizes, and very few report a meta-analysed effect size.

8.1 Young people with disabilities

There are three reviews of interventions for young people with disabilities.

One is a narrative review of mentoring interventions with included studies which report effects on social skills and job search skills (interview technique) (Lindsay et al., 2015). There is no meta-analysis, with many of the included studies being qualitative. Whilst the review reports some positive outcomes, not much confidence can be placed in this as an overall conclusion.

The second is a review of transition planning, meaning the transition from secondary education (Cob and Alwell, 2009). The meta-analysis is reported across all outcomes, with sub-group analysis by both intervention and evaluation design. Studies both with and without a comparison group find a significant effect, being greater for those without the comparison group. Both student-focused planning, which seeks to engage young people more in their transition planning, and student development, which covers life and occupational skills, are found to have significant effects with large effect sizes. However, most of the included studies had small sample sizes ranging from two studies with n=1, a mean of 29 and a median of 21 and only seven of the 14 quantitative studies had a control group.

Finally, Ke et al. (2018) reviewed interventions for both adults and young people with autism spectrum disorder. The results do not distinguish the population. The review includes both before versus after studies with no control, for which the results are presented by intervention category, and studies with a control group, for which results

are presented by outcome, though in some cases these map well onto an intervention category. The before versus after studies generally find a positive effect, though the authors note that outcome is often in a contrived setting so it is not clear if the skills will translate to real-life situations. The studies with a control group have far more mixed effects, though therapeutic approaches and socialisation appear promising.

8.2 Entrepreneurship education

Three reviews report findings for entrepreneurship education in schools and colleges:

Jardim et al. (2021) summarise findings from 29 papers, half of which (15) were from Europe with the rest divided between Asia and America (6 and 5 respectively). More than half the interventions (17) were for higher education students, with the remainder for interventions offered at both primary and secondary level. The curriculum covered such issues as business plans and the development of entrepreneurial skills. No meta-analysis is conducted, but the authors state there are significant gains for three categories: entrepreneurial skills, business management, and social entrepreneurship. However, whilst there is a large effect on developing entrepreneurial skills, there is only a moderate effect on participant's intention to start a business, which they argue is largely influenced by other factors.

Brüne and Lutz (2020) summarise the findings from 21 studies covering students in primary and secondary education. They find a positive effect on self-efficacy, with smaller effects for older children and girls. Entrepreneurial education is reported by 5 studies, of which 4 find a positive effect on entrepreneurial knowledge. Attitudes toward starting a business are moderated by prior experience. The effect can be negative. Five papers find a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention, three no effect and one negative.

Jennings (2014) review six papers on entrepreneurial education which targets inner-city black male youth. The most common finding was that youth did not have initial business interests or knowledge, but demonstrated substantial increases in response to the interventions. For example, following an entrepreneurial knowledge and skills program 19 out of 27 inner city high school graduates in Los Angeles, aged 18–20, had started a business and intended to pursue an entrepreneurial career (Doucet et al., 2011). (Jennings, 2014: 840).

Table 8.1: Reviews reporting skills outcomes

Intervention/ study	Outcomes	Effect size
Mentoring / YP with disabilities/ Lindsay et al. (2015)	Self-determination & self-efficacy, psychological well-being & quality of life, employment outcomes, employment-related skills, knowledge of transition to employment, social skills & peer relations among participants	No meta-analysis. States positive effects, but many included studies do no report effect sizes
Transition planning / YP with disabilities/ Cobb and Alwell (2009)	Various. Mainly involvement in transition planning, but also vocational skills, and job search skills.	Student-focused planning Pre-post test: Q=46.4 Vs. control: Q=26.2 Student- development *Pre-post:* g=0.94 *With control:* Student-focused planning: g=1.47 Student- development g=0.67
Social skills training /ASD adults and youth/ Ke et al. (2018)	Social skills	*Pre-post* Direct instruction: Improvements in interactions noted in all studies but measurement in contrived settings rather than natural ones. Technology-based interventions: Variable, though all benefitted to an extent. Also measured in contrived settings. Naturalistic interventions: 'Improved social engagement, and in one case moving our of parents' home *With control* Therapeutic approaches (e.g. CBT): Reductions in depression, improved social engagement Socialisation participation: Positive effect on socialisation Peer interaction and relationship.: Improvements in desired social behaviour Emotion recognition: Mixed findings General social skills development: Mixed findings on interactions and other social skills

Continued on next page

Table 8.1 (continued)

Intervention/ study	Outcomes	Effect size
Entrepreneurship education / School and college students/ Jardim et al. (2021)	Mainly business skills but also social skills and perceptions of business	No meta-analysis. States significant gains for three categories: entrepreneurial skills, business management, and social entrepreneurship.
Entrepreneurship education / Primary and secondary students / Brüne and Lutz (2020)	Entrepreneurial knowledge. Attitudes top starting a business.	No meta-analysis. Most studies (4 out 5) find positive effect on entrepreneurial knowledge. More mixed effects on the intention to start a business.
Entrepreneurship education / Inner-city black male youth / Jennings (2014)	Personal development. Vocational skills. Intention to start business. Start or expand business.	No meta-analysis. Studies report positive effects on skills and starting a business, as well personal development.

8.3 Qualitative evidence supporting impact on skills development

Qualitative studies lend support to positive effects on personal development and soft skills. Egglestone et al., (2019) report that trainees report benefits such as social engagement and the development of soft and employment-related skills. The people working with them - that is providers and employers - also reported observing improvements in soft skills most notably confidence, aspirations, the ability to socially interact and maturity. One trainee commented that:

> *It just gave me experience of working in a nursery school and built my confidence so now I'm more confident to do everything really, I'm quite quiet and never used to participate in anything but now I will.* (Egglestone et al., 2019: 64)

And a provider said:

> *Soft outcomes are integral, we have had learners who couldn't walk down the street with their head held up before joining. The confidence and support is life changing. We provide this support in baby steps, we give them tiny milestones so they feel like they are achieving something.'* (Egglestone et al., 2019: 86)

Similar findings are reported in the evaluation of the Essential Life Skills programme:

> *…I can concentrate on things for much longer now and am not phased by the small things I was"*
>
> *"the breathing exercises are good when I am feeling stressed they bring me right down and I can go back into the school day"*
>
> *"if you've had a bad morning you can go in there and release everything and say it how it is and that gives you a break from everything that has happened in the morning and start fresh in the afternoon.* (Cutmore et al., 2020: 50)

And also for E2E:

> *Before I started doing all this I was quite a violent, nasty person. I was doing a lot of silly things. I was with a lot of silly people and I was out of control…I thought I wanted to thieve, be a complete nuisance, but I realise that I have a lot more to offer than that.* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 37)
>
> *Before I came here I couldn't really speak to people very easily, I used to get really nervous about meeting new people. Since I been here I find it a lot easier. Before when I used to work in a group I tried to be quite and not talk to people but now when I work in a group I am the first to get involved and start talking.* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 37)
>
> *Learning to be part of a team is one thing it does teach you to do here. Even if you don't like someone here, you have to be in the same room with them for five months, so you got to shut up and get on with it, otherwise it would be arguments all the time and you wouldn't get anything done.* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 40)

8.4 Evidence of facilitators for skills development

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds want to be taken seriously and for people to listen to them. Three examples of this are reported here from the evaluations.

For youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, the setting and learning environment should be different to school with a participant-centred approach in which they are treated like adults. Examples are:

> *Well I thought it would be just like a classroom like at school where you have a teacher and she would be just teaching us literacy and numeracy and that, but it's all about us and what we want to* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 20).

> *I never used to like maths, but when I came here and had Debbie, she put a whole new perspective on maths. She doesn't just sit there going blah, blah, she explains it to you. If you don't understand, she will sit there and explain it again. In school, it's not like that, they tell you once only so it's a lot different, it's not like they're your tutors, they're your friends, you can talk to them*. (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 31)

The second example is the nature of the relationship with the personal advisor. In the Liverpool YEG, participants appreciated the time that was spent with them:

> *It's not just the money, it's the help; they've got more time to deal with people than we have. We see people every other week for either 10 or 20 minutes and it's not enough time, they've got time to spend with the customers.' (JCP staff member) (*Ray et al., 2018: 38).

The third example is challenging gender stereotypes by introducing possible role models. In the pilot of the Gatsby benchmarks, talks were given to students by female engineers. One careers worker commented, 'I think when it comes to things like having a female engineer come in, [girls] ask us: "How can I do that?"' (Powel et al., 2021 para 4.67).

Chapter Nine

Evidence of impact on employment and earnings

9. Evidence of impact on employment and earnings

9.1 The evidence base

Impact or effectiveness of an intervention is the difference the intervention makes to outcomes, as measured by either experimental or non-experimental impact evaluations using a design which addresses selection bias.

The evidence presented in this chapter is from four systematic reviews of effectiveness:

- Kluve at al. (2017) is a global review of 113 reports of 107 interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth in 31 countries. The interventions are categorized as skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment, and the outcome categories as employment, earnings and business performance.
- An update of the Kluve et al. (2017) review by a team led by ILO researchers (ILO, 2022), using the same intervention and outcome categories. The review assesses the effects of 220 interventions within 171 ALMPs using 5,051 treatment effect estimates from 228 reports.
- A review with component network meta-analysis by CEI and IES (Taylor et al 2023) of interventions including apprenticeships, basic skills training, life skills training, on-the-job training, off-the-job training or coaching and mentoring. The review is restricted to high-income countries, and summarises evidence from 60 studies.
- A review by the IES and CEI (Nancarrow et al 2023) of youth wage subsidies in high-income countries, which summarises evidence from four studies, all from Europe.

The chapter also presents qualitative evidence which (1) provides support to causal processes for employment and earning outcomes; and (2) barriers and facilitators to achieving outcomes. This evidence is taken from our own qualitative review of the literature.

9.2 Evidence of impact: quantitative estimates of effects

9.2.1 Overview of effect sizes

The fact that youth employment interventions are largely multicomponent interventions creates a methodological challenge for estimating effects for specific intervention categories. The approach taken by the ILO review is to classify by the main category of intervention. As stated in the report, 'the review defined "main category of intervention" as the largest and predominant intervention type within a programme' (ILO, 2022: 17). No further details are given. This approach can be problematic for interventions which have components of equal importance or differ between individuals. The alternatives in a standard meta-analysis are either to only analyse single component interventions or to include all interventions having that component. The former is unsatisfactory as it would involve not using a lot of available evidence. The latter may include studies for which the component is only a small part of the overall intervention.

An alternative approach is to apply a component network meta-analysis in which each component, and each combination thereof, is an intervention category (a node in the network). This approach in principle allows the isolation of the effects for each component and combinations of these components. This is the approach used in Taylor et al (2023), with Nancarrow et al (2023) being a separate analysis of youth wage subsidies.

Table 9.1 summarises the effects reported in ILO (2022), Taylor et al (2023), Nancarrow et al (2023) and Kluwe et al. (2017). ILO (2022) is an update of Kluwe et al. (2017), so we do not dwell on the effects of the latter except to note that the ILO update reports larger effects - overall effects of 0.08 and 0.04 respectively.

The first column reports the overall effect size (0.08) for all outcomes – employment, earnings and business performance – by various sub-groups. This is a univariate analysis, so the effect size for any one sub-group may be affected by the characteristics of the set of studies reporting that sub-group. The second column reports the meta-regression results, where the dependent variable is the effect size across all outcomes. The next two columns show the multivariate analysis – i.e. the meta-regression estimates – for the employment and earnings outcomes separately. Columns 5 and 6 are the meta-regression results for all outcomes for the high-income sub-sample (column 5) and low- and middle-income countries (column 6). For the meta-regressions the reference category for each set of correlates is shown as a zero in italics.

The main points to emerge are that:

- The effects of youth employment interventions on employment and earnings are on average small. The average effect size of 0.08 equates to a 3.6% greater rate of employment in the treatment group than the control. This can also be stated as the number needed to treat 28 youth. That is, for every 28 youth exposed to a

youth employment intervention, one gains a job who would otherwise not have done so.
- Of the different types of intervention, entrepreneurship promotion has the largest effect (SMD is 0.073 larger than the reference category of skills training). This is the case in the multivariate analysis as well as univariate.
- Skills training has the lowest effect on employment. Employment services have the lowest effect on earnings (SMD is 0.027 less than the reference category of skills training respectively), with the exception of low- and middle-income countries.

In addition there are design elements which affect effectiveness, though only by small amounts, and most the differences are not statistically significant:

- Including a soft skills component in an intervention enhances effectiveness (0.026 larger effect size).
- Providing certification and paying a participation incentive in high-income countries both increase the average effect size by 0.019 and 0.056.
- Interventions for females only consistently have larger effects than programmes for both males and females. The relative effect for single sex programmes for males varies across model specifications.
- Interventions for disadvantaged youth have a larger average effects in both low- and middle-income countries but not high-income.
- In high income-countries national programmes have a larger effect than regional or local ones.
- More rigorous designs find larger effects than less rigorous ones – RCTs have a lower effect size than non-RCTs.

All the above differences in effect are small in absolute terms and not all are statistically significant.

The coefficients in the multivariate analysis are marginal effects, which show the addition that covariate makes to the overall effect size. Each group of characteristics has a reference category for which the marginal effect is zero by construction. So if the set of characteristics for an intervention corresponds to the reference case of every set of covariates then the effect size is the constant (e.g. 0.019 for high-income countries and 0.041 for low- and middle-income countries). The largest expected effect size of 0.212 can be obtained for an entrepreneurship promotion programme for females in a low or middle income country which includes soft skills training and provided a certificate (but did not pay a stipend). The smallest expected effect of -0.001 would be expected for an employment services intervention for disadvantaged youth in a high-income country which pays a participation incentive.

The effects on earnings are low. However, the time of effect measurement is particularly important for earnings. During training, earnings are likely to be lower than those who do not participate in training. That may even remain the case for some months or even years after the training. But the situation reverses itself after some time, so a positive effect is observed. Many studies do not measure effects after a sufficiently long period to capture this positive effect.

Table 9.1: Effect sizes for impact on employment

	ILO						Kluve 1
	Whole sample		**By outcome**		**By region**		
	All outcomes	All outcomes	Employment	Earnings	High-income countries	Low & middle income countries	
	Univariate (average effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Overall / intercept	0.08	0.069	0.067	0.086	0.019	0.041	0.04
By country income category							
High income	0.06	-0.015	0.00	-0.005	N/A	N/A	
Middle income	0.10	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	N/A	N/A	
Low income	0.09	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	N/A	N/A	
By intervention type							
Skills training	0.08	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	0.04
Entrepreneurs hip promotion	0.15	0.081	0.06	0.027	0	0.113	0.14
Employment services	0.04	-0.006	-0.007	-0.039	-0.03	0.038	0.01
Subsidized employment	0.05	0.004	0.011	0.011	0.001	0.028	0.02
By outcome type							
Employment	0.07	-0.005	N/A	N/A	0.01	0.03	0.04
Earnings	0.08	*0.000*	N/A	N/A	*0.000*	*0.000*	0.05
Business performance	0.12	0.031	N/A	N/A	0	0.012	0.03
By sex							
Male	0.02	0.000	-0.005	-0.014	0.021	0.025	0.06
Female	0.08	0.013	0.01	0.019	0.02	0.017	0.08
Both	0.08	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	0.04

Continued on next page

Table 9.1 (continued)

	ILO						Kluve 1
	Whole sample		**By outcome**		**By region**		
	All outcomes	All outcomes	Employment	Earnings	High-income countries	Low & middle income countries	
	Univariate (average effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	Multivariate (marginal effect)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Socio-economic status							
Disadvantaged young people	0.09	-0.003	-0.023	0.038	-0.033	0.044	
Programme scale							
National	0.08	-0.034	-0.037	0.025	0.0035	-0.01	
Regional	0.11	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	
Local	0.07	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	
Intervention design							
Additional services	N/A	0.001	0.01	0.016	-0.03	0.036	
Soft skills component	N/A	0.021	0.020	0.010	0.014	0.026	
Participation incentives	N/A	-0.046	-0.047	0.053	0.052	-0.084	
Certification	N/A	0.028	0.022	0.024	0.017	0.039	
Study design							
RCT	N/A	-0.037	-0.02	-0.02	-0.026	-0.031	

The strengths of Taylor et al (2023) and Nancarrow et al (2023) – other than the more robust treatment of the multicomponent issue – are the more disaggregated intervention categories used and the ability to identify effective combinations of components. Averaging over the three main vocational training categories gives an effect size for the impact on employment of 0.177, more than double that reported by ILO of 0.067 from the multivariate analysis. [2] But there is variation within this with the

highest effect being for apprenticeships (0.22), followed by on-the-job training (0.18) and off-the-job training (0.13). These effects are higher than those for other types of training: life skills (0.04), basic skills (0.0) and other (0.04). There is also a small effect from wage subsidies on employment (0.04). Taylor et al also examines effects on entering or continuing education. These effects are also small: on-the-job training (0.09), basic skills (0.08), life skills (0.02), off-the-job training (-0.00), coaching and mentoring (-0.04), and wage subsidies (0.02).

Taylor et al (2023) analyse the relative effects of multicomponent interventions in two ways. First, they present a standard meta-analysis for each observed combination of components. These results are shown in Table 9.2. No clear pattern emerges from these results. The largest effect size comes from combining on-the-job training with the residual 'other category'. But the majority of the multicomponent effect sizes are smaller than the single component training intervention effect sizes – apprenticeships (0.25), on-the-job training (0,25) and off-the-job training (0.25). But many of these estimates are based on a small number of studies, and so quite fragile, i.e. additional evidence may have a substantial effect on the estimated effect.

Table 9.2: Standard meta-analysis estimates for single component and multi-component interventions

	Overall (or alone)	Off the job training	On the job training	Other
Apprenticeships	0.22			
On-the-job training	0.18			
Off-the-job training	0.13			
Coaching and mentoring	0.06			0.14
Life skills	0.05			0.12
Basic skills	0	0.15		0.05
Other	0.04		0.14	

Source: Taylor et al (2023)

The second approach taken by CEI to analysing multicomponent interventions is the interactive component network meta-analysis. Leveraging the network of effect sizes allows more studies to be used. This analysis is presented where the data allow, with the results shown in Table 9.3. There are only a few estimates available. These all do show the multicomponent interventions to have a greater effect than the single component interventions with one of those components alone.

Table 9.3: Effect estimates from component network meta-analysis

	Alone	Off the job training	Other	Three components
Apprenticeships	0.25			
On-the-job training	0.25		0.48	
Off-the-job training	0.23			0.09
Coaching and mentoring			0.08	
Life skills			0.03	0.24, 0.21, 0.16, 0.03
Basic skills	0.1	0.02	0.01	0.3, 0.13, 0.07, 0.03
Other	0.06			

Source: Taylor et al (2023)

[1] This calculation is based on the assumption that 50% of the control group enter employment.

[2] Assuming all other variables have their reference value categories.

9.2.2 Examples of impact on employment

The National Employment Action Plan in Ireland reduced the probability of a young person being referred for an interview. Participants also had a lower chance (17% less) of entering employment. Among those who subsequently undertook training, there was lower unemployment of 10-14 percent. This is not enough to offset the initial negative impact so overall there is a zero or very weak positive effect (Guiness et al., 2011).

Analysis of training and internships in the YEI and ESF-funded *Piano d'azione per il sostegno all'accesso, rientro o permanenza nel mercato del lavor* (PIPOL) programme in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region of Italy found a 5 percentage point increase in the probability of employment, but none on the likelihood of having an employment contract (Pastore and Pompili, 2020).

YEI supported interventions showed a larger impact in England, with participants working an additional 56 days in the 12 months after the programme, though there was no significant effect on benefit claims by participants (Atkinson and Cutmore, 2022).

The Restart programme in England provided additional job search support to those unemployed for at least six months. Five years after the intervention the unemployment rate was 5 percent lower for men who had taken part in the programme than those who did not, though there was no such effect observed for women (Dolton and O'Neill, 2002).

9.2.3 Examples of impact on earnings

Since there may be a temporary adverse effect on earnings, we present two studies from the UK which present longer run effects.

Dolton et al. (2001) analysed the effect of vocational training under the Youth Training Scheme, as well as the return to different levels of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). The study population is up to 23 years of age, and so likely some years after completing training other than for the most advanced qualifications. The results, shown in Table 9.4, are the percentage difference in earnings compared to the reference condition of NVQ 1 or less. For men, the returns to both NVQ2 and YTS training are low and not significant. But an apprenticeship has an equivalent return to a degree of a 9% increase in earnings (for a degree the effect is measured shortly after graduation). For women, the effect of a degree is even higher (13%) and there is also an effect from having an NVQ. The main takeaway is that the effects are small, and there is no effect from the lowest level of training for men.

Table 9.4: Effect sizes of vocational training and further education on earnings in the UK

Level	Men	Women
NVQ Level 2	3.3	3.6
NVQ Level 3	7.0**	4.7
NVQ Level 4-5	16.1**	14.2**
NVQ 2 or higher	-0.1	6.2**
YTS training only	-0.1	-1.3
Apprenticeship + YTS	2.1	-3.8
Apprenticeship only	9.3**	-4.5
Degree	9.5*	13.3**

*Significant at 10% ** significant at 5%.

Notes: Comparison condition for NVQ categories is no NVQ or NVQ level 1, and for second set of categories no formal training or NVQ level 1.

Source: Dolton et al. (2001: Table 7)

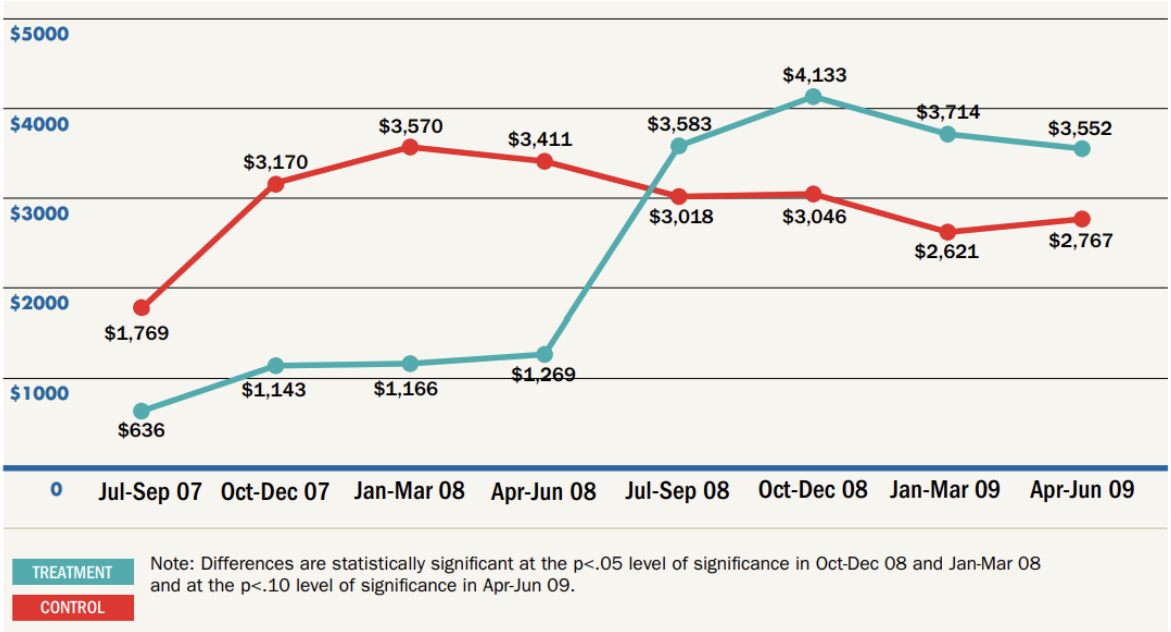
A study of the long-run effects of the NDYP does not look directly at earnings - it reports the time spent on benefits which may be taken as a proxy outcome for earnings. The authors found that the positive impact of NDYP on young people is sustained for a number of years following participation. Specifically, NDYP participants spent, on average, 64 fewer days on benefits over a four-year period than did non-participants. However, those furthest from the labour market were least likely to benefit (Beale et al., 2008).

9.3 Impact trajectory

As already mentioned, programme participants, such as apprentices, may receive lower income than their non-participating counterparts during the programme itself. However, an income advantage for the treated group should emerge soon after.

A good illustration of this point is from the Year Up programme for disadvantaged young people in the United States, which combines technical training with life skills and support to employment. As shown in Figure 9.1, income is lower in the first year whilst the intervention is running. But in the second year, after participants have completed the programme an income advantage quickly emerges so they have 30% higher income. Since this youth is now on a career path this differential can be expected to grow over time (Roder and Elliot, 2011). This difference emerges not because of differences in employment rates between the two groups, as these are similar (86 versus 83 percent), but a higher rate of pay of US$2.26 per hour.

Figure 9.1: Income trajectory for treatment and control in study of Year Up



Source: Roder and Elliot, 2011: Figure 2, p. 8

On the other hand, positive impacts of many interventions are not sustained as the outcome for treatment and control converge after some time.

Contrary factual evidence comes from the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Support Fund for which two small surveys found the most of those surveyed were still in their first employment destination or had moved to another positive destination four to six months after leaving NSF - though this is a very short timeline (Golden et al. 2002).

9.4 Evidence in support of causal pathways

Qualitative evidence provides support for the positive effects of work experience. This includes effects on:

Motivation and confidence: Interventions are often intended to improve employment outcomes by their effect on psychological outcomes such as self-efficacy, which can manifest themselves as motivation and confidence, as shown in the following quote:

> *'It's started to actually make me think about the future and what I'm going to do with myself. I used to wake up in the morning go down to the beach have a smoke and never thought about getting a job. Now, I'm actually getting my head around things and sorting my life out. I've realised I can't go around everyday smoking pot and going on the beach, that's not a life'* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 36)
>
> *Another young man spoke about the way he was increasingly being treated more as a proper employee in the responsibility he had acquired at his placement saying that: 'As my confidence has been building up through the months they have been giving me more responsibility. I have learnt about office work and how to do it, like faxes, talking to people and meetings'* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 29).

Pathway into employment: Interventions can support a young person on a pathway into employment beyond the intervention. For example, a participant in the Welsh traineeship programme stated that, *'I've learnt a lot, I've been working there 4-5 days a week since last August and next month I'm starting an apprenticeship there, I really enjoy it.'* (Egglestone, 2019: 63)

Career choice: The pathway into employment includes supporting career choice. Another participant on the Welsh traineeship stated that, *'the placement has been very useful as I have been learning skills on the job and getting practical work experience. I now know that I want a job in bathroom and construction design'* (Egglestone, 2019: 63).

The role played by support to employment: Staff providing support to employment can provide a range of specific support which will vary from young person to young person as shown by the following two examples:

> *'He's helped me look for jobs on the internet – before I came here I wouldn't have known to start, I'd never really worked on a computer before. So we've gone through lots and lots of things and I've sent off for a few application forms and we're taking it from there'* (Spielhofer et al., 2003: 41).
>
> *'We had the one-to-one for my CV and cover letter, just to improve it and then I actually had a session with him on interview, what employers look for, what they don't look for in someone - attire, manners, body language, everything like that, and it did help out a lot because it's now got me a job and I passed my interview*

because I've taken in what [he] has said in these sessions' (YEG participant) (Ray et al., 2018: 41).

Providers and JCP staff felt that wage incentives could 'tip the balance', making young people who already had the right skill set more attractive to employers, compared to other potential employees who did not attract wage incentives; which reflects the policy intent of this scheme (Jordan et al., 2013).

9.5 Barriers to achieving outcomes

9.5.1 Inappropriate venues

Venues may be inappropriate in various ways: an inaccessible location, having bad associations (e.g. such as school for people who had poor experiences in compulsory education), a setting which is in the territory of a rival gang for a participant, or being an intimidating setting. Regarding the last, lack of empathy includes not recognising that many people are "afraid to enter offices". Other examples include:

- A respondent in the evaluation of E2E stated that he 'thought it was going to be really posh, because downstairs are proper offices and that' and that he had found it rather intimidating' (Spielhofer, 2003: 20).
- Activities supported by the YEI in England took place in a school setting, with the evaluation noting that 'structured provision in a classroom setting was cited as discouraging the engagement of young people in some cases, potentially due to prior negative experiences at school' (Atkinson and Cutmore, 2022: 17).

Conversely, appropriate venues can help delivery. Providers of the National Careers Service England partner with organisations such as JCP to provide careers advice in the place where people needing such advice are likely to be (Bowles, et al. 2013).

9.5.2 Inadequate financial support for young people for start-up capital for enterprises

Young people receiving business skills training, and some TVET courses, are pathways to self-employment. While some training interventions include grants and loans, the amounts received by recipients may be relatively small, and in some cases not all programme participants receive money.

For example, in Poland's youth entrepreneurship initiatives, entrepreneurs also faced difficulties in getting details on the sources of start-up capital, with very little information available on financial institutions and investors and most of this information being largely scattered (Trojnarska and Halabisky, 2015: 23).

9.5.3 Lack of interest among employers

Providers and JCP staff for Youth Contract also believed that overall, large employers were uninterested in the scheme, partly because local branches of large employers did not benefit financially and partly because some felt there was a reputational issue following negative media coverage of government employment schemes earlier in the year. It was felt that micro and small employers tended to be more likely to take up the scheme (Jordan et al., 2013).

9.6 Facilitators for achieving outcomes

9.6.1 Implementation approach through local institutions and organisations

The success of projects in delivering outcomes was attributed to the strengthened institutional capacity that developed through implementation partnerships. The implementation of project activities through local organisations, such as career centres, schools, colleges, and NGOs, frequently strengthened their institutional capacity, thereby fostering the sustainability of interventions.

For example, strong inter-institutional coordination in Turkey's UNJP-YEM programme allowed transfer of knowledge from UN participating organisations to Turkish government agencies, strengthening their long-term capacities in delivering similar programmes. The National Technical Team formed to draft the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NYEAP) had several government agencies like ISKUR and TURKSTAT as members. ILO's guide to framing National Action Plans to combat youth unemployment provided direction to the Turkish stakeholders in developing NYEAP and strengthened their capacity to develop future programmes through other workshops and policy support initiatives. Additionally, UNJP-YEM helped build local and national institutional capacity in developing a national long-term occupational outlook and developed relevant tools and research models to guide government staff in collecting, monitoring and managing data and other training programmes. (Mourshed, 2011: 38, 45).

9.6.2 Intersectoral and public-private partnerships

Strengthened intersectoral and public-private partnerships through working with government authorities contribute to projects intervention outcomes.

In FNIYES, the First Nations and Inuit communities that built strong partnerships with a variety of service providers like employers, businesses, schools and other agencies that could support the advancement of young people were able to bring about greater gains with FNIYES. One example was the community in Alberta working with the Alberta

Power Corporation. The Youth Work Experience Program trained First Nations and Inuit youth as utility tree workers and a contract with the power corporation ensured utility work would be undertaken in the community using the youth (Byam, 2002).

An evaluation of the jewellery project for Colombian youth pointed to the extensive collaboration between *Artesanías de Colombia* (a public-private corporation), Save the Children (an international NGO), the Colombian Ministry of Education, local educational institutions and staff, external consultants and Bulgari (a jewellery company) as a significant factor in the project's success. *Artesanías de Colombia* contributed with its expertise in entrepreneurial projects and the technical know-how in jewellery-making, whereas Save the Children's previous experience with education projects in Colombia allowed it access to vulnerable and remote groups within the area. This important role in the Colombian educational sphere also helped it establish strong relationships with local educational institutions, teachers and administrative staff as well as the Ministry of Education, allowing for the project to flourish and expand its scope and effect. External consultants provided business related support and education and Bulgari funded and facilitated the initiative. (Koumarianos et al., 2017: 11).

Collaborations between different service providers of the same programme were also seen as beneficial. In the TtW programme, service providers emphasised the move away from a culture of competition to collaboration, which helped them work with other TtW providers to understand what works better for young people and develop effective strategies based on each other's experiences.

> *(The TtW Deed) is very open in the sense in that it gives providers that flexibility to deliver and achieve the results that we need to. The best thing about it is there's no competition so when you talk to other providers you can share good ideas and good strategies because there's no competition."* (Henderson et al., 2021: 73).

We also found that since the launch of the Youth Guarantee specific agreements with relevant stakeholders had been signed in all Member States visited. For example, the Spanish public employment service had signed agreements with institutions like Instituto de la Juventud (INJUVE), Federación de Asociaciones Empresariales de Empresas de Insercion (FAEDEI) and the Spanish Red Cross, with a view to reaching the most vulnerable NEETs. Slovakia had signed three agreements with ESF-supported social partners in 2015, with a view to motivating inactive NEETs to register with the employment services. However, in all cases, the exact targets to be achieved by the partner organisation were not defined (European Court of Auditors, 2017)

9.6.3 Supportive relationships

Findings show that learners would acquire employability and marketable skills as a result of effective training delivery attainable through: diversified training approaches, good selection of training institutions, good training environments, availability of training facilities both equipment and ample space and quality trainers/staff.

Support provided by YEG advisors in Liverpool City was identified as the prime reason for the programme's success and its positive perception among participants. Many participants highlighted the relationship the advisors established with the participants, the advice and support they offered, their awareness of individual needs and interests, and their personalised approach to participants as responsible for producing positive programme outcomes.

> *'She's very chatty and she's very fair. She doesn't like force me to do anything, but she's pushing me to do things.' (YEG participant)*
>
> *'She gives me confidence, she says I can do it... she believes in me, she encourages me.' (YEG participant)* (Ray et al., 2018: 36)

In the Siemens Energy, Inc Apprenticeship programme, most apprentices found on-the-job training and the company funded associate degree initiative as crucial factors in ensuring their completion of the programme (Oai, 2017:61).

Evaluation of YEI in South West Scotland also pointed to the supportive environment provided by the programme that gave a boost to their self-confidence and prepared them for the job market.

> *I was given a lot of support with my CV, interview skills, confidence building, transport costs, financial advice and a lot more. This allowed me to access a traineeship under YEI, I then received more support in gaining a Modern Apprenticeship, which enabled me to gain an SVQ Level 3 in Administration. When my apprenticeship was due to end, everyone at Invest in Renfrewshire was very helpful and made sure I was prepared for my interviews, that my CV was up to date and that I was applying for the right jobs. With all of the training, information and experience I received, I have now secured a full-time job with Renfrewshire Council as a Clerical Assistant. I feel I would not have been able to have done this without the help of the advisors and definitely not without my work placement which definitely built my confidence and taught me how to deal with certain situations in the working world* (Graham, 2018: 28).

9.6.4 Appropriate training

The 'Career Traineeships' conducted under Ireland's Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) could achieve high employment among participants post completion of the programme. Employers picked out the trainees' skill level, strengths in certain core competencies even before employment, and assurance of instant productivity as important factors for their success (Fitzpatrick associates, 2018: 33).

The three apprenticeship programmes under Scotland's DYW strategy combined school-based and higher level apprenticeship training to ensure effective pathways out of unemployment for the young participants and skilled workers for employers. FA provided young people with strong foundational skills in their chosen areas at the school level and

often, helped them land a placement in the Modern or Graduate apprenticeship programme. As an employer in the programme noted:

> *"It is also about Foundation Apprenticeships giving us a solid talent pipeline a year in advance. We get an idea of peoples' potential a year earlier and, without a doubt, it helps us find the right people."* (Swinney and Hepburn, 2018: 45)

The qualitative data identify several factors which may facilitate achieving outcomes:

Having a proper job: Placing young people in a job which was perceived as a 'proper job', rather than just being given menial tasks, was valued by young people as giving them more valuable experience and confidence about obtaining another job. The jobs provided by the Future Jobs Fund in England were seen this way: 'All involved believed FJF was a genuine attempt to offer real jobs because people were paid the national minimum wage; had a six month contract of employment with a job description; and had all the other conditions you would expect in gaining a job'. One employer commented that: 'It was not shadowing but a quality job. As an employer it allowed you to try things you otherwise could not do.' (Fishwick, 2011: 14).

Providing pathways into employment: Programmes which provide a structure which can provide pathways into employment can help secure permanent employment. Traineeships in Wales adopted what was called a layered approach which provided such pathways. The evaluation reported that 'the structure of the programme, separated into strands, is also widely welcomed. Traineeships in Wales adopted what was called a layered approach which provided such pathways. The evaluation reported that 'the structure of the programme, separated into strands, is also widely welcomed. Providers identify that both Engagement and Level 1 are critical to the offer as Engagement on its own would be considered insufficient to progress many young people into employment, whilst Level 1 offers a step up in terms of qualifications and activity and introduces a need for more commitment from the participant' (Egglestone et al., 2019: 25). As mentioned above in Chapter 2, Level 2 apprenticeships in England have been criticised as there is no clear progression to higher levels (Harris, 2003).

Chapter Ten

Impact on welfare

10. Impact on welfare

We report here the effects on higher-level welfare outcomes from youth employment interventions. Welfare includes wellbeing, covering economic and social wellbeing, personal wellbeing and development, and inclusion and empowerment. As in previous chapters, we report effects from reviews.

None of the comprehensive main reviews report effects on welfare outcomes. Mawn et al. (2017) review interventions for young people to engage young people who are NEET with the labour market. They report on health and education reviews, noting that none of the studies report sufficient information to conduct a meta-analysis. All studies looking at education attainment and qualifications find significantly positive outcomes. The evidence regarding health is more mixed.

Hart et al. (2017) report the effects from eight studies (of which five are qualitative) of interventions for youth with complex needs. It is a narrative review which does not consistently report effect sizes or provide a meta-analysis. One of the qualitative studies reports that participants expressed improved wellbeing. The authors argue that there is evidence that the programmes have an emancipatory effect, with participants becoming empowered to take further action for themselves.

Jennings (2014) reports the effects of six studies of entrepreneurship education, reporting that five report an improvement in a measure of personal development (such as self-efficacy), in addition to which one study reported a better ability to withstand peer pressure to get into trouble, and another on improved diet. Although the review's title is to empower black males, none of the included studies are of interventions which targeted at this group and none report empowerment outcomes.

Chapter Eleven

Sustainability

11. Sustainability

Sustainability is the continuation of intervention benefits beyond the life of the intervention. This is best measured by long-run studies, though there are few such studies. The exceptions are a few studies which show the impact of labour market outcomes of early child development interventions, which is argued to come from the development of non-cognitive skills (Heckmann et al. 2006). There is no review of this literature for developed countries.

In the absence of a direct measure of sustained benefits, there are two approaches to assessing sustainability: (1) the intervention brought about a change which will lead to sustained future benefits, such as helping a young person onto a better career trajectory than they would have achieved in the absence of the intervention; or (2) that the activities undertaken by the intervention continue beyond the original intervention, e.g. because a life skills curriculum becomes institutionalized in the education curriculum. In both these cases, the benefits are expected to be sustained into the future. In these cases we argue there is a credible case for sustainability.

11.1 Bring about changes to sustain future benefits

The evaluation of the Future Jobs Fund identified two ways in which the temporary wage subsidy may support sustained benefits. First, respondents appreciated the fact that the scheme provided them with experience of a 'real job', i.e. it was a job with a job description in a firm which paid at least the minimum wage. The evaluation identifies several mechanisms by which the real job may support future employment beyond the subsidised job: (1) a person in a job finds it easier to get another job than an unemployed person; (2) job experience strengthens their CV; (3) the experience of the workplace gives workplace skills ('workplace readiness') valued by employers; (4) the working experience increases the young person's self-confidence and desire to get another job; (5) the scheme diverted young people from long-term unemployment and so joining the cohort of 'never worked' who find it difficult to gain employment (Fishwick et al., 2011: 49-50). And of course, the youth may remain employed with the same employer once the six months of subsidised employment end - the data suggest that this was the case for around 20% of FJF beneficiaries.[28]

[28] The data show that 43 per cent of FTF beneficiaries are employed seven months after the FTF employment, of which two estimates are available of the share employed by the FTF employer, 48 and 66 percent. Hence 20 per cent of all FTF beneficiaries remaining with their employer is a conservative estimate (Fishwick et al., 2011: 31).

Second, the subsidy encouraged employers to employ youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and no prior work experience who they would not normally hire. For example, an employer from Newcastle told the evaluators, 'FJF lets you take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn't because the financial risk has been taken away' (Fishwick et al., 2011: 16). As a result of this experience, employers reported that 'they are now more likely to employ an unemployed young person or engage with future welfare to work programmes' (Fishwick et al., 2011: 6).

On the other hand it is argued that there was insufficient attempt to ensure progression post-FTF. Two factors contribute to this problem. First, DWP did not require grantees to demonstrate any plan for progression. Second, the supported jobs had to have a community element rather than focusing on areas of greatest demand, so unsubsidised jobs were less likely to be continued (Fishwick et al., 2011).

11.2 Establishing the conditions for sustainability

Sustainability can be supported by putting in place the conditions, or prerequisites, for sustainability to be achieved. Following Carvalho and White (2004), we identify three areas which should be addressed: (i) technical - are the knowledge and skills, as well as necessary equipment, available to continue the activities; (ii) financial - is funding available to support the delivery of the activities; and (iii) institutional - is delivery within an organisation's mandate, and within the organisation is there clear responsibility for delivery which is covered by the job descriptions of those responsible for delivery?

An example comes from the Essential Life Skills Programme which was a one-year programme in disadvantaged areas across England. Several respondents during the evaluation of the programme commented that they would have liked to be able to spend the funds on capital equipment and staff professional development to be able to continue the activities beyond the programme, but such expenditures were not eligible (Cutmore et al., 2020). Hence, programme funding restrictions limited the possibilities for continuing the activities beyond the one year of funding. Nonetheless, some organisations did make provision for sustainability. Notably, in one area ELS was integrated into a broader initiative which continued after ELS was closed.

Chapter Twelve

Implications for policy and research

1. Implications for policy and research

12.1 Implications for policy

A main implication is that there is no magic bullet. Historically, many interventions have had limited effects on employment. However, when well-designed, implemented and funded, interventions can potentially benefit the most disadvantaged. The most disadvantaged - those furthest from the labour market - can miss out on the benefits of interventions, and are at particular risk of being missed altogether by many interventions on account of creaming and parking. But if interventions are successful at reaching the most disadvantaged, then this group stands to benefit the most. This finding implies that more intensive efforts are needed to include those furthest from the labour market, and that if it is to make a substantive difference to the growing numbers in this position the funding needs to be substantial in scale.

The more specific implications for policy can be grouped under the following headings: (i) clear and attainable objectives: (ii) adequate programme preparation and duration; (iii) adequate funding, resources and staffing; (iv) balance central and local approaches; (v) a customised and flexible approach; and (vi) taking young people seriously. These five points could be embedded in a systems change approach to youth employment.

12.1.1 Clear and attainable objectives

Youth employment interventions typically have a dual objective - upgrading skills for a competitive economy, and assisting the most disadvantaged to engage with the labour market. These are two different objectives requiring two different approaches. Tinbergen's rule states that there should be one policy instrument for each separate policy objective. In accordance with Tinbergen's rule, the types of intervention to enhance competitiveness are unlikely to work with those furthest from the labour market. This tension often works against the most disadvantaged, who are thereby excluded. This tension is illustrated by careers guidance in England. Connexions was focused on the most disadvantaged, but this was at the expense of providing services to the general population. Connexions was replaced by the National Careers Service which serves a broader population, which means that the most disadvantaged are little served. This case illustrates the general principle that if the most disadvantaged are to be reached then explicit attention needs to be paid to this issue in the intervention design.

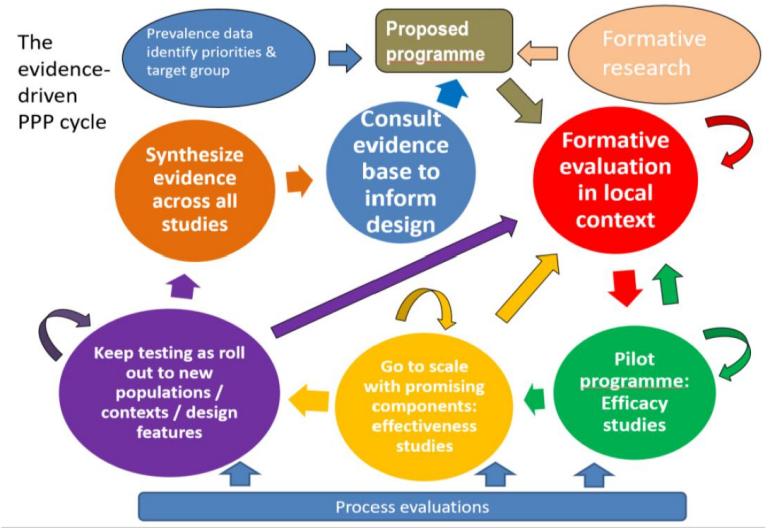
12.1.2 Adequate programme preparation and duration

Adequate programme preparation will entail piloting, and possibly a staggered rollout. For example, E2E was a training and work experience programme in England for young people facing difficulties engaging with the labour market, specifically those not yet ready for a Modern Apprenticeship. Before being launched nationally, it was piloted in eleven areas through 'pathfinder partnerships'. The purpose of the pilot was to 'develop and identify some of the emerging development and operational issues in respect of the provision' (Spielhofer et al., 2003). The evaluation of the pilot gave concrete recommendations on implications for design of the programme.

Ideally, a programme (or policy or project or practice) will follow the evidence-based cycle shown in Figure 11.1. Decisions on programme selection and design are based on formative research about priority issues to be addressed, which can be supplemented by prevalence data, and synthesis of existing evidence of what works. Piloting can go through two stages: formative evaluation, followed by efficacy trials. The lessons from these stages go into full testing of the intervention through effectiveness studies. Testing continues as programmes are rolled out in different contexts, with design adaptations. And all this evidence is included in new reviews.

There are examples of interventions which have been extensively piloted in England, such as raising the participation age for education and training to 18 (Orlando et al, 2024). This was not only done in stages - first from 16 to 17, and then from 17 to 18 - but it was also piloted extensively at local level in recognition of the fact that effective implementation of the national policy would require considerable work at the local level. But there are also examples of programmes rushed into existence, often with too short a time frame for any piloting.

Figure 12.1: The evidence-based programme cycle



Source: White (2025), Figure 5.1

Even with adequate preparation, there will always be a need for adaptive learning - though piloting and phased roll out allows hitting the ground running. This adaptive learning can only happen if programmes are of adequate duration. One and two-year programmes are a starting point but are obviously limited in what they can achieve. Longer-term funding offers opportunity for more meaningful learning and adaptation to build more successful interventions

For example, the short timescales for initial design and implementation of the Essential Life Skills Programme created difficulties. The evaluation reported that compressed timescales were seen as compromising the effectiveness and efficiency of design and implementation, suggesting that a focus on ensuring adequate lead-in times would be beneficial in future programmes.

Another example of short-run programmes is the succession of UK wage subsidy programmes that have different - and changing - eligibility criteria and different implementing agencies, causing confusion amongst employers and other stakeholders. Instead, one potentially effective solution to engaging the most disadvantaged would be a national youth wage subsidy programme which is permanently available to young people furthest from the labour market, and which can be temporarily expanded as needed in a counter-cyclical manner.

Instead, a lasting solution to engaging the most disadvantaged would be a national youth wage subsidy programme which is permanently available to young people furthest from the labour market, and which can be temporarily expanded as needed in a counter-cyclical manner. For example, in the case of the UK the succession of wage subsidy programmes with different, and changing, eligibility criteria, with different implementing agencies, simply causes confusion amongst employers and other stakeholders. It would make sense to establish a national youth wage subsidy programme which is permanently available to young people furthest from the labour

market, and which can be temporarily expanded as needed in a counter-cyclical manner.

Such an approach would avoid having to put a programme into place at short notice. Counter-cyclical programmes need to be put into place quickly if they are to be effective at keeping people in their jobs. Once they are laid off then a return to employment is a more difficult challenge than keeping someone in a job. But even when rushed, programmes are often too late, with teething problems frustrating the desire to act quickly.

Examples of post-crisis schemes introduced in a rushed manner are the Future Jobs Fund introduced in 2009 as a response to the global economic crisis, and Kickstart introduced in the wake of Covid pandemic. The consequences are insufficient planning and preparedness, and low awareness or understanding of the programme. As a result, the Future Jobs Fund was found to have been rushed at both bidding and implementation stages, as well as slow and changeable guidance, and low numbers of eligible applications (Fishwick et al., 2011: 4). Similarly, whilst Kickstart was modelled on the Futures Job Fund, it introduced changes for which there was insufficient time to be tested prior to implementation. Given the rapid timetable, the scheme was opened up to applications to employers before all processes were in place, leading to complaints about unclear procedures and insufficient notice of changes (NAO, 2021).

12.1.3 A customised and flexible approach

Those furthest from the labour market frequently have complex needs, which may include mental and physical health issues, a difficult family background or unstable accommodation, limited educational attainment, and possibly a history of substance abuse and offending. They thus need customised support with access to relevant services which will support a plan of training and work experience to create a clear pathway into employment.

Providing such a customised approach requires flexibility. It also requires that there be an attractive offer to the young person, which implies the need for a broad range of offers. Community organisations being supported should also have flexibility, though may be guided toward evidence-based programmes with evidence-based budgeting (that is adopting programmes which have been shown to work, with reference to an evidence portal such as the Youth Employment Toolkit[29]).

Another aspect of being flexible is adopting a 'no wrong door' approach to young people entering a programme. Requiring referral through a single agency (using JCP in the UK) can slow down the process, and appear overly bureaucratic, which may lose the interest of the intended participant.

[29] https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/tools/youth-employment-toolkit/

12.1.4 Reaching the most disadvantaged: overcoming the poverty trap

Successfully reaching the most disadvantaged has proved a challenge for many interventions. This problem is exacerbated by having output targets for numbers reached, which encourages creaming and parking, that is reaching out to, and focusing attention on, those who are easiest to reach and most likely to achieve success. This is rarely the most disadvantaged. Overcoming this problem needs serious explicit attention to the complex needs of the most disadvantaged, including meeting these complex needs. It involves outreach to the places where they are likely to be, using venues in which they feel comfortable, and providing a broad offer with activities appropriate to them.

The poverty trap - that is the circular relationship between limited skills, limited opportunities and stunted aspirations needs - to be tackled head on. This can only be done by providing a clear transition into work with a strong likelihood of sustained higher levels of future income from employment. This is a long pathway for those leaving school with limited or no qualifications. A phased and flexible approach is most likely to succeed in which young people can work through the stages at their own pace, gaining skills and experience as they go, and thus finding employment which suits them and in which they perform well

Interventions supporting the transition into work need to explicitly recognise the 'first month problem', that is the period between the loss of benefits and the first pay cheque in which bills have to be paid, as well as new work-related expenses (clothes, transport, and possibly more expensive food). Grants toward these expenses can help to ease the transition and may tilt the individual cost-benefit calculation in favour of work rather than benefits.

12.1.5 Treating young people with respect

Young people who are furthest from the labour market were often disengaged at school, and are not likely to respond well to an intervention either in a school setting or which is a similar approach to a school setting. Young people are young adults. They wish to be taken seriously and treated with respect. They want to be listened to. One aspect of this is to provide work experience which is a proper job. Another is to provide training which clearly adds value and can enhance their employability.

12.1.6 Support more research

Whilst the global EGM has over 1,000 studies, there are many evidence gaps. One is a quality gap. Many evaluations are assessed as low and medium confidence in their

study findings as many effectiveness studies have low sample size, insufficient attention to attrition and no attempt to blind.

Any intervention undertaken without plans for an evaluation is a lost opportunity to learn. Research funding agencies should devote more of their funds to intervention research and evaluations to help take advantage of these learning opportunities.

The EGM contains only 30 reviews out of over 1,000 studies. That is a very low share of reviews in the total literature, showing that the youth employment literature is 'under-reviewed'. And many of the existing reviews are narrative reviews. So there is also a need to commission more high quality mixed methods reviews.

12.2 Implications for research

The main implication for research is for researchers - and research funders - to collaborate with implementing agencies to evaluate youth employment programmes to build the evidence base, with particular attention to priority questions. These include interventions to reach the most disadvantaged, and more research on the large-scale government supported initiatives.

Research should pay attention to common shortcomings in evaluations, such as insufficient sample size for effectiveness studies, inadequate description of the intervention in all evaluations, and the failure to use explicit methods in qualitative studies. There is also a need for more mixed methods systematic reviews.

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Annexes

Annex 1 - Glossary

(Prepared by Sujata Shirodkar)

Apprenticeship is a formal employment program that provides training to do a specific job. Apprentices sign a contract with the employer and learn specific skills during their apprenticeship. It may include off-site training.

Attrition is the participant dropout over time in research studies. It's also called subject mortality, but it doesn't always refer to participants actually dying. Common causes of attrition in youth employment programmes are finding alternative employment, moving out of the area, and barriers to participation such as inconvenient time or place.

Benchmarks is a standard or point of reference against which things may be compared

Business performance is the ability of a company to achieve its objectives and expected results, measured using qualitative and quantitative indicators such as employment, sales or turnover, exports or profits.

Business skills training is a training which focuses on vocational skills necessary for running a business but also on business-relevant topics such as financial planning, marketing, and business strategy. It may also be supported by developing life skills such as resilience and financial literacy.

Careers advice, which is also called careers counselling or careers guidance, provides information and advice to young people on career options and may provide connections to potential employers.

Careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is, as the names suggests an employment service which provides a young person (i) information about employment and training opportunities, and the pathway to achieving the agreed goals, (ii) advice takes into account the young person's own aspirations and possibilities, and (iii) guidance are the practical steps required, which are often formalized in an individual action plan.

Causal process is the mechanisms by which an intervention results in the observed change in intermediate and final outcomes.

Certification is a term which refers to the award of some official recognition of status, based either on completion of a course or after testing of existing skills. See also *credentialing*.

Coefficient is a numerical or constant quantity placed before and multiplying the variable in an algebraic expression

Collaboration is the process of two or more people, entities or organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal.

Connexions was a government initiative between 2001 and 2012 to reduce social exclusion among young people in England by providing information, advice and guidance (IAG) primarily around post-compulsory educational routes and careers.

Credentialing is the recognition of institutions to award certificates for qualifications. See also *certification*.

Critical appraisal (or quality assessment) is the use of explicit, transparent methods to assess the data in published research, applying the rules of evidence to factors such as internal validity, adherence to reporting standards, conclusions, generalizability and risk-of-bias. Critical appraisal methods form a central part of the systematic review process.

Deadweight loss is a cost to society created by market inefficiency, which occurs when supply and demand are out of equilibrium. Deadweight loss occurs when the jobs 'created' by the intervention would have been created anyway, or the young person would have anyhow found another job (including self-employment).

Demand side interventions are interventions which increase demand for young people in the labour market. Wage subsidies are a main policy here, but it also includes self-employment programmes, public works, regional economic development and procurement policies (the latter two are rarely youth-specific so that there are not many studies in the map in these policy areas).

Dependent variable is a variable (often denoted by y) whose value depends on that of another variable or variables.

Direct cost is an accounting term that describes any type of expenditure that can be directly attributable to an activity.

Displacement is when workers in a firm are laid off as the firm hires other workers supported by an intervention, such as a wage subsidy. It can also be that jobs are lost in businesses which do not benefit from the intervention because of the competitive advantage given to firms which do benefit.

Entrepreneur is a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks to pursue an activity, and with the intention of realising a profit.

Earning is the money obtained in return for labour or services. Including reported earnings and income, household income, and salaries or wage.

Effectiveness usually refers to whether or not an intervention makes a difference to outcomes of interest.

Effect size is a value measuring the strength of the relationship between two variables in a population, or a sample-based estimate of that quantity. It can refer to the value of a statistic calculated from a sample of data, the value of a parameter for a hypothetical population, or to the equation that operationalizes how statistics or parameters lead to the effect size value.

Efficiency is the cost at which an output or outcome is achieved, it can be increased by increasing output for a given input.

Employment services support young people in their search for employment. They can include CV and interview preparation, and help with job applications.

Entrepreneurship is the creation or extraction of value. Entrepreneurship entails risk beyond and may include other values than simply financial ones.

Error refers to the emergence of discrepancies between the result value based on observation or calculation and the actual value or expected value.

Estimate is an approximate calculation or judgement of the value, number, quantity, or extent of something. It is the magnitude of difference between groups, when two or more interventions are being compared; it is also called the treatment effect or effect estimate.

Evaluation is a systematic determination and assessment of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards. It can assist an organization, program, design, project or any other intervention or initiative to assess any aim, realizable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision-making; or to generate the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and objectives and results of any such action that has been completed.

Evidence and Gap Map (EGM) is a tool for collecting and summarizing existing evidence to inform policy decision-making and to prioritize future research. It maps out existing and ongoing primary studies or systematic reviews in a particular sector or subsector in terms of the types of policies or programmes evaluated and the outcomes measured. It is usually presented as a visualized map and highlights the gaps where no (or little) evidence exists.

Facilitator is a person or thing that makes an action or process easy or easier.

Financial aid is the official help given to a person, organization, or country in the form of money, loans, reduced taxes, etc.

Firm is a business organization—such as a corporation, limited liability company, or partnership that sells goods or services to make a profit.

Impact evaluation is an evaluation focussed on the difference an intervention made to outcomes rather than process delivery or implementation evaluation.

Incentive is a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something

Indirect costs are costs that don't relate to a specific product or service you're selling to customers. Instead, they mainly address operational needs, such as overhead, maintenance and administrative costs.

Information is facts provided to either employers or future market entrants (in this case the youth) and includes labour market information systems (LMIS), digital service and SMS coaching, social media campaigns and awareness campaigns, and information to improve access to services and markets and, so, value chain development.

Intervention applies to any activity undertaken with the objective of improving the outcomes.

Intention to treat (ITT) effect is an analytical approach that aims to compare outcomes based on a group of people allocated to a treatment, even though they may not have fully complied with the indicated treatment as the study progressed (e.g. a patient who has not taken their medication for the duration of the study, patient who dropped-out, etc.). The results obtained from an intention-to-treat analysis will estimate what happens in the 'real world', where the situation is not perfect. See also *treatment of the treated*.

Job-assistance is a program sought to help young people access training including apprenticeships or work placements. The assistance is provided by meetings with caseworkers, in which information is provided on local training courses and available job vacancies.

Job matching refers to the process of aligning job seekers with suitable employment opportunities based on their skills, qualifications and preferences. Job matching is meant to help young people attain employment aligned with their skills and aspirations.

Labour standard interventions are interventions which improve terms and conditions and working conditions.

Labour standards refers to workplace conditions with respect to working hours, break periods, health and safety and so on.

Life skills are a set of abilities, attitudes and socio-emotional competencies that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions and exercise rights to lead a healthy and productive life and subsequently become agents of change.

Lock-in effect is where the choice of an action constrains subsequent choices. For example, commitment to an intervention may reduce job search efforts for a period of time.

Log frame is another name for Logical Framework, a planning tool consisting of a matrix which provides an overview of a project's goal, activities and anticipated results. It provides a structure to help specify the components of a project and its activities and for relating them to one another.

Matching supply and demand are interventions which ensure the location and skills of the labour force match the needs of employers. This includes labour market information systems, careers information, advice and guidance, and events such as job fairs.

Mentoring is a collaborative relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced individual (the mentee) that is focused on the mentee's personal and professional development.

Meta-analysis is a statistical technique that pools the findings, results or data of several independent studies included in a systematic review. A meta-analysis mimics the conduct of a larger study by combining the data from several individual studies included a systematic review and, as a consequence, provides more precise summary estimates.

Meta-regression is a regression model with the effect sizes as the dependent variable. It is used to investigate heterogeneity

Migration is the movement of people to another location on a permanent or semi-permanent basis.

Monetary incentives are financial incentives used in the workplace, which help encourage employees to increase their performance and meet their targets

Multicomponent is having, involving, or consisting of two or more components

Narrative review A traditional literature review designed to (critically) describe and discuss the information available from books and journals on a specific topic from a theoretical and contextual point of view.

Partnership is an agreement where parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests. The partners in a partnership may be individuals, businesses, interest-based organizations, schools, governments or combinations. Organizations may partner to increase the likelihood of each achieving their mission and to amplify their reach. A partnership may result in issuing and holding equity or may be only governed by a contract.

Pre-apprenticeship are programmes which are offered to youth thought to be not yet ready for an apprenticeship

Public private partnership is a government service or private business venture which is funded and operated through a partnership of government and one or more private sector companies

Public works programmes are publicly funded programmes which employ people for a limited duration. Traditionally public works programmes have invested in infrastructure, but may also be used for conservation work or social care. Public works employees are typically paid a low wage, often the minimum wage or below.

Qualified trainer is a professional trainer who needs to be able to identify training needs successfully and carry out an accurate training needs analysis for clients and trainees. The trainers help in skills acquisition, for both youths and sometimes training other trainers. Trainers also help in the supply of labour market information and in awarding certificates to trainees.

Randomized control trial is a prospective experiment that compares the effectiveness of two or more interventions or treatments. The intervention is randomly assigned to eligible participants.

Retraining is further training for those who have already been trained to improve, refresh or update their skills for a task for which they are already training.

Reskilling is the training for new skills different to those previously held, and so unlikely to be applicable to young people.

Referral is an act of referring someone or something for consultation, review, or further action. Referral which is the common mechanism in developed countries in which the welfare service will refer those claiming benefits to the public employment service.

Shared Apprenticeships allow the apprentice to be shared by several employers, and so gain a wider range of work experience than they would with a single employer.

Skill training develops the skills and know-how of participants. The emphasis of skill training is to provide proper training that will support and guide the employees in their chosen field. The skills may be either hard, or vocational, skills or soft, or life, skills.

Soft skills are skills which include social or life skills and are also called as non-cognitive skills which can be developed directly through training or indirectly by group-based activities.

Stakeholder is a person, group or organization with a vested interest or stake in the decision making and activities of a business, organisation or project.

Subsidies is a sum of money granted by the state or a public body to help an industry or business keep the price of a commodity or service low. The subsidy may be a direct payment to the employer, or a reduction in payroll tax or social security contributions. Alternatively, the subsidy may be paid to the employee, though this is less common.

Subsidized employment, in which the government temporarily subsidizes some or all of an individual's wages, gives participants some economic security and can connect them to unsubsidized employment, improving their long-term job prospects.

Substitution is the action of replacing someone or something with another person or thing. Substitution occurs when young people supported by the intervention are employed rather than other young people, so there is no net effect on total employment.

Supply side interventions are interventions which improve the employability of young people, mainly through skills development (including soft skills), but also by supporting job search.

Sustainability the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. It is the continuation of intervention benefits beyond the life of the intervention.

Systematic review is a well-planned and meticulously executed literature review that analyses the findings from existing studies to answer a focused research or review question.

Technical skills are skills which includes business skills, which are developed by training or work experience.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development, which may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET (UNESCO, 2019d).

'Threat effect' or motivation effect is an effect where in 'individuals are motivated to avoid the obligation of programme participation and, thus, cease claiming benefit and re-enter the labour market.'

Traineeship is support for taking part in training.

Training is teaching, or development in oneself or others, any skills and knowledge or fitness that relate to specific useful competencies.

Treatment of treated (ToT) effect. A 'treatment effect' is the average causal effect of a binary (0–1) on an outcome calculated using the outcome of those who complied with the intervention. See also *intention to treat*.

Univariate analysis is the study of one variable and its distribution of values.

Upskilling is the process of learning new skills which build on existing skills.

Vocational training includes any intervention with the purpose of increasing employment-relevant technical knowledge and skills, either training centre based, job based or a combination of the two. Vocational training provides the technical skills required to do a job. This includes occupations traditionally associated with vocational training such as carpentry, metal work and construction, but also professional qualifications such as accountancy and nursing. Vocational training may support social mobility by providing opportunities to enter careers which the target group may not have otherwise had access to.

Wage is a fixed regular payment earned for work or services, typically paid on a daily or weekly basis.

Wage incentives can be defined as variable rewards granted according to the achievement of a specific result.

Wage subsidies are a payment made to, or claimable by, the employer for the employment of young people. Wage subsidies usually cover a proportion of the wage and non-wage costs for eligible employees, not the whole cost.

Welfare includes wellbeing, covering economic and social wellbeing, personal wellbeing and development, and inclusion and empowerment.

Workfare is a welfare system which requires some work or attendance for training from those receiving benefits. Workfare is not an intervention but a means of delivering interventions which has been applied to state-run youth employment interventions in many countries since the 1990s.

Annex 2 – Transformation of effect sizes

We here show the calculation to convert an effect size into a percentage change. This is done by the following steps:

1. effect size expressed as d or g into an odds ratio (OR)
2. create a 2x2 table, which requires data on the outcome in the control condition
3. calculate the percentage change.

The conversion of d or g to an OR uses the following formula

$$OR = e^{\frac{\pi d}{\sqrt{3}}}$$

Using this formula, d=0.07 gives OR=1.14.

To create the 2x2 table we assume 200 observations, evenly divided between treatment and control groups (the results are insensitive to whatever we assume here). That means there are 100 recorded observations in the control group and 100 recorded observations the treatment group. We assume that 50% of individuals in the control group enter employment despite not being exposed to the intervention, which is a fairly common finding. With these assumptions, the observed effect sizes can be easily transformed to a percentage change.

To do this we complete the 2x2 table shown below. From the assumptions already given, we know there are 100 in each of the treatment and control group, and the latter are evenly distributed between those in and not in employment (50% employed).

The number in employment in the treatment group is unknown X. Since the sample is fixed at 100, the number not in employment is 100-X. Since there is just one unknown we need only one equation to solve for X, which is the formula for the odds ratio. The odds ratio is given by: A*D/B*C, where A is the number of participants that were not in employment in the treatment group, B is the number of participants who were in employment in the treatment group, C is the number of participants that were not in employment in the control group, and D is the number of participants that were in employment in the control group. The odds ratio for employment, calculated above, is OR = 1.14, then using the table below and the formula for an OR, we can estimate the value of X. Therefore, the value of X is 53.2.

	Not Employed	Employed	Total
Treatment	100-X	100	100
Control	50	50	100

Therefore, the relative increase in employment is (53.2 – 50.0)/50 = 6.3% (and the absolute increase 3.2%).

Annex 3 – Explanation of acronyms

ALI: Adult Learning Inspectorate

ALS: Additional learning support

APIR: Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review

BCC: British Chambers of Commerce

CBI: Confederation of British Industry

CBO: Community-Based Organisations

CDEPP: Community Development Employment Projects Program

CDF: Community Development Foundation

CE: Community Employment

CEDC: Community Education Development Centre

CEG: Career Entry Guidance

CEI: Centre for Evidence and Implementation

CFA*: Centre de Formation des Apprentis*

CI: Confidence Interval

CIAG: Careers information, advice and guidance

CIE: Cambridge International Education

CW: Careers Wales

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

DID: *Dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità*

DSP: Department of Social Protection

DWP: Department for Work and Pensions

DYW: Developing the Young Workforce

E2E: Entry to Employment

EGM: Evidence and Gap Map

EGM: Evidence and Gap Maps

ELS: Essential Life Skills

ERSA: Employment Related Services Association

ESF: European Social Fund

ESF: European Social Fund

ESFD: European Social Fund Division

ESIF: European Structural and Investment Fund

ESO: Employment Services Officer

EU: European Union

EURES: European Employment Services

FA: Foundation Apprenticeship

FAEDEI: *Federación de Asociaciones Empresariales de Empresas de Insercion*

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FAS: *Foras Áiseanna Saothai*

FJF: Future Job Fund

FFT: Functional Family Therapy

FNIYES: First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy

FSB: Federation of Small Businesses

GA: Graduate Apprenticeships

HICs: High-Income Countries

IAG: Information, Advice and Guidance

IES: Institute for Employment Studies

ILO: International Labour Organization

ILP: Individual Learning Plan

INJUVE: Instituto de la Juventud

IPS: Individual Placement and Support

ISKUR: Turkish National Employment Agency

IT: Information Technology

ITEA: Irish Training and Employment Authority

ITT: Intention To Treat

JA: Jobseeker's Allowance

JB: Jobseeker's Benefit

JC: Job Challenge

JCP: Job Centre Plus

JSA: Job Seeker's Allowance

LAB: Lead Accountable Bodies

LCDC: Local and Community Development Committee

LCREH: Leeds City Region Employment Hub

LEA: Local Education Authorities

LEG: Liverpool Employment Gateway

LEP: Local Enterprise Partnerships

LICs: Low Income Countries

L&MICs: Low and Middle Income Countries

MA: Managing Agents

MA: Modern Apprenticeship

MCTEE: Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment

MDFT: Multidimensional family therapy

MSD: Ministry of Social Development

MSME: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

MST: Multisystemic therapy

NACRO: National Assoc for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

NAO: National Audit Office

NEAP: National Employment Action Plan

NCS: National Careers Service

NCS: National Careers Service

NDYP: New Deal for Young People

NDYP: New Deal for Young People

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

NMW: National Minimum Wage

NSF: Neighbourhood Support Fund

NTT: National Technical Team

NUTS: Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics

NVQ: National Vocational Qualifications

NYA: National Youth Agency

NYEAP: National Youth Employment Action Plan

OA: Opportunity Areas

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OTJ: On-the-job (training)

PA: Personal Advisor

PAED: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development

PAI: *Piano di azione individuale*

PEIL: Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning

PEVTB: Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Board

PIEL: Participation in Everyday Life

PIPOL: *Piano d'azione per il sostegno all'accesso, rientro o permanenza nel mercato del lavoro*

PR: Public Relations

PRUs: Pupil Referral Units

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SERI: Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive

SICAP: Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme

SICAP: Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

SMD: Standardised Mean Difference

SQV: Scottish vocational qualifications

TC: Training Centre

ToT: Training of/other Trainers

TtW: Transition to Work

TVET: Technical Vocational Education and Training

UC: Universal Credit

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNJP-YEM: UN Joint Programme on Youth, Employment and Migration

WHP: Wider Horizons Programme

YC: Youth Challenge

YCs: Youth Credits

YEG: Youth Employment Gateways

YEI: Youth Employment Initiative

YESS: Youth Employment Support Scheme

YFF: Youth Futures Foundation

YGIPs: Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans

YMCE: Young Men's Christian Association

YOP: Youth Opportunities Programme

YS: Youth Service

YTS: Youth Training Scheme