

# Technical and vocational education and training for young people has a small positive effect on employment outcomes



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## *TVET interventions for youth have a small, positive effect on employability and employment*

### **What is the aim of this review?**

This Campbell systematic review examines the effectiveness of technical and vocational education intervention in developing countries on employment and employability outcomes of young people. The review synthesises findings from 26 studies conducted in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, East Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Participants were between the ages of 15-24. Ten studies were used for statistical meta-analysis.

Youth in developing countries are three times more likely than adults to work in the informal sector in jobs with limited personal and social benefits. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are a means to expand opportunities for marginalised youth. TVET interventions have a small but positive effect on employment outcomes for young people.

### **What did the review study?**

Many young people in developing countries work in low quality jobs that have low potential for career development or supporting economic growth. This is particularly problematic for developing countries given the continually significant labour productivity gap between developing and developed regions.

With increasing emphasis on work and skills-based solutions to economic completion and poverty there is a renewed focus on TVET. This review examines the effectiveness of these TVET interventions on employment and employability outcomes of young people in low- and middle-income countries, and which factors may moderate these effects.

### **What studies are included?**

Included studies had to (1) study a TVET intervention, (2) report outcomes for youth aged 15-24 located in low- or middle-income countries; and (3) use an experimental or valid quasi-experimental research design.

A total of 26 studies were included in the review. The studies assess the effectiveness of 20 different TVET interventions from various countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, East Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The study settings included ten upper middle-income countries – Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Latvia, Mexico, Panama and Peru; two lower middle-income countries –



### How up-to-date is this review?

The review authors searched for studies published until September 2012. This Campbell Systematic Review was published in September 2013.

### What is the Campbell Collaboration?

The Campbell Collaboration is an international, voluntary, non-profit research network that publishes systematic reviews. We summarise and evaluate the quality of evidence about programmes in the social and behavioural sciences. Our aim is to help people make better choices and better policy decisions.

### About this summary

This summary was prepared by Ada Chukwudozie and Howard White (Campbell Collaboration) based on the Campbell Systematic Review 2013:9 Post-Basic Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Interventions to Improve the Employability and Employment of Young People in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review by Janice Tripney, Jorge Hombrados, Mark Newman, Kimberly Hovish, Chris Brown, Katarzyna Steinka-Fry and Eric Wilkey (DOI 10.4073/csr.2013.9). The summary was redesigned, proofread and produced by Tanya Kristiansen (Campbell Collaboration). Financial support from the American Institutes for Research for the production of this summary is gratefully acknowledged.

India and Bhutan; and one low-income country – Kenya.

### What are the main results in this review?

Overall, TVET interventions have a small but positive effect on all but one of the employment outcomes measured.

However, there was considerable variation in effects between studies. A main factor driving these differences was study quality. Lower quality studies find a significantly larger effect. Hence the meta-analysed effect size is inflated, and should be based on studies of at least medium quality.

No one model of TVET intervention was found to be better than others and there was inadequate statistical power to detect moderating effects of the variables tested.

### What do the findings in this review mean?

While the review provides some evidence of TVET interventions having positive effects on employability and employment for young people, several limitations of both the included studies and the review itself prevents one from drawing direct and strong inferences from the result of the analyses.

So, in the absence of evidence in support of a particular, and possibly expensive, intervention, opting for the cheapest and/or most culturally acceptable models may be the best approach. At the same time, because the effects observed in this review are generally small and were difficult to detect, it is of some importance that future programmes are evaluated rigorously and that the different stakeholders involved think carefully about how to improve programmes to create larger effects on the outcomes. To build the evidence base further, many more of the TVET interventions currently in existence in developing countries need to be rigorously evaluated, and the results reported and disseminated efficiently.

