

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research Assistant

The ILO is seeking the support of a research assistant with expertise and experience in statistics/econometrics to carry out screening and/or coding tasks to support a systematic review of youth labour market interventions.

Interested candidates may apply for either screening and / or coding related tasks (as specified in detail) below and should indicate clearly in their application for which tasks (or both) they wish to be considered. As detailed in Section 9 below the successful execution of both task demands a basic understanding of (i) labour market interventions and (ii) empirical methods of counterfactual impact evaluations (experimental and quasi-experimental, e.g. difference-in-differences, matching, instrumental variables).

In addition, coding related tasks require an in depth- understanding of empirical micro-economics/econometrics (incl. familiarity with the above mentioned impact evaluation methods and statistics concepts such as effect and sample sizes, statistical inference, confidence levels and intervals and statistical bias).

Interested applicants are invited to apply by sending their CV, letter of motivation (1 page max., highlighting relevant previous research experience), their daily rate as well as their availability until from now to 30 November (in working days per week subject to a minimum of 1.5 days – or 12 working hours – per week) to Jonas Bausch (bausch@ilo.org) by 30 September 23:59 PM CEST. Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis.

1 Background

In 2017, ILO and its partners published a systematic review on “Interventions to Improve the Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: A Systematic Review of Training, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services and Subsidized Employment Interventions”.¹ The review covered 113 impact evaluations based on 107 youth employment interventions in 31 countries that primarily targeted young women and men and were evaluated through a (quasi-)experimental design.

As the evidence-base on youth employment has grown substantially since 2017, the ILO is currently carrying out an update of the systematic review. The review will analyse in detail the labour market impact of skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, mentoring, and subsidised employment interventions. It aims at providing policymakers and practitioners with evidence on what works, and why, to improve the labour market conditions of young people.

2 Objective of the assignment

The objectives of the assignment are:

- (i) **Screening:**

¹ Kluge et al. (2017): Interventions to Improve the Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: A Systematic Review of Training, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services and Subsidized Employment Interventions, available [here](#).

- a. **screen the title and abstract** of a set of references provided by ILO following the inclusion criteria and using the EPPI Reviewer web-based application to determine whether or not to consider the study for full screening
 - b. **Fully screen studies** by recording key qualitative information of each study in an Excel Sheet to determine whether or not to include the study in the systematic review.
- (ii) **Coding:** extract information from impact evaluation studies of youth employment interventions, both in terms of effect and sample sizes of as well as relevant background characteristics of the evaluated labour market intervention as well as other relevant information.

This assignment demands a well-founded understanding of (a) categories of labour market interventions (skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, mentoring, and subsidised employment interventions) and (b) empirical methods of counterfactual impact evaluations (experimental and quasi-experimental, e.g. difference-in-differences, matching, instrumental variables).

3 Scope of work

The research assistant's scope of work will comprise the following tasks:

A. Screening of references:

- a. **Getting familiar with the protocol, screening guidelines, and reference management web-application used for the screening of studies:** The research assistant should become familiar with the review's concepts, terminology, and methodology as described in the systematic review's protocol. In addition, the research assistant should become familiar with the tools, data entry options, and be able to use (i) the reference management web-application EPPI Reviewer (on boarding to the EPPI Reviewer will be provided by members of the research team and additional self-study time might be needed depending on the previous experiences with EPPI of the research assistant) in the case of **title & abstract screening** and (ii) an Excel template to record key information on studies in the case of **full screening**.
- b. **Screening of studies assigned by the ILO:** The ILO has conducted a global search for relevant literature which resulted in a large set of studies. The research assistant will apply the review's inclusion and exclusion criteria to screen the set of studies and classify them accordingly. This process will involve one or both of the following tasks:
 - i. **Screening of title and abstract:** using the EPPI reviewer software (online access provided by the ILO) and assessing whether based on title and abstract the paper might meet the inclusion criteria of the systematic review or not. Studies that pass the title and abstract screening are moved to full screening and are otherwise excluded from the systematic review;
 - ii. **Full screening of studies:** using an Excel template record a number of qualitative information of each study that will allow to assess in detail whether or not to include the study in the systematic review

B. Coding of impact evaluation:

- a. **Reviewing the protocol, screening guidelines, coding manual, and coding tool:** The research assistant should become familiar with the review's concepts, terminology, methodology as described in the systematic review's protocol. In addition, the research assistant should

become familiar with the inclusion criteria, coding manual, coding tools, and data entry options all of which will be provided by the ILO.

- b. **Data extraction:** The research assistant will support the extraction of information, or “coding”, of included studies assigned by the ILO. The research assistant will ensure to code the last published version of the study prior to coding. This assumes the most recent version for the same programme and sample contains the most reliable estimations. The research assistant will use the coding tool (provided by ILO) to extract data required to compute effect sizes and programme characteristics of the study. The research assistant will arrange meetings with the coding team to discuss his/her decisions. The coding manual will guide the research assistant’s work, particularly as regards to definitions and concepts of the effect size information and programme characteristics. The research assistant will provide weekly updates of the coding progress to the ILO.

For both set of tasks described above the consult in addition is expected to:

- **Maintain close interaction with the ILO:** The research assistant will maintain constant communication with the ILO and the review team to avoid duplication of work, ensure a homogeneous understanding of the exercise, and confirm that criteria terminology and concepts the research assistant applies are consistent with those outlined in the protocol. This will involve weekly meetings with the research team to discuss technical questions that might arise from the assignment and discuss logistical and organisational aspects.
- **Submit data:** The research assistant will ensure that all screened information is saved and available as well as any additional information (research papers, programme documents) identified during the process. The main point of contact at the ILO is Susana Puerto (Puerto-gonzalez@ilo.org).

4 Timeline and Key Deliverables

Key deliverables will be agreed upon subject prior to conclusion of any legal agreement and subject to the needs of the research project and the availability of the research assistant on the following basis:

- **Screening Title & Abstract:** screening 600 studies per full working day (8 hours) using the EPPI reviewer software (online access provided by the ILO).
- **Full screening:** screening 24 studies per full working day (8 hours) recording key information on each paper in an Excel sheet
- **Coding:** coding a set number of studies on the basis of 6 working hours per study. Coding includes retrieving a large set of qualitative and quantitative information from each study and recording them in an Excel sheet. Research assistants involved in coding studies will be allotted two additional full working days to familiarise themselves with the coding manual and to compensate for an initial learning curve.

Timelines for deliverables will be set as a function of the agreed deliverables and the availability of the research assistant and should be in any case delivered no later than on 30 November 2021.

Deviations from these figures can occur according to the evolution of the screening process; however, any changes observed or anticipated should be consulted with the focal person at the ILO.

5 Fees

Interested candidates should indicate their daily rate as part of their applications

6 Payment Terms

The first and only payment will be made in relation to this contract upon submission of all applicable deliverables to the satisfaction of the ILO and presentation of the invoice.

7 Staffing, Roles, and Reporting

The research assistant will report to Susana Puerto, the Senior Youth Employment Specialist of the Youth Employment Unit at the ILO Geneva.

8 Specific Clauses

Throughout the course of this assignment, the research assistant will report on a weekly basis to the ILO for coordination and follow-up. If it appears necessary to modify the tasks of work or exceed the time allocated, the research assistant must discuss the circumstances with the ILO and obtain prior written approval. ILO may disclose the draft or final report and/or any related information of the systematic review to any person and for any purpose ILO may deem appropriate.

9 Required skills/experience

- MA level degree(s) or equivalent in economics, statistics, mathematics or related field. Current enrolment in a post-graduate economics program with related coursework and/or research is an advantage. For *coding related tasks* a PhD degree or enrolment in a PhD programme is desirable.
- Detailed knowledge of empirical analysis and econometric methods relevant to counterfactual impact evaluations.
- For *coding related tasks*, previous experience with labour market interventions and impact evaluations is highly desirable.
- Experience with systematic reviews and meta-analysis and understanding of the key concepts would be an advantage.
- Experience managing databases and working with reference management software would be an advantage.
- Exceptional organizational and communication skills, ability to work independently to meet deadlines.
- Very good command of written and spoken English.
- Knowledge of Spanish, French, German or Portuguese would be an advantage.

10 Confidentiality

All data and information received from the ILO for the purpose of this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to

the ILO. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the ILO.