

# CAIPD

Cellule d'analyse d'impact des politiques  
de développement  
Issue 01 (Sept. 21, 2023)\*

## Vocational Training Programmes in Low- and Middle- Income Countries: Insights from Experimental Studies

Mariajose Silva-Vargas  
J-PAL Europe and LISER

Established at the initiative of the Directorate of Development Cooperation, CAIPD brings together researchers from LISER and J-PAL Europe to equip the government with methodological tools for impact evaluations and programme monitoring in cooperation projects.



Source: Mariajose Silva-Vargas, Smart Girls NGO Uganda

## Summary

Experimental evaluations of vocational training programmes in low- and middle-income countries underscores their fundamental effectiveness in imparting new skills. However, this evidence offers a mixed picture on their short and long-term impacts on labour market outcomes as well as their cost-effectiveness. While more research is needed to help clarify the optimal format of such programmes, we can identify from existing evaluations promising strategies that appear likely to amplify impacts. This policy brief delineates the conditions under which vocational training programmes are more likely to yield significant positive effects on participants' employment, income, and the empowerment of women.

### Practical experience matters

Providing practical experience alongside in-classroom training, has led to positive effects on employment outcomes. The experience helps job seekers gain firm-level information.

### Training and mentoring

Incorporating mentoring, counselling, or facilitating connections with employers consistently demonstrates enhanced employment outcomes across diverse circumstances.

### Tackling the cost of training

In certain instances, the effectiveness of vocational training programmes receives a significant boost through the inclusion of cash transfers for participants.

## Main Takeaways

When it comes to designing training programmes, additional insights can be gleaned from experimental studies:

- **Hard- and soft-skills training components** complement each other effectively.
- **Integrating classroom-based technical training with practical experience** such as apprenticeships, frequently results in increased labour supply and higher earnings for participants.
- There is suggestive evidence that **engaging the private sector** in designing training programmes positively influences participants' employment and earnings outcomes.
- Moreover, there is initial evidence that the **quality of the trainer matters**.
- Tailored vocational training programmes **tackling gender-specific barriers** can offer substantial support to women.

\*Policy brief n° 2023-06 from the LISER series, partially based on the J-PAL Policy Insight on "Vocational and skills training programs to improve labor market outcomes," co-authored by Victoire Fribourg, Simon Cooper and Natalie Valent.