

TOOL 5: TARGET GROUP ASSESSMENT

Overview

At a glance

Labour market constraints typically have a disproportionately large effect on vulnerable groups, such as youth, women, displaced persons, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, and ethnic groups. Employment promotion interventions are, therefore, often designed with the aim of enhancing the access of disadvantaged groups to the world of work. For the interventions to succeed, it is crucial to understand the employment barriers and opportunities specific to the target group in question, which may occur in addition to the barriers and opportunities faced by the broader population (e.g. quality of education, private sector hiring...). Target group assessments represent a set of methods that allow us to identify group-specific prospects and challenges, with practical implications for employment programming. Depending on the project needs, this tool can be used independently or in conjunction with other approaches.

Key information it can provide

Target group assessment focuses on the range of employment constraints and opportunities from the perspective of a particular target group, to understand the possibilities of improving their chances for wage and self-employment and enhancing the overall inclusiveness of the labour market. As with the integrated employment diagnostic, it is important to adopt a holistic approach and consider factors beyond the labour market itself, such as health, regulations and socio-cultural norms, that impact the target group's employability and labour market outcomes. Specifically, target group assessments can supply the following labour market information:

- **Country context and target group employment outcomes:** Understand the country context and the target group's labour market outcomes (unemployment rate, labour force participation rate), using descriptive statistics.
- **Target group profile:** Understand the profile of the target group, including their perceptions, needs and aspirations. Note that characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity or marital status, might contribute to different employment outcomes for individuals within a target group. Sub-group analysis to account for variation within the target group might be necessary.

- **Target group employment barriers and opportunities:** Understand labour market challenges and prospects specific to the target group, given the variety of factors that affect the target group more broadly. Note that many of these factors are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They include:
 - **Macro-level:** demographic situation; legal framework; social norms and beliefs; discrimination
 - **Meso-/institutional level:** labour regulation; quality, availability and access to health and social services; access to productive resources; workplace and working conditions; access to infrastructure and transport
 - **Micro/individual-level:** skills and work experience; perceptions; aspirations; information; agency; time; mobility; social capital; health

Data source(s)

Given the range of factors affecting the target group's ability to access the world of work, collecting information from a variety of sources is typically warranted in order to triangulate the findings and draw meaningful conclusions. Potential data sources include:

- Secondary sources
 - Existing literature, including country/regional studies focusing on the target group (incl. school-to-work transition reports)
 - International data sources on the target group (e.g. ILO's YouthPol, World Bank's Women, Business and the Law, etc.)
 - National statistics (e.g. census data, Labour Force Surveys)
 - Administrative data (e.g. unemployment records from the National Employment Agency; online job portals, Chamber of Commerce)
 - Analysis of the legal framework (e.g. right to work; national employment strategy)
- Primary sources
 - Qualitative methods: focus group discussions; key informant interviews (stakeholders include family, institutions and service providers, employers)
 - Quantitative methods: target group survey, such as tracer/alumni surveys; employer survey

Context requirements (feasibility)

The feasibility of conducting an in-depth target group assessment depends on several factors:

- **Project life cycle phase:** Rapid qualitative analysis and desk research can be conducted as part of the project preparation/initiation phase. However, thorough target group assessments (including collection and/or analysis of quantitative data) are often conducted only after the project has been approved (early or late implementation phase), given the amount of time and resources required.
- **Access to the target group:** To collect primary data (qualitative and quantitative), access to members of the target group and other key informants is crucial. Particularly vulnerable populations, such as young women and refugees, may be difficult to reach (e.g. social norms, geographic spread, lack of trust). Moreover, broader context factors (e.g. government sensitivities, fragility and conflict in the area) might hinder primary data collection.
- **Access to detailed, up-to-date administrative records (optional):** If available, detailed administrative data can be used to understand the target group's employment barriers and opportunities without having to carry out a full-scale target group survey (typically more costly). Qualitative tools (e.g. in-depth interviews) could be used to supplement the analysis. Moreover, to support the selection of respondents for quantitative data collection, access to administrative data records and/or population census data would be useful to determine the sampling frame.

Advantages and limitations

Advantages	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide a detailed understanding of the target group and its challenges and prospects, with practical implications for programming • Able to capture different dimensions: macro, institutional and individual barriers and opportunities • Flexible in terms of scope and potential data sources that can be prioritized according to specific knowledge gaps and programming needs • Can be combined with other assessment types (e.g. enterprise survey, market assessment, etc.) • Possible to integrate participatory elements by involving the target group in the assessment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be time- and resource-intensive if primary quantitative data collection needed • Greater focus on supply/labour market matching, with limited information on demand-side aspects • Careful interpretation may be needed to differentiate the target group’s and other stakeholders’ “opinions” / “perceptions” from reality • In practice, often difficult to ensure a representative sample of the population even if quantitative methods are used, due to a lack of accurate census/ administrative data to define the sampling frame

Box 4.10: Youth Labour Market Assessment in Sri Lanka

Conducted as part of the USAID-funded YouLead project in Sri Lanka, the 2018 Youth Labour Market Assessment explores employment challenges and opportunities faced by young Sri Lankans in five priority sectors, with the aim of improving YouLead project interventions. The study adopts a mixed methods approach, combining youth, employer and entrepreneurship surveys (quantitative) with key informant interviews (qualitative). To the extent possible, survey data are disaggregated by gender to highlight any barriers specific to young women. Survey results reveal young people’s preferences: they favour traditional jobs offering greater security, better work-life balance and shorter commutes. Inadequate information about available jobs and a lack of safe transport options can prevent young people from accessing the world of work. Young women in particular face challenges due to competing family responsibilities and a lack of flexible working hours and support services. From the perspective of employers, inadequate knowledge of English as well as a lack of soft and job-specific technical skills were seen as key challenges to hiring Sri Lankan youth.

Source: [Verité Research \(2018\), p. 13-19](#)

How to

Defining the scope / prioritizing learning objectives

Several important aspects should be considered upfront depending on the context and programming needs:

- (i) **Definition of the target group:** The target group should be clearly defined and narrowed down if possible (e.g. youth (18-24) or (15-29); refugee population and/or refugee host community).
- (ii) **Depth of information:** The depth of information needed is a key consideration (i.e. comprehensive or basic/subset target group assessment). Conducting a less resource-intensive target group assessment could help build a basic target group profile, using secondary data on the target group's employment outcomes and simple qualitative tools (e.g. interviews, focus groups). A more complex assessment would focus on the underlying factors affecting the target group's access to the labour market, with an option of conducting exploratory, open-ended research or focusing on unpacking some of the key barriers and opportunities (identified through prior research and/or desk review).
- (iii) **Extent of data collection:** The choice in terms of data sources and data collection should be based on the depth of information required and the available resources. Qualitative data (obtained through e.g. key informant interviews, focus group discussions) provide additional nuance through personal stories and statements. Quantitative tools (such as target group surveys and employer surveys) can provide rigorous data on the target group barriers and opportunities, though they are more resource intensive.
- (iv) **Geographic scope:** This involves the specification of the geographic scope where the assessment is to be carried out, largely determined by the programme's geographic scope. Target group assessment is typically conducted at the sub-national level (regional or municipal), as programmes tend to be implemented in a specific region or city.

Steps/tasks to implement the instrument

Although the specific details will depend on the scope of the target group assessment and the chosen data collection methods, key steps can be summarized as follows:

1. **Inception phase:** Initial scoping of existing literature and country studies focusing on the target group and key stakeholders, as well as any available data. Based on the desk research, the intended scope and workplan of the assessment can be refined. This step also consists of identifying stakeholders to be interviewed or included in focus group discussions (if qualitative methods are used) and/or choosing a feasible sampling strategy and an appropriate sample size (in the case of a quantitative survey).
2. **Design and piloting of data collection instrument(s):** Depending on the specific approach chosen, this step may include the development of guidelines for semi-structured interviews with key informants or focus group discussions, and/or the design of survey questionnaires.
3. **Data collection:** Depending on the extent of quantitative surveying, survey data might be collected separately by a survey firm in coordination with the consultant team or the consultant team might arrange the data collection process themselves.
4. **Analysis and draft report:** Information collected from primary and secondary sources is analysed, serving as the basis for drafting the report. The draft report is used to gather internal and external feedback prior to the validation meeting.
5. **Validation and final report:** A validation meeting with key counterparts and stakeholders helps validate key report findings and make adjustments as needed, while supporting dissemination and buy-in. Feedback can then be used to finalise the assessment.

Level of Effort

The level of effort (LoE) and time needed for target group assessments depend crucially on the scope and depth of the analysis as well as data collection methods and geographic focus. The estimated minimum level of effort is summarized in the table below:

Steps	Details	Estimated LoE (minimum)
Inception phase	The time effort required depends on the scope of the desk review, the ease of sourcing secondary data (national statistics, administrative records) and the approach to selecting respondents.	5-10 days
Design of instruments	The level of effort will largely depend on the number of instruments to be developed, the number of different stakeholder groups interviewed (e.g. local leaders, parents, NGOs, service providers, etc.) and whether a quantitative survey is planned (development and piloting of questionnaires, sampling).	5-10 days
Data collection	The time needed will depend strongly on the geographic scope, depth of data collection planned and type of survey administration (e.g. face to face, phone, etc.). Preparing the field work and collecting the data will likely represent the most labour-intensive part of the assessment.	5-20 days
Analysis & draft report	The level of effort required for data analysis depends on the variety of data sources used for the assessment. If the data are available in an electronic format, the analysis can proceed at a quicker pace.	5-15 days
Validation & final report	The extent of this phase mainly depends on the magnitude of consultation and validation of the results with different stakeholders and institutions, prior to consolidating the findings.	5 days
Total		30-70 days

Skills requirements

Depending on the depth and extent of data collection and analysis, one would typically seek out a team comprised of a senior expert with demonstrated experience of labour market integration for the target group of interest and a local expert with strong knowledge of the local context as well as experience in data collection.

Lead staff/consultant(s)	Local staff/consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master or PhD in Social Sciences, Economics, Business, Development Studies or a related field • Significant work experience in the area of employment promotion for vulnerable groups • Good understanding of the target group of interest • Demonstrated expertise in qualitative and/or quantitative data analysis (according to the needs of the assignment) • Sensitivity and communication skills • Prior work experience in the country/region • Language skills (as needed, e.g. English, French, local languages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education degree in Social Sciences or a related field • Previous experience of working with the target group of interest • Good knowledge of and access to local stakeholders/ community • Demonstrated expertise in qualitative data collection and analysis (experience with quantitative data collection preferred) • Excellent facilitation skills • Proficiency in target group language/dialect (as needed)

Note that quantitative data collection could either be conducted either by the consultant team and their team of enumerators or by a professional survey firm through a separate contract. Hiring a survey firm might be particularly useful when dealing with a larger sample size.

Other considerations

- **Combining multiple tools:** In practice, for a broader understanding of the labour market dynamics, one may want to combine target group assessment with other types of labour market assessments. For instance, it may be combined with market assessments (consumers and businesses), institutional analysis to understand the services available to the target group (e.g. mapping of key stakeholders such as TVET institutes), etc.
- **Participatory approach:** If building engagement with the local target group is a priority, then using a participatory approach to labour market assessment may be warranted (see Tool 8: Participatory labour market assessment).
- **Linkages with gender analysis:** Many development agencies require project teams to provide information on the potential social and environmental impact of the proposed intervention, including on women. Data collected through target group assessments can, therefore, be a useful source of information for institutional risk management frameworks.

- **Synergies with the monitoring and evaluation system:** As part of project monitoring and evaluations, the project team may already have planned to interview (prospective) beneficiaries in order to establish a baseline. It might be possible to adjust the baseline survey in order to collect additional information on the target group that can support labour market diagnostics.

Box 4.11: Labour Market Assessment on Refugee Youth in Turkey

International Youth Foundation (IYF) commissioned a labour market assessment on the situation of Syrian youth in Istanbul. Apart from identifying key employment barriers and opportunities for young Syrian refugees living in Istanbul, the study also served as the basis for designing capacity building workshops for local NGOs as part of IYF's Syrian Refugee Employability Programme.

Process

The researchers relied on both secondary and primary sources of data. Desk research consisted of reviewing relevant literature (including existing surveys of Syrians living in Turkey) and analysing data from public and private organisations (e.g. Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkish Labour Agency, job portals and the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce). Primary data collection included in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and a face-to-face survey of more than 1,000 young Syrians aged 18-29. The design of the survey questionnaire was based on Turkey's standard Household Labour Force Survey, providing valuable information on labour market outcomes and aspirations of young Syrian refugees. Interviews with businesses, young Syrians, service providers and NGOs provided the research team with additional nuance about the target group.

Challenges

Lack of administrative records to determine the total population of Syrian refugees in Istanbul meant that random sampling was not possible. Instead convenience sampling was conducted, creating a potential source of bias. The respondents were more likely to be unemployed than employed due to their availability during work hours. The sample size was increased to mitigate the potential bias. In addition, it was particularly challenging to interview young women, with some citing previous harassment. Women-only survey teams were used to try to address the challenges in reaching this vulnerable target sub-group.

Benefits/ conclusions

The report identified several important barriers to (quality) employment faced by young Syrians, including insufficient knowledge of Turkish, low participation rates in vocational training programmes (often due to scheduling conflicts) and a restrictive regulatory framework. Key consequences in terms of programming included increasing the focus on teaching Turkish before providing vocational training programmes. To reduce potential scheduling issues, it was recommended that the courses are offered outside of working hours. Finally, the report recognized the significance of broader regulatory reforms (going beyond the immediate scope of the programme) as a way of reducing barriers to participation in the formal labour market faced by Syrian refugees.

Source: [IYF \(2018\)](#)

Further resources

Guidelines

[International Labour Organization \(2017\), Methodology for Conducting Youth Labour Market Analysis.](#)

[International Labour Organization, School-to-Work Transition Surveys.](#)

[International Labour Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(2017\), Guide to market-based interventions for refugees.](#)

[International Youth Foundation \(2012\), Ensuring Demand-Driven Youth Training Programs: How to Conduct an Effective Labor Market Assessment.](#)

[IREX \(2018\), Youth-Led Labor Market Assessment Framework and Guide. Meaningfully involving youth in labor market assessments through participatory action research.](#)

Selected studies

[Education for Employment \(2015\), First Jobs for Young Women in the Middle East & North Africa: Expectations and Reality.](#)

[FHI360 \(2014\), Workforce Connections: Kenya Youth Assessment.](#)

[International Youth Foundation \(2018\), Opportunities for Syrian Youth in Istanbul: A Labour Market Assessment.](#)

[Orange \(2016\), Increasing Women's access to the Labor Market in Syria: Training Needs Assessment Report.](#)

[Verité Research \(2018\), Youth Labour Market Assessment Sri Lanka.](#)

[World Bank \(2012\), Kingdom of Morocco: Promoting Youth Opportunities and Participation.](#)