



## ***Youth Employment Network and Jacobs Foundation launch fund for evaluation of youth employment programs***

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*ZURICH/GENEVA (ILO news)* –The Youth Employment Network (YEN), an interagency partnership of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank, have signed an agreement with the Jacobs Foundation, a Swiss-based private foundation, to build an evidence base in youth employment through evaluating the impact of youth employment programs. The Jacobs Foundation has committed to provide 450,000 CHF in funding over 3 years (2010-2012).

The project will be delivered through the “Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment” whereby eligible youth employment organizations can submit applications to a call for proposals to receive financial and technical support for conducting an impact evaluation.

Dr. Bernd Ebersold, CEO of the Jacobs Foundation, strongly supports the project saying, that “evidence which documents the positive impacts of youth employment programs is extremely weak, especially in developing countries. Policy makers simply do not have the information they need to make informed decision regarding the type of program that is needed to provide jobs for their youth. Few, if any youth employment programs have shown evidence of impact – it’s time we make a real effort to demonstrate not only which programs are working well but how they are working.”

Financial support will be provided through grants to subsidize the high costs of data collection and analysis associated with impact evaluation. Technical support will be delivered through “YEN evaluation Clinics”, hands on learning events delivered in targeted regions. The first call for proposals will concentrate on youth entrepreneurship projects in sub-Saharan Africa - one of the areas where there is a severe lack of quantitative evidence.

Evaluation Clinics aim to improve the knowledge and skills of youth employment practitioners to design and conduct rigorous evaluations. The innovative approach of the Clinics is to provide an open space for evaluation specialists to collaborate with practitioners on live case studies, providing practical advice on how to improve and refine evaluation plans. An Evaluation Clinics will be delivered later this year in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

The central outcome of the project will be a series of impact evaluations addressing the questions of “what works?”, “how it works?” and “why it works?” in improving job creation impacts for youth.

Recommendations and results of impact evaluations will be communicated widely to policy-makers and development practitioners to help them improve decision making, programming and resource allocation. Dr. Markus Pilgrim, the Manager of YEN highlighted YEN's strength as a vehicle for communicating evidenced based policy recommendations: "An important avenue of dissemination for the results of the impact evaluations will be through YEN's Lead Country Network, a group of 20 developing world governments committed to designing and delivering national youth employment policy. The partnership with Jacobs Foundation will allow us to provide effective advice to high-level decision makers".

A retreat between Jacobs Foundation and YEN will be held at the end of year three to decide on future collaborations between the two organizations.

### **About the Jacobs Foundation**

The Zurich-based private Jacobs Foundation was established in 1988 by entrepreneur Klaus J. Jacobs. Ever since, the foundation has focused its efforts on the development of children and youth. Today it has many decades of experience in the funding of science and specific intervention programs and their implementation in this field. The Foundation provides funding and support worldwide and has an annual funding budget amounting to approximately CHF 35 million. The Foundation deploys an approach of child and youth development, which puts special emphasis on the positive development opportunities for young people. As far as its methods and approaches are concerned, it is particularly committed to scientific excellence and evidence-based findings. With its investment of EUR 200 million in the Jacobs University Bremen (2006), it set new standards in the area of private funding.

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## **About YEN**

YEN (Youth Employment Network) is a partnership of the UN, ILO and the World Bank set up after the Millennium Summit in 2001 to find new and durable solutions to the youth employment challenge. The network is a global platform whose goal is to prioritize youth employment on the development agenda and to exchange knowledge on effective policies and programs to improve employment opportunities for youth. It is a service provider focusing on policy advice, innovative pilot projects, knowledge sharing, and brokering partnerships. YEN makes use of its core agency partners' know how and resources and ensures youth participation in delivering its services.

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