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Nigeria – ICT Training for unemployed youth in Nigeria: Nigeria BPO

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**Abstract**
Youth unemployment is a problem in many countries around the world, even for highly educated populations. Skills training is a common policy response, although evidence for its effectiveness in both low- and high-income settings has been mixed. The ACCESS Nigeria IT jobs skills training program ("Assessment of Core Competency for Employability in the Service Sector") aimed to prepare recent university graduates for jobs in an emerging back-office processing (BPO) sector. The paper evaluates the employment effects of ACCESS in the sector and examine the extent to which gender biases held by female applicants themselves modify the impact of the program. Intention-to-treat results suggest that the program increased employment in the IT sector by an average of 30 percent two years later, with gains primarily accruing to students who demonstrated above median aptitude for working in the sector prior to training. The program appears to have succeeded only in shifting employment to the new sector, as it had no average or heterogeneous impacts on the overall likelihood of being employed. This sectoral shift is particularly pronounced among women who at baseline were implicitly biased against associating women with professional activities, suggesting that training programs can also help certain populations overcome self-defeating biases that could hamper mobility in the labor market.

KEY VARIABLES
This survey was designed to capture indicators on the following:
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Earnings
- ✓ IAT gender bias
- ✓ Education level
- ✓ Skills assessment

USES OF DATA
The endline data is used to compare relevant indicators to data from the baseline. Furthermore, this data allows an opportunity to assess the pre-program situation of adolescent girls and young women in many aspects of their lives.

SURVEY MODULES
Baseline data
A - Household Module
B - Education Module
C - Employment Module
D - Expenditures Module
E - Social Interactions Module
F – Implicit Associations Test

Training Assessment
A - Attendance
B – Pre-Assessment
C – Post-Assessment

Endline data
A – Household Module
B – Employment Module

## Scope – Summary Data Description

COUNTRIES
Nigeria

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE
The government chose training providers in five large cities: Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Kaduna and Enugu. More details under Sampling.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS
Individuals

UNIVERSE
There were radio advertisements and outreach activities in local universities that attracted 3,018 applicants to the program to which the baseline survey was administered. The endline survey was collected by follow-up calls two years after the program finished and had a total of 1,007 individuals who participated in the training.

## Methodology – Data Collection

TIME METHOD

Baseline data collection started in March 2011 in each of the training centers. Endline was collected two years after in April 2014 via telephone.

**Timeline:**

| March –April 2011 | Pre-assessment of applicants: Baseline survey collected through computer-based self-administered assessment at training centers |
| --- | --- |
| December 2011 | Randomization |
| December 2011 | Communication of treatment status |
| February 2012 | 10-week training starts |
| April 2012 | Training period ends |
| December 2012 | Post Job Fair |
| April 2014 | Endline survey collected |

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

In the second half of 2010, the government of Nigeria and the World Bank worked with a consulting firm specializing in BPO services to launch ACCESS Nigeria. The firm designed a curriculum based on an initial evaluation of recent university graduates in Lagos and an assessment examination that was endorsed by an industry consortium as certification for the sector. This report evaluates the impact of the ACCESS in the cities of Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Kaduna and Enugu. Through a competitive bidding process in these cities, the selected training providers covered sort skills as core competencies in their curriculum. Moreover, the selected trainers are NIIT, AfriHub, Digital Bridge Institute, Multimix Academy and Cape Source.

The program aimed at reaching recent university graduates and equipping them with sufficient skills to work in Nigeria's existing ITes-BPO sector. The eligibility criteria was specific to students final year university students or individuals participating in the National Youth Services Corps – a mandatory internships that must be completed prior to formal sector employment. Applicants were stratified randomly and program slots were given to approximately 60 percent of applicants. Considerable delays in program implementation, due to the political environment of the country, led to a lengthy interval between the pre-assessment of applicants and the communication of treatment status. All applicants, regardless of treatment status, were invited to a post-training job fair which took place in Lagos in late 2012.

Participants received 85 hours of training spread over 10 weeks either via two six hour sessions per week or three two hour sessions per week. All training was completed by mid-April 2012. Those who completed training could take the assessment again and received a certificate recognized by the Nigerian BPO industry.

MODE OF DATA COLLECTION

The baseline survey data was collected through a computer-based pre-assessment, which provided data on the 3,018 applicants of the program. The survey lasted 1.5 hours and included applicants' socio-economic and demographic backgrounds, education history and labor market experiences and expectations followed the assessment. This information allows to benchmark labor and non-labor outcomes. The second part of the baseline, is the Implicit Association Tests, an instrument that social psychologist use to measure an individual's cognitive associations between a social group and a stereotypic attribute. A timed test that consisted in sorting tasks and measured the ease of associations between gender and a number of attributes relevant for women's market participation in Nigeria. Moreover, the test also measured the distinction in ITes-BPO sector associations between gender and the concepts of professionalism and unprofessionalism.

The country faced strong political instability that resulted in delays in the implementation of the program for approximately a year. And shortly after the resolution of national crisis over the removal of fuel price subsidies and also after a Boko Haram bombing that killed over 150 people that led to the imposition of a dusk to dawn curfew in the program state of Kano, the program was implemented in February 2012. Given the delays in implementation however, to gauge interest in the initial applicants, there was a second baseline survey collected through a link provided when the treatment status was announced with strong response rates.

The endline survey consisted in enumerators contacting the applicants using the contact information provided during the baseline survey. The rate of response was 91 percent with 2,733 applicants willing to take the survey. Mobile-minutes were offered as incentives for the endline survey. Furthermore, the training providers also collected attendance data for all trainees and post-assessment scores for applicants who accepted treatment and took the assessment (1,007 individuals)

WEIGHTING

None

**Related Studies**

None

**Related Publications**

None