



HOW TO... MEASURE IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

A Paper Series for Rural Youth Employment

Searching for an innovative and meaningful way to measure the impact of employment projects? Want to go beyond basic metrics like “created jobs” or “income increases”? See a need to capture a comprehensive view of young people’s employment prospects? The “Employment Prospects Index” captures not just the hard numbers but also the subtle shifts in youth aspirations and readiness for the labour market, providing a holistic picture of what drives employment prospects of young people. Discover how this tool is already transforming projects, guiding strategic decisions and uncovering critical needs. Dive into the insights and see how data can empower sustainable youth employment initiatives worldwide.

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THE CHALLENGE

Measuring the effectiveness of employment projects is often simplified to metrics like “how many people have found a new job” or “how many people have increased their income.” However, employment promotion projects **take a holistic approach that considers the entire labour market**. To accurately capture the results and progress of such comprehensive initiatives, it’s essential to have a broader yet easy-to-use monitoring and evaluation tool.

The 360° AgriJobs approach promotes entrepreneurship and develops small enterprises, brings labour market-relevant skills into vocational education. Young jobseekers learn what kind of employment and support opportunities exist in rural areas and how to build a professional network.

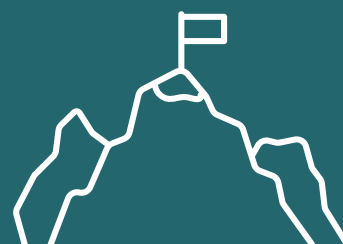


The aim of the approach is to enhance the employment and training conditions for young people in rural areas. This goal is assessed through **three indicators**:

1. Persons having new or additional employment.
2. Persons having increased their income.
3. **Persons having improved employment prospects.**

While the first two indicators measure concrete changes in the youth’s situation, the third indicator assesses a more abstract change in their perceptions. The challenge is to operationalise this indicator in a way that is both meaningful and practical for surveys. It needs to be meaningful so that the project could learn from the measurements and use the data for project management, communication and accountability. While simultaneously, it has to be practical to avoid overwhelming youth and enumerators with complicated or lengthy questionnaires.

Discover the 360° AgriJobs Approach and get to know Africa’s thriving agripreneurs: (agrijobs.snrd-africa.net)





HOW TO DO IT

Measuring an abstract concept like „improved employment prospects“ can be achieved by **creating an index**. An index is composed of several items that outline concrete dimensions of the abstract concept. Well known examples for es-

tablishes indices are the **Human Development Index** (HDI) or the **Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index** (WEAI). In this case, it involves identifying specific aspects that define improved employment prospects.

The “**Employment Prospects Index**“ consists of 11 items, where respondents rate their level of agreement on a scale from “1 – totally disagree“ to “10 – totally agree.”

Prospects

I have good employment prospects in my area.

Income

I am able to earn a stable income in my area of specialisation (in jobs or my own business).

Coaching

I know someone who coaches or mentors me in my job / business.

Health

I am confident that my area of specialisation provides safe working conditions for my health.

Skills

I have relevant qualifications and skills for the jobs in my area / to run a profitable business.

Self-Efficacy

I am confident that I can run my own profitable business.

Matching

I know where to get information on job or business opportunities in my area.

Networks

I am confident that I can build and maintain stable networks / connections.

Markets

I can easily sell my products / my service.

Finance

I can access financial resources or equipment to run a business.

Agri-Food

The agri-food sector offers interesting job opportunities / business opportunities for me.

To develop the Employment Prospects Index, the project conducted a comprehensive review of literature and integrated insights from the **360° AgriJobs approach**, the GIZ study **What Works in Rural Youth Employment**, the **qualitative baseline data from the project in Malawi** and the **ILO Paper on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth**. This process identified key factors that contribute to the success of rural youth in the labour market. These factors were grouped and translated into 17 statements, each designed to be concrete and measurable on the ground.

During a pretest involving a small group of youth in each country, the statements were evaluated

to ensure they were understandable and accurately reflected employment prospects. Based on feedback, the items were refined and reduced to the final 11 statements. They have proven to be practical, as they take little time in a survey, but very meaningful, as the options for analysis are numerous (see “Use Cases”).

These 11 statements now form the foundation of the Employment Prospects Index and are included as a standard in all data collection tools for monitoring the global project. By 2024, data from more than 4,500 youth participants has been collected and analysed, providing a representative sample of the project’s impact.

How to analyse and communicate the data

1. Calculate the Index

An index is ultimately represented by a single number derived from 11 items. There are several methods to calculate this number, but the most common and straightforward way is by averaging all the items. First, calculate the average for each interviewee, and then take the average of these individual averages. This single value can be used as an indicator in results matrices and logframes. See below.

2. Simplified Scale for Evaluation

To measure how much respondents agree with a statement, it's important to simplify the 10-point scale. While calculating the average for each item is one option, using the Top 3% method is preferred, as it better reflects the distribution of responses, which the average does not. The Top 3% is the share of respondents who rated a statement with a 10, 9, or 8 on the 10-point scale. See figure 1.

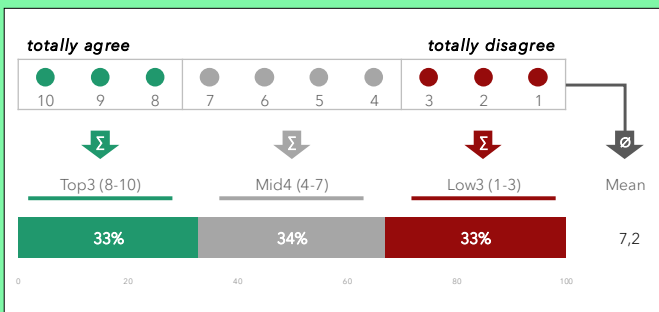


Figure 1: Creating the Top3% value

3. Driver analysis

A driver analysis identifies which factors are highest priority for good employment prospects. The relevance of each item is statistically determined by its correlation with the overall statement, „I have good employment prospects in my area.“ The higher the correlation, the more important the item is for influencing employment prospects.

A driver analysis is typically visualised in a graph, with correlation on the x-axis and Top 3%-Agreement on the y-axis. The further an item appears to the right, the more it influences employment prospects; the higher it is positioned, the better respondents have rated it. See figure 2.

By adding lines representing the mean values of both correlation and Top 3%-Agreement, the graph is divided into four quadrants. These quadrants reveal the most important areas for intervention to improve employment prospects. Items in the lower-right quadrant are highly relevant for employment prospects but are poorly rated, making them key focus areas for improvement.

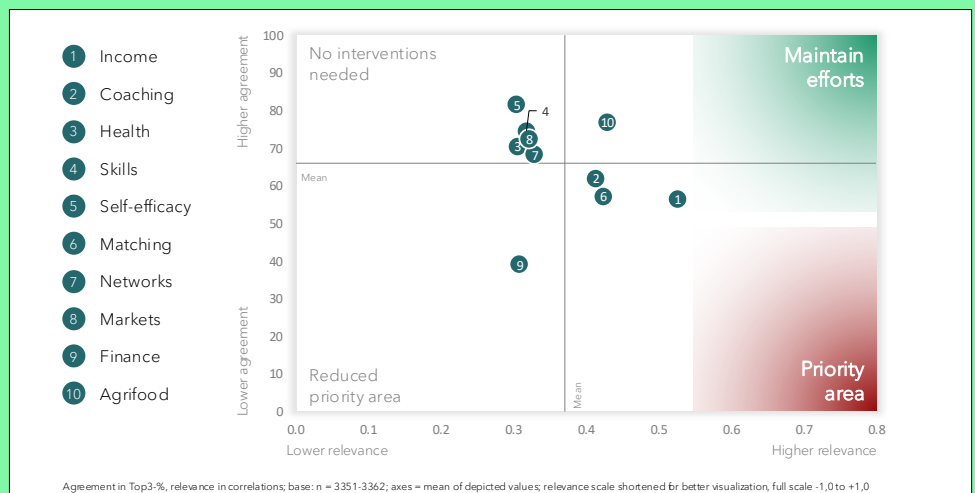


Figure 2: Drivers for Good Employment Prospects



USE CASES

The Global Project on Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth has collected data on the Employment Prospects Index from a sample of 1,809 young people (under 35 years) during the baseline

stage in Malawi, and 3,362 young people six months after participating in project activities in Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya, and Burkina Faso. Below are some key findings and use cases from the data analysis.

Put an indicator in a results matrix or logframe

● Malawi

To measure the outcome of activities, the Employment Prospects Index can serve as a valuable indicator, as it did in the logframe of the co-financing in Malawi:



Outcome

Vocational and technical skills development and labour market-oriented training enhance (especially female) employment prospects in the agri-food sector.

Outcome indicator 1

Agricultural technical vocational education and training curriculum beneficiaries and GmBS trained agripreneurs have improved their employment prospects (both wage and self-employment) by 1,7 points on average (on a ten-point scale).

Baseline: 6.3 points

Target: 8.0 points.

Status: 8.2 points

Means of verification

Employment prospect index developed by the project.

To establish baseline and current values, data must be collected both before and after participants engage in the project. One key advantage of this approach is that it measures the actual perceived change in employment prospects by asking the same questions at both the baseline and endline stages. This provides a clearer picture compared to only asking at the endline stage if employment prospects have improved, which requires participants to recall their past situation months or years ago – often leading to inaccurate responses.

Another benefit is that the index captures a broader and more concrete understanding of change by assessing 11 specific factors rather than just the abstract idea of „employment prospects.“

One can also use single items as an indicator, to measure more specific changes, e.g. in having a more stable income on outcome level or having more relevant skills on output level. An increase in the mean value or Top3%-value of all answers before participation in the project would measure the change.

Assess if the results hypothesis was correct

Malawi

The co-financed training component in Malawi collected data before and six months after participants completed technical training programs in horticulture and aquaculture production, as well as the „Gender Makes Business Sense“ (GmBS) training. The hypothesis for this component was that more relevant training would improve skills, better skills would enhance employment prospects and applying these skills would ultimately lead to higher income. As expected, the results confirmed this hypothesis, with the greatest improvement seen in the item: „I have relevant qualifications and skills for the jobs in my area / to run a profitable business.“ See figure 3.

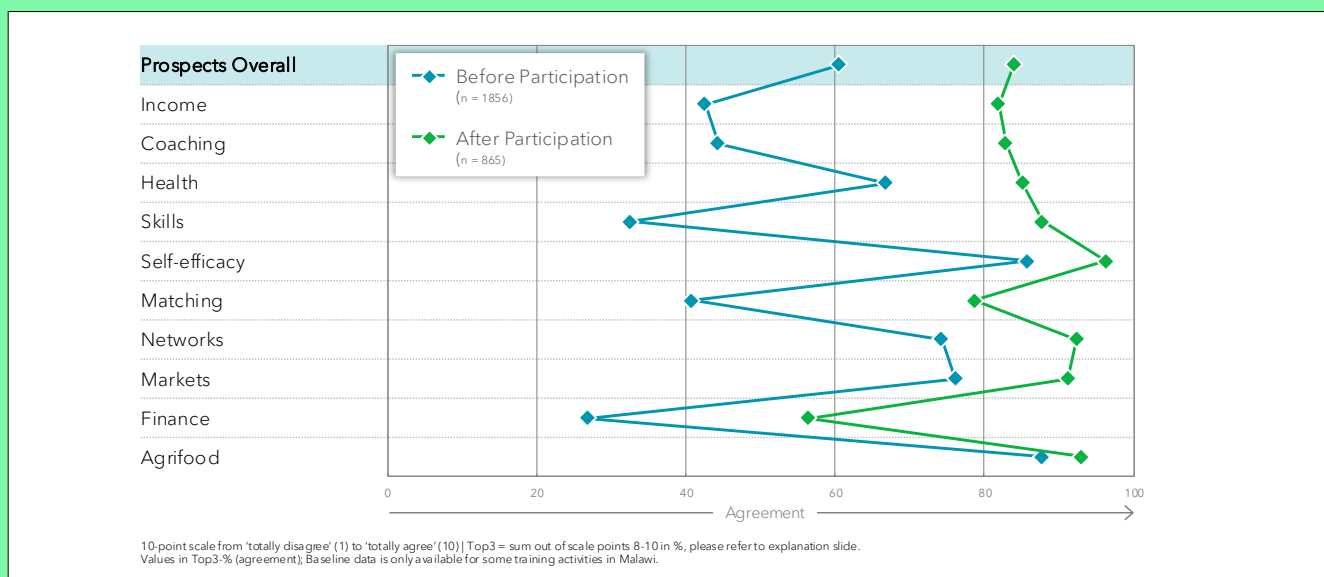


Figure 3: Comparison between baseline and endline

In addition to skills improvement, both „income“ and „employment prospects“ also showed notable increases. Interestingly, the second-highest improvement was observed in the item: „Matching: I know where to get information on job or business opportunities in my area.“ This result aligns with expectations, as the training component also included internship opportunities and the broader 360° AgriJobs approach invited trainees to career counselling sessions and job and opportunity fairs.

Understand what's most important for youth to improve their employment prospects

● Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique

The index shows the needs of a project's target group. It can be used at baseline stage to plan the project's strategy and prioritize intervention areas. As such it is an explorative tool. But also

during the implementation, when data is collected in tracer studies, the index shows needs for further support to the target group and adaptation of interventions. See also below.

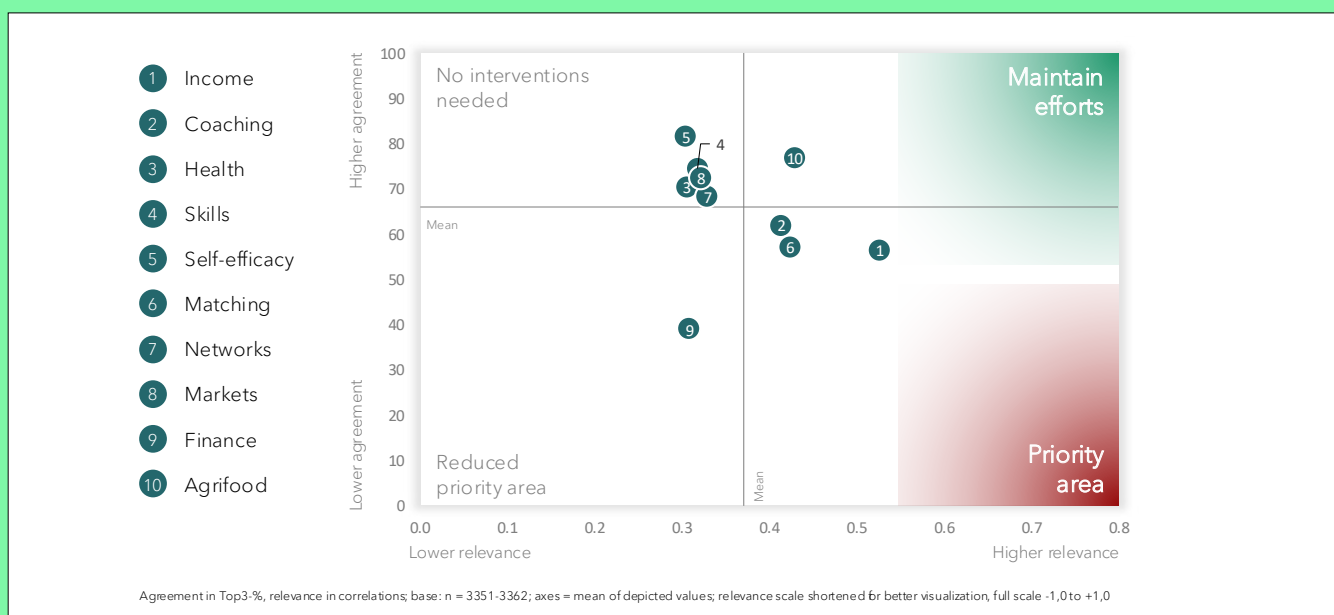


Figure 4: Drivers for Good Employment Prospects (2)

For project participants across all four countries, having a stable income (1) emerges as the most important factor when evaluating their employment prospects, which is unsurprising since the primary motivation for work is often to secure a living. Closely following this is the recognition that the agri-food sector (10) offers promising employment opportunities, signifying that youth increasingly view this sector as a viable career path. Additionally, the high importance placed on access to coaching and mentoring (2) underscores the ongoing need for support, particularly as a large portion of respondents are self-employed. Furthermore, access to information about job and business opportunities (6) holds significant relevance, especially in rural areas where such resources are less readily available compared to urban centres. See figure 4.

It is also crucial to recognize that different target groups prioritize various factors when assessing their employment prospects. The analysis of specific groups of participants, showed the following results, which are not depicted in graphs in this paper. For instance, training participants place greater importance on access to job matching services (6) and financial resources (9), as these are essential for them to launch their own businesses and transition into self-employment after completing their qualifications. Meanwhile, MSME owners and startup founders place a high value on having relevant skills (4), particularly after engaging in business coaching or similar activities, reflecting their focus on skill development for long-term success.



Identify adaptation needs for project implementation

● Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique

Analysing the results of the Employment Prospects Index for specific activities provides valuable insights into what worked well and where additional support is needed.

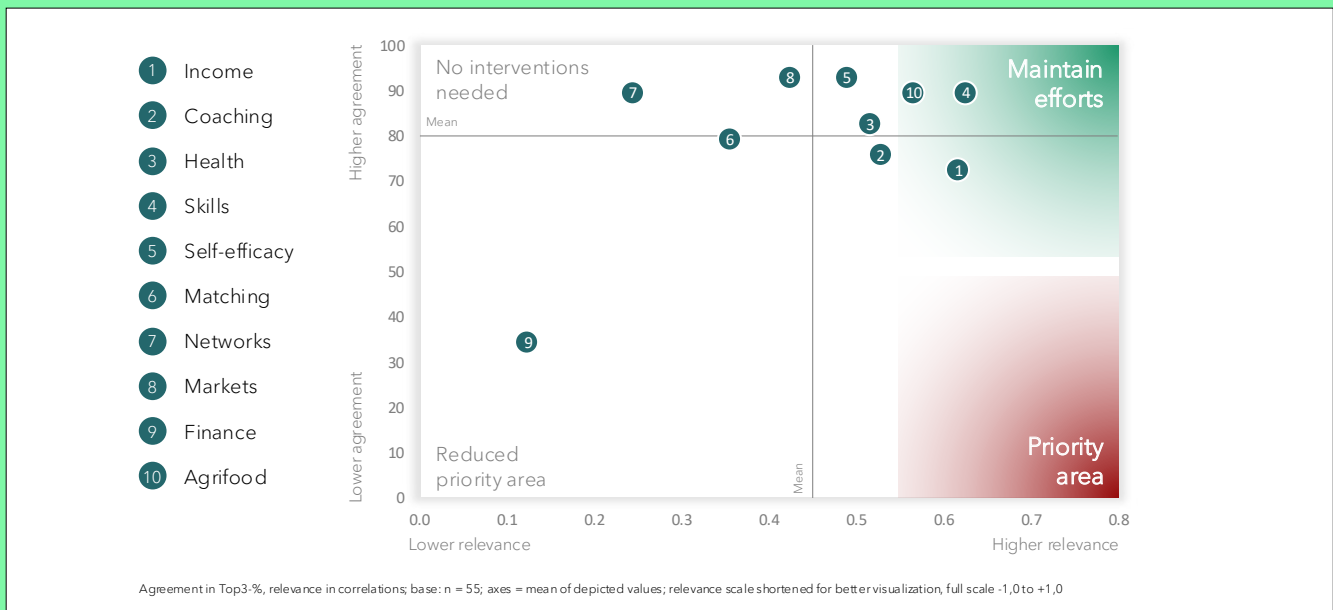


Figure 5: Drivers for Employment Prospects of Aquaculture Training in Malawi

One example from Malawi: Youth who completed a four-month long aquaculture training have shown great appreciation for their newly acquired skills (4), which is evident in the strong positive impact these skills have had on their perception of employment prospects. However, despite gaining valuable qualifications, their new skills have not yet resulted in financial gains, as their satisfaction with income remains relatively low (1).

In order to help these young individuals transition into successful fish farmers, ongoing mentoring and coaching (2) become crucial components of their continued development. Therefore, the project should explore how structured and sustained support through mentoring could be seamlessly integrated into the training program for alumni, ensuring long-term success. See figure 5.



RECOMMENDATIONS...



Reflect on your project's approach and results hypothesis to adapt the items so they better align with the realities on the ground. However, ensure that these items remain or become even more concrete and easy for youth to understand.



Keep in mind that items need to be translated to local languages. Some differences in the items in English and French were just nuances, which were difficult to translate into languages like Chichewa or Swahili.



Using a 10-point scale can be challenging, especially for participants with lower literacy levels who may not be familiar with it. It's important for enumerators to thoroughly explain how the 10-point Likert scale works, using clear examples. A good approach might be to start with simple yes/no questions and then gradually refine their evaluation.



To fully utilise the Employment Prospects Index, it's essential to have internal or external expertise in data analysis and charting.





This **series of How to Papers** has been developed by the **Global Project Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth** and aims to process and systematise the project's practical experiences. Each **How to Paper** has a thematic focus and provides a brief overview of innovative approaches and inspiration for practical implementation. The series targets implementing organisations and donor agencies working in the field of youth employment.



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Global Project Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth
<https://agrijobs.snrd-africa.net>

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 40
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 4460-0
F +49 228 4460-1766

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de/en

Author:

Lukas Marx

The Employment Prospects Index has been created and implemented jointly by:

Regina Gunda, Paula Holy, Gregory Kirimi Muriuki,
Lukas Marx, Diston Mzungu, Flavienne Ouandaogo /
Ouangaoua, Armando Tselo

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Agnes Weegen, Cologne

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