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Youth Music and Entrepreneurship Training to Stimulate Career Development in Colombia

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Timeline
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Sample Size
4,000 youth

Research Implemented by IPA
Yes

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Abstract

Can training programs in the creative industries such as music provide opportunities to help improve youths' technical and nontechnical skills to be prepared for and be successful in the modern economy? In Colombia, researchers are evaluating the impact of a music entrepreneurship and life planning program on fostering technical and soft skills development among youth.

Policy Issue

Youth between the ages of 15 to 24 years old have experienced a twelve percent decrease in workforce participation worldwide,[1] with studies showing that they are underprepared for the job market or unable to access the skills needed to find employment.[2] Such skills include the traditionally sought out hard skills like mathematics, writing, and computer programming, as well as intangible skills like creativity, communication, and entrepreneurship. Evidence suggests that training programs in the creative industries–which encompass music and other

media industries–can give young people opportunities to enhance these skills as it involves both technical and non-technical capabilities to be prepared for and successful in the modern economy.[3] The creative industries also employ more young people than any other industry worldwide, which can enable them to find employment in something about which they are passionate and can thrive in as a career after training.[4]

Some research has been conducted on musical training and education's impact on cognitive and social development among young people.[5] Evidence is more limited, particularly in Latin America, on how music programs can promote and strengthen vocational skills development. This project aims to fill this gap by evaluating the impacts of a youth musical training and entrepreneurship program in Colombia. Moreover, this research builds on previous studies evaluating soft skills training programs on career preparedness[6] by framing it in the context of the music industry.

Context of the Evaluation

In 2021, the annual unemployment rate for youth between the ages of 14 and 28 in Colombia was 21.5 percent.[7] There are around sixty percent of high school graduates who do not step into a higher education institution.[8] This prevents them from developing certain key hard and soft skills needed especially in the formal job market. In Colombia, creative industries constitute one of the fastest-growing sectors,[9] generating an important labor demand focused on creative, artistic, and entrepreneurship skills. Thus, programs aimed at developing such skills and knowledge may help catalyze economic growth, innovation, and national competitiveness.[10]

The Muévete program was initiated to develop technical, creative, and soft skills via the music industry that would prepare youth to be successful in Colombia's modern labor market and economy. It blends the "Producción y Emprendimiento Musical" (PEM) music education and entrepreneurship training program offered by DNA Music, an academy for DJs and music producers, and the "Decido Ser Campeón" soft skills and life planning curriculum offered by the international development organization ACDI/VOCA.

Details of the Intervention

In Colombia, researchers are partnering with DNA Music, ACDI/VOCA, USAID, Focusrite and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)–a government agency focused on childhood development–to measure the impact of the Muévete curriculum on fostering technical, creative, and soft skills development among youth. Researchers have selected 4,000 youths between the ages of 14 and 28 from Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, Quibdó, and Turbo who come from a vulnerable socioeconomic background, have basic digital abilities, have interest in the music industry, and have access to Internet and/or digital devices if they reside in Bogota, Medellin, Cali, and Barranquilla. The participants have been assigned randomly into the following groups:

- **Music Training:** 1,200 youth will receive the PEM music production and

entrepreneurship training.
- **Music Training + Life skills Training:** 1,200 youth will receive the "Decido Ser Campeón" soft skills and life planning training in addition to the PEM music production and entrepreneurship training.
- **No Intervention:** 1,600 youth will not receive training of any kind at this time.

Following the intervention, the researchers will conduct surveys to assess the impact of the Muévete training on participants' music industry and music software knowledge, their life goals, and the effects across different cities and participant backgrounds. Researchers will also compare the two programs' outcomes to similar education programs implemented in Costa Rica and Belize.

Results and Policy Lessons

Research ongoing; results forthcoming.

Sources

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[3] Rosenzweig, Jacob, Patrick Roche, Amy Thompson, and Faizan Ahmad. "How Governments Are Sparking Growth in Creative Industries." Retrieved May 31, 2022 https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2018/how-governments-are-sparking-growth-creative-industries

[4] The Policy Circle Staff. "The Creative Economy." Retrieved May 31, 2022 https://www.thepolicycircle.org/minibrief/the-creative-economy/

[5] *El Sistema* in Venezuela focused on child development and social inclusion (Aleman 2017); the Don Bosco Technical Worker Business Institute in El Salvador started a music training program for youth violence prevention and intercultural promotion (Villodre, 2017); and in South Africa, a music program sought to build social cohesion and cultural identity (Bartolome, 2018).

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