



## Special Session

### **Labour insertion for young people in weak economic territories: analysis, policies and evaluation**

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#### **Context**

The insertion of young people into the labor market has long been a central topic of both theoretical analysis and applied research (Hutchinson & Kettlewell, 2014; Caliendo & Schmidl, 2016; Kluve et al, 2017). Approaches have typically emphasize employability enhancement, vocational training, and the matching of labor supply and demand (Van der Velden & Wolbers, 2003; Smith, 2010; Scandurra et al, 2024). While these “traditional” strategies have proven useful in well-functioning, competitive labor markets, they often show significant limitations when applied to fragile territories—contexts characterized by structural weaknesses and overlapping socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Such territories may include remote or inner areas, regions undergoing industrial or demographic decline, developing countries, or urban spaces marked by social degradation and limited institutional capacity. In these environments, labor markets often suffer from multiple and interacting forms of market failure, from information asymmetries and weak linkages between training systems and productive sectors to pervasive informality and unstable employment opportunities. As a result, standard activation or training policies may fall short, calling for a deeper and more context-sensitive understanding of the mechanisms shaping young people's transitions from education to work.

This session aims to shed light on these complexities, emphasizing the need to rethink labor insertion policies and practices for youth in fragile contexts. It seeks to explore how institutional, social, and economic innovations can build more resilient and inclusive pathways toward decent work.

### **Call for papers**

We invite researchers, practitioners, and policy analysts engaged in applied research on youth employment and labor market dynamics in fragile territories to contribute to this session. Papers may address a broad range of topics related to the labor insertion of young people in such contexts, including but not limited to:

- Empirical descriptions of atypical or segmented labor market structures affecting young workers.
- Case studies of social or institutional innovations aimed at fostering youth employment in marginalized or declining areas.
- Evaluation of active labor market policies (ALMPs) and youth employment programs under conditions of fragility, remoteness, or informality.
- Comparative analyses between different territorial or institutional settings (e.g., urban vs. rural, developing vs. advanced economies).
- Examination of the role of local governance, community-based organizations, and the third sector in supporting youth transitions to work.
- Discussions on methodological challenges in evaluating labor policies in fragile or data-poor environments.

The session particularly welcomes interdisciplinary approaches and contributions that integrate quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research methods. Submissions that reflect on policy implications and that contribute to a better understanding of how and why certain interventions succeed or fail in specific places are especially encouraged.

### **Bibliography**

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