

Effective policies or programmes helping low income women get into better, higher-skilled employment

A brief literature review prepared by Sina Ete, Tupu Tai internship (2018),

Ministry for Women

Contents

Introduction	1
Overview of the content of the literature review	2
1. Programmes.....	3
a. Evaluative reports on job training programmes	3
b. A two-generation approach to job training.....	6
c. Training programmes and their own reports.....	6
d. Technology programmes	7
e. Work Advance programme: A follow-up from <i>E Tu Ake</i>	8
2. Policy	9
3. Conclusion	12
4. Bibliography	13

Introduction

Although there is substantial literature available on low-income women, there is limited information focused on programmes or government policy helping to get low-income women into better jobs.

There are ten papers that have been sourced for this review. The majority of this literature is sourced from the United States. This is due to there being more substantial evaluation on their job training programmes.

In New Zealand, while there are job training programmes available for low income women, including some government funded programmes, there is a lack of evaluative information on the effectiveness of these programmes.

Although limited, the literature review supports the findings in the Ministry for Women's report, *E Tu Ake* (2014)¹. *E Tu Ake* was a working paper on raising the qualifications and earnings of low-income women. The characteristics of effective and promising employment programmes outlined within *E Tu Ake* such as offering quality individual case management and attending to women's childcare needs are two examples of issues that have been identified in this literature review.

¹ https://women.govt.nz/sites/public_files/MWA-E%20Tu%20Ake%20publication-for%20web2.pdf

Overview of the content of the literature review

Section 1.a. Evaluative reports on job training programmes consist of just three sources that are evaluative reports on job training programmes. These review a number of job training programmes in the United States.

Section 1.b. Discusses a two-generation approach to job training.

Section 1.c. Reports on examples of successful job training programmes.

Section 1.d. Looks at programmes focused on getting low-income women into the technology sector.

Section 2 includes papers on policies that intend to help low-income women get into better work. Policy responses are mostly a combination of non-governmental organisations' (NGOs), local government partnerships' and central government's focus on broader policies helping low-income people in general, not just women.

1. Programmes

a. Evaluative reports on job training programmes

These reports were published by United States-based non-profit organisations. Each report evaluates a number of job training programmes helping low-income women getting into better work and makes recommendations for all job training programmes.

Hess, Mayayeva, Reichlin, & Thakur, (2016), [Supportive Services in Job Training and Education](#) takes an in-depth look at supportive services that job training programmes provide (or should provide).

The paper is of value to us as it:

- presents and elaborates on key supportive services
- has detailed recommendations
- has been informed by a breadth of literature and interviews with experts on supportive services and workforce development.

The description of integrated case management and holistic service delivery is of particular interest.

Key support services

Key support services that Hess et al. (2016) found key/necessary to participants' success are child care, transportation assistance, housing assistance, domestic violence services, life coaching, financial coaching and education, mental health counselling and integrated case management.

Integrated case management is considered important because job training participants need a range of support services. Case managers who establish ongoing relationships with participants can assess job participants' interests and needs to help them access multiple services, plan their careers and obtain a job can be extremely valuable. Ideally, case managers would have an extensive understanding of the services available in their community, including state or local agencies, and others.

This paper recommends:

- Implementing promising practices in service delivery, such as:
 - using case managers, for the reasons above
 - offering bundled or integrated services
 - using a holistic approach to support service delivery which strives to understand the context of each individual. It sees participants as members of families and communities with needs in many different areas of their lives. For example, some programmes recognise the needs of both participants, who are parents, and their children together to assure that parents receive training and other services, while their children receive services such as early childhood education. Participants in job training programmes may also face elder care challenges, as well as mental health issues, financial challenges, transportation issues and other barriers
 - conducting new research on job training and supportive services.

Washington Area Women's Foundation², (2013), [Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Field: A Case Study of Nontraditional Job Training Programs for Women](#) supports the need for integrated case management and support services as well as identifying other issues that support improved training programmes and outcomes for participants, including partnerships and basic skills education offer more of an insight into how to.

This report looks at five non-profit organisations that have each received funding from the Washington Area Women's Foundation's key grant-making programme Stepping Stones. Stepping Stones invests in a number of non-profit organisations offering women training in non-traditional occupations.

The Women's Foundation employed an independent consultant to undertake a case study of investments made between July 2005 and June 2011 to help examine the effectiveness of these investments and to inform the Foundation moving forward.

This report serves as a summary of several key findings useful to providers, funders and policymakers interested in workforce development and the economic security of low-income women.

Lessons learned and recommendations:

- Organisations situated in low-income neighbourhoods or those with well-established partnerships with certain communities are better able to retain and recruit clients.
- Case management and other support services are critical to participant success.
 - They are a key factor to participant job training success, retention and in career advancement programmes and need to be provided on an ongoing basis.
 - The type of support will change through different stages of the participant's journey to meet her career goals and case managers need to know their clients and their interests well.
 - Organisations need strong partnerships with external organisations and the targeted industries in order to effectively deliver services.
- Training needs to address basic skills and post-secondary education needs.
 - Basic skills proficiency is the forerunner to post-secondary education and career advancement.
 - Without investments in basic skills, career advancement will remain elusive for many low-income women.
- Employment and job retention specialists are an essential element for participant success that is often missing.
- Build partnerships with community colleges and employers.
 - Community colleges: In addition to having technical training programmes that align with industry-recognised credentials, community colleges have connections to employers and industry groups through formal advisory committees and are abreast of industry changes that affect skill needs and labour demand.
 - Employers: They can help training providers tailor curricula, and gain access to resources, and update programmes during times of changing job demand.

² The Washington Area Women's Foundation is a non-profit organisation in Washington, DC. It is a network of women that invests in the lives of low-income women – and single mums in particular. It is the only public foundation in the metropolitan DC area that is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls.

Anderson & Hess, (2017), [Programs to Support Job Training Success: Innovations to Address Unmet Needs](#) identifies, and provides solutions to fulfilling, unmet needs expanding on the first two papers. This paper provides plenty of tangible examples of how training programmes can meet what it sees as key unmet needs that most job training programmes do not. The report assesses eight programmes that effectively provide support services, informing its recommendations around what strategies and tools should be used by job training programmes.

Key unmet needs include:

- Child care
- Transportation assistance
- Financial assistance
 - emergency cash assistance – to provide stability when unexpected events come up in participants lives (for example, needing to pay for car repair, health emergency or unexpected child care)
 - Raise the Floor, one of the programmes the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR)³ interviewed, helps participants apply for public assistance and covers unmet costs through emergency cash assistance. In an emergency situation, participants can go to their case manager who can provide anything \$50 or under through food vouchers, petrol cards or cash assistance to meet a need as it arises. If the need exceeds \$50, the participant and case manager submit a confidential letter of intent, outlining the participant’s need and academic status, to a committee for approval.
- Mental health services
 - respondents to the IWPR Job Training Administrator Survey identified mental health counselling as the fifth most common unmet need for women enrolled in job training and the third for men.
 - Climb Wyoming even offers mental health services on-site.
- Domestic violence services
 - train staff to screen for domestic violence
 - build partnerships with local organisations that have extensive experience working with domestic violence survivors
 - provide in-house domestic violence services.
- Strategies to maximise the reach and impact of supportive services include:
 - partnering with diverse local bodies. An example of a partnership was the employees of one job programme forming relationships with a bicycle shop close to their office. The bicycle shop assists with bike rentals, offers free or cheaper bikes and does maintenance and repairs
 - case management to help participants use services
 - providing services in group and well as in individual settings to ensure a fostering of community and support among peers.
 - Implementing group sessions can save programme costs while offering a formal opportunity for members to help one another through challenges and share resources.

³ The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) is a US-based non-profit organisation focused on US women’s issues. IWPR conducts research and publishes its findings to inform policies and programmes across the US in order to address the needs of women.

b. A two-generation approach to job training

The following reports explore a 'two-generation' approach to job training formulated by the Aspen Institute, a US-based research institute. The two-generation approach aims to focus on whole families, not just children or adults, through multiple mechanisms, including post-secondary and employment pathways, early childhood education, social capital, financial supports and wellbeing and health.

National Head Start Association, (2015), [Two Generations Together: Case Studies from Head Start](#) presents six case studies of programmes that use the two-generation approach. It represents various ways that two-generation efforts can be funded, designed and evaluated. Beyond local efforts, policies must also be enacted to better facilitate and fund two-generation work and make replication a reality.

Head Start is a programme that was launched in 1965 to provide low-income children with learning experiences, dental and medical care and meals.

The featured statistics and findings state positive results on parents' employment as well as children's success in school.

The report also contains recommendations for other job training programmes.

Aspen Institute, (2017), [What are the Effects of Pairing Head Start Services for Children with Career Pathway Training for Parents?](#) is a report focused on CareerAdvance, a model two-generation intervention that pairs career pathway training for parents and early childhood education for children. This report offers a specific example of the two-generation model in use.

- CareerAdvance promotes parents' career achievement, employment in the health care sector and general wellbeing. CareerAdvance also boosts children's Head Start attendance and lessens chronic absenteeism.
- This study presents strong evidence that pairing good-quality Head Start services with job training for parents generates positive outcomes for children and parents over and above the benefits of Head Start alone.

c. Training programmes and their own reports

These two papers are reports are examples of successful job training programmes.

Climb Wyoming, 2017, [Climb Wyoming 2017 Progress Report](#) describes the Climb programme model which was developed in 1986 to help move low-income single mothers out of poverty permanently. Climb Wyoming programmes are helping women enter construction and energy trades, health care careers, office careers and more to meet the State's workforce needs.

The basis of the model is a job training and placement but there is more to it than finding a job. Other skills are required – skills that ensure successful relationships at work and at home. Mental health services addressing personal barriers that have affected success in the past are

essential to the model. The following table outlines the average wage women received before and after programme attendance.

	Before Climb programme	Two years after Climb programme
Average annual wage	\$12,744	\$29,028
Percentage of participants employed	46%	71%

The report noted that:

- there was a 92 percent programme graduation rate
- 79 percent of graduates were employed full time at the time of programme completion
- more than 50 percent of Climb’s trainings in 2017 were in the medical field in response to Wyoming’s shortage of health care workers.

Women Building Futures, (2016), [Report to the Community 2015 & 2016](#) provides a snapshot of the success of the organisation that empowers women to become more financially independent by taking up careers in trades and occupations where women are under-represented. These careers lead to personal confidence, economic freedom and growth that are life-changing for women and their families and communities.

The following table outlines key performance indicators:

Key performance indicators	2015	2016
Percentage of graduates employed in construction and trades within six months of graduation	91%	93%
Programme completion rate	93%	90%
Percentage of indigenous graduates	28%	23% (target was 35%)
Satisfaction rate among graduates	96%	95%
Wage increase after graduation	184%	132%

d. Technology programmes

This section features programmes that help low-income women get into the growing field of technology. These are merely links to their websites and it will be of interest to watch and evaluate how effective these tech programmes will be.

US-based, non-profit [Techtonica](#) offers tech apprenticeships with stipends and job placement to Bay Area women, non-binary and feminine-adjacent adults with low incomes.

- The programme is free for apprentices.
- It covers apprentices’ living and child care costs.
- The programme is six months long.
- Seventy-five percent of participants so far have been people of colour.
- The programme ends with a job and professional connections in the industry.
- Techtonica provides diversity and inclusion training to the teams that their graduates are to be placed in.

US-based Per Scholas (Technology at Work, 2018) runs a 8–14-week full-time free programme for low-income people to get into the technology sector. Most go in with an annual income less than \$7,000 and after the course, 80 percent are likely to earn \$28,000 or more. Ninety percent of students are people of colour, one-third are women and one-third are disconnected young adults. This programme focuses on building a more diverse technical workforce by creating on-ramps for women and people of colour, who are significantly under-represented in IT.

e. Work Advance programme: A follow-up from *E Tu Ake*⁴

MDRC⁵ (2016), [New Findings Show That WorkAdvance Sectoral Training and Advancement Program Boosts Earnings for Low-Income Workers](#) updates WorkAdvance, one of the programmes described in the Ministry for Women’s 2014 publication, *E Tu Ake*.

WorkAdvance is “an alternative to more traditional training programs that have had trouble successfully serving low-income populations ... WorkAdvance offers formal training and industry-recognized certifications, and it requires providers to be far more employer-focused than traditional training programs, taking into account multiple employers’ human resource needs” (MDRC 2016).

The June 2016 report finding

MDRC conducted a random study of WorkAdvance in four sites. The two-year follow-up results released in a summary report are based on unemployment insurance records and a survey, and concluded that WorkAdvance:

- increased training completion, credential acquisition and sector employment
- increased earnings in three of four sites
- increased earnings among the long-term unemployed.

⁴ https://women.govt.nz/sites/public_files/MWA-E%20Tu%20Ake%20publication-for%20web2.pdf

⁵ MRDC is a non-profit, non-partisan education and social policy research organisation dedicated to learning what works to improve programmes and policies that affect the poor.

2. Policy

This section covers papers that make policy recommendations about low-income women.

Datta and Kotikula (2017), [Not Just More, but Better – Fostering Quality of Employment for Women](#) investigates women's access to good-quality jobs and looks at what governments internationally can do to improve access to women's access to employment.

This working paper contains a brief discussion of the gender gaps in women's access to good-quality jobs and factors contributing to these gaps, and recommends actions that governments can take to eliminate them.

Advice to governments and policy makers – three broad levels:

1. *Systematically address the key constraints that prevent women from actively participating in the labor markets and accessing opportunities. These constraints are reflected and reinforced by gender gaps in wages; occupational segregation; educational segregation; concentration of women in part-time, home-based, informal work; gaps in credit access, etc. The underlying factors or drivers of these gender gaps keep women from fully engaging in economic activities. These include: child care and the burden of household work, limited mobility, gender-based violence and sexual harassment at work and travelling to work, skills and limited exposure to STEM subjects, and legal, regulatory and societal constraints.*
2. *Engage with private sector. Proactive leadership and innovation from the private sector is critical. Policy makers need to engage with the private sector in developing win-win solutions.*
3. *Fill the knowledge gaps – partner with the private sector and to gather better data to reveal underlying factors for women's unequal access to jobs. There isn't enough country data which is disaggregated by sex on statistics such as informal employment, entrepreneurship, earnings and unpaid work or collect data on violence on women.*

Possible solutions to the gender gap in access to quality jobs included:

- improve occupational safety and working conditions to attract women (e.g. Better Work programme in garments sector)
- proactively address gender-based violence at home and on the way to and from work
- level the playing field through legal reforms and strengthen women's collective voice
- take a gendered approach to encouraging STEM enrolment for women in new sectors of labour demand (e.g., ICT, green jobs)
- use proactive policies to promote women in leadership positions
- address data gaps in understanding gender inequalities for better diagnostics and evidence of what works.

Povich, Roberts, and Mather (2014), [Low-Income Working Mothers and State Policy Investing for a Better Economic Future](#) is an overview of the current situation in the United States for low-income working mother-headed households and makes recommendations for state governments.

The recommended policies and actions (were that state governments should focus on policies that are sensitive to the needs of working mothers and to all parents in general by:

- increasing access and success for low-income working mothers in post-secondary education
- improving the quality of low-wage jobs by raising the state minimum wage and implementing and enforcing paid maternity leave and paid sick leave policies to ensure all working mothers can take paid time off when they or their children are sick
- creating a strong network of work supports to strengthen female-headed, low-income families and assure basic family needs are met.

Young Women's Trust (2014) [NEETS and Gender](#) makes important points around what factors lead to people becoming NEET.

The Young Women's Trust supports and represents women aged 16–30 struggling to live on low or no pay in England and Wales and who are at risk of being trapped in poverty.

The Young Women's Trust found that figures indicated there are more young women aged 18–24 who are NEET than young men.

A few notable reasons this paper highlights for people becoming NEET were (Young Women's Trust, 2014):

- The labour market structure. Even during periods of economic growth, there are persistently high levels of NEET, highlighting a structural element to the problem. The changing labour market is a key part of this structural challenge. For example, there are a limited number of jobs for young people and a strong preference amongst employers is hiring people who have completed higher education.
- Careers advice
 - This report states “The Women in Work Commission report (2006) called for careers advice that challenged gender stereotypes. Latest figures for apprenticeships show that despite this, young women continue to work in a narrow range of fields.” Sixty-one percent of female apprentices work in just five sectors, whilst the same proportion of men are spread across more than 10 sectors.
 - This is especially alarming, given the fact that many sectors with high concentrations of young women have fewer available jobs, low pay and poorer opportunities for progression. For example, there are five jobs for every one qualified construction worker, while each qualified practitioner in hair and beauty is competing with four other people.
 - Careers advice is often inconsistent and focused on promoting university over vocational courses. This further perpetuates the idea that vocational routes are inferior while also denying young people the support required to make important choices about their future.

Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse (2017), [Lone Parent Activation in Ireland: Putting the Cart before the Horses?](#) discusses the effects of lone parent activation programmes in Ireland and elsewhere and makes considerable points around creating a package of supports and making jobs better-suited to 'lone parents'.

The article found that the implementation of activation programmes did not lead to a fall in poverty levels in lone parents in the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It noted that for more successful outcomes to assist single parents into sustainable work, there needed to be a package of support for lone parents including paid leave entitlements, cash benefits and a mix of provision-assistance with job search, access to suitable education and training, in-work cash transfers, individual advice and support, access to affordable good quality childcare and ready availability of secure employment. Guaranteed income levels were enough to lift single parents out of poverty; jobs needed to be 'mother ready' rather than making mothers 'job ready'.

3. Conclusion

In summary, there is a lack of evaluative literature available on programmes and policies to help low-income women into good work.

Programmes and policies for women need to offer support for women that is holistic, encompassing all aspects of their lives. Support could include assistance with child care, housing, mental health, financial help, domestic violence and case management. If not already doing so, New Zealand organisations that focus on getting women into employment could look at building partnerships with educational or training organisations, private businesses, local and central government and other organisations. Building partnerships could benefit both parties and would be a less costly way of improving outcomes for low-income women. It could be useful to look at whether programmes such as Climb Wyoming and Women Building Futures could be implemented in a New Zealand setting.

4. Bibliography

- Anderson, J., & Hess, C. (2017). *Programs to support job training success: Innovations to address unmet needs*. Washington: Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C450-Programs-to-Support-Job-Training-Success-3.pdf>
- Aspen Institute. (2017). *What are the effects of pairing Head Start services for children with career pathway training for parents?* Washington: Aspen Institute. Retrieved from <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CAP20Tulsa20impact20analysis.pdf>
- Climb Wyoming. (2017). *Climb Wyoming 2017 progress report*. Retrieved from https://wwsh92vtmami272512nyiajih-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CW_ProgressReport2017_final_web.pdf
- Datta, N., & Kotikula, A. (2017). *Not just more, but better – fostering quality of employment for women*. Washington: World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/569891488778608236/pdf/113175-REVISED-Not-Just-More-but-Better-Fostering-Quality-of-Employment-for-Women.pdf>
- Hess, C., Mayayeva, Y., Reichlin, L., & Thakur, M. (2016). *Supportive services in job training & education: A research review*. Washington: Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/Supportive%20Services%20in%20Job%20Training%20&%20Education%20C434.pdf>
- MDRC. (2016). *New findings show that WorkAdvance Sectoral Training and Advancement Program boosts earnings for low-income workers*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved from <https://www.mdrc.org/news/press-release/new-findings-show-workadvance-sectoral-training-and-advancement-program-boosts>
- Millar, M., & Crosse, R. (2018). Lone parent activation in Ireland: Putting the cart before the horses? *Social Policy & Administration*, 52(1), 111–129. doi:10.1111/spol.12296. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/spol.12296/full>
- National Head Start Association. (2015). *Two generations together: Case studies from Head Start*. Alexandria VA: National Head Start Association. Retrieved from <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/two-generations-together-case-studies-from-head-start/>
- Povich, D., Roberts B., & Mather, M. (2014). *Low-income working mothers and state policy investing for a better economic future*. Working Poor Families Project http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WPFP_Low-Income-Working-Mothers-Report_021214.pdf
- TECHNOLOGY AT WORK. (2018). *Per Scholas*. Retrieved 29 January 2018, from <https://perscholas.org>
- Techtonica: Bridging the Tech Gap. (2018). <https://techtonica.org>
- Washington Area's Women Foundation. (2013). *Lessons learned & recommendations for the field: A case study of nontraditional job training programs for women*. Washington: Washington Area's Women Foundation. Retrieved from https://media.thewomensfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/17144454/2013-Case-Study-on-Nontraditional-Job-Training-for-Women_Online.pdf
- Women Building Futures. (2017). *Report to the community 2015 & 2016*. Edmonton, Canada: Women Building Futures. Retrieved from https://www.womenbuildingfutures.com/docs/default-source/reports-docs/wbf-2017_report_to_the_community_v9_web.pdf
- Young Women's Trust. (2014). *NEETS and gender*. London: Young Women's Trust. Retrieved from https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0000/0665/Scarred_for_Life-Literature_Review-September_2014.pdf