Field Experiment on “Search Clubs”
Counseling for Young Unemployed Living in Deprived Neighborhood

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Abstract

In this paper, we evaluate an experimental counseling program dedicated to young unemployed workers living in deprived areas. The experiment was conducted in France from February 2013 to March 2014 and enrolled about 3600 young unemployed workers. Individuals were randomly assigned to either a 3-month collective counseling program (“Search Club”) or to a classical 3-month intensive counseling program. The evaluated scheme contained innovative features to foster search effort and the use of networks, to remedy to defiance towards public employment services by creating a closer relation between the caseworker and the individuals, to debias beliefs and expectations about the labour market,... All in all, it attempted to provide new forms of counseling designed to address the specific difficulties encountered by young unemployed workers living in deprived areas. The meetings were collective which presented two possible advantages. First, collectiveness could be used to foster emulation, positive competition and information sharing between group members and entail positive employment effects. Second, it could be a solution to provided much more intensified counseling within the limits of human and budget constrains. We evaluate the employment effects of this type of program in the short and mid-run, using survey and administrative data and aim at shedding lights on the mechanisms at play.

Keywords: job search assistance, youth unemployment, field experiment.

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