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**Notification or participation – which treatment actually activates job-seekers?
An evaluation of short-term training programmes**

Short-term training programmes are an instrument of active employment promotion which pursues several objectives, for example testing unemployed individuals' availability for employment. When evaluating these short-term training programmes which test availability for employment, the question is whether this instrument of active labour market policy has an effect on leaving unemployment and if so, through which treatment. Does actual participation in a programme improve the integration prospects, or are exits from unemployment mainly due to the notification of a programme? These two effects are evaluated here separately based on data from a labour market experiment, containing information on invitations issued and on participants and participation.

Although since the start of short-term training programmes an increase in the activities can be reported, researchers have paid relatively little attention to this measure. Nevertheless, a growing number of studies have recently dealt with the analysis of shorter measures, such as short-term training programmes. These studies are mainly based on process data containing relevant information. Unfortunately, these data sets provide no information on invitations to measures or the timing of these invitations. It is therefore not possible to study the effect of the notification of a measure based on this data, but only the effect of actual participation in the programme. In this study, therefore, a different approach is used to investigate the question as to the extent to which short-term training programmes improve the integration prospects of job-seekers.

The evaluation problem is solved here using an experiment. In this experiment, potential participants were selected by an employment agency using random selection into a treatment and a control group. The implementation of an experiment had the advantage that it was possible to examine not only participants but also potential participants who received an invitation to the programme but for various reasons did not participate. This makes it possible to study not only the effect of actual participation in the programme on the participants' employment prospects, but also the effect of an invitation to such a programme.

The evaluation of this experiment shows a positive effect on the probability of leaving unemployment, after receiving an invitation to a training programme. This effect is based primarily on people leaving unemployment before the start of the training programme. Indeed, a positive effect due to actual participation can only be found to a small extent. A higher rate of people in the treatment group leaving unemployment after the review of availability compared to the control group is especially found in the group of part-time unemployed women and the group of unemployed people aged between 20 and 27 in the first months after the start of the training programme. On the other hand, in a group of unemployed people in industrial occupations, this effect can not be found. After a certain time, a slightly positive effect of actual participation can be found in the latter group. A significant positive effect of actual participation, however, can only be found in the group of younger unemployed people nine months after the end of the training programme.

The results of this evaluation of short-term training programmes which test the availability for employment using experimental data indicate that these programmes are very well suited to review whether unemployed people are actually available to participate in a programme and are thus also available for employment. The results show that individuals who have received an invitation to a training programme have higher probabilities of leaving unemployment than those in the control group. However, in this context it is also worth noting that exits from unemployment due to the invitation are not predominantly integrations into regular employment. If the target is to improve the employment prospects by means of the training itself, only moderate success can be found. The evaluation of actual participation in short-term training programmes shows little effect on the exit rate from unemployment and the rate of integration into regular employment.