Esther MBIH

PhD Candidate in Economics
CREST-X-ENSAE, Department of Economics

CONTACT INFORMATION

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RESEARCH INTEREST

Primary: Labour Economics, Policy Evaluation
Secondary: Behavioural Economics, Applied Microeconometrics

REFERENCES

Bruno Crépon (PhD Supervisor)
CREST-ENSAE
Department of Economics
Email: bruno.crepon@ensae.fr

Beatrice Boulu-Reshef
University of Orléans
Department of Economics
Email: beatrice.boulu-reshef@univ-orleans.fr

EDUCATION

2015 - 2020 PhD candidate in Economics, CREST-X-ENSAE and Pôle emploi
Thesis title: *Essays on the Role of Information in Job Search Behavior and Demand for Training*
Advisor: Bruno Crépon
Defense Committee: Béatrice Boulu-Reshef, Bruno Crépon, Pierre Cahuc, Arne Uhlendorff

2015　　**MSc Empirical & Theoretical Economics**, Paris School of Economics
　　　　Sociology Certification, (Bachelor degree level), Paris 1 - Sorbonne
2013　　**Bachelor degree in Economics and Management**, University of Caen

JOB MARKET PAPER

Do informational frictions affect enrollment in public-sponsored training? Results from an online experiment
with Aïcha Ben Dhia (MIT)

Despite massive and increasing public spending in training for the unemployed, little is known about how job seekers decide to enroll in a training program. Decisions related to job training might be undermined by informational gaps, especially about program costs, enrollment procedures, and expectations of reemployment chances. This paper reports the results of a low-cost intervention aimed at testing for the existence of misinformation about training costs and returns, and its impact on enrollment. Partnering with the French Public Employment Services and the largest training provider in France, we sent 50,000 emails advertising training opportunities to job seekers in four regions of France in late summer 2016. We randomly added short messages on training costs, registration procedures, and training returns to the basic email template. We find that receiving an email with a message emphasizing training returns in terms of employment more than doubles the likelihood that job seekers call back the training center. However, callback rates are low in absolute value (less than one percent) and we detect no impact on enrollment one to six months after the intervention. We provide suggestive evidence that the effects on callbacks are driven by increasing salience of basic information about training rather than by belief updating.

Can a Website Bring Unemployment Down? Effects of an Online Platform on Job Search Efficiency
with Aïcha Ben Dhia (MIT), Bruno Crépon (CREST-X-ENSAE), Louise Paul-Delvaux (Harvard University),
Bertille Picard (Aix-Marseille University) and Vincent Pons (Harvard University)

This paper evaluates the impact of an online platform helping job seekers adopt effective job search strategies, using a large-scale experiment. The platform combines labor market data and personal data provided by users to recommend them occupations and areas with high employment chances and it gives them concrete tips to improve their job search methods. The experiment was conducted in collaboration with the French public employment agency on a sample of 212 277 job seekers from April to November 2017. We find modest effects on search methods: job seekers using the website are more likely to rely on personal networks and to use resources provided by public employment services. However, we follow individual trajectories for 18 months after the intervention and do not observe any impact on job seekers' search effort and search scope, whether occupational or geographical. Moreover, we do not find any effect on self-reported well-being and on employment outcomes, both in the short run or in the middle run. Overall, we conclude that more intensive interventions are required to bring unemployment down.

Behavioral Barriers to Human Capital Investment - Evidence from French Jobseekers
Lead author, with Bruno Crépon (CREST-X-ENSAE), Anett John (University of Birmingham), and Lucas Girard (CREST-X-ENSAE)

Despite potentially high gains in labor market outcomes, the demand for vocational training programs in France remains low. We design a survey administered to 20,048 jobseekers that studies the barriers which prevent individuals from taking up vocational training. In addition to "external" barriers, such as lack of information or inadequate supply, we also investigate "internal" psychological barriers, including self-efficacy, executive function, and self-control problems. The first part of the paper presents the survey and describes its main results, contrasting the prevalence of external and internal barriers for different categories of jobseekers. In the second part of the paper, we use the insights gained from the survey to inform the design of a randomized controlled trial. We develop interventions to target either external beliefs (about the world) or internal beliefs (about the self). Interventions consist of app-based courses with interactive sessions involving groups of jobseekers.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Training Enrollment in France: External and Internal Barriers Constraints
with Bruno Crépon (CREST-X-ENSAE), Anett John (University of Birmingham), and Lucas Girard (CREST-X-ENSAE)

Women Self-selection on the Labour Market: Evidence from French Jobseekers

TEACHING

2019 - present   University Paris Sud - Paris Saclay
Microcroeconomics (TA) undergraduates
Macrocroéconomics (TA), undergraduates
Econometrics (TA), graduates
2018   CentraleSupélec
Introduction to economics (TA), undergraduates
2018   ENSAE
Econometrics (TA), graduates
2018   University Paris Dauphine
Statistics (TA), undergraduates
2017   University Paris Descartes
Statistics (TA), undergraduates
2016   University Paris Assas
Market Structures (TA), undergraduates

Languages and computer skills

French :	Native speaker
English :	Fluent
Spanish :	Intermediate level
Software :	Office, STATA, SAS, R, LateX