



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Creating opportunities for youth employment in South Sudan - Final Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *South Sudan*
Final Evaluation: *12/2012*
Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*
ILO Administrative responsibility:
DWT/CO-Cairo
Technical Area: *ED/EMP/MSU*
Evaluation Team: *Richard Chiwara*
Project Code: *SUD/08/50/UND*
Donor: MDG-AF (US\$ 9,000,000)
IOM: 799,718 UNDP: 1,753,326
UNICEF: 985,598 FAO: 879,690
UNFPA: 259,368 UNESCO: 405,263
ILO: 1,400,336 UNIDO: 1,404,659
UNAIDS: 194,526 UNOPS: 917,514
Keywords: *Youth employment, migration, armed conflict, economic reconstruction,*

Extracted from the executive summary of the report

The Final Evaluation of the Joint Programme “Creating Opportunities for Youth Employment in South Sudan” was undertaken over the period 15 October to 23 November 2012 by an independent evaluator. The final evaluation focused on measuring development results and potential impacts generated by the joint programme. It was based on the scope and criteria provided in the evaluation terms of reference (TOR) See Annex 4 for details.

Based on the review of background documents, the evaluation noted that the Joint

Programme (JP) was implemented in a unique period for South Sudan and in a very complex and difficult environment. The magnitude of the challenges in the new nation of South Sudan are quite phenomenal, particularly the lack of infrastructure, high levels of poverty, weak government structures at the State and County levels, and the limited capacity within the civil service and public administration.

The JP was first designed in 2007 when Sudan was still one country and following the separation of South Sudan in July 2011, the programme was divided into two separate programmes. At the start of programme implementation in March 2010, the Government of South Sudan did not agree with the JP design, noting that it had not been approved by the Inter-Ministerial Appraisal Committee (IMAC) and that some of the activities were inconsistent with its priorities. The UN duly responded by setting in motion the process of obtaining IMAC approval, followed by an inclusive UN and government Inception Mission which revised some of the JP activities and approach. The major revision of the approach was (i) shifting the focus from specific States to labour markets, (ii) shifting the focus from target groups such as Internally Displaced Persons, (IDPs), returnees, ex-combatants and children associated with armed forces to an inclusive approach focusing on all youth, and (iii) shifting from Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) to vocational and life skills training.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Following the revision of the JP strategy and approach, the JP's logic model and theory of change, was quite logically articulated and was based on (a) addressing challenges in the enabling environment – mainstream youth in national and State-level development policies and Action Plans, and (b) developing and implementing specific interventions to demonstrate what is possible and what could be done to empower the youth at the local levels (and in the context of their specific labour markets).

However, the evaluation observed some fundamental weaknesses in the JP implementation approach. Firstly, there were too many UN agencies involved especially at the downstream level. Some of the UN agencies did not have the capacity or comparative advantage to operate at that level, and in some cases this resulted in some of the critical activities that had a major bearing on the JP theory of change not being implemented. In particular, the JP logic for creating youth opportunities was premised on the assumption that after they obtained appropriate skills training, that most youth would establish income generation and microenterprises; but the JP did not implement the activities for establishing the microfinance and microcredit outputs. The roles of UN agencies did not reflect their comparative advantages. For example, ILO would have been better placed to handle Labour Market Surveys instead of UNDP; and UNICEF was allocated funds for livelihood training instead of ILO and UNIDO. In addition, given that ILO and UNIDO had similar areas of work in the South and North respectively, it would have been more efficient for them to swap activities when the programme was divided into two.

Secondly, the JP used the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). Since a key result of the JP was to strengthen the enabling environment and mainstreaming youth issues into national development plans, institutional

capacity building would have been a critical component of the programme process. However, DIM does not promote national capacity building and also it does not create an institutional venue for programme sustainability. The evaluation was however cognizant of the considerable capacity gaps, particularly at the time of the JP design which would have made the National Implementation Modality (NIM) almost impossible, and in particular for the donor. In addition, the evaluation also noted that UNICEF operated through a grant contract with PLAN International who then subcontracted to the Indian CAP Work Force Development Institute. PLAN provided a sub- contract to SMECOSS a local NGO to do enterprise and savings training. UNFPA operated through a grant contract to Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), an American NGO. However, ILO and UNDP provided funds and capacity building support for Labour Market Survey capacity direct to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Thirdly, the programme was not designed as a joint programme, strictly speaking. By definition, a joint programme should enable joint attribution of results by two or more UN agencies. This means that UN agencies must work together through a common work plan to achieve attributable results – **outputs**. Where UN agencies are only contributing to a common result – **outcomes** – this cannot be defined as a joint programme. This provides the basis and mechanisms for UN agency collaboration in the context of their different programming and operational regulations, reporting models and timeframes. Due to the lack of joint planning and implementation, the JP missed some opportunities for building synergy between different UN agency outputs. For example, youth to whom skills training had been given through the JP activities were not necessarily engaged by the other UN agencies that were undertaken construction and renovation of youth facilities and infrastructure.

At the process level, the JP introduced some innovative approaches that the GRSS could upscale and replicate to accelerate its youth empowerment agenda. Some of the noteworthy innovative approaches include; (i) Linking vocational and enterprise training to targeted Skills and Market Opportunities assessments, (ii) The Youth Peer Education Network, (iii) Mobile training, (iii) Farmer Field Schools, and (iv) functional literacy. Moreover, as part of building more transformational and scalable approaches, the JP established two clustered joint UN/GRSS strategic initiatives; (i) the development of a youth volunteer service (Payam Youth Service) linked to the national development plan, and (ii) the Cattle Camp Initiative to provide mobile training in excluded areas and to reach the pastoralist youth.

The challenge remains with capacity of duty bearers at the local level to continue with innovations and the motivation of participating youth and communities; this will aid in continuing work in the absence of dedicated support in resources and leadership. Evidence was obtained of large numbers of drop-outs from the Y-Peer network and Farmer Field Schools due to lack of incentive for the volunteering participants.

The JP's most significant result was in raising awareness and focusing attention on the strategic importance of addressing youth empowerment in terms of (a) long term stability, and (b) economic development. The JP contributed notably to results at the policy level. Specific results achieved include, Development of the draft Youth Policy, Support for conducting an Urban Labour Market Survey, Developing the TVETE Policy, and National Cooperative Strategy. Youth issues were embedded into all the 4 pillars of the country's first national development plan - South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) 2011-13, the UNDAF 2012 – 2013, and the UN Peace Building Support Plan.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Based on analysis of the foregoing findings, the evaluation identified four key lessons that were emerging from the JP experience which should be taken into account in future programming in order to enhance inter-agency collaboration and to strengthen effectiveness of programme results.

Lesson 1: The extensive number of partnering UN agencies does not necessarily imply better inter-agency collaboration nor effective implementation. Joint planning and implementing of activities such that there is joint attribution to results at output level enhances inter-agency collaboration.

Lesson 2: The multi-dimensional attributes of sustainability imply that to enhance project sustainability, a rigorous sustainability analysis is needed at the time of formulation of a project or a programme. Such an analysis which is to be followed up by development of a sustainability strategy will assist in incorporating the elements of sustainability, right at the design stage of a project.

Lesson 3: Development processes and results that are not demand driven and lack national ownership, including through budget and institutional support, cannot continue beyond the life of the project.

Lesson 4: When development partner efforts and activities in support of national development priorities are not centrally coordinated; they produce negative unintended consequences such as promotion of a culture of dependence and inefficient utilization of resources through duplication and mismanagement.

Going forward, there was a need for the UN to position itself strategically in order to have a greater impact on youth empowerment in future programming. Clearly, given the high levels of rural violence, poverty, food insecurity and illiteracy in the population in general and the youth in particular, providing livelihood opportunities at the downstream level would be an important contribution for the UN. On the other hand, given the country's high dependence on a depleting oil resource and limited domestic production and high reliance

on imports for almost everything; the UN should provide support for economic growth and diversification.¹ While these are not necessarily mutually exclusive concepts, they provide a useful basis for structuring the problems and targeting UN agency technical expertise to address the problems based on their individual comparative advantages. For example, based on its comparative advantages in a country where 78% of households depend on subsistence farming – cropping and animal husbandry, the UN could achieve more impact by focusing more on growth through supporting the government in policies and strategies to do with Agriculture Modernization, Value-chain Creation and the development of Trade and Markets.

On the whole, the UN focuses on addressing these issues, mainly by providing support for policy development, including inter-sectoral policies; limiting the scope of interventions, including by engaging national institutions in implementing activities and developing national capacities. This of course also requires development of a very solid and effective M&E system to ensure that there is value for money.

This evaluation recommends the following:

- 1) Overall, the JP addressed a critical development challenge (youth empowerment) in South Sudan; and therefore the momentum that was created should be maintained.
- 2) The UN should undertake a comprehensive gap analysis; and only then identify and match relevant UN agency technical expertise based on their comparative advantages to address the gaps.

- 3) The UN should limit the scope of interventions by focusing on strategic areas that promote (1) economic growth and development, and (2) human resources development as a long-term strategy for sustainable employment creation.
- 4) The UN should build a platform for sustaining programme results by integrating institutional capacity development, including through national implementation (government, NGOs and CBOs).
- 5) The UN should provide more support to policy development including sectoral policy coherence to strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable youth empowerment (e.g. regulatory frameworks and by-laws that support various legislation).
- 6) The GRSS should provide requisite resources to support its priorities and strategies for youth empowerment, including establishment of Youth Empowerment Fund; and budget support to vocational and youth training centres.
- 7) The GRSS should streamline the mandates and develop clear linkages between vocational and technical education, including on regulation, inspection, accreditation and M&E frameworks, as well as introducing entrepreneurial education into the system.

¹ While economic growth may be essential for poverty reduction, the relationship between the two also depends on the capabilities of the poor to take advantage of expanding economic opportunities. 'Livelihoods' integrates the measures that enable the poor to cope with and recover from stress and shocks; and comprises creating small capabilities, assets and activities required for the poor to make a living.