



# Evaluation Summaries

## *Evaluation: Expanding economic opportunity and income security through workforce education, skills training, employment creation, and local economic development in Pakistan and the Philippines (TREE Project)*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Pakistan and the Philippines

**Final Evaluation:** November 2007

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**Technical Area:** Skills Development

**Evaluation Management:** Regional

**Evaluation Team:** Dr. Frederick C. Huxley,  
Ms. Lucita Lazo

**Project Start:** 2002

**Project End:** 2007

**Project Code:** RAS0255USA

**Donor:** USA (3.01 million US\$)

**Keywords:** Income generation, Skills development, Workers' education, Economic development, Rural development, Employment creation

### Background & Context

#### **Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure**

The TREE project's objectives were to enhance and build on capacities for developing skills and creating employment among the most socially and economically disadvantaged social groups in Pakistan and the Philippines. The need for productive employment was aggravated by a recurrently unstable security situation in the project's target areas in both countries. Accordingly, the project aimed to contribute to security there, as well as to socio-economic development.

The project strategy with all target areas and populations was a systems approach addressing poverty at several levels. First, it worked to help construct a policy and regulatory environment supportive of economic activity. Second, it increased the capacities of local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to plan, organize, and implement community-based training and support programmes for local economic development and decent work. And third, it provided beneficiaries with opportunities for skills development and follow-up support (such as small-business training, access to credit, and monitoring).

#### **Present situation of project**

The project provided assistance to partner organizations until its completion in September 2007.

#### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The primary purpose of this summative final evaluation was to assess the project's progress in pursuing its objectives 2002-07. The most important of these objectives were improved economic and security conditions as manifest by:

- Increasing employment among the target populations of rural women, unemployed youth, and disabled persons in two Districts of Pakistan and in the ARMM, Region XII, and Davao City areas of the Philippines, and
- Increasing access to information and financial resources by those target populations. This objective was manifest by increased capacities (vocational, entrepreneurial, and managerial skills as

well as higher levels of literacy and numeracy) among the target populations. It was also illustrated through increased institutional capacities among partner organizations implementing skills-training programs (e.g., among the NRSP and branches of the Federal Ministry of Labour in Pakistan, or among the ARMM agencies and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [TESDA] in the Philippines).

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The final evaluation was conducted by two independent evaluators via several interrelated activities. First, the evaluators reviewed key documents prior to fieldwork, then carried out interviews with project beneficiaries in each country, as well as project staff and key persons from partner institutions.

A major constraint influencing the evaluation was that the Team Leader could not participate directly in the fieldwork in either country due to security concerns.

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

**1.** The project was able to meet or surpass almost all of its key targets.

First, it has helped to increase employment among rural women, youth, and disabled persons in both countries. In Pakistan the project trained more beneficiaries (3,072) than expected (2,970), and over nine-in-ten of them (93%) used the training to get new jobs. In the Philippines the overall numbers were somewhat lower (1,897 beneficiaries trained versus 1,743 expected), but the employment rate was about the same (95%, 3-5 months following the training). Second, the project increased access to information and financial resources: in Pakistan it helped beneficiaries to form 175 new savings and credit groups and 7 business associations; in the Philippines 23 new groups were able to mobilize information and financial or other resources for beneficiaries, while only 12 had been targeted. And third, the project had more modest results with increasing the capacities of partner organizations to provide skills training: in Pakistan it trained officers and staff of 54 such bodies in project methodology (though the target was 100 organizations); in the Philippines, it met the target of training 6 organizations to design and implement skills-training programs like those of the TREE. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to

conclude that the project's progress in pursuing its objectives 2002-07 was outstanding.

**2.** Continuation of activities begun under the TREE project seem highly likely in Pakistan (unless there is a major change in government), likely but more modest in the Philippines.

**3.** Via the TREE project, ILO and USDOL have reached a critical juncture in the pursuit of long-term goals -- such as decent work for all and/or a more stable and secure political-economic setting -- in the North-western Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) of the Philippines.

The TREE project has been successful as a pilot initiative in both countries by identifying and then mobilizing target populations, helping to train them, and then fostering support for the former trainees so that a large majority finds gainful employment shortly afterward. To sustain that development trajectory, those trained and employed persons (and their support groups) should now be linked to on-going economic activity (e.g., in the formal sector) or to other development programs (e.g., aid efforts).

**4.** The TREE approach has been robust in addressing rural poverty across several settings.

This evaluation has noted how the project employed the TREE approach to pursue objectives in areas of marginal or vacillating government control (Pakistan) and in helping to heal from a civil war (the Philippines). Evidence suggests that the approach may reinforce (or even help to improve) political security and also equips and supports beneficiaries for better jobs. The approach is proving effective in other efforts as well, such helping to rebuild and regenerate areas of Pakistan that were devastated by earthquake in 2005. The approach seems promising also for addressing needs of rural populations marginalized by less dramatic but perhaps more far-reaching economic trends.

### **Recommendations & Lessons Learned**

#### **Main recommendations and follow-up**

**1.** Replicate and build on successes by exploring how it can inform/guide other projects for rural employment. One step to facilitate this process would be to stop assuming that perfect security is necessary before a project can begin.

**2.** Continue supporting initiatives, such as the Prime Minister's Program for Vocational and Skills Training or those described in "Skilling

Pakistan”<sup>1</sup> to sustain the breakthrough in Pakistan. Continue monitoring and supporting efforts in the target regions of the Philippines to maintain TREE-initiated activities. One way could be to work with employers’ associations, workers’ associations, and NGOs to link the activities with their own plans for the formal sector of the Philippine economy. Another might be to add a training/employment specialist to the staff of ILO-Manila.

3. Insightfully use or adapt elements of prior experiences (including the findings, consequences, and recommendations of this report) in planning and implementing projects currently begin planned for Africa.

### **Important lessons learned**

Tracer studies were critical to showing the effectiveness of TREE training and follow-up support, and independent studies of project impacts in both countries<sup>2</sup> found evidence consistent with the tracer studies.

Having a single implementing partner organization with both capacity and nationwide reach (as with the NRSP in Pakistan) facilitates project administration and speeds replication, if the project merits scaling up to higher levels of activity.

Where implementation is focused on a minority population (as with the TREE project in the Philippines), special conditions may apply. Such a focus can be appropriate – e.g., to heal from civil war and/or to redress historical injustices – but it also can complicate the extension or replication of project successes with other populations.

Some degree of law and order is necessary, but project activity itself may help to build a safer environment so long as beneficiaries and implementing partners see people getting trained, finding jobs, and building better lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC), “Skilling Pakistan: A Vision for the National Skills Strategy 2008-2012,” n.d.

<sup>2</sup> For Pakistan, see Khan, I., *ibid.* For the Philippines, see Bajunaid, M., *ibid.*