



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Workplace Education Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work

Quick Facts

Country: Benin

Final Evaluation: October 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: HIV/AIDS

Evaluation Management: Maurizio Bussi, ILO/AIDS

Evaluation Team: Christian Bugnion, External Evaluator; Dr. Edmond Kifouly, National Consultant

Project Start: July 2003

Project End: December 2006

Project Code: BEN/03/50/USA

Donor: The United States (441,221 US\$)

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

In 2002, the National HIV/AIDS Committee (CNLS) was created under the leadership of the President of Benin and a National Strategic Plan (NSP) was elaborated for 2002-2006. The NSP provided the national strategic orientations but a workplace component was not yet included. Workers' and Employers' Organizations were involved in only limited HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The project was formulated to support the national authorities in their endeavours for the prevention of HIV/AIDS in the world of work, the enhancement of workplace protection and the reduction of the adverse consequences on social, labour and economic development. The

overall strategy was to increase the capacity of the ILO's tripartite constituents to design and implement workplace HIV/AIDS prevention policies and programmes. The strategy built upon the ILO's comparative advantage in advocacy and policy development particularly drawing on the *Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*. Specific target groups, both in the formal and informal economy, were identified and specific training and behaviour change communication programmes adapted for them. The project was carried out in collaboration with the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS and local NGOs.

Present situation of project

A Tripartite Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the world of work has been signed by the Ministry of Labour, the employers' and workers' organizations. The world of work has been integrated as a priority objective in the new National Strategic Framework 2006-2011. Eight articles on HIV/AIDS in the workplace have been included in the new National HIV/AIDS Law. A total of 150 national officials, representatives from the employers' and workers' organizations as well as national NGOs were trained in the development and implementation of HIV/AIDS policies and programmes. The project was partnering with 9 enterprises and with the handcraft promotion centre (*Centre de promotion de l'artisanat*), covering 4,770 workers out of whom 205 were trained as peer educators. The project sustainability workshop was held in July 2006. All project stakeholders participated in the development of the sustainability plan.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation is to determine if the project has achieved its stated objectives, assess the impact of the project in terms of sustained improvements achieved, document best practices that could be used as models for activities in other projects, and recommend to the ILO, donor, and national stakeholders' the next steps to ensure the sustainability and future effectiveness of project interventions.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation team used a multi-criteria method which includes a review of the relevant documents provided by the ILO and the project, pre-trip consultations with ILO backstopping officers in Geneva and with USDOL representatives by telephone, individual and group meetings with key informants and peer educators in the field, and observation in the workplace.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance of the project strategy and objectives

All key informants, both tripartite constituents and workers in their workplace, have confirmed the relevance of the project strategy and the approach followed. At national level and for the first time, the strategy has led the state, employers and workers to discuss at the same table the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace. The strategy has led the tripartite constituents to:

Take note of the importance and the need to have a specific programme regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace;

Sign a tripartite declaration on HIV/AIDS and the world of work;

Influence the text of a new law on HIV/AIDS, and particularly regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace;

Work jointly to recognize and incorporate this aspect in the new national strategic framework.

Within partner enterprises, the strategy filled a gap. HIV/AIDS problems did exist, but no one knew how to address this problem at the

workplace. It raised awareness on the importance and need for a specific HIV/AIDS education programme involving all staff from the directors and managers to the casual workers in all partner enterprises. The project led to the development of policies and programmes within the enterprises of the formal sector, and gave sufficient flexibility to be adapted to each enterprise's specific needs despite the difference amongst sectors and enterprises.

Project management and implementation

Project management and implementation are proceeding correctly. The NPC is closely following his plan of action, and the Project Advisory Board (PAB) includes a number of champions who support the project with genuine interest and enthusiasm. Key informants mentioned the national project coordinator's capacity for persuasion and his dynamism as one of the fundamental factors which has contributed to the project's success.

Impact on project beneficiaries

Direct project beneficiaries, e.g. workers and partner enterprises, have clearly had a positive reaction to the introduction of this project. However substantial time was necessary to establish the activities within the partner enterprises and in the informal sector. This, coupled with a slow start to the project for reasons identified in the internal mid-term evaluation, indicates that only a few months have passed since the project structures have been operational at this level. However, it did not keep the committees from carrying on with their plan of action and they have already undertaken a number of activities. Nonetheless it may be too early to speak of impact at this stage, although the results from the impact survey (September 2006) do show an important quantifiable positive change in knowledge, attitude and behaviour of workers from partner workplaces. Although positive changes have also taken place in the informal sector, it is more difficult to judge to what degree.

The commitment of the committees within partner enterprises is not linked to the company's economic and financial results. The

committees which showed more motivation were actually those of enterprises that are having economic problems. For those partner enterprises, the capacity of the NPC to mobilize resources from the World Bank through the Multi-sectoral AIDS Project (PPLS) was an important advantage in order to realize the activities that had been planned but where there were financing difficulties on the employers' side.

Results and achievements

The evaluation recognizes that the project has reached practically all of the objectives mentioned in the strategic framework. Details by objective and sub-objective are developed in the body of the report. Furthermore, a strong demand for an extension of the project to other sectors has been felt by the evaluation team. The NPC has a list of 31 other enterprises representing a workforce of 12,260 people from different sectors which shows the interest that the project has created.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Although some of the activities, particularly those undertaken within partner enterprises, may carry on beyond the end date of the project, it is strongly recommended that the project continues for a new period in order to consolidate its achievements. The members of the PAB agree on the need to continue and intensify the approach, while covering other sectors and increasing the geographical coverage to become countrywide.

Important lessons learned

The development of a system of monitoring and evaluation of activities in enterprises is an important benefit and an example of good practice, as is the preparation of budgets for enterprise activities, setting out the sources of financing.

An important lesson is to enable participation of the host country partners in project design so that they take ownership of the project, and do not see it as the transposition of something which was done elsewhere in the same way. The flexibility of the BCC methodology allowed each enterprise to adapt its policy and

action plan and to develop material specific to each. In this respect, the adaptability of the approach to the specific characteristics of each player within sectors and enterprises is a worthwhile lesson.

The evaluation team believes that the project would not have been successful and achieved the same results without the active participation and taking ownership by the tripartite constituents and the partner enterprises. The participatory process whereby the tripartite constituents were brought to contribute to the project, the quality and support of the members of the PAB also made a crucial contribution to the NPC's efforts. In the enterprises, the active participation of employers and workers contributed to the results achieved thanks to their involvement from the beginning of the project.

Another lesson relates to the concept of sustainability. This was not defined by the project document, and gave rise to different interpretations. Projects are not sustainable by definition as they have a life cycle. However, the activities and benefits can continue after the end of the project if a transfer of ownership and a hand-over have been planned, and other resources can be allocated to the activities from different sources. While the project envisaged a sustainability plan in order to obtain additional funding after the end of the USDOL financing, the plan did not identify the manner in which transfer of ownership, hand-over and additional resources could be obtained and to what extent. The ILO seems often to be regarded as a donor which reinforces the hope the ILO might have additional funds for the project and false expectations by the stakeholders as to the ILO's capacity to ensure the continuation of the project when the USDOL financing ends. The concept of sustainability therefore needs to be better defined and, thereby, the ILO's role after project duration in order not to raise false hopes.

The project should include a public relations component in order to ensure better project visibility. Visibility is often linked to the capacity to obtain additional financing.

Finally, a fundamental aspect was the change of awareness of the tripartite constituents and other stakeholders concerning the need for a specific element concerning the fight against HIV/AIDS in the workplace. It must be acknowledged that the methodology used by the ILO, which involves the tripartite constituents, is unique and especially well suited to issues of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.