



Evaluation Summaries

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Impact Mitigation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Quick Facts

Countries: Lesotho, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritius, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo

Mid-Term Evaluation: July–December 2008

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: HIV/AIDS

Evaluation Management: ILOAIDS

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Project Start: 1 January 2006

Project End: 31 December 2009

Project Code: INT/05/M08/SID

Donor: Swedish International Development Agency Sweden (US\$5,338,000)

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Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Sida-funded Programme on HIV/AIDS prevention and impact mitigation in Sub-Saharan Africa is a 4-year programme based on inter-departmental collaboration between different ILO units and comprising three components:

(1) HIV/AIDS prevention in the transport sector. Consolidating and scaling up the response to HIV/AIDS in high-risk economic sectors, through the prevention-care

continuum, with a focus on the transport sector.

(2) Mobilising the informal sector to respond to HIV/AIDS. Planning and implementing innovative interventions on HIV/AIDS, through mobilization and capacity building of cooperatives, SMEs and informal sector associations (ISAs).

(3) Strengthening legal and policy provision related to HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Strengthening the development and application of an appropriate legal and policy framework for the protection of the rights of workers affected by HIV/AIDS, including a component on occupational safety and health.

The rationale behind linking these components is two-fold: HIV/AIDS cannot be tackled in isolation from socio-economic factors and policy/legal frameworks that “shape” behaviours and the overall response to the epidemic in a country; and secondly, that ILO departments need to internalize HIV/AIDS into their core business and channel programme achievements at country level into HQ policies and then apply them to constituents’ needs in terms of policy guidance and knowledge sharing.

The *development objective* of the programme is: To reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa by addressing the world of work vulnerabilities and strengthening the application of policy and legal frameworks for the protection of infected and affected male and female workers.

The *immediate objectives* of the programme are:

Immediate Objective 1: Increased knowledge of HIV/AIDS and more responsible attitudes to risk behaviours of men and women workers and their families, help limit the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Immediate Objective 2: Improved working conditions and status of affected women and men working in targeted informal settings.

Immediate Objective 3: Enhanced compliance with the legal and policy framework by ILO constituents.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The programme began in 2006 and the mid-term evaluation was commissioned to determine: progress towards programme objectives; appropriateness of the strategic approach; recommendations for future improvement. The evaluation analysed the programme using an analytical framework covering the following issues:

- Relevance and strategic approach
- Programme progress and effectiveness
- Efficiency of resource use
- Effectiveness of management arrangements
- Sustainability and planning for impact

The principal clients of the evaluation are:

- ILO staff at headquarters and in the field;
- Sida
- Other interested parties include a variety of national and international stakeholders such as ministries, workers and employers organisations, UNAIDS (UN Joint Programme on AIDS); and National AIDS Councils.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology involved:

- Desk Review
- Field Visits: visits to Mozambique and South Africa. The field visit took place between 16-25 August 2008 and involved interviews and focus groups with a range of national stakeholders selected from:

Workers, employers, cooperative members, informal workers; Employers' groups, unions, NGOs, CBOs; Government officials particularly from ministries of labour and transport; People living with HIV/AIDS; Representatives of UNAIDS and other UN agencies at country level; and other national partners.

- Geneva visit for initial headquarters briefings.
- Phone interviews: phone interviews with key stakeholders such as the donor and former headquarters staff.
- Questionnaire: staff in all other project countries, besides those visited, were consulted through a survey (This survey is attached to the full report as Annex 3. This survey was also used as a guide for the face-to-face and phone interviews referred to above).

The countries visited were a representative sample of the programme as a whole and their selection was based on a range of criteria including types of components covered, progress made etc. The evaluation frequently draws on examples from the countries visited but these should not be seen as in-depth country reviews, rather they are observations which are of general importance and which may be applicable to other project countries also. Generalisation inevitably means, however, that all the findings contained in the report will not necessarily apply to each country. The evaluation report is fully evidence-based and draws on data supplied in interviews, questionnaires and programme documentation. For reasons of confidentiality, it is not always possible for the evaluator to cite sources or back assertions with explicit names and situations.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The programme continues to be very relevant due to high prevalence rates and the fact that it

is working in hitherto neglected sectors and with unreached populations.

It is progressing well in countries where it is on course: it is able to show an influence on national policy and developments as well as changes in knowledge and behaviour among workers on the ground. The evaluator was able to validate a number of significant impacts at national level through field visits to South Africa and Mozambique. National projects which are on course are demonstrating good efficiency, often working in a strategic way which maximises results in a cost-effective way. Integration is an important ethos of the programme overall and it has been successful in demonstrating a new way of working ILO, effectively engaging a number of technical units and helping to mainstream HIV/AIDS in the core business of the organisation.

However, there are a number of countries and elements of work which have experienced significant delays of 1-2 years. In total 4 out of the 7 main programme countries have suffered delays in implementation largely for internal reasons. It is recognised that some factors affecting implementation are beyond the programme's control and that its progress is affected by wider ILO structures and policies, operating contexts and external constraints. These issues are acknowledged but the focus of this report is very much on factors within the programme's and/or ILO's control. As such a number of issues about organisational effectiveness and inefficiency merit attention. These include:

- An overly complex management structure which creates a confusing set of relationships, roles and responsibilities making it difficult to track, understand and account for what is happening. The project covers 14 countries (7 main countries) and also involves implementation by headquarters. Management responsibilities for technical and administrative backstopping are split between different persons, units and offices. The result of this has been tension and misunderstanding between

offices and the creation of supervisory loopholes.

- Administrative and bureaucratic systems are seen as responsible for causing these delays. While some issues are due to overarching ILO systems outside the programme's control, the design of the programme does not mitigate these risks. It could have taken better account of organisational policies on decentralisation, budgeting, staffing etc. and worked with the system.
- Various issues were raised about the budget: there is insufficient budget for some countries/components (1 and 2) to meet their objectives whereas other components (3) have an underspend; and secondly, the decentralisation of the budget meant teething problems to start with but the situation has improved.
- Monitoring and evaluation system needs strengthening. The annual learning workshops and reports are working well but the system for ongoing monitoring suffers weaknesses with inconsistencies in frequency and format of reporting between countries and components.
- A number of the problems identified are inherent in the programme design, for instance:
 - Management structure did not take adequate account of overarching ILO structures and processes;
 - Rationale for the choice of the 3 core components has not been made clear to programme staff and the practical links between them unrealised;
 - Choice of countries, particularly in terms of diverse geographical spread and differences in management and structural arrangements has not helped foster integration to the optimum degree;

- Log frame does not adequately capture what the programme is doing and needs substantial improvement;
- Lack of one international coordinator to bring together all the components and countries in the programme is a major weakness.

The overall assessment is that this is an innovative programme which is bringing unique and original interventions to the field of HIV/AIDS. Where it is on course, the programme can show good evidence of impact, efficiency and effectiveness despite being held back by weaknesses in management, coordination and monitoring and evaluation. In terms of the future, the work being carried out at national level by all 3 components fills important gaps in the HIV/AIDS response and needs to be continued beyond this current phase. There is little doubt that much will remain to be done once this programme cycle ends in 2010 given the gravity of needs in project countries.

The question which merits further discussion within ILO is whether this work should continue as separate components or carry on as an integrated programme encompassing all 3 components. The value of taking an integrated approach is much valued by ILO stakeholders who see this programme as groundbreaking and breaking the mould of traditional ILO ways of working. If the work continues under an integrated programme, ILO will need to consider whether the commitment is there to optimise the advantages of such a model and if the wider ILO structures and systems are supportive of such an approach. Without these elements, a future integrated programme will continue to face challenges which impede optimum delivery. This report is based on the assumption that these pre-requisites can be met and proposes a number of recommendations below which can help enhance programme performance.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Many of the issues identified are so fundamental that it is not feasible for the programme to address them in this phase; to do so would be highly disruptive and detract from the importance of meeting current programme objectives. This evaluation report therefore makes recommendations which apply to both the medium-term as well as potential future phases and also identifies those responsible for follow-up in headquarters and in the field. This Evaluation Summary highlights certain key recommendations but readers are referred to the final section of the full report for all the recommendations in order to understand the complexity of the programme and issues arising from it.

Strategy

The evaluation finds that national projects and headquarters should consider various strategic issues in relation to how the programme is being implemented e.g. how it engages with all ILO constituents; whether it is succeeding to work at all operational levels; how it is promoting sub-regional links; how it can scale up and better integrate the components; how it can foster sustainability especially in terms of financial support for partners; and finally how it can standardise approaches and facilitate learning across the countries and components.

Key recommendations on strategy for HQ in conjunction with the Field include:

- Review how sustainability can be further promoted. The programme is working in a way that fosters sustainability by working closely with political structures. It is awakening needs and funding is necessary to enable partners who have been mobilised to take the work forward. Sustainability is an issue for all components and there is a need for a programme strategy for helping partners find resources. Lack of

resources for continuation are a challenge facing all types of partners whether they be large scale government agencies or small cooperatives.

- Explore the scope for more standardised approaches to ensure that national projects are not reinventing the wheel. This would help maximise the advantage of being part of a sub-Saharan programme. Areas for learning, sharing and developing standard tools for adaptation to local contexts need to be identified and may include, for example, peer education training, organisational HIV/AIDS policies etc.

Programme design

On the premise that a future phase will pursue work in the same sectors and aim to do so in a way that fosters integration within ILO, a programme design and management structure comprised of country projects covering all components supervised by one field-based international coordinator of all countries/components who is supported by an internal advisory group of technical units would rationalise the different elements in a more systematic way and help bring cohesion across the programme. **Key recommendations on programme design for Responsible Technical Units (HQ) include:**

- Consider a new management structure which would rationalise the different elements in a more systematic way and help bring cohesion across the programme by taking account of the following issues:
 - having country projects covering all components as the key organising structure i.e. the programme should comprise a collection of country-based projects rather than component-based projects.
 - involving a more limited number of countries in a future phase: a smaller number of countries where the programme can have a deeper engagement with all components would help a more integrated approach

rather than a lighter spread across 14 countries.

- positioning one international coordinator to technically supervise and coordinate country projects covering all components. This position should be field-based in an administrative hub (i.e. regional or sub-regional office) so that the links between technical and administrative management are close and clearly established.

- setting up an internal ILO advisory committee at headquarters to provide technical back-up to the international coordinator and feed in expertise from a range of units (including legal support). This committee would be comprised of technical backstoppers and representatives from key support units at headquarters and should not be confused with the current national committees. This committee should also exercise oversight of the international coordinator and report to his/her administrative manager on progress and problems.

This basic design would require further elaboration and discussion by ILO if it is to be adopted in a future phase.

Coordination

Although important strides have been made in achieving coordination at certain levels, the programme should consider how to ensure that the ethos of integration is understood throughout the programme; how to foster a better sense of community programme-wide so that national projects do not appear to work in isolation; how better coordination with external organisations can be achieved in some countries; and what linkages can be made with other technical units in future phases. **Key recommendations on coordination for HQ in conjunction with the Field include:**

- More efforts to foster a sense of community within the programme and to share information of what is happening at headquarters and in

different programme countries. National projects tend to work in a self-contained way and aside from the annual learning workshop do not appear to have much contact with each other or have the sense of being part of a wider programme. The newsletter that has been initiated should continue but the programme could use this phase to experiment with the best modalities, frequency and format for such information sharing.

- Knowledge and information-sharing within the programme needs strengthening in future phases e.g. email networks; telephone conferences, info-mails, newsletters, CIARUS etc also merits further development.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring system needs a substantial overhaul but this would be disruptive to the programme and also depends on an improved programme design, management structure and log frame. As such the programme will need to consider what interim measures can be taken to improve monitoring in the medium term and how the system can be enhanced in future phases. *Key recommendations on monitoring and evaluation for Responsible Technical Units (HQ) include:*

- In a future phase, the monitoring system needs considerable improvement to ensure consistency in reporting in terms of frequency and format across all countries and components.
- For this phase, consistency will be difficult to achieve given ambiguities and incoherence in the log frame itself. As such, national projects should be encouraged to adopt a few key indicators against which progress can be measured.
- Monitoring should include a review of financial allocations on a monthly basis to better track areas of non-implementation.

Important lessons learned

This programme represents a very innovative model within ILO whereby a thematic area has been successfully integrated with a number of other issues. Integration is an important ethos of the programme and a stimulant behind the programme design. The programme is able to demonstrate a new way of working in ILO, effectively engaging a number of technical units and helping to mainstream HIV/AIDS in the core business of the organisation. In the course of breaking new ground in this way, the programme has learnt important lessons about how the organisational and management structures of the organisation need to support such integrated initiatives.