



# Evaluation Summaries

## *Integrated programme of support for employment reactivation in Argentina (AREA)*

*(Original report in Spanish)*

### Quick Facts

**Country:** Argentina

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent final, June 2008

**Technical Area:** Norms, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

**Evaluation Management:** InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)

**Evaluation Team:** Giuseppe Querenghi and Gabriel Schneider

**Project Start:** November 2005

**Project End:** April 2007

**Project Code:** ARG/02/01M/ITA

**Donor and Project Budget:** Italy

**Keywords:** Employment Generation, Employment Service, small enterprise, local economic development, vocational training

### Background & Context

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

The AREA Programme, with financial support being provided by the Government of Italy, is part of a series of technical cooperation initiatives launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Argentina. This programme is aimed at addressing the effects of the social, economic and political crisis that the country went through between 2001 and 2002.

Due to its strong economic recovery Argentina there was a shift in project strategy in 2005. This shift focussed on employment policies promoted by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MTE-SS), and the Employment Secretariat, with a locally-based perspective (municipalities). The project's redesign is the focus of the present evaluation.

The original development objective of this project was to contribute to the reduction in unemployment and under-employment in Argentina, strengthening the support to productive units (micro and small enterprises MTE-SS and associative forms) in the framework of local economic development, as well as improving the conditions of labour mobility and employability.

The project's specific objectives are:

1. Support the MTE-SS in the process of innovation of active employment policies.
2. Support the MTE-SS in the improvement of employment and employability services.
3. Facilitate the implementation of strategies for Local Economic Development (DEL), integrated with employment policies and employment services, and with a focus on small and medium enterprises.

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

Two international experts were appointed to address the following specific objectives of the evaluation:

- Verify that the project has achieved the previewed results and pre-established immediate objectives up to the date of the evaluation.
- Evaluate the project's capacity to promote or influence the definition and execution of the MTE-SS employment active policies.
- Evaluate the pertinence of the project's intervention in regards to the problems and necessities expressed by counterparts and social actors.
- Analyze the networks and contacts established with the counterpart and local actors and their relationship with the project.
- Evaluate the counterpart and the social actors' level of active participation, including social actors involved in the implementation of activities, as well as in the dialogue and decision-making processes.
- Evaluate the technical support of Italia Lavoro in its performance as the project's co-implementing agency.
- Evaluate the overall management of the project: its organizational structure, the level of decentralisation and services offered, and bottlenecks in project execution.
- Provide a set of recommendations and lessons learned extracted from the project execution.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The adopted methodology was:

1. Desk review of the main documentary sources.
2. Interviews with the main actors and stakeholders involved in the project.
3. Field visits to observe the reality in the zones where the project was implemented.
4. Final meeting of the evaluation mission and presentation of the preliminary report for comments.

The evaluation tried to include an adequate variety of sources which allowed for triangulation of collected information and access to the different perceptions of stakeholder in the project.

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

The AREA Programme has an appropriate design in relation to its established objectives. Project revision in 2005 allowed for adequate adjustment for the new MTE-SS policies, and in consequence, this increased the success of its operations.

A series of activities were carried out efficiently surpassing the most optimistic levels of performance. This was evidenced through the deployment of a substantial number of high-level human resources, accompanied by the reinforcement of the MTE-SS within the country's seven regions where the project was implemented.

### **Recommendations & Lessons Learned**

#### **Important lessons learned:**

The project's lessons learned are identified as best practices. A best practice is conceived as an action that produces a positive impact and responds to three criteria: 1) it can be implemented, 2) success has been achieved, and 3) the intervention is replicable.

The models developed for the municipalities' offices were successful in different contexts, regions and cultures in regards to the project components: Employability and Services Component; Local Economic Development Component (DEL), and the Professional Training Component (FP). All of the instruments developed by AREA are part of an effective model of intervention that could be up-scaled for use as a model in other countries.

The methodology developed by the DEL component has been replicated in the various

regional locations of the project, obtaining similar results in different contexts.

The same criteria could be applied in the Professional Training Component (FP). The MTE-SS has now completed a professional training system which will be launched and will establish a significant reach for training once the World Bank's loan is implemented.

AREA is a good example of how the design of appropriate methodologies for planning and monitoring activities, and their application through project execution, contribute to management efficiency and efficacy. The support of national authorities and international organizations for the development of territorial initiatives does not only bring the obvious benefits in terms of resources, but it also increases participation and the possibilities of sustainability and success.

The involvement of universities is highly positive for the beneficiaries of training activities, as well as for the universities which benefit from a closer link to the municipalities.