Evaluation Summaries

International Labour Office

Job Opportunities for Young Women and Men (JOY)

Quick Facts

Countries: Indonesia

Mid-Term: March 2009

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Employment and Local Economic Development (EMP/INVEST)

Evaluation Management: Charles Bodwell, Enterprise Specialist, ILO Bangkok

Evaluation Team: Tony Powers (Independent Evaluator)

Project Start: May 2007

Project End: April 2010

Project Code: INS/06/50/NET

Donor: Netherlands (US$2,800,000)

Keywords: Youth, Employment, Local Economic Development, LED

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Job Opportunities for Young Women and Men (JOY) is a three year project, covering the period May 2007 to April 2010 and funded through the Netherlands-ILO Cooperation Programme (NICP). It has two components designed to be "mutually reinforcing" - a macro level (or "top down") component that focuses on building the capacities of the tripartite constituents and others to develop and implement effective national employment policies, programmes, strategies and consultative mechanisms; and a micro level (or "bottom up") component that fosters area-based employment and economic development through a participatory "Local Economic Development" (LED) approach.

Present situation of project

Due to delays in the appointment of project staff, JOY was slow to start and the majority of activities did not commence until early 2008. The Project Manager, who took primary responsibility for the first component of the project, was not recruited until June 2008. The project has made up much of the ground lost in the first year and is implementing a very broad range of activities in both project components.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the independent mid-term evaluation was to review progress in the implementation of the project. The evaluation was to cover all components supported by the JOY project and address issues of project design, implementation, lessons learnt, replicability and documentation and make recommendations for future phases of the project.

The clients of the evaluation were the project's management; partners, including the centralized government ministries and their counterpart decentralized offices at the provincial level; the LED forums in East Java; ILO staff involved in the project; ILO field technical specialists and ILO technical units in Headquarters; and the donor.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken between 16th and 27th March 2009. Evaluation methods included a desk top review of key project documents and reports, telephone and email contact with ILO specialist staff, field visits and stakeholder interviews in Surabaya, Pasuruan, Tutur, Malang, Poncokusumo, Jakarta and Bandung.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

JOY remains highly relevant to the labour market situation in Indonesia and fits well with the ILO's strategic framework, embodied in the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), and with the nascent Indonesian Medium Term Development Plan. The impact of the global financial crisis is yet to be fully felt, but youth will be amongst the more vulnerable in any economic downturn.

Design

Adjustments have been made to the original project design at both the output and activity level. These appear to have been valid and in line with the project's broad objectives and the DWCP, but the process for making these adjustments may have exposed deficiencies in the project's monitoring arrangements. Flexibility in the project is desirable, but if changes to outputs and activities are too fluid and are not subject to external scrutiny, there is the risk that project resources can be misdirected or spread too thinly.

Progress

Considering the condensed timeframe in which the project has been operating, JOY has made outstanding progress in implementing quality activities in line with project objectives. It has also been very quick in its response to changing circumstances and stakeholder needs at the national and sub-national level. The donor appears also to have been satisfied with the progress of the project as it recently augmented the project budget after re-allocating funds from other, under-performing projects.

The tri-partite partners are closely involved in the implementation of both components of the project and those consulted during the evaluation valued JOY's contribution to policy formulation and local economic development.

The employment generation and poverty reduction benefits of many of the project's activities will take time to be fully realised, but there are some early signs that JOY is making progress toward the achievement of the project's immediate and development objectives and those of the Indonesian DWCP.

Among the more significant achievements of the first component of JOY are its likely success in having youth issues mainstreamed in the National Medium Term Development Plan and attention given to sectoral development; the revitalization of the Indonesian Youth Employment Network; the development of the Job Opportunities Index; and the establishment of a degree programme in labour market development and planning.

The LED component's most significant achievements include the establishment of district level LED forums that are developing their agribusiness and tourism sectors; improving access to microfinance; and providing linkages to a range of organisations and programmes that can support communities to achieve their goals.

Noting the time constraints imposed on the project, some parts of the project have not yet made much progress. The LED forums still rely heavily on JOY staff not only for direction and inspiration, but also for basic administrative support, the running of meetings, problem solving and the follow-up of actions.

Also, other than organising access to gender-related workshops and seminars for some stakeholders, the JOY project seems so far to have paid little attention to gender issues. The original project document does not seem to define any clear activities in this field. A review of the project might be appropriate to identify opportunities in this area.

Efficiency

Considering the long delays in fully staffing the JOY project and the impressive range of project activities implemented since the beginning of 2008, JOY appears to be a productive and efficient project.

The project's use of volunteer experts from the Dutch PUM programme has provided the pilot LED communities with considerable expertise at no cost to them or to the ILO. The benefits and efficiency of this arrangement could be multiplied if local service providers are given the opportunity to observe and to learn from PUM placements.

The project has played a key role in leveraging extra funding for communities involved in LED activities. This includes access to the €8 million bio-gas fund, $400,000 funding from Rabobank for the communities' microfinancing needs and sponsorship support for the Bromo Agrofestival in Pasuruan. Project staff are currently working on ways of ensuring that some of the Indonesian Government's $6.3 billion stimulus package can also link with communities' LED priorities.

The feasibility study for the development of a Master's degree in labour market development and planning represents a relatively modest investment, but is likely to lead to greatly improved institutional capacity and, ultimately, to better functioning labour markets and better outcomes for young job seekers.

Management

JOY's management arrangements seem sound. The project now needs to revisit some of its basic project documentation – including redefining baseline data, updating and documenting activities attached to each output, collecting and compiling relevant information and data (including gender-related data), and incorporating these changes in a work plan for the project's final year.

Impact

National institutions have been positively influenced by the project. JOY's input into the current Medium Term Development planning process – through the provision of research and through the advocacy of the Indonesian Youth Employment Network – has resulted in youth and sectoral approaches being considered in the draft framework.

Provincial and district level institutions and community members are clearly enthusiastic about the LED approach and seemed committed to expansion. Other institutions, including government services for small and medium enterprises, a provincial employment service centre, universities and businesses, have also directly benefited from JOY activities.

JOY has made a significant impact in collecting, analysing and disseminating data and information to influence policy and programme implementation. Examples are the project's development of a Job Opportunities Index, sectoral research papers, and policy papers on vocational training.

Regarding sustainability and ownership, it was evident that the East Java communities were still largely dependent on ILO project staff for leadership, problem solving, organisation and action planning. The dynamism and entrepreneurialism of JOY staff were clearly inspiring and motivating the LED forums, but they had not yet reached a level of self-confidence that would allow them to take control of the process themselves. Addressing this should be a priority in the project's final year.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The JOY project team should revisit its baseline data for any future evaluation, update and document activities attached to each output, collect and compile relevant information and data, including gender-related data.

2. As part of this review, the Project Manager should consult with ILO Gender specialists to incorporate into project documents, strategies and activities specific actions that will improve gender outcomes. This should include the identification of relevant baseline data and objectives to be achieved over the final year of the project.

3. Before the end of 2009, the project team should develop, document and promote systems, tools and processes that encourage improved local ownership of the LED approach. These tools should be packaged to assist other communities to initiate LED.

4. Before the end of the project, ILO management in Jakarta should explore the extension of ILO support to LED in East Java, perhaps by maintaining the current national

staff engaging an ILO national staff member for one or two years.

5. By the end of 2009, ILO management should liaise with the Dutch programme PUM – Netherlands Senior Experts – to explore opportunities to continue its assistance to JOY, to the LED activities that JOY has initiated and to other ILO projects in Indonesia.

6. As a matter of general policy, ILO management should encourage those stakeholders who are given developmental opportunities through ILO seminars and workshops, to apply their new skills to support ILO projects (e.g. by undertaking, as a follow up to LED training in Turin, a practical LED-related assignment).

7. By June 2009, ILO management and the JOY Project Manager should review the nature of internal local administrative support provided for JOY.

8. Before the end of the project, the JOY Project Manager, supported by ILO management, should pursue mainstreaming of LED processes at a national policy level.

9. The JOY team should immediately seek to work with the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (MOMT) to improve the effectiveness of employment service delivery for Indonesian youth. Valuable lessons have been learned through JOY's support of the Employment Service Centre (ESC) in Surabaya and, as MOMT is currently rolling out a network of 146 new ESCs at the district and provincial level, JOY should be well placed to influence youth employment service delivery. Specific activities might include development of school-to-work transition programmes, career guidance systems, specialist youth outreach services run from the ESCs and the organisation of youth job drives and expos.

10. Many of the project's activities will not produce job outcomes in the short term. Even in the long term, there will be difficulties in establishing a causal relationship between project outputs and job outcomes – particularly given the volatility of the labour market in the face of the global financial crisis. As part of the project's revision of its basic documentation, the JOY Project Manager and ILO management in Jakarta should seek technical advice from the employment specialists in Geneva to develop a methodology to accurately measure or estimate the job outcomes of JOY over the short, medium and long term.

Important lessons learned

- JOY has positioned itself well to advance its own project objectives and those of the DWCP by influencing the new Medium Term Development Plan. Given that this top level planning process happens only every five years and shapes subsequent agency, provincial and district strategic action plans, this is a good mechanism for advancing ILO initiatives in general in Indonesia.
- Outsourcing research projects to local universities and providing guidance on presenting this research in a way that might best influence government policy has both advanced the project's objectives and built local capacity. If ILO offices have the expertise and capacity to provide such guidance and development to local universities, the approach should be emulated.
- The multi-stage process used by the team in introducing the LED component of project to stakeholders in East Java and in selecting pilot communities appears to have worked very well. The approach should be documented in a "step-by-step" guide for application in other countries.
- Directly facilitating "quick wins" for LED communities reinforces the benefits of the approach and inspires participants, but care needs to be taken to ensure that communities do not become dependent on outside assistance and can develop solutions for themselves.