



Evaluation Summaries

Integration of youth in the labour market through Employment Intensive Investment Program

Quick Facts

Countries: Mali

Mid-Term Evaluation: July 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: labour-based intensive employment creation (HIMO approach)

Evaluation Management:

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Project Start: July 2005

Project End: August 2007

Project Code: MLI/07/02/LUX

Donor: Luxembourg (1 150 000 US\$), Government of Mali (2, 220,618 US\$)

Keywords: labour intensive employment, capacity building, public and private partnerships, road construction

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project for the integration of youth in the employment market through Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) was initiated by two different requests from the government of Mali to the ILO. First, the government asked for ILO support to promote employment in the context of its EIIP approach in the preliminary multi sectoral employment intensive investment framework for the rural sector, and secondly, the Malian ministerial assembly, after a request of the

municipality of Bamako's district III to the Ministry of Labor, expressed a request to the ILO regarding assessment of one of its urban areas. Initially distinct, the two projects were gathered under one program addressing youth integration in the employment market, with a rural outreach (Ségou region) and an urban outreach (District III of Bamako) component.

The program identified two areas of intervention:

- Investments in income generating employment, for rural and urban populations: in the area of irrigation and production, environmental issues related to rural populations; and in the area of road paving and sanitation for the urban populations;
- Strengthening the capacity of private and public beneficiaries: small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and study companies, producer associations, youth groups, neighborhood committees

The present project was designed as a pilot approach that aimed at experimenting with the different options for employment intensive employment in the urban environment of Mali. The project was aimed at identifying whether or not the pilot was feasible, and economically viable, and if so, to determine if it should be replicated for further use or up-scaling.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

An in-depth evaluation of the project has been requested to the ILO to assess the results of the pilot phase of the project and its extension, the

project ends in August 2007. The evaluation, which took place between the 22nd of June 2007 to the 10th July 2007, was undertaken by a consultant mandated by the ILO to coordinate the mission and responsible for technical aspects, a consultant mandated by the Grand Duché of Luxembourg to be responsible for evaluating the training aspects and a national consultant who would be the accounting expert to assess the financial and institutional aspects of the program.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology applied throughout the evaluation aimed at:

(1) Analysis of project documents; (2) Briefings with the management of the EEIP unit and its staff during which the evaluation TOR was clarified, and the procedures applied by the implementing agency and its perception of the implementation of the pilot program; (3) Field visits to implementation areas to assess the procedures applied at the regional coordination level by the Agency for Youth Employment and its Ségou branch; (4) Meetings with regional management of public market (DGMP), National agency for collective decentralized investments (ANICT), Fiscal and treasury authorities, to obtain information on market procurement procedures, and investment funding procedures applicable in the country, and its districts' investments funding procedures, and finally; (5) a debriefing meeting was organized in order to present the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation team.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The main strength of the project is that it has managed to build strong capacity among institutional partners and operators in the areas of intervention of the program such as:

- Assessment and identification of community projects: feasibility with respect to local funding resources, priority needs, and ability to provide employment to the most vulnerable part of the population;
- Training of EIIP approach for construction micro-companies, enabling better market access to public bids;

- Identification and provision of demonstration materials on the art of stone paving, allowing, in midterm prospect, the generalization of the approach and the establishment of a stone sector recognized as a technology applicable for roadtops.

The mobilization of development partners (decentralized technical management, municipalities, community associations, private economic operators) was effective throughout the project duration, and has enabled the implementation of quality and cost effective public infrastructure building. Notably, the creation of two new rural roads were built. This has allowed the comparison between the application of two different approaches, the use of GIE and the use of private companies, in public infrastructure market bidding. In the urban component of the program, the use of stone paving for roadtops was an innovative approach supporting labour intensive employment and long term employment by the development of its sector. The approach has demonstrated financial and economic competitiveness and its capacity to coexist with other existing technologies.

The project provided good integration with the use of local materials and alignment with government objectives on employment. Capitalizing on this experience is desirable on a large scale (national) beyond the pilot project.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Important lessons learned

- This pilot project has demonstrated that the choice of technological alternatives is a key element in order to optimize investment impact on employment. The construction activities undertaken, despite all the difficulties encountered, confirm the benefits of linking employment objectives with investment programs and policies. They constitute clear evidence of the increasing awareness of the central role of employment in growth and poverty alleviation strategies.
- Fast payment of the different entities contracted throughout the project was a key element in order to guarantee the

success of EIIP investments. Full control of the planning and financial schedule was a pre-condition for appropriate monitoring of EIIP projects.

- Minimal mechanized processes should be considered as an EIIP approach, as seen in this pilot phase, because it increases the credibility of the program. The involvement of the targeted populations in the implementation of the project became an added value generated through the increase in manual work.

technical assistance projects on the field. Also, future projects should aim at achieving a better balance between investment level and cost of related technical assistance; a ration of 30-40% would be appropriate

Recommendations :

- The training provided should be improved and better structured to effectively address the long term training needs of partners and beneficiaries. Sustained efforts of training of trainers should be put into place. Updated and well designed training materials should be made available at the end of training activities to make sure that acquired knowledge can be referred to by trainees once they return to their professional environment. Finally, a participatory M&E system should be established to monitor and assess the quality of documents, trainings, and the outreach of the programs.
- Payment delays should be reduced to a maximum of 6 days, as the objective of the program is to strengthen local capacities through employment intensive investments targeting service providers and communities with minimal financial and material capacities. The youth employment promotion agency should guarantee the availability of funds before the beginning of construction activities. In order to do so, it would be appropriate to establish a separate account exclusively accessible by the national management of the project for this purpose.
- The optimization of technical assistance should be an important concern of the APEJ, through the adoption of measures that will improve its performance. Among these measures, it would be appropriate to enable better programming control of