



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation of Capacity Building for Employment Services and Jobsnet (CABNET)-ILO Accelerated Employment Services Project (AES), Sri Lanka

Quick Facts

Countries: Sri Lanka
Final Evaluation: January 2009
Mode of Evaluation: Independent
Technical Area: Capacity Building for Employment Services
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Project Start: September 2005
Project End: December 2008
Project Code: SRL/05/05M/SID
Donor: Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) (USD 1.2 million)
Key Words: JobsNet, Job placement, Employment Services, Labour Market Information, Tsunami affected jobseekers, Skills training, Crisis response

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Project was initially designed to meet the needs of employment recovery in the Tsunami affected areas by supporting jobseekers and employers through the existing JobsNet structure. It was implemented in two phases: Stage I from September 2005 to January 2008 in the five districts of Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Ampara and Batticaloa, and Stage II from February 2008 to December 2008, in the three districts of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

The JobsNet is a modern, demand driven, employment sourcing and delivery system set up as a public-private partnership to serve employers

and jobseekers throughout the country. It combines walk-in job service centres with online service for which it operates comprehensive IT network and database software. By March 2005, it registered more than 135,000 jobseekers in its database and more than 10,000 job vacancies. With 63 well trained staff spread over 18 centre, it covers the entire country. JobsNet is supported by a project executed by the ILO and funded by SIDA.

The ILO estimated that with the Tsunami, 275,000 jobs were lost directly and another 125,000 indirectly, in the affected areas. The districts of Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Ampara and Batticaloa were the hardest hit in terms of job losses. Accordingly, the objectives of AES project were to:

- a. Register 10,000 Tsunami affected jobseekers under the JobsNet programme and of which 5,000 to be provided with individual employment opportunities;
- b. 1,000 Tsunami reconstruction related job vacancies to be filled through training and job matching; and
- c. Centralized Labour Market Information system is made operational to assist the Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower (MLRM).

There were 11 outputs planned for achieving the above objectives. These outputs were:

- i. Registration of 10,000 jobseekers
- ii. Delivery of community based employment services to 5,000 jobseekers
- iii. Short-cycle skills training support programme and referrals
- iv. Registration of job vacancies
- v. Job matching to fill minimum 5,000 job vacancies successfully
- vi. Advocacy and payable services for employers/clients

- vii. Accelerated analysis and dissemination of labour market information (LMI) on Tsunami-affected areas
- viii. Mapping of current LMI providers and users
- ix. A strategy for the establishment of a centralized national LMI system
- x. Centralized LMI system designed and made operational, and
- xi. Preparation for computerization of centralized LMI system.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the following main questions.

- Were the three immediate objectives achieved through the proposed 11 outputs?
- Were the project management style and logistic support system effective in the total project implementation and service delivery?
- Given the same kind of target groups, communities and crisis situation, what should be the improvements on the tools and strategies of the AES methodology?

The scope of the evaluation was to ensure:

- The qualitative impact of the project in streamlining employment services to cope in crisis situations
- The effective delivery of quantified results where applicable under the outputs in the project locations of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Hambantota and Matara districts.

In general, the evaluation was aimed to determine whether the project objectives had been achieved and whether all target outputs had been produced. It also had to assess the extent to which the project has responded to the challenge, how fast and effective was it delivered, and how sustainable the results were. It was expected that the evaluation would help to fine tune its post-crisis training and employment / self-employment creation strategy so that it could be more ready and capable to provide response in disaster situations.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation methodology included the following activities.

- i. Desk review of documents provided by the Project Office.

- ii. Discussed the Project, its Components and performance with the ILO Area Office in Colombo
- iii. A detailed discussion with the Project implementation Partner, JobsNet Office in Colombo
- iv. Visited the three district Offices of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee and conducted a Sample Survey of 200 jobseekers/trainees selected from the three districts
- v. Conducted Interviews with representatives of Key Stakeholders in the districts
- vi. Conducted interviews with representatives of key stakeholders in Colombo
- vii. Discussion of preliminary findings with the ILO and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower
- viii. Draft Report had been circulated among the ILO, JobsNet (Pvt) Ltd and Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower etc. for comments and inputs

Main Findings & Conclusions

The performance statements of Stage I and Stage II showed the following achievements as against specified targets.

Activity	Target	Achievement
1. Job Registration	13,000	18,063
Phase 1	10,000	15,070
Phase 2	3,000	2,993
2. Job Placements	5,750	2,764
Phase 1	5,000	2,039
Phase 2	750	725
3. On the Job Training	2,000	2,352
Phase 1	1,000	1,577
Phase 2	1,000	775

The achievement level within districts showed a wider difference with one activity showing better performance in one district and below target performance in the other district. For example, it was observed that a higher rate of performance of registration of Jobseekers increased by 50 %, higher recorded in Matara and Hambantota districts, 110 % and 65 % respectively.

The poor performance of Job placement rate (only 40 % of the target) led to the extension of the

Project to Stage II with the new completion date as end December 2008.

The Project also proposed to conduct Job Fairs (06 nos.), Career Guidance Programmes (30 nos.), Training for Job Placement Assistants (03 nos.) and Employers Forums (06 nos.) during the Project period. The Project has achieved 100 % performance with regard to above targets.

The strengthening of LMI Unit of MLRM was a successful initiative, whereby trained staff and resource support enabled the Unit to produce qualitative and quantitative information on employment services. As a result, a Quarterly Bulletin had been published and available on the website of LMI Unit.

The survey revealed that the beneficiaries were highly satisfied about the skills training component as that they were able to obtain better skills training on programmes where they could not afford otherwise. However, on-the-job training programme showed that a larger number of jobseekers were attached to public sector institutions that had no direct mandate to recruit directly and fill available vacancies. As a result, after the on-the-job training was completed the jobseekers were without employment.

Survey also revealed that JobsNet Service Centers had not taken initiative to attach on-the-job trainees into large industrial establishments such as PRIMA Flour Mill, MITSUI Cement Factory, LIOC Oil Farm, and other Institutions such as Trincomalee and Oluvil harbours, where attrition rates were relatively high.

It was revealed that the Academy of English Nations in Akkaraipattu that conducts English Language teaching classes for 4 groups of students, with 25 students in each providing high quality training to meet the demand of NGOs and INGOs. This was a commendable opportunity opened to youth of the area where language skills were a real handicap for finding employment.

The AES Project achieved encouraging performance, especially with regard to popularizing the JobsNet structure for matching demand and supply of labour in the Private Sector. The unemployed youth are eligible to register in the database of JobsNet and the employers found that it is a quick and less cost mode of looking for qualified and experienced youth for employment. However, the FCCISL, being a Director of JobsNet (Pvt) Ltd, has a better opportunity to have a closer coordination with the District Chambers of Commerce and Industry to obtain the present and future manpower requirements of industry and

trade within the district. This information would be crucial for the JobsNet centres to train job seeking youth to improve their skills to matching employ requirements.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

The evaluation made the following recommendations.

- At the designing stage of the Project, detailed Project implementation guidelines should be prepared and submitted especially to district and field level management staff on Project implementation procedures with the objective of improved planning and implementation of project activities;
- The District Chambers of Commerce and Industry should establish a close relationship with JobsNet centres that has already earned a reputation as an Institution assisting the youth to achieve employment opportunities. Provision of future employment potential of enterprises that supplied to the JobsNet Centers could allow the JobsNet centres to train jobseekers in skills in demand.
- Employers are interested in attitudes of jobseekers during interviews. To achieve this objective, the JobsNet should include 'change of jobseeker attitudes' as one of the components of its counseling programme. This would help to improve the employer acceptability of jobseekers.
- The experience gained by the Project from its beginning to the end should be documented and made available to Donor Agencies and Governmental and Non Governmental Organizations so that it could be used as referral material similar activities during crisis situations.

The rate of achievement of on-the-job training or job placement targets could be improved only through combining them with not only small and medium enterprises sector but also with the large enterprises as well. In the present project, the effort taken by the JobsNet to look into the opportunities available in the large enterprises sector was not utilized in job placements and on-the-job training of youths.

Skills training should not be confined only to prominent skills. The provision of skills training in international languages, for example in professional English, proved having better prospects for unemployed youth both locally and internationally to find employment.

Important lessons learned

The job placement and training targets can be achieved through close collaboration with employers and trainers but the availability of facilities with the training institutions should also be taken into account before refer the large number of trainees to the institutions.

Skills training needs to be well planned and implemented and should result in job opportunities for those who completed training. It was evident during the survey that there were a considerable number of beneficiaries who possess skills but are waiting for jobs. They have registered under the present program for placements and not necessarily for further training. Such requirements need to be further studied before referring those beneficiaries for further training.

The opportunities available for the youth need not to be confined to employment within the local environment. The training given in international languages, e.g. Professional English Education Centre proved that English educated youth have better prospects both locally and internationally when they were provided with competitive training.