



Evaluation Summaries

Poverty reduction within communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work in Cameroon

Quick Facts

Country: Cameroon

Final Evaluation: Between March 18th and March 30th, 2010

Mode of Evaluation: Final external evaluation

Technical Area: Child labour and decent work

Evaluation Management: ILO Regional Office Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Evaluation Team: Beatrice Bimé and Thomas Ranz, AGEConsultants eG

Project Start: October 1st, 2008

Project End: April 30th, 2010

Project Code: CMR/06/50NET

Donor: The Netherlands Government (USD 1,330,420)

Keywords: Poverty alleviation, human trafficking, child labour, local economic development, decent work, microfinance, small enterprise development, vocational training

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The specific objectives are:

- to contribute to a gender-sensitive knowledge base on the economic potential of target communities;
- to create opportunities for equitable access

to decent employment for women, men, and youth within the framework of local economic development;

- to protect girls and boys against trafficking and ensure that they benefit from equal education, training/professional placement opportunities, as well as social protection.

The project has been implemented since October 2008 in the three communities of Bali, Kumbo, and Wum in the North-West Province of Cameroon. The target group of the project were youth, women, and vulnerable groups. Due to their denigration, vulnerability to accessing basic services, and recurrent conflicts with native populations, the Mbororo were the most important beneficiaries.

The project worked closely with local municipalities to develop their work plans and integrate project objectives into Local Development Plans (LDP). The project was managed by an international chief technical adviser, two national experts and a national administrator.

Present situation of project

At the end of the implementation period the project achievements in the three targeted communities of Bali, Kumbo and Wum include:

- Organisation of 1 initial start-up workshop
- Organisation of 1 planning workshop
- Planning and organisation of 3 workshops for setting up Alert Committees

- Establishment of 3 operational Local Consultative Committees, LCCs
- Realisation of 6 baseline studies in different sectors
- Carrying out 4 identification surveys of vulnerable families
- Identification of 1,142 vulnerable families
- Elaboration of 3 strategic community development plans
- Realisation of 13 capacity building and follow-up sessions in the three targeted communities
- Training of 4 partner representatives in the ILO Training Centre in Turin, Italy
- Repatriation of 225 school kids and organisation of their school attendance
- Establishment of 1,350 birth certificates
- Socio-economic counselling of 146 women living with VIH/SIDA and their support with small scale business start-up micro-loans
- Establishment of 62 micro enterprises
- Establishment of 3 cooperatives of micro entrepreneurs (350 women in total)
- Realisation of 11 community driven micro projects

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The project, supported through the Netherlands/ILO Cooperation Programme 2006 to 2010 (NICP), was scheduled to close at the end of April 2010. As required by ILO rules for projects exceeding 500,000 USD, a final evaluation of the project was scheduled to be conducted in March 2010 by an external evaluator assisted by a national consultant. The evaluation mission was supposed to:

- assess interventions to combat child trafficking and to integrate Mbororos and families affected by HIV/AIDS into the local economy;
- appraise project progress in achieving its immediate objectives and its contribution towards building the capacity of local stakeholders to carry forward the LED process, prevent child trafficking and promote social inclusion of the target groups;
- assess whether the project strategy was adapted to the local context, to national

development goals and the priorities of the DWCP, and the national poverty reduction strategy;

- examine the effect of project interventions, both expected and unexpected, on gender relations.

The principal clients for this evaluation include the Donor, regional representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, Employers' and Workers' organizations, the Mayors and traditional leaders of the three Council areas, the ILO Regional Office in Addis, the Sub-Regional-Office in Yaoundé and ILO technical units.

Methodology of evaluation

Adhering to the already existing list of key questions set up by the ILO consultant during her latest visit seemed the most appropriate and viable approach. Principally, these questions had been already grouped along the DAC criteria. The different sections of answers are therefore integrated into the ILO standard structure for evaluation reports in a condensed form attributed to the relevant sub-chapters.

For preparation and execution of the evaluation, the team conducted document reviews and a field visit. A total number of more than 60 interview partners such as focus groups, project staff, NGO partners, officials of local administration; ILO HQ staffs etc. were interviewed.

The evaluation condensed insights and provided relevant real-time information. Against this background, the methodological approach chosen for this evaluation avoided wherever possible repetitions in the three implementation zones thus putting emphasis on a deductive proceeding with a focus on newly appearing questions. Furthermore, a summative evaluation was not feasible, due to the lack of pre-definitions during project planning regarding quantifiable objectives and indicators to be achieved.

Main Findings & Conclusions

- The project's impact was limited to the three communities of the project implementation zone only. Further going engagements on a regional or even national policy and decision making level such as lobbying, advocacy etc. are however a specific mandate of UN organisations. But, such activities could not be included in the set-up due to the short period of project implementation.
- The project design appears too ambitious and overloaded for the short implementation period of finally 19 months only. It is composed of a mixture of a wide range of ILO-covered themes, such as child labour and child trafficking, young entrepreneurship, indigenous people, community driven micro projects, micro finance, HIV/AIDS etc. thus hindering a solid and straightforward implementation process.
- The project used to a large extent standardised training modules and manuals in the sectors of LED, micro finance, and child trafficking. Although considered to follow high quality standards, a partially deficient adequacy to the specific context has been lamented by project staff. Particularly, the integration of illiterate groups has not worked successfully on the basis of the standardised ILO materials.
- The project has had a highly motivated project team. Especially the two local coordinators did their very best to compensate for a project setting which suffered from two subsequent cuts of the available budget and a delayed start.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders is very close at all implementation sites. Nevertheless, the formerly excellent reputation of the project significantly suffered from the abovementioned budget reductions.
- The project has had comparatively accurate monitoring, follow-up, and research components at its disposal.
- All documentation produced by the project meets very high quality standards in terms of systematic accuracy, correctness, and completeness.
- Quantity aspects of project outcomes could not be judged during the evaluation as quantitative indicators were never defined in the logical framework.
- All "young entrepreneurs" trained and supported in the three project districts (altogether 62) were very satisfied with the provided assistance and described the trainings received, including the mentoring by local professionals, as essential key elements for starting their businesses. None of them has had to give up his or her business so far.
- Considered as a whole all budget lines were respected and have been used appropriately. As to the significant exceeding of the scheduled budget for expatriate staff compared to the initial project proposal, this phenomenon could not be explained so far.
- The project's cost-benefit ratio is highly problematic. Administrative and functional costs amount to nearly 70 % of the available budget. Staff costs alone consume nearly 40 % of the total budget. The entire activity expenditures amount to less than 27 % and still include various trainings abroad, studies, surveys and other meetings. The direct funding to beneficiaries covers not even 10 % of the project's budget.
- The decision to completely abandon the revolving micro loan fund has fundamentally affected the project's sustainability. Advices to link up "young entrepreneurs" with already existing micro finance structures could not be realised until the end of the project.
- The approach to execute a project, including integral components of behavioural change with a strong orientation towards learning within an

implementation period of 19 months does not seem realistic.

- From the management viewpoint, too many decision makers and advisers have been involved in this comparatively “low budget” project (CTA, SRO, backstopping consultant, sector experts of all relevant fields of interventions in the ILO headquarter of Geneva and the Turin training centre). The high number of alteration processes resulting thereof was not only time consuming but has absorbed as well considerable financial resources in proportion to the available budget.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

- The TC-RAM project is scheduled to end in April 2010. A succeeding project of the same type and/or an additional funding of the project are not in sight at the moment. However, by now, a second programme phase would be considered as very helpful.
- The project included all pre-defined targeted beneficiaries such as vulnerable households, ethnic minorities, women, people infected by HIV/AIDS adequately in all of its activities. In future a more pragmatic approach focusing on fewer components and to a lesser extent on a strict respect of quota arrangements would be easier to manage.
- The design of the project’s logical framework is set up in a way which requests achievement of the very much data related outcome 1 as a precondition for working on the outcomes 2 and 3. This very specific character of the logframe obliged the project to devote a disproportionate amount of time to “reflection” thus causing a delaying regarding the beginning of the “action”. A more action-research based approach could accelerate future project implementation.
- The existing ILO guidelines defining minimum requirements for project concepts should be strictly respected for new concept designs. Concept

development should be dominated by cost-benefit and feasibility aspects.

- The motivation of stakeholders and beneficiaries within project interventions in social sector development may be supported by training, sensitisation, and information. However, income generation remains a driving force and should never be neglected. The level of LED activities should even significantly increase in similar project scenarios.
- The MFI which originally had been at the very centre of the project should not have been the first choice for a complete cut of funding.
- In a project setting with a narrowly confined target area in only one province out of ten in the country and with very short distances, there was no need for two national coordinators and an additional international CTA. Funds could thus be saved by running a project in similar cases with a national coordinator.
- Large parts of the project’s efforts went into capacity building of LCCs, AOS, micro-entrepreneurs, MFIs and partner NGOs. However, the built up capacity does not seem sufficient to carry forward the LED process and to continue to prevent child trafficking after the project’s end. For doing so at least a second project phase would be necessary.
- Projects like TC-RAM with a holistic character and approach to alleviate poverty and help to curb child labour and child trafficking at the same time are carried to a large extent by motivated stakeholders and beneficiaries. However, raising people’s expectations without subsequently meeting pronounced activities and benefits in a satisfying manner causes irreparable damages and should be avoided.
- In view of a more efficient use of rare and expensive management resources, elements of lean management should be applied such as:

- o Local project manager plus regular coaching through HQ, RO or SRO;
- o Part-time CTA, in charge for several (if possible neighbouring) projects at the same time;
- o Intermittent short term consultancies based on detailed periodical work plans, to be established together with project staff.

communities. Unfortunately, the decentralisation process in Cameroon is delayed and community structures are not yet operational for integration of these development potentials.

Important lessons learned

- Success chances of the newly established cooperatives are quite high because of previously conducted detailed market surveys and a consequent investment in the production of strongly demanded products.
- The cooperatives' group members are highly motivated and committed to the continuation of their businesses which constitutes a positive precondition for the survival of the cooperatives after the project's end.
- The majority of the children who were placed in educational and vocational training institutions will probably not be able to continue after the projects end because the LED component of the project was not linked to the child labour component. Thus, the risk of them returning to child labour in its worst forms remains high.
- The participatory discussions and decision making processes for project identification within the LCCs are considered very positive and fruitful. Their composition represented all relevant parts of the local communities. Representatives of the target groups were not only part of the LCCs in a well balanced manner, but they were able to clearly and openly voice their concerns in the meetings.
- The inclusiveness of the project by making many different segments of society come together and participate in the running of their councils and giving inputs to the five year development plans of these councils will go a long way towards mutual understanding and cooperation in the daily management of these councils and their