



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Creating youth employment through improving youth entrepreneurship

Quick Facts

Countries: China, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Lao PDR, Peru, Sri Lanka and Syria

Final Evaluation: May 2011

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Small Enterprise Development and Youth Employment

Evaluation Management: EMP/SEED

Evaluation Team: Achim Engelhardt

Project Start: October 2007

Project End: 31 May 2011

Project Code: INT/07/09 SDC - 100912

Donor: Switzerland (SDC), \$1.150.000

Keywords: Youth employment, Impact Assessment, Entrepreneurship, Know About Business

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The “Creating youth employment through improved youth entrepreneurship” was an action research project with the aim of providing a better understanding of the role entrepreneurship education programmes play, and the Know About Business (KAB) programme more specifically, in youth entrepreneurship promotion and, ultimately, youth employment.

The project intended to provide the ILO and SDC with a better understanding of how entrepreneurship education programmes are

perceived and internalized by young people, to what extent they lead to improved knowledge about the world of business, as well as behavioral and attitudinal change towards entrepreneurship, and how this knowledge might lead to better employability and higher entrepreneurial activities amongst young women and men, and the ultimate contribution of these measures to youth employment and poverty reduction.

The project had the following objectives:

I. An action research programme on youth entrepreneurship has provided information on performance (what worked well and what not) and impact allowing the development of a methodology for M&E and impact assessment and its application for KAB

II. A KAB web site including a resource platform for entrepreneurship education practitioners from the ILO, SDC and other interested agencies has been set-up and a knowledge sharing network of programme developers, curriculum developers and KAB users is functioning.

III. KAB programme has been adapted to new target groups in particular for unemployed young women and men out of formal education.

IV. Research findings of the project have been transformed into guidelines for designing strategies and programmes for the promotion

of self-employment and entrepreneurship for young women and men.

Following a mid-term self-evaluation in 2010, those objectives experienced slight modifications. The geographic coverage of the project included the following countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas: China, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Lao PDR, Peru, Sri Lanka and Syria.

The project was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and was executed by the Small Enterprise Programme (EMP/SEED) of the ILO's Employment Sector.

The project management structure composed of a project manager in charge of supervising all activities and the timely delivery from the ILO headquarters in Geneva.

Present situation of project

The project is closed. Following a no-cost extension in August 2010, the expected closing date of the project was postponed from September 30, 2010 to May 31, 2011. By 31 December 2010, the project had a balance of \$114.795 yet to be invested.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation purpose is to:

- Determine whether the project achieved the stated objectives
- Determine what steps have been taken for the sustainability of key components of the project beyond the project's life
- Document lessons learned and extract recommendations for future research projects and exercises initiated by ILO or SDC to assess outreach and impact of a given entrepreneurship education and training programme.

The scope of the final evaluation was on all four main objectives of the project.

The final evaluation aims to provide a balanced presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project, the effectiveness of the project, as well as a set of recommendations and lessons learned for future similar initiatives. Further lessons can be drawn for the implementation and coordination of the KAB programme upon which the research project was mostly focused. Also, the ILO has a number of entrepreneurship and enterprise development training programmes that could learn lessons from this exercise (for example, SIYB and GET Ahead).

Users of the evaluation will be both internal and external to the ILO. Internally, users will be the project managers, the responsible ILO unit (SEED), the managers and coordinators of KAB, SIYB, Get-Ahead and other entrepreneurship development tools. External to the ILO, users will be the donor and KAB implementing partners.

Methodology of evaluation

The final evaluation entailed a desk review of relevant materials and in-depth interviews with key project stakeholders in the ILO Headquarters, and through telephone interviews with SDC and with key stakeholders in two selected project countries. The entire period of the project was covered. Due to limitations in the available time and budget, field visits to two or three project countries, as originally envisaged in the Project Document were not possible and were substituted with telephone interviews. The project assessment was based on a sample of two project countries out of a total of eight project countries. A total of eight key stakeholder interviews were undertaken for the final evaluation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

- Project was supply-oriented, due to initial lack of demand for KAB programme impact assessment.

- When the project was launched and during its first year of operations no direct link to the ILO's Programme and Budget was established.
- An impact assessment to detect changes of awareness, knowledge and attitudes would be more appropriate at the conclusion of a KAB pilot project, rather than at the point of mainstreaming.
- Project gained relevance where the ILO was keen to show the results of its work to constituents in country, for example to promote the KAB roll out.
- Project strategy, assumptions and objectives were mostly appropriate, however only amendment of some objectives after the (self) mid-term review.
- The project has succeeded in mainstreaming gender equality to varying extents. In the research outputs, i.e. the impact assessments, the samples of KAB students and the control groups were to the extent possible balanced by men and women interviewed. However, the impact of KAB on all young women and men did not include unemployed KAB graduates. Evidence from Kyrgyzstan indicated that this excludes especially young women from the impact assessments.
- Impact assessments produced evidence that KAB programmes increased knowledge about youth entrepreneurship and stipulated changes to KAB materials
- Positive unintended impact: entrepreneurship education made compulsory in Ethiopia & \$23m programme on youth entrepreneurship launched with Africa Commission
- KAB requires accompanying programmes such as the provision of financing or mentoring for youth entrepreneurship education and ultimately the decrease in youth unemployment.
- All four project elements likely to be sustained after the project's finalization.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

- The highly relevant timing for an impact assessment to detect changes of awareness, knowledge and attitudes is the pilot phase of

an entrepreneurship education and training programme. Once the programme is mainstreamed, it proves difficult to find control groups. In addition, the end of a pilot phase is often the moment of important decision-making where impact assessment data provides valuable evidence.

- Impact assessments should be included in the design and budget of future entrepreneurship education and training programmes. To fully capitalize on the experiences of this project, the ILO is encouraged to assemble a guide on good practice in impact assessment of entrepreneurship education and training programmes to provide methodological and practical guidance for future impact assessments

- To fully capture the impact of KAB on all young women and men, future impact assessments should also look at unemployed KAB graduates to ensure that young women are not overlooked.

- For a fully assessment of a research project's impact, an ex-post evaluation after 2 to 3 years after the project's impact might be recommendable.

- To increase the impact of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in decreasing youth unemployment, accompanying measures such as the provision of financing or mentoring are required, especially if poverty is to be tackled by the KAB programme

Important lessons learned

- Monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment must be included in KAB programme budgets from the onset.

- Performance monitoring by KAB implementers could be tied to maintaining KAB certification

- Research teams with strong and observable experience in carrying out the surveys and analysis should be preferred over experts on the KAB programme to manage the high risk of bias if people directly involved in the KAB implementation evaluate its impact.

- Testing survey questions requires a group of people knowledgeable of the KAB programme,

not only researchers to ensure terms are well understood and an ILO angle is maintained.

- Combining methodologies, quantitative and qualitative, are essential, especially in cases such as tracer studies where obtaining reliable quantitative information can sometimes be difficult.
- Tracing students after a couple of years is highly challenging due to their mobility in the school to work transition period. Where contact details of extended family members or close friends were available, tracking was easier.
- In order to fully capture the impact of KAB on all young women and men, future tracer studies should also look at unemployed KAB graduates. By focusing only on those who became employees or business owners, an important part of youth is left out. Moreover, as shown in the Kyrgyzstan report, by doing so, young women may be heavily overlooked.
- The ILO field Enterprise specialists should be fully informed and where possible included in the impact assessments, for example in the selection of research teams, methodology and implementation.

Good practices

-All KAB country programmes should budget for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment, with the latter taking place for example towards the end of a pilot phase in country. This good practice enables evidence-based decision-making about whether to upscale the KAB programme. Hence, the impact assessments undertaken by the project served as a good practice example for the KAB programme.