



Evaluation Summaries

Alternatives to migration: Decent jobs for Filipino youth

Quick Facts

Countries: *Philippines*

Mid-Term: *June 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Employment*

Evaluation Management: *ED/EMP/MSU, CO- Manila*

Evaluation Team: *Octavio Damiani*

Project Start: *July 2009*

Project End: *July 2012*

Project Code: *PHI/08/50/UND*

Donor: *Multi Donor Trust Fund Office Partnership Bureau-UNDP*

Keywords: *Decent Work, Migration, Youth Employment, Vocational Training*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

This report presents the results of the mid-term evaluation of the MDG-F-1942 Joint Programme on Youth, Employment, and Migration - Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth (JP YEMJP YEM). The general objective is to analyze the design, process and results trends of the JP YEM in order to generate recommendations that would help improve the programme in the rest of its implementation, as well as to identify lessons that could be useful for other programmes and the MDG-F Secretariat.

The JP YEM has two expected outcomes: a) to improve policy coherence and implementation

on youth, employment and migration (YEM) through full stakeholder participation; and b) to increase access to decent work for poor young women and men through public-private partnerships, more inclusive basic education and life skills, career guidance (including on safe migration), vocational training, and entrepreneurship. The expected specific outputs include: a) a National Action Agenda formulated and used to inform national and local planning processes; b) localized YEM policies and programs through one stop resource and support centers; c) a model mechanism to channel remittances for developing youth employment alternatives; d) public/private partnerships to develop alternative employment and services for the youth; e) YEM enhanced entrepreneurship and technical vocational skills training; f) gender-sensitive and YEM enhanced curriculum for public secondary education; g) YEM enhanced employment services; and h) more inclusive flexible secondary education for disadvantaged youth.

The JP Document stated that the JP YEM would focus on four provinces with high incidence of out-of-school and poor youth, low enrolment rates, and where the MDGs were least likely to be achieved: Masbate, Antique, Maguindanao, and Agusan del Sur. The direct beneficiaries would be 10,000 poor and vulnerable young women and men between 15 and 24 years old, including at least 2,800 out of school youth, in-school youth who have a high probability of dropping out, high school graduates without technical and/or vocational skills, returned or returning youth Overseas

Filipino Workers (OFWs), and youth left behind by OFWs. At least 50% of beneficiaries would be women. It was also expected that all youth would benefit indirectly through interventions at the national and policy level.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology of the evaluation consisted of desk review of documents and reports produced by the programme and field work in the Philippines. During the desk review, particular attention was given to the JP document and to the monitoring reports prepared by the JPYEM, after which an inception report was prepared that provided a synthesis of the implementation progress and details about the evaluation methodology. This report was reviewed by the evaluation advisor, the manager responsible for operations in the Philippines, the JPYEM Coordinator, and the members of the Programme Management Committee (PMC) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) of the JPYEM.

The field work phase consisted of a visit to the Philippines to interview program stakeholders and review other documents produced by the program, took place between 4 April and 15 April, 2011.

An initial meeting was held on 4 April with the PMC and the TWG to orient their members about the TOR and methodology of the evaluation and receive inputs from them. Starting in the afternoon of that day, and during the following two weeks, interviews were carried out with officials and professionals from the UN Country Team (UNCT) participating agencies (International Labor Organization - ILO, International Organization for Migration - IOM, United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF, and United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA), the national government agencies and the four Provincial Local Government Units (PLGUs) participating in the programme implementation, the Government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and leaders of civil society organizations.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The main conclusions and findings of the Mid-term evaluation are as follows:

1 The design of the JP YEM addresses issues that are highly relevant to the problems of the youth in the Philippines and the provinces of its area of intervention. In addition, it has been relevant to the priorities and policies of the Government of the Philippines, both at the time when it was designed and at present. The program is also highly relevant to the policies of the involved regional and local governments, i.e. the Government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the Provincial Local Government Units (PLGUs) of Agusan del Sur, Antique, Masbate, and Maguindanao.

2 The ownership of the JP design by the participating national government agencies can be considered as high. The national government –especially DOLE-- was actively involved in the design of the program, and the authorities of the PLGUs participated in consultations to discuss the problems to be addressed by the program and the outputs and activities that were designed.

3 The main weaknesses of the JP design are: (i) the lack of focus on the process of rural-urban migration within the Philippines, (ii) the lack of consideration of time for preparatory and start up activities; and (iii) the lack of consideration of risks related with the political context.

4 The JP has experienced a substantial delay in its implementation. Delays relate to the time spent during the first year in start up activities such as hiring of programme staff and setting up of office. In addition, the political context significantly affected the program during the first half of 2010 due to the May national and local elections.

5 Considering that most of the activities have been implemented for 7-8 months previous to the evaluation (since July 2010), the JP has made significant progress. The most important

progress has been made in the implementation of policy related activities: the provision of education subsidies to high school students at risk of dropping out, the supply of equipment to secondary schools for Career Pathways in Technology and Livelihood Education (CP-TLE) courses, and the training of trainers in entrepreneurship, life skills and gender. Other activities that have been implemented provide a good basis for the achievement of other outputs. The program has accelerated implementation since the last quarter of 2010, and it is reasonable to expect that it will move swiftly in the future. The number of direct beneficiaries is still low compared to the expected number because of the slow start of the program. The outputs and critical activities have been in general of good quality, though it was not possible to evaluate several of them, and it must be noted that the M&E system should incorporate tools and indicators to monitor quality in a systematic form.

6 Up to now, the program efficiency can be considered as low, as a result of the delays in the implementation of the program, which lead to an achievement of outputs and activities lower than what can be expected for a program that is close to the end of its second year of implementation. At the same time, the program shows indications of efficiency, including indications of low operating costs, and good functioning of management and coordination arrangements. It can be expected that the program efficiency increases substantially until the end of the program, as long as the implementation progress continues to proceed smoothly.

7 UN organizations used different modalities of implementation and procurement procedures. Some government agencies had a clear preference for not managing the program funds but using the direct payment modality, i.e. the management of funds by the UN organizations, because of slow and complicated government procurement procedures and due to the additional workload for managing program funds.

8 Ownership of national actors in implementation can be considered as high, with an active involvement of the government agencies (especially DOLE) and the participating UNCT agencies. The high involvement of government agencies relates mainly to the fact that program activities are coherent with their priorities and that the program funds have made possible to either expand what they were doing or to incorporate new approaches. The PLGUs in the four provinces are also participating actively in the PMC, and play an important coordination role at the provincial level through the Provincial Planning and Development Offices (PPDOs). In the case of the Maguindanao Province, the ARMM has also been actively involved in the program, participating actively at the PMC meetings and in key decisions about program output and activities.

9 Because the JP YEM is at an early stage in the implementation of the proposed activities, it is still early to argue that it has made a contribution to the achievement of the MDGs and the goals of the thematic window. However, it shows promising perspectives to achieve most or all of the proposed outcomes, so it is highly possible that it will make a contribution in both areas. The program is also aligned with the goals of the YEM thematic window.

10 The relevance of the program to the current government policies, the active involvement in the program of government and UNCT agencies as well as of the P LGUs, and the good functioning of management and coordination mechanisms, make it possible to argue that the program shows very good prospects of achieving its proposed outputs and of contributing in several ways to the issues of youth fair employment and safe migration.

However, the delay during the first year of the program makes it unlikely that all the expected outputs and activities can be achieved by the current completion date. This suggests the need for an extension of the programme completion date, as well as the reduction of targets in specific.

11 More impact potential could be achieved if some of the programme activities worked in a more integrated manner, rather than doing it in an isolated way.

12 In general terms, it can be argued that the set up of the different program outputs ensures good perspectives of sustainability. Many of the program outputs involve the building of institutional capacities that would help these institutions (the supported secondary schools, the employment services offices, etc.) to continue providing better services to the youth once the program is completed. The lead government agency (DOLE) and the national government agencies and PLGUs participating in the program implementation are showing commitment and technical capacity to keep working on the issues of the program. In addition, some of the benefits of the JPYEM do not involve significant increased costs for the agencies involved. However, some interventions may be more difficult to sustain and would require the setting up of specific arrangements and commitments before the end of the program to ensure sustainability.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

The main recommendations are as follows:

To UNCT participating organizations:

1. Complete as soon as possible the signature of implementation agreements between UN organizations (ILO, UNFPA) and government agencies (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority - TESDA, DOLE Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns-BWSC) in order to speed up the execution of activities with those partners.

To the Programme Management Office, the Technical Working Group, and the Programme Management Committee:

2. Develop a six-month catch up plan for the third year of the programme that incorporates the second-year funds that have not been used.

This catch up plan would cover the period July-December 2011.

3. Strengthen the relationship between some outputs and critical activities to increase impact potential, in particular Output 2.5. Educational subsidies and Output 2.2. entrepreneurship and technical vocational programs.

4. Reduce targets in Output 1.3. (i.e. model mechanism to channel remittances), including a lower number of model mechanisms to be tested, and shift part of the funds allocated to the output to the following activities: (i) education subsidies (i.e. financing a larger number of high school students at risk of dropping out), and (ii) outputs related with the promotion of local development – local employment generation.

5. Incorporate very specific activities to address the issue of internal migration to focus on raising the issue and promoting discussion at the policy level. A possibility might be to finance a study on internal migration and the youth and organize a roundtable with analysts, policy makers at national and local level, and youth organizations in order to promote awareness and identify policy recommendations.

6. Strengthen the coordination mechanisms at provincial level. It is recommended that the JPYEM contracts Provincial Field Coordinators (one per province) to work full-time in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of program activities. A possibility that should be considered might be to share the costs of the Field Coordinators already hired by IOM among all the UN participating organizations and modify their Terms of Reference accordingly.

7. Strengthen the M&E functions by: (i) introducing indicators of results and reflecting both physical and financial accomplishments; (ii) creating mechanisms to monitor the quality of activities; (iii) increasing the participation of beneficiaries and local partners in M&E;

(iv) identifying and analyzing best practices;
(v) including government counterpart contributions in the financial reporting information). It is also recommended that the program evaluates seriously the possibility of incorporating a full-time professional for the JP Coordination Office to work on M&E.

8. Define strategy for sustainability for each output and critical activity.

To the MDG-F Secretariat and the National Steering Committee (NSC):

9. Approve an extension of the program's completion date. This extension might be granted at the time when the program requests the funds for the 3rd year of implementation, and would be subject to the normal conditions of the MDF-Secretariat. It is assumed here that implementation continues to move swiftly as in the last 7-8 months.

10. The MDG-F Secretariat could make an important contribution to the preparation of the programme's exit strategy by providing tools that may include, among others, a checklist of relevant issues that need to be considered when preparing the exit strategy, as well as indicating best practices of exit strategies in similar contexts.

Important lessons learned

The main lessons from the experience of the program are the following:

a) The design of similar programs as the JP YEM could be improved by considering the following issues: (i) including a time period for start-up activities; (ii) including an analysis of risks, identification of mitigating measures in case that they can be managed, and implications for the program implementation in case that they are difficult to handle.

b) The three-year time period of the MDG-F funded programs imposes severe constraints to the possibilities of achieving the expected impacts. As in other Joint Programmes of the YEM window and of other windows, the JPYEM has ambitious objectives and outcomes and deals with development

problems that are complex and often require policy changes that are likely to take longer periods of time. The now existing possibility of extending the completion date of JPs, under certain conditions, has been a positive development. However, the complexity of the problems addressed is likely to require much longer term efforts.

c) Because of the time required by start-up activities, the design of programs such as the JPYEM should not expect that implementation proceeds at the same pace during the three years of the program. Funds allocated for the first year of implementation should represent the lowest proportion, with substantial increases in the next years. This would prevent imposing unrealistic targets for the first year of the programme.

d) The experience of the JP YEM suggests that the transferring of funds to government agencies and application of national procurement procedures included in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness may sometimes be associated with slower implementation. Although UNCT agencies may have somewhat complicated and different procurement procedures, the downloading of funds to the government agencies involved in the implementation of the JP YEM were associated with even more complicated and slower procurement procedures, causing an overload to those government agencies' limited human resources, especially if the time for implementation is limited. By transferring funds and responsibilities, the Paris Declaration aims at promoting the building of capacities of government agencies, higher transparency in the use of funds, and increased ownership. However, the experience of the JPYEM suggests that the direct payment modality, which involves administration of program funds by the UN participating organizations, may not compromise transparency and ownership.