



Evaluation Summaries

Social security quantitative training for Africa (Quatrain) - RBSA Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia

Final Evaluation: November 2011

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: SECSOC, ITC

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Project Code: RBSA Funded

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Keywords: Social Security – RBSA – Governance – Training

poverty and the improvement of welfare in African countries. The overall objective of QA project is to establish academic and continuing education programmes to strengthen the financial governance of social security schemes in Africa. The project outputs are: i) Programmes for members of administrative and supervisory bodies of social security systems designed and 200 members of such bodies trained in the financial monitoring of social security systems; ii) A Masters Programme and a Distance Learning Programme for Financial Management of Social Security Systems designed and established at two African universities and 40 experts trained; and iii) Programme for social security managers from ministries, institutions and organizations of workers and employers in selected countries designed and 100 managers trained.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic/structure

The project on 'Social security quantitative training for Africa' (QUATRAN) was developed by the ILO in 2008. It is a Master of Science (MSc) in Social Protection Financing Programme, established through a partnership between the ILO and the University of Mauritius, with the financial support of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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It is expected that the knowledge acquired from the Programme will help strengthen the management, financial governance and sustainability of existing social protection schemes, lead to future improvements in the schemes, develop new financially sustainable and well-managed schemes where gaps exist, and, as a consequence, reduce poverty and enhance welfare in African countries. The outcomes, objectives and outputs of the QA are quite relevant and together they address needs at country and regional levels in Africa. The challenge of capacity shortages in African countries to address the potential demand for

social security services to all is daunting; therefore, a programme such as this should be seen as a veritable source of supply of scarce expertise to address the difficult issues of human right and poverty reduction in the continent. The active and enthusiastic participation of representatives of workers, employers and governments in the Governors' Seminars organized within the framework of QUATRIN AFRICA has demonstrated the buy-in and commitment of constituents. Within its short span of operation, the QA programme has gained recognition and received enthusiastic support from countries and sub-regional organizations across the continent.

The target beneficiaries of QUATRIN AFRICA (QA) include various groups at national level: policymakers and tripartite partners, managers, financial specialists, and also a university in Africa. The need for such a programme has been well discussed among tripartite constituents at national level and is articulated in some of the DWCPs.

Present situation of project

Significant progress has been made in achieving the first two outputs of the project; the third output was speculative and no budget provision was made for this output at the design stage. Budgetary constraints required project management to prioritize outputs and to identify ones which would only be done if additional resources could be found; this was the output that has been so identified. The ROAF was not able to generate the additional resources needed to address this output, which was to train 100 social security managers. Since a good number of the trainees for the Executive Masters programme are already managers, programme management thought that implementing this output would have been duplication.

Initial project efforts focused on output 1: Programmes for members of administrative and supervisory bodies of social security systems designed and 200 members of such bodies trained in the financial monitoring of

social security systems. Project office locations were established in ROAF (Addis Ababa); SECSOC (Geneva), with support by ILO-ITC; and UoM (Mauritius). Project Office at ROAF has been supported by officials from SECSOC, Geneva in preparing the take-off of the project and its effective functioning, while the office at UoM has been managing the recruitment and training of students for the Executive Masters Programme. The ILO office of the project has been staffed with two experts each and both have contributed immensely to the production of technical Guides and Manual for the planned seminars and training. On its part, the project office at UoM Trust has been managed by a Director, an Assistant Director and one Administrative Assistant. An Oversight Board, constituted in terms of the Agreement between UoM and ILO, has been serving as the coordinating body for the QA programme. As planned the training programme for Governors was developed, and all the series of Governors' seminars were held, and additional request from constituents were honoured.

The training of social security "governors" consisted of six (6) seminars, held in English, French, and Portuguese. In all, 198 social security "Governors" have been trained from 27 African countries – Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia. The institutional spread of the 198 social security "Governors" trained is as follows: Social Security Institutions – 85; Government Ministries – 48; Workers' Organizations – 44; Employers' Organizations – 15; Others – 6.

Equally important was the development of a Social Security Governance Book – *"Governance of Social Protection System: A Guide for Board Members in Africa"*, and an accompanying training manual. The *Guide* is available in paper and electronic form in English and French and in electronic form in

Portuguese and Arabic. More than 3,000 copies of the paper version have been distributed. Copies of the Guide and training manual are available from the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin.

On Output 2 (A Masters Programme and a Distance Learning Programme for Financial Management of Social Security Systems designed and established at two African universities), the ROAF and SECSOC considered universities in Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda as possible sites of the QA Programme. Following their analysis, it was concluded that only the University of Mauritius (UoM) fully met all the criteria, and was thus selected. Project established its office in the UoM Trust and has since been functioning well. Initially, 50 students were targeted for admission in the 2010/11 academic year, with priority given to serving officials from African social security institutions and ministries; advertisements placed in number of media. Out of 60 applications received (from 12 countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Gabon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zambia), 32(53.3%) were enrolled for 2010/11 academic year: comprising 29(91%) international and 3 local (Mauritian); in terms of gender, 26 (81.25%) males and 6(18.75%) females. The programme was offered in English and French. In the second year of the programme, (2011/12) enrolment in the programme dropped to 12 students due to lack of effective demand and poor motivation for sending managers to training institution.

In terms of materials for training, the UoM prepared a course outline and detailed course 'blockbooks' for each of the 10 modules developed and are being used by students and staff. The principal texts for the Masters Programme from the series on *Quantitative Methods in Social Protection* were produced

by the ILO and ISSA. As planned, QA website was developed: www.uom.ac.mu/uomtrust/ilo and linked to the UoM website. ILO also established a link: www.quatrain-africa.ilo.org. The Secretariat managed the course website and other communications in relation to the programme; the local application of the on-line social security modelling tool has also been finalized and applied for training; in the long-term, the tool will be also be available to ILO constituents. The programme also planned to organize and finance 24 internships in OECD countries for African experts, but this has been put on hold for now and will be taken up by the Social Security Department in Geneva.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation has been based on data and information collected by the External Collaborator (EC) from both primary and secondary sources. Information gathering from secondary sources consisted of a desk review of project documents, progress reports, mission reports, records of discussion, the Agreement (and Annexes) between the ILO and the University of Mauritius for the establishment of the Masters Programme, and related documents. Data collection from primary sources involved field visits by the EC first; then to the ROAF office in Addis Ababa, where the staff, including the CTA and Project Officer, were engaged in useful discussions; and second, to UoM where the EC had discussions with the project management, Office staff and the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Although, the limited time available for this study did not permit extensive consultations as initially designed, it was still possible to collect materials and first-hand information required for this evaluation, thereby assuring the integrity of the data base for this report.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Validity of the design

The absence of a comprehensive, single project document points at a gap in the design of this project. The QA programme is located

in ROAF (Addis Ababa), SESOC (Geneva), and UoM (Mauritius).

The expected outcomes of QUATRIN AFRICA (QA) are the long-term reduction of poverty and the improvement of welfare in African countries. The overall objective of QA project is to establish academic and continuing education programmes to strengthen the financial governance of social security schemes in Africa. The project outputs are: i) Programmes for members of administrative and supervisory bodies of social security systems designed and 200 members of such bodies trained in the financial monitoring of social security systems; ii) A Masters Programme and a Distance Learning Programme for Financial Management of Social Security Systems designed and established at two African universities and 40 experts trained; and iii) Programme for social security managers from ministries, institutions and organizations of workers and employers in selected countries designed and 100 managers trained.

The outcomes, objectives and outputs of the QA are relevant and together they address needs at country and regional levels in Africa.

Sustainability

The major factor in the sustainability of the QA programme is finance. The QA project itself has the built-in strategy of making the best of its revenue sources, which consist of three items: tuition fees, financial support from the ILO through QA, and financial and in-kind contributions by the UOM Trust. The tuition fee amounts to USD 8,000 per student; and the various scenarios considered under the *Business Plan for the period, 1 October 2009 to 31 July 2015* reveal that the Programme will have no financial problems as long as there are always at least 25 students (Base and Steady Scenarios), and it will be able to survive with only 22 students enrolled each year but it will not be able to pay fellowships. Analysis of the situation has revealed that the UoM is not in a position to provide substantial financial and in-kind contributions to the Programme,

especially in light of recent budget cuts. Perhaps, focusing on the social security institutions from where potential students are attracted, rather than the potential students themselves could produce a better guarantee of more fee-paying students in the future.

One of the cost saving measures recommended in the Business Plan (2009-2015) is to explore the possibility of reducing the participation of international guest lecturers, while increasing the international attractiveness of the programme in order to promote the growing enrolment of fee-paying students.

The German donation which started off this programme must be commended; but the rather narrow focus on the same donor for the future of QA project is not justifiable, particularly since there is no guarantee of continued support by the Donor to this programme after the 2011. The evaluation has revealed that quite a number of international institutions have already been contacted by QA management and further discussions are awaited with institutions such as SfDB, WB, UNDP, UNICEF; EU, DFiD; GIZ; USAID; AusAID; SDC; UNECA; OPEC; UNESCO; AU; COMESA; and SADC. Some of these agencies have unofficially expressed an interest in supporting QA programme, and this should be further explored by management.

Effectiveness

Following the take-off of the project, the ILO team has been consistent and effective in providing technical and management support to the project. Technical support included part-time teaching by selected staff and contribution to development of the Training Manual for Governors and Modules for the delivery of the Masters programme at UoM.

In order to facilitate the training of Governors as scheduled in the QA programme of work, ILO prepared and published “*Governance of Social Protection System: A Guide for Board Members in Africa*”, and an accompanying training manual. The *Guide* is available in paper and electronic form in English and

French and in electronic form in Portuguese and Arabic. More than 3,000 copies of the paper version have been distributed. Copies of the Guide and training manual are available from the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin.

The training of students is a major output of the QA programme. The original intent of this output was to have two Masters Programmes, one at an English-speaking African university and the second at a French-speaking university. However, due to financial and logistical challenges, it was decided by project management that only one Masters programme would be established, and that it would be located in a bilingual institution. The training of students under this programme originally included a Distance Learning Programme. However, because of the limitations on Internet broadband width in Africa, project management concluded in the project planning phase that a Distance Learning Programme would not be technically feasible in the time period of the project. Accordingly, the Distance Learning Programme was dropped; but as the programme expands in the years to come, Distance Learning could be re-considered given its flexibility to students and tutors as well.

The fellowship award to 28 deserving students proved to be particularly effective in attracting students to the QA programme. Although 30 students were targeted for admission during the current academic session (2nd in the programme), only 12 were enrolled, largely because of lack of financial support. Such a sharp decline in subscription to the programme is rather too early and difficult to extrapolate; but should the trend should be watched carefully. This is why this evaluation suggests that the revenue generation base of the programme should be radically expanded by enlisting the interest of potential institutions in collaborating with ILO on this programme.

Overall pass rate among the graduating students was 100%, although 3 students were required to re-sit Modules 2 and 3 respectively.

Feedback on the quality of the final projects/dissertations (module 10) was also excellent. As a quality assurance measure, the University of Mauritius, appointment Professor Jan Vranken, of Universiteit Antwerpen, as External Examiner to the programme. His report has given a very positive assessment of the programme and quality of candidates. As intended by the ILO and donors, the majority of the graduates are personnel of social security institutions and government departments, and have all returned to serve in different capacities in their countries. ILO and UoM plan to conduct a tracer study to follow up on the performance of graduates in their jobs.

Efficiency

The QUATRRAIN AFRICA (QA) project was set up with a donation of US\$3,948,279 by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and placed in the ILO RBSA Fund category; this placement has negative cost implications, as opposed to a TC project. Project implementation has been shared by ROAF, SECSOC and UoM. The overall financial implementation rate was slightly higher for SECSO (74.6%) than ROAF (70.8%); SECSOC implementation was largely concentrated on 'International staff' payments and ILO travels. On the other hand, ROAF's expenditures were mainly on 'Seminars', staff payments and contract awards.

In terms of efficiency, given the way the project has been financed (extensive use of international staff and award of service and non-service contracts) it is difficult to determine the degree of prudence in the management of funds, except to assume that since these services were given under the established ILO conditions and were found to be satisfactory, the financial transactions must have been efficiently managed. However, there are indications that the implementation of the project has been made more complicated by the delay in the release of funds and the absence of clearly defined ILO internal procedures for RBSAs.

Under the terms of the Service Contract, the ILO provided the UoM with US\$ 612,320 to cover the programme's start-up costs and its delivery in the first academic year (August 2010 through May 2011). The largest part of the ILO financing – US\$ 470,000 – was for fellowships. The ILO also undertook to provide 75 percent of the lecturers for the first year of the programme (25 percent from its own resources/staff and 50 percent through a contract with Maastricht University). QA financed fellowships were awarded to all 28 admitted candidates from QA countries, amounting to a total of US\$ 296,000, this leaves a total of USD 174,000, which has been re-profiled for award in the second/or subsequent years.

To its credit, UoM has been adopting some cost-cutting measures in the delivery of modules in the past year. For example, the delivery of modules taught by international resource persons has been streamlined in such a way that the delivery of a standard module has been reduced, where possible, from 4 weeks to 2 or 3 weeks. Overall, the ILO funds allocated to UoM for the management of the QA programme have been well managed and efficiently utilized under the prevailing conditions.

Deployment of high-quality human resources (experienced and technically competent) has been the major characteristic of the QA programme; from ROAF, SECSOC, ILO-ITC, UoM and MU, all contributed to this training programme through resources and materials development, training and/or delivery of modules. Although the point has been raised by ILO and UoM about the relatively high cost of attracting international experts and teachers to the programme, this is inevitable at the start of this type of programme. UoM has suggested that teaching capacity, if supported, could be built locally, and this would be much cheaper and should ensure the sustainability of the programme in the longer-term. To cut down suddenly and drastically on international teachers' interventions could damage the quality of the programme; however, a

gradualist approach, predicated on local capacity building, should prove more effective.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

- a) Given that the QA project will officially end in June 2012, (although the Agreement between UoM and ILO defined the first 5 years of the QA programme as covering the period from August 2010 through July 2015), project management (ILO and UoM) should design a comprehensive project document for the bridging period (2012-2015) based on the current Agreement between the ILO and UoM under the Section POST QUATRRAIN PHASE.
- b) A resource mobilization strategy should be designed and implemented by ILO and UoM, building upon information already accumulated by project management, in the interest of sustainability.
- c) Programme management should continue to pursue alternative sources of revenue for QA, particularly with agencies that have signalled interest in supporting this programme in one form or another, in order to assure the sustainability of the programme.
- d) In order to promote increasing subscription of fee-paying students to the Executive Masters Programme, management should focus more on the social security institutions across Africa rather than the potential students.
- e) ILO should mobilize resources for the training of trainees who are not managers, as such this is an output relevant to the QA objectives.
- f) The ILO (Social Security Department in Geneva) should organize the internships for the QA graduates as planned.

Possible future directions

- a) The UoM and ILO should consider an expanded phase of the Executive Masters Programme, which incorporates the Social

Security Financing Programme into the Graduate School of Governance of UoM.

- b) Given that the programme is in favour of one language (English) at UoM, the ILO should explore the replication of the Executive Masters Programme in a French Speaking African country.

Important lessons learned

- a) The use of international staff for the delivery of modules at UoM and training at seminars, though rather expensive, is inevitable during the initial phase of this programme; but it provides an opportunity for management to reflect on cost-saving measures and resource mobilization strategies for the sustainability of the programme.
- b) The German donation which started off this programme must be commended; but the rather narrow focus on the same donor for QA project is not justifiable, particularly since there is no guarantee of continued support by the Donor to this programme after the 2011.