



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Improved livelihoods of empowered Namibian rural communities through cultural tourism - Mid Term Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Namibia*
Mid-Term Evaluation: *Jan 2011*
Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*
Administrative responsibility: *EMP/SEED*
Evaluation Management: *MDG AF*
Evaluation Team: *Roger Maconick*
Project Code: *e.g. PHI/08/03/HSF*
Donor: *MDG AF (US\$ 6,000,000)*
UNESCO: 3,838,493 UN-Habitat: 877,507
UNEP: 353,100 ILO: 930,900
Keywords: *Employment creation, small enterprise development, tourism, culture*

Background & Context

The objective of this mid-term evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of programme activities in relation to the stated objectives so far and to generate knowledge including the identification of best practices and lessons learned. Its specific objectives are to:

1. Discover the programme's design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve) and its external coherence with the UNDAF, the National Development Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, and find out the degree of national

ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

2. Understand how the joint programme operates and assess the efficiency of its management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This analysis will seek to uncover the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks.

3. Identify the programme's degree of effectiveness among its participants, its contribution to the objectives laid out in Namibia's concept note on the thematic window on Culture and Development, and the Millennium Development Goals at the local and/or country level. It seeks to offer conclusions and recommendations to improve the direction and implementation of the programme during the rest of its period of implementation.

It seeks to offer conclusions and recommendations to improve the direction and implementation of the programme during the rest of its period of implementation. Scope of the Evaluation The unit of analysis is the joint Culture and Development programme i.e. the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that are detailed in the joint programme document.

The evaluation addresses the questions identified in the TOR at the outset of this mid-term evaluation. A particular emphasis has been put on the current programme results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe.

More specifically, the evaluation assesses four levels of the programme: Concept and Design level, Management/Process level, Results level, Country level Evaluation Users. The audiences for this evaluation are the Programme Management Committee of the UNCT, the National Steering Committee, the concerned UN agencies and the concerned departments in the Governments of Namibia, Spain and the Secretariat of the Fund. An important aspect of the joint programme is the number and diversity of local groups/public and private institutions involved. There is broad group of players on both the UN side and the Namibian side. A sample of these partners and end-user beneficiaries was interviewed during the mission in Namibia.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology:

The methods sought to promote a shared understanding of culture and development and its ramifications for the economy and society. Evidence was gathered from different types of stakeholders and levels of management. As the Joint Programme (JP) document itself notes in the Summary of Results Framework, “Due to the nature of the projects ... for culture and development the required baseline data that could serve as indicators for the JP are not available since there is no research so far carried out so far.”

As this evaluation is a mid term exercise, it seeks to make some provisional judgements on progress towards outputs and outcomes and suggestions, hopefully helpful ones, to facilitate further progress. Initially there were some signals of concern from programme management that the exercise was intended to be an audit or an investigation and some effort had to be devoted to allaying these concerns.

Preliminary hypotheses were circulated to stakeholders for their comment. At the end of mission round up meeting all stakeholders were presented with a brief summary. This was based on the principle that if those who are responsible for actual follow up of an evaluation have a role in suggesting its recommendations, said recommendations are more likely to be both achievable and accomplished. A number of comments on the Draft Report were received in the consolidated format mandated by the MDG-F.

A point on which the national authorities and the UNCT might wish to reflect, may be the attitude to evaluations in general. The initial reaction to this mission was that it was analogous to an audit or a hostile investigation. So a defensive mindset was in evidence and as noted the mission had to take some pains to convey that evaluations can/should be useful tools for all stakeholders.

The majority of the research was done in Windhoek, but the team also travelled to a number of proposed pilot sites principally in the north of the country. The knowledge and expertise of the PMU³ provided to the exercise a great deal of very useful background on the social, cultural and political context for the task. The evaluator applied several techniques in carrying out the research, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, site observation and review of documents. The key informant interview technique was the primary mode used in questioning informants. Interviews were guided by questions derived from the TOR, applied flexibly depending on the relationship of the interviewee to the programme.

Consideration was given to trying to elaborate and suggest some suggested measures of the capacity to be created but it was decided that the data and observations were not yet available. Necessarily this makes the evaluation's findings and

recommendations subjective and supports the view that caution should be exercised by Government and the UNCT in interpreting them. It does also reinforce the thought that both Government and the UNCT should come up with some clear and observable indicators of what is expected in future in the way of developing culture and development capacity in future.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. This programme appears based on a bold underlying concept, using the cultural heritage of a new nation as one instrument for reducing poverty and gradually addressing a suboptimal distribution of income and wealth, at the same time strengthening a sense of national identity. However the programme document, as currently approved, has too many competing goals, is overly complicated and unclear in terms of how to achieve them, which has dissipated management focus and retarded progress.

2. Coupled with that, the work and time involved in complying with the administrative requirements of the several UN specialised agencies associated with the exercise and the possibly rigorous but time consuming financial management and reporting procedures, have contributed to a situation where the programme is well behind schedule and there is some urgent work to be done by all stakeholders to put matters back on a path that will be more productive for Namibia and more worthy of the UN system.

3. It is clear that issues of culture and development may pose an important challenge to smooth sustainable development in Namibia. It is much less clear that the programme is yet addressing the issue in the best way possible and that the UN system are bringing the best thinking and experience on issues of culture and development to bear on the question. That would involve a much more proactive effort to work, exchange and

learn together in a way that advances a common Namibian agenda rather than that of the agency concerned.

4. One underlying concept has been to apply a successful model of community based management of natural resources to the area of culture heritage. This is an interesting demarche and should be maintained, but the country context is of consequence and the files are innocent of a documented consideration of the historical and political background of the country in the formulation of the programme document.

5. The importance of such 'tradition' in creating models for both colonial and post colonial states is well documented and Namibia has a particular historical experience, which will affect how the society moves forward. While not urging on the programme that it undertake a learned disquisition on such issues, it is noteworthy that UNESCO, which has a standing and 'track record' in this important area does not appear to have drawn very visibly on its intellectual resources in formulating the programme.

6. The programme is exploratory both in terms of defining the problem and issues involved and in defining and trying out approaches to solutions. There there has yet been no evident thought given to monitoring this experimental aspect and deriving indicators that help to show if the problems is becoming clearer and if the tentative solutions being tried out can be affirmed or not.

7. The evaluation was advised that a national M&E system covering donor financed activities²⁰ is only nascent for externally financed technical co-operation. If this is indeed so it may be worth extending the remit of the national system to cover such activities as the culture and development programme.

8. It would be timely to consider now whether activities in the culture and

development are of central importance and if so how ongoing or successor activities could best be supported organisationally and financially after the end of this initiative.

9. A case can be made for not giving money to communities for pilot projects just so as to avoid dependency relationships and to encourage local ownership and initiative. If the NPC and the MDG-F secretariat are concerned to set in motion a self-sustaining process of cultural development with all the laudable outcomes foreseen, it may be appropriate to consider an alternative to outright grants to communities with worthwhile project ideas.

10. The current work planning and monitoring procedures appear to be well designed and may work very well for those instances where the task is well defined and clear, where there is an accepted algorithm and where there are straightforward achievement and progress indicators and well grasped administrative and financial procedures are being used by all stakeholders. That does not appear to be the case in this instance and some consideration might be given to see if any simplification would be possible if it led to an increased likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.

11. The conceptual and managerial challenges the programme is facing may provoke renewed attention to thinking through what are the durable processes that such an intervention should seek to promote, how to observe such processes once they are in motion and how to keep them in motion. These are questions that should in future be reviewed by the Programme Steering committee every six months.

12. Culture and development activities by their nature may be better carried on by self supporting forces within a society, so it is by no means certain that a PMU would be a desirable long run source of technical capacity and leadership. Such elements could come from a variety of national NGOs and

Ministries such as those concerned with Culture and Tourism. This is perhaps one of the topics on which a reformulated programme might instigate/contribute to a national debate.

13. The first and most obvious lesson of this programme is not to embark on a bold and innovative initiative in culture and development without mechanisms to ensure the UN agency coherence necessary was assured at the outset and maintained throughout. UNCT members are all members of a team and agency representatives. As such they are all subject to the calls of conflicting loyalties and pressures. The best way to address this is to recognise that each have rights and responsibilities.

14. The second lesson may be that constant monitoring from the outside shining the spotlight of public attention on the participating agencies is needed to assure the coherent, collegial behaviour and synergy necessary to increase the likelihood of success of such an exploratory exercise such as this one. One mechanism to ensure such Agency coherence may be constant monitoring by the MDG-F Secretariat, keeping attention on the various participating agencies and involving interested individuals within government and the society as well as local representatives of member states. Also this issue could be one question to be addressed during the next evaluation of the UNDAF.