



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS- Final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and other countries of the CIS*

Final Evaluation: *November 2017*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *DWT/CO-Moscow*

Technical Office: *Employment*

Evaluation Manager: *Irina Sinelina*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *Tony Powers*

Project Code: *RER/12/01/LUK*

Donor(s) & Budget: *LUKOIL (US\$ 6,000,000)*

Keywords: *employment; youth employment; skills development; active labour market policies*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project “Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States” was implemented over a five-year period, from 2013 to 2017, through a Public-Private Partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and a major Russian enterprise – the global energy company, LUKOIL. Youth employment promotion has been recognized as a global priority and the project represents an important regional response, incorporating many of the policy and

programme approaches called for in the 2012 International Labour Conference resolution – “The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action” and reinforced in the 2013 “Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth” adopted at the Ninth European Regional Meeting of ILO constituents. The immediate objectives of the project focused on both the development of effective youth employment policies and strategies in the region and support for the implementation of action plans and programmes in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It included action at three levels. At the regional level, the project sought to foster a collaborative network across the CIS countries that would serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, regional strategy development and the conduct of peer reviews. At the national level, the project supports the development of packages of initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It also develops the capacity of these countries to effectively implement these initiatives. At the sub-national level, the project supports three regions of the Russian Federation to build local partnerships that would oversee the piloting of some of these initiatives.

Present Situation of the Project

The project scope, geographic reach, and technical complexity required the detailed planning and management of multiple interventions at regional, national and sub-national levels. It encompassed high-level research and advice on the macroeconomic foundations of youth labour

market development, but also detailed technical assistance in implementing programmes. It was a mechanism with “many moving parts”.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation is accountability to the Donor, ILO management and constituents, as well as project improvement. It examined the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The clients of the evaluation were ILO management, technical specialists, project staff, tripartite constituents in the target countries, the donor (LUKOIL), and direct beneficiaries (i.e. policy makers and practitioners). It was conducted in September and October 2017. The evaluation focused on the end results of the project and assessed overall performance in achieving its defined objectives. An international consultant conducted the evaluation using a combination of methods including analysis of documents, field visits to Moscow, the Republic of Kalmykia (in the Russian Federation) and Azerbaijan, and interviews with project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Methodology of evaluation

Key elements of the methodology were: (a) Analysis of key documents and information resources supplied by the ILO, obtained during the field visits, or located via web search; (b) Inception report; (c) Field visits and interviews; (d) Observation. Data collected by the consultant was analysed to identify key issues and themes in line with the evaluation questions. A draft report was submitted for feedback to the Evaluation Manager and circulated for stakeholder comments. The report was finalized taking into account stakeholder comments.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

□ This project was well designed. It responded effectively to regional, national and sub-national needs in the field of youth employment policy and programmes and built on other past support provided by the ILO, delivered

in line with its strategies and programming frameworks. The intervention logic was sound and, despite including a quite complex array of outputs and activities, these cohered well in the implementation, which was managed well.

□ The project broke new ground through the involvement of a major Russian company, LUKOIL, as the development cooperation partner. The company has led the way in demonstrating the positive impact that can be made by the private sector in advancing global development goals. More needs to be done to tell this story to a wider audience.

Effectiveness

□ Most of the planned activities were completed and the Regional Cooperation Network established through the project is now proving to be an effective mechanism for cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, the sharing of international good practice, the commissioning of comparative research on topics prioritized by the constituents, and the improvement of youth employment policies and programmes. The Network is task-oriented and has played an important role in highlighting the need for reforms in the youth employment approaches by its member countries.

□ Five peer reviews were conducted through the project and participating countries have seen this initiative as being useful. The process for these peer reviews has been refined and incorporated into a toolkit with potentially global application. Changes brought about by the peer reviews could be better monitored, but the reviews are already helping the ILO to better target the assistance.

□ The project actively involved the social partners in all facets of its implementation, including the Regional Cooperation Network meetings, the conduct of the peer reviews, the commissioning of research and publications, and in the national and sub-national action plans and programme pilots. Trade Unions and Employers’ Organizations were immersed through the project in the key youth employment policy challenges faced by the participating countries, exposing

them to international good practice aimed at addressing these challenges, and ensuring they had a voice, through social dialogue, in policy and programme improvement. The key labour market institutions, including Public Employment Services (PES), have also benefitted.

□ The project commissioned, validated and published a number of reports and comparative studies designed to disseminate good practice on youth employment policy. All of these publications directly addressed priority issues being faced by the participating countries and there is evidence that the practices identified and the issues discussed have informed the development of national policies and programmes.

□ In response to the expressed needs of the participating countries, the project developed or adapted a number of tools designed to guide them in their review and development of youth employment policy and programmes. These tools all had a practical application for the countries involved and made a positive contribution to the project objectives. The reported use of the peer review tools in other regions was an unexpected positive outcome.

□ The project supported the conduct/implementation of youth employment policy reviews. In Kazakhstan, while the project conducted many of the planned activities, it was not in a position to support the implementation of the action plan due to circumstances outside the project's control. In the Russian Federation, an in-depth analysis of youth employment policies was conducted in 2013-2014 (separate from this project) and the priorities identified and the policy recommendations made in this review formed the basis of a "Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion in the Russian Federation", supported by the project. In Azerbaijan, the project has made a real impact on youth employment policies and programmes primarily by implementing small scale pilots from which broader action plans and strategies later grew.

□ Sub-regional pilots were conducted in three Russian regions. In Kalmykia, the Youth

Employment Partnerships have proven to be an effective mechanism to engage local actors in the development and delivery of active labour market programmes, harnessing local knowledge and contacts and improving service coordination. The Partnerships are still in their infancy and require continuing support to maximize the value they can add to programme delivery in the region. At the individual beneficiary level, the wage subsidy pilot programme implemented by the Partnerships seems to have acted as a "circuit breaker" for a small group of long-term unemployed people, connecting them to jobs.

□ In the other two regions (Perm Territory and Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region), the small pilot programmes run have been successful and may soon be expanded, but the value added by the Partnerships in their management has not been well documented.

□ In Azerbaijan, the successful conduct of a pilot entrepreneurship programme in 2014 (using the ILO's SIYB model) led to a government commitment to scale up its delivery to cover 10,000 households across all regions of the country and backed by a \$US4 million allocation from the Presidential Fund. Ongoing piloting enhanced the country's capacity to expand in this way by training an additional 142 SIYB trainers who have since delivered the programme to 1,915 people. 1,500 of these will receive business start-up assistance from the government. Other project achievements in Azerbaijan included contributions to the creation of a permanent tripartite Commission on Labour, Economic and Social Affairs, the finalization of a new National Employment Policy, and capacity building and reform of the PES.

Efficiency

□ Considering the scale and complexity of activities, which offered intensive support to three countries as well as tangible benefits to six others in the sub-region, the project gave excellent value for money. □ In terms of human resources, the project was efficiently coordinated by a small team in Moscow (CTA, Youth Employment Officer and

two assistants) with an assistant in Kazakhstan. External human resources – expert advisors, trainers, researchers, consultants – were engaged to undertake specific tasks.

Sustainability of results and likelihood of long term effects

□ In Azerbaijan, the project has directly contributed to the development of a new national employment policy, enhanced tripartism in policy development through a new Commission, greatly enhanced PES effectiveness, proven the effectiveness of an active labour market programme, and seen this programme fully adopted, funded by the government and expanded tenfold. All of these are enduring results, representing major reforms at multiple levels.

□ In the Russian Federation, a Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion was developed and this is shaping future interventions. The project has supported continuing reforms in the vocational training system and in the setting of occupational standards and these have the potential to greatly influence youth employment approaches and outcomes, including by better management of school-to-work transition. At a sub-national level, the project is testing the implementation of various delivery models, including the involvement of local partnerships in delivering labour market programmes.

□ In Kazakhstan, even though the project's support for implementation has been held back, a National Youth Employment Action Plan has been endorsed.

□ At a regional level, the project has built an effective mechanism for collaboration, knowledge sharing and joint-ventures among a group of countries with similar needs and a shared institutional heritage. The involvement of BRICS countries has extended these benefits.

Recommendations

1. Promote the project as a model of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Russian Federation and globally and to highlight impact

that can be made by the private sector in advancing global development goals

2. Identify how best to monitor the changes made as a result of the peer reviews in youth employment policies

3. Consider further research into how new and emerging forms of work are affecting young people in the labour market and what policy responses might be needed in CIS countries

4. Continue to build the capacity of stakeholders (especially in pilot locations) to monitor and evaluate the youth programmes they pilot

5. As recommended in the Mid-Term Evaluation, enhance the gender sensitivity of future project implementation including through specialist expertise (e.g. in review of research and tools produced), capacity building for stakeholders in programme design and management, and in project performance monitoring

6. Encourage/support countries to give more attention to the needs of people disadvantaged in the labour market (e.g. people with disabilities, low levels of education, or facing discrimination) in the design and delivery of youth employment programmes, including by sharing international good practice and specialist expertise

7. Monitor and document Azerbaijan's experience in "mainstreaming" and scaling up entrepreneurship training as a means of sharing good practice and lessons learned to other countries (in the region and elsewhere)

8. Ensure project monitoring in Stage 2 gives more attention to measuring outcomes/effectiveness of outputs and activities by revising the current performance indicators and reporting accordingly.

9. Reinforce the application of International Labour Standards in Stage 2 by systematically reviewing opportunities for their promotion at all stages of implementation, especially activity design and commissioning.