

International Labor Organization

REPORT

on independent evaluation of the Dutch TC-RAM on *“Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Women and Men and Other Marginalized Groups in Caucasus and Central Asia through Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Education”*

(RER0452MNET)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BDS	Business Development School
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CDF	Country Development Framework
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CONDIT	Working Conditions Department of the ILO
CPPR	Country Portfolio Performance Review
CRW	Competency Reinforcement Workshop
CRWMT	Competency Reinforcement Workshop for Master Trainers
DAA	Directories of Assistance and Advise
DFID	Department for International Development
DWI	Decent Work Indicators
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
EC	European Commission
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EMP/ENT	Employment/Enterprise Development Department of ILO
EMP/STRAT	Employment Strategies Department of the ILO
EO	Employers' Organization
FES	Federal Employment Service
FL	Federal Law
GENDER-	Gender Bureau of the ILO
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GOR	Government of Russia
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IFP	InFocus Program
IFP/SKILLS	InFocus Program on Skills Development
IFP/SEED	InFocus Program on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprises Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
ILO SRO	ILO Sub-regional Office
ITC	International Training Center (Turin)
KAB	Know About Business
KS	Knowledge Sharing
LFS	Labor Force Survey
LED	Local Economic Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MES	Modular Employable Skills
MHSD	Ministry of Health and Social Development
MLSI	Ministry of Labor and Social Issues
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOL	Ministry of Labor
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Master Trainer
MTR	Medium Term Review
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPP	Netherlands Partnership Program

PES	Public Employment Service
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSIA	Poverty and Social Impact Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RF	Russian Federation
RMA	Rapid Market Appraisal
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SCME	State Committee for Migration and Employment
SWTS	School-to-Work Transition Survey
TC	Technical Cooperation
TOPE-	Training of Potential Entrepreneurs
TOT	Training of Trainers
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TU	Trade Unions
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVT	Technical Vocational Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WEDGE	Women Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality
YEN	Youth Employment Network

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PROJECT DATA

Title:	Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Women and Men and Other Marginalized Groups in the Caucasus and Central Asia Through Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Education	Project ID:	RER0452MNET
Total Budget:	USD 1,236,999.000		
Theme:	Employment Creation and Gender Equality		
Sub-region:	Eastern Europe and Central Asia		
Countries covered:	Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan); Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia); Russia		
Lead Office:	Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SRO ILO in Moscow)		
Responsible ILO Official:	Martina Lubyova, Senior Employment Specialist, SRO ILO Moscow		
Collaborating ILO Units Offices	IFP/SEED, IFP/SKILLS, GENDER, SAFEWORK, ACTRAV, ACTEMP, ITC/ILO Turin		
Donor:	The Government of the Netherlands		
External Implementing Partners:	UNDP, European Commission (European Training Foundation)		

Key dates		Progress reports available for periods:	
Starting date:	01.03.2004	First:	01.03.2004-31.12.2004
Closing date:	28.02.2006	Second:	01.01.2005-30.06.2005
		Third:	01.07.2005-28.02.2006

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PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE RATINGS

HS=Highly Satisfactory, S=Satisfactory, U=Unsatisfactory;
 HL=Highly Likely, L=Likely, UN=Unlikely, HUN=Highly Unlikely;
 HU=Highly Unsatisfactory, H=High, SU=Substantial, M=Modest, N=Negligible

<i>Project design</i>	S
<i>Implementation</i>	S
<i>Performance</i>	S
Relevance	HS
Effectiveness	S
Achievement of Objectives	S
National partners Performance	S
ILO Performance	S
Efficiency	S
Sustainability	HL
Institutional Development Impact	SU

INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges confronting ex-Soviet Union countries in the middle of the second decade of economic transition is to develop competitive formal labor markets. In spite of the fact that at present one could witness overall macroeconomic stabilization, labor market situations and poverty still remain key development issues in the majority of the countries of the region. Poverty incidence ranges between 30 and 80% and in most of the low income countries of the region more than a half of population is below poverty line at any one time. Existing social protection systems (encompassing unemployment assistance, social assistance, pensions, child allowances, and social insurance) are not able to cope effectively with this situation. In all countries of the region there is a serious skills mismatch between labor supply and labor demand. The employment services are facing significant difficulties in providing labor market information and guidance to the unemployed, vocational education systems are in disarray, youth unemployment remains at high levels and labor market situation for women has been deteriorating faster than that for men.

The Project *“Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Women and Men and Other Marginalized Groups in Caucasus and Central Asia through Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Education”* was one of the instruments utilized by the ILO SRO Moscow to address this situation in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

Project assistance was provided in priority areas identified by the ILO in its Operational Objectives and operational shared policy objective or directly by the partners in appropriate countries.

Project was implemented in a very turbulent environment. Revolution in Georgia and administrative reform in Russia before the start up of project implementation; revolution in Kyrgyzstan with a subsequent change of the President and the Cabinet during the project implementation and presidential elections in Azerbaijan accompanied by the change of key ministers including the Minister of Labour and Social Protection at the final stage of the project – all these contributed to high turnover among policy officials and decision-makers and shifts in the governments’ political and socio-economic priorities.

Independent evaluation was supposed to be carried out to assess project design, implementation and performance in three countries covered by the project: Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. But due to the above-mentioned political developments in Azerbaijan at the final stage of the project (changes within the structures of the key counterpart, the Ministry of Labour), the mission to Azerbaijan was cancelled. So this report represents an overall evaluation of the project based on the interviews with the project staff, international and national consultants, progress reports and other materials made available for the evaluator, as well as an in-depth evaluation of the Project implementation in Kyrgyzstan and Russia (see Annexes 4 and 5).

The scope of the evaluation includes the qualitative analyses of the quality at entry, project outputs and achievement of project objective, project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and is based on the indicators listed in the project document and other relevant benchmarks. The evaluation also identifies lessons learned and provides practical recommendations for future planning of the ILO programs and projects of a similar nature in the countries of the sub-region.

PROJECT DESIGN

The design of the project is rated as *satisfactory*.

This section of the report provides an analytical overview and assessment of project design with special focus on project objectives; indicators of achievement of objectives; overall quality of Project document; linkages of the project design with previous activities.

1. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

The Project aims at reducing poverty through increasing employability of disadvantaged young women and men and other marginalized groups (refugees, internally displaced persons, unemployed and informal economy workers) by improving skills development and entrepreneurial training in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia

2. PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project comprised three main components:

(A) Skills Development

Provide advocacy, consultancy, relevant training and supportive equipment aimed at improving the system of vocational training through introduction of ILO modular and community based approaches into training programs and by improving career guidance through consolidating informational and institutional aspects of the work of employment services and vocational training institutions (see detailed listing of activities under the component in Annex 2).

(B) Entrepreneurial Education

Provide consultancy services and training to introduce of the ILO SIYB and KAB programs into curricula of vocational institutions and retraining programs of employment services in order to acquaint and equip young men and women with self-employment opportunities (see detailed listing of activities under the component in Annex 2).

(C) Promotion of Gender Equality

Provide consultant services, training to elaborate more gender responsive labor market strategies and programs and to strengthen the capacity of national institutions to address and effectively integrate gender concerns in their work and to ensure a gender balanced approach to overall project's training activities (see detailed listing of activities under the component in Annex 2 and also Annex 3).

3. INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The indicators of achievement of the project development objectives were clearly defined in the Project document and the assessment of how the indicators were met is presented in Annex 1.

4. QUALITY AT ENTRY

This Evaluation report assesses quality at entry as *satisfactory*.

The project is well designed: the project objectives as stated in the project document are clearly formulated, describing the solutions to identified needs; the indicators of achievement are also clearly defined, describing the changes to be brought about through project implementation; the project document provides the general framework and strategies to manage the project implementation.

At the same time the project design allows for the flexibility in actual project implementation which is essential in the uncertain political environment of the project countries.

A very positive feature of the project design was its two-fold focusing on gender issues: the Project addressed gender issues by mainstreaming them in the technical activities within the first two components and also specifically focuses on gender equality issues in the third component. Such design helps to actually mainstream gender and supports the needs of the national governments to promote gender equality. It's not a secret that the gender equality issue still remains much less addressed in ECA countries, than other social and labor market development issues, so the Project has contributed to integrating gender concerns in all the interventions and drawing greater attention of social partners to gender-related problems thus achieving better tailored and focused social results.

It should be noted that the project was prepared in a short period of time based on the requests from national governments as well as on experiences accumulated and lessons learned during the implementation of other similar activities in the countries of the region. The proposed activities have been seen as a continuation and expansion of other programs and projects related to integrated approach to employment creation in other countries of the sub-region. The ILO staff worked very closely with national counterparts, both at the policy and working levels, in identifying the Project's objectives, outcomes and activities.

At the same time, the decrease in the budget initially requested from the donors, has caused the reduction of the initially planned interventions and several adjustments were made during the Project implementation, including the scope of activities in each of the target countries and other details. This did not decrease the overall quality at entry and implementation of the project, but limited the scope of the applied tools and approaches.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides an overview of the Project delivery process. It addresses the inputs to the project, the project implementation schedule versus the project document, activities implemented over and above the project document.

Based on the information provided to the consultant as well as on the discussions held with counterparts it could be stated that the inputs (human, financial and material) provided to the project could be assessed as *sufficient*.

The Project staff (see list of staff in the Project Data section above) was highly professional and competent. The lack of the ILO offices (NCs) in most of the countries of the Project was partially compensated by involving National Coordinators of the DFID project on "*Poverty reduction through employment of youth and other vulnerable groups in the informal economy of Central Asia and Caucasus*" (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan).

It could be stated that the activities initially envisaged in the Project document were implemented. At the same time as was noted above the flexible project design allowed for introduction of new activities and substitution of some activities which the counties consider less relevant by other activities of immediate priority. (See annexes 4, 5, and 6 for detailed examples).

An important project activity which could be also listed as an activity “beyond” the project was the development of Monitoring and Evaluation System for SIYB programme implemented in the sub-region. The use of this database will make the activities undertaken under the ILO interventions more visible, transparent, easy to assess and evaluate, it will also help to move its users from an attitude of external motivation (responding to ILO staff reminders) to an attitude of internal motivation (getting re certification and better market position as BDS providers). Another additional activity “beyond” the Project was the organization of national media contests on the best publication, TV/radio programme on gender issues.

PERFORMANCE

Overall Project performance is rated as *satisfactory*.

This section addresses four aspects of Project Performance – project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Project relevance is assessed as highly satisfactory, project effectiveness and efficiency as satisfactory and project sustainability as highly likely.

RELEVANCE

The operation was directly related to objectives of the national Governments identified in the national PRSP, MDG and other national development frameworks aimed at reducing the number of people in extreme poverty, promoting gender equality and empower women, developing and implementing strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

The Project is highly relevant to the national governments’ policy priorities in the social area. Progress in development of decent formal labor markets providing opportunities for productive employment based on reforming the legal, institutional, and managerial framework of the national labor systems is considered by the national governments and ILO to be very important to the countries development. Available statistical data confirms the that poverty and labor market development are critical issues, and underlines the importance of gaining a better understanding of poverty incidence and magnitude as well as of how to provide matching of labor supply and labor demand in the countries.

The project is also directly related to the regional priorities in Europe and Central Asia adopted by ILO for 2004-2005, which inter alias include “promote employment, job creation and equal treatment for men and women through labor market policies that include vocational training and skills development programs with special emphasis on youth’ and “strengthen the environment for development of socially responsible business and the achievement of decent work, paying due attention to the issue of equality of opportunity of men and women.”

The Project counterparts during the discussions with the consultant all stressed the relevance of tools and methods (MES, SYIB, KAB; gender mainstreaming) proposed and introduced

with the project support to their immediate objectives. They specifically noted that these instruments allow to increase the quality of services provided to unemployed and thus to increase their employability.

EFFECTIVENESS

This section addresses the progress of achievement of Project objectives and major accomplishments including outputs by components, institutional impact of the Project interventions, project outreach, factors that have influenced the achievement of Project objectives, strategies and methodologies applied project contribution to knowledge sharing and Project contribution to gender awareness.

1. Achievement of objective and major accomplishments

Overall achievement of the project objective is judged to be *satisfactory*. Overall, the project achieved its main objective of supporting the increase of employability of disadvantaged young women and men and other marginalized population groups through skills development and entrepreneurial training and thus contributed to poverty reduction among most vulnerable groups of population

The project provided technical assistance, training and equipment to support an expanded labor market development and employment services reform agenda. It was focused on building national and local capacity, partnerships and participatory approaches in labor market needs assessment and training provision.

The principal outcomes of the project are as follows:

Component 1: Skills Development. The objective of this component was to support national Governments' efforts to improve planning and delivery of employment services and vocational training and at building partnerships among service providers in four target countries: Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Given the successful implementation of activities under this component, outcome is assessed as *satisfactory*.

A major focus of this component was to improve cooperation and collaboration between different agencies and partners providing training services to young women and men and other marginalized groups of the population; to strengthen institutional capacity of the government, trade unions and employers for policy making and planning in the area of vocational education and training; and to upgrade the quality and relevance of employment and training services.

Using the technical expertise of the Ukrainian and Russian experts, the Project has introduced the ILO Modular Employable Skills (MES) methodology in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, to diversify vocational training approaches. MES trainings of trainers were conducted in all four countries, with the first groups of trainers certified, packages for selected professions and corresponding licenses available and some equipment provided to employment services in all four countries. The selection and prioritization of professions has been done in close cooperation with employment services, TVET institutions, Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Education. In the process of selection, the professions that have strong potential for youth employment were taken into account. All those that were interviewed stressed that the application of the MES methodology allows to

substantially economize timing and human resources, which is an important precondition of its sustainability in the countries of transition.

Component 2: Entrepreneurial Education. The outcome of this Component is assessed as *satisfactory*. The objective was to support facilitation to school-to work transition through better entrepreneurship education and supporting aspiring and existing entrepreneurs in starting and expanding a business. This involved: (i) introduction of the concept of entrepreneurship into girls and boys vocational education and training to enable them to make a more informed career choice concerning the possibility of self employment (ii) support to women and men entrepreneurs to be better equipped to start or consolidate their business and (iii) to enable business service providers to render effective support to entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs. Under the Component ILO entrepreneurial training programs (KAB, SIYB) were introduced in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, with about 30 trainers certified in each country. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan¹, the component ensured maintenance and further extension of these programmes, along with re-launching of SIYB implementation in the Russia, with the latest tools available. The delivery of the KAB/SIYB programmes was implemented in close collaboration with social partners, namely with the Employers' organizations, MOLs and strong connections established with the Ministries of Education.

Thus, the Project has addressed the issue of a lack of relevant basic entrepreneurial knowledge among youth within the educational systems of CIS countries, where there is a growing demand and interest in entrepreneurship education at the secondary and vocational educational levels and a clear understanding that business studies can be one of the key components of secondary and vocational training curricula.

It should be stressed that there exist a growing interest in the ILO KAB/SIYB programmes from the part of the donor institutions (Oxfam, Eurasia Foundation, World Vision in Russia; GTZ, ADB, Aga Khan Foundation in Central Asia) because of their practical orientation and increased visibility of results.

Component 3: Promotion of Gender Equality. The objective of this component was to support the Government's efforts aimed at introduction of gender sensitive social policies and gender mainstreaming. The outcome of this Component is assessed as *satisfactory*. Not only the activities under this component allowed meeting the component objective, but also they contributed to the increase of efficiency of other components interventions. The set of important gender related materials were developed/adopted to the countries needs. Through the activities under this component, the activities of component 1 and 2 were enforced and made more effective (e.g. gender mainstreaming in SYIB training cycle, capacity-building for social partners and partner institutions working on SME support). The targeted work with journalistic community and gender training for media has also contributed to the success of the component. Read more on Component 3 in ANNEX 3.

2. Institutional development impact

Institutional Development Impact was *substantial*. Project evolved into an important tool of the Governments to improve the functioning of labor market institutions and skills

¹ Read more on the Project implementation in Kyrgyzstan in ANNEX 4.

development institutions and their coordination in the area of skills development and entrepreneurial training. The project provided critical support to implementation of the training programs for disadvantaged young women and men and other marginalized groups of population, including sharing with the counterparts the ILO methodologies and adjusting them to the country specific needs, providing computers and other equipment.

As a result of the project, interaction between national ministries, central employment services, labor exchange and employment offices at the regional level and technical vocational education organizations became more effective, particularly with respect to the youth related programs and trainings.

Consequently, a joint involvement of social partners' institutions in project implementation and delivery has significantly contributed to the improvement of their relations and consolidated their efforts in working on poverty reduction, employment and income generation.

Finally, the project made an impact on TVET institutions, BDS and other national structures dealing with skills development and entrepreneurial education through providing shared experience, methodologies development and business support practices which respond to the socio-economic context of the region. The introduction (and recognition of the key stakeholders) of the ILO SIYB/KAB programs in the region, their adaptation to the national contexts of the countries and formation of national pools of trainers – is one of the key results of the Project implementation. Thus the project has transferred ownership of these learning programs to the national stakeholders and contributed significantly to further development of entrepreneurial education at the secondary and vocational educational levels. One of the key achievements in promoting KAB in Central Asia is the institutionalization of KAB into the national training curricular of 22 TVET organizations in Kyrgyzstan, which indicates to a high credit to this ILO product and the existence of a good potential for transferring this positive experience to other countries.

Gender interventions, specially the work with mass media, have initiated broad debates in society on equality issues (through round tables with journalists, publications and promotion activities) which have lead to a better understanding of gender equality issues and establishment of special commissions and other similar bodies specifically dealing with gender issues and responsible for policy making in gender equality area. Gender component of the project ensured closer involvement of women associations and state structures that work on promoting gender equality with social partners organizations. It has attracted more women as potential members (for example, as it happened in EOs in Azerbaijan and Georgia) and as potential clients of BDS institutions. It has also strengthened the image of the ILO (and the Government of the Netherlands being a donor) as champion agencies in integrating gender equality principles in the socio-economic development context.

3. Project Outreach

The Project has reached the intended beneficiaries - young men, women and other vulnerable groups of the population through collaboration with social partners, training institutions and mass media representatives.

The project activities did not include activities (training or seminars or other) with straight involvement of the intended project beneficiaries – young men, women and other vulnerable

groups of the population. They were focused on the work with appropriate agencies which in turn are responsible for the work with young and vulnerable people. The number of young people reached by these institutions and trainers trained under the Project was not pre-determined at the Project preparation stage and was not available for the assessment. But as the discussions with the counterparts in the project countries as well as with project team members show the project duration was very short and allowed to initiate and organize the work, but did not provide much time for those trained and for the training institutions to actually deliver training to the young people. Thus the outreach effectiveness is difficult to estimate.

4. Factors Which Influenced the Achievement of Project Objectives

The main factors that have positively influenced the achievement of objectives were:

- well prepared Project concept with a clearly stated goals and objectives;
- relevance of the project objectives to the needs and immediate priorities of the project countries governments;
- commitment of the key project counterparts to Project implementation objectives;
- highly qualified ILO project team.

The factors that negatively influence the achievement of the Project's objectives were:

- turmoil political environment in the Project countries (see also the Introduction);
- short implementation period (actually less than two years);
- lack of ILO presence in some of the Project countries.

It should be specifically noted that the strategies and methodologies applied in the process of implementation were all very effective. As one of the most interesting and effective strategies we could mention gender mainstreaming through project components enforced by a separate gender component. As a result of such strategy, implementation of gender activities became an important part of the Project and contributed to capacity building of the representatives of social partner's organizations.

The Project has achieved the project indicators determined in the Project concept and Project documents. See Annex 1 "Outcome Indicators Achievement Matrix" for detailed information on the achieved indicators by Project components

The Project has contributed to improved knowledge sharing and management in the ILO in general inter alia by support it provided to elaboration of the Management Information System which could be further on used for project monitoring by other projects.

EFFICIENCY

The information available to the consultant and discussions held with project counterparts allows assessing the project efficiency as *satisfactory*. The project counterparts all stressed that in spite of a very short implementation period, the activities under the Project were organized in a very efficient manner and met all objectives agreed with the counterparts. At the same time, the lack of proper project monitoring system (which, as noted in the Implementation section of the report, in fact was designed in the process of the Project implementation and is planned to be expanded on all future ILO projects in the sub-region) does not allow to make appropriate quantitative estimates.

It is proposed to consider that the project efficiency could have been probably even higher if the project countries are informed on planned allocations of funds per components in each country, as such information could contribute to increase the countries' ownership and to shift external motivation in the efficient implementation to internal motivation.

SUSTAINABILITY

This section of the report addresses the following topics: political commitment from the part of the Project clients, ILO constituents and strategic partners to further continue the activities launched by the Project; linkages with other ILO projects.

Sustainability is rated as *highly likely*. The project has successfully demonstrated how the increase of employability of disadvantaged young women, men and other marginalized groups could be achieved through skills development and entrepreneurial education. For the countries of the region this objective remains an important objective of national economic and social development programs and the activities launched by the Project will inevitably remain on the agenda of national governments for the nearest and mid-term future. For example, the Federal Employment Service of the Russian Federation has signed the Memorandum of Understanding with ILO SRO Moscow in which the commitment to continue the activities on skills development and entrepreneurial education, using the ILO most innovative approaches and methodologies after the project closure is clearly stated. For the first time the ILO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with one of the most important strategic partner on joint implementation of technical activities which influences tremendously the effectiveness, quality and visibility of all the current and future interventions, thus ensuring strong sustainability of the project

Active involvement of the ILO social partners in the Project implementation and their demonstrated interest and commitment to achieve project objectives is the key and most important factor of the Project sustainability. Project has achieved impressive results in strengthening collaboration between the ILO social partners and national institutions dealing with entrepreneurial education and skills development, especially in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. Employers' organizations and Ministries of Labor that were usually excluded from the sphere of business education and entrepreneurial skills development have become equal partners with other traditional stakeholders. This has definitely improved collaborative relations between different parties and consolidated their efforts in working on poverty reduction, employment and income generation.

In all Project countries appropriate Ministries and Government agencies were immediately involved in the Project implementation and actively supported the Project activities. In some countries joint legal entities with appropriate governmental structures were established by EOs to support Project implementation (for example, the Committee of Social Partners in the field of technical vocational training was established jointly by the Employers' Association of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Labor). The TU and EOs were also actively involved in the work of the National Steering Committees, working groups, in the process of selection of participants for training, thus substantially contributed to the Project outcome. They played a role of catalysts of the process and are ready to become an institutional base for follow-up activities.

Sustainability of the Project outcomes is also ensured by established linkages with other projects implemented in the region, such as an on-going DFID project on “Reducing Poverty by Promoting employment of Youth and Other Vulnerable Groups in the Informal Economy of Central Asia and Caucasus”, EU TASIC project “Support to the development of an integrated Vocational Education and training System” in Armenia and a just finished gender cash surplus projects on women entrepreneurship development (Georgia and Azerbaijan) and promoting gender equality in TU organizations (Georgia).

The work with mass media, which was on going during Project implementation has created opportunities to make collaboration with social partners more visible and reflected on its most successful results and achievement. It has initiated broad debates in society through promotion activities and organization of national contests on the best publication or TV/radio program on gender issues organized (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan). Some 70 materials were issued and sent for the contests during two months. This innovative experience of a targeted work with journalists (specially providing special training for media and the development of a manual on conducting gender training for journalists) was widely shared with gender (and media) international community (at the World Summit in New-York, September 2005; at the Gender Council of International Federation of Journalists, IFJ in Rome, May 2005; at the European conference of IFJ in Nicosia, July 2005).

Along with the relevance of the Project’s objectives to the countries’ needs, transparency of the Project implementation procedures, the ILO inspired significant public attention to the Project activities are the factors contributing to Project sustainability.

As noted above, the project was specifically designed to put into place institutional mechanisms and capacity for improved vocational education and training. These mechanisms remain in place and are functioning as intended, funded from other than project sources. Project also financed technical assistance to support introduction of MES training modules. Some 20 modules have been translated into Russian to be further adopted and used in the targeted countries. Materials and generic versions of newly updated SIYB/KAB materials are shared with national and local institutions for further follow up. The relevant equipment provided to the Employment Services will be used for the training of the Project target groups -- unemployed youth -- through their training centers. Improved procedures of the vocational education and training institutions will remain within these organizations after the project closure and contribute to sustainability of the project outcome.

Officials interviewed in the preparation of this Evaluation report stated that they are pleased with the results achieved under the Project and will maintain the activities initiated and developed under the project.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS LESSONS LEARNT RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Project was aimed at increasing employability of disadvantaged young women and men and other marginalized groups of population through skills development and entrepreneurial education. Introduction of modern training methods and approaches to the daily practice of employment services, TVET institutions, training institutions of social partners allows to provide better services to those in need – young men and women, unemployed, underemployed, those who wish to start their businesses. This objective is highly relevant to

the needs of the majority of the countries of the region. It is also relevant to the ILO Strategic Objectives and regional priorities for EECA.

2. Project was well designed in spite of the short preparatory period. Partially it was possible due to the fact that the Project was not designed from the scratch, but was based on the lessons learned during implementation of the previous activities in the target countries and the experiences from other similar projects. Also, high professional competence of project team members has contributed to the successful project design. At the same time deeper involvement of the project counterparts in the Project at the design stage could have resulted in better county-tailored project implementation plans.

3. Creation of National Steering Committees for implementing the project at the countries' level is a very positive outcome. The Steering Committees could become real instruments, facilitating collaboration between social partners and facilitate their interaction not only during the period of a specific project but be used also for coordinating cooperation between the ILO and social partners while implementing other activities/projects. Such Committees may become an effective facilitating mechanism and play a role of the ILO "focal institutions" in the countries.

4. Project has been successfully implemented. Majority of initially planned activities was completed, while some were substituted or adjusted along with the evolving priorities of the client countries. The countries has demonstrated active interest in the implementation of the Project and are interested in getting further support in addressing labor market issues. Project monitoring (every half year) allowed introducing necessary changes in the list of planned activities. In the course of the Project implementation, the electronic Monitoring and Evaluation System was developed which will in future contribute to the success of ILO programmes implementation.

5. Coordination between different ILO projects is very important and should be more strengthened, specially in the countries where ILO offices (NCs) do not exist. Such coordination is needed first of all for better positioning of the ILO in these countries, and for getting better results of project activities. Cumulative effect of impacts of different ILO projects should be more visible as a result of such "in house" coordination.

LESSONS LEARNED

TECHNICAL LESSONS LEARNED

1. Labor market development issues are of high relevance to EECA countries economic development. Improvement of labor market efficiency and provision of financially viable, adequate and efficient support to the unemployed are on the agendas' of majority countries of the region. The labor legislation, labor market programs and employment services are in need for further development and modernization. National Governments are undertaking activities aimed at making labor market policy mechanisms more effective, including but not limited to:

- Comprehensive review of the existing unemployment and labor market monitoring systems;
- Improvement of ALM policy mechanisms through better planning, design and evaluation of ALM programs;

- Design of effective services and procedures accompanying job matching activities and support to the unemployed;
- Development of methodologies to forecast labor demand with a view to facilitate balanced development of the labor and training services markets
- Organization of training and retraining, of job seekers based on modern training methodologies and techniques.

2. Gender Equality becomes more broadly addressed by the national governments and partner organizations, though it still remains a difficult issue in the countries of the region. In many countries the National Gender Strategies and National Gender action plans are developed. Often special commissions on gender issues are established and gender focal points appointed in governmental ministries and agencies. The efforts to mainstream gender in the activities of social ministries and agencies are undertaken. To broaden the scope of these activities and to make them more efficient and effective the national governments need better involvement of civil society institutions, substantive analyses, country gender assessments and monitoring. All these activities first of all require in-depth basic and special training of the decision makers and staff of public agencies.

3. Governance and public administration modernization including strengthening of collaboration of governmental organizations and social partners remain in focus of the national Governments. As was mentioned the project was implemented in a very turbulent environment – revolutions, presidential elections, changes of governments, etc. The implementation of the project showed inter alia that the development of public administration and modernization of governance principles are crucial for the success of the reforms on going in the countries. The best practices results dissemination and public administration training could be of significant value to the national Governments.

MANAGERIAL LESSONS LEARNED

1. Focusing of the project at the universally understandable and recognized topic such as “skills development for more productive work” as well as clearly stated Project development objectives – were essential for the project success. The relevance of the Project objectives to the immediate needs of the client countries was an important pre requisite for its successful implementation.

2. In an uncertain political environment, flexibility in the project design was essential in terms of offering a wide variety of tools and approaches to be applied in accordance with the countries’ priorities and socio-economic situation. The Project had a sufficient degree of flexibility to provide adequate reform-oriented technical assistance to the national governments in an uncertain environment. Project implementation involved a variety of partners and stakeholders at the national and regional levels. The relevant Ministries and regional social authorities actively participated in decision-making (as to Project activities in the next period) and evaluation of work to date.

3. Involvement of national governments and social partners in the countries contributed to a positive outcome. The national governments and partner organizations in the countries in which project was implemented were actively involved in project implementation which contributed to the success of project activities.

4. High level of competence of the Project ILO staff was an important pre-requisite for the project success. Though the ILO Project team was relatively small, their professional level was very high which allowed to successfully manage a complex Project implementation in 6 countries, which in turn are very different and require specific approaches even for the similar interventions. The proper selection of international and national consultants to be involved in providing technical expertise for the project activities, has also contributed to the overall success of the Project.

5. Project preparation stage is as important as project implementation and results dissemination stages. This should be taken into account while developing a new project proposal. The extension of duration of the preparation process is needed first of all for the client countries as it allows the counterparts to get more in depth involved in thinking over of the project activities and planning project implementation which in turn provides for better ownership and higher motivation in gaining positive results.

6. A more active dissemination strategy would have yielded better results. As the project involved numerous activities and application of many tools and approaches, more proactive dissemination strategy could have been used to provide access to the experience obtained, for example, putting materials on internet or preparing these for dissemination in the form of electronic multimedia disks. Though many publications and promotional materials were being disseminated through different seminars and other events, it seems to be not enough to meet the demands of constituents (specially in the regions and local communities) in the target countries.

7. Both at the preparation and implementation stages the Project would have benefited from a greater effort to explain its role in the reform process through a PR campaign to explain to a wide audience, especially to policymakers, the objectives and expected impact of the project. This could have greatly facilitated many aspects of processing the project implementation. Those journalists who were involved in the project training and capacity building activities could have been attracted to participate in the project PR campaign.

8. In the future projects, the Monitoring and Evaluation System developed by this Project, should be properly used and agreed upon with the national counterparts at the very start-up.

9. It seems the Project team could have been enforced by adding a project financial/procurement officer to facilitate financial arrangements, monitor procurement procedures and to track project disbursement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analyses of Project design and implementation allows recommending the following:

1. The ILO interventions in support of labour market skills development, entrepreneurial training and support to SMEs by introducing modern training tools and methodologies should be continued. The Project has been able to involve constituent partners to test new tools and methods to promote employment creation and job quality. Different products have been developed and adapted to meet the needs of the sub-region and many were implemented with good results, which have not been sufficiently disseminated. The national governments have expressed their desire to adopt the different products as these were successfully pilot tested,

so the stage of product development and piloting should now be coupled with subsequent stages of broad-based introduction, consolidation and maintenance. **The external evaluator strongly recommends to provide the donor support for continuation of the Project.**

2. The gender mainstreaming focus of the Project has become an effective tool for fine-tuning the social and labor policies of the countries in the region. It could be recommended **to include similar gender components** in all ILO technical cooperation projects with broader technical objectives to support national efforts to integrate gender issues in national development policies and programmes.

3. **Knowledge-sharing** is recommended to be included as an implementing strategy while designing a new for a future project, supported by specific activities integrated into the logical framework of the project, as well as relevant human and financial resources.

3. **The beneficiary assessment** of ILO projects should be undertaken at some moment, because it could provide another rationale for different ILO interventions. It is important both for the client countries and for the donors who provide funding for the ILO projects.

4. National Steering Committees that have been established by the Project, need to be preserved to serve as an effective mechanism to coordinate the ILO work at the country's level (see more in item 3 in Findings and Conclusions) and to facilitate the process of developing and implementing DWCPs which is one of the priority for the countries of the region.

Outcome Indicator

Actual/Latest Achievements Estimate

Component I: Skills Development

(a) To enhance employability of young women and men and other marginalized groups through improved employment services and vocational training by the completion of the 2nd year of project implementation

- (a) Innovative employment and training programmes, particularly for disadvantaged young women and men were identified and pilot-tested in 4 countries (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Russia).
- (b) Capacity and functional framework to plan, design, and deliver skills and entrepreneurial training programs based on ILO-designed methodologies for employment and income generation was established and supported by the partners in 5 countries (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia)
- (c) Instruments for planning, designing and implementing demand-driven and target group-oriented training programs are now available in 5 countries for TVT institutions and business support organizations.
- (d) Project has motivated partners on the need for an integrated approach, socio economic development and strategy for attaining project objectives.
- (e) Project partners are able to provide commitment and support, particularly in the area of training potential entrepreneurs provision and post training support (credits and incentives) – (Oxfam, New Eurasia)

Component 2: Entrepreneurial Education

(a) To introduce girls and boys undergoing secondary vocational education and training to the concept of entrepreneurship and to enable them to make a more informed career choice concerning the possibility of self-employment through participating in the KAB programme

- (a) Workshops on KAB were held in four of the project countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia)
- (b) Recommendations for integration of KAB approaches into national curricula were produced and presented to national curriculum authorities (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan)
- (c) Training of Trainers are successfully held in selected TVT schools in each of newly introduced countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan)
- (d) Teaching hand outs and trainees workbook available in each country
- (e) Up to 20 KAB trainers are prepared in each of the introduction countries (Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan)
- (f) In at least one new country, KAB training package is integrated in educational curricula in vocational training institutions/secondary schools at national level (Kyrgyzstan)

(b) To help women and men entrepreneurs to be better equipped to start or consolidate their businesses, and to enable Business Development Service providers to render effective support to entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs through participating in the SYB and IYB programmes

- (a) SIYB is launched in introduction countries (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia –phase 2)
- (b) SIYB approaches are maintained in one of countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan)
- (c) Effective demand for SIYB training in all target countries promoted
- (d) Up to 20 certified active trainers are available in each project country.
- (e) Network of Master Trainers, Partner Organizations and Private trainers established.
- (f) At least 40 % of entrepreneurs, trainers and Master Trainers are women.
- (g) SIYB materials are available with commercial publishers involved in

the publication and distribution.

Component 3: Gender Equality

- (a) In two years period to achieve better involvement of young women and men in obtaining effective and demands-oriented skills development and entrepreneurial education; to create a sustainable environment for their equal access to training opportunities.
- (a) All project staff is provided with capacity-building training on gender mainstreaming (3 days training for the project personnel)
 - (b) Capacity of relevant TVET and BSP institutions to integrate specific gender concerns in their training activities are improved (gender sessions at Turin seminars; CRW for MTs; workshop for social partners in Kyrgyzstan)
 - (c) Action plans/equal opportunities' policies are developed and adopted by social partners in Kyrgyzstan
 - (d) Gender balance of +/- 10% has been reached in all KAB and SYB training programmes
 - (e) Training and information material developed and adapted under the project promotes gender equality for all training activities, uses a gender sensitive language and illustration².

² The following GM tools and materials were developed or adapted: (i) Capacity-building package on GM in TC projects; (ii) booklet for journalists "Gender Equality: WHY and HOW to Talk About"; (iii) Guidebook on conducting gender training for journalists; (iv) Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in SIYB training cycle (capacity-building kit for SIYB trainers); (v) Gender Mainstreaming in SME development and Entrepreneurial Education (overview of existing policies, technical programmes and best practices examples), (vi) Promotional materials developed by GENDER, CONDIR, IFP/SEED and WEDGE were translated into Russian and used for dissemination in CIS countries covered by the Project.

ANNEX 2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES MATRIX BY COMPONENTS

Project Component	Country	Activities
Component 1. Skills Development	Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan	<p>2005:</p> <p>Improving Planning and Delivery of Employment Services and Vocational Training – KS workshop in Turin for representatives of social partners and implementing agencies from Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan</p>
	<p>Armenia</p> <p>IO1 Output 1.1 (1.1.1-1.1.3)</p> <p>IO1 Output 1.1 (1.1.4-1.1.8)</p>	<p>2004:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission of the ILO SRO Director undertaken to introduce and launch the project (Sep 04); the first Programme of Cooperation between the ILO and Armenia for two years signed; - Technical mission of ILO Senior Employment Specialist to identify the country's priorities, Oct 05: (i) improvement of the functioning and coordination of skills development and labor market institutions; (ii) need for local mobilization of the tripartite framework; - Establishment of a tripartite National Steering Committee to provide policy guidance, technical advice and coordination at the country level established. <p>2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The region of Kotyak is identified by NSC as a pilot for the project activities; - STWT survey as a pilot for diagnosing skills mismatches and other structural barriers for access of youth to the regular labour market launched; - ILO LED/TREE methodology (IFP/SKILLS) is introduced to tripartite constituents to address the issue of local mobilization in the tripartite context; - A technical workshop on applying the ILO LED/TREE methodology in the region of Kotayak with technical expertise by IFP/SKILLS; methodological recommendations for the project implementation in the pilot region developed and presented to the Armenian constituents; - Introductory workshop to present the ILO MES methodology is conducted; prioritization of professions done and provisions for applying MES in Armenia developed; relevant equipment provided.
	<p>Russia</p> <p>IO1 Output 1.1 (1.1.1-1.1.5)</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.1</p>	<p>2004:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FES was identified as the main technical counterpart of the project in the RF; - Background studies and mapping exercises undertaken in 3 main areas: labour market monitoring and info; vocational training and skills development; institutional framework of the labour market in Russia - to serve as a background for further pilot activities; - Several regions are selected (Golitsino, Moscow region; southern regions of Russia) for the project pilot activities on skills development through introduction of ILO MES training; - Entrepreneurial education (SIYB programme) is identified as another entry point for the project's activities in Russia; a detailed strategy for SIYB for 2005 developed;

	IO1 Output 1.1 (1.1.6-1.1.8)	2005: - Technical consultations with FES to develop the strategy for implementing the project through national network of training centers (several ILO tools are offered for testing: TREE, MES, SIYB); - Memorandum of Understanding is signed between ILO and FES for implementing the project; -ILO MES methodology piloted in one of the FES training centers (Golitsino) and introduced to the staff of the southern regions (Ossetia, Dagestan, Kalmykia, Kabardino-Balkaria); - Professions for developing MES modules identified and relevant equipment provided for selected regions of Russia.
	Kyrgyzstan	2005: - Introductory MES workshop conducted; - MES workshop to develop training modules for 5 professions organized; - Equipment for 4 master-classes procured and installed in TVT institutions.
Component II. Entrepreneurial education and training	All Project countries IO3 Output 3.3 (3.3.1-3.3.4)	2005: - Competency reinforcement workshop (CRW) for master-trainers in Almaty to define common strategy to position SIYB in the regions and develop more autonomous processes in the countries; - Boosting Employment and Job Creation Through SME Development and Entrepreneurial Education – KS workshop for social partners and partner institutions from 5 CIS countries in ITC Turin; completion of certification process of SIYB master trainers from Russia and Kyrgyzstan (side-event in Turin); - Adaptation of SIYB materials (SYB, GYB, Business Plan, Game Guide, etc.) and their translation from original updated French into Russian. Reproduction of materials in 2006; - MES training packages are translated from Ukrainian into Russian for further distribution among the public employment services of Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan.
	Azerbaijan IO2 Output 2.1 (2.1.1.-2.1.2) IO3 Output 3.1 (3.1.1-3.1.2) IO2 Output 2.1 (2.1.3) IO3 Output 3.1 (3.1.3-3.1.5)	2004: - Establishment of a tripartite NSC to provide policy guidance technical advise and coordination at the country level; - Introductory workshop o SIYB/KAB for tripartite constituents, partner institutions and potential donors; - Selection of training institutions for project activities implementation; - Adaptation of SIYB/KAB training modules for Azerbaijan including translation; 2005: - Development of SIYB Directory of Assistance and Advise for Azerbaijan; - Selection of SIYB/KAB trainers according to set criteria; - KAB TOT in Baku; - SIYB TOT in Baku; 2006:

		- Translation of new KAB version from Russian into Azeri language.
	<p>Georgia</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.1 (3.1.1-3.1.2)</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.1 (3.1.3-3.1.5)</p>	<p>2004:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a tripartite NSC to provide policy guidance technical advise and coordination at the country level; - Introductory workshop on SIYB/KAB for tripartite constituents, partner institutions and potential donors; - Selection of training institutions for project activities implementation; - Adaptation/translation of SIYB/KAB training modules. <p>2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of SIYB Directory of Assistance and Advise for Georgia; - Selection of SIYB/KAB trainers according to set criteria; - Two SIYB TOT in Tbilisi (April and October 05).
	<p>Armenia</p> <p>IO2, Output 2.1 (2.1.1-2.1.2) IO3, Output 3.1 (3.1.1-3.1.2)</p> <p>IO2, Output 2.1 (2.1.3) IO3, Output 3.1 (3.1.3-3.1.5)</p>	<p>2004:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a tripartite NSC to provide policy guidance technical advise and coordination at the country level; - Introductory SIYB/KAB workshop for tripartite constituents, partner institutions and potential donors; - Selection of training institutions. <p>2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation/translation of SIYB training modules for Armenia; - Development of SIYB Directory of Assistance and Advise (in Russian and Armenian); - KAB TOT in Yerevan; - SIYB TOT in Yerevan.
	<p>Russia</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.3 (3.3.1)</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.2 (3.2.2-3.2.4)</p>	<p>2004:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FES identified as a main counterpart for SIYB program; - Strategy for Component II implementation developed (international consultancy); regions selected; <p>2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidation of SIYB training materials and refreshment workshop for SYIB trainers; - RMAs for Belgorod Oblast and Nizhny Novgorod <p>2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A study tour to China organized for representatives of FES and MHSD of Russia to exchange knowledge and experience on implementation of active labour market programmes, entrepreneurship development and role of public employment services.
	<p>Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>IO3 Output 3.2</p>	<p>2004:</p>

	(3.2.1) IO3 Output 3.2 (3.2.1) IO3 Output 3.2 (3.2.1)	- KAB package adopted by the Government and included in the national curricula of the state TVT schools; - KAB TOT in Bishkek. 2005: - KAB training materials printed and distributed; - KAB TOT in Bishkek. 2006: - KAB TOT in the region of Osha; - New KAB materials' version translated into Kyrgyz and reproduced for distribution among TVT pilot schools on application of KAB methodology.
Component 3. Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming	All Project countries IO4, Output 4.1 (4.1.1-4.1.3) Output 4.4 (4.4.3) IO4, Output 4.2 (4.2.1-4.2.3) Output 4.4 (4.4.3-4.4.4) Output 4.3 (4.3.1) Output 4.2 (4.2.1-4.2.3)	2004: - Development/translation of GM tools and materials: (i) GM in TC Projects (Capacity Building Tools for Project Staff); (ii) Gender Equality: Why and how to Speak about (booklet for journalists); (iii) Promotional materials on - Conventions 156 and 183 (iv) IFP/SEED's WP #15 on enabling environment for women entrepreneurs; - Capacity building workshop on GM for the project staff. 2005: - Development of materials: (i) GM in SME development and Entrepreneurial Education (overview of existing policies and practices); (ii) Manual on conducting gender trainings with journalists; (iii) Integration of gender issues in SIYB training cycle; Fact sheets on WED; gender issues in SME (translation); - Gender sessions at: (i) CRW for master trainers; (ii) Boosting Employment and Creating Enabling Environment for SME Development and Entrepreneurial Education (Turin); - International conference "WoMen and Democracy" (including participation of 4 countries of the project (Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan).
	Azerbaijan IO4, Output 4.4 (4.4.1) Output 4.4 (4.4.1, 4.4.4)	2004: - Awareness raising campaign and preparatory work for ratification of Conventions 156 and 183 – round table in Baku; - National study on Work and Family (in collaboration with CONDIT); - Round table for journalists "Gender equality in the World of Work: the role of mass media", Baku. 2005: - Three-days gender training for journalists in Baku; - National contest on the best publication/media product; organization of the jury; identification of three winners.
	Georgia IO4, Output 4.4	2005: - Round table for journalists "Gender equality in the World of Work: the role of mass media" in Tbilisi;

	(4.4.1, 4.4.4)	- Three-days training for journalists, Tbilisi; - National contest on best publications or media products on gender; work of the jury; one winner selected.
	Armenia IO4, Output 4.4 (4.4.1, 4.4.4)	2005: - Round table for journalists “Gender equality in the World of Work: the role of mass media” in Yerevan; - Tree-days taining for journalists, Tzahkadzor; - National contest on best gender related publication/media product; work of the jury; one winner selected.
	Kyrgyzstan IO4, Output 4.2 (4.2.4-4.2.5) Output 4.3 (4.3.1-4.3.2)	2005: Capacity building workshop on equal opportunities policies on the labour market and the role of social partners, Bishkek.

ANNEX 3. GENDER COMPONENT OF THE PROJECT

The importance of the activities undertaken under this component, combination of innovative approaches used by the project team makes it necessary to address and summarize key conclusions on this component in a separate Annex.

The innovative approach was used in the project design - specific gender equality promotion objectives were integrated in the general context of technical activities and in addition to this were addressed separately in a specially designed component. The budget allocations for Gender component (about 300 000 USD) made it possible to successfully implement gender-specific activities.

The objective of the component was to support the Government's efforts aimed at introduction of gender sensitive social policies and gender mainstreaming and to achieve better involvement of women and men in obtaining effective and demands oriented skills development and entrepreneurial education to ensure equal access of young women and men to these opportunities.

The major gender mainstreaming strategies used in the Project were:

- Capacity building on gender mainstreaming of the project personnel, tripartite constituents and partner institutions;
- Awareness raising and promotion of the ILO Conventions 156 and 183 and other materials on gender equality related to women's employment, creation of favorable conditions for women's entrepreneurship development, on workers with family responsibilities and maternity protection;
- Work with mass media, including development of special tools and programs to conduct training on gender issues for journalists;
- Integration of specific gender needs in SIYB training cycle, organizational arrangements and procedures;
- Systematic collection and use of gender disaggregated data in reports and studies, prepared in the framework of the project;
- Provision of equal assess of men and women to all training activities conducted by the project (explicit indication in the letters of invitation, in the selection procedures, monitoring tables on gender balanced representation);
- Organization of knowledge sharing discussions and exercises on the skills development, entrepreneurial education and gender equality through capacity building workshops or sessions at the workshops.

The activities under this component (see ANNEX 2 for the list of activities undertaken during the project implementation) allowed meeting the component objective, but also they contributed to the increase of efficiency of other components interventions related to skills development and entrepreneurial education. The set of important gender-related materials was developed/adopted to the countries needs. Through the activities under this component the activities of component 1 and 2 were enforced and made more effective (e.g. gender mainstreaming in SYIB training cycle activity supported the SYIB program), the focus on the journalists gender training and involvement of media into gender mainstreaming activities has also contributed to the success of the component.

The work with mass media on equal employment opportunities, favourable entrepreneurial environment, work and family and other issues has initiated broad debates in society through promotion activities and organisation of national contests in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Some 70 materials were issued and sent for the contests during two months. 5 winners were determined: 3 from Azerbaijan, 1 from Georgia, 1 from Armenia.

This innovative experience of a targeted work with journalists (specially providing special training for media and the development of a manual on conducting gender training for journalists) was widely shared with gender and media international community (at the World Summit in New-York, September 2005; at the Gender Council of International Federation of Journalists, IFJ in Rome, May 2005; at the European conference of IFJ in Nicosia, July 2005).

The Project adapted and developed a number of GM tools and promotional materials:

- Capacity-building package on GM in TC projects;
- Booklet for journalists “Gender Equality: WHY and HOW to Talk About”;
- Guidebook on conducting gender training for journalists;
- Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in SIYB training cycle (capacity-building kit for SIYB trainers);
- Gender Mainstreaming in SME development and Entrepreneurial Education (overview of existing policies, technical programmes and best practices examples);
- Promotional materials developed by GENDER, CONDIT, IFP/SEED and WEDGE were translated into Russian and used for dissemination in CIS countries covered by the Project (on Cs 156 and 183; WEDGE’s fact sheets; Working Paper #15 on creating enabling political environment for women entrepreneurs).

For monitoring and evaluation of the Gender component of the Project simple but effective monitoring arrangements were set up. The monitoring of gender component was within personal responsibility of the Project Coordinator. At the national level, the tripartite NSCs and national gender experts were involved and substantially contributed to systematic assessment of quality of research, reports and studies prepared under the project, as well as to ensuring equal participation of women and men in the project activities.

It is important to note that the Project has established mechanisms for knowledge sharing and other inter-linkages with other projects on gender-related activities. The Project used resources, tools and information on gender issues available on Virtual Forum and also information and resources provided by the Gender Partnership Fund and NPP Knowledge sharing project on Gender Equality. The gender component activities, methodologies and approaches to gender mainstreaming were discussed at several workshops and seminars during special gender sessions. The project related issues were discussed at the annual meeting of the Global Gender Team.

The importance of gender component was emphasized during the discussions with project counterparts in project countries. In the Kyrgyz Republic the office of the President has sent a letter to the ILO SRO Moscow in which they expressed their high satisfaction with the gender activities held in the republic and outlined the gender related topics which they consider to be of highest priority in their future work on gender issues. It should be noted that in other project countries the gender activities were also strongly supported by the counterparts and caused significant interest.

ANNEX 4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN KYRGYZSTAN

Meetings held on December 4-8, 2005

On December 4-8, 2005 an evaluation consultant made a mission to Bishkek and reviewed the project implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic. The consultant would like to thank all counterparts for their efficient collaboration during the mission, particularly Mr. Bolotbek Orokov, National Coordinator, who has provided both substantial and logistics support.

The discussions were held with the following officials:

1. Mr Adyl Tailakov, Deputy Head of Department of Primary Vocational Education of the MLSP
2. Mr Murat Mambetaliev, States Secretary of the MLSP
3. Mr Alybek Kadyrov, President of the Confederation of Employers
4. Ms Asyl Orozobekova, Director of TVT school # 85
5. Ms Olga Phillipova, Expert of the Secretariat of National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development of President Administration
6. Ms Gulimira Okoeva, Gender Focal Point, MLSP
7. Ms Dinara Djoldosheva, World Bank Country Officer
8. Ms Tamara Kojomuratova, Director of the Center of Small Business Support, SIYB Master Trainer
9. Ms Tatiana Scopintseva, Head of Division of the State Committee for Migration and Employment
10. Ms Aigul Ryskulova, Head of the State Committee for Migration and Employment
11. Ms Janysh Alimbaev, Deputy Chair of the State Committee for Migration and Employment
12. Ms Svetlana Semenova, Head of Labour Division of TU

Project Activities and Project Outputs in the Kyrgyz Republic

The summary of the discussions and key suggestions of the project counterparts are presented below.

Counterparts assessed Project in the Kyrgyz Republic as *satisfactory*. In 2004, the activities in the employment promoting area were mostly supported through the ILO/DFID Project “Reducing Poverty by Promoting Employment of Youth and Other Vulnerable Groups in the Informal Economy of Central Asia and Caucasus”. The working plan within the Project “Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Women and Men and other Marginalized Groups Through Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Education” was further adjusted and agreed upon according to the current political situation and changed priorities.

As was already stressed, the Project implementation was carried out in a turbulent environment (revolution, change of the President, transformations within the structures of the key governmental bodies). Some initially planned activities were postponed or substituted due to the changes in the staff of the main counterpart (MLSP), creation of new structures (State Committee on Migration and Employment) and re-allocation of responsibilities within

the Ministry and the Committee. Still, in 2005, the Project implementation has gained its full speed: 28 TA contracts were completed under the Project; 6 trainings/workshops/seminars were organized; 3 publishing contracts were signed for publications of project materials; 1 procurement of equipment for the pilot training of the unemployed was organized (see matrix below).

**Activities and Outputs Matrix (co-financed by both DFID and Dutch projects)
The Kyrgyz Republic, 2004-05³**

#	Activity	Implementation	Output
1.	Support on completion of development of National Employment Policy	1 international consultant, 4 local consultants	National Employment Policy drafted and adopted by the Government by the Resolution of the Prime-Minister #126 as of 14 March, 2005
2	Research papers on labor Market situation	4 local consultants 1 international consultant	1) "SME Small and Medium Enterprises- Policy and Legal Framework" 2) " Small and Medium Enterprises- Employment Profiles " 3) Background study on the role of cooperatives in employment promotion and poverty reduction for the Kyrgyz Republic 4) Analysis and Perspectives of Macroeconomic Policies in Correlation with Labor Market Indicators, Youth Employment and Informal Labor Market in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan 5) Economic Restructuring and Changes in the Labor Market
3.	Consultations with UNFPA on joint activities on micro crediting	National coordinator	ILO publications on micro insurance shared with counterparts
4.	Training of trainers (KAB Program)	1 local consultant, 1 international consultant	2 training seminars conducted total 30 trainers trained
<i>5.</i>	<i>Preparation of education materials on KAB for students of Technical vocational training institutions</i>	<i>3 local consultants contract with publishing house</i>	<i>Combined package of training materials (9 modules) translated into Kyrgyz languages, printed together with Russian materials and disseminated among TVT institutions</i>
6.	Pilot project on training of	Contract with the	Social Economic Dialogue in

³ Activities in bold are completed, in italic are ongoing

	unemployed (joint activity with Confederation of Employers)	publishing house Procurement of equipment	Kyrgyz Republic (publication) Equipment installed in Vocational School #17 of Bishkek
7.	Micro credit agencies assessment	1 international consultant	Report “Review of the microfinance program of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in Kyrgyzstan”
8.	<i>Business Incubators (joint with GTZ)</i>	1 international consultant <i>2 local consultants (interpreter and editor);</i> <i>1 contract with a publishing house</i> miscellaneous contract – conference package	Report on assessment of business incubators published in two languages in Russian and English 1 round table “Business Incubators – Problems and Trends” 75 participants
9	Policy analysis on SME policy advocacy from Central to Local level	1 international consultant	SME Policy Advocacy Report
10	SME survey in Naryn Oblast	1 international consultant	Naryn SME Development Report: Situation analysis and Strategy
11	<i>Regional workshop in Naryn on results of SME survey</i>	<i>Miscellaneous contract – conference package</i>	<i>Seminar for 25 participants</i>
12.	Seminar “Equal Opportunities Policies in Social and Labor Sphere: the Role of Social Partners”	2 international consultants 3 local consultants miscellaneous contract – conference package	32 participants trained in gender equality issues in labor sphere materials disseminates
13	Consultations within the KR governments’ working group on Labor Market Flexibility	National coordinator	Recommendations provided to the working group
14	Establishing 3 master-classes for TVT institutions	Procurement of equipment	Equipment for 3 master-classes installed in TVT institutions
15	Two MES workshops for TVT and other national	3 international consultants	1) 1 Introductory MES workshop for 28 participants

	partners	(Ukrainian trainers)	conducted 2) 1 MES workshop to develop training modules for 5 professions for 24 people from TVT institutions conducted
16	<i>MES packages for TVT institutions</i>	<i>Procurement of MES packages from Ukrainian MES Center</i>	<i>MES packages bought from Ukrainian MES Center for Kyrgyz TVT institutions</i>
17	Training course “Improving planning and delivery of employment services and vocational training”, ITC Turin, May 2005	(co-financed with DFID project)	4 participants from Kyrgyz Republic (representatives of social partners)
18	Training course “Enabling environment and BDS for Entrepreneurship Promotion and SME Development”, ITC Turin, September 2005	(co-financed with DFID project)	5 participants from Kyrgyz Republic

Achievement of the Project Development Objective

It is premature to properly assess the achievement of the Project development objective – i.e. the decrease of poverty as a result of Project interventions. Project interventions were mainly focused at training of trainers who in turn will train young women, men and other vulnerable groups of population and thus increase the employability of the latter. To conduct such assessment significant time and resources are needed and it might be an issue for separate project type activity. Considering the fact that there are several projects going almost simultaneously (i.e. Project under assessment and ILO DFID funded project, as well as some other) we could propose to conduct their impact evaluation as a separate activity some time in future.

Nevertheless it could be stated that the Project has significant impact on quality of TVT schools training and contributed to modernization of the training programs in line with market requirements through KAB and MES training options. This, in turn, makes graduates of TVT schools more competitive and increases their employability. While in 2003, 65% of the graduates of the TVT schools became employed, after introduction of new courses in 2004 the number of employed has increased to 70%. Though we could not state that the increase was fully due to the introduction of the new courses, but definitely we may think that the introduction of new courses has also influenced the increase of employability.

The same refers to the activities related to training of SIYB trainers. It is impossible to straight forwardly assess the poverty reduction impact of this activity supported by the project but anecdotal evidence shows that those trained on SIYB become competitive employers and the training facilitates the transition from the unemployed to self employed status. The poverty reduction and employability increase impact of the gender equality promotion activities also need special study for proper assessment. At the same time the immediate evidence reveals that focus on gender equality provided for the fact that half of

those trained under different ILO promoted programs are young women. The interest of young women and men for gender dimension of the SIYB training was noted by master trainer.

Project Implementation: good practices and challenges for the future

The outcomes which were assessed as *highly satisfactory*

(i) Training of trainers under KAB program. In Kyrgyz Republic there are 113 TVT schools. Total annual number of TVT schools students equals to 28 thousand.. The students in the TVT schools are trained in about 100 occupations/professions. In 2005 approximately 15 thousand of students have graduated from TVT schools. Out of the graduates about 70% find jobs, mainly at SME, 12-15% of graduates continue their education at higher schools and universities, 10% join the army and about 5-7% remain temporarily unemployed or join informal labor sector. In TVT schools almost 3.5 thousand of teachers/trainers are employed. In the curricula of the TVT schools the KAB program is being incorporated and the Project has provided support in training of teachers working at TVT schools. As of December 2005 about 60 teachers were trained in KAB program. 30 out of this 60 were trained by this Project. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is satisfied with this outcome. At the same time the need for training of teachers still exists and at least 53 more teachers are needed to be trained (one KAB trained teacher per TVT school).

(ii) Introduction of Modular Employable Skills approach The introduction of the MES approach supported by the Project is assessed as highly satisfactory both by Department of Primary Vocational Education of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and by the beneficiaries of the Program. By December 2005 22 persons were already trained in the MES and 18 persons will continue training and participate in the second round of training. Upon completion of the training and development of modular packages the MES approach is planned to be applied to 5 occupations. The MES approach is highly relevant to the Kyrgyz Republic as it provides for better results if compared with usual training schemes and better fits market economy needs.

(iii) Business incubators support is considered to be a success of the Project. The support included (i) assessment of the business incubators which was provided in cooperation with GTZ and (ii) adjustment of the SIYB program and incorporation of gender component into the program. The Republic has 5 years of overall successful experience of business incubators' activities. This form of support is provided to those unemployed who would like to start their own business. Annual number of unemployed trained through the employment service including those trained on SIYB is about 5 thousand persons. The State Committee for Migration and Employment indicated, that they need to train annually about 15 thousand of unemployed (total number of officially registered unemployed in the Kyrgyz Republic as of 2005 is 64 thousands while the number of unemployed according to ILO methodology is 192 thousand of persons). The support to the business incubator in particular and employment service in general is of high relevance for the republic. Important outcome of the Project activities is that with the support of the Project, SIYB master trainers included a gender component in the standard SIYB training, which was highly appreciated by those trained under the program.

(iv) National Employment Policy. The development of the National Employment Policy paper (partially funded through the ILO/DFID project) is assessed as satisfactory. The changes in the government which have led to changes in political and economic priorities of

the country have their impact on the implementation of the developed policy. At the same time the Ministry of Labor and Social Assistance considers the NEP as a very important input into strategic planning of social and economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic and are confident that the developed policy implementation will start as soon as Government determines its economic priorities.

(v) Coordination between different ILO projects. The Project has established close links with other projects implemented through different social partners in Kyrgyzstan (on informal economy; on trafficking and forced labour; on child labour). There was a regular exchange of information about the current activities within the projects; their national coordinators and implementing partners were invited to participate in the Project's events. At the same time, the MLSP has raised an issue of establishing a post of the ILO National Correspondent who could coordinate all ILO activities undertaken in the republic (which, of course, is beyond this Project's objectives). Also, some other alternatives are being proposed. The head of the State Committee on Migration and Employment has informed that there is an intention to appoint a person in the Presidential Administration responsible for contacts with the ILO. The representatives of the Tripartite Commission of Kyrgyz Republic informed that they are going to include in the agenda of their meetings the information on on-going ILO projects at least on annual basis. They think it would help them to be better informed and provide incentive to actively participate in the ILO projects.

(vi) The Project PR at the country level. The information on the Project objectives, activities and outcomes should be more actively disseminated at the initial stage of the project – both among general public and policy-makers. This also refers to the overall promotion of ILO activities and its role in the social development. For the future activities and while developing a new project documents, it is necessary to include a promotional component as one of the key implementing strategies.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project in the Kyrgyz Republic could be assessed as *sustainable*. All activities supported by the Project are going to be continued by the government, Employers Confederation and Trade Unions. The list of prioritized issues (see below) identified during the meetings with ILO partners, clearly demonstrates their intentions to continue key blocks of activities initially supported by the Project, not depending on availability of further ILO funding. At the same time additional support could speed up the implementation and increase the coverage of those who could benefit from these interventions.

Perspective activities and issues of interest for the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Continuation of KAB training;
- Further development and introduction of the MES training;
- Preparation of the concept on the reform of the primary TVT;
- Continuation of support to SMEs and private business initiatives including provision of SIYB training and development of the business incubators;
- Disability issues: extending employment opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Focus on enforcement of existing gender equality provisions and to introduce gender expertise in the business practice of the government;
- Continuation of training of officials of all levels on gender equality issues;

- Organization of mobile groups of trainers who could deliver short-term training to unemployed at municipal level (including SIYB, MES and probably some other tools);
- Support in preparation to the ratification of ILO Convention #156;
- Continuation and systematization of the work on micro-crediting;
- Local economic development and support to local initiatives aimed at increasing employability and SME development;
- Organization of an information center to promote employment-related issues, new methods of business practices, publication and dissemination of training materials;
- Establishment of a monitoring system which would help to assess demand in skilled labor;
- Gender study on women employment, including discrimination at work (in recruitment/firing, career development, etc);
- Analyses of employability of high school graduates.

ANNEX 5 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

On the week of December 19, 2005 the consultant had meetings with:

1. Ms Martina Lubyova, Senior Employment Specialist, ILO SRO Moscow
2. Ms Irina Melekh, Project Coordinator
3. Mr. Walter Verhoeve, ILO international consultant on SIYB programme
4. Mr Sergei Kartashov, Federal Employment Service of the Russian Federation
5. Ms Natalya Nosova, Director of the regional training center in Golitzino
6. Ms Natalya Luneva, Director of the FES training center in Moscow

The summary of the discussions is presented below.

Project Activities and Project Outputs in the Russian Federation

The Project implementation in Russia is rated as *satisfactory*. The Russian Federation has joined the Project implementation later than any other project countries - in spring 2005, less than a year ago. For a number of reasons, Russia has not being the part of the project from the very start up. One of the reasons is the fact that Russia is not included in the list of countries liable for the Dutch funding and it was included on the condition that not more than 40 per cent will be spent on it. Another reason is the administrative reform at the start of the Project and the lack of institution, which could lead the project implementation. Only in early 2005, the newly established Federal Employment Service became fully capable to effectively implement the Project.

In the RF, the Project was focused on two types of activities – introduction of MES approach, Component I, and SIYB training, Component II (see matrix below).

#	Activity	Implementation	Output
1.	Introductory workshop on MES methodology (July 05)	2 national consultants; 2 international consultants	18 people (17 women, 1 men) trained & certified (representatives of Ossetia, Dagestan, Kalmykia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Moscow oblast)
2.	First SIYB TOT (October 05, 2 weeks)	1 international consultant; 1 national consultant	15 trained (13 women, 2 men); 13 certified
3	Second SIYB TOT (December 05, 2 weeks)	1 international consultant; 1 national consultant	16 trained (15 women, 1 men); 15 certified
4.	Rapid Market Appraisal	3 national consultants	Report prepared
5.	Improving Planning and delivery		5 representatives

	of Employment services and vocational training (training course in ITC Turin)		from Russian social partners' organizations
6.	Boosting employment and job creation through SME development and entrepreneurial education in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan (training course in ITC Turin)		6 representatives of Russian social partners
7.	SIYB promotional materials production		SIYB t-shirts, flags, calendars, large and small booklets, block-notes, DVD-film "SIYB: 10 years in the region" disseminated
8.	Equipment for MES	Procurement contract	Equipment delivered to FES training centers (Moscow and Southern regions)
9.	A reciprocal study tour of the Russian governmental officials to China to share the knowledge on implementing ILO training tools through the ML/PES structures (the Chinese delegation is expected in Moscow in mid-April).		8 representatives (5 women, 3 men) from MHSD and FES

Achievement of the Project Development Objective

As in the other Project countries, it is far too early to properly assess the Project impact on poverty reduction and employability growth among young women and men in the Russian Federation. Less than one year of project implementation does not allow to measure such impact and to make substantial conclusions.

Nevertheless the important outcomes of the project are already visible – (1) the Project has allowed to expand the MES approaches and SIYB training activities to more than 11 regions of the Russian Federation, including to the regions with the highest unemployment rate (Dagestan, North Ossetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia)⁴ Now the MES and SIYB activities are launched in 4 out of 7 Federal Okrugs of the RF; (2) the Project has become a tool for facilitating interaction of the Federal Employment Service with its branches in the regions.

⁴ The first SIYB training program in Russia supported by ILO and Eurasia Foundation was launched in 2000 in Belgorodsky, Voronezhsky and Lipetsky regions. The activities were continued in 2001-2005 and funded from different sources. The Governor of the Belgorod region has launched the "Program on Providing Informational and Educational Services for SMEs" in which SIYB became an important component. The latter program is now fully funded out of the regional budget

Due to the above mentioned administrative reform as well as the reform of regional and municipal governance the interaction between central and regional branches was insufficient and the Project became one of the instruments of re-establishing of such interaction.

Project Implementation: examples of good practices and some problems

The outcomes which were assessed as *highly satisfactory*:

1. Training courses held in Turin ILO Training Center has got very positive feedback. The representatives from FES who participated in both trainings (summer 2005 and autumn 2005) have noted the relevance of the training programs to their immediate needs, high level of competence of the trainers, and excellent training/information materials provided during the workshop;
2. Introduction of MES approach. The project has helped to launch MES in the regions of South Federal Okrug of the RF which has a very specific situation in terms of political instability, unemployment and capacity of the regions to create new jobs. Thus the introduction of the MES training contributes to the increase of employability of unemployed/underemployed who wish to improve their professional skills. It is very important that along with training, the regions were provided with some equipment to support introduction of the MES approach. This definitely contributes to sustainability of the Project results;
3. SIYB Training of Trainers. The Project has allowed to extend the SIYB program to new regions of the Russian Federation. During project implementation, two groups were trained and certified (see the Table). The FES has attracted to these trainings several heads of Employment Service training centers (in Russia there are 122 regional training centers under the Employment Service). It is considered as a very important step to ensure sustainability of the Project results and further continuation of the activities
4. The partnership between the ILO social partners. In the RF, the Project was implemented by FES, which usually is closely interacting with social partners in its everyday activities. But due to the specifics of the Project's interventions in Russia (mostly entrepreneurial training) and a very short period of implementation, the interaction with social partners was not very active. In case of the Project extension, the FES officials consider to get social partners more involved.

ANNEX 6 LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Project document;
- Progress reports (1 March-31 December 2004; 1 January-30 June 2005);
- Studies/analytical papers produced under the project;
- Technical missions' reports and reports on specific activities available;
- Publications/promotional materials produced by the project;
- Relevant country-specific documents, work plans, etc.;
- Reports on specific gender activities (including reporting on Indicator C. on balanced representation);
- Capacity-building/training tools produced by the project.