



South Asia Leadership in Entrepreneurship (SALE)

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Sri Lanka and Nepal

Evaluation date: 30 May 2024

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO Country Office, Colombo

Technical Office: ILO RO-Bangkok

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Key Words: *Key Words: Entrepreneurship, education, youth, gender equality, training, capacity development, disability*

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project is implemented in Sri Lanka and Nepal. **The overall goal is:** “Youth of high school or university age in Nepal and Sri Lanka see entrepreneurship as an attractive career option with an understanding of the principles of business and entrepreneurship in a supportive enabling environment”.

Eight outputs are to be produced related to increased knowledge; changed attitudes towards entrepreneurship among school students (female and male); college/university teachers and undergraduates, and promotion of a favourable environment for entrepreneurship development. The outputs contribute to **three Outcomes:** 1) Enhanced interest in and knowledge of entrepreneurship and increased capacity of young men and women to develop and manage businesses who are potential entrepreneurs; 2) Selected government and academic institutions have higher appreciation for the value of entrepreneurial activities; and 3) General public holds an improved image and enthusiasm about young entrepreneurs.

Present situation of the project

The project will continue to the **end of September 2024** (in Sri Lanka only), working mainly with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce with two ILO project staff members only.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The two **purposes** of the evaluation are 1) Accountability vis-à-vis the donor agency, ILO and its constituents; and 2) Enable evaluation findings to contribute to internal learning within the ILO. The **scope** is to evaluate the implementation from September 2021 to March 2024 in both countries. The **clients** are the ILO; the donor agency; the principal implementing partners and ILO constituents; stakeholders and partners.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation applied a **mixed methods approach:** Key Informant Interviews of 49 persons (females:12); Focus Group Discussions involving 30 persons (females:8); and 84 students, staff in schools, colleges and universities (females: 29); and a questionnaire survey. The data was organised and interpreted to determine any links with the evaluation’s objectives. transcription, organisation, validation of the data. **Methodological triangulation** of the data/information was applied as integral part of the evaluation.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The **Project's Logical Framework Analysis and Theory of Change are designed in a sound manner**, i.e. the relationship between activities, outputs and outcomes is logically framed. However, most of the assumptions lie in the realm of the Project's *influence* and thus are not valid. Linkages could have been stronger between Sri Lanka and Nepal (design and implementation). **The Project is assessed to be relevant** in its aspirations and efforts to change attitudes and mindsets vis-à-vis entrepreneurship. It is well aligned with both countries' government development policies regarding the need for support to youth in this field. It is also well aligned with the Decent Work Country Programme, the Sustainable Development Goal 8 and the ILO Programme & Budget.

The Project has been able to develop collaboration, synergy and **coherence** among the entrepreneurship ecosystem players and development partners. In **Sri Lanka** there has been compatibility/complementarity with a number of other project interventions; and in **Nepal**, the project is complementing the work of its core implementing partners (FNCCI, AYON, NYEF); and the Government and Municipalities.

Regarding **effectiveness**, 4 of the 8 outputs intended to reach the 3 Outcomes, are fully "produced" and 3 outputs are partly produced while one output was not yet produced. Reaching the three Outcomes were partly successful. The targets for outreach were exceeded in both countries – and awareness and enthusiasm have been created among many people involved, for example through the successful Annual Business Idea Championship Award events. There has also been a demand for these and training activities from schools and government agencies. In Sri Lanka the project funds could be "stretched" due to the favourable exchange rate enabling more students and more schools to be reached than what was planned initially. In Nepal, an unintended development was the actual policy on youth entrepreneurship. More involvement of competition contestants in training before competitions could have added to the effectiveness – and sharing knowledge across areas.

Cross-cutting issues have been addressed, or partially addressed, and mainstreamed in the project (e.g. gender equality and social dialogue).

It was found that efficiency in relation to the **use of financial resources** was at a good level and that the results achieved have justified the costs. In terms of human resources, the utilization of the M&E expertise available in the project could have been more efficient. The Project has been able to generate **impact** at some levels and created more awareness of the need to maintain networks and create an improved ecosystem around this topic. Regarding **sustainability**, there is interest for entrepreneurship within public educational institutions but *actual integration of the theme/discipline* and training tools in regular courses in schools and higher-level education (beyond non-credit courses) could not yet be materialized through the actions of this Project.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

1. The **Ceylon Chamber of Commerce should**, in dialogue with the ILO, find ways and means to own the Annual Awards Winning Competitions in the future, to encourage young people and their entrepreneurship ideas. Potential sources of funding should be sought for this important event, e.g. through sponsorship. *(Addressed to Ceylon Chamber of Commerce & ILO project team; Priority: High; Resources: Medium; Timing: Immediate (within 3 months)).*

2. **ILO should** make efforts to keep the momentum created in raising the awareness of youth on entrepreneurship as a potential way to generate income - in both countries (ecosystem partners, forums) and continue to hold an open dialogue with CCC, FNCCI, AYON and NYEF. *(Addressed to ILO; Priority: Medium-high; Resources: Low; Timing: Immediate (Sri Lanka) and within 6 months (Nepal)).*

3. **ILO should** in future youth entrepreneurship projects and interventions make special efforts, already at the design stage, to be even more inclusive: Specifically target and encourage females who are interested in online entrepreneurship; and mainstream (integrate) other non-discrimination issues, such as e.g. disability.

(Addressed to ILO; Priority: High; Resources: Medium; Timing: When designing new projects/interventions)

4. ILO and implementing agencies should involve competition contestants in training before competitions (did not take place in Nepal and Sri Lanka); building more on local relationships and sharing experience in schools across districts and provinces; and engaging the Regional Chambers more on follow-up activities. *(Addressed to; ILO, CCC, AYON, FNCCI, NYEF; Priority: High; Resources: Medium-high; Timing: When designing/developing new projects/interventions on the youth employment theme)*

5. In any future interventions and projects on youth entrepreneurship, the **ILO should** make good efforts to explore the potential and willingness of Workers' organisations/unions to take part in some form, at least, in the Projects - in particular if there are youth groups linked to them. *(Addressed to ILO; Priority: High; Resources: Low; Timing: When designing new projects/interventions)*

Main lessons learned and good practices

1. M&E is an essential management tool for project coordinators, and implementing agencies. Relevant raw data should be inserted in the M&E system, be analysed and distributed/circulated regularly. Every project should have access to M&E expertise and project managers need to actively support their role in projects to ensure follow up; transparency and accountability vis-à-vis stakeholders (and evaluators) regarding the progress on reaching outputs and outcomes. **2.** ILO entrepreneurship/business development training materials should be updated in view of the "digital realm". FGDs and Key Informant Interviews revealed that some ILO generic entrepreneurship/business materials (SIYB, SYB, KAB, GET Ahead) had missed out on the digital revolution – and therefore substantial efforts had to be made to customize the training materials. This is particularly important when training young persons - in view of the fast developments in the digital world. The SALE training and awareness raising sessions in Sri Lankan secondary schools were non-credit sessions and studying for exams will be seen as a priority by both parents and students – therefore the non-credit sessions must be sufficiently attractive.



A **good practice** was utilizing young volunteers in secondary schools assisting students with knowledge transfer in various disciplines, and as role models. The Project in Sri Lanka was able to use the services of undergraduate university and college students as volunteers linked to the Sasnaka Sansada Foundation - that has worked with schools for around 20 years and has a good reputation in the country. The volunteers helped raise awareness on entrepreneurship and could monitor some of the students' engagements and interests, such as E-Clubs. Using volunteers can be applied in all countries that have similar volunteer services. However, follow-up by the implementing agencies/Project needs to be done.