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Independent Final Evaluation of the Decent Work for Youth Project in Mozambique (DW4YM)

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Mozambique

Evaluation date: 31 March 2026

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: CO Lusaka

Technical Office: DWT Pretoria,

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DC Symbol: MOZ/21/03/IFA

Donor(s) & budget: IFAD, USD 4 million

Key Words: Decent Work, Youth, Training, Employment, Gender.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

<p>Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure</p>	<p>DW4YM, launched in 2022, aims to create more and better decent work opportunities for vulnerable young women and men in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula, in northern Mozambique. Funded by IFAD through the REFP programme, the project combines technical and vocational skills development, entrepreneurship support, agribusiness development and employment-intensive infrastructure investments to improve employability, job creation and market access. Its expected results include training 5,000 youth, creating 1,750 direct jobs, strengthening work-based learning and TVET integration, and supporting agribusiness hubs and market linkages. The project is managed by ILO CO-Lusaka, with technical support from Pretoria and ILO Headquarters, and implemented through a Project Management Team working closely with REFP and government counterparts under the oversight of a Project Steering Committee and Technical Working Groups.</p>
<p>Present situation of the project</p>	<p>The final evaluation covers implementation from February 2022 to December 2025. By the time of the evaluation, the project was in its final phase, with implementation focused on vulnerable youth in fragile and poor rural contexts in northern Mozambique. The project had established a structured governance and monitoring system and was being assessed in terms of its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, as well as its responsiveness to cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights and the SDGs.</p>
<p>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</p>	<p>The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the implementation status and results of DW4YM and to generate lessons and recommendations for future programming. Its scope covers the full implementation period and all major evaluation criteria, with attention to cross-cutting themes and the project's adaptability to emerging needs. The main users of the evaluation are ILO staff, constituents, funding partners and other development partners.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>The evaluation was conducted between January and February 2026 using a mixed-methods approach. Data collection included desk review of project documentation, semi-structured interviews with 39 stakeholders, of whom 23% were women, and a validation workshop with key stakeholders. The methodology was designed to answer the evaluation questions and assess progress towards outcomes and objectives through triangulation of documentary and interview evidence.</p>

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The project performed overall from **moderate to good**, with strong relevance, good coherence, credible effectiveness, generally efficient resource use, visible capacity-development and livelihood results, but only moderate sustainability prospects. **Relevance** was a major strength: the project was strongly aligned with ILO, IFAD, UN and national policy frameworks, based on stakeholder consultations and skills-demand assessments, and embedded gender, inclusion, labour standards and environmental sustainability in its design. **Coherence** was also strong, with effective alignment and complementarity with ILO, IFAD/REFP and other partners. **Effectiveness** was strongest in training, job placement, entrepreneurship support, work-based learning and institutional strengthening, with several quantitative targets partly or fully achieved and positive livelihood and TVET effects confirmed by partners. **Efficiency** was supported by decentralised delivery, sub-grants, use of existing infrastructure and strong partnerships, producing good value for money and high overall budget execution. Positive enabling factors included technical backstopping, active partnerships, government and institutional collaboration, and adaptive management. However, performance was constrained by procurement and administrative delays, start-up delays, staff turnover, stretched implementation capacity, fragile security conditions, data-quality weaknesses, and incomplete follow-up systems. The design was also not fully realistic regarding market-entry barriers and post-training business viability, as marketing, business support, certification and structured aftercare were not sufficiently integrated. **Sustainability** is therefore assessed as moderate and uneven: institutional capacities, infrastructure and some pilot models are likely to continue, but scaling and long-term continuation depend on further financing, stronger private-sector and government linkages, and a more formal exit and follow-up strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main Recommendations

- Maintain strong policy alignment and formalise partnerships from the design stage.
- Strengthen realism by integrating market analysis, risk assessment and post-training support.
- Focus resources on the most effective intervention streams and consolidate results.
- Reduce bottlenecks through faster procurement, stronger follow-up and more field support.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the decentralised, cost-efficient delivery model and improve cost tracking.• Increase staffing, introduce a start-up inception phase and strengthen documentation systems.• Improve communication, branding and visibility of impacts.• Develop a clear exit and sustainability strategy with financing and follow-up arrangements.• Operationalise cross-cutting commitments on gender, tripartism, labour standards, environment and capacity development.
Main lessons learned and good practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LL1: Strong follow-up and impact measurement systems are essential to verify longer-term results and sustainability.• LL2: Integrated support packages work better than stand-alone training.• GP1: Linking social cohesion and psychosocial support with livelihoods is a replicable good practice in fragile contexts.