

# **Mid-term independent evaluation**

of the project

**Boosting Youth Employment (BYE) using an integrated approach  
in the framework of DWCPs in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan  
RER/06/52/NET**

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on behalf of

## **1. Preface and Acknowledgements**

With great pleasure I present for ILO Sub Regional Office Moscow this report on the findings of an evaluation of the Project 'Boosting Youth Employment' (BYE). Of course this report contains proposals which are the reflections of the consultant and his team and do not engage ILO or any other party in further actions.

I visited Azerbaijan (Baku) and Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, Osh and Kizil Kia) in November and December 2008 collecting much information to carry out this study. Finally there was a briefing in ILO Sub regional Office in Moscow discussing preliminary observations and getting additional input from the project managing staff.

I want to say many thanks to Aida Jamangulova (in the Kyrgyz Republic) and Elchin Maharamov (in Azerbaijan) that supported the work for this mission substantially. No doubt the national ILO Offices in Baku and Bishkek and the project staff had prepared the mission excellent and had been never tired giving detailed information. It was pleasure working with Rashad Farajov, Aziz Kirgizbaev and Bolot Orovov. Additionally I have to thank to all the many patient people in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan who offered their time for interviews, filling questionnaires and talking to the evaluation team with a great expertise giving substantial information.

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The results and recommendations of this sector-study shall give an orientation for ILO and the constituents in Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic for further actions to bring this project to a successful end, so the results may be used as a pattern for an integrated approach to tackle the problem of youth unemployment and to develop employment among young people.

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### 3. Executive Summary

The project aims on the development of an Integrated Strategy boosting Youth Employment on the basis of proofed experiences in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic. To achieve this strategy three objectives had been developed:

- (i) Creating an enabling policy environment (within the frame work of Decent Work Country Programs
- (ii) Institutionalize employment and self-employment service packages
- (iii) Establish four pilots (in each country two) for a practical proof of the development of an integrated youth employment strategy.

In a nutshell the state of the affairs may be tabulated like this:

Evaluation summary						
Nr.	Main evaluation areas	Excellent	Good	Medium	Some deficits	Strong deficits
1	Relevance		X			
2	Effectiveness			X		
3	Efficiency				X	
4	Impact		X			
5	Sustainability			X		

To summarize in words we describe the state of the project as follows:

The project has a good image in both countries. Especially the strong performance of the implementation of the gender mainstreaming activities and the good performance of the service packages (MST, SIYB and KAB) made a good contribution for this impact.

The **Relevance of the project is given** there is no need to change the design (log frame of the project), though there are some inconsistencies.

The **state of effectiveness** and **efficiency** may be described as follows:

(i) The achievement of the objectives 1 and 2 is adequate. The likelihood attaining these objectives is high. The project fits with the Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP) and shows an identifiable contribution to the visibility of the DWCPs in both countries.

(ii) There are more problems are within objective 3. The pilots are at an early stage. But to get better informed (research based) action plans and a real proof for an Integrated Youth Employment Strategy. Time limits are here highest risk, because the remaining project duration is short for developing, implementing, and assessing four pilot activities in different environments (sector based and area based <urban – small town – rural>). Another risk is the need to recruit adequate expertise and management capacity in all the pilot areas and within the capacity of the constituents (including social partners). There is a need for training of staff, number of qualified staff and in some cases creating awareness of the problem of project management and monitoring.

(iii) Lastly to mention: the global problem of the financial crisis may induce problems (f. i. the selection of constriction as a pilot sector or the return of young labour migrants from abroad) for the implementation of the sector pilot ‘construction’ in Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic..

(iv) Efficiency aspects:

The real project start up was definitely too late. The Chief Technical Advisor and the National experts started between six and nine months after the official project start. This small team organized efficiently

and effectively the technical and financial resources of the project and the ILO as a whole, but the loss of time is considerably and it is difficult to make up time now.

## **Gender**

Because the project does not have a specific objective on gender equality and gender mainstreaming the gender aspects are considered as a cross cutting issue. Many activities had been undertaken successfully mainstreaming gender aspects by the project among them the following:

- (i) The project is actively and financially involved in the UN gender thematic group.
- (ii) Several studies like the Gender analysis of the Labour Market in the Kyrgyz Republic and relevant promotion materials on gender mainstreaming had been produced and disseminated among the constituents and other relevant stakeholders.
- (iii) Additionally to Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) there had been trainings on the topic of the tool of Gender Audit and on request of the Kyrgyz constituents. The Gender Audit service packages was introduced and implemented although this was not planned at the very beginning of the project. The feedback and assessment of this work is excellent.

This all shows the relevance for the capacity building for the constituents, it indicates the constituents' full satisfaction of the constituents and it confirms the good quality of the service offered by the project.

## **Aspects of Impact and sustainability**

- (i) Of course it is too early to assess the aspects of the projects' impact und sustainability by now. But we may give some arguments on the likelihood of having real impact and long term effects as an outcome of the project. It is out of question that the policy environment for enabling youth employment strategies improved in both countries.
- (ii) There is a real progress in the institutionalization of the service packages (MST, KAB and SIYB), especially in the Kyrgyz Republic. The likelihood of having a real sustainable impact out of the project is quite high. The 'officially' licensed integration of the service packages into the curricula (of TVET schools (MST/KAB) makes a substantial difference and shows a high degree of ownership of the constituents themselves. The most important risk lies in the fact that the establishment and usage of MST creates follow on costs (investment in equipment and training (of teachers, f. i.).
- (iii) Clearly to mention that there is a risk that the project pilots will not deliver the fully proofed basic for the development of Integrated Youth Employment Strategies. Especially resource deficits (human resources and time limits) give reason to have doubts. The start of all the pilots is delayed (or too late considering the project time at disposal) in both countries. Also if the pilots will be successfully implanted in the countries there will be very few time to make a real assessment/evaluation of the (sustainable) effects and outcomes of these pilots.

## **The Main Lessons learnt and conclusions**

- (i) The indicators of such projects should be planned more carefully and for projects being implemented in at least two countries the planning may be done more country specific, so that is clear from the very beginning what will be conducted in which country.
- (ii) The planning of the project resources, especially the human resources/staff is in projects of such complexity a very important success factor. This project is a little understaffed, especially the number of staff's person months deployed in the two countries. During the planning of such a complex project specific analysis of the capacity of the constituents particularly with regard to the human resource potentials should be conducted. This may clear up to which degree a tri-partite approach is a realistic tool to achieve project objectives.
- (iii) There was a massive delay for the real (not formal) start up of such a project. The real implementation in the countries started between six and nine months after the formal beginning of the project. The reason behind was ILO internal procedures and processes of co-ordination and planning. This has to be avoided in future projects.

(iv) Comprehensive projects like the Boosting Youth Employment project which have a short of only four years duration with are always on a high risk. At least project duration of two times three years may be adequate. An evaluation of such a comprehensive project implemented in two countries should be conducted with two international experts and a larger (time) budget.

(v) The establishment of a Steering Committee (or a functional equivalent body) is indispensable for a successfully information and communication strategy with the constituents and main stakeholders.

(vi) According to progress of project implementation and the information made by the interviewed national experts the ILO service packages (MST, KAB and SIYB as well as gender audit) are well designed for the target group of youth and can be adapted to the country specific needs with limited efforts.

The main conclusions:

(i) There is adequate progress in achieving objectives 1 and 2, but there are high risks achieving objective 3, especially because of a lack of time and staffing (esp. in the countries). Consequently more resources in the countries (staff and other) are necessary to achieve the intended very complex objectives timely.

(ii) Implementing project pilot activities and using this for empirical analysis drawing deductions for an integrated youth employment strategy is time consuming. To get clear and proofed results the remaining project duration is may be not long enough. If possible the project may be prolonged by at least one year. Another option may be having a follow on project to assess the outcome of the pilots.

## **The Most important Recommendations**

### **A. General Recommendations**

(i) ILO internal process of co-ordination of planning must be handled before or with a limit of a month after the official start of a project as the maximum period of delay. All input coming later than this period should only be considered by the project management if time at disposal allows.

(ii) The project management should develop concrete milestones to be achieved. For the remaining time there should be quarterly schedule oriented at the most important results

(iii) The time frame seems to be the real challenge. There are time consuming procedures (f. i. approval of curricula or co-ordination with Moscow office of ILO) which are to be arranged in the country for the progress of the project. So the project management in coordination with the main constituents should set priorities!

(iv) Re-Organization of (management) work load

- a) For the remaining time of the project the CTA or adequate functionally equivalent experts from the management team in Moscow should have a substantial higher frequency and duration of stays in the country. In the case of the CTA it may be considered having the CTA in the countries with a substantially higher number of working days (f. i. at least 75 working days in each of the countries).
- b) To improve the quality and the likelihood of sustainability of the necessary institutionalization of the service packages (especially in Azerbaijan) international experts for the development of the MST and the KAB/SIYB should spend a substantial amount of working in the countries, if not be based for several months in the countries.
- c) Each project office should have an additional position of a project assistant.
- d) The implementation of the pilots (especially in the rural areas or in the case of the small town of Kizil Kia) will be done with a much higher success if local experts can be hired to manage the whole process of implementation.

(v) Communication of the project management with the constituents and the stakeholder community must be improved.

- a) More direct interaction on working level is necessary. This includes the CTA as well as all the other experts involved in the project.
- b) Advisory board in Azerbaijan must be established as soon as possible. It should be used to inform the constituents on the structure, the design and the targets of the project to make it clear to all constituents which activities fits to which objective of the project. The advisory board may also be used to increase the participation rate of the social partners in planning and implementing the project.
- c) The project management may use the discussion on the results of this evaluation to involve the social partners more actively in the discussion on the finalization (planning!) of the project.

(vi) Project specific information policy:

- a) Regularly information (email based newsletter) should be handed out to the all stakeholders and to interested experts and the public. All relevant materials produced by the project should obligatory be send to relevant leading staff of constituents and other relevant stakeholders.
- b) Improve the project's media policy! Co-operation with mass media helps also the constituents improving their image. F. i. by organizing together with the constituents press conferences to inform the public on the progress of the project.

B. Country Specific Recommendations

Azerbaijan

(vii) The project management must take care to involve the social partners more active in future activities, like monitoring or further planning the NAP-YE.

(viii) The project has to give substantial more input in the area of MST and SIYB.

(ix) The final planning of the pilots and the project as whole should also give additional governmental constituents much room to be involved more actively in the planning and implementation of the project. This will also assist the creation of ownership among these constituents.

Kyrgyzstan

(x) If the decision will done to develop a NAP-YE for the Kyrgyz Republic it should be started as soon as possible. The SCME and the social partners may also be asked on its concrete input to guarantee the necessary progress of such a NAP-Y, because this activity needs support from the project management as well as from the main constituents in the country.

(xi) The development of support in the area of 'Career Guidance' must be intensified. The planned career guidance kit shall be developed in cooperation with the SCME, especially the Youth Labour Exchange Office. The chapters on Occupational Safety and Health for the service packages shall be developed (for both countries) timely in Moscow ILO office.

(xii) The project management shall consequently go on with the participatory way to involve the social partners and other relevant stakeholder in the planning and development of the pilots. The project should continue the active participation in the VET donors' Round Table and also the successfully implemented bilateral cooperation with Helvetas and GTZ.

(xiii) The project may support the implementation of the study on the State of the Affairs of Social Dialogue in the Kyrgyz Republic and involve the social partners actively.

(xiv) The next Steering Committee meeting shall be conducted as kind of planning workshop.



## 4. Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
BIS	Business Information System
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRRC	Caucasus research Resource Centres (Eurasia Partnership Foundation)
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EPL	Employment Protection Legislation
ETF	European Training Fund
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FSU	Former Soviet Union
FYR	Former Yugoslavian Republic
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Co-Operation)
HHS	Household Survey
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILCS	Integrated Living Condition Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC ILO	International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin
KAB	Know About Your Business
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMI	Labour Market Information System
MCB	Minimum Consumer Budget
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MST	Modular Skills Training
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAP-YE	National Action Plan for Youth Employment

NES	National Employment Service
NSS	National Statistical Service
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PES	Public Employment Service
REC	Regional Employment Centres
SATVET	State Agency for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SCME	State Committee for Migration and Employment
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SME	Small and Medium Sized Business
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
SSEE	Secondary Specialized Education Establishment
ULC	Unit Labour Costs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics
(T)VET	(Technical) Vocational Education and Training

## 5. Background and Project Description

The project is based on the national priorities, identified by the governments, employers and workers during technical discussions leading to the development of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan<sup>1</sup>. Decent employment has emerged as a priority for DWCPs in these countries. Boosting employment is viewed by the tripartite constituents of these countries as a decisive factor for national economic growth and poverty reduction, and boosting youth employment in particular is viewed as one of the priorities where demographic pressures are strong and labour markets are facing increasing cohorts of young entrants in the coming years. In recognizing the importance of youth employment, Azerbaijan has stepped forward as a Lead Country of the Youth Employment Network (YEN).

The project builds on the achievements of the previous Netherlands/ILO project, “Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Women and Men and Other Marginalized Groups in the Caucasus and Central Asia through Skills Development and Entrepreneurial Education” (RER0452MNET). As part of project implementation in the sub-region various ILO tools and flagship methodologies aimed at “enhancing employability and entrepreneurship” have been adapted, tested, applied by the ILO constituents and other strategic partners, thus providing a solid base for implementing an integrated approach to boosting youth employment.

The project is making efforts to expand the outcomes of the previous initiatives and reinforce youth labour market interventions at both supply side (improvement of employable skills and entrepreneurial abilities of young women and men) and demand side (supporting conducive labour market policies and environment for safe job creation), accompanied by better assessments and monitoring of the youth labour market and better dissemination of Youth Labour Market Information (LMI). This could be achieved by designing and applying an integrated approach to boosting youth employment that draws on various ILO tools and methodologies.

The project is oriented to strengthening the capacities of social partners to develop their approaches to youth employment, and use social dialogue and expert advice as effective instruments to address the existing employment-related challenges. The ultimate goal is to combine job creation with decent and safe working conditions so as to simultaneously boost productivity.

The expected outcomes and strategies to achieve them can be briefly summarized as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> This description follows the TOR of this evaluation developed by the ILO Sub Regional Office Moscow (details see annex 2)

Immediate objectives	Outcome indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p><b>Immediate objective 1:</b></p> <p>To create an enabling policy environment for Integrated Youth Employment Strategies (I-YES) within the framework of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP)</p>	<p>1.1 Project implemented within the framework of DWCP</p> <p>1.2 Annual gender disaggregated updates of Youth Labour Market Information initiated by constituents</p> <p>1.3 Joint engendered analysis of Youth LMI, youth employment and I-YES pilot results by constituents</p> <p>1.4 Coherent implementation of National Action Plans for Youth Employment, involving competent national institutions (GO's and NGO's) and the private sector (as Country Advisory Teams)</p> <p>1.5 Constituents formulated youth related recommendations for policy reforms based on ILS, social dialogue and I-YES pilots</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation reports on the DWCP implementation</li> <li>- Progress Reports</li> <li>- Minutes of Project Steering Committees and Workgroups</li> <li>- Media appearances, ILO website and relevant ILO publications</li> <li>- National YE SITAN SWTS updates</li> <li>- I-YES case studies</li> <li>- NAPYE updates</li> <li>- List of youth related policy recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-i- Commitment of constituents to the Decent Work Agenda and full ownership of the Decent Work Country Programme</li> <li>-ii- Political commitment to addressing critical youth employment issues in selected key sectors</li> <li>-iii- Political commitment for addressing unsafe labour practices</li> <li>-iv- Political commitment an enabling environment for youth in small business development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Immediate objective 2:</b></p> <p>To institutionalize employment and self-employment service packages, made accessible to young women and men, also promoting safe work and gender equality</p>	<p>2.1 Critical information for youth in the world of work made available to young women and men</p> <p>2.2 Modular skills training programme institutionalised</p> <p>2.3 Modular entrepreneurship training programmes institutionalised in and out of school</p> <p>2.4 "Health as asset" promoted in all service packages</p> <p>2.5 Web-based quality management system in place</p> <p>2.6 Sustainability models developed for all service packages with gender issues being mainstreamed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toolkit for young women and men</li> <li>- ILO Licenses and certificates for key facilitators and master trainers</li> <li>- ILO printing and redistribution licenses issued to printing houses</li> <li>- MoUs with Strategic Service Providers</li> <li>- Data base on training and performances</li> <li>- Sustainability models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-v- Receptive environment for the promotion of gender mainstreaming throughout the project operations and activities</li> <li>-vi- Overall political environment sufficiently stable and safe for project implementation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Immediate objective 3:</b></p> <p>To develop Integrated Youth Employment Strategies (I-YES) piloted in Capital City and selected smaller cities and rural areas, with a focus on identified key sectors (as per the DWCP and constituents' preferences)</p>	<p>3.1 Relevant project pilots selected and planned with constituents</p> <p>3.2 Relevant local appraisals carried out in selected localities</p> <p>3.3 Value chains and/or options for investment programmes identified (carrying employment potential for young women and men)</p> <p>3.4 Services and service linkages established for job placement</p> <p>3.5 Essential services and service linkages for self-employment established locally (in pilots)</p> <p>3.6 Strategic partnership set up between ILO, its constituents, relevant local institutions (GO's and NGO's) and local businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local assessments (Local SITAN-YE, BDS-RMA, RRA, sector and value chain assessment, business culture assessment)</li> <li>- Local Action Plans and updates for YE</li> <li>- Sector analysis by Local Employment Services</li> <li>- I-YES case studies</li> <li>- tracer studies on school leavers and all identified categories of trainees</li> </ul>	<p><i>And also:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-vii- Full project team, project implementation units and National project Steering Committees timely operational in both countries</li> <li>-viii- National resource mobilisation feasible for service expansion to other regions and sectors</li> </ul>

In order to achieve objective 1 the project is delivering a set of activities (technical advice, training, networking, knowledge sharing) for the national constituents aimed at developing their capacities to initiate and conduct situation analysis on youth employment and labour market updates, perform an engendered analysis of youth employment information and strategies, set up priorities for youth employment policies and develop relevant policy recommendations, formulate and implement National Action Plans for youth employment.

To achieve objective 2 the project is providing technical assistance to the national constituents to develop (or adapt) and apply ILO training and service packages and make them available to young men and women in order to increase their employability, including in the pilot regions. The project is providing support in creating sustainable networks of strategic training providers and key resource persons to facilitate and advise on youth employment.

Objective 3: The project provides necessary inputs and assistance to the constituents in the project pilots in urban, semi-urban and rural areas to conduct local and sector-based analysis for better understanding youth employment and self-employment opportunities, and formulate better informed (research based) action plans. The project's activities in the pilots would ultimately contribute to community/sector based planning process and development of Integrated Youth Employment Strategies for urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

The project capitalizes on the work already done, consolidates the tools and instruments that have been pilot-tested, and proceeds with a larger-scale practical and consolidated implementation of an integrated approach in the two selected countries. The next aim is to reinforce social dialogue and to increase efficiency, visibility, impact and sustainability.

As important spin-off effect, best practices achieved and lessons learnt in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan will be disseminated to the wider sub-region with a view towards creating a knowledge-sharing platform. ILO will complement this activity through other activities in the sub-region funded in the framework of the special allocation for tripartite initiatives on youth employment.

High birth rates and high rates of unemployment are still one of the major challenges for both countries. There is no doubt that Kyrgyz Government and the Governments of Azerbaijan both want to administer the problem of boosting youth employment although in times of a global financial crisis and volatile oil prices the initial situation has changed compared to the year 2006. Both countries have signs of a crisis of public financial system and the inflation rates are increasing substantially. Especially in the Kyrgyz Republic the shortages on energy and public spending are considerably. The growth rate of the GDP decreased in both countries. The international environment in the Caucasus Region is unstable since summer 2008 and may cause a breakdown of private and public investment in Azerbaijan.

Anyway the fact that the Government of Azerbaijan is working on finalizing the NAP-YE and the initiative of the Kyrgyz SCME attest that the strict political will to develop such a policy is more than ever existing.

Consequently the specific input of ILO to develop an integrated approach to boost youth employment is still more than welcomed. But the conditions for the project implementation are changing. This should be monitored in details and its impact assessed through the whole remaining project period.

## **6. Purpose of Evaluation**

According to the TOR (see annex 2) the purpose of the evaluation is to:

- a) Determine if the project is moving towards the achievement of its stated outcomes and explain why/why not;
- b) Provide recommendations on how to improve project performance and further implementation;
- c) Where necessary, identify the possible need to refine strategy.

The evaluation covers the project as a whole and in both target countries, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, to serve the following - external and internal - clients' groups:

- Ultimate beneficiaries of the project – young men and women at the age of 15 to 29;
- ILO tripartite constituents and national project partners, including youth groups;
- The Donor;
- ILO management and technical specialists (in the SRO/Moscow and the Headquarters);
- Project staff.

In a nutshell the evaluation may assess the state of the affairs of the project in order to identify the most important actions to achieve the objectives during the remaining project duration.

## **7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions**

The methodology as well as the main questions for this evaluation had been developed already within the TOR for this mission (details see annex 2)

### **7.1 Evaluation Methodology**

The following methods had been conducted in preparation and during the mission:

#### **7.1.1. Document Review:**

The evaluator reviewed project background materials (see also annex 1) before conducting any interviews or trips to the region:

- Decent Work Country Programmes
- Country Briefs, National Policy Documents
- Project Document
- Logical Framework
- Work plans
- TORs

- Progress reports
- Surveys, studies, analytical papers produced
- Reports on specific activities
- Training tools and service packages used and/or produced
- Publications and promo materials
- Mission reports

### **7.1.2 Team Planning Meeting:**

The evaluator has had a briefing with the ILO representatives and project team in Moscow. The objective of the meeting was to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, the available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report.

### **7.1.3 Individual Interviews and/or Group Interviews<sup>2</sup>:**

Individual or group interviews had been conducted with the following:

- a. Project Staff, ILO National Coordinators in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, and other relevant ILO staff
- b. Representatives from the following groups:
  - Youth Employment Programme, ILO Headquarters (phone interviews)
  - National Project Steering Committees members (Kyrgyzstan) and constituents (Azerbaijan)
  - Government staff who have worked with the project
  - Employer groups, unions, NGO's, individual experts who have received training or otherwise worked with the project
  - Community groups representatives who have received training
  - UNDP, other UN agencies
  - Other experts

### **7.1.4 Field Visits:**

The evaluator has had the opportunity to visit Kizil Kia a small town in the southern part of the Kyrgyz Republic. This place will be the area of conducting one of the pilot activities to develop patterns of an integrated youth employment strategy.

### **7.1.5 Debrief in the Field:**

Finally the evaluator presented preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the constituents and the ILO field staff in Moscow (details see annex 4)

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<sup>2</sup> A questionnaire for all interview partners and some other relevant stakeholders was produced by the evaluator. This should reflect again the information transferred by the interviews. Unfortunately the response rate was not as expected (only 9 in KYR and only 2 in AZE, out of around 30 in each country). So these results could not be used for this evaluation.

## **7.2 Evaluation Questions**

The evaluator developed a list of questions based on the TOR and OECD standards for evaluations. The following questions had been used as guidelines for the interviews:

### **7.2.1 Relevance**

Relevance means the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. In evaluating the relevance of a program or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. To what extent are the objectives of the program still valid?
2. Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
3. Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
4. Appropriateness of the project design: Is the design of the project appropriate in relation to the ILO's strategic and national policy frameworks? Is intervention logic coherent and realistic to achieve the planned outcomes? Are the activities supporting objectives (strategies)? Are indicators useful to measure progress?

### **7.2.2 Effectiveness**

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of a program or a project, it is useful to consider the following Questions:

1. To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
3. Extent of progress to date: What progress has the project made towards achieving its immediate objectives as per the relevant outcome indicators? To what extent is the project contributing to:
  - a) Implementation of the Decent Work Country Program  
How the project supports Country Programs (strategic policy frameworks)? Is there a fit between the project design and the direct beneficiaries' needs? How well does it complement other ILO projects in the countries and/or other donors' activities?
  - b) Mainstreaming tripartism and social dialogue
  - c) Mainstreaming gender approach with a special focus on equal access of young women and men to employment opportunities, skills and entrepreneurial training
  - d) Partnerships and interagency cooperation with the UN family.
4. Has there been any additional demand for youth employment services created by the project? If so, would it be feasible to meet such demand within the time frame of the project? How would that influence/strengthen the outcomes?
5. What are the main lessons learned, good practices, innovations? To what extent are best practices documented or should be documented better?

### **7.2.3 Efficiency**

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve



the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a program or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. Were activities cost-efficient?<sup>3</sup> Was the program or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
2. Were objectives achieved on time?
3. Is the project implemented as planned? If not, why?
4. Are there any areas where difficulties are being experienced? What are the reasons? Are there any alternative strategies which would be more effective?
5. Are the resources used in an efficient manner?

#### **7.2.4 Impact**

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

When evaluating the impact of a program or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. What has happened as a result of the program or project?
2. What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
3. How have stakeholders been involved in the implementation? Are constituents satisfied with the quality of tools, technical advice, training and other activities, delivered by the project? Have there been any resulting changes in constituents' capacities to create an enabling policy environment for youth employment? Have there been changes in constituents' capacities to institutionalize employment and self-employment service packages?
4. Are the project pilots likely to produce the intended results in delivering effective and Integrated Youth Employment Strategies?
5. How many young men and women benefitted from the project, e.g., have been trained, employed, improved skills, etc.? (based on gender disaggregated statistics, if available, and/or anecdotal information)<sup>4</sup>
6. How many people have been affected (directly? Indirectly)?

#### **7.2.5 Sustainability**

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability of a program or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

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<sup>3</sup> Financial aspects had not been included in the TOR of this mission

<sup>4</sup> Regarding question 5 and 6 of this area: Both Project Offices had been responsible producing and sending such a list, but the evaluator did not get up to yet (22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2008). Of course this project is more about the development of the qualitative concept of a (pilot based) Integrated Youth Employment Strategy (including an enabling policy environment and the institutionalization of the employment and self employment service packages).

1. To what extent did the benefits of a program or project continue after donor funding ceased?
2. What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the program or project?
3. What is the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes? Are the national partners able to continue with the project after its completion (capacity of people and institutions, laws, policies)? What more should be done to improve sustainability?

Of course in a midterm review it is too early to give final comments on sustainability, but reasonable assumptions on sustainability will be presented.

### **7.2.6 Project Management**

The project management is one of the most important factors of success of a project development. The 'questions of examination' below had been used investigating this dimension:

1. Is it 'Goal oriented' (esp. constituents are able to analyze and use LM data, sustainable service provision, tripartite formulation and steering of Youth Employment Strategies)?
2. Are the management arrangements effective?
3. Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO and partners?
4. Functionality of National Project Steering Committees/NPSC
5. Gender balance in management structure, working groups, SC
6. Networking
7. Knowledge sharing
8. Is staffing adequate and followed by adequate financial means?

### **7.2.7. Assumptions and Risks**

1. Which assumptions had been not correct?
2. Are there any relevant new risks?
3. Specific risk management?

### **7.2.8 Cross Cutting issue 1: gender component of the project**

According to the TOR (see annex 2) the following questions had been relevant:

1. Does the project have a specific objective on gender equality and gender mainstreaming?  
Describe briefly the project's gender component if any.
2. Does the project have a special gender allocation in terms of financial resources? In which purposes this allocation was mainly used for?
3. What activities have so far been undertaken to mainstreaming gender by the project?
4. Have specific studies and analyses of gender issues, in relation to the subject, been used?
5. Has the project obtained technical advice on gender equality issues (e.g. from local gender experts, ILO gender specialists, ILO Bureau for Gender Equality or other)?
6. Has the project adapted or used available tools on gender equality?
7. Have women-specific or men-specific activities been designed and implemented to enable women and men to participate in and benefit equally from the project?

8. How does the project's monitoring and evaluation system measure explicitly any differential effects on women and men, girls and boys?
9. Has the project collected relevant data disaggregated by sex?
10. Describe briefly how the project has established mechanisms for knowledge sharing and inter-linkages with other projects on activities related to gender equality.

### **7.2.9 Cross cutting issue 2: Social dialogue component of the project**

According to the TOR (see annex 2) the following questions had been relevant:

1. Have the tripartite constituents been consulted on policy and technical matters relating to the execution of the project and in order to ensure coordination with other national efforts?
2. Are there arrangements in place to ensure an equal dialogue on project related matters among the government, workers' and employers' organizations?
3. Are workers' and employers' representatives provided with an opportunity to express their views and share perspectives in order to influence dialogue on project-related issues/ matters?
4. Have the tripartite constituents been receiving regular updates on project progress (i.e. progress reports, studies, research reports)?
5. Have the constituents been involved in project activities?
6. Has the project used their advice and recommendations to fine tune its plans of action and approach? Have the priorities of the project partners been taken into consideration?
7. Have activities been undertaken to strengthen the constituents' capacity to handle project related issues after the project completion?
8. Does the project's monitoring system measure constituents' capacity building outcomes of the project's activities?

## **8. Project Status**

The project has conducted a big number of activities. The monitoring of these activities are carefully documented in project reports like 'Key outputs of the project, July 2006-August 2008 (surveys, studies, reports, tools, people trained)'. Out of this document (see annex 3) one may see the complexity and manifoldness of the project BYE. The focus of this evaluation was more oriented on the outcome of the project. Of course there is connection between output and outcome. This was reflected continuously during the mission, but for limited resources on time and man power it was not possible to follow the track of all the conducted activities of the project.

## **9. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following chapter is of course the most important one. All the relevant observations made during the mission are discussed or worked up hereinafter. There will be country specific observations presented

because the development of the project was different in the two countries. When making sense the observations will be given in one chapter only.

## **9.1. General Observations**

We will start with some observations related to the general satisfaction with the project and the relevance of the project design.

### **9. 1.1 Constituents' general satisfaction with the project.**

The great majority of constituents, project partners and other relevant stakeholders are satisfied with the project performance. The observation is that those project constituents who are closely and more actively involved are more satisfied with the project. In Azerbaijan, f. i. the Ministry of Youth is more than satisfied and full of optimism achieving all objectives of the project fully. Others, f. i. the Ministry of Labour and the Confederation of Employers are not fully satisfied and miss mainly information and communication, but also options to join the activities more fully. There is a third group of constituents, f. i. the Trade Unions, which are satisfied with the co-operation with ILO, but have not enough information or experience in concrete co-operation. This is true for both countries, Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In the Kyrgyz Republic with the exception of the State Committee of Migration and Employment (SCME) all relevant constituents and stakeholders are very happy with output of the project. In case of the SCME the communication structure is the main background and the situation may quickly be eased by simple measures (details see 9.4 below)

The comprehensive approach of this project using experts from ILO Moscow, from Geneva, from Turin as well as from Ukraine and Tajikistan is warmly welcomed by the constituents and other stakeholders benefitting from the project's activities.

In sum: the project has a good image and the important constituents and stakeholders realize and emphasize the benefits of the project for them and the countries.

### **9. 1.2 Relevance of the project design**

1. The objectives are still valid. There is no reason to change it.

Objective 3 has two different versions in circulation: The original version ('To develop Integrated Youth Employment Strategies (I-YES) piloted in capital City and selected smaller cities and rural areas, with a focus on identified key sectors (as per the DWCP and constituents preferences') was used in the basic project document (see ILO 2006). It was somehow adapted in project reports and the TOR for this evaluation to 'Constituents with enhanced abilities to formulate policy reforms and action plans for well targeted, effective and Integrated Youth Employment Strategies' (see ILO 2008a). The reason why this happened was finally not to identify during the mission. Although the CTA sees the latest version as more advanced for this evaluation was the original version of the objective the orientation. The **development** of integrated youth employment strategies seems to be most important aspect of the project.

2. The intervention logic and its relation to the ILO's strategic and national policy framework was assessed in the framework of the Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP) as a cross cutting evaluation issue (see part 9.2.3 and 9.3.3, below)
3. Coherence of intervention logic is given. Making interventions in three dimensions (<i> build up an environment in which the national actors have improved opportunities to develop adequate (youth employment) policies, <ii> institutionalize the necessary service offers for the young generation to simplify and ease the access to the labour market and finally <iii> developing close co-operation with the constituents pilot tested integrated strategies) is a coherent approach. The causality between project interventions and the objectives is given.
4. But the project is very voluminous and needs a lot of resource input. Consequently the necessary connection between given potentials or resources (time frame, staffs, contribution of constituents, financial resources , availability of national and international experts, etc.) and the opportunities achieving the objectives of the project seems not fully realistic.  
This project is being implemented in two countries the planning may be done more country specific, so that is clear from the very beginning what will be conducted in which country. It may also be possible to develop a specific burden sharing between the two countries. Achieving the objectives means not necessarily conducting all activities in both countries. Such a planning brings the expectations of the constituents on a realistic level and helps to manage the project more efficiently.
5. In general the activities and outputs of the program are consistent with the objectives of the project. The management of the project may for the remaining time have a stricter check up, if all conducted activities are in a direct connection to the project's objectives or better checking if there is a strict connection between all activities implemented and its contribution achieving the project's objectives.
6. The indicators are mainly useful. From a logical point of view some of them did not show a direct relation to the relevant objective. For instance if the implementation of the project should be done in the framework of the Decent Work Country Programs. Assumed this leads to the creation of an enabling policy environment for Integrated Youth Employment Strategies it can only be assessed if the impact of the DWCPs in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan is assessed. In a nut shell this indicator is not directly connected to the objective of this project, but you need to take an indirect route (via DWCP evaluations or assessments) to get the connection.  
Further: several indicators are not clearly indicated and formulated. They raise in itself questions or should be measured itself (f. i. what is coherent? <indicator 1.4>; what is critical <indicator 2.1> or what is a 'strategic partnership' <indicator 3.6>). Some are part of a circular argumentation (f. i. indicators 2.2 and 2.3 use the term 'institutionalized'; but the objective itself is to institutionalize service packages)
7. Relating the assumptions it has been learned that the commitments (on Decent Work Country Programs, addressing youth employment and unsafe labour, and the environment for youth in small business) as well as the receptive environment for gender mainstreaming and the national resource mobilization feasible for service expansion to other regions are still valid. The overall political environment was still sufficiently safe and stable. But may chance with the increasing impact of the

global financial crisis. In Azerbaijan this may have consequences on the selection of the sector for the pilot. The construction sector shows serious signs of stagnation which may lead to rethink about the orientation and direction of the pilot switching from big companies to small and medium sized companies. Especially in the Kyrgyz Republic the outcome of this crisis shall be energy shortages and reduction of adequate supply of affordable food. Additionally a massive increase of return of labour migrants from Russia and Kazakhstan may create a new challenge for youth employment. The CTA and the project management team are aware of this development and should react adequately if necessary.

But the relevance of the project is given. It fits with the policy priorities of the two countries and is compatible with the development plans of the countries.

## **9.2 Specific Observations in Azerbaijan**

The project development was different in the two countries. So I introduce from each country specific observations. We start with Azerbaijan, because this was the first country visited.

### **9.2.1 Effectiveness and efficiency of the project in Azerbaijan**

#### **General Observations on effectiveness and efficiency of the project in Azerbaijan**

1. Very few of the Constituents/stakeholders are able giving a clear assessment of the effectiveness or the state of the affairs of the project. This is to be seen in the context of lack of information and communication (see part project management below). The main project counterpart, the Ministry of Sport and Youth, has a very positive perception of the project: 'the project is implemented timely and the objectives will be achieved fully'.
2. The country specific situation that the Ministry of Youth (and not the Ministry of Labour) is the main constituent in implementing this project should have given reason having a more intensive communication with all relevant stakeholders. Unfortunately information and communication have been assessed by the majority of the interviewed persons as the project's area with a big deficit.
3. The main stakeholders/interviewed experts expects that after a phase of constructive conceptualization and preparation, the remaining project duration should now be used having a higher emphasis on the 'practice' and involve more direct the ultimate beneficiaries. Especially in the rural areas.

The project lost a lot of time before making the real start up in the country. Additionally to the ILO internally caused reasons the intra-governmental debate which Ministry may be the main constituent for the development of a National Action Plan for Youth Employment (NAP-YE) ending with the decision of the Government of Azerbaijan having the Ministry of Youth as responsible ministry for the NAP-YE delayed the start up of the project.

So now there is a high pressure creating practical (means tangible) results convincing all the constituents on the success of the comprehensive project approach.

## **Specific observations on effectiveness and efficiency related to the project objectives in Azerbaijan:**

The ultimate goal of the project is described as 'to combine job creation with decent and safe working conditions so as to simultaneously boost productivity' (see TOR annex 2). The focus of the evaluation was the concrete outcome of the project related to the so called 'immediate objectives'.

### **Objective 1: "To create an enabling policy environment for I-YES within the framework of DWCP"**

#### 1. Indicator 1.1

Project implemented within the DWCP  
see below (c. Cross Cutting Issues, part 1)

#### 2. Indicator 1.2.

Annual Gender disaggregated updates for Youth Labour Market Information initiated by the constituents

Up to yet the constituents did not offer such information. Due to the CTA there is a commitment that the Ministry of Youth should produce it in co-operation with the National Statistic Administration. The State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan produces an annual publication on general statistics on 'Women and Men in Azerbaijan' in which specific data on youth situation (labour market/employment) are to some extent included (details see Statistic Azerbaijan 2008).

#### 3. Indicator 1.3

Joint engendered analysis of Youth LMI. Youth employment and I-YES pilot results by constituents  
No specific results up to yet in Azerbaijan

#### 4. Indicator 1.4

Coherent implementation of National Action Plan for Youth Employment, involving competent national institutions (GO's and NGO's) and the private sector (as Country Advisory Teams).

There is an NAP-YE in Azerbaijan drafted with the Leadership of the Ministry of Youth, which was approved by the President as lead ministry for this action plan. A real country advisory team was not established. The Ministry of Youth is just asking formally within the relevant line-ministries in the Government for comments and expects the official approval of the NAP-YE by the Government in the first quarter 2009. Other stakeholders like Employers' Associations or Trade Unions had not been actively involved in the preparation of the draft.

The coherent implementation of the NAP-YE may then follow in 2009 and the next years

#### 5. Indicator 1.5 Constituents formulated youth related recommendations for policy reforms based on ILS, social dialogue and I-YES pilots

Constituents from both countries were provided with training (twice in Turin) to develop their capacity for the formulation of youth employment policy recommendations.

But up to yet (7<sup>th</sup> of December 2008) no concrete results in formulation of youth related recommendations. .

There is a risk to mention: This indicator is deeply connected with progress within the process of objective 3 (see below)

In sum: The NAP-YE is drafted and the constituents expect having it officially approved up to end of the first quarter 2009. But the participation rate of the social partners was not really given. The project management must take care to involve the social partners more active in future activities, like monitoring or adapting (resp. formulating recommendations for youth employment policy reforms) the NAP-YE.

**Objective 2: To institutionalize employment and self employment service packages, made accessible to young women and men, also promoting safe work and gender equality.**

1. Indicator 2.1

Critical information for youth in the world of work made available to young women and men.

Initiated by the University of Baku the project supports the recently established Career Centre. The project will assist further development of this centre which should offer relevant information for university graduates. Information Booklets (toolkits for young women and men) may complete the efforts to fulfil this indicator.

2. Indicator 2.2

Modular Skills Training programme institutionalised

The institutionalisation will be achieved with three elements:

- a. Number of licensed developers of modular skills packages and/or MST methodologists.  
There are two candidates (potential master trainers) in Azerbaijan.
- b. The agreed usage of official training materials for students.
- c. Officially authorised providers

ILO offered the Ministry of Labour (MoL) 26 modules.<sup>5</sup> The Ministry has not finally decided to which degree these modules will be used in practice. In Baku Training Centre some MST are used as a pilot, but the modules are not officially approved and it is not possible starting in other VET schools with the usage of MSTs. It is also difficult to determine the responsibilities in the field of MST between the MoL and the MoE. That's why a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ILO and the Ministry of Education on the status of MST development and approval (regulate the usage of MST materials in all aspects) in Azerbaijan is planned to be signed.

To sum up: The project has to give substantial more input in the area of MST. That's why the idea having international expertise in the form of long term expert in the country is in discussion. Such an additional input may organize the necessary progress to institutionalize this service package timely.

3. Indicator 2.3

Modular entrepreneurship training programmes institutionalized in and out of school

The institutionalisation will be achieved with three elements:

- (1) Number of licensed master trainer.

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<sup>5</sup> There are newly developed MST packages produced within the project, responding to the prioritized professions with high potential to YE (4 in Kyrgyzstan and 3 in Azerbaijan)



(2)The agreed usage of official training materials for students

(3)Officially authorised providers

Out of around 30 trained persons there are two or three candidates (potential master trainers) in Azerbaijan. There is a risk that they may fail to achieve the master trainer status, because both are employed in jobs which do not allow using of and at least one of them is going to leave the country. There is no agreed official usage of KAB or SIYB. In sum: In Azerbaijan the project has to give substantial more input in the area of SIYB. That's why it is also planned having an experienced expert as a long term expert for several person months in the country to get the necessary progress organised timely.

#### 4. Indicator 2.4

Health as asset in all service packages.

It is planned to integrate an Occupational Safety and Health chapter in each Service package. These chapters are prepared in Moscow and almost finished and it looks like it will be timely ready integrating it in the relevant booklets and other offers to disseminate relevant information.

#### 5. Indicator 2.5:

Web based quality management system in place.

Quality management in this context means a data base with web-application offering the trainers, facilitators and master trainers of the service packages (especially SIYB) the opportunity to place their experiences and training materials on a web based platform. This platform can also be used to have an active exchange of experience and expertise with other trainers, facilitators and master trainers. Additionally this system may be a platform where clients, constituents and other stakeholders have more easy access to recruit the experts they need for their national, regional or local applications of the service packages. ILO may use this information to improve and update the service packages on the basis of real practice.

The system is commissioned by ILO SRO Moscow. The system will be maintained by the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC ILO).

It is planned and agreed using the platform of ITC-ILO Turin (Russian and English language) as the basic instrument for web based interactive communication between the (master) trainers/facilitators of the service packages (KAB/SIYB) to improve and develop further the quantity and quality of these specific ILO services on the long run. The software is developed in the framework of the project and may give a substantial and sustainable base for (master) trainers and facilitators to improve their expertise. If timely established and maintained by the ITC-ILO Turin this will be another step in the process of institutionalization of employment and self employment service packages.

For time matters the project management should decide how many resources shall be put in this area of the project, which is linked indirectly with the project's main objectives.

## 6. Indicator 2.6

Sustainability models developed for all service packages with gender issues being mainstreamed.

It may be better to understand if the used term is 'sustainable' and not sustainability. Anyway, for systematic reasons it would be better using no terms for an indicator which itself should be measured with an indicator.

These kinds of sustainable models must be developed in the remaining duration of the project. For time matters the project management again should decide how many resources shall be put in this area of the project, which is linked indirectly with the project's main objectives.

In sum: There is a progress in the project implementation and the objective may be achieved if substantial resources (mainly man power) will be allocated in a way that it can be used permanently in the country and without too many time consuming back coupling with headquarters. There are opportunities to involve other stakeholders like the Azerbaijan Micro Finance Association to institutionalize the service packages. The clients of this established Association may have the market potential needed by the future trainer and master trainer. Of course the project management may decide to which extent the all planned activities have to be conducted achieving the objective.

### **Objective 3: To develop Integrated Youth Employment Strategies (I-YES) piloted in capital City and selected smaller cities and rural areas with a focus on identified key sectors (as per the DWCP and constituents' preferences)**

#### 1. Indicator 1:

Relevant Project Pilots selected and planned with constituents.

The pilots had been selected. The planning has been developed further in details, but needs more input to get the real start up. The participation of the constituents was up to yet negligible and the Confederation of the Employers mentioned this as a deficit of the project.

#### 2. Indicator 2:

Relevant local appraisals carried out in selected localities.

There are studies, reports and appraisals produced in the framework of the project. This input should now be carried out and used for the real implementation of the project pilots. And again: an active involvement of the social partners was not really given.

#### 3. Indicator 3:

Value chains and/or options for investment programmes identified (carrying employment potentials for young women and men)

For lack of time there was no opportunity for the evaluator to travel to the rural areas and check the state of the affairs of the pilot there. It seems the state of the affairs is quite well developed for the pilot value chain entrepreneur and tourism. In case of the 'urban based' pilot in the construction sector there is some more detailed input to give. Related to the latest development (development of

oil prices and the financial crisis) it also has to be figured out if the focus here will be on SMEs acting as subcontractors in bigger projects. No real implementation activities had been conducted. It is sincerely useful recruiting national experts for the management of the implementation of the project pilots.

And this all has to be done during the very limited timeframe of the project.

4. Indicator 4:

Service and service linkages established for job placement.

For Azerbaijan this has to be done in the remaining project time especially within the implementation of the pilot activities.

5. Indicator 5:

Essential linkages for services and service linkages for self-employment established locally (in pilots).

For Azerbaijan this has to be done in the remaining project time.

6. Indicator 6:

Strategic partnership set up between ILO, its constituents, relevant local institutions (GOs and NGOs) and local business.

The project wants to develop these partnerships on local level first and then to transfer it to the national level. For Azerbaijan this has to be done in the remaining project time.

In sum: Here the project progress is on that state that there is a real risk achieving the objective 3. This is not only a matter of time. To bring the two pilots to a state of development that allows a kind of empirical assessment in order to extracting proofed patterns for the development of an Integrated Strategy for Youth Employment seems hard to believe. But additionally there is a need for a massive increase of human resource input, especially management support for the pilots on local level. These experts need regional and sector expertise. And it may be not easy to recruit experienced staff.

### **9.2.2 Aspects of Impact and sustainability in Azerbaijan**

These aspects will be discussed for the project as a whole in a special chapter (see 9.5 below)

### **9.2.3 Cross Cutting issues in Azerbaijan**

Additionally to mention the project developed a real comprehensive approach in which aspects employment, self employment, gender mainstreaming, tri-partism, and last not least aspects of occupational safety and health (OSH) are integrated. Four cross cutting issues had been identified:

- Integration in the Decent Work Country Program
- Gender (mainstreaming) aspects
- Social Dialogue

- Networking

### **9.2.3.1 Decent Work Country Program in Azerbaijan**

The project itself fits to the structure of the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) of Azerbaijan very well (details see DWCP AZE 2006-09). There are no DWCP evaluations of Azerbaijan available, but the feedback of interviewees' shows evidence that the BYE project is one of the major players in the framework of the DWCP.<sup>6</sup>

For the constituents/stakeholders it is often not clear to which project which ILO activity belongs. This is certainly a good thing for the trade mark 'ILO', but makes a project evaluation not easier and it may give 'opportunities to put too much emphasize in relevant framework activities, like the 'YEN initiative' or services like 'Gender Audit'.

### **9.2.3.2 Gender aspects in Azerbaijan**

To simplify the evaluation the aspects on gender equality and gender mainstreaming as an important cross cutting issue is analysed in one chapter (see 9.5, below).

### **9.2.3.3. Social dialogue in Azerbaijan**

1. Both social partners – Employers' Associations as well as Trade Unions - are not well on notice of the project and are not aware of details on the structure (objectives, indicators, activities, etc.). The involvement in the preparation, the development and implementation of the project was insufficient. Confederation of Employers is not satisfied with this and wants to play a more active role. Just recently they presented three proposals for possible co-operation to the CTA and are waiting for a feed back on that. The Unions did not play an active role up to yet. But they are ready for co-operation if any request or idea will be presented.

Social dialogue or tri-partism in general was assessed from both social partners as process which should be improved and increased. Employers as well as Trade Unions see themselves not accepted as fully partner in the process of tri-partism in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

### **9.2.3.4 Networking within the UN Family, including knowledge sharing with other donors in Azerbaijan**

1. The ILO and the project are quite good involved in the mutual planning and implementation of the projects/programs the UN family is developing and conducting in Azerbaijan. This planning system is not developed with a breakdown on individual project level, so the specific input of the project was not to be identified by the interviewed responsible manger (from UNPFA).
2. There is no systematic or specific co-operation with other donors inside the country.
3. On international level there is a yearly exchange of experiences with comparable projects supported by the Government of the Netherlands.

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<sup>6</sup> The first of the outcome indicators (Project implemented within the framework of DWCP) may be assessed within a DWCP evaluation if this kind of work will be carried out during the project duration.

## **9.3 Specific Observations in Kyrgyzstan**

As mentioned above the project development was different in the two countries. The following describes the observations made in the Kyrgyz Republic.

### **9.3.1 Effectiveness, efficiency of the project in Kyrgyzstan**

We start again with most important part of the evaluation, the assessment of effectiveness and the efficiency of the project implementation.

#### **General Observations on project effectiveness and efficiency in Kyrgyzstan**

1. Comparable to Azerbaijan only few of the constituents/stakeholders are able giving a clear assessment of the effectiveness or the state of the affairs of the project. This is to be seen in the context of lack of information and communication (see part project management below).  
The Kyrgyz Republic has a specific situation relevant to the project implementation: The functional responsibilities related to the project activities and objectives are divided among three main governmental administrations: The State Committee of Migration and Employment (SCME) is responsible for labour market and employment policy. So the most important outcome – the integrated youth employment strategy – is closely connected to the policy approach of the State Committee, which is represented in the Governmental Cabinet. The State Agency for Technical Education and Training (SATVET) is responsible for all aspects of vocational education and belongs to the administration of the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) is responsible for the Occupational Safety and Labour Legislation in the country and also an important partner in the implementation of the Kyrgyz Decent Work Country Program (DWCP). Additionally to some extent the Ministry of Education is a partner for all aspects of curricula in (non TVET) schools. This makes project management somehow complicate (details see below part 9.4).
2. With exception of the SCME and to some extent the Confederation of Employers all the constituents are satisfied with projects progress. The SCME as well as the Confederation perceived some information and communication deficits and want to see more concrete action in the implementation of the pilots. Also long lasting ILO internal procedures getting decisions on project activities had been mentioned as weaknesses by some stakeholders interviewed.

#### **Specific observations on effectiveness and efficiency in the Kyrgyz Republic related to the project objectives:**

Related to the specific objective the following observation shall be mentioned:

#### **Objective 1: “To create an enabling policy environment for I- YES within the framework of DWCP**

##### **1. Indicator 1.1**

Project implemented within the DWCP see below  
(details see 9.3.3.1; below)

##### **2. Indicator 1.2.**

Annual Gender disaggregated updates for Youth Labour Market Information initiated by the

constituents.

Comparable like in Azerbaijan the project partners did not offer such information up to yet. But there is yearly updated information on 'Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic', in which one may find basic aspects of the labour market and employment in the country.

In sum: The National Statistic Authorities of both countries produces an annual publication on general statistics on 'Women and Men' in which specific data on youth situation (labour market/employment) are to some extent included.

### 3. Indicator 1.3

Joint engendered analysis of Youth LM, youth employment and I-YES pilot results by constituents.

Several studies have been successfully carried out. Among them a study of the situation of youth in the pilot region Kizil Kia is done with close cooperation of the Confederation of the Employers' Association. But the results of the study are not assessed and analysed. The textile sector study is just ongoing and should be finished in January 2009. Some of these studies have to be analysed, assessed, and finalized in the near future if used as a basic input for an integrated approach to the development of the pilots.

### 4. Indicator 1.4

Coherent implementation of National Action Plan for Youth Employment, involving competent national institutions (GO's and NGO's) and the private sector (as Country Advisory Teams).

In Kyrgyzstan youth employment issues are included in the National Employment Program, which was developed with support of former ILO projects. Up to yet there is no National Action Plan for Youth Employment (NAP-YE). The SCME asked for support for the development of such an action plan. This may be developed bottom up (f. i. within the pilot activity in Kizil Kia), but the constituent asked for a parallel development of such an action plan on national level. The development and implementation of the NAP-YE in the Kyrgyz Republic is an additional up to yet not really planned activity. If the decision will done to develop such a NAP-YE for the Kyrgyz Republic it should be started as soon as possible. This is again a matter of time and resources. A successfully implementation of a NAP-YE is hardly to be done in a 12 to 15 months period (the remaining project time).

### 5. Indicator 1.5

Constituents formulated youth related recommendations for policy reforms based on ILS, social dialogue and I-YES pilots

Constituents from both countries were provided with training (twice in Turin) to develop their capacity for the formulation of youth employment policy recommendations.

There had been no concrete results achieved (state: 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2008). But in December 2008 there will be a public hearing organised by (the administration of) the Kyrgyz Parliament in which all relevant stakeholders of Labour Market and Employment Policy are invited to give recommendations on the future development of the Youth Employment /resp. reducing youth unemployment). The

project is actively involved in the preparation and organisation of this public hearing and may use the recommendations for the development of a (National) Action Plan of Youth Employment in the Kyrgyz Republic.

To sum up: The progress of the project achieving objective 1 is good in the Kyrgyz Republic. The relevant stakeholders of labour market and employment policy in Kyrgyzstan and the closer constituents of ILO in the country are active to develop the necessary policy environment for an Integrated Youth Employment Strategy.

Anyway there is a risk to mention: This indicator is deeply connected with progress within the process of objective 3. Concrete the successfully development and implementation of the pilot activities is too a very important success factor for this objective. (See below)

**Objective 2: To institutionalize employment and self employment service packages, made accessible to young women and men, also promoting safe work and gender equality.**

1. Indicator 2.1

Critical information for youth in the world of work made available to young women and men. Initiated.

There are no concrete results up to yet. At least is planned to develop a support in the area of 'Career Guidance': A career guidance kit shall be developed in cooperation with the SCME, especially the Youth Labour Exchange Office. Additionally a training manual and a leaflet 'Jobs in demand' shall be produced with the SCME to be distributed in a printed version as well as an offer on websites (pdf download from the website of the SCME and may be other private or public websites).

2. Indicator 2.2

Modular Skills Training programme institutionalised

The institutionalisation will be achieved with three elements:

(1) Number of licensed master trainer.

There are two candidates (potential master trainers) in Kyrgyzstan.

(2) The agreed usage of official training materials for students

(3) Officially authorised providers

There are a certain number of national experts trained and the probability is estimated high that at least two out of them will get an official ILO certificate (facilitator) during the first quarter 2009. In Kyrgyzstan out of 25 MSTs offered by ILO/ the project 15 are already officially standardized, approved and recommended by the SATVET to the Vocational Schools in the TVET system. According to the SATVET the Ministry of Education is responsible for licensing of the general educational activities in the vocational schools. But for the specific vocational regulations the SATVET is the only responsible governmental body. This would make it much easier to have the necessary institutionalization (MST as part of the official curricula) in time.

Further a Modular Centre in co-operation with the SATVET is in preparation. The centre will have the function of a developing, training and communication centre for teachers and other facilitators using MST in the Kyrgyz Republic. This all shows that the institutionalization in this area of the project is quite well developed in this subarea of the project.

During the mission we figured out that other donors like Helvetas (a Swiss NGO) or UNDP are also actively using these modules. No doubt the project is on the right track and will make the necessary progress within the remaining project time. This may be supported as well as in Azerbaijan by support from the ILO centre in Ukraine and may also be formalized with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ILO and the Ministry of Education on the status of MST in general.

### 3. Indicator 2.3

Modular entrepreneurship training programmes institutionalized in and out of school

The institutionalisation will be achieved with three elements:

- (1) Number of licensed master trainer
- (2) The agreed usage of official training materials for students
- (3) Officially authorised providers

Luckily the project can build up its activities on a several years long tradition of using Know About Your Business (KAB). So the product was in place since 2003 and adopted in 2004 for a limited number of schools. The project supported the up-dating process on methods and materials (for students and teachers) and helped to increase the number of schools using the KAB actively. There was offered training for national facilitators and training of trainers. The project aims at preparing KAB Key facilitators in the system of SATVET so they may be able to independently replicate the number of KAB teachers, expanding KAB into all TVET schools and making it sustainable.

Two out of the trainees have the potentials and are officially recommended by the SATVET as KAB trainer of teachers/trainers. A MoU between ILO/ the BYE project is in progress. The MoU shall outline all areas of KAB implementation and a license to the SATVET to use and reprint materials, train facilitators, monitor KAB course, employment of graduates etc.

In the area of Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) the situation is comparable. There is a big potential of SIYB trainers in the country and the two master trainers will see new colleagues after an already planned specific ILO training in February 2009. Completed by additional activities at the end of 2009 there will be 4 or 5 SIYB master trainers in the Kyrgyz Republic. It is planned supporting the foundation of an Association of SIYB trainer in the Kyrgyz Republic. The project (ILO) shall sign a MoU with this Association of SIYB trainers and master trainers in which the management a revolving fund for supporting SIYB and KAB activities in Kyrgyzstan will be regulated.

There is a risk getting such an association timely registered, for sometimes this may take more than one year. If so other option on institutionalization must be figured out. .

But in sum: the progress in this part of the project is adequate and the project may go on as planned.



4. Indicator 2.4

Health as asset in all service packages.

As already mentioned above it (see indicator 2.4 in the Azerbaijan chapter) is planned to integrate an Occupational Safety and Health chapter in each of the service packages (KAB, SIYB, Career Guiding booklets, etc.). These packages are developed in Moscow ILO office. It was assured the packages will be ready in time.

5. Indicator 2.5:

Web based quality management system in place.

This indicator was discussed already in the Azerbaijan chapter on this indicator (see above).

6. Indicator 2.6

Sustainability models developed for all service packages with gender issues being mainstreamed.

These kinds of sustainable models must be developed in the remaining duration of the project. The basic parts of it are designed to a certain extent, but again the limited (time) resources causes some anxiety the project will make it timely.

In sum: The progress of the project is substantial and the likelihood achieving the objective is quite high if the project management is continuing consequently the pace of the project implementation shown up to now.

**Objective 3: To develop Integrated Youth Employment Strategies (I-YES) piloted in capital City and selected smaller cities and rural areas with a focus on identified key sectors (as per the DWCP and constituents' preferences)**

1. Indicator 1:

Relevant Project Pilots selected and planned with constituents.

Done! The pilots had been selected. The planning has been developed further in details. The participation of the constituents was given, also some of the constituents criticize the selection process, but it was done with involvement of all relevant constituents and sometime the result of such a mutual process does not satisfy everybody.

2. Indicator 2:

Relevant local appraisals carried out in selected localities.

The bunch of studies, reports and appraisals produced for Kizil Kia (Rapid Employment Appraisal, Employers' Survey, Focus groups promoting youth employment, local situation analysis of youth employment/SITAP, employers opportunities survey) is a proof for this. The sector based pilot (textile in Bishkek and Chui Oblast) is ongoing and should be finished and analysed asap.

3. Indicator 3:

Value chains and/or options for investment programmes identified (carrying employment potentials for young women and men)

This has to be developed during the first quarter 2009 (especially for the urban based textile sector pilot). There is no time to lose. This is again an indicator that the 'pilots' must be the main field of action in the remaining time of the project duration.

4. Indicator 4:

Service and service linkages established for job placement.

For the Kyrgyz Republic this has to be done in the remaining project time.

5. Indicator 5:

Essential linkages for services and service linkages for self-employment established locally (in pilots).

There was a kind of start up in TVET school no. 7 with the offering KAB services. But the great majority of input has to be done in the remaining project time.

6. Indicator 6: Strategic partnership set up between ILO, its constituents, relevant local institutions (GOs and NGOs) and local business.

The project wants to develop these partnerships on local level first and then to transfer it to the national level. In Kyrgyzstan there are plans to create a network in Kizil Kia (pilot region). First activities (like co-operation between the local employers' net work and the TVET schools) have started already.

In the case of the sector pilot (textile in Bishkek) a tripartite working group is established and has had continuously meetings to prepare the sector study. Of course the main work has to be done in the remaining project time.

In sum: Although some preparations of the pilots have been made already (especially in the case of Kizil Kia) the larger part has to be done in the remaining time of the project. This could be done if a massive restructuring of the allocation of the staff input and other re-organizational aspects of the project management will be implemented (details see 9.4, below)

### **9.3.2 Aspects Impact and Sustainability in Kyrgyzstan**

These aspects will be discussed for the project as a whole in a special chapter (see 9.5 below)

### **9.3.3 Cross Cutting issues in Kyrgyzstan**

As mentioned above four cross cutting issues had been identified:

- Integration in the Decent Work Country Program

- Gender (mainstreaming) aspects
- Social Dialogue
- Networking

### **9.3.3.1 Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) in Kyrgyzstan**

The project itself fits to the structure of the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) of the Kyrgyz Republic very well (details of the program see DWCP KYR 2006-09). Indeed the BYE project is one of the major players in the framework of the DWCP. This is well documented in the DWCP Implementation Plan, which is regularly updated by the ILO country (see ILO 2008b). For some constituents it is not easy to realize which project belongs to which ILO activity. But the situation in the Kyrgyz Republic is much more clear than in Azerbaijan. For example, the SCME and the SATVET have a clear picture of the project's activities and progress and know what belongs to the specific BYE project and what to the DWCP. In general the constituents are quite satisfied with ILO's activities in the country.

### **9.3.3.2 Gender aspects in Kyrgyzstan**

To simplify the evaluation the aspects on gender equality and gender mainstreaming as an important cross cutting issue is analysed in one chapter (see 9.4, below).

### **9.3.3.3 Social dialogue in Kyrgyzstan**

Both social partners are adequately informed on the project, but information on the structure (objectives, indicators, activities, etc.) may be improved. The social partners are involved in the preparation, the development and the implementation of the project. The Confederation of Employers is more active and is actively involved in conducting of studies as well as the pilot of Kizil Kia. The Unions did not play a comparable active role up to yet. But they are working in the Steering Committee and support the project. Inspired by the project they started an internal initiative to strengthen the participation of youth in the bodies of the Trade Unions. Representatives from both social partners participated in trainings offered in the framework of the project. The impact of such activities is not monitored by the project.

In general: Social dialogue or tri-partism was assessed from both social partners as a process which should be improved and increased. Employers as well as Trade Unions see themselves not accepted as fully partner in the process of tri-partism in the Kyrgyz Republic.

### **9.3.3.4 Networking within the UN Family and with other donors in Kyrgyzstan**

According to information of the National Coordinator of the ILO in the Kyrgyz Republic the ILO and the project are adequately involved in the mutual planning and implementation of the projects/programs of the UN family. A deeper insight was not possible because the responsible representative of UNDP, Mrs. Choibaeva, refused to meet the mission.<sup>7</sup>

The project is well integrated in the VET Round Table, a specific donors' co-ordination and information group, sharing relevant information and organizing mutual activities in reforming the TVET sector of the

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<sup>7</sup> Although we had been sitting in one room (attending both the Kyrgyz VET Round Table) she cancelled an already confirmed appointment. Further she did not agree meeting a fellow employee of her program (Poverty Reduction), who is actively involved in the projects' activities in the field of the service packages.

Kyrgyz Republic. The project has developed an excellent co-operation with HELVETAS, a Swiss NGO working in Kyrgyzstan very successfully since more than 15 years, especially in the TVET sector. Helvetas is using actively the MST tools of ILO in several projects and is ready to continue this co-operation. With the German Technical Corporation (GTZ) the project has had an exchange of information and experience which was finalized in some input in the MSTs on welding established by GTZ and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic (at least in Osh and Jalal Abad).

The project participated in the co-ordination and experience exchange activities of the Government of the Netherlands. This gives outstanding opportunity to reflect strengths and weaknesses of the project on a different level of abstraction.

As mentioned above if the planned web-based platform (see objective2, indicator 5) for SIYB, KAB and MST facilitators and trainers will work and it will be maintained after the project is finished (by ILO-ICT Turin) the project opened a further sustainable place of networking and exchange of experience and expertise.

#### **9.4 Project Management, including participation of the stakeholders/beneficiaries in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan**

Before going in the country specific details it is to mention that the late start up and time consuming internal ILO coordination procedures (f. i. necessary accord with other initiatives and bodies of ILO in Geneva, Turin, etc. to finalize the projects' log frame and TOR; usage of service packages only with acceptance of other ILO officials ...) created management problems from the very beginning of the project. Of course these six to nine months had been used to reformulate the project document and the log frame of the project. According to information from the CTA the start up phase of the project was used to develop further the integrated approach and to fit the project in the framework of the Decent Work Country Programs. This was of course a necessary input for the implementation of the project. But a loss of 15 up to 20% of the project duration as a real project implementation time is almost impossible to catch up. The main input to finalize the project design and other aspects of the project document must be developed before the official project duration has begun. A project management needs more freedom and flexibility and should not too deeply be involved in organizational duties of ILO. May be also the decision having the CTA located in Moscow (and not in the countries of execution) should be carefully analysed in future projects or even for the remaining time of this project.

##### **9.4.1 Steering Committee and Project Monitoring in Azerbaijan**

There is no Steering Committee established. This may be also a result of the long ongoing decision process inside the Government of Azerbaijan which Ministry will finally be the main partner for the development of this project. The project is on the way establishing an advisory board. This initiative was done with limited success by the Ministry of Youth recently. This is a very critical development. An advisory board should be established as soon as possible. Such an Advisory Board should not be just a

thing which has to be done formally. It should be used to inform the constituents on the structure, the design and the targets of the project to make it clear to all constitutes which activities fits to which objective of the project. Such a body may also help the project management to give clear information on the role of the different constituents and stakeholders. The advisory board may also be used to increase the participation rate of the social partners in planning and implementing the project.

#### **9.4.2 Communication/ PR of the Project in Azerbaijan**

Majority of stakeholders/partners have (almost) no information on the general framework/design of the project. This was mentioned by representatives with a more critical view on the project (Ministry of Labour/MoL; Confederation of Employers), by more or less “neutral” stakeholders (Trade Unions) as well as real supporters (Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Education/ Institute of Educational Problems). And indeed there is no printed flyer, no internet presentation, and no newsletter with a comprehensive, but short description of the project design.

#### **9.4.3 Communication/ PR, Steering Committee and Project Monitoring in Kyrgyzstan**

The project produces detailed progress reports, which are mainly oriented on the output of the project implementation (activities). It might be more neatly arranged if the specific progress achieved during the reporting period (and not during the whole project) to make it easier for all to realize the ongoing progress of the project. There had been no (country specific) milestones agreed, which makes it more complicate to assess if all the remaining necessary outputs of the project will assist the timely achievement of the projects’ objectives.

Some of the constituents/stakeholders/partners detected of having not enough information on the general framework/design and the progress of the project. A better and more frequently ‘face to face’ communication would easily improve this.

Just like in Azerbaijan there is no printed flyer, no internet presentation, and no newsletter with a comprehensive, but short description of the project design. The project has produced a folder on which some basic information of the project (esp. the design) is imprinted. This is not well known among the constituents and may be used more frequently to give pro-active information on the project.

The possibilities mass media (TV, Radio, newspapers, web-sites, chat rooms, etc.) informing the interested public and other non-governmental experts and organizations were not used frequently, not to say strategically. The usage of the mass media helps additionally the constituents and other important stakeholders to improve their image as caretaker in the public. The project should not only do good things, the project should talk about the good things in public.

But in Kyrgyzstan a Steering Committee is established and actively used informing the most important constituents<sup>8</sup> on the progress and the outcomes of the project regularly (bi-annually). Also aspects of

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<sup>8</sup> State Committee for Migration and Employment, Ministry of Labour, State Agency of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Confederation of Employers and the trade Unions are represented are represented by four female and one women.

planning for the period up to next meeting are included. This opportunity or tool must be used more active in the future to involve the constituents more deeply and create a higher degree on ownership for this project.

Of course it must be mentioned that in both countries all social partners were I fact involved in many project activities like situational analysis in 2006, tripartite knowledge sharing (Turin 2007), tripartite/ inter-ministerial roundtable in Azerbaijan (June 2008) or for Kyrgyzstan study-tour Netherlands. And the project is planning comparable actions for the remaining time of the project. The constituents may in fact have more benefits out of the project as they themselves realize.

#### **9.4.4 ILO Staff/Experts/CTA Frequency of Presentation in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan**

Constituents and stakeholders expressed the wish having the project TL and other ILO representatives closer and more frequently in the country. In fact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) is present in the countries only 20 to 25 working days in three to four stays. Further it was mentioned during the interviews although seeing the input of specific ILO experts in the country there is no detailed figures on real input of the project staff based in Moscow.

#### **9.4.5 Organization of Staff (Human resources) in both countries**

In both countries there is only one permanent national expert to manage the project implementation. This situation must be described as 'understaffed'. In order to react to the mentioned risks of achieving adequate results with the implementation of the pilots it will be adequate to re-arrange the manning level

### **9.5 Summary of Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Project Boosting Youth Employment**

The state of effectiveness may be described as follows;

The achievement of the objectives 1 and 2 is adequate.<sup>9</sup> The likelihood attaining these objectives is high. More problems are within objective 3. The pilots are at an early stage. But to get better informed (research based) action plans and a real proof for an Integrated Youth Employment Strategy the pilots need to be carefully developed, implemented and assessed. Time limits are here highest risk, because the remaining project duration is short for developing, implementing, and assessing four pilot activities in different environments (sector based and area based <urban – small town – rural>).

Additionally the project did not publish all conducted studies produced in by project input. This may lead to a loss of necessary baseline information to develop the pilots adequate to needs of an integrated strategy and to link the pilots to the demand of the youth.

Another risk is the capacity of necessary human resources. There is a need to have expertise in the pilot areas (f. i. in the town of Kizil Kia). It is not enough going there from time to time. A national/local expert

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<sup>9</sup> It should be mentioned that the check up of the 17 basic indicators measuring the level of achievement of the projects' objectives only one may be assessed as completely done. The degree of achievement of objectives is of course different comparing these indicators in each of the two countries (details see above).

with enough knowledge has to be identified (for all pilots). There are chances to recruit qualified persons, but there is no guarantee to make it. Finally the local stakeholders itself need capacity building to able to join the process of developing such a pilot measure. In the capital Bishkek it may be much easier to solve these problems but in small town like Kizil Kia this is a real challenge. Comparable risks we have in Azerbaijan, where it will be also not easy to recruit applicable local staff or experts.

A further risk lies additionally within the capacity of the constituents (including social partners). There is a need for training of staff, number of qualified staff and in some cases creating awareness of the problem of project management and monitoring.

Lastly to mention: the global problem of the financial crisis may induce problems in the implementation of the sector pilot 'construction' in Azerbaijan. The up to yet booming sector shows symptoms of a crisis and the project management may be forced to adapt the contents of the pilots according to this new situation. Further the financial crisis may force more and more (young) people going back home and will give a fundamental new challenge to the project's target developing an integrated youth employment strategy.

Another approach of figuring out the state of the affairs would be to identify more detailed the individual elements of an Integrated Youth Employment Strategy (I-YES) - The following basic elements of an Integrated Youth Employment Strategy had been identified:

1. An enabling policy environment produced by a set of (project) activities (technical advice, training, networking, knowledge sharing) for the national constituents aimed at developing their capacities to initiate and conduct situation analysis on youth employment and labour market updates, perform an engendered analysis of youth employment information and strategies, set up priorities for youth employment policies and develop relevant policy recommendations, formulate and implement research based National Action Plans for youth employment.
2. Institutionalized, adapted, tested and applied Service Packages for youth employment and self-employment created by providing technical assistance to the national constituents to develop (or adapt) and apply ILO training and service packages and make them available to young men and women in order to increase their employability and entrepreneurship spirit.
3. System or concept of community/sector based planning process and (urban, semi-urban, and rural) pilot tested labour market interventions at both supply side (improvement of employable skills and entrepreneurial abilities of young women and men) and demand side (supporting conducive labour market policies and environment for safe job creation),
4. accompanied by better assessments and monitoring of the youth labour market and better dissemination of Youth Labour Market Information (LMI), and

5. Strong(er) capacities of governmental and social partners and other relevant stakeholders to develop their approaches to youth employment, and use social dialogue and expert advice
6. Sustainable networks of strategic training providers and key resource persons to facilitate and advice on youth employment.
7. Using best practices achieved and lessons learnt to be disseminated to the wider sub-region with a view towards creating a knowledge-sharing platform.

The project gave already input and has had positive impact on elements no. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The deepest impact was realized on elements 1 and 2. But all the mentioned elements need more input, especially elements 3 and 5. The successful work out of elements 6 and 7 depends on the effective establishment of the elements 1 to 5.

The project is more oriented on intermediate target groups like relevant governmental administrations, social partners or other stakeholders like labour market experts. The ultimate beneficiaries, the young people of the two countries, will benefit more on an indirect way by getting better services and policies offered. There was statistics on how many young people had been trained, and how many found jobs, and whether these appear sustainable (see also footnote no.4 above).

Conducting the BYE project created several not planned or intended demands like conducting a study on the state of the affairs of the social dialogue in Kyrgyzstan<sup>10</sup>. There was and is a high demand on 'gender activities', especially implementing Gender Audits.<sup>11</sup> For some of these demands the project had not been able to accommodate adequate (f. i. SCME asked for labour market forecast tools). As mentioned already the SCME asked now for the development and established of a National Action Plan for Youth Employment. It is always good to be flexible, but the project management needs to be focussed on the compulsory actions first and then decide how much voluntary exercises will be added.

Cost efficiency was not part of the TOR for this evaluation mission. As already described above the objectives 1 and 2 are to be achieved in time, but there are risks for achieving objective 3. The real project start up was definitely too late. The Chief Technical Advisor and the National experts started between six and nine months after the official project start. This small team organized efficiently and effectively the technical and financial resources of the project and the ILO as a whole, including inputs from headquarters, Moscow Sub Regional Office and other ILO internal expertise. But the loss of time is considerably and it is difficult to make up time now.

May be one alleviating measure would have been to develop clearly separated activity plans for each country, including defined milestones. A more country specific project log frame would also have been a tool to manage the project more efficient.

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<sup>10</sup> The study will be conducted soon.

<sup>11</sup> The project conducted trainings and a real gender audit (within the Presidential Administration), and there is still further demand, f. i. from the Parliamentary administration.



## **9.6 Gender Aspects**

The project does not have a specific objective on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. There is also no specific financial budget or monitoring system on gender aspects and no women or men specific activities have been designed or implemented. That's why in this report Gender aspects are considered as a cross cutting issue.

Many activities had been undertaken successfully mainstreaming gender aspects by the project:

- (i) The project tries to fulfil the 30% gender quota for all activities, f. i. seminar participants.
- (ii) The staff of the project itself is somehow gender balanced: three male in the position of the CTA and the National Coordinators and four female experts accompanied by one male working within the framework of the project and based in Moscow.
- (iii) The project is actively and financially involved in the UN gender thematic group.
- (iv) Several studies like the Gender analysis of the Labour Market in the Kyrgyz Republic (see ILO 2008d) and relevant promotion materials on gender mainstreaming had been produced and disseminated among the constituents and other relevant stakeholders. Further the ongoing analysis called 'Women Entrepreneurial Study' is in production and its data will be used, f. i. inside the UN thematic gender group.
- (v) Additionally to Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) there had been trainings on the topic of the tool of Gender Audit and on request of the Kyrgyz side one gender audit was conducted within the Presidential Administration. In this context leaflets developed in Moscow had been adapted to the Kyrgyz local needs. This means Gender Audit service packages was introduced and implemented although this was not planned at the very beginning of the project. The feedback and assessment of this work is excellent. More Kyrgyz partners (f. i. the administration of the Parliament) want to conduct a gender audit.

This all shows the relevance for the capacity building for the constituents, it indicates the constituents' full satisfaction and confirms the good quality of the service offered by the project on the aspect of gender mainstreaming. On the other hand the limits of resources may give the management of the project cause to think about additional activities.

## **9.7 Aspects of Impact and sustainability**

Of course it is too early to assess the aspects of the projects' impact und sustainability by now. But we may give some arguments on the likelihood of having real impact and long term effects as an outcome of the project. It is out of question that the policy environment for enabling youth employment strategies improved in both countries. To which extent and quality is finally not assessable today, but no doubt that there will be an impact in both countries.

As we have discussed already there is a real progress in the institutionalization of the service packages (MST, KAB and SIYB), especially in the Kyrgyz Republic. The likelihood of having a real sustainable

impact out of the project is quite high. The real difference the project makes is having the service packages in the curricula so (trained) teacher must use it. The 'officially' licensed integration of the service packages into the curricula (of TVET schools (MST/KAB) makes a substantial difference and shows a high degree of ownership of the constituents themselves. And additionally: there is a very much better 'infrastructure' of trainers and master trainers to facilitate usage of the service packages in the two countries.

Of course we should mention the following: The most important risk reaching the state of institutionalization lies in the fact that the establishment and usage of MST creates follow on costs. In some cases investment in equipment and training (of teachers, f. i.) is necessary. The TVET schools have already problems in financing the necessary copies of materials for the students.

Clearly to mention that there is a risk that the project pilots will not deliver the basic for the development of Integrated Youth Employment Strategies. Especially resource deficits (human resources and time limits) give reason to have doubts. The start of all the pilots is delayed (or too late considering the project time at disposal) in both countries. Also if the pilots will be successfully implanted in the countries there will be very few time to make a real assessment/evaluation of the (sustainable) effects and outcomes of these pilots. But this seems to be a substantial pre-condition for the development and establishment of Integrated Youth Employment Strategies which may be used as guidelines for other countries and regions (details see discussion of effectiveness and efficiency aspects on objective 3, above).

There are some unintended but positive effects which will be shortly introduced:

(i) As an outcome of a training offer on Gender Audit the project was asked to implement such an audit within the Presidential Administration. The implementation of this audit was very successful and created new strong relations with the Presidential Administration. The good performance during the training also created excellent partnership with the Administration of the Parliament which led to a cooperation in Public Hearing on Youth Employment which may give all relevant stakeholders the opportunity to develop recommendations on the development of youth employment policy.

For instance the Swiss NGO 'Helvetas' is now using the service packages (MST) in their steadily ongoing training programs in rural areas (agricultural occupations). And they are planning using other MSTs in their just recently started project on qualification in the tourist sector (hotel business) in the Issyk Kul region.

(ii) Or the network of employers in the small town of Kizil Kia is preparing a memorandum of understanding with the local VET schools to bring the schools' offers closer to the labour market needs. There might be a commercial 'region to region' co-operation as a spill over from the study tour to the Netherlands in the textile.

(iii) A finally mentioned example of such outcomes is the fact that inspired by the project the Trade Unions started internally a youth initiative (youth committee) to strengthen the youth's participation opportunities in the development of policy and the organization of the trade unions.

## 9.8 Lessons learnt and Conclusions

The project Boosting Youth Employment has a comprehensive structure and is implemented in two countries. This is a real challenge for the project management. This inspires and gives necessities to cooperate within the experts of the ILO as whole and with relevant (national and international) stakeholders in the countries. The following lessons are the basic one which shall be used for future action within this project, but also (and more) for other comparable future projects of ILO:

1. The **indicators** of such projects should be **planned more carefully**. The indicators should be clear and easy measurable and create questions itself. Also the number of indicators must be reduced. About three indicators for one objective are enough.
2. In projects being implemented in at least two countries the planning may be done **more country specific**, so that is clear from the very beginning what will be conducted in which country. It may also be possible to have a specific burden sharing between the two countries. Achieving the objectives means not necessarily conducting all activities in both countries. Such a planning brings the expectations of the constituents on a realistic level and helps to manage the project more efficiently.
3. The **planning of the project resources**, especially the human resources/staff, is in projects of such complexity a very important success factor for achieving the goals. This project is a little understaffed, especially the number of staff's person months deployed in the two countries.
4. During the planning of such a complex project a specific analysis of the **capacity of the constituents** (most relevant project partners or stakeholders) particularly with regard to the human resource potentials to participate actively and productive should be conducted. This may clear up to which degree a tri-partite approach is a realistic tool to achieve project objectives. This would also raise the awareness of the question of ownership of the project and may the likelihood of sustainable results.
5. There was a massive **delay for the real (not formal) start** up of such a project. The real implementation in the countries started between six and nine months after the formal beginning of the project. The reason behind was ILO internal procedures and processes of co-ordination and planning. This has to be avoided in future projects. ILO internal process of co-ordination of planning must be handled before or with a limit of a month after the official start of a project as the maximum period of delay. All input coming later than this period should only be considered by the project management if time at disposal allows.
6. A policy environment for an Integrated Youth Employment Policy is depending not only on direct project input, but needs to be build up on long lasting development activities in the relevant policy area. Consequently '**time matters**'. Comprehensive projects like the Boosting Youth Employment project which have a short of only four years duration with are always on a high risk. At least project

duration of two times three years may be adequate. According to time budget this project is ambitious!

7. The establishment of a **Steering Committee** (or a functional equivalent body) is indispensable for a successful information and communication strategy with the constituents and main stakeholders. Many of the existing information deficits and lack of ownership may be avoided if the tool of such a committee had been used for the constituents and relevant stakeholders as a forum of information, discussion and planning.
8. According to progress of project implementation and the information made by the interviewed national experts the **ILO service packages** (MST, KAB and SIYB as well as gender audit) are well designed for the target group of youth and can be adapted to the country specific needs with limited efforts.
9. An **evaluation** of such a comprehensive project implemented in two countries should be conducted with two international experts and a larger (time) budget.

What are the main **conclusions** we may draw for the implementation during the remaining time of this project?

1. There is **adequate progress in achieving objective 1 and especially objective 2** (most notably in Kyrgyzstan). Of course there is still a lot of input to be given in order to achieve the objectives 2 and 3, but this can be done if the project management is optimized and enough resources (national experts, international experts, short term experts, etc.) are allocated in both countries, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan.
2. But there are **high risks achieving objective 3**:
  - a. The lack of time and staffing (esp. in the countries) was mentioned already above
  - b. The estimation of capacity of constituents and other relevant stakeholders to manage such a multi-complex project approach should be done more precisely. They need concrete support, f. i. for the locally implementation of the management of the pilot activities.
3. **More resources in the countries** (staff and other) are necessary to achieve the intended very complex objectives. The capacity and the quantitative input for the daily (office) management as well as for the quality aspects of the projects need to be increased and improved.
4. Implementing project pilot activities and using this for empirical analysis drawing deductions for an integrated youth employment strategy is time consuming. To get clear and proofed results the remaining project duration is may be not long enough. If possible the **project may be prolonged by at least one year**. Another option may be having a **follow on project to assess the outcome** of the pilots deeply and get a real empirical proof for the Integrated Youth Employment Strategy. As mentioned above if the project needs to be extended by a massive increase of staff and other resources in the countries! And if so, for the time limit there is still the risk the I-YES may not be really based on a practical check what worked (in the pilots) and what not.

5. The project management should **weigh up carefully if further additional demands** not originally planned as project activities can be integrated in the project implementation. The limited time budget constrains the project facilitators to concentrate on the key tasks. This must be discussed with the constituents in a transparent and open way convincing them also that more input from their side is also necessary to achieve the objectives of the project.

## 9.9 Recommendations

To improve the likelihood achieving the objectives of the project we divide the recommendations in two parts. We will have general recommendations for the project as whole and we will finish with country specific recommendations.

### 9.9.1 General Recommendations

1. **Project design** is not to change, but in future more precisely description of objectives, results and especially the relevant indicators. A formulation without contradiction and a clear connection of all indicators with the planned objectives makes life easier for all participants (the project implementation agents, the beneficiaries, and the evaluators).  
The first of the outcome indicators (1.1 Project implemented within the framework of DWCP) may be assessed within a DWCP evaluation if this kind of work will be carried out during the project duration.
2. The project management should develop concrete **milestones** to be achieved. For the remaining time there should be quarterly schedule oriented at the most important results (the institutionalization of service packages and the implementation of the pilots having a substantial and proofed basis for I-YES). This almost real time planning seems to be necessary because there is an enormous volume of work to be done.
3. The **time frame** seems to be the real challenge: there are time consuming procedures to be arranged in the country for the progress of the project.
  - a) F. i. the approval of curricula in which the service packages are included may be last longer than expected
  - b) Co-ordination and responsibility sharing among relevant governmental stakeholders is hardly to be influenced by the project management. But in some cases the project depends on it.
  - c) Or a registration of an association, like the trainer association in the Kyrgyz Republic, can be delayed. Some experienced persons gave information this may take a year or more.
  - d) Also the co-ordination with Moscow headquarters seems to be more time consuming.

All those things and may be others too must be taken into account when the final project planning is done. The constituents should be involved in the planning and especially in this areas support the project implementation more actively.

4. The project management should take care that all future conducted **activities** must have a **direct connection to the project** or better there should be a strict connection between all activities implemented and its contribution achieving the project's objectives.
  5. Not all intended results have the same impact on achieving the planned objectives. So the project management in coordination with the main constituents should set **priorities!** Think about giving up some intended results (f. i. annual Gender disaggregated updates for Youth Labour Market Information initiated by the constituents? web based quality management? etc). Another option may be reducing the number of pilots being implemented. From my point of view especially in Azerbaijan a concentration on the service packages and the implementation of one pilot only may increase the probability of success of the whole project.
- 6. Re-Organization of (management) work load**
- a) For the remaining time of the project the CTA or adequate functionally equivalent experts from the management team in Moscow should have a substantial higher frequency and duration of stays in the country. In the case of the CTA it may be considered having the CTA in the countries with a substantially higher number of working days (f. i. at least 75 working days in each of the countries).
  - b) This may also help to solve some of the communication problems as well as increasing productivity of the project management, which is necessary especially for there will be a lot of targeted activities necessary achieving the objective of the project fully.
  - c) To improve the quality and the likelihood of sustainability of the necessary institutionalization of the service packages (especially in Azerbaijan) international experts for the development of the MST and the KAB/SIYB should spend a substantial amount of working in the countries, if not be based for several months in the countries. Azerbaijan needs more input (at least 8 person months for MST and 6 person months for SIYB). In the Kyrgyz Republic at least four person months (two for each package< MST and KAB/SIYB>) seems to be an adequate input.
  - d) Each project office should have an additional position of a project assistant. This will disburden the national experts and gives them room to concentrate more on projects contents (pilots!) than on project administration, like organising meetings, stationary, etc.
  - e) The implementation of the pilots (especially in the rural areas or in the case of the small town of Kizil Kia) will be done with a much higher success if local experts can be hired to manage the whole process of implementation.
  - f) It may be necessary to rent additional office space for the project staff.
- 7. Communication** of the project management with the constituents and the stakeholder community must be improved.
- a) More direct interaction on working level is necessary. Face to face communication with the constituents and other relevant stakeholders must be emphasized more in future. This includes the CTA as well as all the other experts involved in the project. Direct communication will increase

the networking and knowledge sharing aspects as well as the sympathy and ownership aspects among the constituents.

- b) Advisory board in AZE must be established as soon as possible. It should be used to inform the constituents on the structure, the design and the targets of the project to make it clear to all constitutes which activities fits to which objective of the project. Improvement of information on the state of the affairs and the future planning of the project, as well as the identification of the structural relevance of independent actions among the constituents may also be improved with the work of such an advisory board. Such an Advisory Board should not be just a thing which has to be done formally. It may also help the project management to give clear information on the role of the different constituents and stakeholders. The advisory board may also be used to increase the participation rate of the social partners in planning and implementing the project. Of course the project management has to give clear rules on the advisory function of this board during the first meeting. It cannot replace the project management.
  - c) Communicate deeper the approach of the project with the constituents (the advantages of comprehensive ILO input, but also the necessary input of partners <ownership>; use the evaluation to (re-) start such an intensive and open discussion!
  - d) Use the discussion on the results of this evaluation to involve the social partners more actively in the discussion on the finalization (planning!) of the project.
8. Project specific **information policy**:

In co-ordination with the main constituents the project management may initiate the following:

- a) Short description of design and related reports on progress of achieving objectives, summaries of all studies, surveys, etc. for the interested public should be produced and disseminated in a timely manner. ILO Moscow website is not enough! Regularly information (email based newsletter) should be handed out to the all stakeholders and to interested experts and the public. This information may be disseminated via an electronic newsletter, via country specific website downloads, or any other adequate form.
- b) All relevant materials produced by the project should obligatory be send to relevant leading staff of constituents and other relevant stakeholders. The project may use email for this, but should deliver the information with a personal cover letter.
- c) Improve the project's media policy! The project has no real media policy. This is a deficit which should be redressed very shortly. Co-operation with mass media helps also the constituents improving their image.
- d) Use the evaluation to intensify the information policy of the project and to increase the participation of the Steering Committee /Advisory Board in the planning of the final project activities (esp. the pilots) .At least the Chief Technical Advisor should be present in all the

sessions of the SC/advisory board. At least for the first SC/advisory board meeting in 2009 additional input from other project experts would improve the communication and information substantially.

- e) Organize together with the constituents press conferences to inform the public on the progress of the project. For instance use the Steering Committee Meetings, publication of a study or events like the start up of a pilot measure to invite the press and other mass media.
9. **Daily project management** needs (especially in AZE) **more input** from CTA and other leading staff of the project **in the countries** as well as **decentralization of project decisions** (f. i. implementation of studies, trainings etc.).
10. The project management may include representatives of the **social partners** more intensively in the project implementation. This should include more and regularly information on the structure and progress of the project for the social partner as well as involvement in the planning of the final project implementation. For Azerbaijan: the establishment of an advisory board or a comparable body of communication and information for the project must be supported as soon as possible.

### 9.9.2 Country specific Recommendations

According to the different development and situation in the two countries it may be useful having some country specific recommendations:

#### 11. **Azerbaijan** specific recommendations

a) Related to objective 1 ('... create an enabling policy environment ...'):

- 1. The participation rate of the social partners was not really given. The project management must take care to involve the social partners more active in future activities, like monitoring or planning (resp. formulating recommendations for youth employment policy reforms) the NAP-YE.

b) Related to objective 2 ('Institutionalize service packages'):

- 1. The project has to give substantial more input in the area of MST. That's why the idea of the project management having the more input from international experts – if possible as a long term experts for several person months in the country - to get the necessary progress organised timely has to be implemented as fast as possible.
- 2. In Azerbaijan the project has to give substantial more input in the area of SIYB. That's why having an experienced international expertise in the form of a long term expert for several person months in the country to get the necessary progress organised timely should be realized in the nearest future.

c) Related to objective 3 ('I- YES piloted')



1. The project management may involve representatives of the social partner more intensively in the future development and implementation of the pilot activities (especially more and regularly information on the structure and progress).
2. The final planning of the pilots and the project as whole should also give additional governmental constituents much room to be involved more actively in the planning and implementation of the project. This will also assist the creation of ownership among these constituents.

d) Related to **Networking and Knowledge** Sharing

1. The project management may continue the already conducted activities in the framework of the UN family.
2. It may be useful checking possible co-operations with other donors, f.i. the recently confirmed World Bank project on Social Affairs.

e) Related to the involvement of the social partners

1. The project may involve representatives of the social partner more intensively in the project implementation. Additionally the social partners shall be involved in the as fast as possible to establish body of communication and information for the project (Advisory Board).
2. This may give the social partners the opportunity to be more active in the general final planning of the pilots and the project as whole.

## 12. Kyrgyzstan specific recommendations

a) Related to objective 1 ('... create an enabling policy environment ...'):

1. If the decision will done to develop a NAP-YE for the Kyrgyz Republic it should be started as soon as possible. The SCME and the social partners may also be asked on its concrete input to guarantee the necessary progress of such a NAP-Y, because this is again a matter of time and resources. A successfully implementation of a NAP-YE is hardly to be done in a 12 to 15 months period (the remaining project time) and needs support from the project management as well as from the main constituents in the country..

b) Related to objective 2 ('Institutionalize service packages'):

1. The development of support in the area of 'Career Guidance' must be intensified. The planned career guidance kit shall be developed in cooperation with the SCME, especially the Youth Labour Exchange Office in the very near future. Simultaneously the training manual and the leaflet 'Jobs in demand' shall be produced with the SCME.

2. The chapters on Occupational Safety and Health for the service packages shall be developed (for both countries) timely in Moscow ILO office. It should be possible asking on a feed back of the constituents in the countries in an adequate time period.

c) Related to objective 3 ('I- YES piloted')

1. The project management shall consequently go on with the participatory way to involve the social partners and other relevant stakeholder in the planning and development of the pilots. Based on the necessary changes on the management of the project (details see recommendation 6, above) this will give the necessary political backing for the implementation of the pilots.

d) Related to Networking and Knowledge

1. The project should continue the active participation in the VET donors' Round Table and also the successfully implemented bilateral cooperation with Helvetas and GTZ. This is additional input to institutionalize the service packages.

e) Related to the involvement of the social partners

1. The project may support the implementation of the study on the State of the Affairs of Social Dialogue in the Kyrgyz Republic and involve the social partners actively. The Trade Unions may be involved more actively in the final planning of the project's activities.
2. The next Steering Committee meeting shall be conducted as kind of planning workshop.

## **10. Annexes**

(see extra document)