



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Creative industries support programme in Cambodia Final Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Country: Cambodia

Final Evaluation: 1/2012

Type : Independent

Technical Field : EMP/INVEST

Evaluation Management : Fondes de MDG

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Project Code : CMB/08/50/UND

Donateur : Fondes de MDG – US\$ 3,300,000

UNESCO: 748,604

ILO: 941,017

FAO: 791,553

UNDP: 818,826

Within the MDG-F, a results-oriented monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy was established to measure contributions to the MDGs and multilateralism. The strategy seeks to (i) support programme to attain development results, (ii) measure contributions to MDG-F objectives, MDGs, and aid effectiveness mechanisms, and (iii) support scaling up and replication of successful programme through evidence-based knowledge and lessons learned.

Levels of Analysis

A series of evaluation questions, of interest to both the CISP team and MDG-F Secretariat, were provided within the Terms of Reference (TOR), as well as levels of analysis and evaluation criteria. The final evaluation sought to understand three primary evaluation criteria: (i) design, (ii) process, and (iii) ownership. The evaluation questions within each category were then used to generate answers for each level

The CISP not only seeks to improve upon the culture sector, but achieve broad-based social, political and economic changes within the communities involved. Thus, the final evaluation will also assess the specificities of the culture sector, in order to measure the programme's lasting effects. In order to measure these effects

Summary from the main report

In order to promote both the social inclusion and cultural rights of indigenous peoples, as well as provide sustainable income generation and employment creation, the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), under financing from the Government of Spain, supported the Creative Industries Support Programme (CISP) in Cambodia. The CISP, under the auspices of the MDG-F Thematic Window for Culture and Development, was approved in April 2008 and has a three-year duration (September 2008-September 2011), with a total allocation of US\$3.3 million.

Findings, Conclusions, and Lessons Learned

Considering the initial delay in beginning programme activities, it should be noted that the CISP was still quite effective in delivering upon the majority of its expected outputs. As previously documented, the attainment of development outputs may be found within Table 4 (p. 9). Additionally, significant progress toward its expected outcomes were also made, as programme outputs contributed to: the preservation of Cambodia's heritage, cultural diversity, and living arts while promoting their social and economic potential (Outcome 1); improvements in livelihoods, particularly for indigenous groups and women, from enhanced creative industries (Outcome 2); and, improved commercialization of selected cultural products and services in domestic markets (Outcome 3).

Although a series of results were documented at both the output- and outcome-level, the sustainability of the CISP is highly questioned. This doubt mainly arises due to the short time-frame of the joint programme. Although three years in duration, the actual implementation of activities for local communities began in early 2010, which would constitute an actual implementation period of approximately 20 months (for the earliest contracts signed). Additionally, due to difficulties in establishing timely contracts with all local implementing partners, some activities initiated implementation as late as August and September 2011, just weeks prior to the close of the joint programme.

Recommendations, MDG-F Secretariat

First, recommendations have been outlined for the MDG-F Secretariat in New York, concerning the management and oversight of future joint programme. Recommendations were then provided for the CISP, as a whole, as well as individual UN agencies; these mainly focus on the continuation and sustainability of programme activities.

One-UN, One-Procedure

As highlighted within the findings, the financial and administrative burden placed on local-level implementing partners was quite extensive, considering that the operations of these organizations are often constrained by limited financial and human resources. Partners were asked to provide separate reports to each UN agency, albeit in a common format, prior to the disbursement of funds. Additionally, funds were not actually controlled at the level of the joint programme, as they were separately handled by each agency; in turn, causing several implementing partners to be subject to twelve different payment schedules.

The recommendation within the mid-term evaluation mentioned the lead UN agency could, in effect, care for the management and disbursement of programme funds. This would simplify the financial management of the fund for all involved, including local-level implementers, who could then submit one financial report to one unified programme, rather than separate UN agencies. This proposal is preferred due to its simplicity (i.e. funds would simply be transferred to one agency and the procedures of that agency would then be adopted); however, it is possible that certain agencies may not agree in handing over their financial autonomy to another UN organization.

It is also possible that each joint programme hold its own financial officer, autonomous from any involved agency. This option would require the building of an institution and related procedures though. Although the addition of one financial officer does not seem overly complicated, it should be considered that reporting formats would also need to be designed, as well as the actual financial management process to be followed.

Implementation Guidelines

Although the joint programme began in September 2008, implementation guidelines were only provided in July 2009. This was a

major constraint as initial delays may have been more easily adjusted if programme staff were aware of the official decision-making and planning procedures. In order to avoid delays and confusion over lines of authority, implementation guidelines should be provided prior to programme inception. These guidelines should also be translated in the local language as soon as possible, in order to provide technical ministries and local programme staff with an acceptable and readily available document when they join the programme.

Additionally, the programme document originally developed for the CISP did not include human and financial resources for (i) communications and advocacy, and (ii) monitoring and evaluation; however, the implementation guidelines noted that both were essential to the implementation and management of MDG-F joint programmes. As the implementation guidelines were only provided in July 2009, both the communications and M&E strategies were late in their implementation, as the CISP needed to reapportion programme funds for staff and work plans. Thus, it would be best to mention the importance in outlining communications and M&E resources and strategies within future 'Requests for Proposals'. This would inform programme designers on the importance of these two oft-overlooked management aspects.

Lines of Authority

The MDG-F should consider if its current management structure is most appropriate—i.e. the organization of a Programme Management Committee, responsible for the overall guidance of the joint programme, as well as the appointment of a Programme Coordinator, selected by the lead UN agency. As mentioned within the MDG-F implementation guidelines, lead UN agencies should not manage the joint programme; thus, limiting the authority the Programme Coordinator has in making technical and operational decisions, as this responsibility lies with the PMC, which convenes on a quarterly

basis. This structure has its limitations, if one considers that technical and operational decisions must be made on a daily basis during the inception phase. Allowing the Programme Coordinator to make technical and operational decisions may lessen the probability of delays during inception; however, this could also diminish other UN agency's sense of ownership in the process. Nonetheless, the power of decision-making would not lie solely in the hands of the Programme Coordinator, but with the entire team, which happened by default.