



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Working out of Poverty Project Ghana Decent Work Pilot Programme

Quick Facts

Countries: Ghana

Final Evaluation: January 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Local Economic Development, Job Creation and Enterprise Development

Evaluator: Susanne Bauer, external evaluator

Project Start: March 2004

Project End: April 2006

Project Code: GHA/04/50/NET

Donor: The Netherlands (957,000 US\$)

Keywords: Pro-poor growth, informal economy, local economic development

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The pilot project 'Working out of Poverty' (WooP) Ghana aims to address the decent work deficits in micro- and small enterprises (MSE), and to design and test a policy instrument for decentralized poverty reduction and pro-poor growth through a pilot project in two districts in the Central region. The pilot project was funded through the Netherlands Partnership Programme of the ILO for a two-year phase.

Present situation of project

The project has been implemented in close cooperation with the counterpart, the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment

(MMYE) and with the active participation of the Ghana Employers' Association and the Trade Union Congress. Various actors of the expanding informal economy in Ghana, both women and men as well as people with disabilities, have been targeted through a range of activities conducted at national and district level. The establishment of the sub-committees for productive and gainful employment (SPGE) in the two pilot districts of Awutu-Effutu-Senya and Ajumako-Enyam-Essiam, Central region, was successful, and capacities have been built through awareness raising, training and innovative action taken.

After a bridging period, the programme continued with funding from DFID Ghana from November 2006-October 2007.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the independent terminal project evaluation was to review project achievements, and to verify results and sustainability of the project at the end of implementation. In more detail, the evaluator was to look at the aspects of efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, and sustainability.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodological approach was to conduct the project assessment along the systemic organisational development approach (semi-structured meetings with all major stakeholders involved). The mission schedule comprised a one-week assignment of field visits and meetings in Accra and in the two districts of Ajumako and Winneba.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The reaching-out to different target groups at district level appears to effectively meet project targets with some 750 trainees in a universe of 150 small business associations (SBA) and about 4500 small business enterprises (SBE). Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) initiatives implemented on a pilot basis are promising, because they represent fairly new methods, tools and partnerships that bear huge potential for sustainability.

The success of the “Ghana Decent Work Pilot Programme/Ghana Working out of Poverty Project” (GDWPP/Gwoop) has become evident from the achievements over the past two years (2004/2005). Activities demonstrate a dedicated team and a highly positive level of cooperation with national structures. The overall range of inputs, outputs and activities is clearly in line with national priorities and Government concerns to take the MSE and Decent Work Agenda forward.

In the view of the mission team for the evaluation, the ILO has an obligation to continue identifying the financial support needed to accomplish project tasks and pursue its rightful initiatives in a long-term prospect. If not, the ILO will lose its credibility in Ghana. At the same time, a continuation for a more long-term intervention under the label of a decent work country programme constitutes more of an opportunity than a threat.

The ILO is already so well established at the national level that it now also has to live up to some of the expectations created through its numerous workshops, policy contributions and activities. The establishment of a proper labour-market information system would be one such expectation, the continuation of the Decent Work (DW) agenda with a focus on youth employment another.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

First of all, in the short-term, a three-month's bridging phase (March – May 2006) was considered essential for a transition from the

GDWPP/Gwoop programme towards a full-fledged DWCP programme. Several steps were considered necessary for the project to harvest its fruits.

To this end, the external evaluator recommended to use remaining funds from the existing budget (an approximate 25% of the budget remained unspent by the end of February 2006) for the following purpose:

- Launch a participatory stakeholder exercise on project planning for a new DWCP
- Complete outstanding project activities (application of Local Economic and Social Development (LESD) Guide; SBE training).
- Conduct a rapid impact assessment exercise (only if time and funds allow).

In the medium- and long term, the ILO should lobby for a funding allocation to accompany the GDWPP beyond the present pilot phase of the Gwoop programme. The division of the project into two phases allowed for a systematic project design with a proper impact measurement framework in place for the entire five-year period. If taking the origins of the ILO's decent work efforts in Ghana (starting in 2001) into account, the estimated ten-year support package to promote decent work (until 2010) would provide a strong case for the decent work agenda to contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Recommendations for the Future: The pilot project would need to keep its current momentum and continue ensuring the sustainability of its activities. It was premature to try to validate impact at the time of evaluation, because of so many activities had either just been started on a pilot basis, or because they still lacked institutional mechanisms in order to become qualitatively sound and sustainable beyond project support.

In a worst case scenario (i.e. without further funding by the ILO and its development partners beyond the end of the project in February 2006), the national partners were expected to overcome this challenge in particular in the two pilot districts, and identify new opportunities for continued support to expand the decent work agenda to more MSE, sub-sectors, trades and regions in Ghana.

Important lessons learned

The following lessons learned were formulated during the mission. They serve for further discussion of indicators, and in how far these may be feasible for future interventions:

Project design: although the two immediate objectives (aiming at national and district level) are consistent with the overall development objective, the logical framework of the project document was barely used for operational planning and monitoring and for project management and delivery. While the list of comparative indicators of achievement was considered appropriate, the list of specific indicators per immediate objective was partly unrealistic and partly irrelevant indicators, rendering the logframe obsolete. As a result, project staff struggled to get a sense of direction for implementation.

Access to target groups, sense of ownership & injection of funds: working through the SPGE in the two pilot districts has meant a fairly good access and outreach to a wide range of final users and beneficiaries of project inputs. At the same time, the sense of ownership had not yet rooted deeply, because of the SPGEs' dependence on external funding. If successes such as additional fundraising and institution-building could be sustained, the SPGEs would have learned an important lesson of result-based monitoring as a means of good practice.

Awareness created & action stirred: the DW approach combined with the LESD concept and PPP arrangements make the overall project concept highly relevant in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) context. Despite the novelty of this integrated and somewhat complex approach, the awareness created among the stakeholders was already evident. If in the future impact could be confirmed over a longer period of time, the awareness would develop into action taken by the stakeholders themselves.

Process & timeframe: The delays and bottlenecks in some parts of implementing the pilot project have complicated the creation of a long-term vision.

Sustainability: For a truly integrated MSE development and LESD approach to succeed

beyond external funding, the performance criteria need to be further developed and improved for future interventions. The lesson learned from that is that the momentum created by the GDWPP/GWooP programme in its pilot phase carries the risk of lack of sustainability if the project is terminated at the end of the current phase.

Impact measurement: impact measurement had not been possible, due to the lack of a simple monitoring & evaluation system in place. A rapid impact assessment would have to use all project data generated at this point, and use them as the baseline for a next phase. Such an approach was methodologically viable, feasible and could be done at low-cost to validate potential impact that might already show, on a wider scale, in the near future.

A number of open questions remained. They needed to be translated into future action:

The good reputation that the ILO GDWPP/GWooP programme has built up within a relatively short time frame was impressive. At the same time, the expectations created through a complex and supply-driven offer of ILO products created a certain lack of direction and sense of realistic targets.

Macro-economic framework and enabling environment: there was no clear focus in the combined efforts of implementing the ILO's DW agenda through capacity-building at the meso-level, and the GPRS framework and the high-level governmental Private Sector Development Strategy at the macro-level. Given the fact that more than one Ministry interacts with the project on the informal economy, it would be important to also verify in what way to coordinate with the Ministry for Private Sector Development, and the BDS desk established at that level.