



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Youth migration, reaping benefits and mitigating the risks – Final Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Pays: *Albania*

Evaluation à mi-parcours: *5/2012*

Mode d'évaluation: *Independent*

Domaine technique : *ED/EMP/MSU*

Gestion de l'évaluation : *Fondes de MDG*

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UNICEF: 623,221 ILO: 1,289,010

IOM: 628,253

UNDP: 789,516

Abstract from the main report

The Youth, Employment and Migration (YEM) Joint Programme (JP) has been overall largely successful in meeting the expected outcomes. Despite an overly ambitious scope, a short time-frame to implement such a complex programme, and the limited amount of resources available under the programme (US\$ 3.3 million) the JP has achieved significant results in a wide range of areas.

Looking at the initial situation analysis in Albania mentioned in the JP document, progress is outstanding on many fronts. One of the first difficulties was to support the development of proper data and statistics regarding employment. A number of mutually

supportive activities were undertaken, such as the creation of an inter-institutional working group of Labour Market Information (LMI) that allowed to develop a consensus and common approach on data collection, definitions and indicators to be used (some 70 indicators have now been identified versus an initial target of 16). Coaching by the CTA on the development of the technical aspects and training sessions supported the capacity development of the government partners, including in the use of software (STATA, SPSS). Further to the training, NES software support still needs to be brought up to speed as it is using MS EXCEL spreadsheets for statistical work – a constraint that should be addressed rapidly so as to render data processing more efficient and manageable across multiple government units. Beyond the technical aspects, stakeholders indicated the importance of the inclusiveness of the process and underlined the fact that it was the first time for them to share information and work together with participants from different government agencies and institutions. The socialisation and better communication across government agencies is therefore a key aspect of building a common ground for working on YEM related issues and on a coherent and consistent approach to LMI.

Further work was done in terms of developing and undertaking the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Attempts to run a LFS were very much

scattered prior to the JP, while Albania has now a continuous LFS, which is conducted on a quarterly basis. Negotiations are ongoing between INSTAT and MoLSAEO in order for the latter to be able to access the LFS data, so as to inform policy making of labour market institutions. Other institutions, such as the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) are also negotiating similar agreements with INSTAT to have access to labour market and other data. A national survey was undertaken to address the nexus between informal employment and migration of young people, and a number of studies and surveys were undertaken during the JP implementation, providing further evidence of existing needs, gaps and knowledge that was incorporated into the management of the JP.

The Youth Employment National Action Plan (YE-NAP) is a critical milestone achievement that counted with the active support of the MOLSAEO. Of the total costs of US\$ 17.5 million, some US\$ 10.5 million have been already pledged and/or made available through measures under implementation by the Government of Albania (and already budgeted), or donor-funded technical cooperation programmes. Further support is given on bilateral basis to projects after the end of the JP but which support the NAP objectives (Austrian funding to UNDP/ILO for Vocational Training and Swiss Development Cooperation funding a continuation of the TEP to UNDP/ILO).

Other positive results include the development of various innovative and creative agreements with national and local level partners from government, private sector, and non-profit organisations. Collectively, these public-private partnerships (PPP) have brought a series of advantages to migrants abroad, young graduates, youth from disadvantaged groups, particularly those who are contributing family workers and engaged in vulnerable employment in agriculture, as well as contributing to improving labour market information by developing a more comprehensive database from both the demand

and the supply sides. The inclusion of the private sector, through private sector intermediary organizations, means that a larger number of vacancies and more suitable profiling of the demand side is available to job seekers, while the public side continues to identify the unemployed people available for employment who require to be supported through employment promotion programmes. At the regional level, this has to be seen in conjunction with the useful work undertaken at the Youth Employment Services (YES) centres that are placed under the responsibility of the Regional Employment Offices. Each of the target regions has an operational YES centre, although in Kukes it has just now been transferred to another location. In addition, the use of partners with proven experience in vocational and life skills training, such as Don Bosco, has contributed to providing these skills to 52 youth selected from unemployed, in informal employment and from marginalised groups in Shkodra.

Major achievements have also taken place in the two target regions of Shkodra and Kukes. The establishment of an operational Regional Employment Fund in Shkodra, although late in coming, is a very important and useful achievement of the JP. Considering the fact that the model is based on that of the European Social Fund, providing the Regional Council with the capacity to manage the REF in this JP is critical in building the capacity of the Regional Council to manage ESF interventions at the regional level in the future, and shows good forward planning in terms of the sustainability of the mechanisms that have been created. In the other target region Kukes, the development of a REF was not possible, and the mitigation strategy consisted in developing a Territorial Employment Pact for Youth (Y-TEP). The TEP was seen as added value and it is now being replicated in other regions of the country and further funding has been secured beyond the end of the JP. Again this shows that the instruments and mechanisms developed have a strong potential to play a catalytic role in the social and

economic development of the country and the regions.

In the two target regions specific activities and outreach were done on the issue of migration and as regards to visa liberalisation. Target villages in rural areas were selected jointly with the regional authorities. The currently ongoing IOM evaluation of its information campaign has given positive preliminary results in terms of the achieving awareness raising among the youth which should translate in attitudinal change. In addition, at the international level and through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs embassy counsellors were trained and six conferences were organised for the Diaspora in order to explore business and return opportunities in Albania (New York, Rome, London, Brussels, Athens and Milan).

Looking only at the quantitative data regarding the figures available under the JP, the impression is that the JP is costly as regards to the number of direct beneficiaries reached. (e.g. 328 beneficiaries of work training programmes, 322 beneficiaries of the Shkodra Regional Employment and Training Fund, 100 graduates placed in local companies, 942 jobs created/ formalised in Kukes, etc.).

The real value of the JP is that it has set the stage for facilitating Albania's pre-accession to the EU by developing strong technical models and mechanisms that can be further utilised beyond the life of the JP. One pitfall in this construction is the lack of proper legislation to allow the MoLSAEO to channel funds to the regions. While a National Employment Fund exists on paper since 1995, it has no resources. Issues surrounding accountability, legislation and procedures are still entangled. It would be extremely useful to the Government if support to legislative changes was provided in order to allow decentralised funding (both from national government as well as from development partners).

In the case of the present JP, the strong personality of the CTA has been quite useful in maintaining the course of action and approach to the JP implementation. As there are two sides to a coin, this may have led to lower participation of the national counterparts. The departure of the CTA with the end of the JP means that a new dynamic must be created amongst the various actors to ensure that the positive process in which they engaged under the current JP is maintained and a new focal point should be identified to pursue this effort, just as many of the mechanisms and activities will also continue beyond the life of the JP.

Rather than the individual activities that were not realised as planned in the initial JP document, the single biggest weakness of this JP (and also of others previously evaluated) is the lack of lead-time necessary to prepare the ground for implementing these innovative and creative activities. Programmes are never implemented in a linear mode. Changes in the context, in the legislation, in the human resources, the degree of preparation of the different partners, the definition of a partnership strategy, the development of a good communication strategy, all affect implementation. At the design level too much focus is placed on the technical aspects (hardware) and not enough on the socialisation and communication necessary to make people receptive to change (software). A more cautious and realistic time-frame for implementation, recognising the lead-time necessary to prepare the critical mass of actors that will be ready to carry out the process, is needed in future programmes. This is to a large extent the primary reason behind the delays that affected JP implementation, in addition to the elections that were held. Another lesson is that it may be useful to develop a specific communication strategy for JPs. In the case of Albania given the ONE UN framework, a single communication strategy has been developed, but it does not sufficiently support the communication needs of the JP, particularly at the regional levels.

The JP has accomplished much in terms of employment, with limited direct effects on the migration component, which appeared to be the focus according to the JP title. The relationship between youth employment and migration remains to be further explored and analysed. It is much too early to consider a direct cause to effect relationship between youth employment and migration at this stage as a result of the JP, since there is no available data to support this claim (lower migration from Kukes or Shkodra or diaspora investments into Albania are yet to be documented).