



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Enhancing the vocational rehabilitation and employment services for people with disabilities in Oman

Quick Facts

Countries: *Oman*

Final Evaluation: *April 2012*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

ILO Administrative responsibility: *RO – Arab States, Beirut*

Technical Area: *EMP/SKILLS*

Evaluation Management: *Laetitia Weibels*

Evaluation Team: *Wael Zakkar*

Project End: *June 2012*

Project Code: *OMA/06/01/AGF*

Donor: *Arab Gulf Fund US\$ 700,000*

Keywords: *Vocational training, rehabilitation, employment service, disabled worker, disabilities*

Background & Context

Project Summary: Purpose, Logic and Structure

The issue of vocational rehabilitation and promotion of employment for 'People with Disabilities' (PwD) is complex as it involves many facets, including the type and extent of disability, rehabilitation structure, vocational rehabilitation, labour laws and practices, societal and employer attitudes, civil rights laws, labour market trends and so forth. In other words, it is an issue that resides at the nexus of social convention and labour market activity.

On this basis, the project of "Enhancing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services for People with Disabilities in the Sultanate of Oman" aimed to implement a number of multidimensional interventions, both upstream and downstream, in order to improve the situation of vocational rehabilitation and employment infrastructure and services for PwD. Some of the interventions implemented aimed to improve the infrastructure, assessment and vocational rehabilitation services, and employment of PwD, whereas others targeted policy development and improvement in legislation and systems for the placement, employment or self-employment of PwD.

In terms of implementation, the project did bring about important achievements, mainly in terms of mapping and analyzing the available infrastructure, services and complementary services in the domain of vocational rehabilitation and employment of PwD. The project also established the basis for a national structure for the administration and placement of PwD.

Moreover, significant added value was instituted by the project at the level of capacity building and the empowerment of national Omani human resources through:

- a) Building the capacity of directors and government representatives on strategies and

mechanisms to integrate PwD into the labour market.

- b) Building the capacity of staff, trainers and managers in vocational rehabilitation centers on principles of the vocational rehabilitation of PwD.
- c) Strengthening the Directors of the 22 Al Wafaa community-based rehabilitation centers on vocational rehabilitation of PwD.

Significant progress has been noted in the building of bridges with the private sector and in exploring the potential for partnership with industrial companies in order to implement initiatives aimed at wide employment of PwD. Progress was also evident in the conceptualization of the specialized vocational assessment unit structure.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The **purpose** of this formative evaluation process is:

- To provide a clear articulation of the main achievements and findings of the project.
- To assess the success of implementing the project activities, and identify activities which as yet have not been implemented, and to suggest ways and timings for their implementation before the end of the current phase of the project.
- To provide a clear analysis of the project's context, and articulate the main challenges and the factors contributing to its success.
- To provide a clear analysis of the projects' partners and how they took ownership of the project, and to recommend partnerships, communication and collaboration methods for future project implementations.
- To assess current impacts and the sustainability of project activities; where possible, identify evidence of pathways and indicators of long-term impact.

- To provide recommendations to enhance the ILO's efforts to support vocational rehabilitation and employment services for PwD in Oman.
- Based on this evaluation's potential recommendations and national priorities, support the expansion of the project while adjusting the objectives, deliverables and activities.

The **primary client** for the evaluation was the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (Beirut), and the ILO constituents, the Omani Ministry of Social Development, the Omani Ministry of Manpower, the other projects' partners and the donor AGFUND. Secondary clients include other units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation (e.g. SKILLS, CODEV, EVAL).

The **scope** of the evaluation covers the project from its inception to its scheduled end of extension funding in June 2012

The evaluation examined the relevance and logical coherence of the project design and its implementation. In particular, the evaluation examined the impact of project activities on supporting the development of national structures for employment, vocational training of persons with disabilities.

Evaluation Methodology

The methodological approach to this evaluation had three phases:

- A desk review of secondary data provided by the ILO ROAS and the project team.
- Field interviews to collect primary data and validate information documented. Interviews were conducted with project beneficiaries and key informants, including field visits to project sites for consultation with project partners and beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

- A presentation of findings and recommendations to stakeholders and partners was organised at the end of the evaluation mission.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The overall assessment of project's performance is positive, though there are some concerns to be addressed if a next phase is promoted.

The project has proven to be extremely **relevant** in the context of the country's current situation. The issue of the rehabilitation and employment of PwD in Oman has been a priority intervention for the past decade for both the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Manpower (previously, both ministries formed a single institutional body, the Ministry of Social Development and Manpower).

It must also be borne in mind that this project takes place within the context of the 'Omanization' policy that has been adopted by the government, which consists of increasingly replacing expatriate staff with Omani citizens in a number of economic sectors. This policy will obviously be translated into an increasing demand for an Omani labor force that could include PwD.

Three priorities were defined for this Decent Work Country Programme: Enhancing the integration of the national labour force into the economy, ensuring the effectiveness of the social dialogue in compliance with ILS, and enhancing social protection. In general, these orientations represent common ground with the project of enhancing vocational and employment services for PwD.

The project has been generally **effective** in pursuing its objectives. The clear standout achievement is the downstream effort of the vocational centres with capacity building and training activities on the principles of vocational training for PwD. This was implemented for the

staff of the Care and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled of the Ministry of Social Development. Three others were implemented for the staff of three vocational training centres under the Ministry of Manpower (Al Sib Center, Sour Center and Ebri Center).

The capacity building inputs for national human resources also revealed the existence of significant activities and efforts, mainly through the organization of the study tour and the training at the ILO Institute in Turin. Participants in that training revealed important added value and the acquisition of important technical knowledge.

Gender mainstreaming was a focus during project implementation. The situation analysis of vocational and rehabilitation services tackled the beneficiaries of existing services in terms of gender. The project's 'needs assessment' also raised the point that females are, to a wide extent, not benefiting from the programmes of the Ministry of Manpower's vocation rehabilitation centres. The project management established contacts with the Directorate of Rural Women in the Ministry of Agriculture, and perspectives on cooperation were discussed. Furthermore, during the implementation of the project, female Omani civil servants, technicians and directors benefited from the training and capacity building activities of the project

The project has been **efficient** in operation. It is important to note that in terms of adequacy, given the ambition of the project and its horizontal areas of intervention, it can be noted that the resources allocated were limited and tightly restricted. Funds were not sufficient to meet the project objectives or the activities related to the project, as most of the donor contribution was allocated to cover the expertise of various missions and support.

The project has produced outcomes with **impact**. For example, progress in terms of institutionalization was concretized through the setting-up of an effective national structure for

the coordination of governmental and non-governmental efforts; i.e. coordinators for the placement and employment of PwD were designated in each governorate.

Finally, **sustainability** of project efforts seems highly likely and national ownership of the project was evidenced by the fact that responsibility for project design was shared with the key national counterpart (Ministry of Social Development). Government contributions, although in kind, represented 57% of the total project budget. The international expert/Chief Technical Adviser for the project was contracted on the approval of the Ministry (however, it is noted that only one expert's name was suggested by the ILO, and in future phases, it is necessary for several candidates to be made available). A National Project Director (NPD) was appointed by the Ministry of Social Development from ministry personnel to work jointly with the international CTA. Office accommodation within the ministry compound was provided for the project unit for use of the CTA and NPD. Progress reports and feedback relating to the implementation of the different project activities were provided to the Ministry of Social Development and the ILO.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the next phase of project implementation continue to horizontally tackle various issues related to the vocational rehabilitation and employment of PwD. A relative vacuum and deficits still exist in key areas such as: policy, standardization, knowledge acquisition, and institutional mechanisms of coordination, infrastructure and advocacy. It should be noted that some of the key interventions required are located in areas beyond the ILO specialization and its exclusive mandate requiring an inter-agency cooperation.

1. Adoption of the international classification of persons with disability, and matching with

perspectives on vocational rehabilitation and employment sectors.

2. Implementation of a national survey on PwD in the Sultanate of Oman.
3. Development of a coherent national policy for PwD.
4. Implementation of a survey: 'Trends in the Employment of PwD in Oman'.
5. Reinforcing the existing institutional mechanisms for coordination and follow-up. This could be accomplished through:
6. Integrating within the national plan for employment (within the next five years) the creation of a specific number of jobs reserved for PwD.
7. Supporting mechanisms that enforce the working rights of PwD.
8. Reconsidering the division of work in terms of vocation rehabilitation between the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Social Development.
9. Rehabilitating the Ministry of Manpower's five existing vocational training centers to be able to integrate PwD.
10. Transforming the Al Khodh Centre for the vocational training of persons with hearing and physical disabilities into a Vocational Assessment Centre.
11. Opening special vocational training centers for some categories of PwD.
12. Rehabilitating of the 22 Wafaa centers by the Ministry of Social Development.
13. Reinforcing trade union ability and willingness to defend the rights of working PwD.
14. Reinforcing the role of the Employers' Union/Chamber of Commerce in activating the employment of PwD in the private sector.
15. Enhancing communication and advocacy and raising awareness of the rights, dignity, working capacity and contributions of PwD.