



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Going back – moving on: Economic and Social Empowerment of Migrants including Victims of Trafficking returned from the EU and Neighbouring Countries

Quick Facts

Countries: Thailand - Philippines

Final Evaluation: March 2012

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Migration

Evaluation Management: ROAP, Bangkok

Evaluation Team: Pierre Mahy

Project Start: 1 February 2009

Project End: 31 May 2012

Project Code: RAS/08/03/EEC

Donor: European Union (Euro 2,199,813)

Keywords: labour migration, return and reintegration, migrant workers

Background & Context

Project purpose, logic and structure

The overall objective of the project is:

“to contribute to the reduction of labour and sexual exploitation of migrants including victims of trafficking through support to a humane return and reintegration process

emphasizing economic and social empowerment.”

The (specific) objectives of the project are:

Institutional Development: “improving the capacities of service providers to return and reintegrate migrants who have experienced labour and sexual exploitation through enhanced coordination and referral among focal agencies and key stakeholders” (Specific Objective 1),

Direct Assistance: “assisting and economically/socially empowering return migrants in Thailand and in the Philippines who have experienced labour and sexual exploitation to protect them from further exploitation including re-trafficking” (Specific Objective 2).

The set-up for implementation was:

- A Senior Programme Officer (PO) responsible for the overall management and implementation of the project based in the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP);
- Two National Project Coordinators (NPCs) and two Administrative Assistants based respectively in Thailand and in the Philippines;

- Technical support and backstopping provided by the ROAP (Migration Specialist, Child Labour Specialist, Gender Specialist, Workers Specialist, and Employers Specialist) and by International and Local consultants.

Present situation of project

At the time of the evaluation, the project had been in execution for more than 3 years (initial contractual period) and was in its final weeks of implementation under a 4-month extension.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The scope of the final evaluation was to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project, with a particular focus on good points and achievements, areas for improvement and recommendations for sustainability. It also aimed at assessing the extent to which the project had taken into consideration the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) undertaken in 2010 and at identifying possible lessons learnt and good practices for learning and knowledge sharing purposes.

Methodology of evaluation

The tools employed were documentary analysis, identification of relevant evaluation questions, structured interviews to elicit the facts relevant to the evaluation questions and synthesis of findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in the report. Preliminary findings and proposed recommendations were presented and discussed during a stakeholder's workshop after the project's final Conference in Manila on 28 March 2012.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Field visits have established that the benefits of the activities have been largely perceived, both at the institutional level as at the level of the returnees. A number of positive factors have contributed to the

successful delivery of activities, in particular the commitment of all project partners, as well as close cooperation between authorities (national, provincial, local) and NGOs especially in the Philippines. Benefits have also been taken on board by implementing partners through exposure to new tools and approaches on reintegration issues.

The "target" of 1.000 beneficiaries has been exceeded, but more importantly will generate a wider impact for example by integrating new returnees into self-help groups arising from the initial interventions.

Two major unplanned achievements need to be highlighted:

- a. In Thailand the signature of a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with the Department of Employment (DOE) in May 2011 which came as a major advance in project implementation.
- b. In the Philippines, institutional development activities were pushed beyond the original plans in supporting the preparation of local strategic action plans to integrate migration in provincial development plans.

Through the "Institutional Development" component, the project has provided a platform to involve many stakeholders in individual training activities as well as in collective initiatives by setting up working groups/teams which are referred to as Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT), Multi-Stakeholders Working Groups (MSWG), Technical Working Groups (TWG), etc.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

To ILO and project partners for the remainder of the project (April-May)

1. Follow-up on all pending issues and consolidate ownership of acquired results. While a continuation of activities appears to be secured at the level of the Technical Working Group of the DOE in Thailand as part of the LoU, the ownership and continuation of the MDT in Petchabun remains questionable. A follow-up

visit to bring together the team one more time before project closure could help to establish a tentative work plan on activities to be implemented. In the Philippines, the project team should assist the provincial government of Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija in the further preparation of their respective migration and development plans.

2. Prepare a comprehensive **Exit Strategy**, clearly pointing out what needs to be done, where, when and by who in the months following the project closure to maintain the benefits of the interventions, further advance the impact of all activities undertaken and suggest options for longer-term sustainability.
3. Report results, impact and conditions for sustainability to higher levels ("Policy/advocacy") of authority.

To ILO (after project end)

4. Consolidate project results through other ongoing and/or future interventions. In Thailand, the TRIANGLE project provides a perfect opportunity to consolidate the achievements of the project in working with the TWG of the DOE.

To Authorities - National level:

5. Further develop activities in the framework of the LOU signed with ILO (Thailand, DOE) and further develop the integrated services model in possibly tapping into the EU Migration project (Philippines, OWWA)

Local/provincial level:

6. Consolidate & expand MDT and/or MSWG while seeking further assistance for capacity building.

To Returnees

7. Organize self-help groups and/or cooperatives/associations to extend assistance

to new returnees as well as guidance to new migrants with the support of the NGOs

8. Seek assistance from other donor initiatives to expand the start-ups generated by the project (with NGO support or group leader initiative)
9. Continue filing legal action against traffickers and/or illegal recruiters collectively

To the European Union

10. Allow the new Migration project (hosted by NEDA) to engage in further support in the provinces where this project has been operating (PHI)
11. Allow the project on Public Finance Management for LGUs to support provincial governments in the development of integrated plans (PHI)
12. Include the returnees as a target group in the "Justice for all" project (PHI)
13. Include Migration as a key issue under the Governance component of the Policy Dialogue Support Facility (THA)

Important lessons learned

The main global lessons learned from the project are the following:

1. Consolidating achievements of earlier initiatives/projects and making best use of existing structures is a prerequisite to push things further.
2. Working with local government units and providing them with mechanisms to cooperate with service providers and national authorities is a major challenge.
3. Involving implementing partners at the project design stage leads to more realistic approaches and ownership of a project.
4. Joint initiatives lead to better results; the engagement of all partners is vital to achieve meaningful results.
5. Government buy-in is a must to achieve impact and ensure longer-term sustainability.
6. Policies largely depend on personalities rather than on established systems.

7. Networking is important to ensure continuous improvements.
8. Traffickers and exploiters will continue to operate. Gaps in law enforcement remain and lacking knowledge of laws among migrants still needs to be dealt with.
9. Short term actions are useful, but creating a more favorable environment provides longer term impact.
10. ILO's support has been vital for putting together strategic development plans.

The project has generated several **good practices** of which the two key ones are:

1. The formalisation of a cooperation proposal at the highest level through signature of a Letter of Understanding as done in Thailand with the Department of Employment. More than just a declaration of good intentions, the LoU confirms the commitment of the Thai government to engage in a number of activities with ILO in order to jointly work on combating illegal recruitment practices and protection of migrant workers.
2. The definition of integrated migration and development strategic plans which formalize the recognition of the importance of overseas migration in the overall development of a region. In the Philippines, the La Union Migration & Development Strategic Plan takes into consideration the perspective of migrants and their families as well as their own associations, local government units at the provincial, city, town and barangay levels, and public/state, non-government and other service providers.