



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Quick Impact Employment Creation Project (QIECP) for Youth through Labour-based Public Works in Sierra Leone – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Country: Sierra Leone

Final Evaluation: 02-27 December 2012

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

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

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Project Start: 01 October 2010

Project End: 31 October 2013

Project Code: SIL1001OUF

Donors: UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF): RBSA

Keywords: Employment creation; local economic development; capacity building

Background & Context

In response to the post-conflict challenges of social and economic development in Sierra Leone, the Government developed PRS II, or the *Agenda for Change (2008-2012)*, which focused on reducing the high level of unemployment among the youth through investments in employment creation. In support of Government efforts the UNCT, formulated a *Joint Vision for Sierra Leone (2009-2012)*, and the 'Quick Impact Employment creation Project (QIECP) is one of the projects under the UN Joint Vision Programme 19 (Youth employment and development). Initially designed to focus on Bombali and Moyamba Districts, it is envisaged that the lessons learned would provide basis for extending QIECP activities.

The development objective of QIECP is to create employment opportunities for the youth through labour based infrastructure development. The three immediate objectives of QIECP are to: i) create productive employment opportunities for the youth within Bombali district; ii) introduce cost effective labour based methods for the execution of feeder roads rehabilitation

and maintenance using private contractors and; iii) strengthen SLRA and the Bombali District Administrations' capacity to plan, manage and monitor feeder roads rehabilitation and maintenance. The QIECP strategy consists of combining up-streaming - policy and planning capacity building of ministries and public institutions and small/ medium private sector, and down-streaming – programmatic interventions that directly create employment. It is expected that by using local resources and labour intensive approaches to contribute to infrastructure and utilities for rural and urban populations, the project will rapidly generate demand for youth labour.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the project has achieved its immediate objectives and the associated factors, including the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and any external factors that have affected the achievement of the immediate objectives and the delivery of the outputs. The evaluation has taken into account all interventions, geographical coverage, and the whole period of the effective implementation of the project, from October 2010 to December 2012.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation methodology consisted of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Two data sources were explored; namely, primary data generated from interviews with stakeholders and some beneficiaries; and secondary data derived from desk review of relevant documents. Data from both sources were verified and analysed and preliminary findings presented at a debriefing workshop attended by stakeholders. The approach adopted assured the participation of ILO tripartite constituents and both internal and external key stakeholders during all phases of the evaluation process. The major limitation of the data sources relates to completeness of coverage in reaching all project beneficiaries; however, the ILO recently conducted an impact assessment of the project and related labour-based activities in the country and the report has provided information that filled in most of the data gaps in this evaluation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Project relevance: The ‘Quick Impact Employment creation Project (QIECP) is one of the projects under the UN Joint Vision Programme 19, which is in support to the Government of Sierra Leone’s (GoSL’s) approach to addressing the problem of youth unemployment in the country. The QIECP is also one of the major outputs of the Sierra Leone DWCP (2010-2012), which the ILO supported the Government of Sierra Leone to formulate, as well as the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) funded through the UN Peace Building Commission. Therefore, QIECP is directly relevant to the strategies by Government of Sierra Leone and the UNCT for addressing the challenge of high levels of youth unemployment and poverty in the country.

Effectiveness of management arrangements: The project proposed that a National Steering Committee would be constituted to govern the project, but due to administrative constraints the Committee has not been formed. The overall coordination of the Steering Committee has been vested in the ILO which reported to the UN Coordinating office in Freetown. QIECP has been effectively managed by ILO Area Office in Abuja, with backstopping support from the ILO Regional Office in Addis Ababa and from Headquarters in Geneva through ILO EMP/INVEST. For the delivery of project interventions the ILO fielded a Project Technical team comprising 1 Chief Technical Adviser, 1 Training Adviser, 1 Decent Work Adviser, and 2 National Engineers.

The project has established collaboration with UN partners - UNDP and UNIDO, UNAIDS and UNFPA. In addition, the project has also collaborated effectively with related ILO projects in Sierra Leone; assisting GoSL to develop strategies and programmes in support of employment creation as one of the four pillars in the Agenda for Change and; supporting efforts by GoSL to promote the Sierra Leone DWCP.

Efficiency of resource use: The QIECP has depended largely on the UN MDTF for its funding, as well as the ILO RBSA contribution, amounting to US\$3,357,013 and US\$250,004, respectively. Through the Project, ILO received support from JICA (US\$33,606) to carry out training for its small contractors and other stakeholders, with focus on: procurement process; finance procedures; audit for contract procedures and records and; service delivery. In addition, and the project received approx. US\$250,000 from the World Bank through NACSA.

The initial project document indicates that QIECP will require a total of US\$6,293,840 over a 3-year period from May 2010. When project implementation actually started in October 2010, budget allocation amounted to US\$1,535,000 for the period October 2010 – December 2011. In the following year, allocation for the project

from January to December 2012 amounted to US\$1,970,237, and as at August 2012, US\$1,174,312.80 had been spent; but most of the balance of US\$795,924.18 has been committed.

The RBSA funding of \$250,004 was used strategically, mainly for staff costs and operating expenses when MDTF fund was being expected. About 25% of the RBSA was used for the training of seven engineers: SLRA -3, NACSA -1, Ministry of Agriculture -1, Bombali District Council -1 and Makeni City Council -1. In addition, all the staff salaries were covered by the RBSA, without which the Project would have closed, pending release of MDTF funds. In essence, the RBSA contributed immensely to Objective 3, specifically to Output 3.1: SLRA staff trained to construct and maintain roads using labour based methods. The project also attracted support from the World Bank through NaCSA, and from JICA to carry out training for its small contractors and other stakeholders. The project has established close working relationship with a number of public sector players including the Ministries of Works, Housing and Infrastructure; Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security; the Sierra Leone Roads Authority; and National Commission for Social Action

Effectiveness ILO interventions: In spite of financial constraints and the late start of the project, in its 2 years and 3 months of operation, the project has achieved a number of milestones in the areas of capacity building of private local and Government contractors, rural feeder road rehabilitation and construction, creation of employment opportunities, increasing incomes of households in communities, and building partnerships.

Impact and sustainability: ILO is currently assisting GoSL develop strategies and programmes to support employment creation as one of the four pillars in the Agenda for Change, under “Economic and Social Integration of the Youth” a cross cutting issue that affects all four pillars of the Agenda for Change. The QIECP also serves to demonstrate the benefits from the provision of improved infrastructure and contribute to the achievement of the employment goals as part of the “inclusive growth” envisaged by the “Agenda for Prosperity”. In addition, the project has worked closely with the Ministry of Works and Government has issued the National Feeder Roads Policy (May 2011) as well as the National Employment Policy, which is awaiting Cabinet approval. The main task of all the stakeholders during the second phase should be the actual implementation of these and related policies in a comprehensive manner.

The QIEC identified women and men living in communities along the roads who would be engaged daily by the contractors, and earn an income, as the most notable direct beneficiaries of the project. The impact on women can be significant, as experiences from other countries show that women constitute

between 20-50 per cent of the total workforce and do face discrimination in hiring and related work conditions.

A recent review of the Sierra Leone DWCP (October 2012) has noted that modest progress was recorded in issues of policy legislation and investment in programmes to create jobs and higher income. Of direct relevance to QIECP among the list of DWCP achievements is that QIECP as one of the outputs of the DWCP has contributed to the creation of productive employment opportunities for youth in Bombali and Moyamba districts through capacity enhancement training, and training courses for local people in local economic development (entrepreneurship, agricultural production, processing and marketing), training of youth for productive employment, etc.

Conclusions

Relevance: The QIECP is directly relevant to the strategies by Government of Sierra Leone and the UNCT for addressing the challenge of high levels of youth unemployment and poverty in the country. It is one of the projects under the UN Joint Vision Programme 19, which is in support to the Government of Sierra Leone's (GoSL's) approach to addressing the problem of youth unemployment in the country. The QIECP is also one of the major outputs of the Sierra Leone DWCP (2010-2012). Therefore,

Management: Overall, the QIECP has been well managed: the ILO has provided effective technical backstopping support to the project through its employment intensive investment specialists in the sub-Regional ILO Office in Addis Ababa, and from Headquarters through EMP/INVEST in Geneva. The ILO administrative management of the project since its inception has been adequate; but protracted delays in the receipt of funds at operational level has dented its effectiveness to some extent. Both the Headquarters and Abuja ILO offices provide financial management of the project funds. At operational level, the ILO has provided Technical assistance through the deployment of an effective technical team. Taken together, the management of the QIECP has been effective and done in conformity with established ILO standards. Except for the limited financial resources available to this project and the delays in receiving funds at operational level, the results of management efforts should have been much greater in terms of impact and achievement of project targets.

Effectiveness: The ILO capacity strengthening interventions have been very effective in two main areas; namely, training of local contractors, engineers and supervisors in LB methods, and enhancing their productive capacity through provision of equipment. However, the Government has been unable to deploy two of its counterpart engineers, as planned, to work

with the experienced ILO team as a strategy for assuring Government involvement and sustainability. The concerned Government Ministries acknowledged this lapse and promised to correct the situation in future.

In terms feeder road construction and rehabilitation, through trial contracts awarded to the trained contractors, the project has demonstrated the feasibility of labour based approach in the trial Districts of Bombali and Moyale. In addition, the approach has been well received in social, economic and political terms, having created employment opportunities and incomes for young people in rural communities, most of them for the first time. What has been lacking is the equal participation of women and men in the construction and rehabilitation of feeder roads under the project in spite of efforts by the project management to ensure gender equity. This requires government and community interventions to remove the traditional practices and beliefs that constitute barriers to gender equality. However, the entrepreneurship training being conducted in support of LED has attracted a substantial proportion of women, and this is also an important strategy for addressing the temporary nature of LB job opportunities created.

Gender inequalities continue to feature prominently at all almost levels of the Sierra Leone society, including access to and participation in education, employment, politics and decision making. Some progress has been achieved in literacy and education for women; but more attention needs to be paid to certain fundamental issues, such as the existing traditional practices that continue to hinder the promotion of gender equality and related matters for the successful implementation of development programmes such as the QIECP.

Apart from collaboration with UN Agencies in the country, the ILO QIEC project has also collaborated effectively with related ILO projects in Sierra Leone, including the project on Child Labour and Sierra Leone DWCP. Through the QIECP, ILO received support from JICA and NACSA through WB funding for introducing LBT. This collaboration with other projects in meeting government objectives shows the projects effectiveness and efficiency in mainstreaming employment creation. This provides a good lesson on how effective collaborate with other partners could enhance the impact of a project beyond its original conception.

Efficiency: Although project funds have been efficiently managed, overall, the project has been underfunded and the start was delayed. However, the RBSA funding came in handy and was used strategically mainly for staff costs and operating expenses when MDTF fund was being expected. The ILO technical team has been efficient and the backstopping support by ILO Headquarters and Regional office has been quite adequate.

Sustainability: In order to assure Government ownership and sustainability of the project activities, it was proposed that a National Steering Committee would be constituted to govern the project, but due to administrative constraints the Committee has not been formed. In its place, the Nation Feeder Roads Committee has played that role. The concerned Ministries have noted this lapse in QIECP management and indicated that this would be corrected in future.

Future possible directions

Besides the rural feeder roads construction, rehabilitation and maintenance, the next phase of the QIEP should explore other entry points for employment creation and local economic development (such as mining, quarrying, renovation and maintenance of public infrastructure, etc) to further the same objectives.

Human and institutional capacity building for engineers, local contractors and supervisors, as well as training of potential entrepreneurs and related LED interventions, should continue to form the basic strategy for achieving national ownership and commitment to ensure sustainability of QIEP activities. In particular, the ILO may wish to intensify inputs into the LED strategy throughout the country.

The ILO in collaboration with the Government and UNCT should expand the range of partnerships in order to achieve the resource mobilization targets and secure additional technical interventions to facilitate labour intensity and local economic development for employment creation.

In future, all Government contracts, particularly those ones that are large and capital intensive, should adhere to a clause of labour intensity before tenders are approved; this is an effective strategy for promoting labour based approach and employment creation for the youth in the country.

The Government, UNCT (including ILO) and development partners focus should be on a comprehensive implementation of the next SL DWCP (2012-2015), with reference to the Review Report (October 2012). The ILO and interested agencies should support the GoSL in the completion of the Labour Force Survey and the establishment and sustained functioning of SL Labour Market Information System.

Further collaboration with GoSL and UNCT in Sierra Leone should be strengthened to address the different aspects of youth empowerment (education & skills development; health and reproductive health; productive employment; gender and human rights) in order to realize the 'Demographic Dividend' for the country.

See full report for Lessons Learned.

Recommendations

1. Having regard to the direct relevance of the QIECP achievements to Sierra Leone's employment challenges and GoSL's policy and programme response, the Pilot phase of the project should immediately move to a second phase of its wider replication in all the Districts of the country.
2. There are certain ongoing project activities which may not be completed at the end of this Pilot (31 December 2012); the ILO should ensure that such project activities are not terminated by providing bridging funds which should also cover the cost of designing Phase 2 of the project.
3. One major challenge for the next phase of QIECP would be the development and implementation of a better focused gender sensitive strategy for enlisting a more balanced participation of women and men in all aspects of the QIECP, including rural feeder roads construction and rehabilitation.
4. The inability of the Government to deploy two counterpart engineers to work with the ILO technical team during the pilot phase, as agreed, was a missed opportunity; Government (through the Ministry of Works) should be ready to deploy a larger number of engineers to work with the ILO technical team and thereby acquire the necessary skills and experience for labour-based approaches to employment creation.
5. It is commendable that Government has issued the National Feeder Roads Policy (May 2011) and the National Employment Policy is awaiting Cabinet approval, which should come soon; the main task of all the stakeholders during the second phase should be the actual implementation of these and related policies in a comprehensive manner.
6. Research should be included in the design of the second phase of this project, both as a means of supporting the implementation of national employment and labour related policies and as a veritable source of data for programme management, including monitoring and evaluation.
7. While acknowledging the immense contributions of the ILO technical team to the success of this pilot project, the ILO should be encouraged to further strengthen the capacity of its team commensurate with the increased workload of an expanded project during the second phase of replication.
8. As part of the next phase of this project, both the ILO and GoSL should design and implement a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy in support of youth employment creation.