



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Joint programme to address violence against women - VAW (Umbrella INT/10/01/UND) - Mid-term Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Bangladesh*

Mid-Term: *February 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent Joint*

Technical Area: *GENDER*

Evaluation Management: *United Nations MDG Fund – (UNFPA lead) Partners: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UN Women, IOM, UNAIDS, ILO and UNESCO*

Evaluator: *Angélica Arbulú*

ILO Project Code: *BGD/10/50/UND*

Donor: *United Nations MDG Fund*

UNDP: 385,200; ILO: 470,800

UNFPA: 4,889,867; WHO: 171,200

UNAIDS: 337,050; UNWOMEN: 590,212

UNESCO: 262,150; UNICEF: 321,000

IOM: 569,899

Keywords: *Gender, Violence*

Taken from the Executive Summary of the MDG Joint Evaluation Report

1. The Joint Programme to address violence against women (JP VAW) is the largest program ever in Bangladesh in terms of number of partners, with a total of 9 UN agencies and 11 National counterparts¹

¹ The participating Ministries are: Women and Children Affairs; Health and Family Welfare; Education; Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Religious Affairs; Labor and

It was approved in July 2008 with a total budget of \$8 million US dollars for a three-year implementation period starting in April 2009 and scheduled to finish by March 2013. The JP was envisaged within the spirit of 'One UN' to make full use of harmonization instruments applicable to the UN system. The PRODOC identified the principles of cost-effectiveness and minimization of transaction costs as a guide for implementation, with strong monitoring as a key element to ensure highest standards in quality.

2. The JP VAW is one of 13 programmes under the MDG Achievement Fund (MDGF) thematic window of "Gender Equality and Women's empowerment" with a total allocation of almost US\$90 million. This window's main objective is to contribute towards achieving MDG 3 by promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

3. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is part of the MDGF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System. Due to the limited time period for implementation of three years, the MTE has been devised as a short-term exercise with limited scope and depth, focused on the utility of the evaluation as a learning tool to improve the programme during its second phase. It also seeks to generate knowledge by identifying

Employment; Youth and sports; Social Welfare; Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment; Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives; Information

lessons learned, weaknesses and best practices. The evaluation will focus on the joint program as a unit, and look at impact, coordination mechanisms, effectiveness and sustainability.

4. The methodology used included literature review, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, a participatory workshop and an in-country debriefing session. A field mission was organized to Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, Kulna, Narshingdi, Gopalganj and Narail project sites. National level staff of the participating agencies, as well as civil society, selected national counterparts, partners and beneficiaries participated in the field work.

5. The MTE was able to confirm relevance of the JP VAW in a National context where Violence suffered by women is common practice and regularly undermines basic human rights, acting as a barrier to achieving the MDG goals.

6. The MTE was able to confirm alignment with National Priorities and the UN Country team. Further, the team believes the JP is “riding on a positive wave” of increasing interest and support from both the government and civil society to fighting gender based violence.

7. Although a mid-term evaluation is early to assess impact, positive effects could already be observed for MDG goals 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, explained in detail in the body of the report. Other significant achievements of the JP VAW have been the creation of the UN Gender Thematic Group (GTG), and the inclusion of Pillar 7, in the new UNDAF, which is very much aligned with the JP VAW. However, given that only 2% of the UN budget has been allocated to this Pillar, the JP VAW will need to ensure proper mainstreaming of gender, with a focus on VAW, throughout the other six Pillars.

Design

8. The project inception was not done through strategic prioritization but rather based on agencies’ existing activities, which translated into geographic dispersion and lack of internal coherence. Competitive advantages and areas for cooperation were not identified, nor a common strategy that each of the agencies

could support with their specific expertise. As a result, the work is done in parallel with yet few benefits to show for the JP approach.

9. The ability to impact on such a wide range of goals is a positive by product of the large number of partners, and this has also contributed towards visibility, and proved crucial in setting up the GTG and securing the Pillar 7. On the negative side, it has significantly increased coordination complexity and administrative requirements. The wide geographic spread is diluting the program’s impact, and making it harder to ensure internal consistency, and quality assurance.

10. The initial document did not take into account the time necessary to set up the program, which together with the process of approval of the TTPs and RTTPs delayed the program implementation by eight months. In spite of this, once the JP team was in place the implementation rate increased considerably, and is currently at 45% of total funds, including commitments up to and including April 2012. Assuming a 3 month no-cost extension, which the MTE recommends, and increased implementation rate as per the normal project life cycle, the MTE concludes it is possible but not guaranteed that the team can reach full financial and substantial implementation. The team will need to revise activity goals and identify priorities to focus during the remaining time.

11. Progress between agencies varies significantly, for this reason the MTE recommends a review of agency implementation rate and staffing level to ensure sufficient resources are in place to guarantee commitments are met in a timely manner and with the highest level of quality. During the MTE some agencies expressed their belief that some activities, as originally envisioned, would no longer be possible within the remaining timeframe. The MTE recommends this revision to focus on activities currently delayed or lacking clear objectives. These activities will either have to be narrowed down, for which the team will need to agree on priorities, or the funds transferred

to ongoing activities that have proven successful.

Coordination and Process

12. The JPMO was set up late and has made great progress towards coordination and integration of such a complex program. Some key tool identified for this purpose are the coordination workshops, the color coded annual workplan and the outcome groups. However, current levels of oversight and coordination are insufficient, with inefficiencies such as overlaps, inconsistencies and duplications having been identified during the exercise. This is at least partly due to having insufficient human resources.

13. The issue of human resources was highlighted by many agencies. In most cases focal points, both or UN agencies and National counterparts, are charged with implementation of JP VAW in addition to all previously existing responsibilities, and are struggling to meet with the minimum coordination requirements, such as consistent attendance to the PMC (for example). Insufficient staffing was particularly evident in the case of the JPMO which as of the MTE –two years after inception- had only three out of the five professional staff on board. Quality of substantive delivery will only be possible through increased coordination, as per the reports' recommendations, to ensure efficient use of JP VAW resources. For this reason the MTE recommends that the JPMO be strengthened to ensure that it can meet its responsibilities. An administrative and Finance Associate, with sufficient seniority and prior experience of UN systems needs to be recruited so that the programme coordinator and the M&E officer are liberated from more administrative type tasks and can focus on their roles. Increased support from UNFPA management will be required to ensure the analysis feeds into strategic decision making at the PIMC and NSC level, and in order to ensure the UNCT can fully benefit of the JP VAW pilot experience. Distribution of responsibilities between the JPMO and the lead agency need to be clearly identified, with the MTE recommending that program

oversight, coordination and M&E be led by the JPMO, which was set up for this purpose.

14. With some exceptions, the JP VAW has not yet secured significant National ownership, putting the sustainability of its achievements at risk. The consultant observed varying degrees of understanding of the program depending on the Ministry, and little to no concrete commitment was expressed to continuing the program activities. The consultant believes that increased involvement of agency heads and the RC would help to increase buy-in. For this purpose, and to strengthen programme coherence and strategic vision, the MTE recommends the programme implementation and Monitoring Committee (PIMC) be set-up. As envisioned in the PRODOC, the PIMC would be based in MoWCA and count meet on a bi-annual basis. It would be count with the participation of agency heads and their equivalent from the national Ministries, the RC, the ERD and the GED. This would strengthen MoWCA and help to align national ministries, in line with the country team priorities as set out in the new UNDAF.

15. The MTE recommends the use of Outcome groups as a mechanism to shift the focus from activity tracking to results. UN lead agencies have been identified for each outcome group, but currently national counterparts do not take part. The MTE recommends inclusion of national counterparts to the outcome groups and identification of national co-chairs. This focus on results should facilitate the identification of priorities, synergies and complementarity. Joint monitoring visits by outcome are encouraged.

16. With the proposed changes agency heads would participate of coordination mechanism twice a year (PIMC), while the focal points would do so twice a quarter (PMC and Outcome groups). It is key to ensure consistent in participation. Staffing capacity should be sufficient to guarantee this minimal level of availability for coordination, a necessary part of joint programming.

17. Although independent monitoring by each agency should continue, JP VAW needs to strengthen it's quality oversight, and ensure analysis of the information compiled is used in

decision making. Clear indicators and time appropriate goals need to be identified to track programme progress. Given the short lifespan of the programme, greater focus needs to be placed on collecting lessons learned and case studies to show impact. As of February 2012 the JP VAW M&E officer was selected as focal point for UNDAF Pillar 7 - M&E - which will facilitate alignment between the two.

18. As of the MTE the JP VAW did not have a communications officer or communications and advocacy strategy. All agencies reported undertaking awareness raising initiatives, with many having developed materials or using materials previously developed. This is done independently and without coordination which is an inefficient method of working which dilutes impact. An advocacy and communications strategy needs to be developed which focuses on 3-4 key messages and ensures consistency throughout the programme, in line with the new UNDAF communication strategy.

Results

19. In addition to the above mentioned achievements, and in spite of initial delays and the inefficiencies identified, the JP VAW has attained important achievements, which can be found described in greater detail under the section 'initial findings, results level'. Some achievements to be highlighted under Outcome one are the adaptation of the ILO code of practice to the Bangladeshi government; as per decision in UNDAF Pillar 7 meeting, 28 February 2012 meeting extensive awareness raising initiatives in regards to CEDAW with the government, both at national level and with local representatives; work with service providers such as lawyers, judges and the police; work on harassment in the workplace with unions and employers.

20. Although greater efforts towards the improvement of VAW related information systems is required, work undertaken under Outcome 1 comes across as key to ensure understanding and implementation of existing laws. The JP VAW needs to put more thought around what are the best ways to promote sustainable and significant capacity building,

which might require focusing on a smaller number of beneficiaries over a greater period of time.

21. Under Outcome 2 the JP VAW has undertaken significant and comprehensive work in the area of protection for migrant female workers. Increased coordination between the different agencies' would strengthen impact and efficiency in this area. Awareness raising activities targeted youth and men, as well as some of the most vulnerable groups, mainly sex workers, women with HIV/Aids and rural poor. Nearly 2,000 religious leaders, and female religious minded women were trained on VAW. In addition, three Interfaith meetings were held. The potential role of religious leaders is considered key, for this reason the MTE recommend increased focus on this target group, and possibly inclusion of follow-up training sessions to strengthen impact and promote application of concepts learned. Lastly, as a result of JP VAW work, in January 2012 nearly 15 million core textbooks, revised for gender sensitivity and balance, were distributed among students country-wide.

22. Under Outcome 3 shelters were set up to provide survivors of violence and former sex workers with a safe haven, together with life skill, literacy lessons, medical and legal aid. Seven hospitals were certified as Women Friendly Hospitals, with staff being recruited and trained to support victims of gender based violence, while providing changes in the hospital's services aimed at increasing women's access to healthcare. It is key for the JP VAW to look into the sustainability of these initiatives as part of the exit strategy.

23. UNDAF pillar 7 constitutes a key mechanism for sustainability of the programme's achievement and application of lessons learned. This will require thorough analysis of the JP VAWs experience, and a coherent and unified advocacy strategy.