



Evaluation Summary



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Independent Final Evaluation

Decent jobs for Youth and Improved Food Security through the Development of Sustainable Rural Enterprises project (YAPASA)

Quick Facts

Country:	Zambia
Final Evaluation:	December 2018
Evaluation Mode:	Independent Final
Administrative Office:	ILO Office, Lusaka
Technical Office:	Decent Work Team (DWT), ILO Pretoria
Evaluation Manager:	Mr. David Dorkenoo
Evaluation Consultant(s):	Ms. Lotta Nycander and Mr. Mushiba Nyamasana
Project Code:	ZAM/13/04M/SID
Donor(s) & Budget:	Sweden (US\$ 8,2)
Keywords:	Youth, Women, Small scale enterprises (SME), Soya, Aquaculture, Horticulture, Marketing Systems Development, Making markets work for the Poor (M4P), Aggregators, Agro-dealers.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Project's official title is *Decent Jobs for Youth and Improved Food Security through the Development of Sustainable Rural Enterprises*. The title "Yapasa" was used in Zambia. It is a

private sector UN Joint Project, aiming at facilitating the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for young women and men in rural areas through the promotion of sustainable micro, small scale enterprises (SMEs). The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are the implementing agencies, working together with the Zambian Government and many other stakeholders and partners. ILO is the lead agency and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is the development partner. In total, the joint budget is USD 8,2m (ILO and FAO). The Project's four outcomes are:

- 1) Improved public perception and demand for soybean products and of rural economy as a source of youth employment (meta-level);
- 2) More enabling business environment for young entrepreneurs to start and formalize businesses in soybean and aquaculture value chains (macro-level);
- 3) More young people respond to economic opportunities in soybean and aquaculture market systems (micro-level); and
- 4) Value chain development partners along the soybean and aquaculture value chains collaborate

and coordinate effectively and efficiently (cross cutting).

Present Situation of the Project

The Project ended on 31 December 2018.

Purpose, and clients of the evaluation

The purposes of the evaluation are an independent assessment on project achievements, recommendations and lessons learned provided to the clients of the evaluation i.e. Government of the Republic of Zambia, ILO and its constituents (Ministry of Labour, Employers and Workers Federations), FAO and the Development Partner (Sida/Embassy of Sweden), and concerned private sector Partners.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation team collected information and data from many different sources, through a mix of methods (both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was drawn from secondary sources). These methods were documentation review; in-depth semi-structured interviews; formal meetings; informal discussions and focus group discussions; e-mail correspondence; and a questionnaire survey. The evaluation team applied methodological triangulation regarding responses and information received which served the purpose of ensuring credibility and validity of the results and cross-checking information to minimize any bias. The evaluation process was participatory. The evaluators could not secure any meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), which was a limitation. This limitation was mitigated by reviewing documentation, and discussing with other organisations and project managers that are partnering with this ministry, including FAO.

The evaluation team interviewed and discussed with Project staff, government ministries and partners organisations in Lusaka. A 9-days field visit was carried out to all the Project provincial areas: Central, Copperbelt, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern and North Western provinces. The team was exposed to many different aspects of the Project in terms of Partners' appreciation of the marketing model, differences in socio-economic and geographical conditions among the rural

population, and more. Preliminary findings were presented in a Stakeholders Meeting on 2 November 2018 in Lusaka, followed by a draft and a final evaluation report.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Yapasa has played facilitative role in stimulating agro-market systems to innovate and serve rural population living in poverty. The Project has also addressed market constraints to stimulate systemic change and help the project participants to identify own solutions to these constraints. It has reached out to farmers and rural youth through its private sector Partners/SMEs with whom working relationships were formed through Service Contracts with specific conditions for accessing grants and other support.

The Project has developed capacity and raised interest among stakeholders specifically regarding aquaculture and the MSD approach. There has been a strong capacity building component involving Project staff as well, through training, exchange visits/study tours, and attendance in workshops, that has helped developed their knowledge significantly in various technical fields. The evaluation has the firm impression that the Partner companies, with few exceptions, appreciated the way the Project team has worked with them through coaching and mentoring. The Yapasa project team has acknowledged that they have received very good technical and administrative support - on a needs basis - from ILO and FAO, respectively.

The evaluation has assessed the validity of the design, strategies applied, major achievement and challenges. It has applied the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria for evaluations, i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and (likelihood of) impact and sustainability. Cross-cutting concerns have been analysed, such as gender equality/gender responsiveness, youth involvement and disability in the programming and field implementation.

In order to help create improvements for the actors on the market that are sustainable, and reach the Outcomes, the **predominant strategy applied is the Market Systems Development**

(MSD) approach/Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P). Through MSD, the Yapasa project has addressed constraints within markets to stimulate systemic change and made efforts to adapt it to the particular context and circumstances in the selected rural areas. Using this strategy jointly was bold but valid. It was a first for the ILO and FAO in a joint rural programme and as such has provided valuable lessons. The results were mixed (see Lessons Learnt for more reflections). Another valid key strategy was to learn and adapt, and move from pilot activities in the first phase, to reach larger scale impact in the implementation phase - closely with private sector companies/entrepreneurs in selected provinces.

Regarding the validity of project design, it was found that the original project design needed to be changed and was thus **not valid at the start**. The Outcomes were revised in each new Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) Matrix developed as the project gained more experience and knowledge about the marketing situation in the provinces. This also necessitated challenging some of the early assumptions in the original Project design - such as the focus on soya cultivation at the beginning. It is also clear that the many changes were a bit confusing both for the staff, stakeholders and the evaluation team

Regarding the Project's strategies, the **predominant strategy used is the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach**, particularly the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P). Through MSD it addressed constraints within markets and also made efforts to adapt it to the particular context and circumstances in the selected rural areas. Another key strategy has been to work closely with private sector companies/entrepreneurs in selected provinces and learn, adapt and move from pilot activities in the first phase, to reach larger scale impact in the implementation phase/s.

Regarding **relevance**, it was found that the Project has been relevant vis-à-vis the relevant national policies as well as the strategies of the relevant development partners. It has been less relevant for youth, the ultimate beneficiaries, in

terms of choice of value chains as this report has mentioned. Learning is an important part of any project, in particular on a pilot project in which new methods and strategies are experimented with. The Project has been able improve on the original design, adopt a flexible approach vis-à-vis the MSD and learn from experiences throughout the various phases. For instance, when realising the soya was not as successful as anticipated, it turned to aquaculture and (latest) horticulture both of which seem to be more feasible for the target group.

As for the Project's **effectiveness**, it has managed to contribute to most of the Outcomes and attracted attention among many institutions and spread knowledge about the marketing systems approach. Regarding its reach of the set targets: The cumulative jobs result was 2,484 at the end of December 2017 (i.e. 93% of the target of 3,000 jobs). During the first six months of 2018 the situation significantly improved with 1,725 jobs (58% of Project target) recorded. However, the proportion of jobs and incomes generated for the actual ultimate target groups (youths including young women) were much lower during this period - than in 2017. The lack of an instrument to target youths in general and young women in particular was still apparent in 2018. This situation could very well change for the better with continued support for the aquaculture and horticulture value chains, and for rural entrepreneurs determined to engage more youth and women - such as catering to the mining canteens which was part of the plan if the Project is to be extended or if a new Project proposal is submitted to development partners or the Government.

Regarding **efficiency**, the evaluation concluded that the Project was not fully efficient in terms of utilising resources at the start. Funds at the inception could have been used to thoroughly explore what priorities and interests unemployed youth have, including young women, and the diverse roles that economic and socio-cultural norms play in the different areas. In hindsight, using resources to acquire more knowledge at the start could have created a more solid platform for

involvement of youth and the reach of outcomes sooner.

Considering the likelihood of impact and sustainability, **impact** was found in the increased knowledge and technical know-how e.g. in the aquaculture field and the business growth of commodity aggregators, agro-dealers and processors, fish feed and fingerling suppliers. The setting up of CADs, as well as the District fish nurseries, appears fruitful as well, and if continued more impact is likely to be identified in this area – as these are appreciated by the farmers and has (among other things) brought agricultural inputs nearer to the remote areas farmers, and has cut the farmers' cost of doing business. As for the likelihood of **sustainability** in meeting the farmers' and entrepreneurs' needs (for improved and more efficient production and marketing with e.g. the systems of input delivery placed nearer the farmers) - this will depend on many factors including Partners willingness to continue the CAD arrangement and District nurseries. It may also depend on potential future support from DoF and DoA, and other government agencies, to serve the entrepreneurs/youth.

Regarding the Project's consideration for adhering to gender equality issues and women empowerment it was found: a) **Gender responsiveness** in Yapasa is mainly manifested as encouragement of women to take part in soybean, fish as well as horticulture activities and also ensuring a gender balanced project team for which the Project is given much credit. Still, the participation of youth, including young women, was lower than anticipated; b) the Project would have benefitted from undertaking field socio-economic studies at the inception; and c) the gender analysis report produced is not available. More in-depth knowledge from the start could have helped the Project to better determine the needs and meet the divergent roles and interests that women, men and youth have in rural areas and among different ethnic groups that might impact on their level of participation in value chains before these were selected.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

- 1) The UN agencies (ILO and FAO) should increasingly target/design catalytic projects that empower and enhance the youth's productive participation in value chains on their own terms.
- 2) The Government of the Republic of Zambia should promote financial products catering to youth in agriculture and consider allocating more funds to the District of Fisheries to improve operations and enhance the output of small-scale farmers in the aquaculture sector.
- 3) Implementing agencies and projects supporting youth oriented causes in diverse socio-cultural settings in rural areas - should ensure that adequate information (participatory field studies, gender analysis) is available about the people who will be involved/affected prior to major decisions being made about directions, activities and funds.
4. In the future, private sector projects (similar to the one evaluated), as well as implementing and development partners should ensure that gender analysis studies are carried out and recommendations are appreciated and followed - because gender relations to a large extent still determine access to assets and resources as well as decision-making – and are likely to have an impact on governance of value chains.
5. To increase relevance of future similar development projects the implementing and development partners should appreciate that young people, living in poverty in rural areas, are disadvantaged and need various other support to farm, such as funding and intense capacity development and or skills training. The basics for empowering them should be that they are market players in their own right and have with different perspectives that distinguish them from those of their parents/caretakers.
6. A central concern in any new project design catering for the youth in rural areas should be to facilitate overcoming the digital divide and ensure that ICT possibilities are fully explored and if possible implemented. This could help raise their interest and productivity and assist them to exploit other niches e.g. logistics and/or

agro-processing/packaging in the agricultural value chains