



# Evaluation Summary



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## *Strengthening skills development systems to promote access & employability especially of young women and men Final evaluation*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia</i>
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	<i>October/November 2017</i>
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>DWT-Pretoria; CO-Dar es Salaam; CO-Lusaka</i>
<b>Technical Office:</b>	<i>ILO Skills; YEP</i>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<i>Federico Negro</i>
<b>Evaluators:</b>	<i>Tony Powers (Lead); Peter Beck (Mozambique); Idrissa Mshoro (Tanzania); Bright Sibale (Malawi)</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<i>Government of Norway (NOK 33,500,000)</i>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>skills; apprenticeships; RPL; TREE</i>

### Background & Context

#### **Project purpose, logic and structure**

This project covered activities implemented in five African countries – Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia – funded through a Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the ILO and the Government of Norway.

The focus of these activities was the skills development systems and programmes in the target countries. The project also supported ILO global activities and the development of “products” aligned with skills systems. The intention of this element of the project was to prepare and test new tools, organise learning forums, and produce and disseminate new learning materials. The project reflected the common priorities of the partners, which both emphasise the importance of skills as a pathway to decent work.

It responded to identified needs related to the skills development systems in the target countries, which are insufficiently responsive to current and emerging skills needs, often use outdated approaches, and do not give enough attention to work-based training approaches, including apprenticeships. They also do not meet the needs of the many people in these countries who have developed their skills in informal ways.

The project focused primarily on developing the capacity of stakeholders to implement reforms and to modernise their skills systems and institutions. This involved piloting new arrangements in some locations, which gave stakeholders practical exposure to new methods.

#### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

This final independent evaluation of the project examined its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The clients of the evaluation were ILO management, technical specialists (in HQ and the field), project staff, tripartite constituents and implementing partners in the target countries, and the donor (the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). It was conducted in October and November 2017 and covered the full two-year period of the project and activities in all five countries (Uganda and Zambia were only added to the project in 2017 and so activities were only delivered in the second half of 2017.) An international consultant led the evaluation and conducted field visits to Geneva, Uganda and Zambia. National consultants conducted the field visits in the other three countries.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

### Relevance

★ The project directly supported the ILO's work in building effective national skills development systems and, in particular, the delivery of work-based training – a priority for the participating countries and therefore highly relevant. Formal “Quality Apprenticeship” systems were a focus in some locations, while others sought to improve less formal work-based learning in rural locations or to offer a pathway to skills recognition via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

★ The project aligned well with the development goals and priorities of the donor, the Government of Norway. Its Education for Development White paper emphasises skills development systems, apprenticeships and RPL. It also gives priority to a number of other issues that this project directly or indirectly supported including agricultural training and food security, and skills for the energy sector.

★ The project was relevant and timely for all participating countries. Building on previous ILO cooperation, *Malawi* wants to expand its Work Integrated Learning (WiL) model which it sees both as a means of improving the livelihoods of the rural poor and as a pathway to economic

diversification. *Mozambique* is concerned about the uneven benefits of its economic growth and wants to enhance training system delivery in poor rural communities. *Tanzania* wants to build on a successful apprenticeship pilot (supported by the ILO) and turn it into a full-scale national programme. *Uganda* needs assistance to overcome some institutional barriers, finalise its National Apprenticeship Framework, and more fully understand the steps required to implement the system nationwide. *Zambia* is committed to introducing a range of work-based learning options and needs support to develop a framework and implementation plan.

### Effectiveness

★ *Overall*: The project has delivered most of the planned outputs and achieved its intended outcomes, despite a number of implementation difficulties and delays. The flexibility given to the ILO through the Outcome-Based Funding was an important factor in this. Being able to shape a project package to fit the current needs of the participating countries gave the ILO the capacity to provide a timely response to the stakeholders' most pressing priorities in skills system development, motivating them to fully engage as project partners.

★ *Malawi*: The expected outcomes from project activities were the institutionalization of WiL and RPL into the Malawi TVET system and the enhancement of stakeholders' capacity to advocate for demand-responsive training. Results in these areas were generally good, though progress in the RPL component has been slower than anticipated. Local stakeholders are now independently championing the adoption of WiL as an effective part of the national training system. From the learners' perspective, the project has not only trained them in horticulture, but has directly linked them with markets.

★ *Mozambique*: In Mozambique, the project faced a number of challenges that disrupted delivery, including the premature exit of the initial training provider, Bilibiza Agrarian Institute of Cabo Delgado (IABIL), and staff turnover and recruitment delays in the ILO's

local project team. Despite these challenges, the project has achieved its intended outcomes. The TREE programme has been successfully established and demonstrated in the Cabo Delgado province, a region that faces significant challenges in the provision of training. By harnessing the skills and knowledge of experienced local craftspeople and entrepreneurs and using them as local trainers, the project has allowed communities to lift their overall skills base, expand their production and increase participants' income generation. The formation of 12 cooperative producer associations across the participating communities is having a positive effect on collective production and income generation.

★ *Tanzania*: The project has achieved good results against all planned outcome and output indicators and the funds made available through the partnership enabled action that built on an earlier small-scale pilot and made real progress towards the institutionalization of apprenticeships in the Tanzanian training system. While the apprenticeship system is still in its infancy, the understanding and capacity of the key institutions and social partners have been significantly enhanced nationally, both in mainland Tanzania and now, after this project, in Zanzibar.

★ *Uganda*: The project in Uganda was designed to provide a short burst of activities to overcome the stalled progress in apprenticeship development in the country. Skills system reform had been on the local agenda for some years, but progress in implementing these reforms had been slow. As an external actor, the ILO was able to work with the constituents to help overcome institutional blockages and to offer technical expertise to support the development of the apprenticeship system. The finalization of the National Apprenticeship Framework and its submission to Cabinet was a major achievement of the project. This document translated the broad policy intent articulated in earlier plans into a detailed action plan that defined roles, responsibilities and procedures.

★ *Zambia*: Like Uganda, Zambia had less than a year to implement its project activities. The project has helped to initiate the reform process, but progress has been limited so far. At the time of the evaluation, a draft framework for Work-Based Learning was nearing completion.

★ *Global Component*: The global outputs of the project were all relevant to the ILO's work in skills development. Targets and performance expectations set out in the results framework for this component were met. Overall satisfaction with the delivery of its workshops was very good and the information products available on the ILO's Knowledge Sharing Platform are relevant and of high quality. A multi-media learning package on RPL was nearing completion and should meet a growing global need.

#### *Efficiency*

★ Progress in the first year of project's implementation was slow. At a country level, advocacy work, negotiations and discussions may have been taking place behind the scenes, but in terms of the delivery of tangible outputs there was not much to show by the end of 2016. A review of project status in November 2016 resulted in only one country submitting a report that aligned with the project's logical framework. Most worrying was the slowness to use the allocated funds – as at February 2017, with only ten months of the project time remaining, only 10% of the funds had been expended.

★ To improve the rate of delivery, the March 2017 review meeting did a number of things. First, the project's reporting framework was updated. It basically established a "to do" list for the participating countries linked to the logical framework and including targets to be met. Second, a standardised reporting format was introduced that closely monitored performance against these updated performance indicators. Thirdly, following consultation between skills branch and the affected Country Offices, two additional countries were added to the project (Uganda and Zambia). The time available to implement activities in these two countries was

limited, but these fitted well with current priorities and could be initiated immediately.

★ The project's management arrangements – which were mainly decentralized, but were supported by staff in Geneva and Pretoria – generally worked well, although there were some complications which affected overall efficiency. First, the loss of the Pretoria-based Senior Skills Specialist left a gap in local expertise and institutional memory. Second, the rather complex “chain of command” in place meant the processes for making certain decisions or adjustments to project plans were not straightforward.

★ Overall, despite these issues and some inefficiencies identified at the country level (see body of the report), the project's efficiency was satisfactory. In terms of cost-benefits, it has delivered good outcomes in five countries within a relatively modest budget of US\$4 million. The fact that the project was able to build on previous ILO development work was an important factor – the project was generally not starting from scratch and so harnessed existing momentum.

★ While not a primary measure of the efficiency of this project, over 500 people have benefited from training through its pilot programmes. These pilots have increased the likelihood of programmes being scaled up and seeing many thousands more trained.

#### *Sustainability of results and likelihood of long term effects*

★ The nature of the Outcomes-Based Funding provided through the partnership lends itself to the attainment of more sustainable results and longer-term impact. This is because the activities that are supported have generally been identified with a view to maintaining continuity. They were all built on previous interventions and were designed to take the next steps in the achievement of agreed policy reforms and long-term plans.

★ Furthermore, the country-level activities all offer good prospects for a sustainable effect because they all focus on systemic reform. This contrasts with projects that fund training delivery in a one-off exercise – an approach which offers an immediate and observable result, but no

sustainability at all. Though the pace of progress will be influenced by the continued availability of funds and technical support provided in the future, the project has at least built pathways for reform in the target countries. Its global component has complemented this effort and extended the message of reform to a global audience.

### Recommendations

1. For all future Outcome-Based Funding projects, establish clear protocols or rules that allow for the timely adjustment of overall project strategy and budget in response to any issues in implementation identified in performance and financial reports.
2. Given the limited timeframe available for projects of this type (generally two years or less), attention should be given to preparing a detailed cash flow forecast for planned project outputs and activities as part of the initial design phase.
3. Enhance the level of regional interaction in projects of this type by building into their design more opportunities for collaboration, the exchange of ideas and peer reviews among the participating countries.
4. Consider including in the results framework some “downstream” outcome indicators (e.g. sustained employment, increased income generation) that measure progress towards broader development goals and which ensure that project remains focused on the “big picture” and not just the execution of tasks.
5. In all projects focused on skills system development, continually reinforce the need for these systems to be inclusive – in terms of gender, but also disability, education level, location and other disadvantaged groups.