



Evaluation Summary



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Final Independent Evaluation of SIDA's support to ILO projects in the field of employment promotion with an emphasis on youth employment with particular focus on Phase II (2016- 17) of the ILO-SIDA Partnership Agreement (2014-2017) on Outcome 1

Quick Facts

Countries: *Cambodia, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, Paraguay and Tunisia, plus a Global Component.*

Final Evaluation: *16 April 2018*

Mode of Evaluation: *Final Independent Evaluation*

Administrative Office: *EMPLOYMENT, Geneva.*

Technical Office: *EMPLAB, Geneva.*

Evaluation Manager: *G. Thijs/U. Eisele, EVAL.*

Evaluation Consultant: *Theo van der Loop (International Consultant)*

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Keywords: *National and Regional Employment Policies, Youth Employment, Jobs, Final Evaluation, Inclusive growth.*

Background & Context

Context of the ILO-SIDA Partnership

Youth employment represents a global challenge in the world of work and remains a top priority concern in most countries across all regions. The ILO has been addressing youth employment challenges in a number of strategic key decisions and documents related to this challenge. Against this background, over time, the ILO has increasingly been requested to provide support in

the field of youth employment to its member States. The present Evaluation Report concerns the Final Independent Evaluation of SIDA's support to ILO projects in the field of employment promotion with an emphasis on youth employment with particular focus on Phase II (2016-17) of the ILO-SIDA Partnership Agreement (2014-2017). This Phase II supports Outcome 1 of the 2016-17 ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) on "More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects".

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and strategic fit, coherence and validity of design, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of ILO's programme approach and interventions at global and country levels, and to provide inputs to the design of the next ILO-SIDA partnership agreement. The ToR for the present evaluation specifies that the evaluation should include three components: (1) a synthesis study analysing evaluation reports of former employment policy and youth employment interventions in the period 2012-17; (2) a performance evaluation of all project components covered under Phase II of the current partnership; and (3) an ex-post analysis on sustainability of results and likely attribution of selected previous SIDA funded projects related to employment policies and youth employment dating back until 2012.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation is based on a desk review, meetings with ILO staff in Geneva, three in-country missions to Moldova, Morocco and Cambodia, meetings with

ILO staff in DWT/ROAP in Bangkok, and a series of skype meetings with stakeholders undertaken by the international consultant. While the 2016-2017 phase of the ILO-SIDA Partnership involved 6 countries, the total number of countries involved in the Partnership since 2012 is 24 (see Table 3.1 of the complete evaluation report).

Main Findings & Conclusions

The main findings and conclusions of the present Final Independent Evaluation will be presented below according to the six Evaluation Criteria specified in the ToR.

1) Relevance and Strategic Fit

The Synthesis Review in Chapter 3, based on three earlier evaluation reports, established that the relevance of the strategy and the interventions is quite high in terms of the needs of the recipient countries, in terms of the priorities of the Swedish Government as well as in terms of the priorities of the ILO. Sufficient attention was clearly paid to the needs of the governments, and partly also to the workers' and employers' organisations although they hardly feature among the findings or the recommendations of these reports.

The Performance Evaluation of Phase II (2016-17) in Chapter 4 found that the programme as well as most of its project interventions are very relevant to the achievement of Outcome 1, especially related to technical backstopping on employment strategies, and knowledge exchange and sharing, with great differences between the six countries involved in this phase, ranging from initial support for the development of a National Employment Policy (NEP) in Tunisia, towards building on existing NEPs through implementation of action plans and regionalisation (i.e. Cambodia and Morocco). Regarding support to the school to work transition of young women and men and to knowledge products, a series of activities have been undertaken and assessed as relevant in this report.

The institutionalized forum where the tripartite constituents express their needs concerns the tripartite consultation process organised by ILO Country Offices resulting in the usually five-yearly

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP). In most of the DWCP's for the countries in question there are priorities that are particularly relevant for the present programme. The trade union situation is very different in the six countries, ranging from one centralized union in Tunisia and Moldova, to varying degrees of fragmentation in the other four countries, where their participation in country interventions is quite minimal in particular at the regional level. In large part this can be attributed to a perceived lack of capacity at both levels. With respect to the employers' organisations, either their organisations or their individual members were actively involved in selected Partnership interventions. National tripartite fora are important as a platform for discussions but they do not always have a decisive impact on policy development.

The selection of the six countries for the 2016-17 phase was quite a long, step-wise process, initiated by the PRODOC (2016) specifying no less than five selection criteria. It could not be established why Jordan was included in the Partnership for the third time and Cambodia and Morocco for the second time, while the other three countries are selected for the first time. Tunisia was added only in 2017 after explicit requests from the Tunisian government. The project and programme interventions were relevant both for the Call for Action (ILO 2012) as well as for the conclusions of ILO's second recurrent discussion on employment (ILO 2014a). Furthermore, the partnership was very relevant to the various national and international development frameworks, including UNDAF and SDGs. In some countries the European Union plays an important role, for example in Moldova and Jordan. ILO's work is also very relevant for the Global Deal "Together for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth", an initiative from the Swedish Prime Minister.

2) Coherence and Validity of Design

On the whole, coherence of design could have been much better and this is especially related to the structure of the programme and the lack of integrated M&E systems. The 2014-15 evaluation recommended to adopt a "programmatic approach" based on a broad participatory national consultation process.

With respect to the countries, the continuity is quite limited as only five out of the total 24 countries were selected more than once, of which only Jordan was involved in all three phases. Nevertheless, there were several instances of continuity, such as the regionalisation based on an existing NEP developed in an earlier phase.

In evaluating the coherence of design of the 2016-17 phase we need to keep the nature of the programme in mind, i.e. its piloting function. With a budget of US\$ 2.37 million for 6 countries and a global component, the intention was explicitly to pilot activities on “What Works for Youth Employment” in different contexts, as well as catalysing other activities or projects at country level. With respect to the various phases of the Partnership since 2012 one of the main lines of continuity was through the Global Component as the countries kept on changing almost every two years. The selection of focus countries was in part adequate to meet the project objectives, which was in particular to have a variety of contexts that could feed into the database on “What Works for Youth Employment”. However, none of the countries are Low-Income Countries, and most of them are relatively small in terms of population size. Lastly, no countries were selected from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia or the Caribbean. Tunisia was included in a later stage (early 2017). The flexibility of the outcome-based funding modality made such a transfer possible.

The project design, with a global component and six country interventions, was logical based on the objective of piloting what works in youth employment, but the resources were thereby spread thinly. It was decided not to have a full-fledged Chief Technical Officer for the project to save resources, but a coordinator for the global component who could also liaise with the country initiatives. At country level, national programme coordinators were appointed. The timing was relatively short with a project period of two years only (2016-17), which was further reduced by administrative procedures, country selection and in-country staff appointment procedures. The project outputs link causally to the intended outcomes/objectives specified in the PRODOC. It

would have been better, though, if a comprehensive Log Frame would have been included in the PRODOC instead of one that only relates to the Global Product. As it happens, separate PRODOCS were developed for each of the six countries.

The capacity of various project’s partners were only partly taken into account in the project’s strategy and means of action. The countries were generally chosen when the national government was involved in developing a NEP. However, the capacities of regional governments, and (regional) employers’ and workers’ organisations were not as such taken into account, and many stakeholders suggested that these required substantial capacity building efforts. In addition, employers’ and workers’ organisations are often involved in quite separate types of project intervention, and rarely are involved jointly.

The coherence and the complementarity between, on the one hand, the global component, and on the other, the six selected countries is very clear. The global component offered a service platform to support country level interventions by providing a wide range of resources. There was also some degree of feedback of the country activities into the global products’ development, but there was little contact among the six countries.

3) Effectiveness

The 2012-13 evaluation concluded that the partnership was effective in achieving the proposed outcomes either in terms of Global Products or country-specific results, and the 2014-15 also was quite positive on effectiveness. The countries in majority started to develop, or strengthened their NEP and YE Policies and National Action Plans (NAP) due to the projects intervention. Both evaluations found that the Partnership was able to link to a number of other ILO projects and resources and to interventions funded by other donors which led to synergies and cost-sharing. In addition, ILO resources have been used for leveraging or as “seed resource”, and a number of examples have been provided in the report.

Concerning the cross-cutting issue of gender, it was found that although in the project’s conception a

gender strategy was not particularly detailed, in its implementation gender issues were generally integrated in a satisfactory way. The IndevelopAB (2015) review underlined enhanced attention for gender mainstreaming and recommended lightly earmarked funding for gender equality programming whereby the modality for support could be through the funding of the Women at Work (W@W) Centenary Initiative. In addition, as a consequence of the recommendations on this initiative, SIDA has increased its support to RBSA and supports the W@W initiative.

The 2016-17 Phase of the partnership has achieved the majority of its planned objectives with an estimated delivery rate of over 98% in April 2018, which was in September 2017 just over 66%. The project was extended with 3 months until the end of March 2018. The management capacities and arrangements of the Partnership have in most cases clearly contributed to the achievements of results. In Geneva, the partnership is embedded in the Employment and Labour Markets Branch (EMPLAB) within the EMPLOYMENT Department which has been managing the programme well. There was no single CTA, but the international ILO staff who is coordinating the global component was also compiling the regular progress reports from the six countries into one comprehensive report. The regional ILO offices provided technical inputs and at times also more management-like roles. At country level, the national programme coordinators have managed their programmes well, although they are sometimes overburdened with responsibilities in other projects. The counterparts at country level, invariably the ministries of labour, have shown themselves motivated and willing to manage their side of the programme, while Inter-Ministerial Committees have proven to be important venues for coordination and management.

In order to pilot 'What Works for Youth Employment', it was good to have a diversity of countries in combination with a global component that was to support the country initiatives and to compile best practices and lessons learned on YE. For that, the drafting of a report that collects such good practices and documents lessons learnt would

be one of the most effective products for the realization of the programme's goals.

The project yielded several unexpected, or unexpectedly successful, results, such as the UNJP on Youth in Cambodia, the On-the-job training of youth in Moldova, the great support for the REP of the Regional Council (RC) in one region in Morocco, the attention for the involvement of the private sector, and the enthusiasm of the Moldovan Employers' Organisation on the awareness campaigns on Rights@Work.

The performance-monitoring system showed several flaws such as the Log Frame in the PRODOC which only covers the Global Component and the lack of a Theory of Change. Concerning reporting, ILO compiles detailed progress reports every three months, and annually brings together the detailed country and global component reports into the 'Systematization Report'. However, SIDA prefers a different type of reporting, which is less on country details, and more on the contribution of the partnership to overall Outcome 1 which requires a clear narrative and a Theory of Change. Concerning monitoring SIDA has been using a hands-off approach in recent years but intends to move towards more hands-on involvement for the new partnership.

The cross-cutting issue of gender was well-covered in most components of the Partnership, including gender mainstreaming in training modules, collection of sex-disaggregated data/indicators, identify women as one of the target groups of specific policy interventions, etc.

4) Efficiency

In 2012-13, the Global Component was more an entity in itself focused at the development of what were called 'Global products', without a coordinating task. Generally, coordination was considered relatively weak being divided between CEPOL and YEP, and in 2014-15 the EMPLOYMENT department was added as the ILO Administrative Office. The Partnership included 10 countries in 2014-15, and it was managed and monitored as 10 different and independent

interventions or projects (plus one Global Product). In relation to centralized-decentralized management models the two evaluations do not agree in that the 2012-13 study concluded that a mixed model will be needed while the 2014-15 evaluation leans much more towards the decentralized model identifying it as a Good practice.

On overall efficiency both ILO evaluations were very positive, in particular based on the good relationship between the resources spent and the high quality products which were generated, and on the fact that the project delivered most of the expected products on time, even though two years were considered a very short time to implement the initiatives. Both ILO evaluations were also highly positive on the Outcome-Based Funding Modality (OBFM) allowing for greater flexibility in the different activities' programming, in the administration of funds and in the creation of synergies and links with other country partners and projects. Communication between countries and project management was not optimal, and in combination with the earlier conclusion that the Partnership was managed and monitored as a series of separate and independent interventions plus one Global Product, it is clear that not much was created in terms of synergies among country interventions, although there was potential for synergies within countries. The overall findings on monitoring and evaluation are that, at the level of the countries/global components, basic M&E systems were in place, but that the links between the different systems were mainly lacking. Therefore, it was broadly recommended to strengthen the Results Based Management (RBM) system and the reporting-oriented approach.

Initially (in 2009-2011) the funding of the Partnership was centrally controlled in HQ Geneva with one Program Manager in Geneva, but this was abandoned with the pressure from within the ILO for decentralization of funding to empower country offices. Instead, ILO's EMPLAB is coordinating the programme. In Geneva tasks were then refocussed on backstopping, quality control and the global component. Country offices have been quite intensively supported by relevant employment and youth employment specialists based in DWT, RO

and HQ Geneva, but project staffing at the country level seems to have been scant.

In terms of expenditures, personnel in general takes up the largest part of the budget with 57% of which 22% is for international staff/consultants. Spending on seminars, training and other activities seems to have generally been done efficiently taking up just 20% of the total budget. As we have seen in the above, delivery rates are high with an average of over 98%, and the balance remaining of the budget is relatively small indicating that project funds and activities have been generally delivered in a timely manner. However, different types of delays are identified such as start-up delays, changes in key government staff, delayed decision making at the regional level, other ministries' involvements, and delayed availability of government budget.

While the Global Component coordinated the progress reporting with the individual countries, there were rather limited links between the countries. Getting together to learn from each other was not really stimulated in the programme because international meetings take up relatively large parts of the budget. Exceptions were the Youth Academy in Turin, and a few experiences were identified with cross-fertilisation among countries. In most countries the projects also acquired funds from other sources than SIDA. The PRODOC presented a broad Risk Analysis for the project as a whole, not for each component and country. The three types of risks identified affected the implementation of the Partnership quite substantially at one point or another.

5) Impact

All the data presented in this report show that a project period of up to two years can be considered as a relatively short time to be able to arrive at impact. Nevertheless, progress has clearly been made, and capacities were increased, tools developed and policies started or improved, while Decent Work and youth employment have gained in importance in national development agendas in several countries, and NEPs and YE Plans have the potential to promote job creation. The capacity of tripartite constituents was built through several

modalities in the 2016-17 Phase, such as training seminars and workshops, the tripartite dialogue processes undertaken for the development of DWCP's and for NEP and REP development, mentoring and guiding the consultation process, strengthening of various institutional mechanisms, and Training of Trainers.

The Partnership has certainly contributed in different ways to the strengthening of the enabling environment at country level, in terms of the development of laws, policies, technical capacities of national and regional stakeholders, local knowledge through the national experts contracted, and of the mind-set and motivation of stakeholders. The support of the Partnership is without exception very much appreciated by stakeholders, and almost all have indicated with clear reasons that the support should be continued in the next phase and if anything they require more extensive support.

6) Sustainability

In the course of the three phases of the partnership under study, there was a positive tendency towards enhanced sustainability and ownership. The 2012-13 evaluation found that the sustainability of results was one of the issues of major concern in the partnership, whereby the possible allocation of funding in the next phase seemed of critical importance for sustainability and for maintaining commitment, indicating that ownership was not fully rooted yet at that phase. The 2014-15 evaluation was more positive and underlined that the project has taken important steps to achieve sustainability, which included adapting activities to national contexts, developing close relationships with key national stakeholders and institutions in all countries, and involving them in project activities and strengthening national institutions, implying that ownership had been enhanced.

The Performance Evaluation of the 2016-17 Phase concluded that sustainability was relatively strong because of the focus of the programme on, firstly, getting the NEP's institutionalized, and then, on providing support for the implementation of these policies both through NAP's and through REP's. To be sure, the sustainability of the NEPs is higher

than those of the NAPs and the REPs because with respect to the implementation at both national and regional level the key national and regional stakeholders involved all indicated that more support is needed from ILO-SIDA and others for these processes to materialize, whereby often one area was singled out as pivotal: capacity building of the organizations involved. As a global programme, the sustainability rests particularly on the collection of best practices and lessons learned in youth employment in all these countries at a central place for every government to be accessed and see What Works under which circumstances and in which stages of development.

Although the programme also pursued enhanced capacities and more informed and effective engagement of constituents, its intention was more to pilot What Works in Youth Employment than to guarantee sustainability within any particular country. In fact, the country that benefited three times in a row, Jordan, has not been able to arrive at a high degree of sustainability and was probably chosen each time more because of the international concern related to the refugee crisis and the large number of youth among them, than because of concerns for sustainability. In fact, the country that has the highest degree of sustainability was involved in the Partnership for the first time in 2016-17, i.e. Moldova, and at least part of that sustainability is due to the possibilities offered by the anticipated EU accession. Therefore, it seems external political factors are playing an important role in this. That being said, it is also clear that the higher sustainability in Morocco and Cambodia can be attributed to the fact that they were involved in the Partnership two times, as compared to Paraguay and Tunisia which have been involved only once.

In the PRODOC there was no explicit exit strategy proposed, and most of the six countries are expecting to be included in the next phase as well. Some country offices have already acquired additional funding for the coming year(s). The procedures, tools and knowledge products developed by the project are expected to be replicated by other countries. For example, the Global Component produced, modified, adapted and translated training and other modules which are

sustainable and which are ready to be replicated with the necessary adjustments. In the above a few concrete examples have already come up of countries that are interested to replicate certain project elements. However, the important thing is to make such procedures, tools and knowledge products readily available and accessible to other countries.

Recommendations

- 1) Continue NEP implementation including REP in particular in Cambodia and Morocco: Due to the Partnership a footprint has been made now, and this needs to be taken further, in order to reduce the risk of losing the momentum.
- 2) Continue the role played by ILO in UNDAF, and make sure to pay additional attention to the adherence to the SDGs, in particular relating to poverty alleviation.
- 3) Design a comprehensive M&E system with an overall coherent log-frame that applies to all components of the programme with clear milestones and an appropriate Theory of Change and a solid Risk Analysis.
- 4) Make the involved stakeholders more aware of the possibilities and benefits of exchanges between countries whereby the Coordinator of the Global Component initiates and stimulates such cross-country exchanges through international and regional workshops.
- 5) Make in the new phase substantial allocations for capacity building of the tripartite constituents, including selected national counterparts, but certainly also regional governments and regional branches of the social partners. This needs to include such basic tasks as monitoring and reporting, but also the formalisation of the informal economy.
- 6) Reach out more to the employers' and workers' organisations, and enhance the undertaking of more joint work between them; also develop capacity building (as part of the previous recommendation) targeted at both organisations, and enhance the role of the private sector through the employers' organisations.

7) Have a project duration of at least three years, preferably four, and try to streamline as much as possible the preparatory administrative procedures involved.

8) Make sure communication with SIDA is taking place regularly; in joint discussion a kind of steering committee could be set up, e.g. a Partnership Agreement Committee.

9) Set up a database and compile a report that collects good practices and documents lessons learned extracted from the global and country interventions. This needs to be coordinated by the Global Component as its primary task in the new phase from 2018.

10) Make sure that a new phase of the ILO-SIDA Partnership will materialize, whereby less than six countries will be involved, some of which are lower-income countries, whereby STED will be included, and whereby synergies will be targeted with the Swedish bilateral support and global programmes. Develop a proper exit strategy at the outset for all the selected countries.

11) Maintain a high level of attention for Gender Mainstreaming in the global component and in the country interventions, and include it in all the M&E tools, such as Log Frame, Theory of Change and Risk Analysis.

12) In the next phase of the ILO-SIDA Partnership make sure that SIDA's support is focused on "ILO's work within Outcome 1 with an emphasis on Youth Employment", and not on "ILO projects in the field of employment promotion".

Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Finally, from the experience gained by evaluating the ILO-SIDA Partnership in the present report three Lessons Learned and five Good Practices have been compiled in Chapter 7.