



“An integrated and universal social protection linked to Social Protection in South Africa developmental social welfare services in South Africa / short title: Social Protection in South Africa.” – Independent Final Evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: South Africa

Evaluation date: 02 September 2022

Evaluation type: Joint

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: DWT/Country Office Pretoria

Technical Office: DWT/Country Office Pretoria

Evaluation manager: Nonkululeko Ngcobo (RCO), Ricardo Furman (ILO), Laure Beloin (OHCHR), Ilona Milner (UNICEF) Kay Lau (UNWOMEN) and Adrien Tigo (UNDP)

Evaluation consultant(s): Sifiso Chikandi (Team leader) and Lenard Turugari (Team Member)

DC Symbol: ZAF/19/51/UND

Donor(s) & budget: Joint SDG Fund US\$ 2,000,000

Key Words: : Social protection, joint programme



BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Programme, "An integrated and universal social protection linked to Social Protection in South Africa developmental social welfare services in South Africa / short title: Social Protection in South Africa" (SPSA-JP), was a joint programme among UN agencies, including ILO (lead agency) -UNDP-UNICEF-UNWOMEN- OHCHR. Overseen by the Resident Coordinator and Funded by the Joint SDGs Fund, the project sought to foster innovation that would see UN agencies collaborate for improved social protection in South Africa. Key expectations from the Joint SDGs Fund included joint communications and profiling of the fund, the establishment of a local joint fund, and institutional arrangements that would foster greater progress in the provision of social protection in the country.

Present situation of the project

Closed

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to enhance accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge. The evaluation assessed the Programme's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and the UNDS reform. The clients of the evaluation were the stakeholders in UN reform and social protection in South Africa (Government of South Africa, labour, business, UN agencies, the Joint SDGs Fund, and the Resident Coordinator)

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was conducted using a theory-based approach, focusing on outcome-level indicators, and using mixed methods. The evaluation focused on the country context, the objectives of the Joint SDG Fund, DaO, the UN inter-agency approach to social protection, and the theory of change for the programme to assess its performance in relation to the needs of stakeholders. The OECD evaluation criteria together with the relevant ILO guidelines on gender were applied to assess the contribution of the programme. Data collection drew from programme documents, self-assessments by agency personnel, and key informant interviews. A major limitation to the data collection was COVID-19 that restricted the scope for in-person interviews.



MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The programme was evaluable, with defined outcomes and indicators, indicator baselines and targets. The outcome statements and indicators were pitched at the output level and did not measure transformative changes in duty-bearers' capacities nor the capabilities and well-being of beneficiaries. The programme had relevant components concerning what was to be achieved in terms of social protection services. However, UN guidance on how to achieve the outcomes through the placement of the programme within the operational principles of the Joint SDG Fund, DaO, and inter-agency social protection programming were not fully utilised.

Whereas the evaluation anticipated five types of changes based on the purpose of the Joint SDGs Fund (as outlined in its terms of reference and expectations on funded initiatives), the delivery primarily focused on one aspect (delivering technical solutions to shortcomings in the content of social protection in South Africa). The other four aspects (internal UN institutional arrangements for social protection, UN-partners institutional arrangement for collaborating on social protection, UN collective strategic positioning, and learning relating to the preceding three aspects) received limited explicit attention. The chosen approach emphasized inadequate coverage from a sub-population-group perspective with limited regard for other key aspects including coordination, integration, system efficiency and policy coherence across domains (including social services, skills development, and the labour market).

The evaluation posits that an opportunity was missed in not using a SPIAC-B espoused approach and the terms of Reference of the Joint SDGs Fund to guide the design of the programme. The selected approach has produced valuable products whose continuity is dependent on mobilising new resources. The aggregation of SPIAC-B country-level representatives would have created a strong base from which future UN work in social protection would benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The UN should undertake a relevance and feasibility assessment of establishing a local chapter of the SPIAC-B



	<p>(named appropriately) to convene multiple stakeholders with an interest in social protection in South Africa.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: UN should use its convening power to influence the establishment of national social protection coordination structures in South Africa.</p> <p>Recommendation 3: There should be a high-level coordination structure to exercise oversight of the Expert Panel to ensure high-quality technical inputs into the design of a sustainable social assistance mechanism.</p> <p>Recommendation 4: The UN should consider mobilising Inter-Agency Social Protection Board member agencies at the country level to undertake an ISPA.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: The UN should consider the establishment of a UN Social Protection Group that consists of not only the JP PUNOs but all UN agencies with an interest in Social Protection.</p> <p>Recommendation 6: Set up a Social Protection Fund that will support experimentation and adaptation</p> <p>Recommendation 7: The UN, under the leadership of the RCO, should strengthen learning across joint programmes.</p>
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lesson 1: Investment in the process is important, especially where solutions are contested (wicked problems).</p> <p>Lesson 2: Systems change interventions need to adopt realistic timelines and set outcomes, indicators and targets that are in keeping with the selected timeframes for programme interventions.</p> <p>Lesson 3: Technical soundness needs to be coupled with strong process considerations and guidance to realise the potential of joint programming through measures that include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reflection on existing guidance on DaO and JPs to identify opportunities and options for strengthening operational efficiency, b. Operational efficiency indicators to ensure that joint programme partners do not operate independent of each other and/or miss the benefits that arise from joint programming, and c. Consideration of the ‘state of the art’ approaches within thematic areas to ensure the most strategic design choices are made.



Lesson 4: Independent operation of joint programme components runs the risk of missing opportunities to mobilise additional resources for the JP theme as agencies may focus on their separate needs to the detriment of shared interests.

Good practice 1: Appointment of an Expert Panel as an Advisory Committee to DSD was a good practice. Through the ILO-WITS MoU and DSD-WITS partnership, the ILO and WITS supported DSD initiatives on the BIG, including the establishment of an Expert Panel (EP) on the BIG. The objective of the EP was to provide strategic guidance and technical support/input to DSD on the Basic Income Grant, in particular, the development and follow up actions of the Cabinet memo on the BIG, appraise BIG options and to serve as a collaborative and coordination hub for BIG research and knowledge generation. The measurable and visible impact was the elevation of the debate on BIS for the 18 -59 working age group into the national social security agenda.

Good practice 2. Engagement with beneficiaries and their representative bodies was also a good practice. Whilst the project at the design stage intended to develop a social security system for those in the informal sector, including domestic workers, continuous engagement with the intended beneficiaries and their representative bodies during implementation revealed that sections of the informal sector were already catered for in existing policy instruments (UIF, COIDA and maternity leave) and the gap was translating provisions into benefits. The impact was a redirection of effort towards the designing of systems for the provisioning of benefits to the informally employed.

Good practice 3. The project had a provision for each of the five participating PUNOs to hire a Project Officer. UNICEF and UNWOMEN hired one Project Officer to manage their component, which was a good practice. The measurable impacts were the realised cost savings as well as the effective implementation of the project component, with each of the two PUNOs' project management needs being satisfied.