



Evaluation Summary



International
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ILO-Irish-Aid Partnership Programme 2016-2022 Inclusive Growth, Social Protection and Jobs (PP-IGSPJ) – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Malawi, Mozambique, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, and Zambia*

Final Evaluation: *September 2022*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *CO Lusaka (for Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia), CO Dar-es-Salaam (for United Republic of Tanzania) and CO Hanoi (for Viet Nam)*

Technical Office: *SOCPRO, DEVINVEST*

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Evaluation Consultant(s): *Patricia Carvalho*

Project Code: *GLO/16/33/IRL (Umbrella), GLO/16/63/IRL, RAF/16/54/IRL, TZA/16/51/IRL, VNM/16/54/IRL*

Donor(s) & Budget: *Irish Aid (US\$ 11,250,000)*

Keywords: *employment, social protection, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The PP-IGSPJ was implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in

Malawi, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zambia. It defined two development objectives: (1) “Poverty reduction through improved incomes and sustainable livelihoods”, and (2) “More people have access to adequate social protection benefits, delivered by a more efficient and effective system”.

The logic of intervention established two specific components: the Employment-Intensive Investment Programs component (EIIP) and the Social Protection (SP) component, which despite being conceptualized as integrated components were implemented separately. The EIIP component was implemented only in Tanzania. It sought to contribute to the adoption of “employment-promoting approaches to support the delivery of public investments”. The SP component sought to contribute to the adoption of “comprehensive, well-designed, and well-coordinated social protection systems” in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Viet Nam. Each country had outcome-specific targets. Within the SP component, the Programme further included a Regional Component (RAF), and a Global Component.

The Programme opted for a decentralized management structure, including the CO Lusaka (for Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia), CO Dar-es-Salaam (for United Republic of Tanzania) and

CO Hanoi (for Viet Nam), as well as SOCPRO and DEVINVEST.

Present Situation of the Project

The Programme started in December 2016 and will run until December 2022.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The Final Evaluation assessed the relevance, coherence, and strategic fit of the Programme, as well as the effectiveness, effectiveness of the management arrangements, efficiency, results/impact and sustainability of the intervention. The geographic scope of the Evaluation included the five beneficiary countries. The main clients of the evaluation are the ILO constituents and partners in the countries, implementing ILO units, ILO constituents, development partners, other relevant UN agencies, CSOs, and the Development Partner (Irish Aid).

Methodology of evaluation

The Final Evaluation used as reference the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Gender and human rights considerations were also considered as part of this evaluation. The evaluation employed a mixed method methodology, which included: desk review, preliminary interviews, analysis of secondary data, semi-structured interviews with 27 key informants (project management and implementing partners), and structured interviews with 33 beneficiaries. Due to COVID-19 risks, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation did not preview any missions of the Team Leader to the Programme countries. To mitigate that limitation, national consultants were contracted to conduct in person interviews in the beneficiary countries with national stakeholders in Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, and Viet Nam. In Mozambique, online interviews were carried out by the Team Leader.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance, coherence, and strategic fit: The evaluation has found the PP-IGSPJ contributes to key ILO policies and objectives, falling within the scope of a wide range of ILO Conventions, Recommendations, and strategies including Convention C102, Recommendation No. 202, ILO's Decent Work Agenda, ILO's Programme and Budget (2016-2017 and 2022-23), Decent Work Country Programmes of Malawi, Zambia Viet Nam and Mozambique, the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All, as well as the EIIP strategy. The Programme design was successful in considering national development priorities, development partners priorities, and interests of the different stakeholders, and it was responsive to the national sustainable development plans for SDGs.

Effectiveness: The EIIP component in **Tanzania** had positive results in introducing models to increase knowledge and decision making on the agriculture and road construction sectors (Outcome 1), namely through Employment Impact Assessments (EmPiA) on agricultural value chains that strengthen Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) Public Work action, and the adoption of Community-based Routine Maintenance Model (CBRM) that strengthened the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA). At policy level, the Programme contributed to policy review (e.g., the National Employment Policy and the National Social Protection Policy) and awareness campaigns to ensure the mainstreaming of employment investment approaches into sector policies and strategies (Outcome 2). Likewise, the Programme obtained tangible results in strengthening institutional partners. For instance, the Public Work Program technical manuals developed for TASAF Productive Social Safety Net Program (PSSN), assisted in targeting, and enrolling 1.2 million low-income households that received regular transfers/income through

participation in labour-intensive public works, creation of community infrastructure, as well as learning of skills for potential future employment (Outcome 3). Lastly, the Programme has provided technical trainings to participating institutions, as well as to small-scale contractors, which enhanced their capacity and promoted employment intensive strategies (outcome 4).

In **Viet Nam**, The Programme contributed to setting-up a coherent multi-tiered social assistance system within the context of the National Master Plan on Social Assistance Reform (MPSAR), and the National Master Plan on Social Insurance Reform (MPSIR), potentially covering almost 1 million people, which is a great feat towards expanding coverage (Outcome 1). It contributed to supporting an adequate legal framework for MPSAR's objectives, through the design/reform of social protection schemes, including the revision of the Social Insurance Law – which fostered the gradual extension of social insurance coverage -, and the Decree 20/ND-CP/2021, whose formulation enabled 240,000 older persons (+75) from poor and non-poor to reach old-age pension (Outcome 2). Lastly, it contributed to improving efficiency of operations via capacity-building, TRANSFORM training and training on social protection statistics for national stakeholders (Outcome 3).

In **Malawi**, the Programme's intervention was effective in pushing the process for instilling a culture of social protection, through improving coordination and collaboration amongst social protection stakeholders and raising awareness of CSOs and media on social protection (Outcome 1). It assisted in improving national social protection policies and frameworks in consultation with social partners, including the Old-Age Social Pension Scheme, the Universal Social Old Age Pension Bill, the Urban Cash Interventions (CUCI), the Malawi National Social Support Programmed (MNSSP), and the review of the

National Social Support Policy. The Programme further contributed to increasing the technical capacity of stakeholders and coordination through TRANSFORM training. The efforts are contributing to the expansion of the social protection framework, and to increase coverage of social protection schemes, including informal sector workers (Outcome 2 and 3). Finally, the Programme assisted in increasing its knowledge and technical capacity on social protection, notably within the scope of the MNSSP II Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, with a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey, and with an evaluation of the Geographic Information System (Outcome 4).

In **Zambia**, the Programme was effective in instilling a culture of social protection, by strengthening CSOs, providing training to journalists on social protection, and by developing actions of advocacy on social protection (Outcome 1). The Programme supported initiatives that fostered better coordination of policies and access of potential beneficiaries to social protection programmes, notably the Single Window Service (SWS). It contributed to building capacity of key officers on social protection and raising awareness on the need for social protection programmes to be shock responsive (Outcome 2). To improve national social protection policies and frameworks, the Programme supported the development and implementation of the Integrated Framework for Basic Social Protection Programs; a critical instrument for coordination in the 7th National Development Plan of Zambia, and in the National Health Insurance (Outcome 3). The Programme contributed to the financial sustainability of SP by supporting policy analysis (e.g., application of the MicroZammod model), and CSOs training on social protection public spending tracing (Outcome 4).

In **Mozambique**, the PP-IGSPJ had a reduced implementation; almost exclusively focused on

outcome 2 - TRANSFORM training and technical and financial support to Mozambique's COVID-19 response -, and some intervention on outcome 4, namely through the organization of the MOZMOD Technical Retreat, as well as to other trainings on microsimulation, and it supported the adoption of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Social Protection. Moreover, the Programme provided technical and financial support to the development of the Social Protection Response to COVID-19, which contributed to mitigate the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 with a planned cash transfer to 1,582,179 beneficiaries.

In the **RAF component**, the sharing of best practices (south-south cooperation) has not been significant within the Programme, despite the organization of three regional sharing of best practices (eg., CoP Learning and Practice Lab on extension of social protection to the informal economy) (REG1). TRANSFORM was an instrumental initiative to increase capacity for social protection practitioners in Southern and Eastern Africa, having reached 1,648 social protection practitioners (36 *percent* women, 64 *percent* men), which assisted the institutional capacity-building efforts of the Programme in all beneficiary countries (REG2). The **Global component**, focused on providing technical assistance, contributing to increasing the quality of TRANSFORM training, and increasing the knowledge and resources available on social protection in the beneficiary countries. It conducted regular multi-country team meetings, provided technical support through the ILO technical Advisory Platform in the areas of gender and extension of coverage, and launched a series of multi-country studies (e.g., multi-country study on the COVID-19) (Outcome 1). It also supported documentation of experiences and the development of good practices' guides. The efforts contributed to establishing a body of literature and resources, accessible to all, and

contributed to information-sharing and learning (e.g., the development of country briefs, guides on social protection culture, drafting social protection legislation, and good practice guide on the informal economy; the development of the TRANSFORM website) (Outcome 2 and 3).

The intention of the Programme of integrating the SP and EIIP components did not materialize, based on a decision made early on at the inception phase. In that sense, both components (SP and EIIP) were implemented as separate projects in different countries. The evaluation found that the collaboration between the different countries within the SP component, including within the RAF component, was not fully capitalized during implementation. Countries could have benefited from cross-fertilization at the regional/global levels, enabling constituents and national institutions to exchange best practices from other Programme countries.

Effectiveness of management arrangements:

The Programme opted for a decentralized management structure, which favored implementation effectiveness, dialogue with national partners, and capacity for adaptation. The role of the global and regional components should, however, be strengthened in terms of centralizing/sharing information, promoting strategic level opportunities, including initiatives for countries to engage and interact through south-south initiatives such as lessons learned and knowledge sharing. Difficulties in delivering effective mechanisms of south-south cooperation - a key element of the Programme- were identified. Nonetheless, the TRANSFORM initiative contributed to fostering this cooperation, through a culture of social protection. The Programme put in place a Coordination Hub of the TRANSFORM initiative in Zambia to coordinate the initiative across the African countries.

This evaluation has found that the strategic and adequate involvement of the Irish embassies can

contribute to provide relevant strategic insights and promote synergies at the local level. The engagement of the national partners was successful as the Programme had enough flexibility to respond to new and ongoing requests from the governments for technical support and capacity-building. The frequent turnover in the ILO team at the global and national levels has negatively impacted implementation due to lack of historical knowledge of the Programme, and difficulties in coordination and promotion of regional exchanges.

Efficiency: The Programme has executed 9 973 651,00 USD, which is equivalent to 86% of the total budget. Staff costs took over half of the total expenditure (51,4%), which is linked to the fact that the presence of ILO specialized staff in the beneficiary countries on a long-term basis is a key element to ensure efficient delivery of the planned activities and intended results. A strengthened participatory approach to budget allocation could potentially contribute to improving the planning and implementation of the activities at the national level. The Programme sought a strategic prioritization approach in its interventions to leverage existing financial resources, supported by the level of flexibility needed to respond to the constraints caused by COVID-19.

Results/Impact: The Programme has produced significant and potentially long-term impacts. In **Malawi, Viet Nam, and Zambia** the programme contributed to instilling a culture of social protection, which reportedly contributed to raising both awareness and visibility of social protection issues. Transversally, capacity-building of national institutions and social partners - notably through TRANSFORM training – contributed to a better understanding, debate, and monitoring social protection schemes in the beneficiary countries. The Programme provided technical support and training leading to the adoption of legal frameworks that effectively expanded social protection coverage. For instance, in **Viet Nam**, the governmental endorsement of the MPSAR and

MPSIR represents a positive impact in increasing access to adequate social protection to almost 1 million people. In **Malawi**, the Universal Social Old Age Pension Bill targeted 600,000 people (360,000 women) aged 65 and above. The **Mozambique's** COVID-19 Social Protection Response Plan potentially reached 1,500,000 persons. In **Zambia**, the SWS initiative contributed to enhancing coordination of social protection service at local level, streamlining access to social protection programmes to citizens. In **Tanzania**, the efforts in improving public works programmes and creating a more business friendly framework for small businesses and local communities to partake on governmental infrastructure investments represent a relevant step in changing attitudes regarding public investments.

Sustainability: policy reforms developed with support from the Programme have been incorporated into national legislation and legal frameworks to extend coverage. For instance, in Viet Nam the MPSIR established a clear target of 60 percent insurance coverage of working population by 2023, including to informal sector workers. Capacity-building is another area that offers some signs of sustainability, as it contributed to improving governmental response, and CSOs participation in decision-making and monitoring of social protection progress. In this regard, the institutionalization and brand recognition of TRANSFORM provides positive indication of sustainability, as countries recognize the usefulness of TRANSFORM it means they also see the need for improved training of national technical staff and can consider institutionalizing it. That was the case, for instance, of Malawi that institutionalized the TRANSFORM social protection training package in 2021.

Country teams are at the moment in consultations with partners to identify further areas of support and strategic orientations for a new project proposal. Nonetheless, the current Programme has provided evidence that some avenues of ILO

intervention may be discontinued despite their national relevance. For instance, according to key informants, the EIIP component in Tanzania may be discontinued, yet insofar no handover mechanisms have been reported to this evaluation. The EIIP component provided key instruments to national authorities and learning institutions to keep on improving public works strategies in an efficient manner. However, the methodologies and practices developed have yet to take root, hence a careful plan to ensure sustainability would have been an optimal solution.

Lessons learned

Strategic Lessons Learned:

LL1. The adoption of integrated approaches to policies, strategies and legal frameworks for social protection contributes to the steady expansion of social protection systems (contributory and non-contributory schemes) and reduces fragmentation. The Programme provided technical support and training leading to the adoption of legal frameworks that effectively expanded social protection coverage and increased coordination, including for workers in the informal economy.

LL2. The sustained expansion of social protection in the beneficiary countries is highly dependent on further improving internal capacity for in-country statistical capacities to monitor social protection systems and improving financial management and economic sustainability of social protection policies and programmes. These countries have shown a clear need for further improvements in these areas.

Operational Lessons Learned:

LL1. A solid project design phase, with in-depth consultations with key stakeholders at global and local levels, is key to ensure that the Programme has a clear, feasible and realistic strategy for every stakeholder and component/country, as well as to

avoid large deviations that can result in suboptimal results (such as uneven participation of all countries (*e.g.*, Mozambique) and lack of regional exchange). A clear project design will further enhance coordination/inter-connection between the Programme components, which will enhance effectiveness and efficiency, and improve the learning strategy.

LL2. Although having a decentralized Programme is very relevant for the effectiveness of the national components, it is equally important to ensure that the **regional and global components have a decisive role in coordinating and bringing together the different components at the strategic level**, ensuring the exchange of practices, knowledge sharing and capitalization of the south-south cooperation opportunities.

LL3. Ensuring the existence of clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms from the inception phase of the project – such as an operational project monitoring tool (to record progress on indicators at the outcome and output level and activities), which could be hosted by the Results Monitoring Tool; and a centralized project library which is shared with all team members -, would enable sharing of crucial information and relevant initiatives between the teams in different countries, enabling them to understand the progress made in other countries and what regional synergies can/should be explored, while informing management decisions.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

Strategic Recommendations (SR):

SR1. Undertake in-depth consultations and discussions at the design phase of a possible new partnership to ensure that a potential new programme has a clear, feasible and realistic strategy, as well as a clear division of roles and responsibilities among the different components

(SOCPRO/ILO and Irish-Aid; high priority; short-term; moderate resources).

SR2. Consider streamlining Programme outcomes, and within each outcome establish country targets and high-level indicators. Multiple sets of outcomes can add unnecessary complexity and prevent desirable practices such as the establishment of Communities of Practices (CoP) and sharing of knowledge. In that sense, outcomes could have been streamlined across all components, as there are sufficient commonalities between the three sets of outcomes. Moreover, outcome indicators should be high-level. They should enable the analysis of the effective changes that took place in each country, instead of measuring outputs. (SOCPRO/ILO and Irish-Aid; medium priority; short-term; low-level of resources).

SR3. Ensuring that regional and global components effectively create more opportunities for south-south learning and sharing of best practices on universal social protection, among governments and social partners in the different countries. South-South cooperation mechanisms (CoP, field visits, exchanges, joint training) are highly valued and relevant from a political, legal and institutional point of view, because they promote a system of mutual assistance and exchange of information and experience that fosters the adoption of institutional solutions for the promotion of social protection floors. Further exploring these exchanges is expected from a regional programme (SOCPRO/ILO; high priority; medium-term; high-level of resources).

SR4. Enhancing the coordination between different Programme components, with a clear role for a global component to centralize the information, promote strategic level opportunities and initiatives for countries to engage and interact, share best practices and knowledge (SOCPRO/ILO; high priority; short-term; moderate resources).

Operational Recommendations (OR):

OR1. Consider the creation of an internal monitoring and evaluation system from Programme/Project inception that includes, at least, i) an operational monitoring tool (to record progress on outcomes, outputs indicators and activities for each component) and ii) a centralized project library, which should contain all up-to-date relevant programme documentation. All team members should have access to this information in order to avoid loss of historical information (especially due to turnover) and enhance further coordination between the Programme components (SOCPRO/ILO; medium priority; medium-term; low-level of resources).

OR2. Improving Programme's financial management tools, such as ensuring adequate participation of all components involved in budget implementation during the budget planning phase and better monitoring during implementation, which can improve the feasibility and adequacy of financial planning to component and donor needs, which may increase the efficiency of implementation (e.g., ensuring that financial execution meets the donor requirements) (SOCPRO/ILO; high priority; short-term; low-level of resources).