



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Mid-term evaluation of the ILO project on Support to the reintegration of the returnees in Ethiopia

Quick Facts

Countries: Ethiopia
Mid-Term: 04 November 2017
Mode of Evaluation: Independent
Administrative Office: ILO CO for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan
Technical Office: MIGRANT
Evaluation Manager: Gugsu Yimer Farice and Mariette Sabatier
Evaluation Consultant: Seetharam Mukkavilli, Team leader and Kifle A. Wondemu
Project End: 31 December 2017
Project Code: ETH/15/01/EEC
Donor & Project Budget: Ethiopia Euro 5,000,000
Keywords Ethiopia, evaluation, returnees, reintegration

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

As a result of limited domestic productive opportunities, but burgeoning youth unemployment, a large number of young citizens are leaving Ethiopia in search of job opportunities, particularly to South Africa, Middle East, Europe and North America. The project had its origin in the forcible repatriation of 163,018 (100,688 male, 53,732 female and 8,598 children) Ethiopian undocumented migrants from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to Ethiopia during November 2013 to March 2014 as part of the “Saudization” of the KSA labour market. KSA returnees face severe difficulties, particularly in terms of decent livelihood opportunities and reintegration into the Ethiopian labour market. The intervention logic for

the project is rooted in an erstwhile ILO project’s experience, an ILO’s needs assessment of returnees, and national and international good practice. If KSA returnee capacities are built for employment besides psycho-social counselling to adjust, then they would successfully reintegrate in Ethiopian society. The 2014 ILO assessment documented the range of challenges hindering returnees’ reintegration, such as lack of financial support to initiate micro or small enterprises (92%); followed by lack of training (58.7%); lack of business development services (28.4%) and access to government services (41.2%). Through the ILO assessment, three problems were identified: 1) The need for decent livelihoods; 2) The need to reintegrate with dignity, since stigma is a crucial issue related to reintegration; and 3) The need for close coordination and knowledge sharing among service providers. These informed the design of the interventions in the project being evaluated which focuses on enhancing employability through training and financing arrangements for micro-enterprises.

The project addresses the second goal of a larger EU funded project: enhance migration governance in Ethiopia and support the reintegration of returnees. The first goal is pursued separately through a project implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). The specific objective of this project is to provide individualised and rights based reintegration assistance to returnees with a particular focus on vulnerable women and girls.

Present Situation of the Project

The three year project began in January 2015 and is scheduled to finish at the end of 2017. It covers three regional states of Ethiopia. The project is overseen by the ILO team but implemented by partners at local level. It provides psycho-social support, Training of Trainers' training, entrepreneurship and motivation training and short-term skills training for self-employment among the returnees. It also provided revolving funds to local financial institutions to enhance their lending capital for returnees.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess project's progress towards the outcomes and long term goals. The scope of the mid-term evaluation is limited to the period from January 2015 to 30 May 2017. Expected users of the evaluation are European Union (donor), the ILO, the government, project partners and other stakeholders. The evaluation was carried out through a desk review and a field mission. It used primary and secondary methods of data collection including key informant meetings and survey of beneficiaries of the training and rehabilitation. The field mission covered two regional states of Amhara and Oromia and within them three woredas chosen on the basis of proximity to Addis Ababa. Within the chosen regional states, three woredas located near the regional state capitals were visited. Thirty-eight beneficiaries were interviewed. They were chosen as per availability at the woreda administration offices as per prior arrangements made by the project authority.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was carried out through a desk review and a field mission to Ethiopia. The desk review analyzed project related documentation. An inception report was developed prior to the field mission. It elucidated the methodology and included data collection sheet and work plan. It also included seven tools of primary data collection such as questionnaires and a Case Documentation Sheet

to document good practice. The evaluation methods include desk review of project documentation, key informant interview and field survey.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and strategic fit

The project addresses the governmental strategy and the ILO's priorities at the global and national levels. The project is aligned to the needs of the returnees as it aims to deal with lack of skill and lack of access to credit. However, as the project did not use any means-tested criteria to select the returnees for benefit provision, relevance in terms of targeting the poor is a gap.

Validity of design

The ILO project has a clearly defined outcome and three outputs. There are no 'impact' level results in the design. There are indicators and targets but no baseline¹ in the design. The indicators were not fully adequate to monitor the four interventions specified in the design to accomplish the outcome. Research on needs assessment in the form of a needs assessment with the main stakeholders (ILO, 2014) informed the formulation of the project design. The project design includes a strategy for sustainability. The annual reports for the project for 2015 and 2016 discuss about challenges with the validity of the project design and state that the project target is unrealistic. The design by its assumptions failed to adequately take into account the risk of blockages in project implementation. The project design did not include any selectivity criteria in terms of beneficiary selection for provision of its scarce resources.

Project effectiveness

The project has three outputs on social integration, training and reintegration support. As of 30 May 2017, the achievement is 45 per cent of the target for social support as per the project data. Through AGAR(an NGO), the ILO project assisted 1545 persons comprising of 946 females, 577 males and

¹ The project team did a baseline study in 2017

22 children of whom eight were male and 14 were female. For the output on training, Training of Trainers' on entrepreneurial and motivational training was provided for 214 TVET teachers and partners. Entrepreneurial and motivational training was given for 9347 returnees in Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions. Short-term skills training were provided for 3016 returnees. Areas to address on training include translation of materials in to local languages, customization of the training modules, increase in course duration and accommodating the diverse educational background of the trainees.

For the output on reintegration support, 312 returnees (259 males and 53 females) were given total loan of Ethiopian Birr (ETB) 10.48 million in Oromia regional state; 347 returnees received loans from May 2016 to February 2017 in Amhara². There are contributing and challenging factors affecting effectiveness of the project activities. However, these vary from region to region depending on local circumstances.

Contributing factors

- Returnee interest in motivational and vocational skills training
- Availability of Technical and Vocational Training Institutes(TVET)
- Presence of project partner MoLSA/BoLSA at federal and regional state levels
- Availability of a network of MFIs

Challenging factors

- Reshuffling of government officials and experts.
- Weak inter-institutional coordination
- Limited access to working space to start business

The Regional Government representatives³ stated that they are hesitant to give preferential access to

² Amhara Credit and Savings Institution's progress report ending 28 February 2017. Both ACSI and ILO contributed ETB 10 million to a loan matching fund of the project to finance returnees

³ As per the key informant meetings with regional government representatives during the field mission (email dated 31 October 2017 from Dr. Kifle A. Wondemu)

working space, credit and employment opportunities to the returnees as it could be both unethical and supportive of illegal migration.

Efficiency of resource use

Impact and sustainability

At the mid-term stage, the project completed 42 per cent of the activities in its implementation plan and the rest were either on-going or yet to start though overall project implementation appears to be behind the schedule. The project completed preliminary project office related activities such as hiring the project staff and setting up of office besides conclusion of an agreement with the Government of Ethiopia. While the ILO project team was endowed with expertise on migration, expertise on other areas was elicited from external entities. Participation of TVETs contributed to the project achievements on provision of training. The gaps in expertise include those related mentoring of new businesses of the returnees at the local level and those related to monitoring and reporting. While the ILO project team was in position from the beginning lending continuity, there was staff turnover among partners at local level.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The project team is fully staffed. It has in-house expertise on migration besides other areas. It acquired the technical services on training from outside. TVETs in the project area contributed to the project with expertise on short term skills training. The stakeholder feedback on the ILO's technical support was positive. The project team succeeded in signing of MOU with key partners including MFIs. The project constituted the advisory committees known as Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Technical Working Group (TWG). A project monitoring and evaluation plan is in place for the project. It supports the project implementation plan. Most of the indicators in the M&E plan are input indicators. The project has annual narrative reports for 2015 and 2016. The project data is segregated by gender. Financial data in terms of allocation and expenditure by outputs and regions is not available from the ILO project. The project activities were delayed for different reasons including the declaration of emergency in

Ethiopia. Governance and management arrangements are affected by: i. setting ambitious targets, ii. Choice of several interventions despite the risks associated with high dependency on external entities for project implementation; iii. Limited in-house capacity on social reintegration; and v. not so active contribution of the advisory committees in providing strategic advice for the project and addressing implementation issues due to infrequent meetings. Issues about the management arrangement according to the key informant meetings were:

- Infrequent monitoring of the project by the ILO
- The rural and urban local government is not part of the steering committee
- The monitoring system is very weak

An area in need of strengthening relates to post-training technical support for returnees in developing business plans. After developing them, beneficiaries may need technical support through mentoring to implement the business plans. Impact orientation and sustainability

As this is a mid-term evaluation, it is difficult to comment on impact or sustainability. At the mid-term stage, as per the program strategy the returnees are trained, MFIs provided loan fund, and some businesses launched. In the next phase, if the returnees successfully establish and operate their businesses, impact in terms of economic reintegration may surface. Capacity of the returnees is being built through training though a significant number of them are yet to utilize the skills. Among national institutions, the project strengthened the capacity of TVET colleges in the project area through:

-Engaging TVET staff in the Training of Trainers' programme

-Engaging TVETs in developing skill training modules

The project has a study on developing a national strategy for reintegration of returnees that may offer ideas for the future public policy. The trained TVET staff may continue to train others in entrepreneurship. The time lag between the

motivational training and skills training on one hand and between skills training and start of businesses on the other could have an adverse effect on the impact of training. While the project activities do not appear to be sustainable, the skills provided for the returnees are sustainable.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. There is no risk management and mitigation plan for the project. Given the implementation experience and high dependency on partners, one may consider developing a risk management and mitigation plan for the next phase.
2. It may be worthwhile to reflect if the project should continue with the existing four interventions or delimit them in the next phase for a better focus.
3. The needs assessment of the ILO noted that about half of the returnees felt that they may be able to manage the crisis on their own. It also noted the sharp economic differences among the returnees. Hence, bringing in selectivity criteria for benefit provision of all types of assistance for better targeting at the most vulnerable among KSA returnees may be considered.
4. Given the implementation delays and the issue of funds shortage, it is recommended to consider whether to start wage employment creation activities, unless it has a clear feasibility plan in place, while taking note of the lessons of the project in the first half. At the mid-term stage, wage employment related activities have not commenced.
5. Inter-linkages between social reintegration or rehabilitation and economic reintegration could be considered whereby beneficiaries of rehabilitation are assessed and if needed supported through economic reintegration intervention.