



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Creating opportunities for youth employment in Tunisia - Mid Term Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Tunisia*
Mid-Term Evaluation: *10/2011*
Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*
ILO Administrative responsibility: *ILO-Cairo*
Technical Area: *ED/EMP/MSU*
Evaluation Management: *MDG AF*
Evaluation Team: *Mouna H. Hashem*
Project Code: *TUN/09/50/UND*
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Background & Context

As the UN Joint Programme (JP) Youth, Employment and Migration (YEM): Engaging Tunisian Youth to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the UN MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) 2008-2010, has completed its second year, the MDG-F Secretariat is fulfilling its requirement in conducting a mid-term evaluation as required by the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and the Implementation Guidelines of the MDG-F supported Joint Programme (JP).

The JP was conceptualized to respond to the swelling problem of unemployed youth and migration particularly in the poorer interior regions of Tunisia as well as the government's weak inability to find effective solutions. The JP is principally an institutional capacity building project. Its overall objective is to increase employment opportunities for young people particularly in migration-prone areas through the sustainable creation of decent jobs and by strengthening the capacity of national and local governments to improve youth employment opportunities through strengthened policies and programmes. It is being implemented in three selected pilot regions: El-Kef, Gafsa and Tunis. The JP aims to achieve three outcomes:

Outcome 1: Better youth, employment, and migration (YEM) policies suitable to the labour market trends and the specific needs of unemployed university graduates and unemployed low skilled youth in the three target regions (El Kef, Gafsa and Tunis).

Outcome 2: University graduates have better access to decent job opportunities and engage in the creation of small and micro credit enterprises (SMEs) in the target regions.

Outcome 3: Low skilled young men and women from El-Kef, Gafsa and Tunis have access to better employment and migration support services and decent job opportunities.

The JP's evaluation objectives are:

1) To assess the programme's design including its internal and external coherence with the National Development Strategy, UNDAF, and

the MDGs, and the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action;

2) To assess the efficiency of its management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation;

3) To identify the programme's degree of effectiveness and contribution to the objectives of the youth, employment and migration thematic window, and the MDGs at the local and country level.

The evaluation methodology employed, as per TOR, is an expedited process relying on systematic fast-paced analysis to produce conclusions and recommendation within approximately three months. It's also qualitative due to the scarcity of quantitative data.

The unit of analysis is the JP, which entails evaluating the JP as a whole and not the separate activities of each UN agency. Three evaluation criteria were applied in assessing the JP performance: 1) project design; 2) process level; and, 3) sustainability and national ownership. Each evaluation criterion consists of a set of questions that were used as the evaluation instrument. Throughout the evaluation the JP document (JPD) was employed to assess the JP's implementation in relation to its design. Moreover, the evaluation was conducted in a participatory approach.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Design level: Among the strengths of the project design is that it's based on a thorough diagnosis of youth, employment and migration within the country's economic, political and social context. It also demonstrates a top-bottom, bottom-top model. As a result, this model would sustain an on-going link between the central and regional level, in addition to implementing mechanisms for scaling-up actions in support of the national development plans and the MDG agenda. Another positive feature in the project design includes a private public partnership (PPP) strategy, i.e., establishing partnerships between government, non-government and the private sector to

respond to the multifaceted dimensions of YEM. Conversely, the project design also has some shortcomings affecting its implementation.

Process level: In assessing the efficiency in implementation, organizational structure and management of the JP in reaching its results, the evaluation takes into consideration the unfavourable political climate under which the JP has been functioning from its commencement until the present.

Efficiency: The JP's management and coordination model is set up whereby each UN agency has a Tunisian government counterpart. The JP designated the ILO to lead the UN agencies and the MOE as the lead coordinating agency. UNDP is the administrative agency; yet, each participating UN agency is responsible for its own component, implementation pace and finances. There are also several committees extending from the central to the regional levels with different roles and responsibilities interconnected to ensure coordination and flow of information among them; these include: the National Steering Committee (NSC); the Programme Management Committee (PMC); the Programme Core Team (PCT). In spite of this organizational structure, the evaluation found that it is not functioning accordingly due to the lack of effective leadership and coordination.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Another impediment to the JP is that it lacks an effective monitoring and evaluation system. As a result, the JP does not have follow-up mechanisms to verify the quality of the products, punctuality of delivery and progress of the JP towards achieving the envisaged results.

Targeting: Overall the JP is not reaching its designated target group/beneficiaries. There is a general attitude among the stakeholders that this is not a priority, yet, the gravity of this issue is if the beneficiaries are not the poor unemployed youth, how would the YEM contribute in its remaining timeline to the MDG 1, i.e., to eradicate poverty and extreme hunger by achieving full and productive

employment and decent work for all, including women and young people?

Results Level: The findings of the JP's performance towards reaching its expected results by its completion date of 2012 are as follows:

i. Capacity enhancement of Government of Tunisia (GOT): According to the JPD, this result was to be accomplished by civil servants' participation in conducting baseline studies so as to acquire skills in data collection, analysis, etc. Consequently, this would build the national database and allow them to develop indicators to investigate, monitor and analyze youth labour market trends. Yet the UN team overlooked the underlying purpose of these interventions and instead contracted independent consultants who selected their own research assistants rather than civil servants. In addition, the studies conducted by the JP do not comprise sufficient baseline data to serve the intended result.

ii. Capacity building of local institution: The different UN agencies have contributed to enhancing the capacity of local government agencies to support and follow enterprise creation and development primarily by training of trainers (TOT) but limited activities to the private sector or banks.

iii. Inter-institutional mechanisms: Government institutions such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Employment and Industry have been linked together by participating in the JP; their collaboration was exemplified by the manner in which they worked together in participating in the project design. They also occasionally participate in the JP workshops and forums regarding YEM. Yet, these activities have not resulted in establishing interinstitutional mechanisms.

iv. Partnerships: At the time of the evaluation there was no evidence of embedded mechanisms of partnership between the public and private sector, yet, it is important to mention that the previous regime did not encourage setting up these partnerships.

v. Improved knowledge: The JP activities have conducted several studies, which have been useful in designing project activities. Yet, they

have not contributed to enhancing the capacity of the GOT in building its knowledge base and understanding of integrated policies and measures to tackle informal economy and their impact on migration predominantly because civil servants from partner ministry agencies such as ANETI did not participate in this research as prescribed in the JPD, instead the JP contracted independent consultants.

vi. Pilot system for circular migration: The IOM has laid down the groundwork for conducting a pilot system to test circular migration; this includes identifying France and Italy as the two destination countries, developing a pre-orientation manual for each country, networking with Tunisian executives and managers in France to get them involved and identifying private recruitment agencies. The IOM is now in the process of finalizing logistics to test this initiative by sending the first batch of 20 migrants to Italy.

Recommendations

1. A first priority is for the UN team to decide on who will be the lead agent for the JP second phase. Two possible options include: (1) The UN team can choose a leader from among themselves; or, (2) The JP can contract an international CTA.

2. The JP's timeline should be extended at no cost to make up for all the time lost due to the political crisis.

3. The JP stakeholders need to formulate a work plan jointly for its second phase indicating the activities of each agency, under which outcome and the expected outputs. This should be accompanied by a budget plan in effort to find ways of cost sharing and/or reduction of expenses. Activities that are not cost-effective should be substituted by other activities that could provide counselling for entrepreneurs for less cost such as group counselling.

Project design level:

4. Project design needs to be revised to include specific objectives that correlate with activities, the desired outputs and outcomes. It should also include assigning the UN team with

complementary activities reflecting their competitive edge as to insert that they function as one project rather than several small independent projects. The UN team may need to get technical support for this activity.

5. The JP needs to develop appropriate monitoring indicators to measure the progress towards achieving its outcomes. This should be done during revision of the project design and could be performed by the same person providing the technical support. In addition, the stakeholders and PC should have a workshop to standardize their M&E approach and reports.

6. The JP needs to be decentralized and streamlined enabling its stakeholders at the central and regional level to work in sync towards achieving the JP outcomes.

7. The JP needs to develop criteria that define the target group as stated in the JPD, i.e., the neediest and whose opportunity for employment is the lowest.

8. The JP needs to include activities that respond to poor unemployed women and women migration. Emphasis should be in providing women with employment activities appropriate to their cultural setting and social challenges.

9. An advocacy and communication strategy needs to be incorporated in the revised project design.

Process level:

10. Entrepreneurship activities need alignment with government policies to encourage job creation. For instance, government providing low interest loans for the establishment of cooperatives or associations can carry this out. Pilot projects of cooperatives should include capacity development in management, finance and marketing; this includes training of TOTs to provide these services to beneficiaries.

11. SME development and circular migration pilot projects should be revised to be more cost-effective interventions. In doing so effectively would require PPP at the central and local levels to identify policies and programmes that are more sustainable and compatible with the market demands and political context.

12. Project activities should be continuous as to maintain their effectiveness to reach the desired output, in other words there should not be big gaps between activities aiming at the same outcome.

13. Training sessions should be conducted in Arabic also all project documents that are to be shared with the national counterparts should be translated to Arabic, including the mid-term evaluation report.

14. The role of the programme coordinator (PC) needs to be clarified and supported. It is essential that he receive support such as attending workshops on management, monitoring, etc. In addition, hiring an assistant as included in his TOR. Another option is to assign two focal points in each of the selected regions (El-Kef and Gafsa) to assist him in overseeing the JP activities.

15. The JP needs to pursue partnerships with the private sector to encourage their involvement, as they can make important contributions such as assisting in identifying effective training programmes for the youth that would correspond to the local job market demands and/ or offering internship programmes.

16. There is a need for new economic policies that redistribute economic development ventures and investments to the interior regions. This can include providing incentives to lure large companies to open/relocate to the interior regions and to hire from the local youth population. Pilot projects should also be aligned with these new policies.

Results level:

17. The JP needs to improve its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods; there are two options on how this can be carried out: (1) hiring an expert to oversee the M&E activities of the JP; or (2) providing the PC with training in M&E. Moreover, the UN team should have a standard M&E methodology; consequently, it would be very useful to have a monitoring and evaluation workshop for the JP team.

18. The JP needs to place stronger emphasis on capacity development of policy makers, managers and staff of participating institutions.