



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Improved livelihoods of empowered Namibian rural communities through cultural tourism - Final Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Namibia*

Final Evaluation: *Mar 2013*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Administrative responsibility: *EMP/SEED*

Evaluation Management: *MDG AF*

Evaluation Team: *Enhancing Heritage
Resource, Incorporated*

Project Code: *e.g. PHI/08/03/HSF*

Donor: *MDG AF (US\$ 6,000,000)*

UNESCO: 3,838,493; UN-Habitat: 877,507;

UNEP: 353,100; ILO: 930,900

Keywords: *Employment creation, small
enterprise development, tourism, culture*

Executive Summary extracted from the full evaluation report

Background Rationale

The MDG-F funded Sustainable Cultural Tourism Joint Programme in Namibia addresses an identified development need both at national level as well as MDG-F UN agency level. By strengthening culture, the social basis is provided that stimulates creativity, innovation, human progress well-being with the view of reducing poverty. The joint programme (JP) was designed as a three year intervention starting February 2009, subsequently extended by one year ending February 2013 had three defined outcomes:

1. A national knowledge base to be developed on linkages between customary and traditional practices, tangible intangible cultural & natural heritage livelihoods;

2. Sustainable, gender sensitive cultural & natural heritage legislation, policies programmes with capacity awareness enhanced on sustainable cultural & natural heritage livelihoods related international cultural legal instruments;

3. Pilot Projects, using knowledge base enhanced policies legislation, operational, empowering communities through the development of cultural assets as products able to reap economic benefits within the broader cultural tourism industry.

This multi-level implementation aimed at translating the international approach to development in support of the MDGs by complementing Namibia's tourism sector with cultural tourism initiatives that enable ethnic minorities, communities in remote areas individuals with cultural skills to enhance their livelihood through meaningful, sustainable, heritage utilisation.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted from the 15th of January to the 28th of February 2013. Document review, stakeholder consultations as well as site visits were undertaken. Stakeholders consulted include pilot site committee members, tourism

operator, government agency staff, consultant's communities living close to the sites as well as the implementing UN agency civil society organisations. A draft report was presented to the PMC/ reference group for input comments.

Findings / Conclusions

Achievements

The evaluation found / concluded that the JP has achieved the following, considering the initial intentions, evolving opportunities available evidence:

- The JP created a structured interaction amongst cultural stakeholders over an extended period of time including ministries, national government institutions, regional and local government community representatives. These stakeholders addressed issues ranging from the enabling environment for sustainable cultural heritage utilisation to practical, project oriented interventions training;
- The concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has formally been operationalized in the country through the establishment of a system to capture and record ICH the sharing of these elements that hold potential economic value.
- The structure of JP delivery enabled a decentralised approach of project implementation empowering regional local stakeholders in Namibia to take ownership of project modalities including implementation control disbursement of funds.
- With cultural stakeholders predominantly found at national (head office) level, the JP managed to put cultural heritage utilisation on the development agenda of regional & local stakeholders, including communities who were also exposed to practical income generating opportunities.
- The implementation of Joint-programme principles brought together a multitude of stakeholders at national international level creating linkages communications channels likely to be sustained beyond the programme cycle.

- Advanced skills were developed through formal training efforts for some 18 senior technical individuals in the cultural sector of the country the 'Start Your Cultural Business' training efforts has exposed over 300 individuals to the entrepreneurial opportunities around (cultural) heritage utilisation across the country.

- Environmental Impact Assessments were carried out at all pilot sites at the initial planning stage updated based on detailed project plans in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders enhancing the EIA process on regional level.

- Three, of the ten pilot projects in support of cultural tourism enterprise creation have reached physical completion that enables actual operation.

Challenges

In contrast to the achievements noted above, the evaluation found / concluded that the JP faced several challenges including:

- The sector wide approach within a three (extended to four) -year programme was over ambitious not sufficient time was allocated to an inception period that would have given stakeholders a chance to fully grasp the objectives interventions, hence to successfully operationalize the programme;
- The tourism sector was underrepresented at the Programme Management Committee (PMC) operational level;
- Project implementation has been slow. The creation of a functional PMU took almost one year, staff changes have occurred on all programme levels causing further delays;
- At regional level, community traditional authority consultations around pilot site development took much longer than expected;
- On the administrative level, the requirements for financial management were perceived by national stakeholders as cumbersome lengthy.
- The physical development of pilot sites started only in 2012 for all but one site.

- Objective validation of JP interventions has not been fully effective due to a weak Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system.
- The timing of soft-skills development interventions had to be compromised due to the delays in physical site development leading to stakeholders undergoing training before pilot projects were initiated.
- The business planning component of the pilot sites, a key output towards poverty reduction, was identified only half way through the programme implementation after construction has started. This influence the sustainability of the pilot sites limited the ability of Local Economic Development (LED) interventions;
- The projects are seen by many communities as government initiatives, not community-owned, the expectation that government will look after them prevails.
- Physical work at six of the pilot sites are roughly 50 – 60% complete at the time of the evaluation; with the completion rate at one site under 10%.

It must be concluded that although the JP has not achieved its overarching aim towards operationalising benefit creation from cultural heritage, it has achieved a substantial strengthening of the enabling environment for cultural heritage utilisation created the platform to ensure such benefits can occur in the future.

Lessons Learned

Overall, the implementation of the JP clearly reveals that adequate provision should have been made for an inception period of at least 1 year.

The low rate of completion of the infrastructural work at the pilot sites highlights major challenges concerning capacity building ownership by local communities. The project has capacity building as one of its goals; at the same time the delays in completion of work at the pilot sites clearly points to capacity constraints on the ground. The timeframe allocated for a programme of this complexity size requires a minimum 5 years of implementation, especially if 10 operational, capital projects are included as output.

Recommendations

The evaluation has two main recommendations:

- The partly completed infrastructure developments need to be finalised soonest. This combined with the formulation of proper business plans will ensure relevance sustainability of the training, policy strengthening, ICH documentation and utilisation general cultural awareness creation elements of the programme. The positive impact this is likely to have will then be measurable in the near future;
- Stronger involvement of the tourism sector in the further implementation of the project has to be ensured for overall success.