



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Skills Development and Employment Services for the Construction Sector in the Gaza Strip – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Palestine

Final Evaluation: 25 April 2013

Mode of Evaluation: External

**ILO Office Administratively backstopping the
Project:** ROAS

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: ROAS

Evaluation Manager: Jean-Francois Klein

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Joint evaluations: ILO, UNWRA

Project End: 25 February 2013

Project Code: PAL/10/01/SDC

Donor & Project Budget: Swiss Development
Cooperation US\$ 1,850,090

Keywords skill requirements, employment
service, technical education, construction
worker, vocational education

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure The project, through the provision of skills training, using modern training curricula and applying on-the-job training, is increasing the employability of workers and responding to the immediate needs of the labour market. In the longer term the project is contributing to the development of modernised and labour market based vocational education and training curricula, and supporting its integration into a system which is relevant, flexible, effective and efficient. The short term vocational training courses introduced at UNRWA TVET centres – GTC and KYTC for

over-aged school students in partnership with ILO are built on the competency based training approach as envisaged by the TVET strategy. Within this context, the project was developed and implemented by ILO and UNRWA, (USD 493.087 for the ILO and US\$1.357.003 for UNRWA) over a period of 18 months.

Present Situation of the Project The project duration based on the original contract was from the 1st of December 2010 until 31st of May 2012. There were two no-cost extensions approved, bringing the final completion date of the project to 28th of February 2013

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) the purpose of the evaluation is: 1) to review the achievements of the project by assessing to what extent the stated objectives and major outputs have been achieved. Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the project implementation framework; 2) Review the collaboration that has been established with representatives of employers, with employers themselves, and with trade unions, in order to facilitate apprenticeship and transition to work. Identify the bottlenecks that may have constrained this collaboration and how it can be systematised; 3) Analyse and make recommendations regarding the sustainability of the project, provide recommendations on how to build on the achievements of the project, and identify more specifically the support needed for the furthering and up-scaling of the CBT approach to other training

undertaken by UNRAW; 4) Examine the joint programming model, in particular the coordination between ILO and UNRWA to achieve the common pre-set objectives of the project; 5) Document lessons learned and good practices for replication.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation had two main components: a) the desk review of the project documentation; and b) in-Gaza field mission to conduct interviews, meetings and focus group discussions with stakeholders.

Two Focus Group Discussions took place with students who had formerly participated in the training program. The Focus Group Discussions were attended by approximately 32 students. One-to-one interviews took place with two students to allow for more in-depth discussion of their experiences with the project. A meeting also took place with a number of private sector companies who provided apprenticeship places under the project.

Main Findings & Conclusions

There are a number of strong evidence based results achieved against the project's objectives and outputs as outlined in the project document. The project has brought substantive changes to the lives of young people struggling in the standard educational system. The project has the potential to be even more successful if a number of principal recommendations are implemented in the future.

Relevance: The project has been very relevant in responding to an identified skill gap in the labour market. The project has been able to offer 655 students, who were not progressing in the education system, an opportunity to take on a tailored type of skills training program. Central to the relevance argument are the life changes this project has brought for a large number of students.

The project allowed both UNRWA and ILO to gain experience in and learn from the Competency Based Training Approach in the specific context of Gaza. UNRWA is currently revising its TVET strategy for its five areas of operations, with the aim of incorporating CBT across all its vocational

training programs. From this experience (and others in the region), ILO is finalizing a handbook on CBT.

Effectiveness: 713 students participated in the program spread over 4 training batches. Of these, 655 students (92%) passed the Competency Training Program and 58 failed. All students who passed the CBT participated in the 6 month on-the-job training program. Out of a sample of 100 students: 22 % of the students were unemployed, 16 % of the students were working in non-related areas, and 62% were working in jobs related to their training. The results in finding employment are encouraging but can be further strengthened through providing better support to students during and after the apprenticeship, and through better identifying areas in which employment can be found more easily.

The application of the CBT training approach has been effective in supporting students in acquiring a skill that they can apply in the workplace. Training participants rated the CBT training program very highly and gave an average rating of 8 out of 10 to their experience.

The students valued the apprenticeship highly but made a number of recommendations to strengthen the apprenticeship, with a focus on learning on the job. Students found that their technical and professional knowledge did not improve sufficiently during the apprenticeship. Students would like to receive regular visits from trainers who provide them with input and advice on improving their skill level. Both UNRWA and employers do not have the right understanding of what an apprenticeship entails, namely skill development and on-the-job training.

Efficiency: Performance of the program against efficiency criteria is mixed. When reviewing the amount of the investment in relation to the results achieved, the project is representing good value for money. Results achieved are sustainable and will have an effect beyond the duration of the project such as: the chance for 655 students to take on a productive role in society; UNRWA's capacity strengthened in delivering short-term CBT courses (resources and ToT); and ILO's strengthened

experience in supporting CBT training in the region.

Sustainability: The program will have lasting effects beyond the duration of the program. The training of the students will allow them to have a productive role in society; it changed the self-esteem of the students and the way the community and their families view them. The capacity of UNRWA has been strengthened in delivering short-term tailored training courses, allowing UNRWA to be more market focused in the delivery of their vocational training programs. The program has provided learning to both UNRWA and ILO to replicate this approach in other areas and to integrate lessons in the review of the TVET strategy for UNRWA.

The main achievement of the project lays in the changes the project has achieved with the over-aged students taking up the training program. The project intervention resulted in a greater self-esteem for the students, with their position in the family and the community changed.

Sustainability of results can be strengthened through greater attention being given to the selection of contractors and sub-contractors for the apprenticeships.

The project was able to draw on the strengths of both ILO and UNRWA agencies to a certain extent. However, it was found that the strengths of both agencies could have been better utilised if communication challenges had been addressed. ILO has the ability to provide capacity building and quality assurance but was confronted with a number of challenges in recruiting the appropriate skills level of staff on a long term basis. This contributed to challenges in communications and impacted on regular advice and input to the staff implementing the program. However, it is the evaluator's opinion that the joint implementation model between two UN sister agencies has its value and is worth developing further. When concerns around management and communication are addressed the complementary roles and expertise can be further exploited and put toward achieving stronger results for the program.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Recommendation 1: Develop a clear Theory of Change and identify underlying assumptions that place the students at the core of the program as a basis for future project designs.

Recommendation 2: The name 'Over-Aged Students' should be dropped from the moment the students start the training program. Students should be able to see the vocational training program as a new start.

Recommendation 3: In future designs ensure the program outcome statements are equally relevant and more closely reflect the program Theory of Change, the higher level changes the program aims to achieve.

Recommendation 4: In future programs ensure that students have the opportunity to return to follow regular school curricula if desired. Or at a minimum, future programming should ensure learning opportunities for students to ensure further development of literacy and numeracy skills. This could perhaps be done through a continued school based learning program that complements the vocational training program.

Recommendation 5: The training program should be strengthened qualitatively by placing the students more central to the project intervention. A number of small adjustments will have a significant impact on the results including, but not limited to: 1) UNRWA trainers follow students during apprenticeship; 2) ILO engages pro-actively with employers and Trade Unions on working conditions; 3) students will be better informed about the purpose of the apprenticeship when deciding to take on the skills training program and before starting the apprenticeship itself.

Recommendation 6: The apprenticeship component of the program is to be strengthened through ensuring a correct common understanding of the purpose of an apprenticeship.

Recommendation 7: The apprenticeship component of the program should be considered as an integral part of the training program; it should

not be considered as something that follows the training program. The training program for the students should be a 12 month program that includes one package composed of training centre based skills development and the apprenticeship to further strengthen and apply acquired skills. GTC/KYTC based training and the apprenticeship should both be treated as an integral part of the training program.

Recommendation 8: Apprentices should be supervised by the trainers of the GTC or the KYTC during the apprenticeship to follow up on learning and skills development. The apprenticeship program should not be considered as part of UNRWA's Job Creation Program. The purpose of the apprenticeship is not job creation or cash for work; it is about skills development.

Recommendation 9: ILO staff needs to work with the employers on ensuring correct understanding and application of the apprenticeship.

Recommendation 10: Strengthen the technical oversight of the program through ILO recruited and trained technical monitors over the duration of the project, with a focus on bridging the gap between the training program and the needs of the private sector, and follow up on the apprenticeship program with the employers.

Recommendation 11: An individual employment strategy for each student is developed to support the students in finding employment after completion of the apprenticeship.

Recommendation 12: A results framework and workplan should be developed by the program with realistic resources allocated against each outcome and output. This should be closely managed by the program manager and updated quarterly for the PMU and the PAC.

Recommendation 13: In future similar projects, implementation should be strengthened through the employment of a psycho-social support person to assist trainers to train and support students more effectively. It is not recommended that a psycho-social support person be solely dedicated to work directly with students, as this could emphasize to

the students that they are regarded as different or problematic.

Recommendation 14: CBT trainers should continue to maintain the relationship with the students during their apprenticeship. The transition from training centre based training to the apprenticeship with an employer would be strengthened if the students could keep the relationship that they developed over the period of months with their training instructors.

Recommendation 15: To strengthen and formalise the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to allow it to provide strategic direction to the program, with the relevant input from different stakeholders.

Recommendation 16: Bring clarity to the lines of responsibility of those involved in the management of the project. The project management should be leaner, with one project manager responsible for overseeing full project implementation, without micro-managing or taking over the role of other stakeholders involved.

Recommendation 17: For the next design the program should be supported by a strong Results Framework, allowing the program to assess both quantitative and qualitative results.

Recommendation 18: ILO and UNRWA should utilise their comparative advantages more strongly, with UNRWA focusing on the training delivery in their training centres; providing psycho-social support to the students; trainers following students during the apprenticeship; employment strategy after the apprenticeship; and ILO focusing on providing CBT technical support to UNRWA (training methodologies, curricula, building capacity and providing quality assurance for a sustainable testing and certification system); liaison with potential employers (focus on CBT, health and safety conditions).

Recommendation 19: The program should ensure strong linkages with the Palestinian Authority and other stakeholders to ensure the CBT curricula are shared and assessed within the National Qualification Framework.

For Lessons Learned, please see the full report.