



Final Evaluation of the Project

IND 1211, IND 1212, IND 1213, IND 1214, IND1215 - P3647

Vocational Education and Training for Inclusive Growth of Tribal Communities in East Indian States of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa

(EuropeAid 128395 – Contract No. DCI-NSAPVD/2009/210-785)

Evaluation report prepared on behalf of Welthungerhilfe Bonn by:

Paul Wolterstorff M.A.

paulwolter@aol.com

Freiburg, 17.12.2014

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
BMZ	German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBO	Community Based Organization
CWS	Centre for World Solidarity
DRCSC	Development Research Communication and Service Centre
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INR	Indian Rupies
KVK	Krishi Vikash Kendra (Agriculture Development Centres)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Microsoft
NGOS	Non Governmental Organisations
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PR	Public Relations
RKM	Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SHG	Self-Help Group
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (Indicators)
STs	Scheduled Tribes
SWOT	Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Acknowledgement and disclaimer

Many people deserve to be thanked for their contribution to this evaluation exercise. I would like to place on record my deep appreciation for the support received from the project coordinator, managers of implementing organizations, field officers and trainers. I also thank service providers, senior experts and representatives of Government departments for their support to the evaluation by finding time to participate in the field work, responding to incessant queries and providing valuable inputs.

A special word of thanks goes to the workshop participants who were willing to share their experiences and gave important feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Finally I would like to thank all beneficiaries who took time off from their busy schedules to meet with the evaluators, participate in various discussions and provide their valuable feedback. Interactions with them have contributed a lot to the successful completion of this report.

A final independent evaluation of the project *“Vocational Education and Training for Inclusive Growth of Tribal Communities in East Indian States of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa”* (EuropeAid 128395 – Contract No. DCI-NSAPVD/2009/210-785) was conducted from November 10 to November 24 in India. The project holder Welthungerhilfe contracted the independent consultant Paul Wolterstorff M.A. to conduct this mission. He was supported by the project manager, Subhankar Chatterjee, as well as by staffs of the implementing organizations Agramee, Centre for World Solidarity (CWS), Development Research Communication and Service Centre (DRCSC) and Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama (RKM).

The project is part of the EU co-financed vocational education and skills development portfolio complementing initiatives under the India-EU Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan on Economic Cooperation. It was implemented from January 2010 to December 2014. The project focuses on Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) districts of East Indian states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal with sizeable tribal populations. The project holder is Welthungerhilfe.

The overall **objective** of the project is to contribute to reduced unemployment and inclusive growth in rural areas and to complement to the achievement of MDG 1. The specific objective is 1) Increased access to skills and training for tribal, Dalit and Other Backward Classes (OBC) adolescents and youths in selected BRGF districts of three Eastern states 2) Established institutional arrangements for planning, quality assurance, certification and linkages. Target group for the five year project period are 4.600 adolescents and youth in the age group of 15 to 35 from among Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other backward castes. Final beneficiaries are 88.000 people from amongst families of beneficiaries and society at large.

Framework conditions in India can be described as a paradoxical clash of high standards of living in parts of the urban centres and extreme poverty in marginalized rural areas. On the one hand, India is projected to become the second largest economy in the world by the year 2050. On the other, 93% of the country’s workforce is in the unorganized sector and rural marginalized areas often have to struggle to get access to achievements of the booming economy. A significant proportion of the population in underdeveloped regions lives below the poverty line. 90% of the age group of 15-24 years, which accounts for 19% of India's population, has received no professional training. They can hardly contribute to the urgently needed progress in rural areas. The Indian government is aware of this problem and adopted a new training policy in 2009 addressing the unorganized sector and disadvantaged segments of the population. Courses for young people in rural areas are addressed explicitly in this policy. The recently created National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) has been given the mandate to create jobs for 70 million of the poor.

The evaluator confirms high **relevance** of the project. The project could significantly improve the income of beneficiaries: 61% of the beneficiaries increased their income; the incremental income is more than 50% for 49% of trainees. The project also contributed to functional alphabetization, decreased dependency from wage labour, increased yields via introduction of effective and sustainable farming systems and improved access to public and private services via improved linkage systems. The approach is in line with Welthungerhilfe policies presented in the Indian Country Strategy Paper 2007 -2013 and the Country Programme 2010 – 2014. It contributes to

objectives mentioned in these documents, such as alleviation of extreme, structural poverty and hunger, fight against social exclusion of marginalized, disadvantaged groups and consolidation of sustainable agriculture in the context of ecological management. It also corresponds to the National Skill Development Policy of India from 2009 targeting explicitly the unorganized sector and disadvantaged sections of the society and it contributes to objectives of NRLM intending to promote rural youth via VET courses. Little impact in the field of advocacy and insufficient contributions to structural reforms partially reduce the policy reform relevance of the project.

Project planning is based on a pro-poor approach targeting marginalised and vulnerable groups of the population that are out-of-reach of mainstream government interventions. Based on locally existing resources and occupational traditions the approach was highly accepted by targeted populations; the familiarity of target groups with trained occupations enhanced acceptance and ownership of project support measures. This ownership was increased by continuous application of participatory methods inviting beneficiaries to gain a better understanding of their economic and social context via Action Research Approaches. Some planning deficiencies have been identified as well: The project design is rather complex for a project with very limited resources; some indicators and terms are not well-defined and hence hard to measure and the impact chain is incomplete leading to non-optimal impact monitoring.

Major strengths in the context of **effectiveness** are excellent achievements in the field of Result 1 focusing on the preparation of skill development courses: The conduct of training courses, the preparation and use of training manuals, the build-up of a data base based on a baseline survey and the creation of linkages with third parties assisting effective training implementation have all been implemented as scheduled in planning documents. The majority of result 2 indicators focusing on multi-stakeholder linkages have also been achieved: the vast majority of beneficiaries become self-employed after training; the project created numerous linkages with public and private resource organizations and supported cooperatives and farmer organizations via continuous counselling. The project achieved most of the targets of Result 3 emphasizing strategic partnerships: It linked demonstration sites with development agencies, presented PR materials to Government agencies and invited public representatives to closing ceremonies.

Some insufficiencies have been identified in the following areas: Some quantitative targets or result No.2 have not been met (only 10% of the beneficiaries instead of targeted 25% became service providers; only 45% of the beneficiaries instead of targeted 60% obtained loans and only 52% of the beneficiaries instead of targeted 70% established market and trade linkages. Additionally, some project activities lacked structured, systematic approaches (e.g. creation of linkages, Capacity Building of cooperatives and sector associations and service provision to third parties). Result 3 focusing on strategic partnerships has not completely been achieved. Due to inefficient civil society networks PR materials have not been presented to them; KVKs have not taken an official decision to integrate similar VET courses into their program yet and advocacy measures have only been conducted in a non-formal and unstructured way.

Taking very limited budgets into account (617.664 € excluding contingency and administrative lump sum) the project achieved excellent **efficiency** resulting in low costs per trainee of approximately 140 EUR/10.815 INR and an average incremental income per trainee/year of

10.133,80 INR. The total benefit of the project by September 2014 is 1.302.127 € whereas the total cost of the project excluding contingency and administrative lump sum accounts for 617.664 €. This means that the beneficiaries have already generated more than twice the amount invested by the project.

Due to insufficiently installed impact oriented monitoring systems some envisaged project results, such as impact on policy level via systematic conduct of advocacy, have not been sufficiently tracked. The cost/benefit ratio of some training, such as palm juice production with an input of 50 training days for relatively small producer groups, is only efficient when more emphasis is put on dissemination of the gained know-how. Efficiency can also be further improved by allocation of more funds for follow-up measures, such as linkages with public and private service providers and systematic support of strategic partnerships comprising advocacy based on international best practices.

Economic **outcomes** contributed to the achievement of major targets defined on Project Objective level: 4244 of targeted 4600 beneficiaries have already been trained; 72% of all beneficiaries have initiated their trade in accordance to the know-how acquired in VET short-term courses (target: 75%); 61% of the beneficiaries increased their revenue (target: 75%) and the offer to apply for credit and grant schemes was used by 45% of the beneficiaries.

Socio-cultural outcomes on Specific Objective level can be attested in the context of continuous demand for VET courses (comprising the acceptance of training fees of up to 3000 INR for Community Centre based training). 42% of all beneficiaries have been linked to resource organizations (target: 5 linkages in each area); as targeted community centres in all four districts played an important role as a focal point for information, advice and counselling.

Organisational and political outcomes as described on Specific Objective level have been achieved: 11% of all trainees work as service providers (target: 10% are engaged as trainers) disseminating the VET approach. Disseminated PR materials informed the Government on the Welthungerhilfe approach and led to the expressed will of continuous support of such initiatives.

Environmental outcomes have been achieved in the context of environment friendly courses in the field of sustainable agriculture, non-timber forest production, agro-processing and value addition, water conservation technologies, renewable energies and integrated animal health care and nutrition. Beneficiaries from the three districts applied for these courses, participated in training and disseminated know-how to other interested community members.

Major economic **impacts** are less dependency of "*ecopreneurs*" from other sources of income; such as unskilled wage labour offered by public work programmes and unskilled jobs in urban centres. Increased revenue achieved by 60% of the trainees contributes to better livelihoods and were used for education, improved housing, acquisition of land or ponds, better nutrition, medical care and household devices. Grant and credit linkages for 45% of the entrepreneurs were highly relevant for investments in micro enterprises, such as acquisition of land, construction of storage devices and purchase of resources, inputs and equipment.

Socio-cultural impacts are more social exchange in cooperatives and self-help groups contributing to increased social cohesion and solidarity; better communication, conflict management skills and

raised self-esteem, especially for women. The project also helped to improve analytical skills and management abilities.

Organisational and political impacts have been created in the context of improved linkages between the demand (rural, marginalized youth) and the supply side (public and private service providers). These improved linkages led to more and better provision via continuous advice and counselling. Service providers also expressed their willingness to upscale service and training provision in future.

Ecopreneurs also created positive environmental impacts in the context of less erosion, better fertility of acreage due to use of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides, increased bio-diversity and more use of renewable energy.

Some challenges and constraints leading to non-optimal impact have been identified as well: Migration could not be restricted yet, especially young trainees are not always authorized by elders to implement what they have learnt and not all trained occupations proved to be successful. Many beneficiaries expressed the demand for longer and more intensive training courses. Access to finance was slow and sometimes accompanied by various administrative hurdles. Additionally, consolidated impact in the field of community development (e.g. systematic capacity building of cooperatives and self-help groups) and advocacy (approved decision of Government institutions to disseminate similar VET programmes in future) has not been fully achieved yet.

Numerous “*ecopreneurs*” are beginning to run their businesses in an economically **sustainable** way. They possess the technical know-how on how to implement their trade, received grants and loans for start-up investments and are connected with service providers offering advice and support services. Investments made with incremental income, such as purchase of land, enhancement of acreage, farms and fish ponds and renovation and construction of houses create long-lasting effects. Cost-sharing arrangements for community college training also contribute to economic sustainability.

Contributions to socio cultural sustainability have been achieved by increased social interaction and improved planning and problem solving abilities of beneficiaries organized in cooperatives and self-help groups. Formerly shy women learned expressing themselves and started economic and social activities based on mutual understanding and solidarity.

All implementing organizations are well established in the regions. They have effective training tools and mechanisms in place and will continue to support project beneficiaries thus contributing to organisational and political sustainability. Public institutions, such as sector departments, research institutions, training centres and livelihood promotion societies expressed their will to continue with linkage services even after end of the project.

Farmers trained in sustainable agriculture and in Integrated Farming Systems know how to produce and use organic inputs in an ecologically sustainable way. Ecological management helps increasing biodiversity and fertility of acreage. A vulgarization of respective know-how is taking place.

Limitations of sustainability are seen as well. Some “ecopreneurs” need more physical inputs in order to consolidate their businesses and not all project beneficiaries possess the land they are working on. Parents and other elders do not always allow full implementation of know how gained by adolescents. Self-help groups have not been sufficiently trained and the intended reduction of migration is still a challenge. Additionally, the National Rural Livelihood Mission and other VET departments express interest in more self-employment oriented VET in rural areas, but still lack sustainable concepts for large scale implementation of such courses.

The major conclusion of the final evaluation is therefore that the full potential of a very promising VET approach for marginalized rural youth has not been realized yet. **Recommendations** hence focus on the improvement of various details of the approach. The evaluator recommends:

- For the VET project: Conduct of a Final Exchange Workshop in close cooperation with the Green Colleges project comprising service providers and other potential partners. The workshop should present best practices and lessons learnt and encourage participants to implement and disseminate similar approaches.
- For implementing partners: Conduct of an analysis of own potentials and constraints. The analysis should serve the purpose to develop an exchange system in which implementing partners and other service providers can learn from each.
- For Welthungerhilfe and the Green Colleges Project: The evaluator recommends encouraging Welthungerhilfe sector specialists and staffs of the Green College project to work on further improvements the VET project design in accordance to the following points:

With regard to planning, beneficiary selection and impact monitoring: Increased attention to local decision-making powers in order to fully implement the knowledge imparted in courses; development of sector-specific support measures (value chains and clusters approaches); increased use of impact monitoring comprising respective training of project staffs and assistance in establishing appropriate systems.

With regard to the conduct of training courses: Increased offer of business management training; modularization of the entire training program; creation of an incubation concept for intensive counselling of business start-ups; expansion of value-adding components; creation of special training courses for the production of required inputs, such as tools and small machinery; capacity development of training institutions in accordance to defined accreditation criteria.

With regard to networking: Registration and support of regional service providers in order to strengthen a services market; organization of matchmaking events linking the demand and supply side of service delivery; offer of joint venture training modules; dissemination of best practices of the VET project according to results of the final workshop; preparation of guidelines for former trainees working as service providers; conduct of events for mutual learning and exchange of implementation partner organizations.

With regard to strategic partnerships for further dissemination of the approach: Invitation of potential multipliers to project sites; preparation of advocacy guidelines; training of

Green Colleges staffs and partners of the project in the application of advocacy methods; supply of information on non-favorable framework conditions to regional and national councils.

As essential learning experiences must be noted that qualified young people do not always have the power to implement what they have learned. Value-adding activities such as food processing should be based on accurate market analysis and an influence on an enabling environment should refer to well defined advocacy guidelines. Particularly positive examples from the project are the reference to locally available resources and already known techniques, the application of participatory action research approaches for hands-on support of self-help groups and the promotion of little time-consuming skills complementing traditional sources of income.

