



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Durable solutions for Somali refugee, returnees and IDPs in Baidoa through promoting immediate and sustainable livelihoods

Independent final evaluation summary report

Quick Facts

Countries:	Somalia
Final Evaluation:	25 th Aug to 10 th Oct 2016
Evaluation Mode:	Independent
Administrative Office:	CO Ethiopia and Somalia
Technical Office:	EMP/SKILLS, EMP /INVEST/ ILO CRISIS
Evaluation Manager:	Gugsa Yimer Farice
Evaluation Consultant(s):	Charles Munene
Project Code:	SOM/15/02/JPN
Donor(s) & Budget:	Japan (US\$ 1,000,000)
Keywords:	refugees, enterprise development, skills, fragile contexts

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The voluntarily repatriation of refugees from Kenya to Somalia, deterioration of the protection space in the host countries and relative peace in parts of towns in south central Somalia have resulted to a change in the trends, whereby many Somali nationals are increasingly streaming back home. Most of these returnees and the host community face high levels of unemployment and lack of

alternative income earning opportunities. This was partly because of limited investments and low capacity of the Local authority (LA) to support an enabling environment for business investments.

This situation results to strains in service provision and increases the competition for resources and available opportunities which is a recipe for conflicts particularly between the host community and the returnees. One quick way to cushion the returnees and the host community was to offer short term employment opportunities and unconditional cash grants, and in the medium to long term, build the capacity of the communities to participate more in the market and restore income stability among them.

Present Situation of the Project

Activities under output 1 had been accomplished as per the set plans. Six hundred meters of one economic infrastructure (Ali Salaamey road) had been repaired as at the time of this evaluation. Skills transfer on 'Do Nou' technology had benefited an estimated 134 people. Beneficiaries had been equipped with road construction skills and some had been able to secure jobs with other road construction companies. Overall, from the implementation of activities under this output, 2,814 man days were created.

Activities under output 2 had also been fully accomplished. The target number of 320 beneficiaries was reached, 67 percent female and 23 percent male. They were trained on various vocational skills including, beauty salon, hairdressing, tailoring and electrical installation. Training in the skills was facilitated by qualified and practising artisans using ILO manuals, which were translated into Somali language. Half the beneficiaries were awarded grants of USD 500 following a business plan competition, in which all the 320 caseloads participated. Of the total 320 graduates, 235 graduates secured employment, while 85 graduates were unemployed as at the close of the project.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation serves two main purposes. First was to give an independent assessment of the project in achieving project objectives and delivery of results, strategies and implementation modalities chosen, partnership arrangements, constraints and opportunities and second was to provide recommendations for future similar projects in terms of strategies and institutional arrangements. The primary clients are the donor, the implementing organisations, partners as well as other relevant stakeholders.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation reviewed all project materials and undertook field level consultations with project beneficiaries, staff of the implementing organisations, and local level stakeholders¹. Consultations with beneficiaries were done using focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with selected beneficiaries. Other stakeholders were interviewed as key informants². A total of 72 beneficiaries, 42 female and 30 male were interviewed in the focus group discussions, while 15 people were interviewed as key informants. The field mission took place from the 13th of September to 26th September 2016. Field data collection was

carried out by local level research specialists, all well-grounded in qualitative research methods and conversant with the context of Somalia and specifically Baidoa. Data from the field was thematically analyzed and fed into the project outputs, the set indicators and evaluation criteria.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Documentary reviews and discussions with stakeholders show that the project design was adequately informed by the context of Baidoa and most importantly by lessons learnt from the initial returnees' project in Baidoa. Indeed, it was reported that the initial proposal for this project was put forth by community elders when they realised the gaps that had been left following the closure of the initial returnees' project. As such, the project interventions were structured towards addressing the specific needs of refugees, IDPs and the host community. A stakeholders' mapping that was carried out at the beginning of the project was instrumental in ensuring that all relevant individuals and agencies were brought on board the project.

Synergy between the project and relevant government agencies and UN bodies was strategic in ensuring efficiency in the implementation of the various interventions. This, saw the successful completion of the screening and profiling exercise which would otherwise have been riddled with competing interests. UNHCR was instrumental in ensuring accuracy in screening and profiling, while the line ministries focused on fairness in distribution of opportunities across all categories of beneficiaries.

The project was well managed, with ILO offering overall technical oversight. The partner organisations were carefully identified and well versed and experienced in the areas they

¹ A more detailed list of all people interviewed is appended to this report

² A checklist of issues that guided data collection is appended to the report

contributed in. MMCI was particularly a strategic partner given its local experience and adequate infrastructure, which made the skills training efficient and cost effective. CORE was on top of the game in delivering the 'Do Nou' skills transfer, which was cost effective and made use of locally available technology. Project staffs based in the field were reported to have been very helpful in supporting the project especially on matters that touched on the community, while Nairobi and the regional office staff offered effective technical oversight and overall project management. A basic review of budget lines depicts prudence in utilization of funds, while the overall management and project governance was effective.

Evaluation findings show that all the planned activities under each of the two outputs had been successfully completed and in some cases surpassed. Training of beneficiaries in vocational skills and on the 'Do Nou' technology was done. A total of 600 meters of 'Ali Salaamey' road repairs were planned but 624 meters including a 10 meter drift were achieved. With standard maintenance, this road was expected to last in good shape for a minimum of 7 years. Beneficiaries and stakeholders were generally satisfied with the work done. The improved road created a link to an additional 900 meters of road which linked to the Main Baidoa market.

In relation to skills development and job creation, a total of 134 people were trained on the 'Do Nou' technology against a target of 129 people. Among the 134 were 5 engineers from the host community. This difference was as a result of efforts to ensure fairness in selection of beneficiaries across all villages in Baidoa. A total of 2,814 man days were created against a target of 3,900. The shortfall was attributed to reduced scope of work, which shortened the project number of days. Short term employment and induced employment was also created. Some of the trained beneficiaries had already secured jobs with some construction companies in Baidoa.

A total of 320 people were selected for training in various vocational skills. They comprised 160 refugees, 96 IDPs and 64) were host community. A rapid skill gap assessment was carried out to identify the labor market demands so as to provide youth with information on market trends and needs to facilitate their identification of skills of interest. Most skills were on demand, with the repair and sale of mobile phones and beauty salons topping the list. Repair of mobile phones and hairdressing further topped the list of the opportunities that offered the best opportunities for doing business. The two also topped the list if skills whose local demand exceeded local supply. Despite this, a majority of the beneficiaries (78 percent) selected tailoring and beauty salon, which was contrary to what would have been expected. Based on the findings of the market assessment, it would have been expected that most beneficiaries would have chosen to pursue mobile phone repairs and hairdressing as they were rated highly under the three levels shown above.

Training was done by trainers involved in the respective skill trades. ILO training modules and manuals, translated into Somali Language were used in the training. The training also entailed mentorship talks from established business people, and internship opportunities. The evaluation notes that the training not only impacted skills among the beneficiaries, but it also promoted integration and peaceful coexistence between the three groups.

All 320 beneficiaries were also trained on business entrepreneurship skills utilizing the ILO entrepreneurship modules that cover concepts such as Know About Business (KAB) and Start Your Business (SYB). A business plan competition was consequently done and all the 320 beneficiaries submitted their business ideas. A total of 160 or 50 percent of the beneficiaries were picked for business grants support of USD 500 each. Half the grantees were refugees, 30 percent IDPs and 20

percent were host community. Most grantees (80 percent) were male and 20 percent female.

Findings show that most grant beneficiaries chose to invest in other businesses besides what they had trained in. This affirms the earlier finding on selection of skills to train in. This notwithstanding, of the 320 beneficiaries trained, 235 or 73 percent were reported to be employed as at the time of this evaluation. Of these, 165 or 70 percent were self-employed and 30 percent or 70 beneficiaries were in wage employment. Overall the performance of interventions in this project was satisfactory and based on a clear understanding of the underlying challenges and issues. The set targets were met subject to the few amendments in the 'Do Nou' technology skills transfer component which were explained.

The pointers to impact were emerging in the number of beneficiaries in wage and self-employment and from the reported developments that were taking place along the developed road. Skills gained will be sustained and will remain useful to beneficiaries in their lives. The reported number of beneficiaries, who were already working, either wage or self-employment is a clear indication of the sustainability potential of the project interventions.

Recommendations

1. Based on the finding that many grant beneficiaries did not invest in the skills they trained in, it is prudent to expand the scope of future market assessments to undertake a comparison of skills needs of potential trainees and their business interests. This will ensure consistency in matching support to the beneficiary interests and avoid situations where beneficiaries arbitrary enrol for training so as to gain access to grants which they use to set up their desired businesses.

2. It may be useful to delay issuance of grants for a while after the end of the training. This will allow youth assess their potential, capacity and interests, and make a more informed decision on what they wish to pursue. Preferably, grants ought to support existing or conceived business ideas, among people that have already established some business ventures, while those who choose wage receive placement support.
3. The beneficiaries trained in 'Do Nou' technology will need to be supported to establish strong linkages with other agencies that may be involved in infrastructure development. This will give them more opportunities for jobs and to further enhance their skills.
4. Besides the project progress reports sent by the implementing partners to ILO, it was not clear how evaluation findings were continuously shared amongst the broad range of other stakeholders. This would need to be clearly indicated in the project design.
5. All infrastructural projects ought to benefit from an initial feasibility study by the implementing partner to better focus the design and costing.
6. For sustainability of infrastructural works, mechanisms for maintenance ought to be established by the LA to ensure their sustainability.

Please see the full report for lessons learned and best practices.