

Closure Stage Quality Assurance Report

Overall Project Rating: **Inadequate**

Project Number : 00079981

Project Title : Support to Joint Youth Employment Programme

Project Date : 01-Apr-2014

Strategic

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

1. Did the project pro-actively take advantage of new opportunities and adapt its theory of change to respond to changes in the development context, including changing national priorities? (select the option from 1-3 which best reflects this project)

- 3: The project team regularly completed and documented a comprehensive horizon scanning exercise to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context that required adjustments in the theory of change. There is clear evidence that the project board considered the scanning and its implications, and documented changes to the project's RRF, partnerships, etc. made in response, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project team has undertaken some horizon scanning over the life of the project to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context. The project board discussed the scanning and its implications for the project, as reflected in the board minutes. There is some evidence that the project took action as a result, but changes may not have been fully integrated in the project's theory of change, RRF, partnerships, etc. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project team may have considered new opportunities and changes in the development context since implementation began, but this has not been discussed in the project board. There is limited to no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result. This option should also be selected if no horizon scanning took place during project implementation.

Evidence

P. 15 (Adaptive Management), 28 (Relevance), Final Evaluation Report - Remained relevant throughout the programme cycle. No horizon scanning exercises available.

2. Was the project aligned with the thematic focus of the Strategic Plan? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. It addressed at least one of the proposed new and emerging [areas](#) and implementation was consistent with the issues-based analysis incorporated into the project. The project's RRF included all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF included at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: *While the project may have responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan, it was based on a sectoral approach without addressing the complexity of the development issue. None of the relevant SP indicators were included in the project's RRF. This option is also selected if the project did not respond to any of the three SP areas of development work.*

Evidence

Project Document of the Joint Programme does not explicitly contain any reference to the UNDP Strategic Plan, although contribution to "Sustainable Development Pathways" can be identified.

3. Evidence generated through the project was explicitly used to confirm or adjust the programme/CPD's theory of change during implementation.

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No evidence that the programme's theory of change was adjusted during the programme cycle.

Relevant

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

4. Were the project's targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, to ensure the project remained relevant for them? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Systematic and structured feedback was collected regularly from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, as part of the project's monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted group were active members of the project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informed decision making. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Targeted groups were engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, was collected regularly to ensure the project addressed local priorities. This information was used to inform project decision making. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected, but this information did not inform project decision making. This option should also be selected if no beneficiary feedback was collected.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

Implementation of activities related to the YouthConnekt Initiative have been anchored to local entities directly working with the youth and selecting participants. National Youth Councils (NYCs) are under MINICYOUTH and have offices and operations at the national and local level. The NYCs help the Ministry to identify and mobilize youth to participate in the different YouthConnekt activities and through the NYCs, the Ministry easily reaches youth at the province, district, sector, cell or village level. NYC offices have virtual connectivity infrastructure which enables connectivity of youth regardless of where in the country they are.

5. Did the project generate knowledge, particularly lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) – and has this knowledge informed management decisions and changes/course corrections to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, analysis and monitoring were regularly discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that the project's theory of change was adjusted, as needed, and changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

Evidence

The Final Evaluation of the JP has informed the succeeding programme phase. No mid-term evaluation was conducted. Frequent Steering Committee Meetings have been held to discuss lessons learned from previous semester and way forward to address challenges met.

6. Were the project's special measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and produce the intended effect? If not, were evidence-based adjustments and changes made? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project team systematically gathered data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments made, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence that adjustments and/or changes were made, as appropriate. This option should also be selected if the project had no special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women relevant to project results and activities.

Evidence

Through the JP, In 2018, UNDP has supported the Ministry of Youth and "girls in ICT" (CSO) to organize the Ms Geek Africa competition aims to inspire female university/TVET students to think critically and design ICT solutions to issues faced by Rwandans today. Young women compete based on the innovative ideas as well as their ability to develop a certain technology or develop a business idea. The purpose of MsGeek is to alter the stereotype held by many young girls that ICT is a man's field and to demonstrate that girls and young women can also excel in the technologies and build their confidence in competing in the open market. 10 girls were provided with technical and financial support during the 2018 edition of the Miss Geek Africa competition <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/nigerien-salissou-crowned-miss-geek-africa-2018>. In the Final Evaluation of the JP, one of the key achievements mentioned is that capacity of 40 girls was developed in entrepreneurship-business development for ICT related projects through the Miss Geek Competition.

7. Was the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *There is credible evidence that the project reached a sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.*
- 2: While the project was not considered at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the initiative in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage in a second phase or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- 1: The project was not at scale, and there are no plans currently to scale up the initiative in the future.

Evidence

YouthConnekt has been evidently successful in Rwanda and has been replicated in 10 other countries in Africa currently. A Regional Hub and Fund have been established in Rwanda to facilitate the scaling-up of the initiative. Regional workshops and project steering meetings have been held. YouthConnekt has also been selected as a UNDP Country Support Platform.

Social & Environmental Standards

Quality Rating: Inadequate

8. Did the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human rights-based approach? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: There is credible evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights, on the basis of applying a human rights based approach. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were actively identified, managed and mitigated through the project's management of risks. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: There is some evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. Potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were identified and adequately mitigated through the project's management of risks. (both must be true to select this option)

- 1: *There is no evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. There is limited to no evidence that potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were managed.*

Evidence

No evidence available.

9. Were social and environmental impacts and risks (including those related to human rights, gender and environment) successfully managed and monitored in accordance with the project document and relevant action plans? (for projects that have no social and environmental risks the answer is “Yes”)

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No updated risk analysis available.

10. Were any unanticipated social and environmental issues or grievances that arose during implementation assessed and adequately managed, with relevant management plans updated? (for projects that did not experience unanticipated social and environmental risks or grievances the answer is “Yes”)

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No updated management plans available.

Management & Monitoring

Quality Rating: Inadequate

11. Was the project’s M&E Plan adequately implemented? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF was reported regularly using highly credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the project’s M&E plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Evaluations, if conducted, fully met decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards, and management responses were fully implemented. Lessons learned, including during evaluations, were used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF was collected on a regular basis, although there may have been some slippage in following the frequency stated in the project’s M&E plan and data sources were not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted meet most decentralized evaluation standards; management responses were fully implemented to the extent possible. Lessons learned have been captured but not used to take collective actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: *Progress data either was not collected against the indicators in the project’s RRF, or limited data was collected but not regularly; evaluations did not meet decentralized evaluation standards; and/or lessons learned were rarely captured and used.*

Evidence

Final evaluation was conducted and regular reporting on progress made against expected results. No evidence of systematic reporting on RRF indicators. Tracer study was conducted in 2018 to assess the impact of job creation as a result of support from the YouthConnekt initiative.

12. Did the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) function as intended? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- The project's governance mechanism operated very well, and is a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)
- The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)
- The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document, and/or the project board or equivalent did not function as a decision making body for the project as intended.*

Evidence

Yes, the Project Steering Committee met on a regular basis and Annual reports produced in addition to quarterly progress reports presented to the Steering Committee.

13. Were risks to the project adequately monitored and managed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders at least annually to identify continuing and emerging risks to project implementation and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk, and some evidence that risk mitigation has benefitted performance. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: The project monitored risks every quarter, as evidenced by a regularly updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: The risk log was not updated every quarter as required. There may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that could have affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks. The project's performance was disrupted by factors that could have been anticipated or managed.*

Evidence

No evidence that the risk log was updated. Although the Project Steering Committee met on a regular basis, one of the main challenges identified in the final evaluation was the weak monitoring and data collection (See section on Challenges in Final Evaluation Report).

Efficient

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

14. Adequate resources were mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.

- Yes
- No

Evidence

Among the challenges identified in the final evaluation, adequate resource mobilization was one of the areas where all UN agencies participating in the JP, did not manage to deliver the initially committed funds. This affected the implementation of some of the outputs. As a result, these outputs did not deliver results to expected extent as responsible agencies withdrew participation to some extent. However, the YouthConnekt initiative was among the successful elements in terms of mobilizing additional resources for implementation, especially for the two YouthConnekt Africa Summits where more resources were mobilized from both traditional and non-traditional donors.

15. Were project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. Implementation of the plan was generally on or ahead of schedule. On a quarterly basis, the project reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them. This option is also selected if operational bottlenecks were not reviewed during the project in a timely manner.

Evidence

Although no evidence of a separate procurement plan only for the JP has been seen, UNDP regularly, in the Sustainable Growth Unit, updated a consolidated procurement plan, where procurement activities for the YouthConnekt element were captured and plan for.

16. Was there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies, taking into account the expected quality of results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project communicated with a few other projects to coordinate activities. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules. It is not clear that the link between cost savings and quality of results was made.

Evidence

The implementing partners of the JP, MINICYOUTH, together with UNDP regularly reported back to the Project Steering Committee on utilization of funds, justifications for changes of plans, inadequate budgeting etc. for correction for the next implementation period (quarter basis).

Effective

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

17. Is there evidence that project outputs contributed to the achievement of programme outcomes?

- Yes
- No

Evidence

A tracer study conducted for assessing the impact of YouthConnekt Africa participants, 2012-2017, showed that 284 out of 540 YouthConnekt Rwanda participants who were surveyed, they had created 8,309 total jobs, with an average of 277 jobs per district. Since not all YouthConnekt participants were respondents, the figures likely understating the outputs of YouthConnekt Rwanda participants. This has indeed contributed to the JP outcome "Job creation and enterprise development through entrepreneurship development, access to markets and inclusive financial systems" as well as UNDP 1 2013-2018 outcome 1 and the thematic area of

Productivity and Youth Employment in Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) 2, the government of Rwanda's former development plan.

18. The project delivered its expected outputs.

- Yes
- No

Evidence

Evidence has been seen that the outputs relating to YouthConnekt was successful in delivering on the expected outputs (see Final Evaluation Report, YouthConnekt Africa reports, Tracer Study 2018 and Progress Report Q4 2018).

19. Were there regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project was on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *Quarterly progress data informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented were most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations) were used to inform course corrections, as needed. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 2: There was at least one review of the work plan each year with a view to assessing if project activities were on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There is no evidence that data or lessons learned were used to inform the review(s).
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once per year to ensure outputs were delivered on time, no link was made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no regular review of the work plan by management took place.

Evidence

Yes, narrative progress reports were submitted and presented to the Project Steering Committee on a quarter basis and a Final Evaluation was completed for the project (See previous uploaded evidence).

20. Were the intended targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results were achieved as expected? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Targeted groups were systematically identified using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence to confirm that targeted groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups to assess whether they benefitted as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries were members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project did not report on specific targeted groups, or there is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries have capacity needs or are populations deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected, but not regularly.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

Yes, with the special focus on targeting girls and young women (which was an objective of the YouthConnekt initiative), a Miss Geek Competition focusing on girls' participation in the ICT field (See previously uploaded evidence).

21. Were at least 40 per cent of the personnel hired by the project, regardless of contract type, female?

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No evidence seen.

Sustainability & National Ownership**Quality Rating: Needs Improvement****22. Were stakeholders and partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners were fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used in combination with other support (such as country office support or project systems) to implement and monitor the project, as needed. All relevant stakeholders and partners were actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There was relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

The National Youth Council (NYC) was a central national institution which organised and coordinated most of the YouthConnekt activities. They also led the selection process of participating youth across the country. As for more project management related activities such as evaluation and procurement, there were support from the country office. However, the overarching ownership of the project, with strong lead from the Ministry of Youth, was within national systems.

23. Were there regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems, and were the implementation arrangements adjusted according to changes in partner capacities? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems were regularly and comprehensively assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources. There is clear evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Implementation arrangements were formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: Aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources. There is limited evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Some adjustment was made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements were not considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were not monitored by the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

Not applicable as the Ministry of Youth remained the most relevant Implementing Partner for the project throughout the project phase and had a central ownership role.

24. Were the transition and phase-out arrangements implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made to the plan during implementation? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project's governance mechanism regularly reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: There was a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: *The project may have had a sustainability plan that specified arrangements for transition and phase-out, but there was no review of this strategy after it was developed. Also select this option if the project did not have a sustainability strategy.*

Evidence

According to the final evaluation, there was no clear exit strategy at the end of the project according to the project team. One of the key elements recommended was developing a resource mobilization strategy to ensure the continuation of the project. This has since been done for the YouthConnekt Hub and Fund. In addition, the project managed to mobilize \$8,000,000 in traditional donors fund at the end of 2018, which will be fundamental for the next five-year programme starting in 2019 and ensure continuation and scaling-up of the YouthConnekt initiative.

25. Please upload the final lessons learned report that was produced for this project.

Summary/Final Project Board Comments: