



Programme: Poverty Reduction and Environment Protection (PREP)

Project: Joint Programme on Youth Employment Somalia (JPYES)

Implementing Partner: Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF)

Location of monitoring: Hargeisa

Dates of monitoring: 18/07/2019 – 26/07/2019



Left to right: KII with the JPYES Programme Coordinator, Abdihamid Mohamed Omer; KII with the MESAF focal point Abdirahman Mohamed Muse

Project Background

As stated in the Programme Document, the aim of the Joint FGS-UN Programme on Youth Employment aims to capitalise on recent security, governance and reconciliation achievements by expanding employment opportunities for young men and women in Somalia. The programme recognises the significant extent to which youth can foster stability. It identifies a number of interventions that could create work opportunities for young people – opportunities that are positive alternatives to participation in violence and conflict.

Addressing both the demand and supply side of the labour market, the programme has three specific outcomes:

1. Improving the long-term potential for growth, productivity and employment by tackling the key constraints of six value chains in various sectors, including agriculture, fisheries and livestock, leading to 5,000 sustainable jobs;
2. Enhancing the longer-term employability of 20,000 youth (13,000 urban and 7,000 rural) through basic literacy, numeracy and life-skills and vocational and business training in sectors with high growth and employment potential;
3. Rehabilitating productive infrastructure through short-term jobs for 30,000 youth (16,000 rural and 14,000 urban).

Activities flagged for Q2 verification:

The following two activities of MESAF were flagged by UNDP's Programme Oversight and Quality Assurance Unit (POQA) for third party monitoring in the second quarter of 2019:

- Activity 1.1: Recruit one Programme Coordinator to provide technical advisory, leadership and coordination support;
- Activity 1.2: Conduct multi-stakeholder coordination and review meetings and M&E visits.

Methodology

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with Abdihamid Mohamed Omer, JPYES Programme Coordinator (recruited by MESAF) and with Abdirahman Mohamed Muse, M&E Advisor and MESAF focal point. Both KIIs were conducted at the MESAF office in Hargeisa. In addition to these interviews, the activity verification exercise was supplemented by a review of documents provided by MESAF. The activity monitoring reports of the M&E Adviser Abdirahman Mohamed Muse, have been particularly useful.

Relevance

The Programme Document sees JPYES as a ‘frontline intervention’ to achieve results through job creation and skills development. It is argued that this is ‘one of the most important priority projects’. Such a ‘high-visibility, government-led campaign to mobilise young people in an effort to rebuild (or build anew) critical economic infrastructure’ is an important contribution to economic recovery and state building. It addresses two critical challenges:

- The bleak employment situation for Somali youth – and young Somalis cannot afford unemployment because of the absence of social protection. They therefore face underemployment and they are tempted into survival activities such as self-employment, unpaid family work – and they become prey for militant groups.
- The competitiveness problem of the private sector, with a particularly weak export performance – which leads to a low demand for jobs, which is seen as a main factor with regard to youth employment.

In the interview with the JPYES Focal Point he said that the needs that are being addressed are very basic ones – needs related to what he called ‘better living’. The Programme Coordinator was more explicit. ‘Youth employment is a major issue,’ he said. ‘It is a priority for the government and a special concern for MESAF. Employment creation means enabling youth to be productive members of the society.’

Activity Verification and Effectiveness

Activity 1.1: Recruit one Programme Coordinator to provide technical advisory, leadership and coordination support

The Programme Coordinator has been recruited. In fact, two have been recruited – the first one was engaged in April 2018 on a nine months contract, and he left after only six months. It was not possible to establish why he left before his contract ran out. The second Coordinator was recruited in October 2018. The first one underwent an open and rigorous selection process, including being short listed, then interviewed and given a written test. Because of the need to fill the post quickly, the second one was chosen from a list of consultants held at the ministry. The Coordinator does have ToR, which were shared with the IDC TPM team. The main tasks are to coordinate stakeholder meetings with his secretarial support; develop a productive partnership with all stakeholders; conduct monitoring activities; ensure good communication between partners and promote cross-learning. The MESAF M&E Advisor confirmed that the Coordinator has carried out the following main tasks that are in line with the ToR: facilitating donor and stakeholder meetings; checking programme activities against work plans; conducting programme monitoring activities; facilitating Steering Committee meetings; coordinating National Employment Forum annual meetings. And the M&E Advisor also identified a number of contributions that the Coordinator has made: drafting an employment policy; writing a concept paper and formulating the second phase of the JPYES programme in Somaliland; developing a Somaliland internship programme, among others. He also said that the Coordinator is good at multi-tasking.

Activity 1.2: Conduct multi-stakeholder coordination and review meetings and M&E visits

The Programme Coordinator provided information about four **coordination meetings**:

Meeting	Participants	Purpose	Outputs
Sahil Regional Youth Employment Programme (YEP) Coordination; Berbera; 30 October 2018	Sahil Region YEP stakeholders and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish regional steering meeting of YEP stakeholders in Berbera; Update on current employment youth initiatives in Somaliland; Share information about challenges, lessons learned and best practices of YEP in the region; Develop ToR of regional steering meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToR of the region intra-agency steering meeting; Monthly meetings schedule; Updates from partners; Meeting minutes
Communication/Coordination Meeting; Berbera; 17 November 2018	Sahil Region YEP stakeholders and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To obtain information on progress of the project and on beneficiary views about the impact of trainings, challenges, and any gaps; To receive recommendations about ways forward with the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-training plan including internships, apprenticeships or job placements; Employers were engaged in discussions on providing job opportunities for the trained youth; Beneficiaries' recommendations on incorporating more practical vocational skills as well as literacy training; Establishment of Youth Associations at local levels
YEP National Steering Committee Meeting; Hargeisa; 30 November 2018	UNDP, FAO, UN HABITAT, SIDA, Somaliland government partners, local NGOs, private sector representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring YEP stakeholders together to share employment creation initiatives and to update the ministry on the progress of ongoing activities in various sectors that YEP partners are implementing in Somaliland; Members discussed challenges, lessons learned and success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus was mainly on private sector engagement, particularly with regard to 'technology-oriented business'; Agreement was reached that MESAF should finalise the Somaliland YEP II through a participatory approach
Communication/Coordination Meeting; Berbera; 29 December 2018	Dry fish and marketing beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss challenges beneficiaries were experiencing; To consider recommendations made by the beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main outcome was to urge FAO, in particular, to distribute the small-scale Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) to enable youth fisheries to start catching, processing and marketing

With regard to **M&E visits**, four had taken place, conducted jointly by the Programme Coordinator and the M&E Officer:

Activity	Findings and Recommendations	Comments
Monitoring Prosopis eradication, management and utilisation; Abdaal Village, Berbera; Implementing agency: FAO/PENHA; Date: 25 October 2018	A cash-for-work project for youth; Abdaal was a village badly affected by drought; Beneficiaries reported delayed payments and poor equipment for clearing the Prosopis	From the monitoring report it would seem that the project was concerned only with CfW eradication, but the project involves producing livestock food and charcoal from the Prosopis – as noted in another report on the progress of the project in Beer Village, Burao
Monitoring of provision of fishing boats for youth in Berbera; Implementing agency: FAO; Date: 30 October 2018	The constructed boats had not been handed over to the intended beneficiaries and they also needed some repairs having been idle in the water for several months	The report notes that it had been difficult to communicate with the FAO local consultant
Monitoring of a dry fish processing centre in Berbera; Implementing agency: Tamaam Construction Company; Date: 20 November 2018	The centre was complete and furnished at the time of monitoring, and was ready for handing over to the Berbera municipality – and to be used by 17 youths trained in life skills by FAO; However, it was also noted that the local fishing community were ill-informed about the centre	There are issues here about the effectiveness of project-support communication and approaches related to community participation
Monitoring a dry fish business start-up project for youth in Berbera; Implementing agency: FAO; Date: 30 December 2018	The plan was to establish four youth cooperatives for drying fish, but at the time of monitoring only two were operating. A constraining factor was the suspension of an FAO subsidy to the enterprises. The report identifies poor marketing and weak community engagement as challenges – also, the report identifies the lack of a proper business plan as a constraint	All four of the reports are rather brief. They involved interviews with beneficiaries and it would have enriched the reports to have included quotations highlighting their views. Also, there is a lack of information concerning the number of beneficiaries and the training they had received.

Challenges

A number of challenges related to the overall implementation of the programme were identified by both the MESAF M&E Advisor and the Programme Coordinator. The M&E Advisor highlighted delays in funding as a main constraint affecting the timely conduct of activities. He also claimed that the funding allocated to the programme's work in Somaliland was too little, given the size, and importance, of the youth unemployment problem that the programme is addressing. Another point he made is that the government is 'overlooked as a responsible partner'. This is a point strongly seconded by the Programme Coordinator, who argued that, with the exception of UNDP and HABITAT, the UN and implementing partners are not sharing reports with MESAF – and there is a lack of what he calls 'dual responsibility'.

A few challenges were also faced by the TPM team during the activity verification exercise. The Director General was new in the MESAF office and was not aware of the programme; and the fact that the TPM coincided with a concurrent UNDP monitoring exercise, which caused confusion at MESAF and delayed the interviews.

Recommendations

- The criticism from the projects that funding is delayed is a recurring one, but in this case FAO is singled out – this is a matter that should be explored further by UNDP.
- The other matter that needs to be reflected on is the view expressed by both respondents that the government is not sufficiently engaged as a partner in the oversight of the programme.
- The task order for this assignment did not involve monitoring any of the training courses being provided. But when the TPM focuses on outputs it will be important to appraise the effectiveness of the course, particularly because in this verification exercise it appears that the concentration has been more on general life skills than on specific vocational training.

Supporting Documents Provided by the IP

- M&E Advisor contract;
- Beer monitoring report;
- Dry fish business start-up spot check report;
- Fish processing centre spot check report;
- FOA fishing boat spot check report;
- Oct-Dec 2018 M&E report;
- Prosopis utilisation, management and eradication report;
- Programme Coordinator contract;
- ToR for Programme Coordinator;
- Yirowe monitoring report