



End-Term Review

Final Report Executive Summary

Support to the Development of Human
Resources of Beneficiary Organisations
(SDHR),

Uganda

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1 Presentation of the evaluation

The Support to the Development of Human Resources Project (SDHR) was initiated as a pilot project for the new strategy for Enabel's scholarship programmes of 2011. Main guidelines of this strategy were increased alignment to both the Belgian and Ugandan development priorities, complementarity with other Enabel supported programmes and using a capacity development approach instead of merely training. The project runs from May 2014 until February 2020 with a budget of roughly €6.5 million. The project aimed at improved service delivery through increased skills levels. The four project outputs were:

- Beneficiary Organisations (BO) are selected and strengthened to define objectives to improve their organisations;
- BOs are strengthened to develop their human resources development (HRD) Plans linked to organisational performance goals;
- Activities selected from the HRD Plans effectively implemented;
- Individual scholarships are managed.

The first three outputs are sequential – three phases – the fourth output was a left-over activity from the previous scholarship programme. A total of 49 BOs was selected from the health (20), education (23) and environment (6) sectors. Most were government organisations located in the rural and hard-to-reach areas of the country, 16 of them located in the capital Kampala. Their training plans and budget were formulated on the basis of an organisational self-assessment covering 10 areas like strategy, structure, work processes and (Human Resource) management. Depending on the organisation size, most training budgets varied between €35,000 and €85,000; the big hospitals had a larger budget.

The project's End Term Review (ETR) took place in October/November 2019 and is a follow-up of the Mid-Term Review of February 2017. 18 BOs and 4 other stakeholder organisations were consulted with a total of ± 160 interviewees.

The overall objective of this ETR is to evaluate the performance of the SDHR intervention in Uganda based on the five OECD/DAC criteria, and to contribute to learning among the key stakeholders by analysing key success factors in order to draw lessons for the elaboration of new policies, strategies and programmes in Uganda and other Enabel supported countries. In particular, this ETR will be used by Enabel to inform the design of the new country programme Belgium-Uganda, which is currently under preparation.

2 Results and conclusions

Relevance (score A)

SDHR was a relevant project both towards the government of Uganda (GoU) development objectives and the Belgian development cooperation strategies. The project aims to contribute to the implementation of the GoU training policy involving most of the relevant government agencies (Ministry of finance, planning and economic development, MoFPED and relevant Line Ministries). Considering the capacity needs of the 49 BOs, the project has had a relevant contribution in addressing these needs.

Efficiency (score A)

At the time of the ETR (almost the end of the project), most of its resources, 98%, are spent. A final activity with the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) is still ongoing using budget from the Study Fund. SDHR implemented various efficiency measures:

- Tendering for training services via lots led to a considerable decrease in tender procedures;
- Developing standard formats for training preparation, implementation and evaluation;
- Setting up a training data base that created easy reporting and project presentation materials.

At the start of the project, the execution rate was rather low, mainly because the initially planned Sector Technical Committees appeared not feasible. When the project coordination team (PCT) was enlarged the execution rate stepped up.

Effectiveness (score A)

The mission interviews and the end-of-project satisfaction survey both confirm that skill levels have increased. The application of these newly acquired skills is also positively evaluated, e.g. in computer use and practices of performance appraisals. Improved job performance and organisational performance are not formally outcome measurements; however, following the mid-term review (MTR) the project decided to slightly 'stretch' this objective to include performance levels as well. The factors responsible for the effective training-performance linkages are:

- BO selection based on interest and ready to enter a change process;
- The strong demand orientation of the entire process; from needs assessment to follow-up;
- BO management was intimately involved. Only one BO dropped out;
- Focus on quality during the tendering process, training design and training implementation. Only a few trainers did not provide as expected;
- The emphasis on action planning and follow-up through progress tracking and coaching after the training.

The end-of-project organisational self-assessment showed a significant improvement.

Impact (score A)

Assessing project impact - *improved service delivery of Ugandan institutes and organisations* – was not expected to be part of this ETR, but the mission did find a large number of examples testifying that SDHR has successfully initiated service delivery improvements. The project published three documents on Stories of Change, explaining the contribution of the training programmes towards better service delivery. The end-of-project satisfaction survey confirmed this contribution.

Sustainability (score C)

The four main factors facilitating lasting change within the BOs are not sufficiently available:

- Training and organisation development support financed via the national/district budget;
- Equipment needs adequately covered by the national/district budget;
- Staffing norms adjusted to the current service delivery needs;
- Local organisations becoming more effective in local resource mobilisation.

Being a pilot project for the new scholarship programme, and having an outcome formulation of *BO staff skills improvement*, sustainable results have not been SDHR's focus of attention. The project devoted its resources on supporting the BOs in their organisational improvements. Because these organisations are, to a large extent, dependent for their functioning on higher level authorities, sustaining the current improvements is highly questionable.

Specific questions

Complementarity/synergy with other projects

Synergies with other Enabel supported projects mainly concern the two education sector projects "Support to the Implementation of Skilling Uganda (SSU)" and "Teacher Training and Education (TTE)"; with the health projects there was less overlap in beneficiaries. Both projects appreciated working together with SDHR and made use of SDHR tools, especially the self-assessment and tendering tools. They also cooperated in training planning and implementation. The mission has three considerations for this type of collaboration:

- Complementarity between SDHR and the sector projects had not been firmly structured in the overall country programme at the time of starting the respective interventions. If maximum complementarity is preferred in the national portfolio, anticipating how collaboration is to take place among projects would be advised. When structuring and organising a CD support project like SDHR, it would be more effective if it could follow and service the various sector projects; the sector projects are to take the lead.
- Choosing for a separate CD intervention, apart from the sector programmes, could be useful for two reasons. Firstly, it can assist in areas of CD support not envisioned during inception of these projects. Secondly, CD support can provide useful tools for the sector programmes. This would be a quality control function that may also be organised across Enabel supported countries
- A separate CD intervention like SDHR would be more effective if better integrated in the relevant Ugandan governance structure, e.g. additional support to national agencies like the Ministry of Public Services.

SDHR contribution for use in similar projects in other countries.

Through its integrated approach towards training, SDHR's contributions to other countries are:

- Concrete experiences on the question of being a support to the sector programmes in the country and/or being a separate programme in its own right;
- A large series of tools and formats to be used during the BO support process. Besides the tools the open-minded and demand oriented attitude of the staff is as important;
- Introducing innovations, for example the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training, which became in high demand;
- Formats, tools, success stories and lessons learned are important elements to share on a wider scale and can be part of the Enabel e-learning platform.

3 Recommendations

To the Project Steering Committee

In case a project continuation is considered:

- Focus the national level support on MoPS and the HR departments of the ministries of health (MoH) and education and sports (MoES);
- Two other ministries involved in making HR and CD activities work at field level are the Ministry of Local Government and the MoFPED. Co-financing by MoFPED is suggested;
- Start with the HR and CD needs of the BOs in order to be as practical as possible. A good number of them have become assertive enough to be effective dialogue partners with national agencies;
- Giving a role to the Ministry of ICT, not only to guide computerisation of the local agencies, but also to set up *blended learning* programmes, is suggested;
- Investigate the use of e-governance ratings as indicators for a new programme;
- Include a south-south learning component.

To Enabel HQ

- Have both CD support in the sector programmes and a separate CD support intervention;
- Take a more than average feasibility and formulation period, to get all parties aligned in the same direction. Local consultants may assist in this preparatory process;
- Have a longer-term view, e.g. 5 or 7 years, but be flexible in implementation. Contexts in these kinds of programmes usually change. Annual progress and planning events might be suitable in this case. The theory of change is helpful in this process;
- A focus on blended learning is a way to make the Belgian strategies on supporting digitisation and innovation more operational;
- Financing flexibility as was possible with the Study Fund can be integrated in the Uganda portfolio.

4 Lessons learned

The project's capitalisation report¹ does not only explain its approach in working with a large number of local organisations towards improved performance, it also lists, per development phase, a series of lessons at operational level and lessons to be considered for future programming. A total of 38 lessons learned are provided.

Additional lessons that the ETR would like to highlight are:

1. *How to get more government buy-in.*

SDHR implementation has realised that lasting effects of training to local organisations needs more buy-in from the side of the government, more than involvement as public service commission (PSC) members and the initially planned Sector technical committees (STCs). Discussions with PSC members and chairman confirm the need for more support actions at national level. Not only in training, but also in getting CD higher on the (budget) agenda. These actions (see also recommendations above) may include

¹ Helping people becoming better at their job: Training and development in the workplace in 49 Ugandan organisations. Lessons from SDHR, Updated version, June 2019.

CD support to MoPS being in charge of HR development across Government agencies, e.g. on:

- Collaboration with Ministries of Health, Education and Local Government employing more than 80% of all government staff;
- National Competency Framework;
- Updating the 2006 staffing norms;
- Implementation of the country's training plan.

2. *Data-base crucial for a large training programme*

Project implementation benefitted considerably from the elaborate training data-base. This monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tool was designed rather late in the project so it was still under development at the end of it. It would have been better if this tool was part of outputs 1 and 2 activities. The data-base is a good example to be used by other similar projects.

3. *Mutual learning among BOs*

Regular joint events among all BOs were planned with the objective to learn from each other's experiences. This appeared less the case than anticipated. Exchanges among sectors, or even sub-sectors like the district health offices (DHOs), hospitals, vocational training institutes (VTIs) and national teachers colleges (NTCs), might have been better.