



EVALUATION BRIEF

[Date]

[TITLE OF THE EVALUATION, E.G. FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF COUNTER TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS”]

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: External Independent Final evaluation

Evaluator(s): Fulu Koali and Moraoetsi Rakuoane, IOM Regional Office in Lesotho

Field visit dates: 11th to 26th April 2022

Final report date: 30 May 2022

Commissioned by: [IOM Mission in Lesotho]

Managed by: Mabaruti Motsamai, Project Manager

Evaluation purpose: The overall objective of the evaluation was to

determine the extent to which the project (Socio-Economic Reintegration of Returnees and other vulnerable households’ project) contributed to its objectives and judge on the overall performance of the project against its results framework

Evaluation criteria: The evaluation criteria included Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, and Gender and Human Rights).

Evaluation methodology: The mixed methods research/evaluation approach (qualitative and quantitative) through a combination of both open ended and close ended questions was used in this evaluation. Data collection methods utilized included Key informants’ interviews, household interviews, desk review, observations, literature review and focus group discussions. The assignment was completed in three phases which include 1) planning for the evaluation, 2) evaluation data collection and 3) data analysis and report writing

PROJECT SUMMARY

Like many other countries in the world, Lesotho has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 which led to numerous socio-economic interruptions and catastrophes which include loss of life and loss of employment among many others. Lesotho was among the last countries in sub-Saharan Africa to record the first case of COVID-19 (May 2020) but due to lack of adequate preparedness, poor health infrastructure and health systems; and limited resources the country was still severely impacted by the pandemic.

The “Socio-Economic Reintegration of Returnees and other Vulnerable Households in Migration Affected Areas severely impacted by COVID-19 pandemic” project was a pilot intervention in which the Government of Lesotho needed and requested support from international organizations such as IOM which has extensive experience in sustainable reintegration programming – to support the Basotho returnees from South-Africa due to COVID-19 related adverse livelihood conditions they were faced with in South Africa.

The project was implemented in five districts of Lesotho between March 2021 and March 2022. The goal of the project was to support sustainable reintegration of returnees who continued to come back to Lesotho through official borders and informal crossings (so-called “community crossings”) from South Africa since March 2020 when South Africa implemented the COVID-19 lockdown and border closure.

The project comprised of three broad outcomes and these were:

Outcome 1: Government of Lesotho has improved its ability to successfully implement reintegration programmes.

Project information:

Geographical coverage: [Lesotho in Qacha’s Nek, Quthing, Mophale’s Hoek, Mafeteng and Leribe]

Project type: Socio-Economic Reintegration of Returnees and other vulnerable households’

project) Project code: [CS.1122]

Gender marker: [2a]

Project period: [March 2021 to March 2022]

Outcome 2: Vulnerable Basotho returnees impacted by COVID-19 have enhanced their livelihoods through restoring their dignity, income generating opportunities and enhanced their living conditions in the district of origin.

Outcome 3: Government of Lesotho - through Ministry of Local Government has improved its ability to enhance social unity/cohesion through community development initiatives.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

IOM has made considerable progress in improving the livelihoods of the returnees and households who were severely impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

About 99% (98/200) trainees graduated from the vocational training due to the support provided by the project and majority were already pursuing their businesses when the project phased out by 30th April 2022.

The community development projects/cooperatives made substantial progress in promoting social cohesion and collaboration among the communities severely impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

The strong commitment and collaboration were noticed in three visited community development projects during the evaluation. The community members and committee members interviewed were passionate about the project and determined to be the first target market for their products, market the products to their friends and relatives, continue paying their monthly subscriptions, encourage more community members to join and protect the project sites from theft and damage by animals.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender: The project design was intentional about gender dimensions by proposing at least 50% participation of women in skills training. The evaluation discovered that the female (60%) participation in vocational schools training was higher than that of males (40%) and the same scenario was true in community development projects committee membership where 63% of the members were females versus 37% of males. This development reaffirms the finding from IOM rapid assessments that females were the most affected by COVID-19 compared to their male counterparts.

GOOD PRACTICES

Optional (see note above).

LESSONS LEARNED

The project design and selection of activities which were informed by the findings of the assessments and intensive stakeholder consultations aided in ensuring that the project provides the most relevant support to the respective target beneficiaries and bolstered the participation in project activities especially in the community development projects.

Comprehensive reintegration model adapted in the project design targeting individuals (returnees), COVID-

19 affected communities and Government Ministries (DISCOSEC) all in one project was strategic in addressing the immediate, medium term and long term gaps related to management of the reintegration issues at district and community level.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Selection process and verification of beneficiaries' eligibility could be improved - intensive verification of the beneficiaries (returnees) eligibility (upon selection by community leaders and NACOSEC members) could be improved through engagement of independent consulting firm/consultant who does not have direct interest to the project activities and associated benefits
2. Increasing duration of the vocational trainings to at least 3 to 6 months could enable the trainees to have a better grasp of the training content which will then enable them to make high quality and competitive products or services upon completion.
3. Management of beneficiaries expectations. The support which the project would provide especially to the trainees would need to be clarified early as some of them came with high wrong expectations that they were going to get monetary allowances and then decided to drop out once they found out that was not the case.
4. IOM would consider working together with one or few ministries like Social Development and Local Government in implementing similar projects in the future since these ministries have presence at all levels (National, District and Community level)

