Final Evaluation of Rural Youth Employment Project

*Project Number: 00074246*

1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Jamaica Country Office conducts project evaluations to capture evaluative evidence of the overall contribution of UNDP projects to national development results. Conducted within the framework of the UNDP Evaluation Policy (2011), this evaluation assesses the overall role and contribution of the Rural Youth Employment (RUYE) Project to income generation, employment rates and in longer run to poverty reduction in the target communities.

Poverty is not simply a lack of adequate income, but is rather a multidimensional phenomenon that represents the deprivation of one’s ability to live as a free and dignified human being with the full potential to achieve one’s desired goals in life. The inability so to do is often but not always a function of insufficient income to access the requisite goods and services. The RUYE project was designed to target some of the issues that result from the nexus of a lack opportunities, income insufficiency and unemployment rates among youth. The lessons learnt from this project can be used to improve the performance of all actors who wish to counter the effects of these nexus of factors in the future.

The evaluation has the following objectives:

- a) to assess the role and contribution made by the RUYE project to income generation, employment rates and the potential contribution in longer run to poverty reduction
- b) identify the factors that have affected the project’s contribution, answering the question of why the project has performed in a certain way
- c) make recommendations for improving the contribution and successes of similar projects in the future.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title:</th>
<th>Rural Youth Poverty Reduction Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDAF Outcome(s):</td>
<td>Outcome #3: Environment and Poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expected CP Outcome(s):</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Those linked to the project and extracted from the CPAP)</td>
<td><strong>Outcome 3.1:</strong> Reduction in the incidence of poverty, unemployment and exclusion among vulnerable groups and selected communities, particularly in rural Jamaica.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expected Output(s):</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Those that will result from the project and extracted from the CPAP)</td>
<td><strong>Output 3.1.3:</strong> Improved access to sustainable livelihoods for adult men and women and to social services for adults and youth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing Partner:</td>
<td>Scientific Research Council (SRC)</td>
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<td>Responsible Parties:</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MOA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the levels of rural poverty more than twice as high as urban poverty and youths being over-represented in both national poverty and unemployment figures, there is a compelling case for interventions in rural Jamaica. From this need the Rural Youth Employment Project (RUYE) was born. The initial project budget was USD1 Million and the project duration was to have been from January 1, 2010 until December 2012. The interventions under RUYE were aimed at increasing the employability of youths through capacity building, thus improving their employment opportunities and allowing them to be able to be engaged in sustainable economic activity. The 4 Parishes identified – Trelawny, St Ann. Manchester and St Thomas consist of a large percentage of traditional farming communities which focus primarily on cultivation of crops such as tubers (yams and sweet potatoes), and fruits and vegetables. The most identifiable skill sets in these communities are production, harvesting, crop maintenance, export quality standards; project management and implementation.

The expected outputs of the project were:

a) Baseline study to identify target population and target markets, training requirements, output targets and monitoring indicators
b) Training and capacity building for rural youth in various technical and management practices related to agriculture and agro-processing
c) Business Development
d) Progress monitoring and output evaluations

The following performance indicators were formulated for the project:

a) Increase in number of rural youths (males/females) equipped with literacy, technical and business management skills.
b) Increase in number of rural youths (males/females) engaged in agriculture and or agro-processing
c) Increase in number of agricultural facilities and or agro-processing facilities available for and being utilized by rural youths
d) Percentage completion of commercialisation of selected model enterprises

Approximately 20 Communities were initially identified as contenders for community based post facilities, with community mobilisation and prep work taking place in all. Upon completion of the baseline and the development of costing for the retro-fitting or construction of facilities there was a further prioritisation exercise. In this exercise a short-list of 14 communities/groups were identified as demonstrating the most progress and as having the best likelihood of quickly demonstrable, replicable and sustainable success. At the point construction began however the project had only enough funds to pay for 7 of these facilities. This as the cost of completing these facilities ballooned beyond the budget of project due to inaccurate estimation and scoping and the general high levels of cost appreciation experienced between 2010 and 2012. Plans were however developed with different levels of details for all 14 groups, and all 14 groups have received all the requisite training.
The Rural Youth Poverty Reduction Project was intended to contribute to the reduction of rural youth unemployment in the targeted communities by providing youths with theoretical training, practical experience, production inputs and final production facilities that allow for value-added agricultural production. The Project was to have resulted in increased numbers of youths actively earning a living directly or indirectly through agriculture and accessing greater returns from value added processing. In effect therefore they were to have been provided with access to real and substantial access to sustainable livelihood options. The youths should already have begun to reap rewards from the primary agricultural elements of the project and all is now on stream for them to access and utilise the post-harvest production facilities to improve the agriculture value added, and their own income levels. The net impact will be the scaling up of economic activities from either none at all or subsistence levels “hand-to-mouth” activities. The long term vision is improved linkage between those activities and the local tourist and export sectors where possible and economically feasible.

In 2012, a project revision was done to increase the overall budget from to USD1,058,521 and to extend the project duration till 30 June 2013. The project objectives and outputs remained unchanged. The main challenge is sustainability of activities and systems established during the course of project implementation, particularly in the context of the global economic crisis.

3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

As foreseen in the project document a final independent evaluation of the project needs be conducted in order to

(1) assess the potential for impact of the project and the investment made
(2) assess the achieved results at output level and contribution to outcome level results of the project and demonstrate to what extent it has achieved its objectives and has been relevant, efficient, cost effective and sustainable,
(3) provide information for better decision-making of in future similar interventions (best practices and lessons learned as well as to provide a basis for policy recommendations)

4. EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation must address the entire project from inception to completion and should embody a strong results-based orientation.

The evaluation will identify the outputs produced and the contributions to results at outcome level and positive or negative changes produced along the way, including possible unexpected results. The evaluation is to identify the key lessons learnt and best practices

Key questions to be answered by the evaluation:

A. Relevance:
   1. Are the project objectives relevant to the actual youth unemployment and poverty situation in (rural) Jamaica?
   2. Does the project address needs of the targeted demographic?
3. Does the project address needs of policy makers, state and/or non-state practitioners active in the fields of rural and youth economic development?
4. Is the project responding to the core mandates of UNDP and USAID in Jamaica?
5. Does the project design respond to the key needs of relevant beneficiaries?

B. Efficiency:
1. Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
2. Has project funding been spent as planned?
3. Could the project activities and outputs been delivered with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity?
4. Did the project M&E systems and practices allow for in-time corrective actions and tracking of the progress towards the expected results (outputs, contributions to the outcomes)?
5. What measures have been taken during project planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
6. Has the project been cost-effective, i.e. could the results have been achieved at lower cost through adopting a different approach and/or using alternative delivery mechanisms?

C. Effectiveness:
1. Has the project achieved its foreseen objectives and outputs?
2. Has the project contributed towards the outcome level results? If not, has some progress been made towards their achievement?
3. What are the success factors for the achievement or reasons for non-achievement of project objectives, outputs and contribution to outcome(s)?
4. What are the major challenges, opportunities and obstacles encountered by the project as a whole?
5. What are the potential intended and unintended, positive and negative, long term effects of the project on unemployed youth, individuals and institutions working in the fields of rural and youth economic development?

D. Sustainability:
1. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be sustained after the end of the project?
2. Are the beneficiaries committed to continue working towards project objectives after it ends? Do institutions and professionals have motivation and capacity to efficiently administer the facilities built under the project?
3. Are services developed under the project likely to continue, be scaled up or replicated after the project funding ceases?

E. Gender equality:
1. Did the project identify gender issues in the design and/or implementation phase)
2. What results has the project achieved addressing gender sensitivity?
3. Could the project have been more gender-sensitive?
F. Partnerships:
   1. Have coordination mechanisms between the, relevant partners been successfully established?
   2. Have partnerships with civil society organizations been established? What is the likelihood that these partnerships will be sustained after the end of the project?
   3. What are the opportunities, achievements and/or challenges of the partnerships?

5. EVALUATION METHODS

The project evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with UN evaluation norms and policies, including UN Standards and Norms for Evaluations\(^1\), UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results\(^2\), and in particular UNDP outcome-level evaluation a companion guide to the handbook on planning monitoring and evaluating for development results for programme units and evaluators\(^3\). Evaluation methods should be selected for their rigor in producing empirically based evidence to address the evaluation criteria, to respond to the evaluation questions, and to meet the purpose of the evaluation. Evaluator will review available key documents and conduct a thorough desk review. These documents encompass the ones closely related to the project as well as context-specific ones from the government and other organizations. Preliminary list of documents to be consulted is attached in Annex 1. The desk review is of primary importance as information contained therein will be cross-checked by primary research methods.

The evaluation should include but not necessarily be limited to the following methods:
   1. desk review of relevant documents (project document, quarterly, semi-annual and annual project reports, minutes of technical meetings, reports on project activities, relevant national policy documents etc.);
   2. individual and/or group interviews (or other primary data collection methods like focus groups) with members of the Project Board, main governmental stakeholders and civil society, representatives of the counterparts and implementing partners;
   3. interviews (or other primary data collection methods like focus groups) with a representative sample of the project beneficiaries based on a pre-designed questionnaire;
   4. meeting with representatives of USAID;
   5. field visits to facilities and groups supported under the project;
   6. questionnaires

The inception report will (i) summarize the desk review findings, (ii) specify and elaborate on the evaluation methodology (evaluation matrix) relating evaluation questions to evaluation criteria, indicators, sources of information and methods of data collection, and (iii) develop data collection tools and instruments. The model for the evaluation matrix is as follows:

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\(^1\) Available at UNEG Webpage: http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4
\(^2\) http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/
An outline for the inception report is attached in Annex X.

6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Evaluation will be conducted by an independent expert without prior involvement in the project. The evaluator will not act as representative of any party and should remain independent and impartial throughout the evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the United Nations and the UNEG and the Evaluator selected must sign the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators.

The evaluator should have:

1. minimum of a master’s degree in economics, development studies, social sciences, or related field, with specialized training in evaluation and project/program management;
2. extensive knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods to projects and/or programmes
3. Minimum 5 years’ experience in project or programme evaluation
4. Excellent communication, interpersonal and drafting skills
5. Knowledge of and experience with UNDP or other donor or developing country poverty reduction programmes would be an asset
6. Experience in project management is considered an asset

7. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

7.1. Management arrangements and logistical support

The evaluation should be planned and conducted in close consultation with UNDP Jamaica Country Office (CO). The evaluation tools and methodology must be agreed with the CO. The CO will provide including travel arrangements, transportation during the field missions, and organisation of meetings, and submission of all documents for desk review. The Regional Service Centre (RSC-LAC) of the UNDP will provide quality assurance and ensure compliance with the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) by providing comments on evaluation tools and methods, the draft report and clearance of the final report.
Although the evaluator should be free to discuss all matters relevant to this assignment with the authorities concerned, he/she is not authorized to make any commitment on behalf of UNDP.

The evaluator reports directly to UNDP Jamaica Country Office. The report will contain the findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as a recording of the lessons learned during project implementation. To the extent possible, the draft report will also be circulated to the project counterpart agencies, the representative of the donor and, with other parties involved in the project for review. While considering the comments provided on the draft, the evaluator would use his/her independent judgment in preparing the final report. The final draft will be an independent and impartial evaluation of the project and will meet all UNEG evaluation requirements.

### 7.2. Indicative timeframe for the evaluation process

**Expected duration: 1 June 2013 – 31 July 2013 (to be confirmed)**

**Locations:** Home based and Jamaica

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Id</th>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>START</th>
<th>END</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Final Evaluation process RUYE Project</td>
<td>30/05/13</td>
<td>17/06/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Contract preparation and signature</td>
<td>30/05/13</td>
<td>03/06/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entry Visa application</td>
<td>04/06/13</td>
<td>17/06/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consulting activities</td>
<td>18/06/13</td>
<td>03/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Start-up audit conference</td>
<td>18/06/13</td>
<td>19/06/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Desk review of project document, reports and other background</td>
<td>02/07/13</td>
<td>08/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Documentation collection and desk review</td>
<td>02/07/13</td>
<td>08/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Development of evaluation methodology</td>
<td>09/07/13</td>
<td>09/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Preparation and submission of brief inception report containing work plan, key findings of desk review and</td>
<td>09/07/13</td>
<td>09/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Trip to Kingston Jamaica</td>
<td>10/07/13</td>
<td>15/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Consultant’s trip to Jamaica</td>
<td>10/07/13</td>
<td>10/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Field work</td>
<td>11/07/13</td>
<td>20/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Site Visits, Meetings and interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries and Partners: debriefing with UNDP CO</td>
<td>11/07/13</td>
<td>20/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Trip to Consultants home base</td>
<td>21/07/13</td>
<td>22/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Consultant’s return trip</td>
<td>21/07/13</td>
<td>22/07/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Preparation of deliverables</td>
<td>18/07/13</td>
<td>02/08/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Data analysis and preparation of the draft report</td>
<td>18/07/13</td>
<td>25/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Draft evaluation report with findings, lessons learned and results submitted to UNDP for review</td>
<td>25/07/13</td>
<td>25/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Collecting comments on draft report from UNDP</td>
<td>26/07/13</td>
<td>30/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Finalization of the report on the basis of comments received and submission</td>
<td>31/07/13</td>
<td>02/08/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Presentation of final evaluation report Final Project Board Meeting</td>
<td>02/08/13</td>
<td>03/08/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Presentation and approval by the Project Board</td>
<td>03/08/13</td>
<td>03/08/13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7.3. Expected deliverables

Expected deliverables:
1. Inception report
2. Draft evaluation report in line with UNEG evaluation guidelines.
3. Final evaluation report and presentation.

The final report should not be longer than 35 pages, excluding the annexes and the executive summary (Annex 3). The report should be developed with respect to the following chapters:
   a) executive summary (maximum 4 pages)
   b) introduction (including evaluation objectives and scope)
   c) description of the intervention
   d) evaluation Approach and Methods
   e) analysis
   f) evaluation Findings, including contribution to outcomes, and sustainability
   g) conclusions
   h) recommendations
   i) lessons learned and best practices

Annexes to the evaluation report should be kept to an absolute minimum. Only those annexes that serve to demonstrate or clarify an issue related to a major finding should be included. Existing documents should be referenced but not necessarily annexed. Maximum number of pages for annexes is 15.

8. PAYMENT

Evaluator will be issued consultancy contract and paid in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures. Payment will be made in three instalments: 20% upon completion of inception report, 40% upon completion of the draft report and 40% upon clearance of the final report and presentation.

9. ANNEXES

1. Results framework of the Project results and the theory of change of the intervention if available
2. Preliminary List of partners and key stakeholders (with contact information)
3. Preliminary List of key documents and databases to consult
4. Code of Conduct for UNEG evaluators
5. UNEG Ethical Guidelines.
**Annex 1**

**Project Results and Resources Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcome: Reduction in the incidence of poverty, unemployment and exclusion among vulnerable groups and selected communities, particularly in rural Jamaica.</th>
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**Outcome indicators**

**Target:** youth in target communities – especially males capacitated in income generating skills

**Indicator:** # of youth trained in entrepreneurial skills; # of micro-enterprise initiatives established; # of youth involved in income generating enterprise; level of unemployment of out-of-school youth

**Partnership Strategy:** National Execution by the Scientific Research Council (SRC) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MoA)

**Project title and ID**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Outputs</th>
<th>Output Targets</th>
<th>Indicative Activities</th>
<th>Inputs ($US)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Vulnerable and out of school adolescents and young people, particularly boys, equipped with lifelong learning, livelihood skills and increased access to work | Baseline:  
- To be determined from baseline study  
Target:  
- 75 Youth per parish  
- At least 1 | **Rural component (2010-2012)**  
- Baseline Study  
  - Measurement of youth unemployment (by gender)  
  - Identification of agricultural and agro-processing activities with most potential for value added processing  
  - Identification of viable products and markets  
  - Assessment of training needs in target parishes to increase youth involvement and achievement in agricultural activities identified  
  - Identification of communities from which participants to be drawn  
  - Assessment of physical infrastructure available for agro- | 930,000 |

*Target subject to adjustment based on findings of baseline Study*