

**Evaluation Report Title: External Evaluation of YDP and NUYEP Programmes: Final Evaluation Report
By Montrose**

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

1. DFID agrees with the evaluators that this project represents the successful achievement of planned outputs, meeting, or in many cases exceeding, those demanded of the implementing partners, VSO and YBI/Enterprise Uganda. We would add that this is no minor achievement in the context of post conflict Northern Uganda, and represents a significant input into the lives of almost 30,000 people. Half of these are women, representing major innovations and effort on the part of implementers to overcome social barriers to women's participation, without which we might have expected a much worse gender ratio.

2. The positive (if uncertain and crude) assessment of the project's return on investment is welcomed - with caution, given the methodological challenges. There are two notable features that we would wish to highlight, and are likely to hold true even given the data weaknesses. First, that while the VSO component has a lower RoI than the YBI/Enterprise Uganda, this is likely a function of their targeting a much poorer, more disadvantaged part of the population. Doubling a poor person's income could be assessed as more valuable than doubling a non-poor person's income even though the income increase is less compared to the investment. Second, the project seems to reflect a classic 80/20 rule: almost all the positive RoI was generated by 20% or fewer of beneficiaries. This begs the question: are there better ways of selecting participants?

3. DFID Management agrees with the evaluation that the data collected did not support an optimal evaluation. We only had very crude counterfactuals available against which to assess the impact of these interventions which rely more on post-project snapshots than pre-post comparisons. (Although the 'comparison groups' established by the evaluators for the purposes of comparing non-beneficiary and beneficiaries was a useful approach). Setting up control groups for effective randomised control trials could have provided more reliable information and therefore a more accurate calculation of the costs and benefits. This message will be strongly advocated in dialogue with other implementers of similar projects.

4. The challenges posed by critics of direct youth skills interventions (where a project covers the cost of a set number of beneficiaries) are that projects of this nature are expensive, with short lived results, cannot be replicated beyond the very small number of direct beneficiaries, and their benefits are often overstated by weak evaluation techniques. This project trained 30,000

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people in Northern Uganda in a £10m project; Northern Uganda's labour force is expected to grow from 3.1 million to 8.5 million over the next 25 years. Pro rata, providing training to 5.4 million people would cost around £1.8 billion (the crudeness of this statement is acknowledged – but the scale of the problem is well illustrated); while the 80/20 rule would suggest only 1 million people might produce major benefits for themselves and for the economy. Our project and our evaluation have not answered all these criticisms, but they have helped to set out some ways to frame and develop a response. Projects need to demonstrate they can be cheaper, more replicable, more targeted, and more measurable than even the projects evaluated here, which have broadly produced what they set out to produce.

5. We agree with the evaluators that this project has made numerous contributions to better practice: as well as innovations to support equal gender participation, both projects used different ways respond to market demand for labour; improved governance and financial management at technical colleges; and built in good value responses to social problems and post conflict trauma. Not all were equally successful, and there are many useful lessons contained in the evaluation report in this respect.

6. This evaluation attempts something rarely undertaken. Usually, a project is assessed against the objectives it sets itself. They are rarely assessed against competing or comparable projects. Skilling youth in Uganda is an objective that has launched dozens of projects and mobilized many tens of millions of dollars in development aid. This evaluation uses a very crude assessment of basic information from ongoing related projects in Uganda to try and assess: what is a reasonable cost for a given result? What approaches would appear to provide the best value for money? Again, while the conclusions of this report are limited, given the crudeness and difficulty of data comparisons, the evaluation report highlights an approach that bears further development and replication, if coordination and collaboration can be strengthened.

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| Recommendations (see recommendation section pp78-82 of the Montrose evaluation report for more details) | Accepted or Rejected | If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | <i>No successor project is planned; most actions refer to the extent to which we will promote the findings.</i> |
| 8.1.1 Strengthen future attempts to measure value for money in related skills based project by using Randomised Control Trials (where feasible, and cost effective), or other forms of natural experiment, or other non-random sampling methods, for a stronger counterfactual. | Accepted | Publicise the finding. We agree this is a very valuable step to improve the quality of data and assessment of these types of project. Oversubscribed, subsidised training schemes should be relatively amenable to an ethical RCT approach. |
| 8.1.2. When calculating Value for Money, use costs per additional beneficiary, using a ‘costs ingredient’ method, rather than a simple ‘total expenditure/number of students’ calculation. | Partially accepted | Where feasible and appropriate this methodology should be further explored. |
| 8.1.3 Assessing economy and efficiency requires comparison to a technically feasible alternative, which requires time to develop. This should be included in future programme design. | Accepted | Publicise the finding – this would be one way to develop the cross project comparison work undertaken by the evaluators. |

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| <p>8.2 Branding, certification and franchising</p> <p>Future youth enterprise projects should consider a form of branding alongside certification, to increase the value of the courses, both in terms of marketing the course to students and to their prospective employers.</p> <p>Should future programmes employ a similar approach to NUYEP, this lends itself to create a form of social franchise. Once the beneficiaries pay their initial 5,000 to be part of the scheme that could be seen as their ‘franchise fee’, as people self-select into more intensive support they could upgrade to a ‘Silver’ and ‘Gold’ type franchise. With the correct marketing to create reputation within the market, this branding could increase both the fees project entrepreneurs are able to charge their customers and as well as increasing their customer base as they would be seen as ‘Gold Standard’ businesses</p> | Partially Accepted | <p>Delayed delivery of certificates from the national authority was a severe problem in the project, limiting the value of courses undertaken by beneficiaries under YDP. In this case an alternative brand of certificate, if it could achieve a similar or greater status, would have been valuable.</p> <p>We would warn against a proliferation of certification systems however (very possible in a context of many projects).</p> <p>On ‘franchising’ – what is described here is a form of certification - we accept the potential value of the approach, but would leave it to implementers such as Enterprise Uganda to decide whether their approach and market were suitable.</p> |
| <p>8.3</p> <p>Given the relative success, under NUYEP, of those receiving mentoring and counselling services, any repeat/similar project should develop these more. Successful graduates should become mentors themselves.</p> | Partially accepted | <p>The mentoring and counselling beneficiaries were self-selecting, which may have accounted for their relative success, and a wider number of beneficiaries of these services might not benefit to the same degree. Another issue is increased cost (the free ‘mentors’ were very hard to find). Bearing in mind these risks, these recommendations will be supported.</p> <p>The use of previous beneficiaries as mentors however, is strongly supported, especially in the case of large, long running schemes, where the reputation of the scheme will add weight to the reputations of the mentors.</p> |

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| <p>8.4 Further in depth analysis of those who achieved most success, including psychological analysis</p> | Accepted | Given the relatively small number of beneficiaries who generated the most return, this seems a good idea, and one that we would support in dialogue with organisations like Enterprise Uganda and YBI. We would also publicise, to all relevant stakeholders, the fact that most of the investment returns of the project were generated by relatively few beneficiaries, to help them come up with their own ideas of how to exploit this trend to improve cost/benefit ratios. |
| <p>8.5 Disability Future projects should build stronger linkages with other disability support NGOs to help disabled beneficiaries overcome their challenges. Further work could be undertaken to better understand the challenges of the disabled within a given market.</p> | Accepted | Accepted, and already undertaken in DFID Uganda’s ongoing agribusiness project. The report contractors, Montrose were selected by our agribusiness project implementing partner to undertake a study of disability in relation to agribusiness markets, in Northern Uganda, partly inspired by the work of the YDP and NUYEP projects. There is clearly potential research and practical benefit in understanding the interaction of disability on markets in contexts such as Northern Uganda. |
| <p>8.6 Gender In order to have a stronger influence on gender norms and practices in severely unequal societies, use a holistic approach that encompasses the national legal framework on equal pay and sexual harassment; the role of men in championing rights, and using techniques such as ‘Gender Model Families’; the empowerment of women in their communities to understand how to face inequalities and to support one another to speak up safely</p> | Partially accepted | Accepted, noting that several of the practices and principles mentioned in this recommendation were undertaken by the project implementers. We note that some practices may be beyond the ambition of smaller projects or certain contexts, but all (and others) are potentially valuable tools and approaches that require consideration. |
| <p>9. Female participation Use lessons from YDP and NUYEP relating to how female participation was successfully encouraged in a difficult environment (including the use of crèches, various forms of affirmative action and outreach to fathers, husbands and brothers of potential participants)</p> | Accepted | Findings will be publicised - we agree that there are some excellent and powerful lessons from some of the approaches used. |