

Post Evaluation Review

‘Vocational Skills Development and Income Generation for Disadvantaged Young People in Sierra Leone’ Project

For Turing Foundation



Photo: Bread-making group of former apprentices from Potoru

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Executive Summary

The Turing Foundation funded an apprenticeship training extension project, which was implemented 2016-2018. The project end evaluation showed that 255 youth had learned skills and increased their income and standard of living as a result. A post evaluation review was carried out one year after project end to see if the benefits to the individuals and the trainers were sustained.

This review included data collection from 4 of the original 12 communities, meeting with 8 of the 24 original artisan groups, 64 former trainees and 7 artisans.

Findings showed that all the former apprentices were engaged in the activity of their training, were earning income exceeding that previous to the project, and were engaged in group and individual businesses. Income of the 44 participants who provided income data, showed an average 1100% increase compared with at project start.

In addition to the apprentices, an additional 143 individuals are receiving skills training as a result of the project; 21 taken on by artisans, and 122 taught by former apprentices. This equates to 1.8 additional people trained per apprentice trained.

Factors in the success of the project were found to be

- Access to loan scheme
- Significant monitoring and support by MAPCO the implementing partner
- Two-year period of the project
- Careful selection of trades for which there is sufficient market demand
- Apprenticeships forming part of a wider CBO (Community Based Organisation) project implemented by APT/MAPCO which strengthened the CBOs, provided rights training and literacy
- Business training which accompanied the skills training
- Access to markets

Recommendations

A number of recommendation to design and approach were made including:

- The model used has proven to be very effective in developing livelihoods for disadvantaged youth people in deprived areas of Sierra Leone, and therefore should be replicated.
- The reviewed project could be built on as there is already the capacity for successful implementation in the communities.
- The design should focus on trades for which there is high demand, and which do not require high investment to start off after training.
- New projects should have frequent monitoring and support from experienced implementers.
- Develop interventions where there is a strong CBO and well managed revolving loan scheme in operation.

Introduction

The Turing Foundation supported a two-year vocational training project in Sierra Leone (Nov 2016-Oct 2018): “Vocational Skills Development and Income Generation for Disadvantaged Young People in Sierra Leone”. The project was an extension of the apprenticeship training component of a larger Big Lottery Fund (BLF) project ‘Empowering Communities in Sierra Leone’ (2014-2018). Both projects were managed by APT Action on Poverty and implemented by our partners in Sierra Leone MAPCO. An evaluation was conducted at the end of the project.

Turing Foundation requested APT to conduct a Post Evaluation Review in October 2019, one year after the Turing Foundation component had completed. From October 2018-October 2019 there was no additional support or project in the communities.

The project enabled 255 apprentices (65% female and 14% with disabilities) (target was 240 apprentices) to train within their communities with locally identified and trained artisans for between 12 and 18 months, 10 trainees per artisan. Apprentices also accessed the same literacy and small business development training inputs provided directly by their local Community Based Organisations in the larger BLF-funded project as well as having access to CBO revolving loans to start their own businesses upon completion of the apprenticeship. At the end of the two-year project it was expected that the beneficiaries would have improved income generation skills and be actively engaged in micro-enterprise or paid employment.

Terms of Reference for this post evaluation review are to:

- Evaluate the impact of the project on trainers, trainees, their households and communities one year on from the end of the project.
- Identify key contributing factors of the approach used which have enhanced and/or hindered their prospects during this period and potential for sustainability in the future.
- Identify key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects

And to answer key questions:

1. Learning Outcome: Does the design and approach of the project contribute the sustainability of the impact on trainees?

- i) How have the youth trainees used and benefited from the training since the end of the project, in terms of their:
 - a) current employment/business activities,
 - b) perceived current income/assets/change in standard of living/meals per day
 - c) future plans and prospects?
- ii) Of those who are no longer benefiting, what are the barriers and challenges that led to such a result?
- iii) What has contributed to their success or failure in the above that are:
 - a) part of the direct project (vocational training component, business skills, hands on skills working with suppliers/customers),

- b) part of the wider project (such as literacy/numeracy training, access to revolving loans, support from CBO leadership/community assets and
- c) unrelated to the project (such as external mentors, finance, opportunities).

2. Learning Outcome: Does the design and approach of the project (including the role of the CBOs) contribute to the sustainability of the training?

- i) Are any of the artisans:
 - a) continuing to support/mentor former trainees,
 - b) engage in joint business with former trainees,
 - c) take on new trainees.
- ii) If they have,
 - a) what are the factors that have enabled this,
 - b) what are the benefits to themselves and others,
 - c) related costs and how they are secured.
- iii) If they have not, what have the constraints been?
- iv) Are any of the trainees training or employing others?

Methodology

The review team comprised of APT staff (APT CEO, Programme Development Manager and Project Officer), MAPCO Field Officers and MAPCO senior staff. APT reviewed relevant documentation. A survey instrument was designed in consultation with MAPCO, and planning of activities was carried out.

An assessment was carried out in 4 of the original 15 communities (Potoru, Mano, Taninihun Kapuima and Feiba). Communities were selected to include the 2 communities visited during the end of project evaluation, and two further communities were selected on their accessibility as the review was carried out during the rainy season, when road conditions are very bad.

In each community the team (one APT staff, one MAPCO senior staff and one field officer) met with artisans, former apprentices and CBO leaders. MAPCO field officers attended the day before to organise the assessment by calling together the relevant people.

Focus Group Discussions were carried out with former apprentices, key informant interviews were carried out with 8 artisans, and discussions were held with CBO leaders in groups, and individually.

Data collection was carried out over a 3 day period (14th-16th October 2019). Interviews were also held with a town based vocational training centre, and a group discussion was held with MAPCO staff on their previous experience of running a town-based vocational training centre.

The assessment met with 62 out of the 80 former trainees in the 4 communities and was able to gather information about the current occupations of those that were not present. 7 of the 8 artisans in the

communities were interviewed (one had passed away). The trades covered were agriculture/vegetable production (3 groups), soap making (2 groups), motorbike mechanics (1 group), and bread-making (2 groups).

Findings

1. Learning Outcome: Does the design and approach of the project contribute to the sustainability of the impact on trainees?

i) How have the youth trainees used and benefited from the training since the end of the project?

Current employment/business activities

The youth trainees have overwhelmingly continued in the business in which they were trained.

The majority have continued to work as a group in various ways, together with their artisan. Group cohesion is high, and both trainees and artisans have found it preferable to continue their co-working, rather than trainees setting up a business entirely on their own.

For example, the vegetable production/agriculture groups are all still working together as a group, but in addition to their group agriculture plots and activities, they all also have their own expanded farming plots.

The bread making group in Potoru are still working as a group, but also doing their own businesses baking bread (some using pots rather than a kiln). The other bread making group in Mano is more complex, some work alone and use artisans equipment for a fee, one had his own oven so works independently, one woman has moved away to a nearby community Njala to set up her own bakery there, and her family will follow when she is established.

The motorcycle maintenance trainees have split, 6 are still working with the artisan, and a group of three trainees have set up as a separate business, and one as an individual business.

One of the soap-making groups is still working together as a group, whereas the other soap group are now doing their own soap-making (although they still have mentoring).

Community	Trade	Group	Individual	Comment
Potoro	Vegetable/farming	All	All	Individual and joint plots
Potoro	Bread making	All	All	Come together as a group when they have a contract to bake for an event/meeting.
Mano	Bread making	Most	All	Some are paying for use of artisan's oven/tools.
Mano	Motorbike mechanic	All	4	3 set up their own, 1 set up alone, remainder still with artisan
Taninihun Kapuima	Soap making	None	All	All are working independently.
Tainihun Kapuima	Vegetable/farming	All	All	Individual plots as well as joint plots
Feiba	Soap making	All	Most	They work primarily as a group, most members also make their own soap.
Feiba	Vegetable/farming	All	All	Individual plots as well as joint plots

Perceived current income or assets, changes in standard of living and or number of meals per day

The responses to these questions were overwhelmingly positive.

Examples given were ability to afford school uniforms, and shoes, some women were proud to be able to afford new clothes, some reported how they can support medical costs of family members, all reported eating better, and all reported eating three meals per day. The women in Taninihun Kapiama said they were eating well and even ‘growing fatter’.

The table below shows a remarkable increase in income after the end of the project as businesses and skills continued to grow.

Income table

	Project start	Project end	One year after project end (44 participants)
Average monthly income (SLL)	32,573	76,981	359,477
Percentage increase	N/A	236%	1100%

For example, the average motorbike income is now 670,000 per month compared with 70,000 per month a year ago. For soap makers, the average income is now 515,000 per month, compared with 42,000 per month a year ago.

Although it should be noted that it is difficult to assess income from their trades, especially agriculture, and some groups were not used to calculating profit after costs, therefore the data collected was not completely standardised or collected from all participants. Some respondents gave the same or similar incomes to others in their group. Some also tended to also take out the cost of food clothing etc, leaving what was left as savings rather than business profit.

Only one group reported some degree of market saturation, the bread making group from Potoru. Despite this, they were still able to provide food for their children, school uniforms, better clothes and shoes, afford tailor made clothes, able to give gifts to relatives and friends, and have also invested in items for their business such as storage buckets, mixing bowls etc, several of them were also noted to be wearing gold jewellery. They were working together as a group and getting contracts to provide bread for meetings, trainings, funerals, and other occasions. The visit time was during the rainy season when less activities are planned, which means there are less orders for bread. During the previous month, the roof of their bakery had collapsed, and they are planning to repair once the rains have ended. Another reason for the reduced sales this year could be that the road to Potoru was being surfaced, but work has now ended, and with it, a lot of construction workers who increased the market for their bread, have left the area. The women are still making bread and selling it, and have expanded into different types of bread and cakes. They reported that all are working still with the artisan as well as on their own.

The soap group from Feiba were continuing to make soap as a group, and only one was also making it independently. All the other members had also started some other services such as cooking or petty trading which increased their incomes, these had all started up as a result of learning during the

project. The group divide out the soap-making tasks and share out the profit after every 5/6 batches of soap made.

Agriculture groups have improved food availability as they get to keep a share of the crops. In income terms, they are selling part of the groups' agriculture harvests for future investment as a group, saving some seed, and dividing some between themselves. It is, therefore, not easy to quantify monthly income accurately. However, these groups also reported eating better and having more vegetables that they grow themselves.

The groups from Taninihun Kapiuma reported that they had not only supported family members needing medical treatment, but also had a number of children studying at senior school in the nearby towns of Moyamba and Bo, whereas prior to the project they couldn't have afforded to send their children away to study. They also reported repairs made to their houses.

Future plans and prospects,

Some groups had clear plans of what they wanted to achieve next, particularly those in agriculture, where there was saving of seed, saving of income from sale of joint crops and plans to expand the agriculture areas. For the soap makers in Taninihun, they had made a good living from the soap, and were planning to expand into bread making as they could see a market for it, even though there were no skilled bread makers in their community. The farming group in Taninihun also wished to engage in bread making, possibly in cooperation with the soap making group.

Some of the bread-making individuals had plans to purchase their own oven, expand to nearby locations, and try to learn new types of baking. However, the former trainees explained that it is very expensive to build or purchase their own ovens so it would take a long time to save sufficient funds for this.

Of the motorbike repair apprentices, a group of three had set up a separate business, and others remained with the trainer whilst they continued to improve their skills.

When asked whether they thought their social status in the family/community had changed since being involved in the training, all respondents agreed that they were better included in decision making, and have gained more respect from community members. For example, a mechanic from Mano said he was respected in the community now and not regarded as idle. Women in the Feiba soap making group said how they are more empowered now, they have had human rights training and understand their rights, so they can walk side by side with men, and they are better able to make decisions. Some of the Potoru farming group said they could now meet their responsibilities for their children, no longer having to ask for assistance from relatives, and able to pay school fees and related costs. In addition, many former apprentices said how they can now loan money to friends and relatives, and support their children to attend better schools.

The women-led farmer group in Taninihun has registered as a CBO so that they can in future be eligible for agricultural support from the Ministry of Agriculture, they have also set up their own revolving loan and have already amassed 1 million Leones, and are using its fund to support members in need.

It was noted that those that started up their own businesses tended to be the more mature members of the groups, and younger ones more likely to remain with the artisan.

Several of the CBO leaders also expressed how having such apprenticeship opportunities in their communities has led to more peace and less conflict over money as incomes have increased, and people are productively engaged. This was echoed by some of the participants who say there is less conflict over lack of income now.

- ii) Of those who are no longer benefiting, what are the barriers and challenges that led to such a result?

We did not find any who were no longer benefiting, apart from one woman who had a stroke and her daughter had taken over as part of the bread making group in Potoru. For the group members who were not in attendance, we asked what they were doing and where, and all responses led us to believe that they are also still using their skills.

In the agriculture group which was dominated by men, although all were benefiting, the three women were earning less than the men, and were less engaged in group discussion. Farming groups are doing joint plots and also individual plots, planting a range of crops. Potoru lost one harvest of maize to pests but this didn't dampen their enthusiasm to continue working as a group. The soap trainer in Feiba passed away, but the group is still going well – organising themselves and working as a team and not as individuals, and continuing to share out the tasks.

These examples shows that despite a range of setbacks and difficulties, the groups have shown resilience.

iii) What has contributed to their success or failure in the above that are:

- a) part of the direct project (vocational training component, business skills, hands on skills working with suppliers/customers),

Working as a group has been beneficial in that participating in women's' groups seems to improve the confidence of women, as they learn from each other and support each other.

Group working also enabled them to share tasks, and strengths, for example, the farming group added two men to their group to help with the farm land clearing.

The participants were able to earn an income from the trade from early on in their involvement, except for agriculture.

They were able to continue with the trade/business without need for significant investment in tools and equipment which often holds back vocational training graduates.

The selection of artisans was also conducive to good results, in that all artisans continued to support their former trainees, gained direct benefits themselves from their involvement, and are from within the community and connected through social bonds. They remained engaged throughout the project period and are still engaged. Clearly the skills they have demonstrated have been learnt by the trainees to the extent that they are able to earning a living from it. Former trainees are living close in the community and can still count on the support from the trainer/artisan.

The business skills training also enabled most of the former trainees to understand profit and loss, how to grow a business and simple budgeting. Trainees were able to recollect what they had learned in the business training and gave examples relevant to their own business area. Also all the businesses are well rooted within the community and aligned to the needs and effective demand of consumers.

The group members and individuals are directly meeting customers and consumers so are getting feedback regularly, understanding the competition, and learning about customer service, and market

trends. The business training helped them to work in a group, and how to keep the groups together (as reported by the Agriculture trainer in Feiba), and also taught them about diversifying products (as reported by Feiba soap artisan and CBO leader).

- b) part of the wider project (such as literacy/numeracy training, access to revolving loans, support from CBO leadership/community assets)

Availability of a loan fund has been significant for nearly all trainees. All groups are still accessing loans from the CBO, as individuals but the majority are using them as a group. These CBO loan funds are still being well managed which means that the community members are still able to benefit from the loans. Taninihun CBO has increased their loan capital significantly and now has 50 million Leones in their fund.

Bread makers in Mano are being helped by the CBO, and several other trainees and artisans mentioned that the CBO leaders refer customers to them, and help chase up unpaid bills. CBOs are still visiting the groups who are working together.

Many of the former trainees continue to take loans to support their business and repay monthly. One reason they are still keen to do this, is because those funds for repayment are not available for general expenditure, so can't be used on daily necessities or loaned to friends and relatives.

The Taninihun farming group have started their own dues payments which are kept by the CBO and used to support members when they experience difficulties, hardship or illness, operating as group insurance scheme.

- c) unrelated to the project (such as external mentors, finance, opportunities).

Having nearby markets is a factor in the success of the businesses. This was reported by those in Mano, where there is a nearby weekly market (Baja trade fair), and Taninihun, and 3 bread makers and a motorbike business was set up in nearby Njala.

Another factor is the ability to rearrange the work and the group to fit their needs (different groups have decided on different forms). For example, the new motorbike business set up in Njala by former trainees have defined clear roles and responsibilities; sharing sales, bike inspection and servicing between them. They then check the money at the end of the day and divide up the profits (keeping a portion for the workshop).

The groups' reinvestment, such as practised by the farmer groups in saving seeds and saving some of the proceeds from the sale of crops has been beneficial, whereas individual farmers may have faced pressure to use those funds to support family members or relatives if they had the funds in their possession. The groups are able to save the proceeds from the sales for larger expenditures, such as purchase of equipment, labour costs of land clearing or purchase of seed and fertiliser at the appropriate times.

Trainees qualities – more mature trainees tend to be more likely to start up their own business/branch out on their own. The younger ones are less likely to do this. This may be a result of better social capital, life experience, access to resources etc.

None of the participants reported access to other loan funds such as micro-credit, either as individuals or groups.

2. Learning Outcome: Does the design and approach of the project (including the role of the CBOs) contribute to the sustainability of the training?

- ii) Are any of the artisans:
 - a) continuing to support/mentor former trainees,

We found that all were continuing to support and mentor former trainees, either as a group or as individuals, with the exception of the one soap maker who passed away.

- b) engage in joint business with former trainees,

As reported in the section above, and table, all artisans were continuing to work with former trainees in various forms. The bread makers in Potoru come together when there is a contract to fill, which is managed by the artisan, otherwise they make their own bread and sell on a daily basis. The motorbike apprentices in Mano who stayed with the trainer were still improving their skills and did not have the capacity or tools at that time to set up on their own. The two different soap-making groups chose different methods, one in Taninihun is engaged in individual soap making and the other in Feiba is still working as a group making a range of soap products, these women are also engaged in additional income generation activities which started after the project began (eg petty trading, cooking etc). One bread maker from Mano has set up her own business in nearby Njala, one former mechanic apprentice has set up also in Njala with two of the other former trainees and taken on 5 new apprentices.

- c) take on new trainees.

In terms of passing on their skills, we saw a surprising number of additional people taken on by the trainer as a result of the project.

Table showing trainers who have taken on new trainees

Community	Trade	Number of new trainees	Comment
Potoro	Vegetable/farming	0	
Potoro	Bread-making	4	4 more women were invited to join the group, and considered part of the group.
Mano	Bread-making	4 (3 male 1 female)	More trainees are keen to join. Some help in the marketing of bread. They are not paying to be trained.
Mano	Motorbike mechanic	3	Trainees are supported by their parents, but don't pay for the training. The trainer can't take on more than 3 due to providing lunch and medicine to them, and he is still working with 6 former trainees, premises not large enough to take on more.
Taninihun Kapuima	Soap making	7	Taken on 7 new trainees, they do not pay for training but help trainer by selling soap for her one day per week. These women are from neighbouring communities and come for training one day per week.
Taninihun Kapuima	Vegetable/farming	3	3 additional members were taken on at the start of the training.

Feiba	Soap making	0	They are still working as a team, the trainer passed away.
Feiba	Vegetable/farming	0	Limited by the availability of tools, and for now they want to improve the seedlings and productivity.
Total		21	

ii) If they have taken on additional trainees,

a) What are the factors that have enabled this?

Factors include having the time, space and tools/equipment. Where the soap makers in Taninihun have moved on to make their own soap, the trainer is free to teach further groups of trainees, who approached her from neighbouring communities as they wanted to learn the skill. The motorbike mechanic trainer took on more apprentices after three of the former apprentices moved on to set up their own business, his constraints are ability to pay for their lunches and medicine, and size of his premises. Farming groups cited lack of farming hand tools as a constraint. The bread maker in Mano is constrained by the size of the oven, he originally had 10 trainees, 6 still with him and he has taken on 4 more (making up to the original number of 10). Other factors include a strong desire to be trained by other individuals and or their parents, this is likely to come about when they see the improvements in status and income of other trainees. Several of the artisans also expressed a willingness to support their fellow community members.

We also discussed with CBO leaders whether they are able to support further such apprenticeships in their community. General response was positive, both for trades where they have suitable artisans but also ones where artisans are not present, such as bread making in Taninihun and masonry, carpentry, bike mechanic needed in Feiba but not available.

b) What are the benefits to themselves and others?

By continuing to have trainees, the artisans are benefiting by being able to take on larger contracts (eg bread making). They are also continuing to make a contribution to their community, building up social capital by training others for free, having access to other transactional benefits such as training others for sale of soap in return. The trainers are also maintaining their status in the community by having this skill to pass on. In addition, the artisans also reported increased income compared with when they were working alone or with informal apprentices in the past. Farming groups together with the trainer, are planning to expand as they build up land areas and seedbanks.

Motorbike mechanic services are beneficial to the community as they previously had to get their bikes by truck to the nearest town for repair, which is expensive and inconvenient. The motorbike mechanic trainer also explained that training apprentices has built up his reputation in the community, and the trainees have brought more customers.

c) Related costs and how they are secured.

In no case was it reported that the new trainees were paying directly for the apprenticeship opportunity, although there were several examples of transactions either during training (selling soap) or reward after training (motorbike trainer). The bread maker artisan in Mano explained that their informal trainees were more adhoc, such as just helping with bread selling, or unable to attend at certain times of the year due to agricultural commitments etc. Therefore, the training is self-sustaining through benefits to business and social capital.

iii) If they have not, what have the constraints been?

Those who haven't taken on new trainees are those still working with the original group, which may indicate they don't have the time, space/equipment to take on more. The Potoru bread maker artisan said no others had come forward for training, possibly this has been constrained by the market saturation that was reported, and he previously said that he was getting old and didn't want to continue training. No new soap making trainees were taken on in Feiba as the trainer passed away.

Some artisans mentioned specific equipment or premises support that would enable them to take on trainees. A follow-on project could be very beneficial as it would build on the solid foundations that are already in place.

iv) Are any of the trainees training or employing others?

There were significant evidence of former trainees providing training opportunities to others. In total 121 other people were reported to have been trained by former apprentices. The ways they have done this have varied from the agriculture groups who explained that they shared their knowledge with others, and also shared seeds and cuttings, to taking on a set of apprentices in the case of the mechanic in Mano.

Table showing Former apprentices who have taken on their own apprentices.

Community	Trade	Number of new trainees	Details
Potoro	Vegetable/farming	26	All reported training others, and providing seed and other loans to friends, and potato vines and cassava cuttings.
Potoro	Bread-making	6	All reported training an additional 1-2 people, sisters or sister-in-law.
Mano	Bread-making	14	One man taught his 4 brothers, one man who set up on his own in nearby town has 6 people working with him, two others reported they had taught their children.
Mano	Motorbike mechanic	6	One former trainee set up on his own with 2 other former trainees and 5 new apprentices, one other trainee has also set up on his own with one apprentice.
Taninihun Kapuima	Soap making	42	All 9 respondents reported training a further 4-6 people, to be paid at the end of the training.
Taninihun Kapuima	Vegetable/farming	10	There is a group of 10 women who are farming with them to learn the skills. The artisan has visited their community to give additional support.
Feiba	Soap making	15	When they do group soap-making, these additional people from neighbouring villages join in and are shown what to do, now all have the ability to make on their own at home.
Feiba	Vegetable/farming	3	Some mentioned training household members.
Total		122	

Access to other sources of Vocational Training, such as at a Vocational Training Centre (VTC)

If these trainees had not had access to this training opportunity, what other options were open to them? All respondents said there were no VTCs in their chiefdom. There was no option for them to attend one as they were too far away, none had even heard of anyone who had attended a VTC, which gave the impression that VTC is only available to youth who live in urban areas.

The Review Team visited a Vocational Training Centre in Kebbie Town of Bo City called the Rapid Tech Vocational Centre for comparative purposes. This centre is funded by a US church group and has been operating for 20 years at various locations. The vocational training centre has around 15 staff and 50+ students aged 15-30, all students are from Bo City or staying with friends or relatives in Bo. 12 different training courses are offered in courses of 2-3 years, including carpentry, tailoring, auto mechanic, soap making and bread making. Most courses also include 6 months organised internships in the final year then a graduation ceremony. There are no educational level restrictions. Students paid only 150,000 Leones for the first year, which includes uniform. Most of the costs were covered by the donor, however, the donor has now withdrawn funding. The management have set a fee of 50,000 Leones per semester which is far below what is needed to sustain the training, however even charging this very low fee, has resulted in many of the students dropping out. The training centre lacks basic equipment and facilities, and does not have the funds to upgrade computers for example, or even to connect to the internet, so it is unlikely they will continue to attract students. Without prompt external support the training centre will cease to operate.

The leaders of the Vocational Centre explained that there is competition among training providers in the city. As new schemes start-up they advertise for trainees. If what is offered is better than what students are currently getting in terms of benefits, such as lunch, transport, uniform, start-up kits, the youth will leave the current programme to join the new programme. This means that they may go from training in one skill to another to another, never gaining proficiency in any. Loss of trainees part way through the programme is a recognised and serious problem for these providers.

MAPCO, who have also previously provided this kind of training at a training centre in Bo also experienced the same situation, with youth leaving the programme as soon as another programme became available if the new programme was offering a better package.

MAPCO also reported that when start-up kits are provided at the end of training, these are often sold to meet short term needs, rather than used to build up the business. Despite meetings with other vocational training providers to discuss these issues, the situation remains unchanged. For these reasons, MAPCO APT projects do not provide start up kits but provide business training and support the vocational training with access to loans.

Case studies

1. Musa Sheriff (male) – Motorbike mechanic Mano Community.

Since the apprenticeship training was officially completed, Musa was able to set up his own workshop 7 months ago. He started it with 2 of the former trainees and has also taken on 5 new trainees. The workshop was set up with the help of a loan from the CBO. The workshop is at the trade fair centre, which is closer to the market. He is able to give his trainees maintenance payments and food. He found the business training useful as he learnt about customer relationships, how to select good quality spare parts and how to check they are genuine, otherwise they break and he has to replace them. Musa’s income was around 25,000 Leones per day when he was with the artisan, and now it is 70,000



Leones per day. Musa and the other 2 former trainees have divided up the responsibilities in their workshop, one is responsible for bike inspection, one for the servicing the motorbikes and the third for handling the money and dividing it out at the end of the day. Sometimes they collectively save for expansion or other costs. The CBO is also helping the business by sending their motorbikes for maintenance, recommending the repair centre to their relatives and also helping to chase payments. Musa is better able to support his family of four children, previously he had used to fish and sell the fish, but he often didn’t catch enough to take care of his family. With the skills he has learnt he is able to support his family and is recognised for this skills in the community. *Photo: Musa Sheriff (taken 2018)*

2. Rugiatu Kalon (female) – Soap maker in Taninehun Kapuima

Rugiatu is making soap on her own now after completing her apprenticeship, although she still gets advice from the artisan Edna. She makes a profit of 200,000 to 300,000 Leones per month now, whereas last year in September 2019 she reported monthly income of 48,000 Leones. Rugiatu is currently training a further 5 people in soap making. She is not being paid for this, but there is an



agreement that she will get some payment at the end of the training. With her increased household income she was able to support a relative who needed an operation, she has also made some repairs to the cracked walls of her house as she was able to buy bags of cement. Rugiatu says there is no problem with marketing the soap, and all the soap makers are able to sell what they produce within the

community. By training other women to make soap, these women don't need to ask them for money as loans any more, so they can also begin to support themselves. As a group, the soap makers of Taninihun are planning to start a bakery as a further income generation activity, and as they only make soap on a couple of days per week, they will also have time for baking.

3. Fatmata Karim (female) Agriculture Group in Feiba

Fatmata is one of a mixed group of men and women agriculture former apprentices. Fatmata works as part of the team on joint plots, but also on her own plots. She is growing cassava, okra, potato and groundnuts. In the programme, she learnt how to plant correctly, previously she was farming a very small plot, now she has a much larger area. Her income from okra is 300,000, pepper 100,000 and other crops 200,000. She still gets seeds from the trainer. Now she is able to eat good food from her own farm, take care of the children, and settle family matters such as repaying loans. Fatmata has passed on her skills in agriculture to her family members. With the additional seeds she grows she is able to pass some seeds on to friends at planting time. Fatmata still sometimes gets loans from the CBO, she uses loans to pay fees for her children and is able to repay at harvest times. Fatmata and her family of 5 children are now able to eat three meals a day and says the quality of food they eat has improved, with the proceeds of agriculture they can also purchase additional condiments. Next year Fatmata says she wants to increase the size of her farm, one constraint is the hand tools. She sees agriculture as a viable business and if she works hard she can increase the scale.

Fatmata is still working as part of the agriculture team with the original artisan. She participates in the team and they divide up some of the preparation and planting tasks, for example women make the mounds in rows and men plant the seedlings. She thinks this sharing of tasks is working well. This year



Group

on the joint plots the groups are growing cassava and groundnut, which has already been harvested and replanted, and potato leaf. They have saved some of the seed to replant next year. As a group they are planning to reinvest some of their profit into other businesses such as purchasing rice to sell. The group has continuing support from the CBO, helping them maintain cohesion in the group, and moral support.

Photo: Taninihun Kapuima Farmers

4. Edna Morisana – Soap Making Artisan in Taninihun Kapuima

Edna is no longer training the original group of trainees. She has now taken on a new group. When her original trainees process their soap, they sometimes stop by to see her and give her a tip from their income. Edna says that her former trainees can now make a range of different products, such as lump

soap, foam soap, perfumed and scented soap, and some can even make types of soap that she didn't teach them.

Edna currently has 7 trainees. These trainees come from another community every Friday to learn. They are not paying for the training, but when they sell the soap they produce together, they bring the money back to her, as she hasn't the strength to go around selling the soap herself any more. This way, she is earning income from the training without charging fees from the trainees. Edna still receives support from the CBO in the form of access to loans that she takes to purchase caustic soda and other materials. Her soap making equipment is showing signs of wear and tear now. In terms of market saturation, Edna reports that there is not sufficient soap for the needs in her own community, so there is plenty of market demand. Her current trainees come from a nearby community and sell the soap there.

The project has brought benefits to Edna as she is a grandmother, she is able to support the school uniform and shoes costs for her grandchildren, she is happy to see them prospering with her help. Edna feels that she has done something good for the community. She said there is still a lot of interest in her community to learn to make soap. (Photo: Above with Rugiatu in purple shirt)

5. Gadiru Kamara (male) Bread making apprentice in Mano Community

Gadiru is still working under his artisans' supervision, baking and selling bread together with the group. He does not have his own tools and oven, he has no other financial support and has not taken a loan. He is worried about taking a loan in case he can't make the repayments. With the work he is currently doing with the artisan he is able to make 26,000 Leones per day. Gadiru also worked together with the whole group when they come together for larger contracts such as for funerals. It is difficult for him to pass on the training to his siblings as he doesn't have his own tools and equipment for bread making. He is now able to eat three meals per day. The estimated monthly income for Gadiru is 312,000 Leones per month, at the end of the project one year ago he reported earning approximately 50,000 Leones, and in the baseline at the start of the project his income was 24,200 Leones. His income has increased over 12 fold.

6. CBO leader Vandi Suleman Loan Officer from Feiba Community

Vandi rates the apprenticeship programme highly, as it has brought new ideas and skills to youth. They could replicate this with other businesses in the village such as bread making, tailoring, blacksmiths, mechanics. In their community Vandi is encouraging the trainers to train more people, and also ensuring they can access loans for this purpose. There are other skills needed in the community such as masonry, carpentry, bike mechanic, but there are currently no community members trained in those skills. The project has brought peace and development to the community.

Discussion

From the above findings, it is clear the design and approach of the project does contribute to the sustainability of both the training and trainees, and is a very effective approach for training rural community members in skills available in the community and in the products and services in demand in the area.

One year on from the end of the project, the former trainees are all still benefiting directly and indirectly through the CBO loans and support. The level of income, increased social capital and

increased well-being are significant, with indications of an 1100% average increase in income compared with before the project started.

The skills training is also being passed on to further community members. In addition to the apprentices taken on as part of the project, the experience has led to a further 143 trainees being taken on by the 80 apprentices and 7 artisans covered in the review. If this is replicated in the other apprenticeship scheme communities supported by Turing Foundation, then this could be estimated at a total of 453 additional people benefiting in terms of skills passed on. At this point we have not assessed the quality of the training they have received or the level of income secured as a result, but the project has been extremely successful in galvanising additional small business development in these communities. An interesting fact is that most trainees reported taking on trainees of the same gender as themselves, and one woman mentioned that she trained the people who were borrowing money from her regularly, so they wouldn't need to keep borrowing from her.

One striking aspect is the sense of pride and growing self-reliance mentioned by the community leaders and individuals that came through clearly in the discussions and meetings. This contrasts with discussions with the VTC where trainees and trainers were constantly asking for more support with little sense of what they could do for themselves.

The community aspect of the model combined with the artisans being local to the community result in the support being sustained beyond the end of the formal project in a way that would not be possible in a VTC. The trainees were not all ready to set up their own businesses, particularly the younger ones, and staying on with the artisan is a viable option to further develop their skills, confidence and build up the savings/tools needed to start up. This is made possible as both the trainer and trainees benefit.

A significant factor in the success of this project is the three-year project that this grant was an extension of, that had already built the capacity of the CBO and the communities to develop and support such apprenticeship training. MAPCO is also very experienced in implementing this type of training. As a result, the community members were already familiar with the concept of apprenticeship training and the methods used, and had already witnessed the impact on youth who had been trained previously.

This model of apprenticeship training requires that the artisans are present in the community which means that only current trades or services can be replicated, and it is less easy to bring in new skills.¹

The apprenticeship training was carefully and closely managed by MAPCO throughout the training period, so after the training ended, the groups were therefore sufficiently robust to develop and evolve into different forms that suited each trade and each groups' members.

A further success factor was in the selection of trades/vocational training that was; sufficiently market led (such as soap, bread making and motorbike repair); did not require high start-up equipment; and could be slowly built up into a business.

¹ In another APT project in Sierra Leone, a community member having witnessed the benefits of APT apprenticeship scheme in a neighbouring community, decided to encourage their own skilled adult child to return to the rural area to train others, recognising that there was demand in their community for both the trade and the apprenticeship opportunity.

Recommendations

1. A community-based training method for apprenticeship training can be a successful model. The advantage over a VTC in a nearby town is that community members with young children (particularly women) have access to it and the costs of accommodation and food are reduced by accessing the training from home. VTCs in rural areas are unlikely to be able to cover their costs of operation from fees income, as youth trainees are unlikely to be able to afford such fees.
2. Market analysis of the capacity of the community to absorb a number of newly trained people is essential, to ensure there is sufficient effective demand to absorb the additional products or services in the communities where they live and the surrounding accessible communities and markets.
3. Focus on trades that do not require high level of inputs and start-up costs for the trainees on completion, or that could be easily continued with the artisan, otherwise this could hinder their ability to continue after a training period.
4. Continuing to work as a group rather than setting up individual businesses is a viable option for former trainees and is not detrimental to future earnings of individuals, although, when learners move on, this frees up the trainer to take on new trainees.
5. Employment prospects for uneducated people are very scarce in rural areas, therefore, engaging in such trades and services at community level is a viable way to dramatically increase income for people who were previously barely making sufficient on a day to day basis to feed themselves and their children.
6. One disadvantage is that only trades where skills are already present in the community can be taught using this method. Bringing in artisans from nearby communities may prove more difficult and have more risks attached.
7. An apprenticeship scheme of this nature will require careful set up and monitoring, particularly if it is the first time it has been carried out in a community. Such staff time and costs should be included to adequately support this.
8. Once a community has run a two-year scheme, it is likely that further schemes could be run at lower monitoring and management costs as capacity has been built in the community, and workshops set up. Therefore, economies of scale and additional value addition could be achieved by follow-on projects where strong foundations have already been laid.
9. This scheme is less likely to be effective in a semi-urban area, where there are other options available for short term income generation, which may divert trainees away from mastering their trades.

10. Support from a well-functioning CBO with a loan scheme that participants can join is a significant factor in the future success of apprentices.

11. Maintaining a reasonable length of apprenticeship programme is recommended (up to 2 years in this case), this gives sufficient time for the group to establish good ways of working, to learn and put into practice business skills and to develop their products for the market, even if the apprentices can be proficient in the purely technical skills in a shorter timeframe.

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Disclaimer:

The content, analysis and opinions in this report belong solely to the authors.