

Industry Contributions to Support Somalia: Experience of the Joint Shipping Initiative

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Introduction

The Joint Shipping Initiative was formed in 2012 as shipping companies wanted to help find a solution to the piracy threat off the coast of Somalia. The commonly held view is that piracy started as a way for fishermen to protect Somali waters from unregulated fishing and dumping of toxic waste, although a much wider group of Somalis have engaged in piracy due to the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities. The Joint Shipping Initiative was developed to focus on capacity building: strengthening communities against piracy through local economic development, job creation and support for micro and small entrepreneurs - particularly youth and other vulnerable groups - in the piracy 'hot spots' of Puntland and Central Somalia. The hope was, and is, that this will help vulnerable people to build a brighter, more secure future in a difficult environment, making piracy a redundant choice.

Initiated by Shell, the Joint Shipping Initiative members include Shell, BP, Maersk, Stena and the Japanese companies NYK, MOL and "K" Line. Between them, they have contributed USD 2.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project "Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy in Puntland and Central Regions of Somalia". The first phase of the UNDP project had been funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, starting in 2012. The Joint Shipping Initiative continued the programmes in 2013 and has recently extended its funding to the end of 2015.

Project Overview

The capacity building elements of the project include:



- Social rehabilitation;
- Employment skills and entrepreneurship training;
- Micro- grants and start-up tools;
- Infrastructure projects using ‘cash for work’ schemes.



The target communities are selected by assessing their vulnerability to piracy. These districts face many common challenges: very poor infrastructure, limited livelihood options, high unemployment rates, and an absence of youth facilities and vocational training centres.

Although the districts face common challenges, they have specific priorities, so

a “one solution fits all” approach is not suitable. A cornerstone of the project is therefore conducting needs assessment surveys to prioritize local requirements. A team of socio-economists and civil engineers runs focus group meetings engaging local stakeholders, including elders, women and youth groups and local authorities. This effort is supported by labor market studies to identify skills shortages.

The prioritized sub-projects are agreed between UNDP and the Joint Shipping Initiative. Due to the security situation on the ground, there is no active involvement or visits by the funding companies. The Joint Shipping Initiative has relied fully on UNDP, as the partner on the ground, to shape and deliver the project. UNDP uses a direct implementation approach, with local partners engaged to deliver the different project elements, such as local NGOs and government agencies. Identifying suitable partners can be challenging, as some NGOs struggle to meet the required standards. As a result, there can be several months between agreeing a project element with the local community and implementing it.

What has been Achieved: Project Delivery and Case Studies

Half-way through the Joint Shipping Initiative project, 500 men and women in Eyl, Gara'ad and Hafun have been trained in their chosen skill area. A number of infrastructure projects have been completed: a market extension in Adado, a training facility in Abudwaq, flood prevention in Bander Bayle and a feeder road in Hafun. These projects have employed almost 1,200 people on a short-term basis and the market extension has also provided long-term employment for 200 traders.

The following case studies illustrate the type and variety of sub-projects delivered.

Feeder Road

The internal roads and feeder roads that connect Hafun to neighboring districts are un-surfaced and inaccessible during the rainy season, isolating the district for at least two months per year. A project, funded by the Joint Shipping Initiative, and managed by the Puntland Highway Authority, rehabilitated 2.2 km of road using labor intensive methods. This effort has provided short-term employment opportunities for 538 unemployed men and women for 25 days and priority was given to those affected by the recent cyclone. The rehabilitated road increases accessibility to the district, in turn improving business and livelihood opportunities for the Hafun community.



Hafun: Building a feeder road using labor intensive approach



Vocational Training in Eyl

Training and Micro Grants

The sub-project in Eyl is an example of a joint initiative between two units within UNDP Somalia and co-funded by the shipping companies and Government of Japan (Community Security Project CSR). The implementing partner was the Eyl Municipality. The focus of the project was the establishment of the Eyl Business Service Center and the training of 100 youths. As a first step, the UNDP Community Security Project 'rehabilitated' the participants to help them overcome previous negative influences and experiences: this provided a solid foundation for the vocational training. The trainees were then given the option to choose between several skills; namely computer applications, plumbing, masonry, electrical maintenance or repairs and tailoring. Finally, at graduation in August 2014, the trainees were provided with start-up kits and grants.

The successful implementation of these Alternative Livelihood projects has shown that it is possible to overcome local challenges and deliver the targeted output. Feedback from beneficiaries has been positive, as the project opened employment opportunities and small grants and start-up kits have been used to establish or expand businesses. Informal feedback from recipients, based on interviews by UNDP, reveal the impact this project has on a personal level – providing potentially live changing opportunities for individuals.

What is the Impact?

The desired impact of the Alternative Livelihood Project is to reduce crime and piracy by increasing community resilience and employment opportunities by:

- Long-term employment fostered through the provision of training and grants;
- Local economic growth through rehabilitating assets in support of greater market access;
- Support to youth empowerment and employment for alternatives to piracy.

Although the delivery of the project is tracked (ex. people trained, infrastructure built), the actual impact is difficult to measure, due to challenges in collecting the necessary data as well as the fact that improvement in the above can clearly not solely be attributed to the project. However, feedback on earlier UNDP capacity projects has been positive, and the funding partners are hopeful that in due course, there will be a visible, if not measurable, impact from their funding.

Looking Forward to a Long-Term Sustainable Outcome

In judging the sustainability of the impact from the project, consideration must be given to the larger picture. The Somalia New Deal Compact (2014-2016)¹ provides an overarching strategic framework for coordinating political, security and development efforts. The Alternative Livelihood Project could be regarded as a piece of the puzzle, with many puzzle pieces required to pave the way for a new future.

Addressing the difficulties the project faces on the ground, including security, resources, effective administration, goes far beyond the scope of the Alternative Livelihood Project. This is where the implementation of the Somali New Deal Compact is required to step in to enable progress on all fronts. With changes to the local environment to ensure that training/grants and infrastructure are used effectively, the project will have a real impact and allow the project to grow and attract further participants.



Conclusion

Through an effective partnership between the Joint Shipping Initiative and UNDP, a number of Somalis at risk of engaging in piracy have been given alternative income and livelihood opportunities. Training, employment and infrastructure have been delivered, largely on time and on budget, and in spite of severe security, logistical and other issues. Given the challenging circumstances, this is a significant achievement.

However, this initiative is only a piece of the puzzle. To provide all at-risk Somalis with long-term, sustainable livelihoods that make piracy far less attractive, a larger, multi-disciplinary and long-term effort is needed including building the capacity of local government and local law enforcement, improving schooling and infrastructure, and attracting direct investment and industrial development. This goes far beyond the capacity of a single initiative and requires the coordinated response from all stakeholders. As one of them, the Joint Shipping Initiative is pleased to play its part and to keep working in Somalia, hoping to be joined by others in the industry in this exciting project – and is open to new members.



Endnotes

¹ See <http://www.pbsdialogue.org/The%20Somali%20Compact.pdf>

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