



FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Theme:	Gender equality in the world of work
Project number:	INT/04/M53/NET
Project name:	Technical coordination and knowledge sharing of the theme “Gender equality in the world of work”
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Implemented by:	Bureau for Gender Equality
Collaborating units:	Relevant ILO field offices and units at HQ
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ILO/NPP	ILO/Netherlands Partnership Programme of technical cooperation
TCKS	Technical coordination and knowledge sharing of the theme ‘Gender equality in the world of work’
CoP	community of practice
GE	gender equality
GM	gender mainstreaming
KS	knowledge sharing
KM	knowledge management
GENDER	ILO Bureau for Gender Equality
SPO	Shared Policy Objective
SPROUT	summary project outline
DW	Decent Work
GBA	gender budget allocation
VF	Virtual Forum
GFP	Gender Focal Point
SGS	Senior Gender Specialist
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
IO	immediate objective
TPR	<i>Thematic progress report</i>
OATUU	Organization of African Trade Union Unity

KEY FINDINGS & LESSONS LEARNED

As the coordinating mechanism for the ILO/NPP Gender Equality Theme, the Technical Coordination and Knowledge Sharing project (TCKS), implemented by GENDER, has been able to learn valuable lessons not only as regards its own performance but as regards that of the theme in general. Included here, as well as the main findings and lessons learned by the TCKS itself, are some key lessons GENDER has drawn from its experience of coordinating the Gender Equality Theme projects.

On the role of the Technical Coordination and Knowledge Sharing project:

- The TCKS's support and advisory role in ensuring gender responsiveness in all the Gender Equality Theme projects, from as early a stage as possible, was indispensable to gender mainstreaming in the projects. Timing constraints, however, meant that in several cases the gender equality dimension was added to existing gender-blind projects. This is not the most effective, efficient or sustainable way of mainstreaming gender equality in a project.
- The TCKS played its most active role in the Theme in the early stages of planning and project design, when it assisted all the projects to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy on the basis of a gender analysis, making it relevant not only to the thematic area addressed but also to other donor priorities such as basic education. Its role in later stages, with regard to individual projects, tended to be reactive rather than proactive, with its proactive role being carried out through reporting functions and participation in knowledge sharing events and fora.
- During the life of the projects, the TCKS found itself responding to requests for support where on-the-spot or regional gender expertise was lacking. Its workload was therefore difficult to quantify and plan, and it was not always able to meet such requests. In particular, while it was relatively easy to send out relevant requests for information, many project holders saw this as a second-best alternative to personal contact and discussion with the TCKS.
- The TCKS proved an effective monitoring mechanism for the Gender Equality Theme, and the monitoring and reporting tools it designed were seen by projects as one of its most valuable contributions. The success of

reporting in the cluster was aided considerably by the fact that reporting on gender was itself resourced and that the gender budget allocations justified the TCKS in requiring reports on gender activities.

- The TCKS has shown that GENDER has a very great potential as a systematic and accessible knowledge and information base on gender equality in the world of work. The collection and dissemination of tools and materials, however, need to be complemented by (pro)active promotion of KS on gender issues through KS events, capacity building and networking.
- The TCKS needs to be able to assess the relative value and appropriateness of different gender mainstreaming approaches and tools for different purposes and in different social contexts. Such an assessment – based on an analysis of this cluster of Gender Equality Theme projects, would enable a better and more finely targeted response to the GM needs of future projects.
- Projects were frequently unclear about the role or even the identity of the TCKS project. GENDER needs to establish its own identity as a knowledge sharing resource on gender, avoiding confusion both with the Gender & Employment Helpdesk and with other KS entities and projects in the ILO while maintaining a mutually synergetic relationship with them.
- On the other hand, the sympathetic and collaborative way in which the TCKS has been implemented has given GENDER greater perceived legitimacy and has to some extent changed attitudes towards it, so that it is increasingly seen as a source of support rather than ‘the gender police’.

On the Gender Equality Theme:

- The Gender Equality Theme projects show that gender equality is mainstreamed into technical cooperation activities much more effectively, efficiently, and sustainably if it is specifically resourced.
- However, the resources provided need to be adequate and timely. Reasonable time must be made available for projects to design proposals that are gender-responsive from the start. Funds must be disbursed in time to allow projects to carry out their planned activities. Sustained access to dedicated gender expertise in the project, or at the very least in the region, is vital.
- By allocating dedicated resources to gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality in its TC projects, the ILO ensures that gender mainstreaming activities are undertaken visibly and accountably. The allocation to projects of funds earmarked for gender-related activities obliges them to report on the use of those funds and to plan gender activities into their project cycle.

- However, careful tracking of project expenditure from the gender budget allocations is necessary to ensure accountability.
- Gender budget allocations, gender-specific projects and women-specific projects are all different strategies gender mainstreaming. Which strategy is used should depend on the gender needs identified in the problem analysis and the constraints imposed and opportunities offered by the external context in which the project is implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand the scope of the gender equality budget allocation mechanism to cover all projects under future ILO/NPPs, with Gender Equality Theme coordination project working closely with the coordination projects of other themes to manage this process coherently.
- Set up an effective mechanism to track the financial administration of gender budget allocations, based on analysis of their use by this group of projects. Hold capacity building on gender budget tracking.
- Incorporate gender equality considerations, including quantitative and qualitative gender indicators, into all projects from concept note stage onwards.
- Adequately resource core activities of gender mainstreaming (gender analysis, collection of sex-disaggregated data, equitable representation. etc.).
- Ensure that there is gender expertise on the spot throughout all projects
- Revise and improve the ILO/NPP reporting format with respect to gender mainstreaming and hold capacity building on gender-responsive reporting and monitoring.
- Disseminate and promote throughout the ILO the enhanced knowledge base on gender equality and mainstreaming generated by the Gender Equality Theme, including good practices and tools. Design a mechanism for tracking use of gender tools so as to enable assessment of the relative value and appropriateness of different tools in different contexts.
- Explore ways in which cross-fertilization and mutual learning (between countries, projects, sectors) on gender can be promoted, including communities of practice, refinement of web-based tools, etc.
- Organize a specific knowledge-sharing event on gender issues, as a way not only of promoting KS but of establishing GENDER's identity as a knowledge base.
- Examine and clarify the relationship between the Gender and Employment Helpdesk and the TCKS and their specific areas of competence.

This report is an external evaluation of the project **Technical coordination and knowledge sharing of the theme ‘Gender equality in the world of work’**, which was set up within the Gender Equality Theme of the ILO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (ILO/NPP), a substantial technical cooperation programme funded by the Dutch government in the biennium 2004–05. The project provided technical support, coordination and knowledge management and sharing to the other 13 projects in the Gender Equality Theme cluster, which were either devoted specifically to gender equality and women workers’ rights issues or had specific budget allocations for mainstreaming gender equality in the project cycle. For an overview of the Gender Equality Theme and a list of the projects, see annexes 0 and 1. Note that, for the sake of brevity, individual projects are referred to throughout this evaluation by their numbers as in annex 1.

This evaluation examines how successful the technical coordination and knowledge sharing project (project 1; hereinafter TCKS) has been in supporting the other projects in the Gender Equality Theme cluster and in promoting and facilitating the sharing of knowledge between them and beyond them in the ILO. It does *not* evaluate the performance of the whole cluster in mainstreaming gender equality. In that sense it is not an update of the *Thematic progress report* elaborated by GENDER in March 2005.

The evaluation is based on a review of available documentation on (and from) the projects, enriched by interviews with relevant field-based staff and staff at ILO HQ, held in Geneva in November 2005. Documents were collected from HQ and by email. No field visit was carried out. At the time of writing several of the projects had not yet submitted their final reports, so these have not been read by the evaluator.

Document review:

- Technical coordination and knowledge sharing project SPROUT (January 2004) and *Thematic progress report* (March 2005)
- individual project SPROUTs, progress reports, final reports and evaluations;¹
- reporting guidelines/template;
- tools produced specifically for the projects by GENDER;
- some materials produced by the projects;
- materials produced by GENDER in the context of the programme (quarterly information sheets, articles in ILO newsletters, etc.);
- the gender equality chapter of the Virtual Forum created by the Integrated Employment Creation Knowledge Sharing Project, also part of the ILO/NPP programme.

Interviews with some project implementers and backstoppers were held in Geneva in November 2005. Most of the interviewees were staff at HQ, but telephone interviews were also held with ILO regional staff in Yemen, Moscow, Suva and Phnom Penh. A list of the people interviewed appears in annex 2.

¹ Note that not all final reports from the projects were available at the time of writing, so many of the examples quoted come from the progress reports prepared at the end of 2004.

Through the TCKS project, the Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER) played a role of technical coordination, knowledge management and knowledge sharing. It advised and supported the individual Gender Equality Theme projects, helped them design their gender mainstreaming strategies, shared knowledge that contributed to their achievements, and helped to disseminate knowledge and lessons learned resulting from them.

The cluster of projects was very ambitious and varied in scope, covering over 40 countries and a number of themes related to the ILO's operational objectives and regional priorities.² The TCKS project occupied a unique position in the cluster, being both a project in itself and a service/mechanism of coordination and communication for the 13 other projects in the cluster.

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 Objectives

The **purpose** of the technical coordination and knowledge sharing project, as stated in the Brief description at the beginning of the project document (SPROUT p2), is to:

- contribute to an integrated and consistent way of mainstreaming gender issues in the implementation and monitoring of the 13 projects;
- ensure that the ILO shared policy objective of gender equality was integrated into the core themes of the ILO/NPP;
- contribute to strengthening the capacity of ILO constituents and labour market institutions to promote gender equality in their respective mandates and programmes;
- serve as a knowledge base on gender equality initiatives and provide technical support and good practices to the projects under the ILO/NPP in their efforts to promote gender equality.

The **anticipated results** of the project, as expressed in its **immediate objectives**, envisaged that at the end of the project:

- 1 The ILO constituents, ILO staff and other partners involved in the NPP projects containing a gender mainstreaming strategy, have increased capacity to support poverty alleviation policies by integrating gender sensitive planning into their cross-sectoral development programmes and projects on basic rights, employment, social protection and tripartism;
- 2 The ILO constituents and ILO staff have access to and use the expanded and improved gender mainstreaming knowledge base and thereby contribute to the ILO shared policy objective.

These objectives corresponded well to the issues identified in the project's problem analysis, such as:

- recognition of the link between poverty reduction and gender equality;

² See project 1 SPROUT, p5

- the tendency for gender equality to evaporate as a result of non-systematic gender analysis on the one hand and resource constraints on the other (because gender is a cross-cutting issue it does not receive specific funds and no-one takes specific responsibility for it);
- the need to address strategic as well as gender needs in ILO programmes, looking at attention to gender equality in national policies, equitable representation in the design and implementation of projects and among stakeholder organizations;
- the need to build capacity and awareness, and especially to sensitize men, both among the ILO constituents and senior ILO programme staff themselves;
- the importance of drawing the link in practice between basic education (especially for girls) and decent work for women and men.

However, there is some disjunction between these immediate objectives (and the aims more informally expressed in the SPROUT's brief project description, p2), and the project's **development objective** (SPROUT §3.2, p6), which refers chiefly to MDG 3 and with only a secondary reference to the world of work in the addition of 'legal literacy and skills development for income generation'. This emphasis was made in response to the donor's expressed priority of basic education, but it looks surprising that it is MDG 3, rather than Decent Work, that appears in the highest in the project's hierarchy of objectives. It might be better, in future phases, to make basic education and MDG compliance an immediate objective rather than the overriding development objective, or to make explicit the link between the MDGs and Decent Work in the development objective.

A problem which had to do with the short notice at which project proposals had to be put together was that gender was in several cases added to the project at a late stage, not planned in from the beginning. Mainstreaming was more difficult when gender considerations had to be inserted into a project already largely planned but not gender-mainstreamed.

2.1.2 Outputs and activities

Outputs and activities are detailed and for the most part describe what the TCKS project will do. However, it is not always clear who will do what. The listing of activities under IO 1 (SPROUT p8) describes activities to be carried out by the 13 projects which the TCKS project will support, rather than the activities to be carried out by the TCKS project itself in providing such support. For example, output 1, activity 1.3 ('Undertake specific gender studies and analysis ...') does not mean that GENDER will carry out such studies; it will support the projects in carrying them out. Output 1, activity 1.1 does not mean that the TCKS project will 'prepare a gender mainstreaming strategy' for each project, but that it will help each project prepare its mainstreaming strategy. A similar comment can be made about the activities under output 2 (p8), where it is assumed that the TCKS project will not itself 'design and implement gender-specific activities ...' (activity 2.1) but will assist and advise in such design and implementation. This may seem a fine distinction, but it gives rise to potential misunderstanding of the exact remit and responsibility of GENDER as the implementing unit of the TCKS project. A more accurate impression would be given by wordings such as:

- 1.1 Assist each project in the preparation of a gender mainstreaming strategy;
- 1.2 Support each project in ensuring the involvement ...;
- 1.3 Assist each project to undertake specific gender studies ...;
- etc.

The outputs and activities under IO 2 are unambiguous and refer clearly to activities of knowledge sharing, data collection, and dissemination to be undertaken by the TCKS project itself.

2.1.3 Indicators

The project document defined a series of mostly quantitative **indicators** (§3.5), specifying achievements which the projects in the cluster should reach by 2006 with the support of the TCKS project. However, as with the enumeration of activities, the role played by the TCKS project itself in achieving these indicators is not clearly distinguished from the role of the other NPP projects. Several of the indicators (e.g. number of projects reporting on their gender-sensitive indicators) could be met by the projects without any input from the TCKS. This leads to a blurring in the reporting between the TCKS project and the Gender Theme cluster: it is sometimes difficult to distinguish reporting on the achievements of the projects in the cluster from reporting on **how the TCKS has contributed** to those achievements. Indicators for future phases should make this distinction more clearly. In the example above, for instance, the indicator might be better phrased ‘Number of projects ... that have used the specific gender reporting tools designed by GENDER in their reports on their gender-sensitive indicators’.

Also, more **qualitative** indicators would be advisable in future, referring to discernible attitude change, reduction in resistance to gender equality, increase of gender-related content in reports and assessments, etc. These changes are hard to quantify but easy to detect, and are important because they are fundamental pointers to progress towards gender equality.

2.1.4 Strategy

The TCKS project’s strategy (see SPROUT pp 6ff., evaluation TOR p2), constituted a sufficiently clear framework for managing the project implementation, covering:

- **technical coordination** of the 13 theme projects with respect to gender mainstreaming and equality;
- **technical support** on gender equality concepts and gender mainstreaming processes in the projects;
- **knowledge management** of gender approaches, including reporting to the donor, and expansion of the ILO’s knowledge base on gender equality and mainstreaming;
- **knowledge sharing** by collecting and disseminating gender mainstreaming experiences and tools among the 13 projects and more widely in the ILO.

Although it was clear from the outset that individual projects would have different needs, all these elements of the strategy were put into practice to some degree in the 13 projects. In particular, the TCKS assisted all the projects in designing their gender strategies and designed monitoring and reporting tools for them (see Implementation, below).

The strategy was framed well within the priorities both of ILO gender policies (including new instruments such as the 2004 Gender Resolution and the March 2005 Governing body Decision) and the Shared Policy Objective on gender equality,³ and also dovetailed with the other ILO/NPP themes and crosscutting elements (basic education, social security, employment creation, bonded labour, child domestic labour) to the extent that it helped to

³ See Immediate Objective 2, SPROUT p7, and diagram on SPROUT p5

manage and share knowledge on the gender aspects of all these in the projects (e.g. see Basic education, above) and especially in reporting.

2.1.5 Institutional arrangements and capacity

According to the project document (SPROUT p10 §4),

‘The project’s success depends entirely on GENDER’s close collaboration with the implementing partners of the NPP projects in all the regions. This requires that GENDER and the staff of the various Offices/SROs/units establish intersecting workplans and information sharing mechanisms.’

Such close collaboration depended (*a*) on the commitment of the project implementing units to gender mainstreaming and (*b*) on the capacity of the ILO Gender Network (see below, Implementation). Even given the existence of specific gender budget allocations, this was a bold assumption, and it is fair to say that the projects which seem to have performed best in terms of gender mainstreaming and knowledge sharing on gender were those where the management structure contained a gender expert or there were individuals already committed to gender.

2.1.6 Project identity

A key problem which could present a challenge to future work of this kind was the perceived vagueness in the definition or identity of the TCKS project. Interviewees saw the project, and GENDER’s role, in different lights. Some considered it just as a coordinating mechanism for the TC-RAM-NL; some thought of it as a knowledge-sharing resource; and to others it was just ‘the Gender Bureau’ doing its daily work of servicing, advising and supporting the other projects. Not everybody was even aware that it was a project in the ILO/NPP cluster.

The ways in which the project documents express their relationship with the TCKS and GENDER is telling in this respect. Not all the NPP projects identify GENDER as an important collaborator. Some were confused as to whether technical support and KS were the responsibility of GENDER or GENPROM: project 4, e.g., names GENPROM as the technical backstopping unit and puts GENDER last in a list of ‘other units’ collaborating (SPROUT §5, p14). It sees the Gender and Employment Helpdesk (project 2) as its chief point of reference for knowledge sharing, rather than GENDER or the TCKS.

The lack of clarity in attributing activities and indicators, noted above, very possibly contributed to this unclear project identity.

‘Whilst we were using the KS project we were unaware that it was any different to the ILO gender support through the Gender Bureau. The title wasn’t well promoted to us.’ (Questionnaire response, project 11)

2.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

2.2.1 *Outputs under IO 1*

Outputs and activities under this immediate objective broadly cover the project's technical coordination and support functions, including capacity building.

The great majority of the outputs and activities proposed in the project document were achieved. This section outlines the work done by the TCKS project in **supporting** and **assisting** the other NPP projects in their planning and implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive activities. Interviews with project staff indicate that the most valuable intervention by GENDER was the support and expertise it offered in the design/planning phases to the designing of gender mainstreaming strategies, especially for projects which received a gender budget allocation from the NPP funds.

(a) Support to gender mainstreaming in project design, planning and reporting

The TCKS project's support to projects during the design/planning phases, especially in **designing gender mainstreaming strategies**, resulted in gender considerations appearing (to differing degrees) in the projects in problem analyses, specification of outputs and indicators, and institutional arrangements. Some projects said that the most crucial help they had received from GENDER was in this phase, when they were helped to plan gender mainstreaming and gender-related activities into previously gender-blind projects (e.g. projects 11, 13) and could thus take advantage of the gender budget allocation to ensure that the gender strategy did not 'evaporate' from the implementation.

This was one of the most important results of the TCKS project, particularly for the projects with a gender budget allocation, where, since gender was not the subject of the intervention, more careful analysis was necessary than in the gender-specific projects to weave gender equality results throughout the projects. Even so, only two of the eight gender budget allocation projects (11, 14) cited Gender Equality as one of the themes addressed, while project 10 mentioned 'equal opportunities' within Employment Creation.

'Without dedicated gender support, the project gender strategy would have relied on the CTA ... and this would not have been very effective.' (project 11)

'The Gender Bureau of the ILO was fully involved in the design and backstopping of the project, and they made timely interventions when it became apparent they were needed to help strengthen the administration and solve problems in the host sub-regional office.' (project 5, final evaluation report)

In some South-east Asian projects, the gender mainstreaming strategy also benefited from the existing GEMS, the ILO gender mainstreaming strategy specifically developed by ROAP, and from the presence of ILO gender specialists in the region at the planning stage (e.g. 13).

The TCKS project also helped design **gender indicators**, which were not in place in all the projects from the start (e.g. project 7, information from interview). Indicators were necessary for project proposals to be approved, and this meant that in some projects they were added at the last minute and were therefore somewhat vague – the intention being to refine them later. The final SPROUTs all contain gender indicators, though to varying degrees. These mostly concern equitable representation, though there are notable exceptions such as project 4, which has qualitative indicators referring to gender-sensitive content in reports and documents. As might be expected, the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators is more

thoroughgoing in the gender-specific projects than in the projects with a gender budget allocation.

Proactively, the TCKS project developed a set of **monitoring and reporting tools** to assist the cluster. A **monitoring and self-assessment** tool tailor-made for each project made it easier for the projects to keep track of their progress on gender mainstreaming. All projects have reported specifically and in detail on gender. A **Management Tool for Promoting Gender Equality in the ILO/NPP projects** was also developed, consisting of a brief introduction to relevant gender concepts and six checklists on ways to mainstream gender into workplans, staffing, progress reports, organizing workshops, research, and information campaigns.

The TCKS project also made inputs into the process of reporting to the donor on the ILO/NPP cluster.⁴ Space for reporting specifically on gender equality and guidelines to help projects do this were incorporated into the standard Dutch TC-RAM **reporting template** by special request of GENDER, in collaboration with CODEV (incidentally, this is evidence of CODEV's growing gender sensitivity). As a result, all the progress and final reports submitted by the projects reported extensively on their gender activities, and underreporting of gender work was reduced.

The mid-term *Thematic progress report*, prepared by GENDER in March 2005 and reporting on progress in gender mainstreaming in all the projects, is a monitoring exercise in itself, leading to the identification of good practices and challenges and thus contributing to the ILO's knowledge base on gender.

By making the projects accountable via reporting, all these tools helped to reduce the 'evaporation' of gender analysis and strategy in implementation and rolled back the tendency for gender to be 'mainstreamed into invisibility'. However, there were reportedly still some gaps in accounting for the gender budget allocations.

(b) Capacity building:

The TCKS project has contributed to enabling many project staff and stakeholders to increase their gender sensitivity and their capacity to mainstream gender equality in the project cycle confidently on the basis of clear understanding of gender concepts. This was done via close collaboration between the ILO Gender Network in the field and the TCKS, and by use of gender mainstreaming tools disseminated by GENDER and often translated and adapted by the projects. The following are just a few of many examples:

- In Yemen (project 3), GENDER provided gender capacity-building materials which were translated into Arabic and used for capacity-building with staff of women workers' directorates in the Labour and other ministries;
- In the Caucasus (project 14), GENDER's checklist was translated into Russian and became a standard tool for the project. This project acknowledged great support from GENDER in sending tools and materials, 'but this was not only a one-way street; because on the one hand we had lots of tools from Geneva, but we hope that the tools

⁴ Although all projects (except IPEC, which has its own reporting format) were asked to use the same reporting format/template, the projects with a gender budget allocation were asked to report in a specific section on the use of their allocation, and to report regularly to GENDER on this. However, only the thematic reports on gender equality, employment creation, bonded labour, child labour and social security were submitted to the donor.

we have developed in the project will help GENDER' (Interview with project coordinator, project 14));

- In Laos and Cambodia (project 10), GET Ahead training materials were adapted and used in a ToT course training partner organizations to train income-poor women and men in SMEs;
- In Indonesia (project 13), ILO entrepreneurship and skills training materials were adapted, translated, and disseminated into the education system, the wider stakeholder community and selected formal and informal sectors (TPR p30);
- In SYNDICOOP (project 7), basic education courses for informal economy groups, 50% of whom are ♀, used simple, locally adapted ILO gender-sensitive materials.

Being a coordination mechanism, the TCKS did not itself organize capacity-building events, but supported and resourced capacity building carried out by the projects themselves, and took part in the regional and interregional workshops. Strategically, capacity building on gender mainstreaming was largely carried out early in the project cycle, so as to ensure that a commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming in the world of work on the part of project staff and partner organizations could rapidly be translated into effective implementation. For examples, see *Thematic progress report*, pp6–8.

2.2.2 Outputs under IO 2

Outputs and activities under this immediate objective broadly cover the project's knowledge management and knowledge sharing functions, including productive collaborations in KS and gender.

In this area the role of the TCKS was twofold: it played a proactive role in disseminating knowledge extensively and appropriately among the Gender Equality Theme projects, and it advised and assisted the projects in their own knowledge generation through tools design, the compilation of good practices, and the collection of sex-disaggregated data. It also collaborated actively with CODEV (e.g. in the refinement of mechanisms for reporting on gender-related activities), with INTEGRATION, and with other knowledge-sharing initiatives in the Office, particularly the Integrated Employment Creation Knowledge Sharing Project (e.g. in the Virtual Forum).

The increased knowledge base generated through the projects has already shown itself useful when providing technical support to many ILO constituents on ways to strengthen their capacity to understand, implement and advocate for gender equality in the world of work. Notable examples included work with trade unions (projects 5, 7), governments (projects 3, 4) and employers (e.g. project 4)).

'... trade unions in Ethiopia, which were previously not engaged in gender as a priority issue, are now looking for funds to implement gender activities (Final report, project 5. p14)

'As a direct result of project intervention, employers in tea estates have taken on board the notion of corporate social responsibility. Employers have acknowledged that women workers' productivity can be influenced by mainstreaming gender issues into conditions of work, specifically by providing day care centres and in one case a community centre for their women workers.' (Final report, project 4, p8)

(a) Knowledge management and sharing

The range of means that can be used to manage and share knowledge is very wide and embraces most forms of communication. It is useful in evaluating the TCKS project to distinguish between passive and active means of knowledge sharing:

- ❖ **Passive** knowledge sharing occurs, for instance, when information is sent out from a central resource (e.g. GENDER) to a ‘periphery’ of recipients, with no guarantee that it will be read or used, or even that it will reach the person most likely to use and disseminate it. While the NPP projects generally expressed appreciation of the information they had had from GENDER, they were not always sure that the materials had been used (project 7), there being no tracking mechanisms for this, and some acknowledged that they had been overwhelmed by the quantities of material they received and felt it could have been better targeted. One project (11) pointed out that a gender specialist on site was useful here to enable filtering and efficient use of the materials received.
- ❖ **Active** knowledge sharing involves a two-way process such as a face-to-face meeting, a training, workshop or seminar, a telephone or video conference, or joint drafting of a document. According to some projects, face-to-face meetings were the most valuable form of knowledge sharing and they regretted that GENDER had not had the capacity to carry out more missions to the projects. One project (7) suggested sending a gender specialist from GENDER to work in the field for a month or so, incorporating gender into project workplans and working with national liaison officers – a suggestion that reflects the gap left in regions which lose or lack a gender specialist.

‘Providing books and written materials is one thing but there needs to be more interaction and sharing knowledge in the real sense of the word.’ (Gender specialist, project 11)

The TCKS project was involved with the projects as knowledge **producer** (tools, checklists etc. developed by GENDER), **disseminator** (sending out materials to projects, participating in KS and CB events, contributing to Virtual Forum), and **systematizer** (documenting and collection good practices, SDD, reporting on progress). Knowledge sharing activities on gender, with inputs from GENDER, took place with different target groups and partner organizations:

- project beneficiaries at the grass roots (e.g. 9, 4);
- constituents / at the policy level (e.g. 3, 8);
- within the Office, with other units.

Means of knowledge sharing on gender used in the projects

Documents:

- research, publications;
- sex-disaggregated data collection;
- guidelines, manuals, checklists;
- regular information sheets and inputs into ILO newsletters;
- training materials/packages;
- documentation of good practices (e.g. 3);

Electronic inputs:

- Virtual Forum set up by the Employment Creation Knowledge Sharing project under the NPP;
- regular or ad-hoc contact between the projects and GENDER by email, telephone, fax, tele- or videoconferences

Face-to-face:

- workshops, seminars (including regional/international KS workshops);
- training and capacity-building events;
- missions;
- field visits,
- high-level meetings with ministries (e.g. 3, 6), tripartite meetings;

Popular media:

e.g. VCDs (10), radio and press (3, 14), DVD/video (4, 9), story-telling (4), popular theatre (9);

Indirect means:

- promotion of networking (e.g. Mekong, support to women's SBAs)
- functional literacy interventions, e.g. with children at risk of CL in Tanzania;

Nearly all the projects used gender-sensitive training tools and materials targeting, for example, women entrepreneurs in the informal economy. Many of these tools (e.g. GET Ahead, SIYB/KAB) were adapted to the local context and/or translated into local languages, thus adding to/consolidating GENDER's knowledge base and improving the applicability of tools. See annex 2, List of gender-sensitive tools. Materials were sent by GENDER direct to project staff, not just to project backstoppers (which is the usual practice). Once this contact is approved and set up, the network could share information among its members, not through centre. This encouraged non-centralized networking and gave projects a sense of own autonomy.

The TCKS project participated in various knowledge sharing workshops connected to the ILO/NPP and the Gender Equality Theme projects, including:

- Employment's Knowledge Sharing workshop August 2004: GENDER had a space in it., although only one day was on gender issues;
- INTEGRATION's KS workshop in Turin, October 2004 – apparently established Office-wide guidelines for establishing good practices;
- first regional KS workshop December 2004, in Lima, including ILO-NPP KS projects, reportedly a very gender-sensitive event;
- KS workshop organized in Mombassa, April 2005, attended by SYNDICOOP National Liaison Officers and Gender Focal Points from four countries and project personnel from other ILO projects across Africa;
- Asia-Pacific regional KS workshop in Bali, May 2005, hosted by the Youth Employment project and attended by other ILO projects across the region;
- INTEGRATION's Knowledge Fair for the Informal Economy held during ILC, June 2005, in which the TCKS was a member of the organizing team;
- INTEGRATION's Cambodia KS workshop for DFID-funded projects on the informal economy, November–December 2005.

For GENDER, participation in all of these KS events was a good entry point for incorporating gender mainstreaming and equality issues in knowledge sharing – and vice versa, since both KS and gender equality are cross-cutting. The workshops helped create synergies between knowledge sharing and gender mainstreaming, and enabled productive networking and exchange of experience and information on gender. The August 2004 workshop, for example, resulted in exchanges of gender mainstreaming strategies between the projects, and helped extend the ILO Gender Network.

However, adding a day on gender to a workshop already three days long might be cost-effective but not attractive to participants. It could be more interesting (though more challenging) to explore ways of weaving in gender considerations and relevant examples throughout a workshop. There are also problems concerned with establishing GENDER's identity as a specific KS resource, since none of these events was organized by GENDER itself, or the Gender Network. The August 2004 KS workshop, for instance, made GENDER visible, but was probably seen by most participants as an output of Employment rather than GENDER. A KS workshop specifically on gender issues, organized by GENDER, could be valuable (see Recommendations).

A KS tool created especially for the ILO/NPP projects is the **Virtual Forum** of the Integrated Employment Creation Knowledge Sharing Project. It has a specific section or space devoted to gender equality, moderated by GENDER. However, the initial enthusiasm reflected in an early flurry of postings on the gender equality section was not kept up, as the dates of postings show, and the Virtual Forum has never really functioned as an active KS instrument in which discussion and debate, or Q&A, take place – it is mostly a place where people post documents and other people download them. This is useful, but is not the optimum use of a tool which could be powerful as a virtual meeting place where equal exchange happens.

Logistical problems also inhibit, or even prohibit, access to the Forum for some projects particularly in Africa (and among those staff who are put off by electronic modes of information exchange). It is positive, however, that gender equality information sits on the Virtual Forum side by side with other areas of information, potentially encouraging people who might not otherwise do so to explore the gender area. The Forum's gender equality space may have the potential to form the basis of one or more **communities of practice on gender in the world of work**, though it cannot itself constitute such a community of practice. (See Recommendations, §6.5 for suggestions about communities of practice.)

'Knowledge sharing has led to additional motivation and insight between project beneficiaries, shared tools and experience gained to help counterparts and other trade unions to tailor these for their own use.' (Final evaluation report, project 5)

(b) Collaboration

From the point of view of KS on gender, the collaborations set up between GENDER and **other HQ units in the context of projects** created valuable synergies between gender and other aspects of the projects as well as between projects. For instance, project 14, in the Caucasus, worked closely with WEDGE and GENDER, creating a mini-network between the Moscow office and the two HQ units. Collaboration and complementarity with the Gender and Employment Helpdesk (project 2) was valuable, if sometimes confusing for other projects unsure of the identity of their sources of information and assistance.

The ACTRAV contribution was valuable, and it's very important for the trade unions involved to see that the ILO structure is behind the project, not just GENDER, since the role of worker representatives will be even more important in any follow-up. Some male figures are also necessary to legitimate the project with the trade unions. (Interview, project 5 evaluator)

Collaboration with **other knowledge sharing initiatives in the Office** was equally important. Clearly, a key collaboration was that with the Integrated Employment Creation Knowledge Sharing Project and participation in the Virtual Forum (see above), which enabled GENDER to disseminate easily accessible gender information potentially to all NPP projects and around the Office; but important KS collaborations also occurred with INTEGRATION (see above) and DECLARATION.

GENDER is a member of the ILO's senior-level Knowledge Sharing Group and collaborates with HRD in introducing gender examples into its training module on knowledge management. The experience of the TCKS can be carried into these entities in various ways, providing valuable outreach beyond the NPP.

There is potential for many more interlinkages than currently exist between GENDER's KS project and KS groups and initiatives in IPEC, ILO-AIDS, INFORM, and other units. Though at present specifically designed in the context of the NPP projects and Employment, the Virtual Forum could perhaps be developed into a vehicle to promote this, spreading the learnings of the NPP more widely through the ILO.

Key KS linkages from a gender perspective were those with the **ILO Gender Network** in the field. Most if not all of the projects were on touch with the gender network in the field and indeed could be said to have expanded it by appointing project-level GFPs (e.g. project 7) and using local gender consultants (several projects). However, the capacity of the Gender Network fluctuated from region to region and over time, which not only caused problems during the reporting period but also raises questions about sustainability (see below). On the positive side, project 9 was just one project which acknowledged support from gender advisors/specialists based in regional and country offices (see project 9 progress report p26). On the other hand, the departure or absence of dedicated gender specialists from several regions left the projects there unsupported. (The fact that in the Caucasus, for instance, the head of the RO is a gender expert and former regional SGS is not a substitute for the presence of a dedicated gender specialist.) Where there were gaps in the Gender Network, GENDER found itself stepping in more often to respond to requests.

2.2.3 Response by the TCKS project to requests for advice, support, information

While the TCKS project has been extremely proactive in its support to gender-sensitive project design, implementation and reporting, the more reactive activities (responding to requests) were inevitably highly dependent on the other projects' identified and expressed needs for knowledge and guidance. Requests from projects were usually for more tools and materials; but on the other hand, as noted above, some people said they were swamped by information from GENDER. Striking a balance was not easy.

The projects differed widely in their relationship with the TCKS and with GENDER, and in the amount and kind of support they asked for. Sometimes this had to do with the importance of gender in respective projects, which itself was variable despite the overall concern with gender mainstreaming common to them all. It was not necessarily the case that the gender budget allocation projects requested more (or less) help in their gender work than the gender-specific ones. Rather, the interviews reveal that a project's need for interaction with GENDER and the TCKS project was in inverse proportion to the number of regionally-based ILO gender specialists available to it. Where there was less regional gender expertise, the projects called on the TCKS for support – and in particular face-to-face support – more often. The interviewee from project 11, for instance, noted that the project

had only had recourse to GENDER when it lost its regional gender specialist, half way through the project period.

'We used the technical expertise of the Gender Bureau a lot, maybe not as actively as we might have, because the staff are few and overworked. It was particularly valuable here because this region now lacks a senior gender specialist.' (Interview, project 14)

The projects expressed some differences of opinion about GENDER's responsibility for generating knowledge on specific project themes. For instance, a gender specialist working with project 11 was disappointed that GENDER had not provided a general analysis of gender issues in social security; on the other hand, the staff of the Gender and Employment Helpdesk (project 2) thought that providing **sector-specific** gender expertise was the job of the Helpdesk rather than of GENDER. And GENDER staff interviewed agreed that the project's remit was to provide generally applicable guidance on gender analysis, gender-sensitive planning, indicator design, monitoring and reporting, and gender mainstreaming in implementation, than to offer sector-specific gender analyses.

Much of the most effective KS work GENDER did was in backstopping and being there to field requests for advice. But in this it overlapped with the Helpdesk. Systematic pooling and joint analysis of the experience of the TCKS and the Helpdesk should be a priority in the process of winding up this funding phase. The list of gender tools in annex 2 is a major output of the TCKS project and a good basis on which to undertake such a pooling process.

Although the projects expressed appreciation of GENDER's presence at formal knowledge-sharing events such as international and regional workshops, often what they appreciated most (and wanted more of) was speedy responses to their questions via telephone or email, or visits by GENDER staff to their projects. There is therefore an important role of ongoing support to gender mainstreaming in daily work that needs to be addressed, but which is not easy to define or quantify ('like nailing jelly to a wall', according to one interviewee!) and therefore to fund.

2.2.4 Delivery of inputs and outputs

Since some projects were not completed at the time of writing, and not all full final reports of projects were in, it is not possible yet to assess the extent to which project inputs were delivered as planned or whether all the projects had been able to carry out the project activities within the proposed timeframe and with the expected quantity and quality, although the indications are that for the most part they did succeed in this. In some cases materials and tools were produced but there was no time within the project period to disseminate them or use them widely, or the putting together of a toolkit was not completed. The evaluator's interviews indicated that late arrival of funds, the consequent delays in recruitment of gender staff and consultants, and turnover in ILO gender specialists in the field did hinder production of planned outputs in several cases.

As regards the TCKS project itself, the late arrival of funds had repercussions on GENDER's ability to respond to requests. In particular, the late announcement of the availability of funds for gender mainstreaming, followed by late arrival of funds to projects, led to:

- ❖ late and hurried design of gender components of projects, including design of indicators, resulting in gender being incorporated into projects as an add-on, and putting pressure on GENDER to assist several projects at once under severe time constraints;

- ❖ delays in recruiting project gender staff, resulting in further pressure on GENDER to fill information gaps. GENDER was not always able to meet requests, especially for visits from GENDER staff, from projects which didn't yet have enough gender expertise on the ground.

2.2.5 *Human resource constraints*

'Having a gender budget line has made it far easier to get gender into other parts of projects. But for the project it depends on the availability of gender expertise. It is necessary to have someone on the ground.' (Interview, former Gender Specialist, SRO Manila)

'The ILO Gender Bureau is a small division backstopping many other activities at international level, so it was also a challenge for them to become specifically involved in such detail in one project.' (Final report, project 5)

'Without a full-time gender specialist, the opportunities to attend Pacific gender forums would not have been able to be captured.' (Questionnaire response, project 11)

The capacity of the TCKS project and GENDER to provide the Gender Equality Theme projects with effective and efficient technical backstopping and knowledge sharing on gender depended heavily upon the operational effectiveness, strength and stability of the ILO Gender Network, which consists of GENDER staff, Senior Gender Specialists (SGSs) in the regions, Gender Focal Points, Sector Gender Coordinators in Geneva, and relevant staff at ITC-ILO in Turin. However, this was by no means guaranteed, particularly in the field. As we have noted already, the lack of gender specialists in some regions and staff turnover resulting in the departure of gender specialists in others made smooth gender mainstreaming for projects in those regions much harder than for projects in regions where they could count on fulltime or easily accessible gender expertise, and this had 'knock-on' effects for the workload of GENDER staff in the TCKS project. GENDER itself did not have the resources to fill all the gaps in expertise that should have been filled by gender expertise in the field.

A few examples suggest the range of project experiences:

- The excellent support on gender to the Mekong Delta project (10) given by Bangkok RO shows how important it is to have gender expertise accessible to the projects, and meant that this project had little recourse to assistance from GENDER after the planning phase. .
- Project 7 was not alone in using a gender consultant who was well versed in local and regional issues but didn't know the ILO. It would be helpful in such situations to have a gender expert who is knowledgeable about the ILO working with the consultant in the early stages.
- Project 11 came late to interaction with the TCKS project, only after the SRO gender specialist in Manila had left, and had three successive gender specialists, resulting in inefficient transmission of project information. It engaged in knowledge sharing with the project mostly from mid 2005. This project's detailed and analytic final report, however, constitutes a significant contribution to the ILO's knowledge on gender and social security.
- In project 5, the initial backstop was the regional ILO gender specialist based in the SRO in Harare. Apart from the difficulties of backstopping the whole project from

Zimbabwe, which was not one of the project countries, the transfer of the regional gender specialist and her replacement by an associate expert who had no authority left a vacuum in gender expertise. Particularly in Mali, GENDER had to intervene repeatedly. In the absence of gender experts in the field, the role of GENDER, as the only contact on gender equality, was vital.

3 PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The categories below – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability – obviously overlap and interrelate to a significant extent (can an output be effective without being efficient? can a project be sustainable if it is not effective?). The following sections attempt to distinguish usefully between them, guided by the evaluation TOR and the Explanatory note in the reporting template. .

3.1 RELEVANCE

3.1.1 Appropriateness of the TCKS project as a means of achieving the objectives

The strategic approach of mainstreaming gender into sectoral projects has undoubtedly been appropriate. It has long been recognized that GM is the best – possibly the only – strategy for ensuring that the practical and strategic needs of both men and women, boys and girls, are met in a project, and the advances made by this group of projects are good evidence of this. More recently, the close links between gender inequality and poverty have become widely recognized and are an important concept underlying the Millennium Development Goals. This made the ILO/NPP Gender Equality Theme a significant instrument in line with international poverty reduction efforts, and GENDER an appropriate entity to coordinate the theme's projects.

'The linkage of the project with the PRSP processes avails an opportunity to address gender dimensions in the PRSP process leading to realization of the ILO's gender equality and social inclusion objectives.' (SYNDICOOP Gender Workshop, December 2005, §1)

As regards the stated objectives of the TCKS project:

▪ **Development Objective:**

The project contributed to the achievement of MDG 3, which concerns the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through eliminating gender disparities in education (which also has as one of its indicators for progress 'Share of women in waged employment in the non-agricultural sector'). In the context of poverty reduction through decent work, the Gender Equality Theme projects mostly interpreted basic education broadly to take in vocational education, skills development for work, legal literacy, and training for small and micro-entrepreneurship. The TCKS project was an appropriate vehicle for disseminating basic ILO gender concepts and materials and for supporting the projects in developing their own materials.

▪ **Immediate Objectives:**

The project was clearly an appropriate way of contributing to gender mainstreaming in the Gender Equality Theme projects. As an overarching HQ unit whose remit is to advise on

implementation of the ILO's Shared Policy Objective on gender equality, GENDER was well placed to coordinate the projects' gender mainstreaming strategies and to systematize the good practices and lessons drawn from their experience. Since its focus is not limited to any one thematic sector in the ILO, it was able to correlate experience from different sectoral projects and to identify common ground and productive linkages/synergies. This will generate a valuable base of cross-sectoral knowledge.

Knowledge sharing on gender issues as an appropriate means of achieving the objectives

Knowledge and information are fundamental to building technical capacity and competence, confidence, and a sense of ownership of development processes, including the empowerment of poor women, girls and boys and the advancement of gender equality. It is therefore clear that the knowledge-sharing activities of the TCKS project, including support to capacity building, were a highly appropriate way of meeting its objectives and of contributing to all the aims of the ILO/NPP in general.

As we have seen, the projects coordinated by the TCKS showed a clear preference for ongoing knowledge and information support, in particular short, practical, targeted checklists and guides. These tools were among the most appreciated of the knowledge sharing means devised by GENDER, and their adaptation by projects to local needs and contexts adds to the ILO's base of practical knowledge.

However, not all methods of knowledge sharing used by the TCKS proved equally appropriate. The Virtual Forum in its current form may not be the most appropriate means of KS among units, regions, offices, and constituents, both for logistical reasons and resistance to technology, and because it is still a passive means of KS. Communities of Practice around gender issues could be a suitable tool for active knowledge sharing, but the idea needs to be explored carefully and not applied uncritically.

3.1.2 Extent to which the project met needs expressed in the problem analysis

The problem analysis outlined in the SPROUT (pp3–4) identifies a great many needs, many of them emerging from analysis of preceding projects, including addressing strategic gender needs, building on existing successes in mainstreaming, and linking with decent work approaches and national poverty reduction strategies. TCKS worked with the project holders at design stage so as to address these needs – for instance, gathering sex-disaggregated baseline data (e.g. 11, 12); involving the tripartite partners (e.g. 3, 5, 7); involving men and boys (9); employment generation through opportunity identification (e.g. 4), basic and vocational education (e.g. 4, 10), and efforts to increase market access for informal economy workers (7, 10); linking to decent work and poverty reduction strategies at national level (e.g. 3, 6, 8).

Building a knowledge base on gender

Knowledge-sharing activities undertaken by the TCKS have formed the basis of a pool of gender mainstreaming tools and examples of good practice that can be disseminated and used far beyond the Gender Equality Theme projects. In particular, the gender budget allocations have enabled staff and stakeholders in the projects to:

- use and adapt existing knowledge/tools on gender mainstreaming and explore ways of using it more effectively;

- build and extend their own capacity on gender issues, in terms of gender sensitivity, confidence in handling gender concepts, and competence in applying them in practice to their areas of work;
- build up a further body of knowledge on the efficacy of gender mainstreaming through documentation and sharing of experiences between sectors and regions.

There is great potential for continuing this work in creative and innovative ways..

Responding to the new management focus in the ILO on management through knowledge sharing and communication techniques, GENDER has been able to introduce such techniques to staff using the projects as examples/case studies in KS on gender equality. This, in turn, makes gender equality and mainstreaming more visible in the ILO Knowledge Management group, of which GENDER is a member, and beyond. Similarly, GENDER can promote KS on gender further afield than the ILO by participating in interagency meetings and workshops on knowledge management and sharing.

The TCKS has taken an active part in this process by providing tools, making presentations at KS workshops, and contributing to training in various aspects of gender equality and mainstreaming at project level (e.g. project 7, regional training workshops on gender analysis and planning).

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

3.2.1 *Coordination and collaboration*

The importance of **coordination** and **collaboration** in ensuring effectiveness cannot be underestimated, particularly in situations of limited resources.. The whole Gender Equality Theme programme illustrates the effectiveness of working in partnership and collaboration, not only with other ILO entities and constituents but also with a wide range of civil society stakeholders.

In particular, GENDER's collaborations with other KS initiatives in the ILO, in particular through active KS such as participation in meetings and workshops, have been effective ways of spreading the gender message more widely. Collaboration with other theme coordinators, most notably in Employment, has been found valuable, for instance enabling GENDER to have a slot in a workshop which makes it possible to bring gender issues to a wider audience. Such collaboration should be intensified (see Recommendations).

3.2.2 *Getting results for beneficiaries*

In a wide-ranging programme such as the NPP, the range of direct and indirect beneficiaries is very wide, as individual project reports show. The chief beneficiaries of the TCKS project, as the coordinating and supporting unit, were the other projects and their beneficiaries. The TCKS project contributed to the results achieved for these beneficiaries through its proactive role in the design of project gender mainstreaming strategies and by the provision of materials, advice, and support throughout the project cycle. Knowledge sharing initiatives on the part of the TCKS project – such as disseminating project experiences and good practices at KS workshops, via newsletters (e.g. *ILO Gender News*) and infosheets, and postings on the VF GE space moderated by GENDER – have had a clearly positive (and acknowledged) impact on the outputs of the projects.

The capacity of beneficiaries at different levels, ranging from poor women in Tanzania or Cambodia (projects 4, 10) to high-level ministry staff in Yemen (project 3) has been raised through the use and adaptation of ILO gender mainstreaming tools. In Ghana the project report emphasizes ‘the effectiveness of an approach relying on capacity building of national partners to influence national policy processes’ (Progress report, project 8, p4) .

‘A wide variety of capacity building workshops and seminars have been held for key stakeholders and community leaders in aspects varying from gender issues, reproductive health to trade union matters, women and children’s rights, and child labour issues.’ (Final report, project 4, p6)

‘While capacity building activities have numerically reached more men than women, the latter occupy senior positions (Deputy Minister, senior staff STEP). The training received has significantly improved their leverage in policy formulation and management. (Progress report, project 8, p6)

Although it is not always easy to track the use of tools and estimate their success, there is evidence from several projects of local ownership of the ILO’s gender mainstreaming tools. For instance, local government officials attached to community development departments in Tanzania, have used the skills and approaches provided by project 4 for their work with groups of poor women not included in the project’s activities (Final report, project 4, p9)..

Finally, the KS project, through collaboration, has shown itself to be an effective and efficient tool for making horizontal linkages, promoting tripartism (project 4 is one of many examples), and breaking down the notorious ‘silo’ mentality. Knowledge sharing both promotes and benefits from networking.

There was one activity developed within the project to formally share experiences. Given the modest amount available for project activities, such knowledge sharing is otherwise restricted to informal exchanges via networks and trade union structures through their regular meetings and conferences. For example Ghana and Tanzania [chapters of OATUU] have agreed to exchange information on gender policy and implementation. Nonetheless, the project has helped to focus on best practices. (Final evaluation report, project 5)

However, the effectiveness of technical support and knowledge sharing varied from project to project, for a number of reasons both intrinsic (cultural specificities) and extrinsic (resource constraints) to the projects. In particular, among the projects with a gender budget allocation, the extent to which gender has ‘spilled over’ from gender components into other project components – i.e. the extent of true mainstreaming – is variable. In some cases (e.g. projects 7, 9, 11) mainstreaming clearly occurred; in others this is less clear and the gender budget allocation remained rather within a specific component and/or was confined to activities with women such as promotion of women’s entrepreneurship. The development of qualitative indicators would facilitate this assessment.

3.2.3 Influencing national development processes

Gender equality in the context of decent work has proven to be effective as an entry point into national policy processes and poverty reduction strategies. In Nicaragua (project 6), an agreement was drawn up with the Ministry of Education to give vocational training to young migrant women; in Ghana (project 8), gender inputs have been made to the national poverty reduction strategy; in Tanzania (project 4) the project’s counterpart ministry provided a concept paper outlining how project components could be incorporated into the government’s ‘Mkukuta’ poverty reduction strategy.

3.2.4 *Changing attitudes, from the individual to the policy level*

Greatly increased gender responsiveness on the part of male senior project staff is noticeable. This in turn has influenced several of the ILO constituents involved in the projects, increasing their attention to gender equality: in Tanzania, for instance, the Ministry of Labour, Youth Development and Sport has decided to provide a concept paper to outline how the gender equality elements of project 4 could be incorporated into the national poverty reduction strategy.⁵

In Caucasus, on the other hand, project staff have noticed that women's national machineries (e.g. in Kyrgyzstan) are now working on women and work issues, whereas a few years ago, 'the talk was of Beijing + 5, the MDGs, development projects, but nothing was being done around the world of work, mostly work on domestic violence, trafficking, the political level; but nothing on gender and employment'

At the individual level, the Yemen project noticed an 'amazing' change in women directors in ministries from shyness to assertiveness. Often these women had been appointed to high-ranking posts without necessarily having the communication skills required for them, and the project, with the support of the TCKS, has enabled them to become more confident.

'I never used to help my wife in domestic work. Thanks to training inputs given by IRCDS at Ekkadu, now I am helping her in fetching water and in firewood collection.'

'In my village, women were given training and my wife shared the training details with me. Due to that interaction I now participate in child rearing, take them to *balwadi* and schools.'
(SCG men's support group members, project 9)

All is not perfect, though. One interviewee noted that an **attitude problem** persists: although staff are expert and committed development workers who are happy to conduct a gender analysis of the labour market, they are still unwilling to spend time on a gender breakdown of their own activities. For instance, project staff are reluctant to get involved in budget tracing for gender activities, although this has been shown not to be particularly difficult (see below).

3.2.5 *Legitimizing gender mainstreaming as a strategy*

The allocation of specific funds with reporting requirements has conferred visibility, ownership and accountability on gender mainstreaming work. In the eyes of project staff, the allocation of funds justifies them in taking gender mainstreaming seriously and spending time and human resources on it. With specific resources attached to it, which have to be accounted for, gender mainstreaming does not 'evaporate' from the projects and gender work is not underreported, as so often happens.

'Without the budget GM would have been included in the project but its effectiveness would have been very limited and the gender focus in each country lost. ... No special gender workshop would have been conducted ... The risk of mediocrity or failure would have been high.' (project 11)

⁵ Project final evaluation report, December 2005, p10.

The increase in **the ILO's visibility** on gender issues is clear – e.g. where there was work done with mass media, where there was collaboration with other agencies, among constituents, and at policy level. Active knowledge sharing, such as TCKS participation in knowledge-sharing events, provided an important entry point for gender equality: many people want to know about knowledge-sharing, and participating in such events gave GENDER and members of the Gender Network new opportunities for bringing up gender in new ways and attracting interest in it from new angles. Staff began to see gender as a useful way of making their institutional image better. In particular, the Gender Equality Theme did much to raise the profile of gender issues in the informal economy and the SME sector, and to raise awareness of the key equality Conventions.

However, to date there has not been an international knowledge-sharing event devoted entirely to gender. It may now be time to do this, perhaps to present the results of the Gender Equality Theme. (See Recommendations.)

Coordination of a group of projects also means that GENDER has more substantial inputs to make to the biennial *Implementation report* to the ILO's Governing Body, further increasing the visibility and legitimacy of gender mainstreaming in TC. (Care needs to be taken, however, to ensure that gender doesn't disappear again from the overall *Implementation report*, which is a highly condensed summary of departmental reports put together by PROGRAM)

3.2.6 Increasing accountability on gender equality

The reporting requirement that accompanied the gender budget allocations has had the important result of increasing reporting on gender activities in non-gender-specific projects. The allocations have enabled monitoring of ILO gender mainstreaming initiatives in different contexts. The reporting has led not only to greater accountability on the part of the individual projects but the building up of a solid knowledge base on what worked and what didn't. This is the first time GENDER has been able to follow a group of projects closely, as a programme, enabling comparative analysis of results and challenges which will inform future approaches to the promotion of gender equality in TC and future proposals. It is extremely important that this accountability has made attention to gender equality in mixed projects more visible – and potentially more fundable in the future.

The reporting tools devised by the TCKS project were conceived as effective ways of ensuring adequate and standardized reporting which would facilitate the gathering of good practice examples. In some of the projects this has taken place; but problems with reporting on gender activities have also been raised by project interviewees. The Reporting template seems to have been generally used in the way recommended, with all the mainstreamed projects reporting on gender separately, as instructed, in a specific section (6). However, there is a risk that, since gender was given a section to itself separate from relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the projects may have been inadvertently relieved of the responsibility to say whether allocation for gender was well spent according to these criteria.

It is also possible that the projects did not address the reporting template's 12 questions on gender in their progress reports because they didn't know how to, and given the undoubted time constraints, just didn't bother to struggle with them. Some project staff may have found the gender questions daunting. High staff workload both in the projects and in GENDER was also an obstacle. There is a need for training in reporting on gender using the Reporting template.

The gender budget allocations also brought the financial aspects of accountability into the spotlight. Tracking of the use of funds was not done systematically in the projects, although a few examples of good practice show that this is not impossible. This issue is discussed in detail below, under Efficiency (see 3.3 below).

3.2.7 High-level commitment to knowledge sharing on gender equality and mainstreaming

In the 13 Gender Equality Theme projects, the **commitment** of senior figures among both ILO staff and other stakeholders to the project was always essential to ensuring that the project activities were carried out effectively and efficiently. For the TCKS project to succeed, this commitment was necessary at two levels: GENDER's own commitment to this project, and the commitment of the other project leaders to gender mainstreaming and to knowledge sharing in their projects. The gender budget allocations in projects 7–13, and the requirement to report on their use, did serve to increase project leadership commitment to gender mainstreaming, but not necessarily to **knowledge sharing on gender mainstreaming**, which, on the evidence of the available reports and the evaluator's interviews, was more variable than commitment to mainstreaming *per se*. It should be recognized that obtaining this commitment is not entirely within the gift of the TCKS project itself.

3.2.8 Challenges to effectiveness

Several of the challenges to effectiveness and efficiency have been mentioned elsewhere in this evaluation. They include:

- insufficient time to prepare proposals;
- late arrival of committed funds reducing time for implementation;
- insecure availability of gender specialist staff in projects and at regional level;
- lack of time in projects to do ongoing knowledge management/sharing once project activities were fully under way;
- poor tracking of expenditure on gender in projects with a gender budget allocation;
- logistical and communication problems;

All these constraints also affected the TCKS's ability to coordinate and support the projects in different ways:

- difficulties in mainstreaming gender in existing, non-gender-sensitive project proposals;
- unpredictable workload as regards advisory work;
- tendency for passive knowledge sharing (dissemination of documents without prior request) to be ignored;
- difficulty in coordinating tracking of expenditure.

Beyond the ILO/NPP, continuing resistance to gender equality and women's empowerment in many societies must be acknowledged as a challenge. Gender equality is still a sensitive and difficult issue in many of the participating countries; and this is reflected in the attitudes of many constituents towards gender equality and mainstreaming.

'[Gender equality] is not on the list of priorities of most ILO social partner organizations and national institutions in these countries.' (Progress report, project 14, pp 11–12)

'While there has been a lot of activity in relation to gender in the Pacific, this has not yet been translated into significant gains for women in the region; partly this is because ... the barriers are great, particularly from traditional customs.' (Questionnaire response, project 11)

'Despite the increased awareness of these problems faced by working women in the labour market and the workplace there are still real gaps between legislation and its practical implementation in an effort to promote equality of opportunity and treatment.' (SYNDICOOP Arusha workshop, p59)

There is also still some resistance to gender mainstreaming among staff, although the gender allocation package has contributed to very heartening changes in staff attitudes to gender. The view of GENDER as 'gender police' is changing, but still exists.

3.3 EFFICIENCY

In nearly all cases, the projects were ambitious and set themselves high goals. The individual final project evaluations will reveal to what extent each one met its aims and whether it did so cost-effectively. Certainly all the projects interviewed said that they had spent their entire gender budget allocation (and in some cases had supplemented it in order to achieve their results) and would have no trouble using more money to further the works already done and improve the results already achieved.

3.3.1 *Tracking expenditure on gender*

In the **gender-specific** projects, tracking how much was spent on gender equality is obvious. However, project staff have no immediate incentive to analyse the funding further for the purposes of reporting to the donor. However, a closer breakdown of their project expenditure would enable them to clarify the cost-effectiveness of their work and provide back-up for their arguments in favour of maintaining the funding to women- or gender-specific projects.

In the projects with a **gender budget allocation**, on the other hand, the difficulty of tracking expenditure on gender and the reluctance of staff to take it on posed a particular challenge. Theoretically, the ILO's budget tracking system does not enable disaggregation of expenditure by theme, only by input (conference, seminar, training, mission, salary of staff member, salary of consultant. Some projects used this as a justification for the 'disappearance' of their gender budget allocation into the main budget, raising fears that these projects did not use their gender allocation exclusively for gender activities. This lack of accountability made it difficult for GENDER, as the coordinating unit whose job it is to report to the donor on the use of gender budget allocations, to say accurately how efficiently the GBA projects used their funds.

A meeting on budget tracing concluded that it would not in fact be difficult to devise a system of markers that would enable identification of gender-related expenditures. Alternatively, since the GBA is quantified in each project, it should be possible to ringfence it and track the use of funds by input within this allocation – e.g. fee for gender consultant, conference in gender, training on gender issues, production of manual on gender, etc. (Project 11, for instance, had no difficulty in disaggregating its GBA expenditure.⁶) The problem was that project staff would need to understand and use the system, and that it would take time for them to learn. According to one interviewee, there is reluctance to load

⁶ See evaluation questionnaire response.

more accounting onto project staff and risk provoking resistance to gender activities; according to another, this staff resistance is an attitude problem. Yet it seems fair to ask projects that benefit from a gender budget allocation to be prepared to account for it.⁷

As for **the TCKS project itself**, its budget (US\$381,000) appears modest in view of the large and sometimes unpredictable workload. In particular, day-to-day coordination and support functions – responding to requests for information and advice -- are hard to quantify. In the absence of a detailed breakdown of the project's budget it is hard to assess its cost-effectiveness or the efficiency of spending, but it is unlikely that the budget was underspent.

3.3.2 Other challenges to efficiency

It must be acknowledged that most projects experienced difficulties in implementation because of **late arrival of funds**, which reduced even further the short timeframe they had in which to implement their projects and has visibly affected their ability to deliver all their planned outputs by the end of the funding period.

Changes in gender staff also affected efficient delivery of outputs, as discussed elsewhere in this report, placing greater burdens on GENDER to offer ongoing support, which often could not be provided efficiently from Geneva. Project holders repeatedly emphasized the importance of having permanent ILO gender expertise on the spot. It seems reasonable that this should be a basic requirement for implementing a project that foregrounds (and funds) gender mainstreaming. (See Recommendations.)

The gender analysis of the project has to some extent been constrained by the constant change in the incumbent of the gender specialist post. This has had the effect of limiting a proper gender analysis of the needs of men and women, the division of labour between men and women, the constraints and/or opportunities, particularly the discrimination experienced by women, directly and indirectly, and the capacities that exist to promote gender equality in the work places with consequential impacts on the benefits that accrue or are derived based on current future social protection schemes. (Final report, project 11, p7)

Logistical problems with **communication links** between GENDER and the projects by email and telephone were reported by projects 5 and 11. In such cases face-to-face activities (meetings, workshops, trainings, missions) are perhaps more efficient than electronic methods. Some use was made of teleconferencing, and videoconferencing, e.g. between several projects in a region. Several projects would have liked more frequent visits from GENDER than they received, but that need varied across regions and correlates with the availability of regional gender expertise: regions with a SGS didn't need GENDER's support as much as those without.

Systematic **tracking of the use of materials** by the projects was not developed (see 2.2.2 (a) above) by the TCKS, except for the Virtual Forum where the numbers of users of the Forum and of each document are recorded and available for analysis. Annex 2 lists gender tools developed and adapted by the projects, but it would be useful to devise a rigorous mechanism to keep track not only of documents mailed or emailed but of who has used them, for what purpose, and with what success. (See Recommendations.) This could perhaps be done jointly with the Gender and Employment Helpdesk.

⁷ An alternative approach was taken by project 8 (Working out of Poverty in Ghana), which distributed its gender allocation on a pro-rata basis over the different budget lines (Progress report, p6).

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

The projects have reported on their own sustainability, and most of them either had exit strategies or firm ideas about follow-up phases, including on gender. A good example is the well-documented workshop discussing the sustainability of the project's gender work held by SYNDICOOP (a GBA project) in December 2005 in order to

map out the way forward with regard to gender mainstreaming sustainability beyond the project's period, [to] assess the ability of project partners and other stakeholders (i.e. relevant government ministries) to take over the project's gender mainstreaming activities, and to enhance the stakeholders' sensitivity to design and implement gender-sensitive policies that would advance gender equality. (*Refining Mechanisms for Gender Equality Sustainability within SYNDICOOP (beyond February, 2006)*, SYNDICOOP Gender Workshop, Arusha, 7–8 December 2005, p2)

This workshop highlights the important insight that knowledge sharing is extremely important, but it is not free -- it requires adequate resourcing. The workshop report, for example, identified as a challenge to the implementation of the gender strategy (in Kenya) 'limited resources (funds) to undertake Gender Analysis and Baseline Surveys for the project'.

Questions on future plans and needs at SYNDICOOP's Arusha workshop revealed some needs and expectations which fit well with a continued role for GENDER:

Question 9: What do you expect from the ILO if you do not get funding from ILO or through ILO?

- Technical assistance and guidance
- Training for capacity building
- Sharing of knowledge (bringing project personnel together)
- Lobbying and advocacy

Question 10: If there is funding?

[Responses included:]

- Capacity building
- Link projects with other partners
- Networking for sharing of ideas at regional and international levels.
- Create a vision at regional levels e.g. East African Model SYNDICOOP
- Stronger support from ILO regional office for Africa to provide:
 - Advisory services
 - Support to gender and youth initiatives
- Training on reporting format

Ownership of gender mainstreaming and concerns in the projects is at least a partial guarantee of sustainability: when project holders have developed tools and processes they will be committed to continuing to use them. Project 5 is a good example here, describing a rosters of trainers, the training manual produced by the project, and the design and reinforcement of gender policies and strategies in trade unions and government as key factors for sustainability (see Final evaluation report, project 5, p14). The favourable change in attitude towards gender issues is also a not inconsiderable factor in sustaining project achievements.

In SYNDICOOP, gender training, sensitization and capacity building with the project's leaders/managers seemed to have resulted in people being comfortable with the concepts, and there was less resistance to the gender approach than is usual in Africa.⁸ Attitude change of this kind is a very positive indication that gender equality has been taken on board, its value recognized, and that gender-sensitive work will continue.

However, follow-up actions and maintenance of the gains made in this phase will require **additional resources** in the future.

The ILO/NPP has generated is a greatly **expanded body of gender-related knowledge** and tools, with shelf lives of varying duration. The sustainability of these efforts will depend on the use and follow-up on tools produced (translation, dissemination, etc.). While some of this – hopefully an increasing amount – can be handled in the field by constituents and other beneficiaries of this phase, there will always be a need for GENDER and the ILO Gender Network to support and promote such processes and to feed them into the ILO's wider knowledge sharing focus.

It will also be very important not to lose the knowledge residing with the Gender and employment Helpdesk.

The Virtual Forum has not yet fulfilled its potential as a flexible and sustainable knowledge-sharing mechanism. However, if it is modified in ways that will increase ownership and use of it, it could become a key component in the ILO's knowledge sharing on gender equality.

The Gender Equality Theme programme has made it possible for the ILO, through collaboration on gender issues, to make fruitful **relationships with other stakeholders** which will outlast and transcend the duration of the projects themselves. Such relationships include those generated by the projects' inputs into national policy and poverty reduction processes, relationships with a wider range of organizations of women workers, women entrepreneurs, informal economy workers, etc., and the expansion of the Gender Network. GENDER itself has established new strategic alliances within the Office, for instance with CODEV. Gender has in some cases also been an entry point to wider ILO work in general.

Before the ILO/NPP programme the [Moscow] office didn't have any substantial TC projects at all. This big project gave us a chance to clarify national priorities in the countries covered and to create a network between countries, not only on gender. (Interview, project 14).

Certain individuals seem to be determinant in the promotion of gender equality and mainstreaming in the regions, despite regular gender training for GFPs. While their expertise, experience and commitment is a tremendous asset, often in difficult contexts for women, this puts a lot of pressure on these individuals, and suggests that gender mainstreaming is still not very well institutionalized but continues to depend on the presence of certain committed and expert individuals. In view of the problems caused in the projects by staff movements, this is a big sustainability issue. Steps must be taken to ensure that the gender capacity of regions and programmes does not depend on particular individuals but is assured by institutional means.

⁸ Interview, Adrienne Cruz, November 2005.

3.5 UNANTICIPATED EFFECTS

In such a wide-ranging programme, it is not surprising that both positive and negative unanticipated effects – or side-effects -- should be observed, and only those directly affecting the TCKS project and GENDER are mentioned here. The positive side-effects to a large extent concern purely qualitative aspects which could hardly have been measured by indicators, for instance increased gender sensitivity among male senior project staff and an improved perception of GENDER by other units as a result of its welcoming attitude and helpfulness in the provision of assistance and materials. GENDER now not seen so much as ‘the gender police’. This may actually have been more positive for GENDER than the Gender Audit.

On the negative side is a problem raised already several times in this evaluation: the unpredictability of staff movements, placing unforeseen strains on the Gender Bureau’s capacity to respond and to backstop efficiently.

The Virtual Forum, by its innovative and experimental nature, doubtless produced many unexpected effects. Of greatest relevance to GENDER, however, is the felicitous: coexistence of spaces on gender equality and other themes, which could inspire people who wouldn’t otherwise do so to explore the gender equality site and find useful information on it.

4 LESSONS LEARNED

There is an acknowledged difficulty about reporting on **impact**. Mostly this has to do with timing – the NPP programme itself was of quite short duration (2 years) – too short, according to some project holders, for them to complete all the processes they had set in motion -- and not all projects had actually closed at the time of writing this evaluation. It is very probable that the full impact of the Gender Equality Theme projects will not emerge for some years.

That said, many of the lessons to be learned from the Gender Equality Theme projects were already evident by the mid-term and are still valid. These are listed in the *Thematic progress report* (pp 22–3), and it would be worth while to revisit them in the light of experience during 2005. However, they apply mostly to the cluster of projects as a whole. A more recent summary of the lessons learned on gender mainstreaming in the projects can be found in ‘Observations and lessons learned on gender mainstreaming in projects under ILO/NPP’. (an informal review carried out by GENDER).

The following are some lessons of specific relevance to the TCKS project:

- ❖ **Gender-sensitive, gender-mainstreamed project proposals cannot be prepared overnight.** The rushed proposal process forced people to make overambitious proposals (since there was no time to be judicious about what to include) while at the same time trying to be honest about their aims -- a difficult circle to square. Given the resistance to gender mainstreaming that still persists among ILO staff and other stakeholders, if a project takes on gender goals which it then cannot meet, it confirms hostile prejudices about the value and ‘doability’ of GM.

- ❖ **Realistic goals need to be set.** The timeframe for implementation of the projects was admittedly short, and while some project holders complained that this did not give them time to implement properly, it could also be argued that some were too ambitious in their objectives. Gender work does take time, and that should be acknowledged; but also project holders need to learn to design objectives and plan project implementation to fit the time and other resources available
- ❖ **ILO Gender Specialists are clearly the most important points of reference for gender-related TC projects in the regions.** However, **gender consultants** may need to be contracted to fill gaps and for special purposes, such as developing training materials or carrying out evaluation and reporting exercises. Selecting consultants with the right level of expertise is obviously crucial to the quality of output, hence the importance of ILO backstopping (e.g. by GENDER) in the identification of appropriate consultants for particular tasks. However, consultants need to have knowledge and experience of the ILO and how it works, including in the regional context, as well as issue-related expertise.
- ❖ In common with gender equality and all cross-cutting issues, **knowledge sharing depends for its effectiveness on adequate and sustained inputs and resources** (financial human, time).
- ❖ If material is being sent out 'passively' to projects, it needs **a gender specialist at the receiving end** to be able to filter, interpret, decide what to use/disseminate.
- ❖ KS was used extensively during project planning, but **once the many project activities had begun it was much harder for staff to continue working actively on 'everyday' KS**, including monitoring for reporting purposes.
- ❖ **Innovative techniques such as the Virtual Forum often have the least impact initially.** They need time and possibly training to take root. People's ability or willingness to cope with advanced technology is less a gender question than a generational one. Often the simplest methods of KS are the most effective.
- ❖ **Cross-linkages between countries with very different gender equality situations are highly fruitful**, giving opportunities to see what works in each case and to develop culture-specific gender knowledge (which can then be disseminated). The important lesson here is that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' route to gender equality.
- ❖ **GENDER needs to establish its own identity with regard to these projects and to KS on gender**, avoiding confusion both with the Gender & Employment Helpdesk and with other KS entities and projects in the ILO while maintaining a mutually synergetic relationship with them.
- ❖ **The position of the Gender & Employment Helpdesk is ultimately anomalous** and its structural relationship with TCKS ambiguous and reduplicative. It backstopped two of the other 13 projects (4 and 6), although this could be expected to have fallen fully within the remit of the TCKS, and has provided a lot of information to those projects that also fall within the NPP Employment creation theme. There is a clear case for merging the Helpdesk and the TCKS into one coordinating and knowledge-sharing point of reference with a clear identity

5.1 *A new approach*

The Gender Equality Theme cluster was an innovative and bold experiment: **innovative** because for the first time the ILO can say it has systematically mainstreamed gender in a cluster of projects with other common themes, visibly and accountably; **bold** because this was a new and untested approach for the ILO and for GENDER. The objective of gender equality has always been there, but this was an experiment in putting it into practice in a **concrete, measurable, evaluable** way. One of its successful outcomes is that future development of this kind of work will now have a systematic knowledge base on GM in many different development areas of priority for the ILO and the donor community, on which to build new actions.

'This project has led by example and has been widely promoted as the first major project in the Pacific which has had a dedicated gender budget. This has had a big impact on feedback from women's groups.' (Questionnaire response, project 11)

5.2 *Expanding the ILO's knowledge base on gender issues*

The gender budget allocations have enabled the building of a valuable bank of knowledge on best practice in designing and implementing GM strategies and activities in a range of thematic sectors, including employment creation, small enterprise development, skills development for employability, the informal economy, combating bonded labour and child labour, and others. They have enabled monitoring and reporting activities that do much to reduce the 'evaporation' or 'invisibilization' of gender concerns in TC. In the gender/women-specific projects, on the other hand, gender equality and women's empowerment themselves have been the subject of the intervention (rather than the strategy by which other objectives may be achieved) and the results, particularly the thoroughgoing sensitization of ILO constituents (government decision-makers, trade union leaders), will have valuable ripple effects reaching into Decent Work country programmes, poverty reduction strategies and perceptions of the ILO itself.

5.3 *The value of consistent, high-quality gender expertise*

The Gender Theme offered a good opportunity to strengthen the **ILO gender network**, in various ways:

- strengthening relations with gender specialists and gender focal points in the field through dialogue and involving them actively in project planning. Since both field specialists (gender and otherwise) and gender focal points actually have varying degrees of support for gender mainstreaming, the TCKS' project's technical support and coordination work has helped GENDER to enhance its relationship with them;
- strengthening the knowledge base of GFPs, and using this knowledge to sensitize them. Some GFPs are already keen and knowledgeable, but others have taken on the role simply because their bosses have told them to, and have little knowledge of gender or ownership of the GFP role;

- extending the gender network both by increasing the number of GFPs (e.g. project 7, SYNDICOOP, established a GFP in every subproject) and by involving people beyond the GFP network, in particular technical cooperation staff;
- enhancing the recognition by ILO the availability of gender experts in the regions.

However, as noted elsewhere in this evaluation, fluctuation in gender expertise in the field was a huge constraint with direct resource implications for GENDER and the TCKS.

Neither gender mainstreaming nor KS on gender mainstreaming can be done effectively without adequate, dedicated, ringfenced and sustainable resources: not only financial ones, but human and time resources as well. A Senior Gender Specialist in each region and a consistent gender expertise presence in each project should be minimum requirements. This needs to be planned in and HRD needs to be aware of it.

However, the opposite seems to be happening. The apparent draining away of SGSs from many regions is a worrying development. Project experiences in some regions in Africa, or in the [region covered by the Moscow RO, where gender specialists were absent, contrasts sharply with those in the region covered by the Bangkok RO, where there is strong gender support from the office. It is very clear that having regional SGSs takes a great deal of pressure off HQ, and the trend to reduce them should be reversed urgently.

5.4 *Comparison between women/gender-specific projects and projects with a gender budget allocation*

The March 2005 decision by the ILO's Governing Body on gender issues in technical cooperation means that attention to gender equality is now mandatory in all ILO TC projects. The Gender Equality Theme projects demonstrated, in effect, three different ways of doing this: via projects with a gender-budget allocation, gender-specific projects, and women-specific projects. All three strategies advance the ILO's Shared Policy Objective on gender equality and the objective of Decent Work but offer different benefits from different perspectives. Which approach is more suitable for a particular project depends to a large extent on the external context in which the project is being implemented and the opportunities offered or constraints imposed by national politics and culture.

As noted elsewhere, the provision of a **gender budget allocation** was the most innovative feature of the Gender Equality Theme, since it made it possible to back up stated intentions with dedicated resources. Some of the GBA projects focused more on practical gender needs (starting up women's entrepreneurship, basic and vocational education and skill training on an equal basis for girls and boys, etc.). It is here that gender mainstreaming tends most often to be interpreted as meeting the needs of women; but on the whole the GBA projects in the cluster, with the assistance of the TCKS at the design/planning stage, did locate their gender activities within a broader social framework (the bonded labour system, the informal economy, youth employment, etc.) on the basis of a gender analysis of that framework.

The **gender-specific** projects were those which took equality itself as their subject, looked at the differing needs and interests of men and women in the project, and actively involved men as well as women in actions to promote gender equality. Project 5, which aimed to sensitize the African trade union movement to gender equality, is an example of this.

Yet other projects were **women-specific**, with a thrust largely towards women's empowerment and women's strategic gender interests (strengthening women's national machinery, strengthening trade unions' capacity to understand and address gender inequality issues, etc.). An example is project 3, which focused on strengthening women's national machinery in Yemen as well as national ownership of the DW agenda and acceptance of gender equality.⁹

However, there were overlaps between these categories, and in some cases gender activities spilled over beyond the confines of the gender budget allocation, becoming as firmly embedded in GBA projects as in gender-specific ones. It is perhaps in these projects that the added value of the gender budget allocation is most evident. The activities of project 9, for instance, including participatory analysis with men, show that gender equality and the role of gender relations are as central to the project as in any of the gender-specific projects, while project 11 is principally focused on equality in Pacific social security systems, in a culture that has traditionally not included women in them.¹⁰

'... one builds awareness and ownership through gender-specific allocations and tests the ground for gender mainstreaming approaches at the same time to see if the ground is ready for the seeds to take root.' (ILO regional gender specialist, quoted in *Thematic progress report*)

In terms of investment, it could well be that the cost benefit of the GBA projects is greater because, if gender mainstreaming is taken on board and implemented with commitment, it reaches into other parts of the project, whereas a gender/women-specific project might stay within its own 'silo' or its wider relevance remain unrecognized. However, all these approaches are valid and important tools for meeting the ILO's commitments to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The choice of a gender-specific, women-specific or GBA project must always depend on local/sectoral conditions and identified needs. In some cases it continues to be strategic (and realistic) to implement projects that specifically address women's needs and aim at women's empowerment; in other contexts, the Gender Equality Theme projects have amply demonstrated that earmarking funds for gender-related activities contributes greatly to mainstreaming and can generate much added value in projects which are not primarily *about* gender.

5.5 *Continuing challenges*

The Gender Equality Theme cluster has made some noticeable inroads into changing attitudes towards women and gender, at several levels and in many ways, as described above. However, resistance to gender equality mainstreaming is a problem which has not yet gone away. attitude still has to be addressed. Gender fatigue is detectable; GENDER is in a way the victim of its own success, being seen by some as doing too much for other units to cope with, or as making impossible demands for accountability – all of which are symptoms of resistance.

⁹ See Yemen project's presentation of project results in Geneva, 9 January 2006.

¹⁰ In any case, the distinction between practical and strategic gender needs is becoming increasingly blurred. Strictly speaking, promoting women's microbusinesses, for instance, meets a practical gender need (income generation), while promoting small businesswomen's associations meets a strategic gender need; yet, strategically, the two approaches are interdependent. There can be few interventions more strategic than 'educating men and empowering women in the decision-making process ... in both the family and in group discussion' (Progress report, project 9). Whether an intervention addresses one sex (usually women) or both as target groups and partners should depend on the needs defined by a baseline gender analysis.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 *Expanding the scope of the gender budget allocations*

- ❖ Expand the scope of the gender equality allocation mechanism to cover all projects under future ILO/NPPs, not just those under a special Gender Equality Theme. Management of this expanded mechanism could be done by the Gender Equality Theme coordination project working closely with the coordination projects of other themes to provide coherent support on gender mainstreaming for individual projects under all themes.

6.2 *Mainstreaming gender from the start*

- ❖ Make sure that gender equality considerations are incorporated into all projects **from the start**, at the concept note stage. Make sure gender-sensitive indicators are included from the very beginning of project design.
- ❖ Where this has not been done (or not been done for some time), hold some capacity building on designing **qualitative gender indicators**.
- ❖ As far as possible, ensure that there is **gender expertise on the spot** at the earliest stages of project design, so that gender objectives, indicators and activities are culturally appropriate and realistic, rather than relying on gender specialists at HQ to do this.
- ❖ Ensure that there is **money in the budget** for gender mainstreaming (not just for activities with women, or even for gender-specific interventions). There need to be resources to enable projects to do gender analysis, to train their own staff in gender mainstreaming, to collect sex-disaggregated data, and to ensure sex-balanced representation on committees and at events. These are the low-profile, 'internal' activities that actually make gender mainstreaming a reality.
- ❖ In particular, there should be a provision/condition in the next funding round that ties the gender allocation specifically to the availability of **a gender specialist for each project**.

6.3 *Accounting for gender budget allocations*

- ❖ As a priority, set up an effective mechanism to collect information on the financial administration of the gender allocation,¹¹ based on a careful and honest analysis of the use of the gender budget allocations in this group of projects..
- ❖ Hold capacity building on gender budget tracking (as part of gender budget analysis). The Pacific Social Security project (11) is a model of good practice in this respect and could be a key knowledge resource for a capacity-building exercise.

¹¹ This was envisaged in the *Thematic progress report* p20, to be done jointly by GENDER and regional and project-based gender specialists.

6.4 *Facilitating reporting on gender mainstreaming*

- ❖ Hold training days on using the ILO's gender monitoring and reporting tools to report on gender budget allocations and on gender mainstreaming in projects generally. Training could be based on the use of the Reporting template. Training could be reassuring for those who find the gender questions and guidelines daunting.
- ❖ Explore ways of refining the format for project reporting on gender so as to make it less fragmented, if possible.
- ❖ Consider making the questions and guidelines in the Reporting template into a separate training document for training in gender-sensitive reporting.

6.5 *Promoting and monitoring the use of gender knowledge and tools*

- ❖ Systematize, disseminate and promote around the Office and among constituents the expanded and improved knowledge base on gender equality and mainstreaming which the Gender Equality Theme has generated, including good practices and the tools developed, adapted, and translated by the projects. This can be done through resource lists, the GENDER website, the Virtual Forum, and further events in which knowledge sharing is a component.
- ❖ Develop a rigorous mechanism for tracking and analysing the use of different gender tools – who uses what, with what target groups, with what success / effect, etc. – with a view to the future development of practical, appropriate gender tools. Based on feedback about the use of tools, explore ways to increase and improve this, including capacity building, establishment of communities of practice, etc.

6.6 *Extending knowledge sharing on gender*

- ❖ Explore further ways in which cross-fertilization and mutual learning (between countries, projects, sectors) as regards materials, tools, and good practices can be promoted.
- ❖ Explore concepts of communities of practice as a modality for targeted knowledge sharing on gender issues without the problems of information overload and passive knowledge sharing. This needs careful thought: a CoP must focus on people's daily work, and must not be so broad as to lose focus, so it is likely that several CoPs, dealing with gender in different ILO sectors, could be the most useful modality.
- ❖ Include in the next phase of the TCKS project a comparative evaluation, based on the evidence from reporting by the current group of projects, of the comparative effectiveness of women-specific, gender-specific and GBA projects as regards the achievement of gender equality in the world of work and compliance with the ILO's shared policy objective on gender equality.

6.7 *Establishing GENDER's identity and raising its profile as a KS centre*

- ❖ Organize a specific knowledge-sharing event on gender issues. GENDER has participated in several KS events, but now needs its own event, to raise the profile of gender in KS around the ILO. The results of this cluster of projects could provide a thematic basis.
- ❖ Investigate the ongoing confusion of identity and remit between the Gender and Employment Helpdesk and the TCKS and clarify their specific areas of competence. The

perceived duplication of function does no justice to either unit and puzzles many project holders and others. Ultimately, the best solution may be the one already suggested, a merger of the two units.