

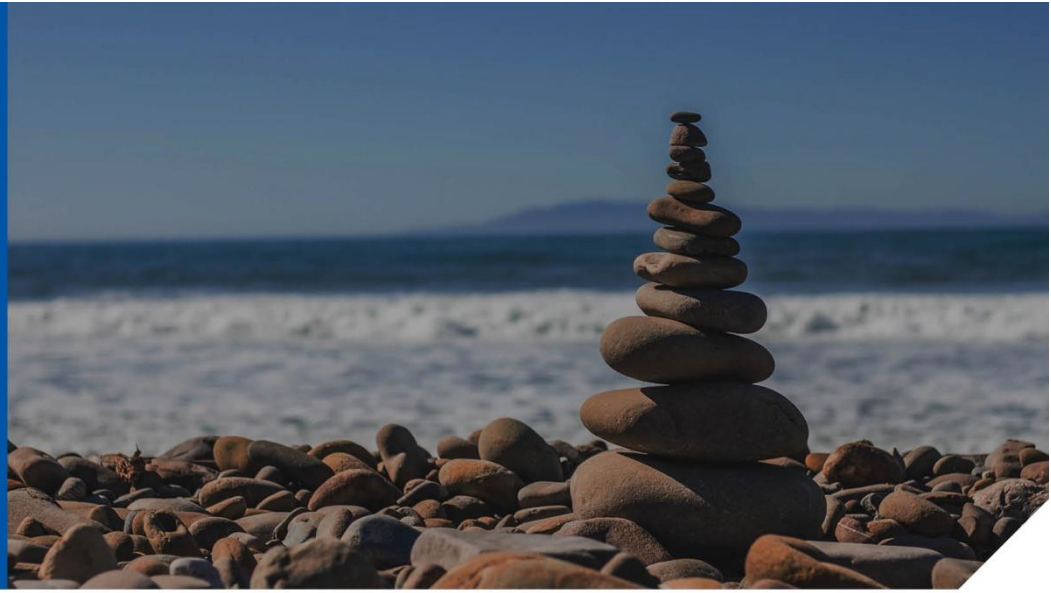


International
Labour
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► Evaluation Office



i-eval Discovery



Decent work through Skills and Livelihoods training for groups vulnerable to discrimination – Midterm evaluation

Executive Summary

ILO DC/SYMBOL: *BRA/21/01/BRA*

Type of Evaluation: *Project*

Evaluation timing: *Midterm*

Evaluation nature: *Independent*

Project country: *Brazil*

P&B Outcome(s): *Outcome 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all people in the labor market) / Outcome 7 (Adequate and effective protection at work for all people) of the ILO Program and Budget.*

SDG(s): *8 - Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all / 10 - Reduce inequalities within countries and between countries*

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: *09 April 2024*

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

ILO Administrative Office: *CO - Brasilia*

ILO Technical Office(s): *CO - Brasilia*

Project duration: *July 2021 – September 2024*

Name of consultant: *Caio Csermak*

Name of Evaluation Manager: *Cybele Burga*

Evaluation Office oversight: *Patricia Vidal Hurtado*

Evaluation budget: *USD 10,600*

Key Words: [Use themes as provided in i-eval Discovery](#)

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Project has a budget of US\$1,000,000.00 (one million US dollars) for ILO to implement the project for a period of 36 months between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2024. The activities span across five states in Brazil, including two in the Southeast region, one in the Northeast region, and two in the North region. The expected impact is the increase in the participation of people in their gender diversity in the formal economy and the job market in Brazil. To achieve such impact, the Programme foresees three specific objectives:

1. **Objective 1:** Improve access for people diverse in terms of gender to training in job-specific skills;
2. **Objective 2:** Improve the capacity of government, workers, employers and civil society organizations to implement national strategies to promote decent work for people diverse in terms of gender;
3. **Objective 3:** Disseminate effective strategies and methodologies for the economic inclusion of people diverse in terms of gender.

According to its design document, the following outcomes are anticipated:

According to its design document, the Project includes the following results:

- People diverse in terms of gender have the skills and confidence to access decent work;
- Employers and trade associations promote inclusive, safe and diverse workplaces for people diverse in terms of gender;
- People diverse in terms of gender are able to start and maintain decent self-employment;
- The national action plan on employment of people diverse in terms of gender achieves measurable improvements in the economic inclusion of vulnerable social groups;
- People diverse in terms of gender are increasingly engaged with and supported by worker organizations;
- Governments, employers' and workers' organizations and civil society organizations in the same field of the project have the capacity to develop strategies to improve the economic conditions of people diverse in terms of gender.

The project is managed by the ILO Office in Brazil, which is technically advised by the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work section of the ILO headquarters in Geneva. Nationally, the project is managed by a National Coordinator who is supervised by the Technical Officer in Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and supported by a Project Assistant. Additionally, a Steering Committee and an Advisory Group are involved.

Present situation of the project

According to the three objectives outlined in the logical matrix, the Project implemented three complementary strategies, although they are at different stages of their implementation in chronological

	<p>terms.</p> <p>The first strategy aligns with the objective of ensuring that people diverse in terms of gender with higher technical qualifications have access to decent jobs, union organization, and business opportunities. In this context, the main training program has been the Kitchen & Voice course. This training served 209 individuals across the Northeast, North, and Southeast regions of the country. The Project includes other training programs that have also been implemented, such as entrepreneurship courses and training in union organization.</p> <p>The second strategy focuses on strengthening the capabilities of state actors and representatives of workers and employers to promote the rights of people diverse in terms of gender. In this regard, a CSO specializing in technical cooperation for promoting diversity, along with other project partners, developed trainings for the inclusion of gender-diverse individuals in the workspaces of small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, there is a focus on national-level public policies, which includes the development of a national action plan to promote decent work for people diverse in terms of gender. An initial version of the plan, as well as a strategy for monitoring its implementation, were developed with the Project's support and will be reviewed and managed by a federal human rights agency. The expectation is that its implementation will begin in 2024.</p> <p>The third strategy is still in the initial phase of implementation and was addressed by this evaluation only in terms of its design. It includes knowledge management and dissemination initiatives and the scale-up of good practices generated within the scope of the project. The aim is to enhance the capacities of governments, business and labor organizations, and CSOs to develop strategies that improve the economic conditions of people diverse in terms of gender. A key part of this strategy is the systematization of methodologies, curricula, and good practices generated within the project's scope and converting them into knowledge products. These can be adapted and expanded for use by subnational governments and in the international context for the learning of CSOs, employers' and workers' organizations, and governments. Initiatives include the systematization of pedagogical experiences implemented within the project, such as professional and union training.</p>
<p>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</p>	<p>The overall objective of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the results achieved by the Project through an analysis guided by the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability. It identified the results (expected and unexpected) that are being achieved or why they are not.</p> <p>The evaluation covers all the results and products of the Project, as well as the activities developed from July 2021 to December 2023. Regarding the results, the evaluation covers the perspectives of</p>

	<p>design, execution, and sustainability of the first two results, which are already in an advanced phase of implementation. Regarding the third result, the evaluation only includes its design.</p> <p>The main users of this evaluation are the ILO Offices for Brazil and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the implementing partners of the Project: government counterpart at the federal level, employers' organizations, workers' organizations, and CSOs.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>This evaluation used a mixed methods approach, featuring a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the evaluation questions, using both primary and secondary data sources. Data analysis utilized: a) content analysis of the qualitative data collected; and b) descriptive statistics.</p> <p>Data collection took a participatory approach with the goal of including a broad and diverse group of counterparts and social groups indirectly (through document review) or directly (through interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires). Thus, the combination of data from different sources, counterparts, and social groups allowed the triangulation of information to achieve robust and evidence-based results.</p> <p>The main data collection methods were:</p> <p>a) Document review: Examination of relevant documents provided by the ILO, the Project counterparts, or resulting from the evaluator's active research;</p> <p>b) Semi-structured interviews in person and remote: A total of 40 interviews were conducted with 48 people. The list of people interviewed includes implementing partners, civil society counterparts, government counterparts, and the program management team;</p> <p>c) In-person focus groups: A total of 7 focus groups were conducted including beneficiaries of the following training courses: Kitchen & Voice Southeast (2); Kitchen & Voice Northeast (2); Union Training (2); and Entrepreneurship Training (1);</p> <p>d) Online questionnaire: To increase the outreach to beneficiaries of the Project's training actions, the evaluator implemented an anonymous online questionnaire that was answered by 51 people. The survey included a representative sample of all the project's training activities: Kitchen & Voice North (11); Kitchen & Voice Northeast (14); Kitchen & Voice Southeast (15); Union Training (9); and Entrepreneurship Training (8). The total universe of people to be consulted included 300 beneficiaries, which corresponds to a response rate of 17%; and</p> <p>e) Field visits: The evaluator conducted 3 missions in which interviews, focus groups, and field visits to the spaces and institutions where the Project activities were carried out were conducted. The first mission took place in October 2023 in the Southeast region. The second and third missions were carried out in the Northeast region in November and December 2023, respectively.</p> <p>The main methodological limits of this evaluation were the restriction on field visits and the challenges in reaching the</p>

population benefiting from the Project's activities. Consequently, most data collection was done remotely. In relation to reaching the population benefiting from the Project's activities, even with field visits, it is important to highlight that the evaluator encountered difficulties in reaching beneficiaries living in situations of vulnerability, such as food insecurity and sex work

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

This mid-term evaluation revealed sixteen evidence-based findings leading to six cross-cutting conclusions across various evaluation criteria. Highlighted findings include: the project's strong alignment with national and international regulatory frameworks, as well as other ILO initiatives and its main counterparts; the relevance of the project's target audience's specificities to its activity planning, despite a lack of a robust diagnosis of their situation; effective participation from the project's main counterparts, although not from the start of its implementation; the mobilization of a diverse group of partnerships leveraging their comparative advantages; the absence of an evident theory of change and the limitation of indicators designed for project progress measurement; robust results in terms of individual capacity building within the target audience, albeit on a limited scale; contributions to the institutional strengthening of CSOs representing the target audience; the potential to achieve impact level through policy advocacy at the federal level; and the need for a more robust approach to the systematization and dissemination of good practices to ensure result sustainability.

In summary, the evaluation's conclusions were as follows:

CONCLUSION 1: The project presented a design aligned with ILO normative frameworks, tailored to the diverse gender population's access needs to decent work, though it lacked a more robust diagnosis of both the target audience and potential employers.

CONCLUSION 2: The project has been highly permeable to the participation of its main counterparts in the design and planning of its activities, as well as in decision-making bodies like the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group. However, this openness was not a reality at the proposal design stage, so the participation of counterparts has been expanding over time as needed for adaptation to the context.

CONCLUSION 3: The project achieved relevant bottom-up results through capacity building in individuals and organizations: at the individual level, professional trainings empowered people in their gender diversity, though the number of project beneficiaries was limited. The third project result presents proposals on how to systematize and replicate good practices, yet the initiative lacks a structured approach in this regard. At the organizational level, institutions of diverse natures acquired new skills and formed networks utilizing their comparative advantages to leverage project outcomes.

CONCLUSION 4: At the top-down dimension, the project achieved results with the potential to guide impact through its articulation

with the federal human rights body, providing technical cooperation for the development of a national plan for the employability of people in their gender diversity that includes an implementation program and monitoring strategies. This is further supported by the inclusion of two objectives for this purpose in the Multi-Year Plan 2024-2027.

CONCLUSION 5: A theory of change for the project was not developed, leading to inconsistencies in its conception and the division of responsibilities, resources, and activities. These issues were partially resolved during the execution of the initiative.

CONCLUSION 6: The capacity-building actions in individuals and institutions, coupled with influence on changes in normative frameworks and the construction of public policies, show a potential orientation towards impact. However, it still lacks a more robust planning, especially regarding strategies for systematization and dissemination of good practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations

In summary, the evaluation's recommendations were as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Project could offer a wider variety of courses by leveraging both the diagnosis of the desires and expectations of the target audience and the demands of employers, focusing on longer trainings in technical areas of high demand or added value in the labor market.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Project lacks a review of the Theory of Change to make it more robust and incorporate adaptations to the context and contributions from project counterparts throughout its execution. This should include reviewing the project's logical results framework and its monitoring indicators, as well as guiding the planning of a potential extension or the systematization of good practices for replication.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Project could establish a broader relationship with companies and employing institutions, engaging them throughout the project cycle and coordinating training actions with the creation of hiring opportunities through the commitment of the private sector.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Result 3 of the Project should be reviewed for the final phase of its implementation, including robust and feasible actions for the systematization of good practices and the development of dissemination and replication strategies for the methodologies used in the Project, aiming to gain geographical reach and scale.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Although the Project has managed to reach the most vulnerable groups among its target audience, a deeper focus on its internal diversity would be desirable, designing actions for segmented groups and taking into account their specific barriers to labor market access.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Regarding implementing partners, a better definition of roles during the project execution process would be

	<p>desirable, harmonizing expectations and communication parameters from the planning phase of actions.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 7: In dialogue with implementing partners, the ILO could develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the project's long-term impact after its conclusion. This would include developing impact indicators, as well as methods for data collection and analysis that allow measuring the project's effectiveness and sustainability over time.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 8: The ILO could incorporate an approach to environmental sustainability and just transition in the final execution phase of the Project, as well as in new similar initiatives. Such an approach should be in the proposal design, present its own monitoring indicators, and be cross-cutting to all results, so that each activity includes elements that ensure the implementation of a sustainable perspective.</p>
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lessons Learned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scholarships and food allowances were essential to ensure access and retention of people in vulnerable situations in the project initiatives; 2. The perception of the project counterparts and the results it achieved point to the importance of the representation of people in their gender diversity within the management and teaching body of the project initiatives and the implementing partners; 3. Building bridges and creating heterogeneous networks enhance joint actions, the use of comparative advantages, and the scale of results, although they can also generate or intensify conflicts; 4. The sustainability of a project that offers, on a small scale, vocational training services to a vulnerable audience depends on the systematization and potential multiplier of its methodological models; and 5. It is crucial to have the participation of implementing partners, especially those representing the ILO's tripartite mandate, in the planning of activities and governance instances from the initial phase of the project. <p>Good Practices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive participation and governance structure: The governance structure of the Project, including the Advisory Group, promoted the inclusive participation of various counterparts, allowing the voices of beneficiaries and partners to be heard; 2. Strategic alliances for sustainability and impact: Forming strategic partnerships with governmental agencies, CSOs, employer institutions, and unions proved to be crucial for the project's success; 3. Adaptive approaches and response to contextual changes:

The project's ability to adapt to contextual changes and unexpected challenges, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and government changes, demonstrates organizational flexibility and resilience;

4. **Beneficiary-centered training and capacity development:** The implementation of training programs tailored to the needs and aspirations of the target audience, as well as the focus on the capacity development of individuals and organizations, were central elements of the project's success; and
 5. **Complementarity between training themes and the use of training for normative influence:** The Project's training actions combined professional training, union engagement, and entrepreneurship, covering a wide range of ways to promote decent work that served as pilots for advocacy with governmental partners.
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