



South-South Cooperation to Enhance the Institutional Capacities of Trade Unions in Asia and the Pacific— Final external evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: 24 countries in Asia and the Pacific

Evaluation date: 27 February 2024

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO ACTRAV

Technical Office: ILO ACTRAV

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DC Symbol: RAS/19/05/ACF

Donor(s) & budget: 1.000.000 USD

Key Words: trade union, capacity building social dialogue

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

In 2023, the International Labour Organization's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) celebrates the tenth anniversary of its South-South Cooperation with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), aiming to advance the Decent Work Agenda in the Asia-Pacific region aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project aimed to enhance the capacities of unions in the region and was aligned with multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shift in project delivery from in-person to virtual capacity-building and outreach solutions. Key activities included five virtual training programs, a Training of Trainers event, and the launch of a Community of Practice and Learning Cloud for Trade Unions. Regional conferences were also organized, addressing various issues such as skills development, youth empowerment, and strategic workplans. Despite the pandemic challenges, ACTRAV remained committed to innovative capacity-building solutions for regional unions, ultimately contributing to the project's objectives of strengthening workers' organizations and advancing the Decent Work Agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

Present situation of the project

Project has been finalized

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation provide a comprehensive framework, aligning with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) evaluation policy guidelines, which aim to ensure accountability, improvement, and organizational learning. The specific objectives of the evaluation encompass assessing efficiency, relevance, impact, sustainability, coherence, achievement of stated objectives, implementation modalities, and providing recommendations and lessons learned. The primary audience for the evaluation includes the donor partner, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, ACTRAV, key stakeholders involved in the project, service providers, consultants, participants, and representatives of trade unions in the region. The evaluation aims to inform strategic improvements and share valuable insights and best practices with relevant departments and partners.



Methodology of evaluation

A selection of 15 evaluation questions was made. The evaluation phases involved desk research, online surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews. Data analysis tools such as Atlas.ti, Excel, and Tableau were employed for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The evaluation framework is structured around Kirkpatrick's four-level model, encompassing interaction, learning, behavioral change, and organizational change, with a hierarchical approach to assess the training programs' effectiveness and impact, aligned with the Theory of Change (ToC) and addressing key questions about knowledge application and organizational strengthening.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the project underscores several key aspects of project design validity, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, representativeness, impact, and sustainability.

In terms of project design validity, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a fundamental revision of the program, leading to the reconstruction of a Theory of Change (ToC) that refocused the project on enhancing the capacities of national trade unions and fostering networking among them. While this shift was essential given the circumstances, it highlights the need for flexibility in project design to adapt to unforeseen challenges.

Recommendations emphasize the importance of follow-up activities to ensure that the learned skills are effectively implemented within unions (see recommendation 1).

Relevance emerges as a significant strength of the South-South (S-S) program. The program's proactive approach in identifying and addressing the specific needs of stakeholders, especially trade unions in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific, stands out. This adaptability was particularly crucial as the program transitioned to an online platform during the pandemic. Recommendations highlight the commendable practice of identifying real needs through a bottom-up approach and suggest continuing this approach in future projects (see recommendation 4).

Coherence is evident in the program's activities, which are well-connected and complement each other. Collaboration among various stakeholders was strong and committed, ensuring the program's effectiveness. However, there is room for improvement



in terms of representative selection and commitment, which is recommended for future iterations (see recommendation 1). Effectiveness is demonstrated through survey responses, discussions, and interviews, revealing positive results in terms of knowledge gain, support from unions, and application of learned skills. While the short-term impact is evident, assessing long-term application and organizational changes remains a challenge. Recommendations highlight the importance of follow-up activities to track and enhance the sustained impact of the program (see recommendation 1).

Representativeness is another area of strength, with participants from 25 different countries, balanced gender and age representation, and strong engagement with younger participants. The recommendations focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of online modules and introducing new training content based on stakeholder input (see recommendations 2 and 3).

The impact of the program is assessed using a four-level model, revealing success in creating an engaging learning experience and enhancing knowledge and skills. However, measuring behavioural and organizational changes remains challenging within the program's timeframe. Sustainability is embedded in the program's design, with training instructors to become e-trainers and an online Community of Practice (CoP) for continuous learning.

Recommendations emphasize the need for follow-up activities to enhance sustainability and foster positive changes within unions (see recommendations 1, 2, and 4).

In conclusion, the evaluation highlights the program's adaptability, relevance, and effectiveness, with recommendations focused on improving representative selection, follow-up activities, efficiency of online modules, and introducing new training content based on stakeholder needs. The program's success in engaging a diverse group of participants and its potential for long-term impact and sustainability make it a valuable initiative for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions

Recommendation 1: Implement a Training Follow-Up System to ensure the implementation of learned skills and knowledge, offering individual



	<p>guidance, and overcoming barriers, with the involvement of union leaders to drive behavioural and organizational change.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Exploit and adapt the developed training modules, Community of Practice, and learning cloud for future use in the region and potentially other regions, fostering knowledge sharing and a multiplier effect.</p> <p>Recommendation 3: Address the training needs related to platform workers, given their increasing significance in the evolving economic landscape, aligning with the ILO's policy priorities.</p> <p>Recommendation 4: Maintain the bottom-up approach for needs assessment, involving union leadership and enhancing communication with union leaders through short online sessions to improve program understanding and participant selection for better alignment with specific needs.</p>
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lessons Learned</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English proficiency is crucial for effective participation in English-centric training programs. Tools for translation are limited during live discussions, emphasizing the need for advanced communication tools to bridge language barriers. 2. Clear communication about program objectives and participant profiles is essential to avoid inappropriate participant selections, ensuring union leaders' accountability for training outcomes. <p>Emerging Good Practices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A bottom-up approach effectively identified trade union training needs across diverse regions, aligning program content with identified needs and engaging participants. 2. The program's transition to online and blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated efficiency and efficacy in expanding outreach and engaging a wide audience, with potential for replication and alignment with broader labour and education goals.