Final independent evaluation of the project "Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa"

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Abbreviations

ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EQ	Evaluation Question
GEDI	Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch
HQ	Headquarter
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Executive Summary

Background

The International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented the project "Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa", funded by the Government of Norway. The ILO commissioned orange & teal for a final independent evaluation, covering the implementation period January 2023 – June 2024.

Objectives

The evaluation aims to assess the project's performance using the OECD DAC criteria, detailed in seventeen evaluation questions. Furthermore, it synthesises learnings and good practices and provides recommendations for future interventions.

Methods

Several data collection methods and sources of information were used to respond to the evaluation questions. This included document and data review, individual and group interviews, and a validation meeting with the project partners.

Findings

The evaluation main findings, structured according to the OECD DAC criteria, are as follows:

Relevance: The project aligns with regional and national needs, which were identified through regular interactions between ILO staff, constituents, and stakeholders. Frequent and ongoing dialogue and specific needs assessments ensured tailored activities. Adaptations to unforeseen events and additional requests were managed, including through a no-cost extension.

Coherence: The project aligns with global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in Ethiopia and Malawi, promoting gender equality and workers' rights. In countries without DWCPs, it aligns with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). The project complements other ILO initiatives focusing on labour law reform and compliance such as in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania. National efforts in Ethiopia and Malawi on early childhood development and gender-based violence also align with the project's objectives.

Effectiveness: The project is perceived as having achieved its intended outputs and outcomes, though data reporting was incomplete for some indicators. The ILO's self-assessment rated the progress as "highly satisfactory" after year one. Interviewees highlighted the quality and relevance of activities and outputs. Training participants were highly satisfied across several capacity building events, providing examples of how they immediately applied their newly acquired knowledge in practice. Gender equality was a key focus through the project's focus on conventions and policies which aim for gender equality, capacity development, and childcare centres.

Efficiency: The project management and efficiency received mixed reviews from participants. Some saw issues like the absence of a dedicated regional coordinator as hindering delivery, while others considered the centralised management to be an asset for this shorter, pilot like project. The frequent turnover of focal persons within constituents was mentioned as an additional challenge. Irrespective of their viewpoint, interviewees commonly appreciated the teamwork between regional and HQ staff and the flexibility to repurpose resources for other activities. Investment decisions were tailored to situational analyses, supporting demand-driven activities despite budget and time constraints. Monitoring and evaluation tools were only partly effective, with unclear baselines and targets, making it difficult to assess results comprehensively. The project was noted for high output efficiency, delivering many activities and outputs, although it required significant extra effort.

Impact: The project has a solid theoretical foundation, including a context analysis and evidence base, enhancing its potential impact. The project effectively addressed issues like trade union knowledge and participation in ILS supervision and aligned with ILO's gender equality framework. However, assumptions about trade unions' resources and commitment from social partners pose risks for sustainability. Notwithstanding, interviewees reported positive impacts, such as the implementation of violence and harassment policies (Component 1) and improved income opportunities and job retention for women as a result of childcare centres (Component 2).

Sustainability: Assessing sustainability is challenging due to the project's recent completion and diverse contexts. Positive signs include integrating clauses from Conventions into collective bargaining agreements and anti-harassment policies (Component 1) and sustainable childcare centres in Ethiopia (Component 2).

Lessons learned and good practices

One lesson learned from the project is the importance of carefully considering the size and sector of companies to optimise the effectiveness and impact of interventions. Based on preliminary results from Ethiopia, future projects should continue return-on-investment approaches and incorporate economic incentives to motivate private actors to sustain project results. Coupling training activities with practical actions has proven effective, enhancing learning by allowing immediate application of acquired skills. Additionally, providing childcare, a commonly acknowledged good practice, has been beneficial for women's labour market participation in this project.

Recommendations

The report provides the following recommendations:

1. Consider developing a programme-type intervention that goes beyond an individual project.
2. Identify activities that build on the results achieved in the current phase.
3. Revisit the budget allocations for the planned interventions.
4. Leverage and share the project team's extensive knowledge and methodologies.

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned orange & teal to conduct the independent final evaluation of the project "Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa". This report contains the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, responding to the evaluation questions as defined in the inception phase. Aligned with the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the Inception Report,[1] the report is divided into six chapters: Introduction, Objective, Approach, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations. The report's annexes provide additional information, including lessons learned and good practices.

2. Objective

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the project's performance using the OECD DAC criteria[2]. It also identifies lessons learned and good practices and provides recommendations to enhance sustainability and guide future similar interventions. Specifically, the evaluation shall:

- Assess the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN SDGs, and national development frameworks.
- Evaluate the achievement of the project's stated objectives and expected results, identifying supporting factors, constraints, including the implementation modalities.
- Determine the integration and impact of gender equality, disability inclusion, and support for other vulnerable groups at both output and outcome levels.
- Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the project and evaluate the sustainability of the project's results.

The evaluation responds to 17 evaluation questions, focusing on effectiveness and sustainability, as agreed during the evaluation's design phase.

The evaluation covers the implementation period January 2023-June 2024. It focuses on the regional level and the country level interventions in the six selected countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

> **The project in a nutshell**
>
> Funded by the Government of Norway and managed by the ILO Regional Office for Africa with support from ACTRAV and GEDI, this project aims to strengthen the capacities of ILO constituents to protect workers' rights and promote gender equality.
>
> The intended impact is that workers in the six targeted countries will benefit from enhanced protection of their rights, including the right to organise and freedom from violence and harassment at work. Workers with family responsibilities will gain improved equality, maternity protection, and access to childcare leave and services (Project Document, January 2023).

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[1] The Inception Report was approved on 3 July 2024.

[2] Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability.

The project has two components:
- Component 1: focuses on regional capacity development for the ILO International Labour Standards (ILS) system, supporting national ratification campaigns and advocacy for gender equality and violence prevention. Regional trainings aim to equip trade union leaders and members as human rights advocates, enhancing their effectiveness in promoting workers' rights.
- Component 2: focuses on country-level interventions in Ethiopia and Malawi. In Ethiopia, the project aims to improve gender equality in the garment sectors and promote rights for workers with family responsibilities, including maternity protection and childcare solutions. In Malawi, the project seeks to prevent and mitigate workplace violence, particularly gender-based violence, focusing on the agriculture sector.

The project began in January 2023[3] and, following a six-month no-cost extension, concluded in June 2024. More information is available in Annex 1.

3. Approach

In the following, we briefly describe how the evaluation was conducted, including data collection methods and sources of information, to address the evaluation questions that guided our focus (see Annex 2).

We use a mixed methods approach, which comprised document review, data analysis, individual and group interviews. Our approach was informed by the OECD DAC Standards (including the Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, and "Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully" and "Protection of people involved in evaluation" guidelines) as well as ILO's relevant guidance notes and standards.

- **Document review:** We reviewed the documentation shared by the project technical teams, including the Project Document, the project progress and activity reports, as well as selected project outputs.
- **Data review:** The M&E framework as well as the training assessment reports were essential for assessing the project's effectiveness and impact.
- **Interviews**: We conducted 23 semi-structured interviews with project stakeholders, comprising individual interviews and two group discussions, either in person, online, or via phone. Three of these interviews were conducted after the validation workshop to ensure a balanced representation of respondents between Component 1 and 2. Annex 3 lists the persons we consulted for the evaluation.
- **Validation**: An online debriefing workshop on 2 July 2024 and written comments on the draft report provided opportunities for stakeholder participation and feedback.

The evaluation was implemented in accordance with the inception report, with minor deviations. We collected data and information from various sources and perspectives, providing a sound basis for the evaluation. Notwithstanding, some challenges and limitations need to be mentioned:

- Scheduling interviews with key stakeholders was challenging, primarily due to availability issues because of the International Labour Conference in late spring 2024, requiring more resources and delaying the document review for the validation workshop.

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[3] The project was scheduled to start in December 2022 but began in January 2023.

- Interviewees often stated previously reported information, indicating that the evaluation audience share the same level of information about the project.
- The level of triangulation of various data sources was adjusted to match the available time and resources, ensuring a focused and efficient evaluation.

We adhered to ethical guidelines and data security in the following ways:

- Interview participants were provided information on the purpose of the evaluation, their involvement, and their rights, to ensure receiving informed consent.
- Information we obtained was de-identified, and we generally allowed for interviewees to decline to answer questions if they so preferred.
- Recordings, transcripts, memos, and contact information will be deleted six months after completion of the evaluation; recordings were only done based on prior consent.

4. Findings

This chapter contains the findings of the evaluation questions (EQ) as presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2.

3.1. Relevance

In terms of relevance (EQ1-3), we assess the extent to which ILO constituents and other stakeholders were involved in the project's design and implementation, the alignment of the project with the needs and capacities at regional and national levels, and how effectively it adapted to unforeseen external events.

ILO constituents and project stakeholders interviewed generally agreed that the project met their needs well and that they were closely involved in its implementation. Although ILO constituents and other stakeholders were not directly and formally involved in the project's design, their needs and capacities were considered as a result of the regular interactions between the ILO and stakeholders, including unions, employers, and government representatives. Interviews revealed that while formal project designs may not always include extensive stakeholder meetings, this ongoing dialogue provided an informal yet effective needs assessment. Field specialists from ACTRAV and GEDI regularly visit and interact with stakeholders, ensuring the project design reflects actual needs on the ground. This assessment was confirmed during the validation workshop. Additionally, the project document provided a situational analysis for each of the six targeted countries, identifying country-specific priorities in both components. The project built on existing activities and support from constituents.

Frequent pre-project communication with stakeholders and the close involvement of ILO constituents ensured that the project activities were tailored to the specific contexts and capacities of each country. For example, Component 1's scope expanded from six to fifteen countries based on stakeholder needs identified through ongoing interactions of the ILO with its constituents. In Ethiopia, interventions were tailored to the garment industry, while in Malawi, they focused on the tea industry, reflecting continuous feedback about significant gaps and needs.

Additionally, needs assessments were conducted in Ethiopia and Malawi[4] to identify priority activities and support their design. These were customised for different countries, such as addressing gender-based violence in Malawi's tea plantations by focusing on the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and its Recommendation (No. 206) and prioritising maternity protection in Mozambique under the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) due to government support and the need to avoid contentious issues. These examples highlight the project's flexibility and responsiveness to specific national needs, ensuring effective and relevant interventions.

The project adapted to several changes from the initial plans, including the absence of a central coordinator and additional requests from stakeholders. These adjustments are discussed in more detail in the Efficiency section. Additionally, external events[5] were reported as causes of delays. The no-cost extension facilitated an effective response to these delays, ultimately ensuring the project activities' completion.

3.2. Coherence

With regard to coherence (EQ4-5) we discuss the project's alignment with global and national development frameworks and its complementarity and alignment with other government, ILO or UN interventions. The evaluation questions cover many and various frameworks, initiatives and programmes. Given the resources and timeframe available and as agreed during the design stage, we have strategically focused the desk review on a selection of relevant resources.

The project is overall well-aligned with global development frameworks such as the SDGs and the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes, where these were established during the project's lifetime. The Project Document refers to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 8, 10, 13 and 16. Specifically, the alignment with SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) is evident given the focus of the activities on workers' rights and gender equality. The contributions to SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions) are less direct yet still coherent.[6] However, the project did not include activities which would fall under the scope of SDG 13 (Climate change), which is no longer referenced in the one-year progress report.[7]

DWCPs were established in Malawi and Ethiopia when the project was designed (Table 1). Malawi's programme ended in 2023 and promoted training social partners in collective

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[4] In Ethiopia, needs assessments were conducted at the workplace level with individual workers, workers' representatives, and employers' representatives to inform the implementation of the Care@Work solutions. In Malawi, the needs assessment was conducted with the government, workers' representatives, and employers' representatives to identify their needs.

[5] External and unforeseen events identified in the project reports and by interviewees included Cyclone Freddy, which hit Malawi and caused delays, and political instability in Ethiopia, where regional conflicts hindered the pace of priority factory assessments for tripartite constituents and required to focus on companies in Addis Abeba. Interviewees noted that the country's security problems meant that the government's attention was directed to containing these issues, deprioritising labour rights and ratification processes.

[6] Examples of SDG targets to which the project activities could particularly contribute are: 5.2 – Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; 8.8 – Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment; 10.2 – By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status; 16.7 – Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

[7] Progress Report 1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023. Promoting Workers Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa Project Code (RAF/22/11/NOR), 01 March 2024.

bargaining, educating constituents on gender equality, women's leadership, and men's roles, and implementing gender-responsive strategic plans for employers' and workers' organisations. In Ethiopia, the 2021-2025 DWCP aims to ensure the enjoyment of fundamental principles and rights at work, enhance the capabilities of employers' and workers' organisations to influence policymaking and engage in inclusive dialogues, ratify and effectively supervise international labour standards, and improve occupational safety and health in workplaces along with the labour inspection system.

Table 1: Alignment with DWCP outcomes and outputs

Country	Years	Aligned DWCP outcomes and outputs (selection)
Malawi	2020-2023	• Social partners trained in collective bargaining • Constituents trained in gender equality, women's leadership, men's roles • Gender-responsive strategic plans for employers' and workers' organisations implemented
Ethiopia	2021-2025	• Enjoyment of fundamental principles and rights at work • Enhanced capabilities of employers and workers organisations to influence policymaking and engage in inclusive dialogues • Ratification and effective supervision of international labour standards. • Improved occupational safety and health in workplaces, and labour inspection system

In the absence of up-to-date Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda, we assessed the alignment of the project with these countries' United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Our findings indicate that, in general, the project is broadly aligned with the UNSDCFs. The UNSDCFs for these countries include outcomes or outputs related to gender equality and the enhanced participation of women and youth. Additionally, they address the strengthening of institutions and the empowerment of individuals to claim their rights and participate in decision-making processes. Indeed, while the UNSDCFs do not specifically focus on workers' rights, these frameworks do address access to human rights for the entire population, including workers.

We have found that the project is complementary to other current or past ILO-supported initiatives in several of the countries under scope. For instance, in Ghana, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR) initiated a review of labour laws in 2020, leading to the development of the Labour Law 2024.[8] This law aims to enhance fairness in the workplace, promote worker empowerment and protection, and ensure decent work conditions and fair wages. The Trades Union Congress in Ghana, involved in the review, made proposals and supported efforts by other labour groups to incorporate the provisions of Convention No. 190 into the new legislation. In Tanzania, a previous ILO project already focused on reviewing and developing laws and regulations to align with international standards and ensuring compliance. ILO's support included increasing public awareness of labour laws, enhancing the capacity of labour institutions, and strengthening the framework for compliance through tripartite dialogue.[9]

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[8] https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/president-republic-ghana-reaffirms-his-commitment-passing-new-labour-act

[9] See source under this link.

In Ethiopia, the project is also aligned with Better Work, which focuses on the compliance with labour law of the garment and textile industry.[10]

In the two countries covered by Component 2, we have found that national and local government initiatives are underway to enhance equality at work and combat gender-based violence, aligning with and complementing the ILO project on workers' rights and gender equality. The Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019 introduced several improvements to care policies, including a three day paternity leave. This change provided a foundation for the project's efforts for capacity building in care-related international labour standards. Locally, the Addis Ababa City Government, in collaboration with the federal government, has launched an Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme to address the shortage of public childcare services for children under six.[11] This initiative aims to benefit over 1.3 million children by 2026, particularly from low-income households, through the establishment of ECD centres and community engagement. Additionally, Ethiopia's National Early Childhood Development and Education Policy Framework 2022/23 mandates the establishment of childcare centres in government offices and ensures adequate funding from government, private, and international sources for early childhood development sectors.[12] In a similar vein, Malawi's National Gender Policy and the National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence (NPA) aims at providing an approach to ending violence against men, women, and children. The NPA outlines five priority areas, including prevention, early referral, effective response, coordination, and sustainable financing, alongside research and data collection.[13] The Malawi Public Service Workplace Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, published in 2023, is another example. This policy provides a framework for preventing, reporting, and addressing sexual harassment in public service workplaces, aiming to promote a safe and respectful work environment. Furthermore, interviewees noted that the Government of Malawi's request to conduct a Legal Gap Analysis of Malawi's laws concerning Convention 190 is also evidence of the project's alignment with government interests.

3.3. Effectiveness

This section discusses the project's effectiveness (EQ6-11), focusing on the progress towards achieving the intended outcomes and outputs, including regarding gender equality, and the factors contributing and hindering effectiveness.[14]

The project reports several achieved outcomes and outputs, but data for many logframe indicators remain unreported in the project's progress reports. For the reported outputs and outcomes, assessing the level of achievement is difficult since the logframe is only partially operationalised. Most indicators at output and outcome level lack baselines, targets, and achievement values, as detailed in Table 2. The limited data availability can be attributed to several factors, including the need for data inputs from workers' unions and the dispersion of information across various project reports rather than being centrally documented, resulting in their non-reporting at this time.

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[10] See for instance Outcome 3: by 2027, the garment and textile industry benefit from improved industrial relations, collective bargaining and minimum wage policy. https://betterwork.org/ethiopia/

[11] See source under this link.

[12] See source under this link.

[13] See source under this link.

[14] To keep the report succinct and cover all evaluation questions as required by the ILO, we discuss the Theory of Change (EQ6) along with EQ15 in the impact section.

Table 2: M&E framework indicators (logframe)

Indicator	Target	Achievement / comment
Outcome 1: Workers' organisations advocate for national ratification and application of ILS and use the ILO supervisory mechanisms to ensure compliance		
# submissions / comments provided by trade unions	at least 6 submissions / comments	13 countries made submissions; # of submissions / comments not reported in M&E
# pre-reporting tripartite consultations requested by trade unions	n/a	no data available in reports
# pre-reporting tripartite consultations requested by governments (C144)	n/a	no data available in reports
# of advocacy activities initiated and implemented by trade unions	at least 6 national processes for ratification	# of advocacy activities not reported in M&E
Output 1.1: knowledge and tools to claim workers' rights		
# of trade union officials who completed training on supervisory mechanism	n/a	Delivery of regional training in Nairobi from 1-7 July 2023; 27 participants from 14 countries
Output 1.2: ratification campaigns		
# of campaign activities organised with the support of the ILO	n/a	Campaigns implemented in 6 countries; # of activities not reported in M&E
Output 1.3: knowledge & tools for youth trade unionists		
# of trade union officials who completed training on C190, 183, 156	n/a	Delivery of regional training in Johannesburg from 4-8 September 2023, 19 participants from 12 countries[15]
Outcome 2: Tripartite constituents and sector-level affiliate organisations implement measures to enhance gender equality in targeted sectors		
# measures to enhance gender equality implemented in target sectors reported to the ILO	Ethiopia: 4 factories to implement care leave policies and services, incl. upscaling and sustainability plans	4 companies received training; 2 factories received childcare centres and a 3rd one received daycare supplies. HR manuals of different companies were reviewed and comments on their care policies were provided;
	Malawi: process to ratify C190 initiated	Adoption of a legal gap analysis on C190, a pre-requisite to the ratification of C190 by Malawi. Other reported measures include revision of Labour Inspection Data Collection Tool
Output 2.1: Equality@Work initiatives designed and piloted		
# workers serviced through pilot packages	n/a	50 workers (women whose children attend childcare centres) (Ethiopia)

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[15] Participants from Ghana could not attend due to visa issues.

# workplaces that offer concrete solutions to workers with family responsibilities	n/a	3 pilot care solutions (Ethiopia)
Output 2.2: strengthened capacity of workers' and employers' organisations on Equality@Work initiatives		
# knowledge sharing sessions organized with employers and workers	n/a	>9 trainings, workshops, and similar (see Table 3); no conclusive data reported in M&E
# upscaling plans formulated jointly between employers and workers with the support of the ILO	n/a	HR manuals of different companies were reviewed and comments on their care policies were provided
Output 2.3: knowledge & tools for government officials		
# of government officials trained, including labour inspectors	n/a	14 officials trained on care policy in Ethiopia; 40 and 69 labour inspectors trained in Ethiopia and Malawi respectively

Note: The table above is a simplified version of the project's M&E framework;

ILO's self-assessment scores the level of results achievement favourably, and the majority of the interviewed constituents share this view. As of December 2023, the ILO reported that over 80% of outputs and indicator milestones for Component 1 were on track, and for Component 2, 60-80%.[16] These values correspond to a "highly satisfactory" overall delivery assessment. Based on this assessment, the ILO concluded that achieving project outcomes for both components is probable, noting that a longer time horizon is needed to fully assess impacts. This self-assessment aligns with feedback from interviewees, who highlighted the quality of activities, services, and products provided, as well as the dedication of ILO staff and implementers. They noted that the project implemented a high number of activities and produced various pertinent outputs in a short period, commending the project team's efforts. They also noted that selected outputs exceeded initial targets, including the number of submissions under the ILS supervisory mechanism and the furnishing of childcare centres in Ethiopia.

The various products developed in the project include, but are not limited to:

- In Ethiopia: an ILO research brief "Promoting Care at Work in Ethiopia. The availability and adequacy of care policies in the garment sector"; a training manual for trainers involved in awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy for workplace care policy packages: "Care at Work in Ethiopia's Garment Sector: A Training Manual for Advancing the Rights of Workers with Family Responsibilities"; and a video presenting the childcare centres and testimonies of beneficiaries.

- In Malawi: a gender and anti-sexual harassment policy for the Malawi Congress of Trade Union (MCTU); a national model policy against violence and harassment in the workplace; a national code of conduct on harassment and violence in the workplace; a training manual on prevention of workplace violence and harassment; and a revised labour inspection form, which contains questions on occupational health and safety and violence and harassment.

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[16] At the time of reporting, preliminary information suggests that the delivery rate reached 80%, reflecting progress made after December 2023. The final assessment will be provided in the final project report, expected in September 2024.

Participants' satisfaction with the project's various trainings is high, as indicated by course evaluation forms and confirmed in interviews. Evaluation results for the two regional training programmes in Component 1 show that 95% of participants rated the overall quality, job relevance, and organisational relevance positively for the first training. For the second training, 94% rated the overall quality positively, 100% found it relevant to their jobs, and 88% found it relevant to their organisation's needs.[17] When asked about their satisfaction with the overall quality of the training, participants scored the first training at 4.65 and the second at 4.59, both exceeding ILO's benchmark of 4.52. Areas that were rated less positively included the adequacy of information provided beforehand, with 76% and 53% positive responses respectively, and logistics of the events, with 85% and 88% positive responses respectively. This includes providing all slide sets and panel discussions also in languages other than English.

Participants shared several tangible benefits and examples of how they applied the knowledge acquired from the training shortly after its completion. This feedback indicates the training's relevance, effectiveness, and practicality. Examples that the interviewees shared include dissemination of the knowledge gained to other trade union members and affiliates, utilisation in developing and implementing action plans for campaigns and other engagements with government officials and employers, development of organisational policies such as the gender equality and anti-harassment policies of the unions in Ghana and Malawi, or provision of comments to legislative and policy proposals as part of regular consultation processes. In Malawi, for instance, one interviewee highlighted the importance of training to prepare for the negotiations to renew collective bargaining agreements with pertinent provisions on gender equality or on violence and harassment, while another respondent highlighted applying the knowledge and skills gained from the ILO training during the International Labour Conference (ILC).

Gender equality has been integrated into the project's design, consistent with its focus. This is evident in the project's direct focus on women and young trade unionists in training activities and equality at work initiatives.[18] These initiatives specifically target young and female trade unionists, as well as women workers of reproductive age. For instance, female participation in the two regional trainings under Component 1 held in Kenya and Johannesburg were at 48% and 74%, respectively.[19] Additionally, the project concentrated on feminised sectors such as garment and textile in Ethiopia and agriculture in Malawi. The project activities aimed to promote the ratification of key ILO Conventions, all of which emphasise gender equality at work.[20] Interviews revealed that gender equality was mainstreamed throughout project delivery, with significant participation from women in both project implementation and activities, including training as shown in Table 3 and company selection.

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[17] These percentages refer to the ratio of participants who provided a score of 4 or 5 for the respective evaluation dimension.

[18] This comprises the Care@Work, GBVH@Work, and Voice@Work initiatives, which we briefly summarise: Care@Work: Enhances care policies, focusing on maternity protection, SRHR, childcare, disabilities, and HIV/AIDS. GBVH@Work: Implements policies and training to prevent and address workplace gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).Voice@Work: Promotes women's participation in social dialogue and negotiations by removing barriers and providing support.

[19] While each trade union organisation selects its own training participants, the ILO encouraged them in the invitation letters to nominate young unionists and women for the event in Johannesburg.

[20] Including the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and its Recommendation (No. 206), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

Table 3: Women participation in selected capacity building events

Comp	Topic of Training	Participants	Women	Ratio
1	Strengthening Active Participation of Trade Unions in Africa in the ILO Supervisory Mechanism (Kenya)	27	13	48%
1	Trade union actions to advance decent work for women and youth (South Africa)	19	14	74%
2	Maternity Protection (Mozambique)	36	17	47%
2	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (Ethiopia)	65	52	80%
2	Factory-level awareness raising sessions (Ethiopia)	151	80	53%
2	Promoting Effective Maternity Protection and Care Policies (Ethiopia)	21	12	57%
2	Capacity building of labour inspectors on gender responsive labour inspection (Ethiopia)	40	18	45%
2	Collective Bargaining Agreement Training (Ethiopia)	68	24	35%
2	Violence and sexual harassment training (Malawi)	30	8	27%
2	Labour inspectors and OSH officers training on gender equality, violence, and harassment, and gender-responsive labour inspection (Malawi)	69	21	30%
2	Sensitisation of agricultural workers on prevention of gender-based violence, including in Thyolo and Mulanje districts (Malawi)	2300	1600	70%

Source: Project reports and ILO staff feedback.

Spotlight: Voices from private sector representatives

In Ethiopia, the project collaborated with four garment and textile companies, selected from a pool of 12 that underwent a "factory assessment" to design relevant care solutions. These companies, located in various parts of Addis Ababa, have staff sizes ranging from 50 to 600 workers, most of whom are women. Interviews with representatives from these companies highlighted their experiences regarding the project's outcomes, challenges, and sustainability. The following is a concise summary of key findings:

Results

Interview participants shared that the project activities have yielded several positive outcomes, including:

- Training on workers' rights and sexual and reproductive health, which equipped workers with knowledge and skills benefiting both their professional and personal lives.
- Significant reductions in staff turnover, especially among female workers, in companies with new childcare centres, which has notably boosted productivity.
- Childcare centres providing clean, well-ventilated, and developmentally supportive environments, intended to enhance the well-being of children from low-income backgrounds.

Challenges

Interview participants shared the following challenges:

- The short implementation period was seen as a constraint, limiting efficiency and impact.
- Limited resources were a common issue. One company representative suggested that direct budget provision by ILO to the company, rather than through Partnership for Change, the implementing partner, could have optimised resource use.
- Three company representatives stated that they lacked information on the resources allocated for the childcare centres and how those resources were utilised.
- Delays due to additional construction needs and logistical coordination were reported by one company representative.

The project contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women and young unionists. We learned from our interview with government stakeholders, ILO constituents, and private sector representatives that the project empowered women and youth especially, and people with disabilities to a lesser extent, through capacity development, specifically on issues such as maternity protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); collective bargaining and women's representation within collective bargaining agreements negotiations; and international and national legal frameworks on workers' rights. In addition, the establishment of childcare centres in two textile factories in Ethiopia was commended as contributing to the productivity and general well-being of women working in factories. Efforts to ensure disability inclusion included positive conditionality, requiring mechanical accessibility for participants needing it in all project activities. Additionally, the constituents were encouraged to nominate persons with disabilities for project activities, aimed at contributing to their empowerment.

Spotlight on disability inclusive training

The overall focus on disability was limited both in the project design and in its implementation. While the project was not targeting persons with disabilities – the Project Document, outlining the project's background, purpose, and objectives, rarely mentions disability – the project did ensure that disability inclusion was considered in its activities to some extent.

Interviews and progress reports specifically mentioned a disability-focused training at Hagere Tibeb Maderaja company, a semi-public entity in Ethiopia, on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and worker's rights. The company's workforce has a high percentage of persons with disabilities, including persons who are deaf or blind. This necessitated adaptations to the training methods.

The implementers searched for sign language translators and created illustrations to ensure that the training materials were accessible to everyone. Additionally, narrators were brought in to describe video content for blind participants. Recognising the needs of the company's workers, additional training sessions were organised so that all workers could benefit from the training on care at work.

Interview participants noted that this training was much needed and provided an otherwise inaccessible opportunity for workers with disabilities. The example also highlights the importance of inclusivity and adaptability in training programs.

3.4. Efficiency

In this section, we examine efficiency (EQ12-14) by assessing the project's monitoring and evaluation strategy and its impact on accountability, management, and learning. We also discuss the strategic allocation and utilisation of resources, and the efficiency of the project's implementation mechanisms in achieving its objectives.

Project management and efficiency received mixed reviews in the interviews. Some participants perceived certain issues as enhancing efficiency, while others saw them as undermining it. The lack of a dedicated project (regional) coordinator exemplifies the mixed feedback. Some respondents felt that the reliance on centralised project management at HQ, which resulted from the absence of a dedicated staff based at the regional office, negatively impacted the delivery, resulting in delays and less efficient decision-making and follow-up, which required significant efforts from all involved parties. Conversely, others observed that RO and HQ staff managed to work seamlessly together, demonstrating effective teamwork and collaboration across different offices. For some interviewees, the intervention from headquarters even accelerated problem-solving, countering the delays caused by the absence of a regional coordinator and the challenges posed by a project involving various parties. Additionally, the frequent turnover of focal persons within constituents created challenges, disrupting project continuity, and requiring extra effort from the project management team to ensure new individuals were fully briefed. The resources that were not allocated for the project (regional) coordinator could be repurposed for other activities, thereby enhancing the project's overall efficiency. Overall, the individuals we interviewed appreciated the project management, which was characterised by flexibility and adaptation. Several of them also highlighted the dedication demonstrated by the various stakeholders involved.

Investment decisions were broadly based on the situational analysis provided in the project document, which allowed for tailored approaches, as exemplified by the varying priorities for ratification campaigns across different countries. The project also built on existing activities and support from constituents and initial consultations ensured the project's activities were demand-driven and relevant, despite budget and time constraints. Other examples of strategic investment included supporting additional requests by the constituents, which could partly be financed from resources that were initially planned to be spent for the project (regional) coordinator. These unplanned activities on the one hand led to increased management costs, but on the other hand reflected the project's responsiveness to adapt and remain relevant and responsive to on-the-ground needs. The non-cost extension enabled the completion of the affected project components.

The project's monitoring and evaluation tools are only partly effective in guiding and measuring change. As discussed above, the main M&E tool is the project's logframe. Key elements such as baselines, achievement levels, and target values for outcomes and impacts are only partially defined, making it more difficult to assess the project's results. At this point, it is not possible to conclusively assess the project's results based on the indicators mentioned in the logframe. Notwithstanding, it is evident that there has been extensive reporting on project activities and outputs, as well as tools to gauge the project's results (e.g., training outcomes), as reported in the effectiveness section.

The project exhibited high output efficiency. In our interviews, participants generally refrained from commenting on resource efficiency due to unclear information regarding the project's detailed allocated resources. However, several of them stated that the project delivered a high number of activities and produced many outputs, suggesting high efficiency. At the same time, several interviewees estimated that the extra effort they provided to the project was in the range of 20-30% above budgets. This effort was done by late hour work sessions and work during weekends, as well as identifying best value for money service providers and suppliers. While the project demonstrated high output efficiency and adaptability, areas for improvement mentioned by the interviewees included faster decision-making processes and providing more detailed information on the costs of project outputs.

3.5. Impact

This section discusses how likely it is that the project contributes to impact, focusing on the project's Theory of Change (ToC).[21] We use our own reflections on the project's ToC and interviewee perceptions to respond to the evaluation question (EQ15).

The ToC builds on a solid theoretical foundation, ensuring the project is well-founded. Our assessment focuses on three key elements of the ToC: context analysis, evidence base, and assumptions. As previously mentioned, the situational analysis enabled the project to adapt its design to specific circumstances, which enhances its potential to create impact. While the ToC is only partially explained, as shown in the visualisation in Figure 1, the Project Document highlights foundational problems such as insufficient trade union knowledge of ILS, their lack of participation in supervising ratified ILS, and trade union representatives lacking the tools to fully engage. While not mentioning it per se, the ToC builds on ILO's experience and evidence. Similarly, the activities focusing on improving gender equality are explained and aligned with ILO's ToC for gender equality,[22] which itself is informed by collected evidence. Another important aspect to consider are the underlying assumptions of the project. The project's main assumptions are that active participation of workers' organisations in the supervisory mechanisms will lead to enhanced ILO compliance (Component 1) and successful pilots will strengthen interest in replicating and scaling equality measures (Component 2). Both these outcomes would then contribute to creating the desired impact.

Figure 1: Project Theory of Change
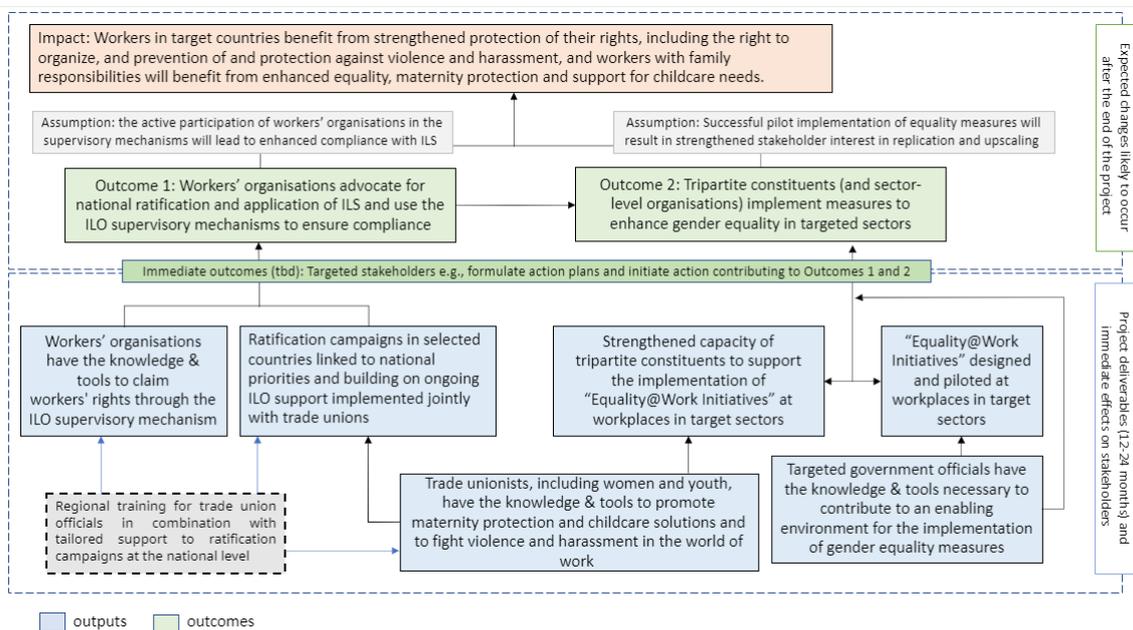
Source: Project Document, January 2023

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[21] The project's impact statement reads: "Workers in target countries will benefit from strengthened protection of their rights, including the right to organize and to be free from violence and harassment at work. Workers with family responsibilities will benefit from enhanced equality, maternity protection, childcare leave and services."

[22] Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work, ILO, September 2022.

The question arises whether working on realising these two assumptions is enough and if other assumptions hold true. One explicit assumption in the logframe for Output 1.2 is that "Trade unions have the resources required in terms of staff and funds to invest in ratification campaigns with the primarily technical support of the ILO." However, interviews revealed that workers' organisations face persistent resource constraints, often limiting their activities to statutory obligations and requiring ongoing external support for additional efforts like campaigning. This assumption is therefore at risk and could undermine impact. Similarly, Output 2.2 assumes "Social partners are committed to implementing relevant international labour standards," and Output 2.3 assumes "Political will and commitment to international labour standards and other gender-related international commitments, as well as supportive social norms for gender equality in the workplace." In practice, support from employers and governments might be questionable, at least for some commitments or social norms and some contexts. In these instances, the project would have to address how to proceed if social partners are not committed and how to handle this lack of commitment. While it is acknowledged that all these aspects cannot be addressed by a single project, considered to be a pilot, thinking the ToC more broadly could be helpful when designing a more comprehensive follow-up project.[23]

Irrespective, most of the interviewees believe that the project has already positively impacted organisational practices as well as regulatory frameworks.

- Under Component 1, interviewees mentioned that workers' organisations implemented violence and harassment policies inspired by and aligned with relevant Conventions and that specific regulations in Conventions entered into collective bargaining agreements, making them legally binding for the respective contractual parties.[24]
- Under Component 2, the effects most often cited were improved income opportunities for women who were able to return (and stay) in their jobs as their children are being cared for in childcare centres. In this context they also highlighted potential longer-term well-being and development benefits for children, who are cared for in a developmentally friendly environment, adhering to accepted standards (Ethiopia, Component 2). Conversely, as further explained in the spotlight, employers have stated that they experienced productivity gains as they have to invest less into training new recruits because there has been fewer fluctuations, already in the short period of time the childcare centres are operating. In Malawi, the cited effects include an increase in the number of violence and harassment cases being reported, as well as a rise in the number of people joining unions.

3.6. Sustainability

In this chapter we assess the extent to which the project outcomes have been achieved sustainably, enabling continuing benefits to target groups beyond the project's lifespan. Furthermore, we discuss the project's exit strategy, and the measures that should be incorporated into similar future projects to increase the sustainability of results (EQ 16-18).

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[23] Questions that emerge in this context include: What are the underlying assumptions for the causal chain from activities to impact to work? Are these assumptions sufficient? Do all assumptions hold true for impact to be feasible? What underlying assumptions are at risk to hold true? How can at risk assumptions be supported in a way that they do not realise in practice?

[24] In Ghana, at least three companies or organisations were mentioned in interviews to have recently added clauses in their collective bargaining agreements inspired by Convention No. 190.

Assessing the sustainability of the project outcomes is challenging at this stage due to varying levels of results and the diverse contexts in which the project was implemented. Since the project was completed just a few weeks ago, it is generally too early to assess the sustainability of the achieved results. Furthermore, many of the project's topics should be considered ongoing processes that require continuous optimisation and attention to ensure long-term sustainability. Notwithstanding these limitations, there are promising indications of sustainability in both components.

- Regarding Component 1, for instance, the integration of specific clauses from relevant Conventions into collective bargaining agreements indicates a strategic approach to embedding sustainability within existing frameworks, even without formal ratification of the Convention(s). Additionally, several trade unions have reported the integration of anti-violence and harassment policies within their own organisations, suggesting sustainability.
- In Component 2, the assessments differs by country. In Malawi, the integration of the project's initiatives with other activities and plans is a positive step towards sustainability, although many respondents view the project as having laid only the initial groundwork. In Ethiopia, the implementation of childcare centres based on business and return on investment considerations suggests a sustainable model where businesses are motivated to maintain these centres.

The findings regarding the continuation of campaigning activities even after the end of the project are mixed. Some interviewees provided examples for continued activities (e.g., radio and television talk shows in Ethiopia, promotional video in Mozambique), demonstrating that the campaigns can continue based on the momentum and capacity built during the period. Several others state that resource constraints will bring campaigning to a halt, noting that financial support to workers' organisations is essential for activities/actions that would otherwise not be funded. Other factors that affect sustainability are the limited scale of the project. A case in point is that, in several of the project countries, activities could only be implemented with a select group of participants or locations or regions, leaving gaps in coverage that can undermine sustainability. External factors must also be considered, such as the recent situation where one of the companies involved in the project's capacity-building efforts was demolished and is currently no longer operational.

Regarding an exit strategy, we found that it was not formulated. This was confirmed in discussions and during the validation workshop. The reason was that the initiative was seen as a pilot with limited scope and duration, making a dedicated exit strategy unnecessary – a reasonable and pragmatic choice.

3.7. Lessons learned and good practice

In this section we summarise lessons learned and good practices that can be drawn from the project implementation, complementing the ones identified by the project.[25] More information is provided for three of them in Annex 4 and Annex 5, using ILO's templates for lessons learned and emerging good practice.

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[25] These lessons learned are documented, for instance, in the 2023 annual report, focusing on issues related to context and implementation environment, project strategy and design, advocacy and communication, and capacity building.

- Making the business case for Care@Work and the provision of childcare centres was essential for single business owners to engage and commit to investments. This business case could be further strengthened.
- Engaging with small- and medium-sized firms in Ethiopia proved more effective than with large companies. While large companies may have a strong signalling effect, it could also result in a mere windfall effect.
- Balancing stakeholder requests with the original plans is essential. While positive for stakeholder engagement, it can cause delays and require extra time and resources from implementers.
- Coupling training and mentorship with activities/actions on the ILS and its supervisory mechanisms enhanced the learning process by allowing immediate application of learned skills for promoting and defending workers' rights.
- Generally, many ILO good practices highlight the provision of childcare for children as beneficial for women's labour market participation.

5. Conclusions

"Promoting workers' rights and gender equality at work in Africa" was a short pilot project, which was perceived as successful by the involved stakeholders, including the ILO constituents, the donor, and ILO staff. It was found to be relevant to the needs of constituents and countries, aligning well with global development frameworks, national policies, and other ILO projects. Despite mixed views from interview respondents on efficiency, the project and the teams involved demonstrated adaptability, which contributed to its effectiveness. The quality and relevance of the activities were highlighted, and participant satisfaction with the various capacity building activities was high.

However, the short duration of the pilot presents challenges in assessing its impact and sustainability. While there are promising signs and tangible positive results – such as the implementation of violence and harassment policies under Component 1, and improved income opportunities and job retention for women thanks to childcare centres under Component 2 – the full impact and sustainability of these initiatives remain to be seen.

Given the strong support and interest from all stakeholders in continuing the project, the conclusion is that the groundwork has been effectively laid for a second phase to scale activities. The foundation established by this pilot provides a solid basis for future projects.

6. Recommendations

This chapter presents recommendations that are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, including the feedback received from the project stakeholders during the validation

process.[26] In formulating the recommendations, we were guided by the following considerations and assumptions:

- The project was often referred to as a test or pilot initiative, aiming to explore feasible support avenues, signalling the interest to continue the project in a second phase.
- There is an acknowledgement that outcomes and impacts need more time and resources to materialise, warranting additional resources for scaling and expansion.
- Stakeholders prefer a larger-scale, adaptive, and flexible facility that allows for adjustments, causing less administrative overhead.
- Despite the upcoming changes in responsibilities from Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to NORAD, continued project support is feasible and administratively viable.

The recommendations comprise operational and strategic aspects, with a focus on practicality and actionability. The recommendations are thus intended for implementation in the short and medium term and are addressed to the ILO and the Government of Norway.

Recommendation 1: Consider developing a programme-type intervention that goes beyond an individual project.

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
Donor	High	High	Medium-term

Note: Resources: High includes funding arrangement. Timing: Short term up to 6 months, Medium-term up to 18 months, Long-term more than 18 months.

The project was considered a pilot for many of the involved stakeholders, allowing to explore and test promising and feasible interventions. Going forward, we recommend developing a broader and more integrated intervention that addresses pertinent decent work and equality issues, including the ones addressed in this project. A more comprehensive programme should provide enough room to implement activities and produce outputs flexibly to address emerging needs and reap opportunities that arise during implementation.[27]

This recommendation is mainly directed to the Government of Norway, which expressed interest to continue funding a new intervention, although there may be an interruption. The feasibility of this recommendation depends on several factors, including the willingness of all partners to collaborate and how much funding is available for a continued engagement. Considering that clearing the administrative steps to ensure timely agreement may take some time, we believe it is important to initiate preparatory steps well in advance. The upcoming transfer of implementation responsibility to NORARD could be a good opportunity to clarify the potential feasibility and interest of a new project.

Possible actions: For the ILO, consider developing a programme theory of change in consultation with constituents and project partners as the basis of a new project, reflecting various contextual factors which may impede workers' rights. This would allow for a more flexible and comprehensive approach to creating sustainable impact. For the donor, activities to consider are

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[26] Project stakeholders participated in the validation process through an online meeting and by providing written feedback on the draft report.

[27] One evaluation question asked whether the project has an exit strategy. If an exit strategy is needed or considered valuable, it will be essential to define the criteria, stages, or circumstances for shifting focus or ending the intervention.

to engage in a dialogue with the ILO upon transfer to NORAD to clarify expectations and resources and to start identifying which elements of the ToC would be supported.

Recommendation 2: Identify activities that build on the results achieved in the current phase.

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO	High	Medium	Medium-term

Note: Resources: High includes funding arrangement. Timing: Short term up to 6 months, Medium-term up to 18 months, Long-term more than 18 months.

The project effectively implemented various activities and developed a range of outputs as detailed in the findings section. However, time and resources were limited to address all identified needs and the project had to focus on a limited number of staff for capacity building, locations, and regions. Moving forward, we recommend any new project to build on the results achieved and address gaps identified in this phase to "complete" the interventions. Designing activities to sustain and scale the achieved results should be a priority.

Possible actions: Based on a revised and comprehensive ToC, identify the interventions that are needed, while leveraging the methodologies, outputs, learnings, and good practices identified during the current project in the involved countries. Consistent with the One ILO approach – a strategy for strengthening internal coordination and collaboration – ILO staff in country units could play an important role in this regard, closely working with headquarters to ensure an integrated and coherent approach

Recommendation 3: Revisit the budget allocations for the planned interventions.

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO	Medium	Low	Medium-term

Note: Resources: High includes funding arrangement. Timing: Short term up to 6 months, Medium-term up to 18 months, Long-term more than 18 months.

Interviewee feedback indicated that budget allocations were tight, requiring extra effort and workarounds to meet expectations and quality standards. We thus recommend exploring measures to ensure more accurate budget allocations to avoid underfunding. Future projects could, for instance, include reserved budgets for adjustments, reducing the need for extensive administrative processes and providing greater flexibility to address unforeseen needs.

Possible actions: This recommendation comprises activities such as conducting an ex-post costing of the various activities and developing benchmarks for future, similar type activities. The recommendation is addressed to ILO staff involved in the design of a new intervention.

Recommendation 4: Leverage and share the project team's extensive knowledge and methodologies.

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO	Medium	Low	Short-term

Note: Resources: High includes funding arrangement. Timing: Short term up to 6 months, Medium-term up to 18 months, Long-term more than 18 months.

The team has developed valuable outputs, including studies, guidelines, and checklists, which could benefit ongoing ILO-implemented projects in the target countries, such as Better Work, SCORE, or Siraye in Ethiopia, the ACT/EMP-ACTRAV Joint Programme in Tanzania, or ACCEL Africa in Uganda. These tools and instruments could provide guidance or serve as inputs for these projects while a follow-up phase is being designed.

Possible actions: This recommendation involves identifying and sharing the resources with the projects for which they would be relevant. It could also include continued communication and dissemination efforts, including to pan-African organisations such as the Africa Union or the African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation. ILO staff in country offices in particular could play an important role in this regard, to the extent feasible with their work loads.

Table 4: Summary of recommendations

Number	Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
1	Donor	High	High	Medium-term
2	ILO	High	Medium	Medium-term
3	ILO	Medium	Low	Medium-term
4	ILO	Medium	Low	Short-term

Note: Resources: High includes funding arrangement. Timing: Short term up to 6 months, Medium-term up to 18 months, Long-term more than 18 months.

In addition to these main recommendations, we would also like to present **ideas** and **suggestions** that were mentioned from different participants.

- Participants recommended conducting additional research, studies, or analysis to strengthen the arguments of workers' organisations in the ratification process. This research could include data on the number and characteristics of workers, the benefits they could gain from ratification, and the estimated costs and benefits for governments and employers to implement the measures outlined in the conventions.

- With regard to the equality at work interventions, some participants recommended to broaden the toolbox to support and incentivise employers to invest into measures. This could include providing specific tax deductions for employers or exploring opportunities to pool funding from several companies to invest into childcare day centres, to ease the investment and maintenance costs.

- The company representatives interviewed in Ethiopia (Component 2) mentioned several areas for improvement, including to better inform on the resources that were allocated for the childcare centres and how those resources were utilised. This information would be helpful to better understand the investment case for childcare centres and how feasible it would be to build up such facilities with own resources.

- Three workers' organisation representatives recommended integrating project activities more closely into the annual plans of central and affiliate unions to enhance the sustainability of the interventions.

- One respondent viewed that national-level training might be more effective than regional training, because national training allows for direct engagement with local leaders and

technical personnel, ensuring that the training is more relevant and immediately applicable to the specific context of the country. This would be particularly important in contexts in which workers and workers' organisations face pressing challenges.

- One interviewee suggested that developing the training material in local languages (additional to national languages) would be helpful in disseminating information.

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Annex 1: Project overview

Table 5: Project overview

Title	Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa
Budget	USD 1'000'260
Duration	January 2023 – June 2024[28]
Donor	Government of Norway – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Responsible ILO unit	Regional Office for Africa (ROAF)
Technical ILO units	Bureau for Workers` Activities (ACTRAV) Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion Branch (GEDI)
Description	Funded by the Government of Norway and managed by the ILO Regional Office for Africa with support from ACTRAV and GEDI, this project aims to strengthen the capacities of ILO constituents to protect workers' rights and promote gender equality.
Impact	Workers in target countries will benefit from strengthened protection of their rights, including the right to organise and to be free from violence and harassment at work. Workers with family responsibilities will benefit from enhanced equality, maternity protection, childcare leave and services.
Outcomes	The project implements two main components: • Component 1: focuses on regional capacity development for the ILO International Labour Standards (ILS) system, supporting national ratification campaigns and advocacy for gender equality and violence prevention. Regional trainings aim to equip trade union leaders and members as human rights advocates, enhancing their effectiveness in promoting workers' rights. • Component 2: focuses on country-level interventions in Ethiopia and Malawi. In Ethiopia, the project aims to improve gender equality in the garment sectors and promote rights for workers with family responsibilities, including maternity protection and childcare solutions. In Malawi, the project seeks to prevent and mitigate workplace violence, particularly gender-based violence, focusing on the agriculture sector.
Theory of Change	The project's theory of change involves two components: • Regional focus: Enhance capacity on the ILO ILS system, support national ratification campaigns, and promote gender equality in six countries. It aims to prevent workplace violence and harassment, empower trade union leaders, and strengthen workers' rights. • Country-level focus: In Malawi and Ethiopia, improve gender equality in agriculture and garment sectors, prevent gender-based workplace violence, and promote workers' rights, including maternity protection and childcare.

Sources: Adapted content from ToR, Project Document 2020, Progress Report 2023

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[28] The project was scheduled to start in December 2022 but began in January 2023.

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

In the evaluation matrix, we added probes to each evaluation question. The focus of the evaluation will be on the lead question, the probes will merely provide a lens or direction for inquiry. The probes will therefore not be answered in the evaluation report.

Evaluation questions and probes	Docs	Data	Int.	Assessment
Relevance				
EQ 1: To what extent were ILO constituents and other project stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the project? • What specific roles did ILO constituents play during the project design? • Examples of how stakeholder feedback was incorporated into the project. • Were any stakeholder groups particularly influential or underrepresented?	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews.
EQ 2: Were the project interventions designed and implemented according to the needs and capacities of constituents at both regional and national levels? • How were the capacities of constituents assessed during the project planning? • Examples of how the project interventions were tailored to meet the specific needs.	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews.
EQ 3: How effectively did the project adapt to external, unforeseen events during its lifetime to respond to changes in circumstances? • What were major unforeseen events that occurred during the project? • Were strategies or mechanisms in place to adapt to changing circumstances?	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews.
Coherence				
EQ 4: Is the project aligned with global and national development frameworks, including the SDGs, National Development Plans, UNSDCFs, and ILO Decent Work Country Programmes? Probes: • How are these frameworks referenced in the project document(s)? • Do the project activities plausibly align with the frameworks?	●			Summary as documented in reports, focusing on alignment of formulations in selected frameworks and selected countries.
EQ 5: How well does the project complement and align with other ongoing UN and government initiatives, and ILO programmes at HQ and in the field?	●			Summary as documented in reports; rapid Google search to

	Col1	Col2	Col3	
Probes: • Which project collaborations are mentioned in the project documents? • What types of collaboration have taken place? • Do other projects tend to Component 1/2 issues, are there diverging projects?				identify whether there are diverging projects.
Effectiveness (incl. validity of design)				
EQ 6: Was the project design, including the Theory of Change and implementation modalities, realistic, purposeful, and effective in achieving its objectives? • Is the Theory of Change explained in the Project Document? • Are underlying assumptions explicitly mentioned, also explained?	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews; rapid literature review on the assumptions defined in the Theory of Change.
EQ 7: To what extent did the project achieve its intended outcomes and outputs? • Were baselines, where required, and targets (outputs and outcomes) defined? • To what extent were the targets achieved? • How did participants assess the training outcomes?	●	●	●	Summary as documented in reports, focusing on M&E data, or mentioned in interviews.
EQ 8: What internal and external conditions at the country level enabled the project to make progress towards its objectives? What were the key success factors and inhibiting factors?			●	Summary as mentioned in interviews.
EQ 9: To what extent was gender adequately mainstreamed within the project? • How were gender issues defined / articulated in the Project Document? • How were gender equality and empowerment specifically addressed in the project? • How were women involved in the design and delivery of the project? • Which gender related messages or activities were implemented?	●			Summary as documented in reports.
EQ 10: Did the project contribute to improving gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth, and people with disabilities? Did the project results affect women and men differently? • What outcomes were achieved for women, youth, and people with disabilities? • How did the project's results differ for women and men, and why? • What specific measures were taken to include and support people with disabilities? • What specific measures were taken to include and support youth? • Were there any unintended gender-specific, disability-, or youth-related results?	●	●	●	Summary as documented in reports, focusing on M&E data, or mentioned in interviews.
EQ 11: Did the project implement any innovative approaches to advance its objectives?			●	Summary as mentioned in interviews.

• Examples of innovative approaches. • What was novel about the approaches?				
Efficiency				
EQ 12: Did the project implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy, and to what extent did this contribute to accountability, management, and learning? • How was the M&E strategy defined in the Project Document? • Which M&E roles, processes, and tools were used? How frequented? • Were learnings documented?	●		○	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews.
EQ 13: To what extent were financial and human resources strategically allocated and utilised at global, regional, and country levels to achieve the intended results? • Were resource allocation decisions documented? • Were adjustments of resource allocations explained? • Have synergies been explored?	○			Summary as documented in reports.
EQ 14: To what extent were the project's implementation mechanisms efficient in achieving the expected objectives? • Were roles and responsibilities defined and implemented? • Were challenges identified and addressed adequately?	○		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews.
Impact				
EQ 15: How likely is it that the project contributes to impact, based on the Theory of Change and underlying assumptions? • Is it plausible that project outputs and outcomes lead to impact? • Is it plausible that the underlying assumptions hold true in practice?	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or mentioned in interviews; rapid literature review on the assumptions defined in the Theory of Change.
Sustainability				
EQ 16: To what extent have the project outcomes been achieved in a sustainable manner, enabling continuing benefits to the target groups beyond the project's lifespan? • How have project outcomes been integrated into national institutions and systems? • What evidence exists of the target groups continuing to benefit from the project? • Are constituents willing and able to sustain the project results?	●		●	Summary as documented in reports or in interviews.

• What challenges exist in sustaining the project outcomes?				
EQ 17: Has an effective and realistic exit strategy been developed and implemented? • What components were included in the exit strategy? • How was the exit strategy communicated to stakeholders? • How effectively has the exit strategy been implemented? • Are there any gaps or areas for improvement in the exit strategy?	●			Summary as documented in reports.
EQ 18: What measures should be incorporated into similar future projects to increase the sustainability of results? Probes: • What lessons have been learned regarding sustainability from this project? • What specific measures can enhance the sustainability of future projects?			●	Summary as mentioned in interviews.

Annex 3: Interviewees

Name	Organisation
ILO	
David Dorkenoo	ILO
Emanuela Pozzan	ILO
Hilma Kupila Mote	ILO
Inviolata Chinyangarara	ILO
Laura Addati	ILO
Mban Kabu	ILO
Mia Touma	ILO
Mohammed Mwamadzingo	Formerly ILO
Naome Chakanya	ITCILO
Na Pahimi Baizebbe	ILO
Parth Ajit Kanitka	ILO (Provided written input)
Victor Hugo Ricco	ILO
Constituents	
Alex Richard Nkosi	International Trade Union Confederation Africa
Angesom Gebre Yohannes	Industrial Federation of Textile Leather and Garment Workers Union, Ethiopia
Dagim Yosef	Ministry of Industry, Ethiopia
George Khaki	Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi, Malawi
Harriet Botchway	Trades Union Congress, Ghana
Innocent John	Trade Unions' Congress of Tanzania, Tanzania
Jessie Ching'oma	Malawi Congress of Trade Union, Malawi
Mary Akosua Karimu	Trades Union Congress, Ghana
Sosna Abraham	Confederation of Ethiopian Employers' Association, Ethiopia
Wilfred Nkhoma	Plantation Agriculture Workers Union, Malawi
Zerihun Kebede	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ethiopia
Private sector	
Kefyalew Muluneh	Yirgalem Addis Textile Factory, Ethiopia
Mareshet Tsehay	Ethio Impact Manufacturing PLC, Ethiopia
Shashitu Mamo	Hagere Tibeb Maderaja, Ethiopia
Solomon Assefa	Eltex Textile and Garment, Ethiopia
Donor	
Mona Frøystad	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Implementer	
Birikit Terefe Tiruneh	Partnership for Change, Ethiopia

Annex 4: Lessons learned

Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality in Africa

Project DC/SYMBOL: RAF/22/11/NOR

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 19 July 2024

Lesson learned element	Engaging with small- and medium-sized firms in Ethiopia on the establishment of childcare centres proved more effective than with large companies.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	In Ethiopia, the project collaborated with four garment and textile companies, selected from a pool of 12 that underwent a "factory assessment" to design relevant care solutions. One of the solutions was setting-up childcare centres at the companies.
	To test the feasibility and suitability in different company settings, four companies were selected with different sizes and staff numbers. These companies, located in various parts of Addis Ababa, have staff sizes ranging from 50 to 600 workers, most of whom are women.
	The underlying idea was to gather experience for future interventions of this kind. Furthermore, involving a large company should signal to smaller and medium-sized companies that investing in childcare centres is worthwhile.
Context and related preconditions	The project was implemented in Ethiopia and aimed at improving equality at work, aiming to enhance gender equality in the garment and textiles sector. It necessitated the openness of private sector companies to engage with the project team, making infrastructure adjustments, and shoulder the cost for maintaining the childcare centres. An important precondition to consider was that the garment and textiles sector faces high staff fluctuation, as women tend to maternity care, decreasing productivity.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	The targeted users of this lesson learned are ILO, the implementing partners as well as the respective constituents and companies.
Challenges / negative lessons-Causal factors	One challenge was engaging with the larger company, which involved several failed attempts to set up meetings to discuss potential collaboration and mutual benefits. The likely reason for this difficulty is that the large company already has its own plans and resources to establish childcare facilities, making third-party support, with its relatively small investment, unnecessary and unattractive.
Success / positive Issues-Causal factors	It is reasonable to assume that an investment to set up a childcare centre in the larger company could have resulted in windfall gains for the company.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The lesson learned suggests that ILO and implementing partners continue considering the pros and cons of partnering with different actors, including their incentives to engage.

Promoting Workers' Rights and Gender Equality in Africa

Project DC/SYMBOL: RAF/22/11/NOR

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 19 July 2024

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Making the business case for Care@Work and the provision of child-care centres was essential for single business owners to engage and commit to investments.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	In Ethiopia, the project collaborated with four garment and textile companies, selected from a pool of 12 that underwent a "factory assessment" to design relevant care solutions. One of the solutions was setting-up childcare centres at the companies.
	To test the feasibility and suitability in different company settings, four companies were selected with different sizes and staff numbers. These companies, located in various parts of Addis Ababa, have staff sizes ranging from 50 to 600 workers, most of whom are women.
	From the onset, the project team followed an approach to highlighting the business case to owners, namely that the setting-up of in-company childcare centres creates a positive return on investment. The approach contributed to motivate business owners to engage – and it should also motivate them to maintain these centres going forward, contributing to sustainability.
Context and any related preconditions	The project was implemented in Ethiopia and aimed at improving equality at work, aiming to enhance gender equality in the garment and textiles sector. It necessitated the openness of private sector companies to engage with the project team, making infrastructure adjustments, and shoulder the cost for maintaining the childcare centres. An important precondition to consider was that the garment and textiles sector faces high staff fluctuation, as women tend to maternity care, decreasing productivity.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	The targeted users of this lesson learned are ILO, the implementing partners as well as the respective constituents and companies.
Challenges / negative lessons-Causal factors	Business owners, regardless of gender, were primarily interested in having a successful business, indicating that a strong business case to invest into childcare would likely be persuasive. For the implementing team it was thus essential to make business owners understand the challenges women workers phase and how addressing these challenges could benefit their business.
Success / positive Issues-Causal factors	Reasons that spoke for investing into the childcare centres included:
	- Offering childcare helped companies to retain skilled employees, especially women. - Companies that provide childcare support saw lower staff turnover rates and less workplace absences. - Workers could focus on their work, enhancing their productivity at the workplace.
	These findings mirror a recent UNICEF (2021) study on employer supported childcare in Rwanda's tea sector which found that investing in childcare benefits businesses by enhancing employee recruitment and retention, especially for women. This can lead to higher productivity and reduced absenteeism. Providing childcare also improves company reputation and aligns with

	corporate social responsibility goals. Additionally, it helps companies comply with regulations, strengthens community relations, and can lead to cost savings by reducing turnover. Overall, employer-supported childcare contributes to a more stable and productive workforce and supports economic growth by enabling greater female workforce participation.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO 2024: Workplace Daycare centers ensure mothers enter the workforce and continue working ([link](#)) UNICF 2021: Business-Case for Employer Supported Childcare ([download](#)) UNICEF 2022: A Child Care Centre lifts the burden of mothers absorbed in childcare and work ([link](#))

Annex 5: Good practice

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Good practice element	Coupling training with activities/actions enhanced the learning process by allowing immediate application of learned skills.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	One of the project's components focused on regional capacity development for the ILO International Labour Standards (ILS) system, supporting national ratification campaigns and advocacy for gender equality and violence prevention. The regional trainings aimed to equip trade union leaders and members as human rights advocates, enhancing their effectiveness in promoting workers' rights. Two training events were held in Nairobi, Kenya, and Johannesburg, South Africa, respectively. The training events were followed by mentoring and specific actions, namely, to advocate for the ratification of ILO Conventions in the different countries targeted by the project.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	There are no limitations in terms of applicability and replicability. The good practice can create a more effective and holistic learning experience.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The findings from the evaluation highlighted the following benefits from combining the regional (theoretical) training with specific actions after the training: • Supports theoretical concepts, making them easier to understand and to retain knowledge more effectively. • Encourages problem-solving and critical thinking skills and helps apply knowledge to different situations. • Makes learning more engaging and enjoyable and improves motivation as learners can apply their skills. • Shows the practical application of theoretical knowledge, enhancing the relevance of the newly acquired knowledge.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The interviewees noted that they were able to integrate newly acquired knowledge in various ways, including in ratification campaigns; reform of organisational policies; and collective bargaining agreements.
Potential for replication and by whom	This lesson is particularly relevant for ILO and implementing partners.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	n/a

Other documents or relevant comments	n/a