



Final independent evaluation of the project “Promoting Workers’ Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa”

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda

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Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ROAF

Technical Office: ACTRAV, GEDI

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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project “**Promoting Workers’ Rights and Gender Equality at Work in Africa**”, aims to protect workers’ rights, including organising and freedom from workplace violence and harassment, and to ensure workers with family responsibilities benefit from enhanced equality, maternity protection, and childcare services. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of ILO constituents in Africa, focusing on 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.

While Component 1 is led by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), the ILO Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion Branch (GEDI) is responsible for Component 2. The project is managed by the ILO Regional Office for Africa and spans January 2023 to June 2024. It focuses on Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The project contributes to ILO's 2023-24 outcomes on social dialogue and gender equality, as well as to several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including decent work, reduced inequalities, peaceful societies, and gender equality.

Present situation of the project

The project implementation was finalised in June 2024.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

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

Scope: The evaluation covers the entire project implementation from



	<p>January 2023 to June 2024, focusing on regional and country-level interventions in the six target countries.</p> <p>Clients: The main clients of the evaluation are the ILO, specifically ACTRAF and GEDI staff, ILO constituents in target countries, and the project donor, the Government of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>A mixed methods approach was employed, including document review, data analysis, and individual and group interviews, guided by OECD DAC Standards and ILO's relevant guidelines. The document review covered the Project Document, progress reports, and selected outputs. Data review focused on the M&E framework and training assessment reports to evaluate effectiveness and impact. The evaluators conducted 23 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, both individually and in groups, in person, online, and via phone, ensuring balanced representation between project components. An online debriefing and written feedback on the inception report and draft report facilitated stakeholder participation. Despite challenges given the short delivery period of the evaluation, the methodology proved successful to collect sufficient data to ensure a robust evaluation. Ethical guidelines were followed, including informed consent, de-identification of information, and data security measures, with recordings and sensitive data scheduled for deletion six months post-evaluation.</p>
<p>MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS</p>	<p>The evaluation main findings, structured according to the OECD DAC criteria, are as follows:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>



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 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).

Conclusions: The short pilot project was deemed successful by stakeholders, including ILO constituents, the donor, and ILO staff, as it aligned with global development frameworks, national policies, and other ILO projects, meeting the needs of constituents and countries. Although opinions on efficiency were mixed, the project's adaptability contributed to its effectiveness, with high participant satisfaction in capacity-building activities. However, the short duration makes it challenging to assess its long-term impact and sustainability, despite promising results such as the implementation of violence and harassment policies and improved job retention for women through childcare centres. Strong stakeholder support suggests a solid foundation for a second phase to scale up activities, building on the groundwork laid by the pilot.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations

The report provides the following recommendations:

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

Main lessons learned and good practices

The lessons learned and good practices that can be drawn from the project implementation, complementing the ones identified by the project team, are:

- 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.