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Engendering informality measurement for Labour Force Surveys – Independent Final Evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Peru, Uganda

Evaluation date: 12 December 2024

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: Department of Statistics (STATISTICS)

Technical Office: STATISTICS (Supported by GEDI, INWORK)

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DC Symbol: GLO/20/27/GAT

Donor(s) & budget: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), USD 3'069'554

Key Words: Gender-Inclusive Measurement; Enhanced Data Collection; Gender Disaggregation; Gendered Informal Work Analysis; Gender-Sensitive Policy Design; Statistical Capacity Building; Gender Pay Gaps; Social Protection Expansion; Collaboration for Better Data; Awareness and Advocacy.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The "Engendering Informality Measurement for Labour Force Surveys" project was a partnership between the ILO and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), funded with US\$ 3,069,554. The project aimed to enhance the measurement of informal employment from a gender perspective, focusing on women's informal work and the impact of COVID-19 on their employment. Its main outcomes included improved knowledge and tools on informal employment and care work, as well as better data on the pandemic's gendered impact. The project also aimed to develop new statistical standards for measuring informality, integrating them into the 2023 ICLS resolution, and launching the Global Care Policy Portal and Investment Simulator. Co-implemented by the ILO's Statistics Unit, GEDI, and INWORK, the project notably worked with stakeholders in pilot countries, namely Peru and Uganda.

Present situation of the project

The project began in October 2020 and was initially set to end in September 2024. The project was then extended to December 2024. Following a successful first phase, the ILO and BMGF partnership entered a second phase, starting on 15 November 2023 and ending on 15 November 2026. Phase II aims to use the data to improve policies and financing to accelerate women's economic empowerment and gender equality. It will also capture and share lessons learned for scaling up the new measurement tools to notably support broader adoption in other countries.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The independent final evaluation of the project aimed to assess (i) project accountability, (ii) project improvement, and (iii) institutional learning. It covered interventions from October 2020 to September 2024, focusing on two key components: (1) Measurement and standard work, and the ILO Global Care Policy Portal and Investment Simulator (Outcome 1), and (2) Estimation work and analytical outputs (Outcome 2).

The evaluation included both global and national interventions, with a specific focus on pilot countries, namely Peru and Uganda.

	Gender and disability considerations were integrated as a cross-cutting theme in the evaluation methodology and deliverables. The primary end users of the evaluation findings are staff within the ILO Department of Statistics. Secondary parties making use of the results of the evaluation include ILO's constituents such as national statistical offices, and national and international partners. Furthermore, the findings of this final evaluation are destined for ILO's management (the project team), overseeing the implementation of the project, participating units - GEDI and INWORK, as well as for the project's donor Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Methodology of evaluation	The evaluation used a combination of tools for a comprehensive assessment, including a desk review, semi-structured interviews, and a short survey. Data from various sources and methods were cross-validated through triangulation to ensure reliability. Findings were disaggregated by gender and other available factors, with conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation's results. The major limitations of the evaluation were following: 1. Net Impact Measurement: The evaluation couldn't assess net impacts due to the lack of a control group, making it impossible to measure the true effect of participation. 2. Time and Stakeholder Constraints: Tight deadlines and an increasing number of stakeholders led to prioritizing key participants, limiting the scope of interviews and potentially affecting findings. 3. Stakeholder Input: Focus group interviews were used to gather feedback in limited time, but some stakeholders may not have shared their views as openly as in one-on-one interviews. 4. Focus on ILO Statistics: The evaluation mainly focused on ILO Statistics components, which accounted for most of the project's duration and budget, with less emphasis on other initiatives managed by the GEDI branch.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The project successfully addressed gaps in gender-sensitive data on informality and care work, aligning with ILO's goals of gender equality and decent work. Key achievements include the development of new statistical standards for measuring informality with a gender lens, integrated into the 21st ICLS Resolution in 2023, and the creation of the Global Care Policy Portal and Investment Simulator. It also provided modelled estimates, including on COVID-19's gendered impacts, aiding policymaking.

Building on these successes, ongoing efforts are needed to strengthen national capacity, ensure sustainability, and expand the project's impact. Lessons learned will guide future scaling, outreach, and policy engagement to advance gender equality and reduce inequalities.

The project's pilot phase demonstrated its feasibility, and, following positive feedback, it expanded with increased funding. Adaptability to stakeholder needs, strong leadership, effective management, and collaboration with national statistical offices ensured success, despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and staffing issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions

- **Recommendation 1** (from conclusions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) proposes to ILO and BMGF to endorse the design and development of an "impact-oriented" framework, intervention strategy, and M&E system for Phase II, with the support of M&E and systemic change expertise. Priority: High / Importance: High / Resource implication: Medium.
- **Recommendation 2** (from conclusions 3 and 4) proposes to ILO, tripartite constituents and implementing partners to strengthen the project visibility and sustainability. With the support of communication experts, design powerful strategies to effectively reach out to global, regional and national key stakeholders. Priority: Medium / Importance: High / Resource implication: Medium.

- **Recommendation 3** (from conclusions 3, 4, 5 and 6) proposes to ILO and donors to consider extending the duration of each project phase or adopting a multi-phase plan, with sufficient foresight to accommodate recruitment needs and avoid loss of capacity. In its current format, each phase could benefit from an additional 6 months to account for recruitment timelines and related constraints. Priority: High, / Importance: High / Resource implication: Medium to High.

Main lessons learned and good practices

Main Lessons Learned

1. **Ongoing Support for Sustainability:** Continuous human and financial support is essential for long-term success, ensuring momentum through outreach, change management, and resource mobilization.
2. **"Less is More" Approach:** A focused, realistic approach is key for transformative change, especially in complex environments like National Statistical Offices (NSOs), requiring manageable change and behavioural shifts.
3. **Feasibility and Strong Partnerships:** Feasibility should be assessed based on capacity and resources, and strong partnerships are crucial for capacity-building, funding, and policy-making to ensure scalability and sustainability.

Good Practices

1. **Synergy of Leadership, Expertise, and Management:** The combination of strong leadership, technical expertise in statistics and effective management was crucial to the overall success of this data-intensive project.
2. **Strategic Staff Recruitment and Capacity Building:** Success was driven by recruiting skilled staff and ensuring continuity through ILO's regular budget support.
3. **Effective Stakeholder Engagement and Standards Development:** Stakeholder engagement led to new standards for measuring informal employment with a gender lens, enhancing capacity for economic inclusion for women.