



Evaluation Summaries

Mainstreaming Tripartism across the Netherlands ILO Cooperation Programme and Product Development for Employers' and Workers' Organizations

Quick Facts

Countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Indonesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu Nepal, Pakistan, Bolivia, Yemen, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan

Final Evaluation: May 2010

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Tripartism and Social Dialogue

Evaluation Management: ACT/EMP ACTRAV

Evaluation team: S.C. Cornwell

Project Start: May 2007

Project End: April 2010

Project Code: INT/06/63/NET

Donor: Netherlands (\$1,850,000)

Keywords: Mainstreaming tripartism and social dialogue

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project on “Mainstreaming Tripartism across the Netherlands ILO Cooperation Programme and Product Development for Employers' and Workers' Organizations” aimed to strengthen tripartism and social dialogue in the context of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) by building the capacity of the social partners to participate fully in national development programmes, the NICP country projects and to be of greater value to their

current and potential members. The project did not include a component for labour administration.

The underlying premise of the project was that stronger, independent and representative workers' and employers' organizations are essential building blocks for tripartism and social dialogue and are prerequisites for mainstreaming efforts. The project's strategy involved three levels of intervention: country level activities with a primary focus on the needs and priorities of the organizations and a subsequent link to complement the 11 NICP country projects; product development at the global level; and capacity building in thematic areas in tandem with the Turin Centre.

The three outcomes of the project were 1) stronger employers' and workers' organizations; 2) the organizations are more valuable to their membership and potential members; and 3) the social partners influence socio-economic and governance policies.

This was the first major technical cooperation project, designed jointly by ACTRAV and ACTEMP, that focused on mainstreaming. The project faced a number of challenges as the needs and priorities of the social partners varied across the 12 countries and the NICP country projects addressed different technical themes and employed different types of interventions.

The project was managed by ACTRAV and ACT/EMP with each bureau involved directly with the social partners through their field specialists. Product development and training programmes were implemented in collaboration with the ILO T

raining Centre in Turin. Cost-sharing arrangements were made possible in a number of instances with other ILO projects and some of the activities were based on previous groundwork financed by ILO Regular Budget technical cooperation funds (RBTC).

The activities of the project included global product development and interregional or regional training activities; institutional building through SWOTs, strategic planning exercises, review of management methods and staffing; supporting organizational unity; reinforcing information and research and training units within the organizations; workshops on core issues (freedom of association, collective bargaining, gender, advocacy and lobbying, DWCPs, PRSs) and on specific issues such as inflation and wages and free trade agreements; and support for providing specific services to members. A bipartite seminar for employers' and workers' organizations in West and Central Africa on DWCPs was held in April 2010 which led to a joint statement: "Social Partners Platform for Action".

The evaluation, covering the period of May 2007 to April 2010, set out to assess the impact of the project on the capacity of workers' and employers' organisations and on the enhancement of tripartism, the impact of the project on the individual 11 NICP country projects and to assess the validity of the strategy to mainstream tripartism through partnership agreements. The evaluation has addressed issues related to the conception and design of the project, project management, the results obtained vis à vis the objectives/outcomes, the linkages with the individual NICP country projects and the approach taken to mainstream tripartism in large multi-faceted programmes by focusing on capacity building.

Some specific achievements and good practices are highlighted. Lessons learned and recommendations are suggested with a view to developing improved strategies for ensuring sustainable tripartism and social dialogue in ILO technical cooperation projects in the future.

The clients of the evaluation are the workers' and employers' organizations involved in the project, the donor and the ILO.

Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation relied essentially on a desk review of documentation on the mainstreaming project

and on the individual NICP country projects and on extensive interviews with ILO staff, at Headquarters, at the Turin Centre, in field offices, and in projects. A 5 day field visit to Liberia enabled interviews with constituents, which was complemented by telephone interviews with the social partners in Indonesia. A second planned field visit to Kyrgyzstan was cancelled due to civil unrest.

The evaluation faced certain limitations: lack of sufficient background data and insufficient contact with constituents in order to assess fully the impact of the project, as well as little analyses on the part of the NICP country projects in terms of their contributions to the process of mainstreaming.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The project was highly relevant to the ILO as a whole and addressed a key issue affecting the Organization: increased capacity and participation of the social partners in both ILO and national development programmes. Good results have been obtained, but continued efforts will be required to achieve the overarching objective of enhanced tripartism and social dialogue.

The design of the project faced a number of shortcomings with overly broad outcomes together with outputs that did not indicate how tripartism and social dialogue would be mainstreamed. This is a key issue that will need to be addressed in the future. The approach of the project was new and there were no models on which to base a comprehensive strategy. A fundamental concern in the evaluation was that the concept of "mainstreaming" in the field of tripartism has not been fully understood; it has not been parsed into different components and processes to demonstrate what is effective "mainstreaming" as opposed to participation or involvement of the social partners in various activities.

While the logical framework of the project was weak, the assumptions and risk outlined at the outset proved valid and provide insights for the design of future projects.

The management of the project was divided between the two bureaux: ACT/EMP and ACTRAV. This was essential for an effective implementation of the project. The division of allocations between product (tools and materials) development, country level activities and

interregional and regional seminars proved effective for the ACT/EMP activities. ACTRAV opted for a greater involvement at the country level which was justified by challenges of union fragmentation and weaker organizations. Coordination with and outreach to the NICP country projects and with ILO field offices was uneven, insufficient in some instances and exemplary in others. Similarly the division of responsibilities and the definition of the specific roles of those implementing the mainstreaming project and those in the country projects were not clearly spelled out. This was compounded by the lack of any on-going review mechanism or body that could bring the various actors together to adjust strategies and improve coordination across the board. These are internal management issues that will need to be addressed by the Office in the future.

In terms of the attainment of its objectives, the project had good results for its Outcome 1: stronger workers' and employers' organizations. Most of the outputs were delivered and some exceeded the planned targets. Examples of stronger employers' organizations include those in Liberia, Bolivia, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Nepal and Indonesia. Stronger workers' organizations include those in Liberia, Kyrgyzstan, Bolivia, Nepal, Indonesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and to some extent Yemen. The targets on gender issues were not reached, which indicates that more efforts are required in this area.

For Outcome 2: organizations are more valuable to their membership; the project was successful in assisting the organizations to develop new services. This was most impressive in Bolivia for the employers and the workers, but other services were successful in Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Nepal for the employers and in Cameroon, Pakistan and Nepal for the workers.

For Outcome 3: social partners influence socio-economic and governance policies, numerous examples have been provided indicating how both the employers and the workers organizations have influenced socio-economic policies. These include Liberia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan for both workers and employers as well Yemen for the employers and Bolivia for the workers. The work that was not fully addressed in the policy area at the country level concerned training and plans related to UN Reform, capacity building specifically targeting mainstreaming efforts and to

some extent participation in PRSs. Both UN Reform and PRSs were discussed in interregional and regional seminars, particularly in those organized by ACT/EMP and in the bipartite seminar on DWCP in March/April 2010 held in Dakar.

A significant achievement of the project was the production of guides and training packages, which were developed in collaboration with the ILO Centre in Turin. These included a communications module for the Effective Employers' Organization series, DWCP training programme and guide for employers, two LED case studies on employers' organizations and local economic development, and toolkits and manual for workers' organizations on the informal economy, MDGs and PRS.

Coordination and alignment with the NICP country projects was uneven. This was influenced by several factors: the objectives and outcomes of the NICP country projects and how these projects themselves addressed the mainstreaming issue; the existence of social partner organizations in the regions where the NICP country projects were operating; the extent of respect for fundamental principles and rights at work in given countries; and the extent to a social dialogue culture in different settings. Taking account of these factors, successful complementarity and coordination between the mainstreaming project and the NICP country projects were achieved in Liberia (despite some communication problems with workers' activities), Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and the South Pacific. More limited coordination occurred in Indonesia. In Yemen and somewhat in Ethiopia, preparatory work with the workers' organizations contributed later to the workers' participation in the NICP country work; although no real coordination took place. In Nepal, Pakistan, the Cameroon and in Mozambique there was little coordination, although for different reasons in each case. A review of the alignment and coordination issues was highlighted in the evaluation because of the lessons it provided for future mainstreaming strategies.

The project faced several constraints and obstacles. These included political instability and unrest, concerns about freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, inactive social dialogue mechanisms, fragmented organizations and in general weak secretariats of both employers' and workers' organizations. These issues also have an impact on future strategies for mainstreaming.

The evaluation concluded that very sound bases had been created for sustaining the achievements in a number of instances, but that it was too early to determine the full extent of the sustainability in all countries. Where organizations had committed staff and resources to continue the work, the outlook was promising. In other cases, resources were lacking and some services were donor-dependent. In yet other circumstances, particularly where there was fragmentation among the organizations and where there were serious issues of freedom of association or social dialogue, far more work was necessary on building the strength and unity of the institutions.

Several good practices have been listed. These included coordination and briefing workshops of specialists (ACT/EMP); leveraging resources with Turin, other ILO projects and the private sector; systematic approaches to institution building; maximizing the expertise of the field specialists; defining entry points for bipartite action; and producing technical papers.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

The evaluation offered recommendations based on the lessons learned in the project.

Concepts and strategies

- Work on tripartism should include labour administration and reinforcement of a social dialogue culture.
- Tripartism and social dialogue cannot exist without the existence of strong, independent and representative social partners. This is a fundamental prerequisite for mainstreaming.
- The concept of mainstreaming needs to be clarified so that its components can be parsed into outputs that can be clearly targeted to dynamic changes in the processes of tripartism and social dialogue.
- Strategies for mainstreaming need to be comprehensive and adapted to different settings and different types of interventions. These strategies also need to identify the responsibilities of the different projects to dovetail their activities.
- There will be circumstances in technical projects where there are limited entry points for mainstreaming and continued work on strengthening the institutions of the social partners will be essential.

Design and scope

- Good design is essential for effective implementation. In the event of broadly defined objectives at the outset, follow-up detailed implementation plans and adjustments in strategy will be essential. These need to be shared by all involved in a project at the country level.
- Given the extensive needs and priorities of the social partners' organizations, some difficult selection of key areas for intervention will be necessary for a future project. Consideration should be given to limiting the outcomes to those where the social partners are able to contribute staff and resources for follow-up and sustainability.
- Policy issues constitute a wide area of action. Thought should be given on how to address those dealing with UN Reform, which emerged as a weak area in the evaluation.
- End of project self-evaluation meetings or questionnaires filled out by the constituents would help address the need to involve the constituents in impact evaluation.

Management

- Field specialist expertise should continue to be maximized in the future. HQ management in the future will need to be supported, either with more resources or with reduced workloads in other areas.
- The scope for jointly managed activities will depend on common areas of concern for the workers and the employers. The bipartite seminar on DWCP at the end of the project was a good example of joint work. At the country level, several areas emerged: gender, labour law reform, PRS processes.
- A review mechanism or modality is necessary to bring together the main actors in different projects under a partnership agreement. Coordination and information sharing should be systematically ensured not only at the start of projects, but as they progress. Ideally this should be at the country level, led by the ILO Office. PARDEV should give thought to organizing appropriate arrangements.
- Reporting procedures should be improved, particularly to identify how mainstreaming has been addressed in country projects. ACTRAV should also tighten its

procedures.

Specific follow-up steps are suggested for dissemination and sharing the good practices identified, post-hoc evaluation questionnaires addressed to the constituents, and dissemination of training materials and technical papers.

The evaluation has concluded that the project was highly relevant to the ILO and commended the decision to include a mainstreaming project in the partnership programme. Despite the progress made and the lessons learned on how to approach this type of project in the future, continued assistance to strengthen the capacities of the social partners will be required. Achieving genuine and effective tripartism and social dialogue will be a longer-term effort.