



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation Unit

## *Promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in the rural and export processing sectors Final Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Pilot countries: Bangladesh, El Salvador, Kenya, Morocco, the Philippines and South Africa*

**Final Evaluation:** *March 2012*

**Mode of Evaluation:** *Independent*

**ILO Administrative responsibility:**  
*DECLARATION*

**Technical Area:** *Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*

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**Project End:** *Dec 1022*

**Project Code:** *GLO/09/60/SID*

**Donor:** *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (US\$ 1,628,000)*

**Keywords:** *Collective bargaining, freedom of association, agriculture, export processing zones*

### Taken from the Executive Summary in the Main Report

#### Background and Context

1. The project entitled 'Promoting freedom of

association and collective bargaining rights in the rural and export processing sectors' was part of the Sweden/ILO Partnership Programme, which began in August 2009 and finished in December 2011. This project was a joint effort between two ILO offices, DECLARATION and NORMES, which form part of ILO's STANDARDS sector. The project's primary aim was to systematize a method for diagnosing challenges on freedom of association and collective bargaining in the rural and export processing sectors. It was piloted in four countries: Bangladesh and Philippines (export processing sector), and Kenya and South Africa (rural sector). Some initial research and awareness-raising activities also were conducted in El Salvador and Morocco.

#### Purpose, scope and users of evaluation

The primary purpose of the independent evaluation was to determine to what extent the project achieved its stated objectives, examine how these objectives were achieved, and identify any obstacles to the process. It also aimed to provide recommendations based on the project's achievements and lessons for application in the second phase of the project. The scope of the evaluation focused on the project's relevance and strategic fit, the validity of its design, the effectiveness of its

implementation, the efficiency of resource allocation, the effectiveness of management arrangements, and the sustainability of its achievements. Users of the evaluation included 5. SIDA, DECLARATION, NORMES, ILO field offices, and other ILO collaborating units and projects (ACTRAV, ACT/EMP, GENDER and Better Work).

### Methodology of evaluation

3. The methodological approach for data collection was primarily qualitative in nature, comprised of a desk review and interviews with stakeholders, including the core project team and steering committee, participating field offices, collaborating units or projects, and external consultants or advisors. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with most of the ILO Geneva headquarters' staff, while interviews with stakeholders outside of the 6. Geneva headquarters were conducted via Internet or telephone. The selection of interviewees was purposeful and non-random based on involvement in some aspect of the project design and implementation, or in an advisory capacity. Interviews were not conducted with ILO constituents in any of the pilot countries. This resulted in the independent evaluator directly assessing the constituent support and involvement, or any changes as a result of their participation.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

4. In the area of **relevance and strategic fit**, the project fulfilled a relevant need to develop global tools that would provide a systematic method for diagnosing issues related to freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in the rural and export processing sectors. It also represented a strategic fit within the context of the participating ILO field offices' Decent Work 7. Country Programme priorities and outcomes. There was some hesitancy shown by tripartite constituents in two countries, El Salvador and Morocco, with regard to participation in the diagnostic process, however, indicating further

need to 'market' the purpose and benefits of the diagnostic.

The **project design** identified a logical sequence between activities in relation to the specific products that form part of the diagnostic process. These, in turn, contributed to the achievement of project outcomes. Means of verification of both outputs and outcomes were established. Nevertheless, the accuracy and validity of certain acceptable ILO indicators for verifying achievement of project outcomes was unclear, particularly with regard to whether 'the launching of an awareness-raising strategy on freedom of association and collective bargaining' could, in fact, verify that tripartite constituents were 'better equipped'.

With regard to the **effectiveness of the implementation**, the achievements recognized by project stakeholders included both the products—national reports, global tools and diagnostic reports—as well as the actual process that contributed to greater dialogue and awareness of issues regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining rights. These achievements were the result of the concerted efforts of the project staff and field offices to involve tripartite constituents throughout the diagnostic process; the project's leadership, methodical planning and dedication; and the support and commitment of the field offices. These achievements, however, were impacted by two weaknesses in the project design and implementation: (1) the project's short timeframe, which did not provide adequate time for planning and completing all of the outputs, and (2) the perceived information gaps, which led to some level of misunderstanding among stakeholders regarding the project's purpose, scope and timeline for key deliverables.

In the area of **efficiency of resource use**, including financial and human resources, some field offices expressed the need for more administrative and technical support during the diagnostic mission, yet the pilot process demonstrated that paying for additional

support did not always result in the most efficient or effective process. The use of outside consultants to carry out administrative tasks alleviated some pressure experienced by field office staff, but it did not always result in additional support with the technical tasks that were required to complete the diagnostic process.

8. Regarding the **effectiveness of management arrangements**, the joint efforts and complementary areas of expertise of both the DECLARATION and NORMES offices have contributed to developing a well-rounded approach to the diagnostic process. The primary reasons cited for the project's success were the knowledge, experience and dedication of the project team, as well as the technical and administrative support of the field office staff. Communication channels between the Geneva-based project staff and field offices were open and productive, with early communication being key to maximizing its effectiveness. Coordination and collaboration with mainstream ILO units or other projects was stronger in some units than others. Key factors contributing to stronger coordination and collaboration were involvement of the mainstream unit during the design of the project, and maintaining that unit informed during the implementation phase.

9. Finally, with regard to **sustainability**, it is likely that the activities conducted, and products created, in the project's first phase will serve as the necessary 'building blocks' for the sustainable actions planned for its second phase. However, the feasibility of completing all of the phase II activities in a two-year timeframe will pose a significant challenge.

### Recommendations & Lessons Learned

10. The following is a summary of the key recommendations directed to the DECLARATION Programme, the project's phase II implementer.

- a. Create a project work plan for phase II that can be implemented within a **two-year time period**. Scale up the diagnostic process only to the degree that the identified outputs and outcomes remain **achievable** given the budget and timeframe. Enable and encourage the continued **streamlining** of the diagnostic process, without compromising the necessary constituent involvement throughout the process.
- b. Elicit and host **timely opportunities** for field office input regarding the diagnostic process, and how it best fits into ongoing activities regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining. Work with field office staff to identify specific **administrative and technical support** that will be needed prior, during and following the diagnostic mission.
- c. Allow for **flexibility** in the design and implementation of the diagnostic process, to take into account the country context and its social or cultural characteristics. Integrate ideas and suggestions from the local interview team in order to improve the data collection process as the diagnostic mission progresses.
- d. Establish a **performance monitoring plan** with valid outcome indicators that clearly measure progress toward achieving results. Indicators should be both observable and measurable from a practical standpoint. Use monitoring data to track progress throughout the implementation phase, and make any necessary adjustments to project strategies.
- e. Develop a clear **communication strategy** that will disseminate information to stakeholders regarding the project's purpose and scope, and provide timely updates of key project activities. Promote the larger social and economic benefits of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

- f. Collaborate with ILO mainstream units and projects at the **planning stage** in order to address roles and expectations in a substantial and timely manner. Integrate ideas and expertise of key contributors within the mainstream units. Inform collaborating units on a regular basis to ensure that consultation on project issues is productive and meaningful.
- g. Identify strategies at the planning phase that will lead to **sustainability** of core project outputs and outcomes within the project timeframe. Prioritize the identified sustainable actions and closely monitor their progress to allow for early identification of any barriers or challenges. Adjust or add to these sustainability strategies as needed.

### **Lessons learned and good practices**

11. The following is a summary of the lessons learned and good practices that may guide similar future projects:

- a. **Planning and coordination with field offices**, beginning at the design phase and continuing throughout the implementation phase, allows for the timely identification of key administrative and technical support personnel who can facilitate the successful implementation of project activities.
- b. **Greater tripartite ownership** can be achieved by **consulting constituents** during the selection of national consultants who conduct studies on issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The consultants should be seen as neutral by the tripartite constituents.
- c. **Working with national interviewers** is an important component of the diagnostic process. It provides invaluable support and augments the larger capacity-building efforts. Proactively soliciting ideas from national interviewers with regard to adaptation of interview tools or strategies will support a diagnostic protocol that

takes into account the cultural and social context of the country.

- d. Pilot projects that establish a **realistic project scope and timeline** have a greater chance of success. Within the topic of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, there are inherent complexities; sufficient time must be allocated to accommodate likely delays when consulting tripartite constituents, obtaining approval within the ILO system, and coordinating logistical details.
- e. **Strategic and ongoing communication and dissemination** of project information helps to clarify the project's purpose and scope. It keeps stakeholders informed and vested in the success of project activities, and conveys the relevance and influence of its results.