



# Evaluation Summaries

## Strengthening the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to be effective partners in social dialogue

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Inter-Regional*

**Final Evaluation:** *May 2010*

**Mode of Evaluation:** *Independent*

**Technical Area:** *Social Dialogue, ACTRAV, ACT/EMP*

**Evaluation Management:** Robbin Poppe, Evaluation Manager

**Project Code:** *INT/06/62/NET*

**Donor:** *Netherlands (US\$ 850,000)*

**Keywords:** Employers' organization, workers' organization, social dialogue, capacity building

### Background & Context

The Project was conceived as an initiative towards enhancing social dialogue. Social dialogue reflects the key ILO constitutional principle of tripartism which is essential to the concept of **decent work**. The Project, entitled "Strengthening the Capacity of Employers' and Workers' Organizations to be Effective Partners in Social Dialogue" Project INT/06/62/NET, comprised a set of actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to play their role as Social Partners (SP) and to be responsive to the needs of their members. Through the project it was foreseen that the SP will influence the development of equitable and integrated social and economic policies, and will contribute to Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

The **overarching objective** of the project was to contribute to strengthening the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to act as representative, autonomous and knowledgeable organizations, to participate in national social

dialogue institutions, policy-making processes and other institutional mechanisms, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and DWCPs. The project's **immediate objectives** aimed at building the capacities of SP and to contribute to the development of training materials and methodologies and thus strengthening the ITC/ILO capacities to support the formulation and implementation of DWCP. It was expected that by the end the project, between 340 and 610 SP representatives would have been trained and that at least 40% would have been women.

The **aim of this independent/internal evaluation** is to provide an objective and impartial assessment of the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Project. Specifically, the evaluation sought to determine the extent to which the Project contributed to strengthen the capacity of Employers' and Workers' to effectively participate in social dialogue and in national economic and social policy development; whether employers' and workers' organizations, women and men have acquired the capacity: i) to act as effective spokespersons and social dialogue partners; ii) to contribute to and influence national economic and social policy development; and iii) to deliver services to their members and to other organizations; and whether the ITC-ILO has been effective in supporting the formulation and implementation of DWCP with the contribution of the Project.

**Methodologically**, the evaluation was approached through the following stages and means: i) Data Collection (desk review, semi-structured interviews); ii) Data Analysis of primary and secondary information; iii) Reporting, including a draft report and a final report drawing on the feedback from key stakeholders.

**The overall Project was managed and implemented** as an integral part of the programmes for workers (ACTRAV) and

employer's organizations (ACTEMP) of the ITC-ILO. The rationale behind this approach was to ensure that the project's objectives will be fully aligned with the overall goals and priorities of both organizations; and will significantly contribute to reinforce their capacities and effectiveness. The funds, which were equally assigned to both organizations, were used for a number of activities that were held at the Centre and at the country and regional levels.

The project activities were responsive to the needs of SP. Both in the case of ACTRAV and ACTEMP training programmes were designed in line with the needs of their main constituents and of NICP countries and of ILO's priorities. Accordingly, activities focused on strengthening capacities of employers and workers (especially unions in the latter case) for social dialogue and for promoting DWP, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

An achievement, among others, that deserves to be highlighted is the contribution the project made to increase the overall capacity of ACTRAV and ACTEMP to deliver more relevant and pertinent training services to their constituents beyond the NICP contribution.

The **partnership** between the project and the ITC-ILO entailed the involvement of a range of actors and activities. ITC-ILO is working with NICP-supported projects implemented by ACTRAV and ACT/EMP departments in Geneva. The ITC-ILO ACT/EMP Programme was closely involved in trainings developed under the Geneva NICP project, training on DWCP for employers, and development of training material. Interaction with Dutch employers' organizations was maintained throughout the implementation. Activities for workers, as well as elaboration of training materials were the result of a joint effort between ACTRAV Turin and ACTRAV Geneva. Furthermore, the activities on PRS and informal economy led to the involvement of national organizations in activities developed by other international institutions. Last but not least, the project worked in close coordination and with the support of ILO/Geneva.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

A summary of findings is listed and explained below:

### Impact

- Employers' and workers' organizations have increased their capacity to participate in social

dialogue processes, and to influence economical and social policy development.

- Organizations have been able to engage in or to create new networks, as well as new relationships with other organizations and partners.
- The quality and the effectiveness of the participation of both employers' and workers' organizations in DWCP have significantly increased.

### Effectiveness

- The training material produced in the frame of the project is being utilized by ITC-ILO in programmes targeting employers and workers.
- The training reached remarkable standards of quality. Participants' satisfaction assessments reveal a very high level.
- Action plans developed by participants were applied within their organizations.
- The Project triggered the interaction among staff of all NICP funded projects and the individualization of specific training inputs affecting such projects.

### Efficiency

The Project was underpinned by a strategy aimed at optimizing resources. In this frame, resources allocated were used in combination with other sources of funding. This strategy increased the efficiency of the project as synergies between projects and resources were triggered and more participants and organizations were involved in the training provided.

### Sustainability

- The ITC-ILO has increased its capacity to provide relevant and appropriate training for both employers' and workers' organizations.
- Employers' and workers' organization are using the material produced or validated by the Project to provide training within their organizations as well as to partner organizations.

Given the greater degree of coordination developed during the project between both SP and the implementing agencies, i.e. ITC- ILO and Geneva HQ, a new project that will construct further on what was achieved is being envisioned.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

1. The experience of the project in terms of matching resources from various funding

sources and of using them for activities pursuing similar objectives have yielded positive results. In order to reach a more in depth understanding on the extent to which this strategy could be replicated, it is recommended that cost benefit analyses are undertaken. If possible such analyses should compare projects with similar objectives but underlined by different strategies.

2. In order to ensure that a project will effectively address gender it is recommended that a gender perspective is incorporated at the design phase and implemented throughout the project cycle. A gender perspective should be explicitly reflected in the results expected to be achieved by the project at the various levels of the results chain. The project gender approach was aimed at ensuring that a percentage of trainees will be women. Although this target is undeniably relevant it is, however, not sufficient to analyze results, from a gender perspective at the outcome and impact levels.
3. The evaluation system was unevenly implemented by the organizations responsible of the management of the project. Approach to evaluation varied in terms of comprehensiveness, rigourousity and effectiveness. Based on this experience, it is recommended that for future programmes, the conceptualization and implementation of an evaluation strategy becomes an integral part and if possible a condition of the overall project strategy.
4. The documentation of good practices and success stories is highly recommended in the short term,. The project was implemented involving a wide range of actors playing a role in influencing policies to social dialogue, in various regions, countries and in different political and socio economic contexts. If concrete experiences and cases are documented the significance of the lesson learned through the project will be increased.

well, the implementation of key joint initiatives. The assessment of the results obtained through such joint activities should allow a more rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the relevance and the effectiveness achieved by the overall project (and not solely by its independent components: ACTRAV on the one hand and ACTEMP on the other)

2. Comprehensive evaluation strategies are essential for evidence based analyses of the results obtained through interventions. Information generated through systematic evaluation should inform future programming and the design of new interventions. The project is an example of the relevance and usefulness of including explicit and sound evaluation strategies since the inception phase of an intervention. When a comprehensive strategy was included a deeper understanding of both the quality of training and the results obtained through it was possible.
3. Systematic documentation of good practices and success stories should be part of the overall project strategy. This is especially valid for projects entailing a strong learning component, involving various actors and covering a range of geographical and cultural settings. The documentation of good practices and success stories is will potentially contribute to reinforce the institutional learning systems of the organizations involved in the projects e.g. ILO, ITC/ILO, donors, and other partners.

## **Lessons learned**

1. Projects managed by more than one technical programme (ACTRAV and ACTEMP in this case) and that are supposed to act independently albeit seeking common results, should entail as