



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Promoting Fundamental principles and rights at Work and Social Dialogue – Final External Evaluation

Quick Facts

Country: Egypt

Final Evaluation: 11.7.2014

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

**ILO Office Administrative and Technical
backstopping:** FPRW and ILO Cairo

Evaluator: Nahla Hassan

Evaluation Manager: FPRW

Project End: June 2014

Project Code: EGY/07/03/USA

Donor & Project Budget: US \$2,900,000

Keywords: Fundamental principles and rights at work, labour standards, collective bargaining, social dialogue

Background & Context

In January 2008, the International Labour Organization (ILO) received a four year Cooperative Agreement worth US\$2.4 million from USDOL to implement a project entitled “Promoting the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Social Dialogue in Egypt.” As per ILO evaluation policy and USDOL Management Procedure Guidelines, an independent final evaluation was carried out for the project in June 2014. This is the report of the findings of the final evaluation.

Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Social Dialogue in Egypt was

implemented over two distinct phases referred to in this report as Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 covers the period of April 2008 when the project officially started until November 2010 when it stopped as will be discussed later in this report. Phase 2 covers the period from October 2011 until June 2014. Findings of this final evaluation are based on analysis of both implementation phases of the project, however with greater emphasis on phase 2. The project was timely and needed during both its phases of implementation. The interventions took place at a time characterized by major political volatility and instability. Project implementation faced serious challenges from both the political context as well as the internal weaknesses of some stakeholders throughout its life cycle. The project has adapted implementation strategies to respond to emerging new stakeholders such as the independent trade unions and workers federations in Egypt post 2011.

Relevance Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Social Dialogue in Egypt was designed as a policy project aiming at supporting Egypt conform to its international obligations under C87 and C97. The project aimed predominantly at promoting freedom of association in Egypt. The project was formulated to render support to the Egyptian government as a first step toward democratizing Egypt’s labor relations and supporting labor reform in order for Egypt to be in-line with its international obligations. Accordingly, the project could be said to have

been consistent with the needs and requirements of the Egyptian government and the needs of Egypt in 2008. However, the perception of ‘consistency’ and approval by the Egyptian government was based on tight government control of all labor and employers structures in the country. The promotion of freedom of association and support for increased abilities for collective bargaining and social dialogue were not viewed as a priority by the Egyptian government although they were consistent with international labor standards, Egypt’s international obligations and global priorities. The project is directly aligned with United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and ILO priorities and strategies in Egypt. This is particularly the case in regards to issues pertaining to poverty reduction and good governance objectives for Egypt. In addition, the project is aligned with ILO’s strategies of pushing social dialogue as a mechanism for all labor related interventions including social protection, employment and other sectors. The project was also aligned with USDOL strategies of promoting modernization of the economy, social peace and cohesion as well as the respect for rights and freedoms of the Egyptian people. The project made strategic use and developed increased coordination mechanisms with other USDOL funded projects and implemented by the ILO in Egypt.

Effectiveness: The project invested a lot of time and resources in providing a wide range of awareness raising and capacity building activities to all social partners. Despite the immense efforts by the project in delivering trainings and awareness raising activities since its inception in 2008, it is very difficult to assess whether the project has achieved its objectives in light of the fact that the project did not develop adequate measurement systems to periodically measure progress towards objectives.

The biggest achievement of the project despite all the challenges is its ability to bring labor issues and labor grievance to the forefront of the political discourse in Egypt. The evaluator is of the opinion that the widespread activities of the project in all governorates coupled with the intense labor environment in the country have prompted the Egyptian government to declare the establishment of the Social Dialogue Council in June 2014. The project adopted two interlinked strategies in order to attain its objectives, namely awareness raising and capacity building. It is evident from the experience of the project that fostering dialogue amongst the social partners and working simultaneously with employers and workers organizations yields greater results than working with each social partner alone without establishing the necessary linkages and building confidence to promote social dialogue. In Port Said and Cairo, the project strategy of working at the governorates level and on sector-specific issues was perhaps the most successful implementation strategy. Another key highlight of the project was the strategy to engage the FEI following the changes in the organizations’ leadership. The project successfully built a level of confidence and rapprochement with FEI by developing adequate training sessions based on sound needs assessment. The project faced many difficulties in working with employers’ organizations at the central level until the beginning of 2013. The achievement of IO 2 could have been helped by paying closer attention to the needs of the workers’ organizations. The project could not work on the internal governance of the trade unions hence making it difficult to ensure effective functioning of these federations. The reasons given for this is the internal conflict over leadership and approaches within these federations. At the same time, discussions with FEI leadership during the course of this evaluation show that the project has made progress in changing the views and perceptions

of the organization in what concerns the role of the ILO and FPRW in general.

Efficiency: The project had sufficient and adequate financial resources to implement its activities. At the end of the project, the project expenditure is close to 100% indicating the successful delivery of all project activities despite the various delays which has prompted the extension of the project twice (from December 2011 to December 2012 and then to June 2014). Several stakeholders expressed surprise that the project would use its funds in ‘expensive’ venues. Although, some funds could have been used differently, the cost of the workshop can be said to have been justifiable. The project could be considered cost effective: close to 45% of project funds were allocated to project activities, mainly seminars, workshops and production of awareness raising materials and publications. The results could be said to justify the cost. During phase 2, the project was better staffed than phase 1. The project had qualified and committed officers focusing on the various components of the project. The project’s CTA and some officers were cost shared with the second USDOL funded project “Creating a Conducive Environment for the Effective Recognition and implementation of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.” This increased the efficiency of the use of human resources available to the project. Nonetheless, the project’s effectiveness and efficiency could have benefited from two additional staff members, namely a specialist in government relations to work directly with MOMM and a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer. The M&E function should be considered as a ‘core function’ that USDOL should require in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of project interventions. The project could have also increased its efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability by developing the skills and capacities of a group of trainers focused on labor issues as was originally

envisaged and carried out during phase 1 of implementation. Trainers prepared during phase 1 were not used during phase 2, which reduces the efficiency of resource use. Lastly, although the meetings and trainings were the backbone of the project, recommendations made during these meetings was hardly followed-up on. This reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions.

Sustainability and Focus on Impact: Without a doubt, the project has supported an increase in awareness regarding fundamental principles and rights at work and the importance of social dialogue in Egypt. It is evident that various stakeholders benefited from participation in project activities to the extent that almost all of them (including MOMM) have expressed their desire for the project’s activities to continue. The project has succeeded in reaching some key development milestones, namely supporting the establishment of the first ever independent trade union in Egypt in 2010; engaging FEI and other employers organizations and supporting them to become more effective; and prompting the Egyptian government to establish the National Council for Social Dialogue at the national level with experts committees at the governorate levels.

The project enriched the discourse around labor issues and social dialogue in Egypt through many activities with the media and the translation and dissemination of a wide range of key publications. Currently, there is a common ground on which social partners can build. The establishment of the National Council for Social Dialogue is a positive step forward to ensuring the institutionalization of social dialogue and freedom of association in Egypt. The declaration by the Egyptian government of the establishment of the National Council for Social Dialogue is a strong indication that the government recognizes the importance of social dialogue.

The project supported the establishment of bilateral committees in 10th of Ramadan and in Port Said which are more than likely to continue to function after the life of the project. It is recognized that the Council established by the government will require additional capacity building with a focus on governance structures to ensure its effectiveness.

Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at work and Social Dialogue in Egypt did not develop a sustainability plan and/or an exit strategy. The project focused on providing a wide range of awareness raising activities to a wide audience to ensure that international labor standards and principles of freedom of association become part of labor discourse in Egypt. The benefits of the awareness raising and capacity building of various structures cannot be deemed durable without the necessary legal frameworks which at the moment are not in place.

the moment ETUF seems relatively weak, however, the fact that it is the oldest federation of trade unions in Egypt with representation in many governmental ministries and institutions requires a new approach.

- 6) The ILO should develop a new and unified approach in working with all TUs. This is imperative to maintain an objective stand with all social partners in Egypt.

Key Recommendations

- 1) It is not sufficient to develop process indicators; the development of outcome indicators should be a fundamental part of planning and monitoring project objectives.
- 2) At times of political uncertainty and changes in the context, projects should re-examine project activities and develop plans for anticipating risks. This can greatly enhance the effectiveness of projects' interventions.
- 3) Other USDOL projects in Egypt should build on the success of this project by continuing to promote social dialogue as a means to solve labor disputes.
- 4) Encouraging bilateral and trilateral committees would support the sustainability of this project and the objectives of UNDAF, ILO and USDOL in Egypt. This should be done in an inclusion fashion ensuring that all are represented.
- 5) Future projects should consider a context analysis when re-engaging with ETUF. At