



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Improving indigenous peoples' access to justice and development through strategic monitoring – Final independent evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	Cameroon, Kenya, Suriname, Peru, Thailand, Nepal
Final Evaluation:	August 2017
Evaluation Mode:	Independent
Administrative Office:	Gender Equality and Diversity Branch
Technical Office:	Gender Equality and Diversity Branch
Evaluation Manager:	Rasha Tabbara
Evaluation Consultant:	Tony Powers
Project Code:	GLO/14/04/EEC
Donor(s) & Budget:	EC (€749,963)
Keywords:	Indigenous Peoples, UN Declaration, ILO Convention

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

While the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 has improved awareness of indigenous issues and has led to a number of important advances in the development of national policies, too little progress has been made in improving indigenous

peoples' living conditions and in protecting their rights. Poverty, human rights violations and encroachments on indigenous land and natural resources continue. The project sought to address this issue by building indigenous communities' capacity to systematically monitor their own human rights situation and evolving development needs, and by ensuring that the situation of indigenous peoples is addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.

The project had two main elements. The first element involved the development and testing in six pilot countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Suriname, Peru, Thailand, Nepal) of a community-based monitoring framework. The second element involved global consultations with indigenous peoples' organisations to define their needs and priorities and supported advocacy work.

Present Situation of the Project

The project ran from 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2016. All expected project outputs were delivered including a community-based assessment framework, the conduct of the six pilots, development of a data portal and advocacy to ensure that indigenous peoples' needs and priorities were addressed in the post-2015 development framework.

Two follow-up projects have since commenced that will build on this project.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to indicate to the ILO and its partners the extent to which the project achieved its aims and objectives and to assess the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluation would cover the all activities completed or planned during the term of the project.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation reviewed available project documents and reports, conducted skype interviews with project stakeholders and gathered additional information via email. No field visits were made.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

The project documents presented a strong rationale that reflected the needs of indigenous people and was in line with the strategies and priorities of the ILO, the EU and the project partners. Through the first element, the project offered a mechanism not only to collect much-needed disaggregated data on the situation of indigenous peoples and communities, but also to empower these communities in the process, enhancing the relevance of the information they could use in local rights advocacy. Through the second element, the project would allow indigenous peoples to seize a vital opportunity to influence the post-2015 development agenda and to ensure that indigenous rights were given due attention.

The project design took gender issues into account and recognized a need for the framework and project activities to be responsive to the needs of indigenous women. The project management structure was appropriate and the Steering Committee actively reviewed progress, updated the project work plan, and helped enhance the sustainability of the project by developing follow-up projects.

In terms of project design, there were some deficiencies. Clearer and more realistic objectives were needed and the connections between inputs,

activities, outputs and indicators of achievement were sometimes tenuous.

Effectiveness

Element 1: There is little if any evidence that the project has yet achieved any tangible results under this element's objective, which was about enhancing indigenous peoples' access to justice and development in the pilot countries. This objective was unrealistic for a two-year project. In practice, the project emphasised the lower order "enabling" objectives of establishing the monitoring framework and data portal and testing their application. Considering these provides a better basis for assessing the project's effectiveness.

The completed framework is a significant outcome of the project. It fills an important gap, recognized by UNPFII, by providing a tool that can be used to monitor implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ILO Convention No.169 and other international standards. Continued effort will be required to ensure that the framework is understood and applied by governments, UN agencies and other development actors.

The framework was tested in the six pilot countries, but there was insufficient attention given to capturing the results of these "tests" in a methodical way (e.g. documenting the lessons learned on what worked and what did not work and in what circumstances). Data were collected, but there were some issues with their validation and uploading to the data portal. Data were used in at least one location (Suriname) to support local rights advocacy, but more time is needed to assess the effectiveness of the framework to support such advocacy. The pilots raised awareness of human rights and indigenous rights among some participants involved including women.

The data portal was completed, but its effectiveness as a driver of reform at a local, national and international level is still untested. Questions raised in earlier project monitoring reports remain about the utility of this product for communities.

Element 2: As evidence of the effectiveness of project's advocacy related to the post-2015 development agenda, partners pointed to six specific references to indigenous peoples within the 17 SDGs. Although some rights and aspirations were not referenced (e.g. collective rights, self-determination and cultural sensitivity), all agreed that the outcomes represented a significant step forward from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The discrete contribution made by the project to the achievement of these results is difficult to isolate and measure, but it does seem to have added impetus to the overall effort by building a consensus among the key indigenous organisations, developing position papers, organizing events, and briefing individuals.

Efficiency

The project experienced some delays that affected its efficiency. It took longer than planned to finalize the framework and questionnaires and this flowed on to other activities. Translations of materials were needed and this caused more delays. Given that the budget allocated for each pilot country was quite small, there might have been a case to concentrate resources on fewer countries to enable the provision of more support for data collection, validation and analysis. Some residual funds were available towards the end of the project and these were used to add value to the project in some pilot locations. Overall, the project was managed in a way that maintained good cooperation between the partners, responded to delivery problems as they occurred and delivered all the expected results set out in the project document within budget.

Impact and sustainability

The framework and especially the indicators it defined were described by stakeholders as a "major breakthrough". The need for such a framework had been talked about for years, but little progress had been made. The project enabled the key international indigenous bodies to come together and to develop, test and adopt it. However, there are significant challenges in maximizing the framework's impact and

sustainability. Indigenous communities will need continuing support and capacity development if they are to own the framework and use it locally. How this support will be sustained into the future is unclear. It also remains to be seen how many national governments, UN agencies and other development actors will adopt the framework to guide their own work. This too will require continued promotion and advocacy.

The sustainability and ultimate utility of the data portal will also take time to become clear. Whether it can achieve the vision of being a tool for community empowerment is still uncertain.

The post-2015 development agenda now includes some important references and indicators that relate to indigenous peoples' rights and these represent a major improvement compared with the relative silence of the MDGs on indigenous issues. Development actors will now be made more aware of these issues and this is a truly sustainable project outcome.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

- a) As part of the project design process, an "evaluability assessment" should be undertaken to ensure that all project activities are designed in a way that can demonstrate their effectiveness in achieving desired project outcomes.
- b) Document a strategy for the short, medium and long-term sustainability of the Monitoring Framework including its promotion to indigenous communities, national governments, UN agencies and other development actors.
- c) Clarify the steps to be taken to overcome barriers that might limit the utility of the data portal at a community level.
- d) Incorporate into future projects the capacity to take action in response to any urgent concerns identified during the monitoring, including by providing support for local level advocacy.
- e) To avoid spreading funds too thinly in the important testing phase, assess the cost-benefits of investing more resources in fewer pilot locations

f) Consider the involvement of additional partners with an understanding of the specific needs of women in the target communities and which can enhance the project's results for women.