



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Promoting the Right to Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining – Outcome 14 Final Independent Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Brazil, China, Jordan, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Malawi, Morocco, Niger, Vietnam and Zambia*

Final Evaluation: *January-February 2016*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *ILO FUNDAMENTALS*

Technical Office: *ILO FUNDAMENTALS*

Evaluation Manager: *Peter Wichmand, ILO EVAL*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *Sandy Wark*

Project Code: *GLO/14/30/SID; GLO/14/66/SID; PHI/14/51/SID; SRL/14/51/SID; GLO/13/43/NOR; GLO/14/51/NOR; CPR/14/51/NOR & ZAM/14/53/NOR*

Donor(s) & Budget: *Norway USD 1,130,686 Sweden USD 1,158,493*

Keywords: *Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining*

Background & Context

This covers the independent final evaluation of two global technical cooperation projects conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) entitled “Promoting the Right to Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining.” with main objective to promote the effective recognition and implementation of freedom of association and

collective bargaining rights, which are described in ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

The projects had the following two immediate objectives:

Strengthened ILO knowledge-base and capacity to implement high impact strategies on freedom of association and collective bargaining;

Improved respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in law and practice in target countries and sectors.

These projects built on previous phases of technical cooperation assistance by the Governments of Norway and Sweden dating from 2011. Since both donors were supporting the same outcome within the ILO strategic framework (outcome 14), they agreed to have one common project document and monitoring and evaluation framework. Norway’s contribution amounted to USD 1,130,686 and Sweden to USD 1,158,439.

The project was conceived to address the needs of ILO constituents in target countries to effectively realize, in law and practice, the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining with particular focus on three economic sectors, namely, agriculture, ready-made garment and mining. It had two components, one global and the other country level. The global component planned interventions to increase knowledge, support advocacy and develop intervention models. The country level component was to provide technical assistance to harmonize national laws, develop and implement policies and build the capacity of stakeholders in the following 12 countries: Bolivia, Brazil, China, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Togo

and Zambia. Kenya and Togo were dropped early in the project and replaced by South Africa, Morocco and Vietnam.

Present Situation of the Project

Both projects have now concluded. This final evaluation considers the entire project implementation period from 1 January, 2014 to 31 March 2016 (Norway) and from 15 August, 2014 to 31 December, 2015 (Sweden).

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This independent final evaluation serves two main purposes:

1. Give an independent assessment of the project;
2. Document challenges, lessons-learned, good practices, and recommendations for future, similar interventions.

Methodology of evaluation

Between February and March 2016, the evaluator reviewed project documents and products, carried out semi-structured, individual interviews via SKYPE with the main ILO personnel and some consultants involved in project implementation at both the global (mainly Geneva) and country levels. The evaluator also visited three project target countries (Jordan, Vietnam and Zambia) where she interviewed national stakeholders and project beneficiaries in individual or group meetings. Lastly, the evaluator solicited feedback from national stakeholders in target countries not visited in person via an online survey. The evaluation was guided by the key questions identified in the final evaluation terms of reference (ToR) as well as by the project work plan and monitoring and evaluation matrix.

The evaluator was only able to get direct feedback from ILO national constituents in three out of 13 countries included in this project. Other national stakeholder feedback was solicited via an online survey; unfortunately, the latter only yielded 2 responses. As result, national stakeholder feedback from target countries NOT visited is nearly absent. Lastly, the ability of the evaluator to determine project resource use efficiency was limited by the amount of financial data provided.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Project Design: *The project design generally contributed positively to implementation by making*

good strategic choices at the inception of the project. Good design decisions included: building on the achievements of previous partnership phases; choosing countries with a strong ILO presence and with staff resources to adequately assess and follow-up on project supported interventions, working in countries which presented opportunities to build on other relevant, ongoing or recently concluded ILO programs, and focusing on sectors considered economically important to target countries but which are characterized by important decent work deficits.

Project Relevance: At the global component level, stakeholders within the ILO appreciated the project's focus on producing global tools not linked to a particular project and on offering professional development opportunities for ILO staff; they indicated the flexibility of outcome based funding allowed more liberal funding for these types of needed activities. However, some ILO program managers involved in implementation thought the global level intervention strategy would have been more effective if it were more focused, with fewer strategic outputs.

Strategies at the country level that contributed to project relevance included being responsive to specific national stakeholder requests for assistance, conducting needs assessments to discern gaps and opportunities, and regularly consulting with stakeholders. In a number of countries, the project was particularly effective in analyzing and capitalizing on relevance factors such as the importance of the targeted economic sector in the national economy, external trade and investment related pressures, and internal social, political and economic factors which made inventions more or less urgent/timely/risky. Project interventions in Vietnam and the Zambia stand out as being particularly timely – the former, because of unexpected political openness to allowing independent trade unions and the latter because the potential negative consequences of falling copper prices on industrial harmony.

Project progress and effectiveness: Although the project's global component produced or contributed to a large variety of relevant and potentially useful knowledge materials, several were not finalized by project end making their actual effectiveness hard to predict. The global advocacy campaign, which was planned to be large, outward oriented and ambitiously

conceived to change perspectives on freedom of association and collective bargaining was scaled back and reoriented to be quite small, conservative and ILO-orientated. Some relevant communication tools and activities at the country level were carried out however. Progress on the development of global tools such as capacity building guides, e learning modules and intervention models was slower than expected; one of two models was produced in draft form. The draft model highlights some innovative strategies for promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining in plantations that might be taken up later in the FUNDAMENTALS branch's work on the rural economy and supply chains. Two unplanned regional activities were successful – the regional journalist workshop capitalized on the potential of the media as change makers and the MENA bipartite workshop on effectively used South-South exchange as a means to spread good collective bargaining practices and inspire follow-up efforts in participating countries.

The country level component featured a variety of effective interventions in 13 countries which were generally in line with the project intervention strategy presented in the PRODOC. The project contributed to practical measures to improve respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in a number of countries. Examples include developing guidelines and raising the awareness of judges and prosecutors involved in labour rights cases (Sri Lanka and the Philippines), supporting the creation of tripartite social dialogue forums (Malawi, Morocco, Zambia), and the development and support for implementation of national or sectoral action plans on freedom of association and collective bargaining (Malawi, Brazil, Rwanda, Zambia). Project assessments were generally very effective in identifying and defining the challenges to be debated and addressed by national stakeholders; in Zambia, the assessment work appears to have led to a number of reforms (mining sector minimum wage, limits on use of contract labour) and initiatives (improved cooperation among trade unions).

Factors that affected project implementation included its late start, challenges identifying and recruiting qualified national staff, changes within partner organizations, and in some cases social, economic and political events that were beyond its control (the withdrawal of support from the Bolivian Government

due to unrelated difference with the ILO, brakes put on reform in China linked to its economic slow-down, the pressure of Vietnam to accelerate reforms associated with trade deals, the fall of copper prices in Zambia).

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender was mainstreamed into project strategies and activities effectively in many countries and in some of the global component products. Some of the knowledge materials and many of the activities of the Project focused on labour relations challenges in sectors where women workers are predominant. In most countries and in global training activities, the project sought to achieve gender balance among participants and records of participation were sex-disaggregated. Some countries were purposeful in mainstreaming gender into program activities by focusing on discrimination and sexual harassment.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: The project's monitoring and evaluation system was adequate to track its progress against its work plan and larger objectives. Data on some indicators was not tracked due to insufficient monitoring systems or poor indicators. Reporting was adequate and balanced the need for formal reporting with managers' time constraints and their need to focus on implementation. Geneva and managers implementing country level activities reported having regular consultations to adjust plans to account for challenges and opportunities in the field. Final country progress reports for China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Zambia were detailed and thoughtful in their analysis.

Efficiency of Resource Use: In the programs for which budget and expenditure information is the most complete (decentralized programs), resource use was efficient. However, information provided to the evaluator by the project was insufficient to evaluate its overall efficiency and cost effectiveness. Based on available information, the rate of decentralization of funding to country programs did not meet targets. The project effectively leveraged human and financial resources from other ongoing ILO programs in about half of its target countries.

Sustainability: At both the global and country levels, project managers implemented strategies to favor the sustainability of project actions. The global component of the project produced a number of

potentially useful information and capacity building tools and training activities. However, several research products and training tools were not yet finalized or diffused by the end of the project implementation period. The capacity of the FUNDAMENTALS branch to follow-up and complete these deliverables is challenged by staff reductions and strategic reorientations and threatens their sustainability.

Project country level activities resulted in changes in partner institutional capacity and strategic priorities that may sustain project efforts in some cases. In other cases, sustainability may hinge on the ability of the ILO to continue its support for a longer period of time. Efforts to mobilize resources for such efforts are ongoing in some countries; in other countries, the ILO indicated that there is commitment by ILO specialists to follow-up and sustain project work in at least a limited way.

Conclusions

This project implemented many effective strategies which, with a few exceptions, were in line with its initial implementation strategy. Notable project achievements were the creation/reconstitution of tripartite social dialogue bodies in Malawi and Zambia. Vietnam is a noteworthy example of a country where the project was able to complement the work of an existing ILO program and capitalize on an unexpected political/trade related opening which may lead to the ratification of C. 87 and 98 in the next five years. Programs in Jordan, Morocco, and Zambia were exemplary for their efforts to work with relevant national stakeholders on promoting collective bargaining in particularly strategic sectors of their target countries' national economies. Most countries integrated gender considerations in meaningful ways – but in particular the program in Sri Lanka. The Philippines was exceptionally creative in reaching a wide variety of stakeholders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 for the ILO: In future multi-country thematic projects on the promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining, the ILO should work in fewer countries but with higher intensity. It should favour project implementation modalities capitalize on experienced national staff in country programmes

(versus strategies that are implemented by Geneva or regionally based specialists).

In this project, for the most part, the volume of ILO activities is aligned with programme effectiveness. Among the operational reasons for this may be because higher intensity programmes can justify having an effective manager based in the country and include sufficient resources to implement relatively holistic approaches to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

Recommendation 2 for the ILO: Future project designs may consider factoring in the potential for South-South cooperation in country targeting strategies by choosing geographically proximate countries and common sectors.

The choice of some target countries in this project created opportunities for such cooperation, but on a limited basis. Participants in the MENA workshop reported that learning about the experiences of countries that share common challenges was helpful. Stakeholders in Zambia suggested that there were many countries in southern Africa with large mining sectors that could learn from its experiences in this project.

Recommendation 3 for the ILO: Future technical cooperation Programmes on freedom of association and collective bargaining should favour designs that are sector and perhaps even commodity specific.

Programme managers in the country level activities reported that sector focused programmes elicited higher levels of stakeholder engagement because they were able to deal more directly with practical concerns and address challenges related to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Emerging findings from research on intervention models in the plantation sector likewise indicate that working on specific international traded commodities may offer opportunities for the ILO to capitalize on new, innovative supply chain related strategies. Within sector focused Programmes there may likewise be opportunities to implement more integrated programmes which, like the Better Work Programme, consider productivity and workers' rights issues in an integrated and holistic manner.