



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

ILO-Norway and ILO-Sweden Partnership Programmes' contribution towards Outcome 9 - Employers have strong, independent and representative organization

Quick Facts

Countries: *Norway Partnership Programme (NP): Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Moldova, Montenegro, Myanmar, and Nepal - Sweden Partnership Programme (SP): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Cambodia, FYR Macedonia, Honduras, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Swaziland, Vanuatu, and Zambia.*

Type of Evaluation: *NP: Midterm; SP: Final*

Mode of Evaluation:

Outcome Based - Independent Evaluation

Admin & Technical backstopping: *ACT/EMP*

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Project Code: *GLO/12/56/NOR, GLO/12/60/SID*

Donor & Project Budget: *Norway (US\$ 2'932,107); Sweden (US\$561,215)*

Keywords: *employers organization, sustainable enterprise, capacity building.*

Background & Context

Summary of the projects purposes, logic and structure:

The focus of the NP was:

- (i) strengthen the institutional capacity of employers' organisations in policy development and dialogue at national, regional and interregional levels, and

- (ii) (ii) to assist EOs to develop new and improved services to enable membership recruitment and retention.

This programme started in April 2012 and will end in December 2014 and covers 12 countries and 3 regional activities.

In respect of the NP, the evaluation was a mid-term evaluation, which is planned to be followed by a final external evaluation in December 2014.

The SP sought to enhance the capacity of EOs to participate in the policy dialogue on sustainable enterprise development for job-rich growth and provide these organisations with an opportunity to do more in-depth policy work that would more effectively contribute to national policy dialogues. It covered 13 countries and one regional activity.

Both the NP and SP funding also contributed to the elaboration of several global products which supported activities at country level. The NP included a new training tool, "Greening Economies, Enterprises and Jobs: The role of EOs in the promotion of environmentally sustainable economies and enterprises."

In addition NP funded a global survey on women in business and management and the development of a resource network of employers to share good practices and advocacy on advancing women in business and gender equality.

SP contributed to further improvements to the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprise (ESEE) toolkit.

Present Situation: The NP is currently being executed and will end in December 2014. The SP has been fully executed and ended on March 2014.

Purpose, scope and audience of the evaluation: The main purpose of the evaluation was to examine the CPOs achieved and Global Products produced under Outcome 9 that were funded by the NP and SP and assess their contribution towards achieving Outcome 9 (Employers have strong, independent and representative organizations).

The scope of the evaluation was the 19 (of 23) countries in which the two programmes operated from April 2012 until early 2014 and the GPs which were developed under the two programmes. The audience of the evaluation was ACT/EMP headquarters and field specialists, main employers' organizations in the countries under review, programme managers, main national partners, ILO field office directors, technical support at headquarters, field and HQ technical specialists, responsible evaluation focal points, and the donors.

Methodology of evaluation: The evaluation team based its assessments on the following main sources of information and data:

- **a document review covering** (i) general ILO programme and budgets, work-plans, DWCP documents and other country-level documents, (ii) more specific NP and SP programme documents, progress reports, and (iii) an overview of international literature related to EO capacity development.
- **interviews** with ACT/EMP staff and other ILO officials in Geneva.
- **field missions** to four countries: Botswana, Cambodia, Honduras and Moldova, including interviews with ILO field coordinators and local ILO representatives as well as a wide spectrum of representatives of EO boards and secretariats, member companies, trade unions, government officials etc.
- **an EO survey** based on a questionnaire that was sent to partner EOs in 13 countries which were not subject to field missions. Answers were received from all these countries.

While the evaluation is primarily focussed on the outcome level, i.e. the strengthening of capacity of partner EOs, it is also expected to comment on the contributions by CPOs and GPs "towards making a significant input to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes". The report gives a number

of reasons why the assessment of impacts of EO support may be a challenging task.

However, in order to provide a basis identifying potential impacts, a generic results chain has been constructed. This results chain illustrates how SP and NP funded interventions through a chain of events may result in development impacts. This could be seen as a simplified illustration of a "theory of change". References are made i.e. to research literature which provides useful illustrations of the complexities and conditions related to each of the linkages in this results chain.

Main Findings & Conclusions

According to the key evaluation criteria defined by the OECD/DAC, and adding an additional criterion of "validity of intervention design", the findings and conclusions of the evaluation are:

Relevance: The findings from the four case studies confirm the relevance of the NP and SP funded interventions as well as the resulting CPOs and GPs. Likewise, strong mutual linkages were observed between outcome 9 and other outcome areas and with the DWCPs.

It is obvious that a fruitful cooperation has been established between ACT/EMP and other departments in the work with country programmes as well as with the GPs. The findings from the country case studies in combination with the EO survey give a very clear message from EO representatives that ILO support respond well to their needs and concerns.

Validity of intervention design: The four country case studies indicated that the chosen interventions to high degree were logically coherent and with realistic objectives in terms of CPO achievement. The "Outcome-Based Partnership Funding" (OBPF) modality served its purpose well, i.e. to provide a "light earmarking" of donor funds which allow donors to track their contributions to specific priorities.

However, the way that this modality has been applied in the context of the NP and SP funded programmes meant that there are special log-frames and results reports for each of these interventions. A recent independent review of the OBPF modality indicates that procedures may be simplified by relying on one single reporting structure irrespective of source of funding.

The P&B indicators are designed and work well for the purpose of aggregation of CPO results at department or agency level. However, at the same time it is obvious that the P&B indicators are not very well suited for monitoring over a longer time period of gradual increases in the capacity of a partner EO. The Evaluation Report provides some ideas on how such measurement tools may be developed.

Effectiveness Data presented in ILO's Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2012-13 paints a positive picture regarding the CPO achievements regarding Outcome 9. The set targets for 2012/13 have been surpassed and results are clearly better than the previous biennium. Compared to its resources, Outcome 9 also ranks quite high among all outcome areas (no. 3 among 19 outcome areas).

NP and SP funding contributed substantially to the overall achievement of CPO indicators within the EO cooperation. The number of countries where SP funded interventions contributed to achieving a CPO indicator was higher than the ones recorded for the corresponding NP funded interventions.

The evaluation did not encounter any examples of measurement of outcomes from knowledge production, i.e. GPs, in the same standardised way as applies to country level outcomes. However, the review of GPs indicated that the NP and SP funded GP elements reached most of their set objectives.

The EO Survey painted a fairly positive picture of EO attitudes and activities in respect of gender equality and non-discrimination. The four country case studies showed that the gender dimension were an integral part of most NP funded activities, while there were considerable challenges related to the mainstreaming of gender equality in relation to SP funded EESE processes. It was noted that in several cases the gender dimension was absent in business agendas.

Efficiency ACT/EMP's progress reports indicate that outputs were delivered in basic accordance with work-plans and milestones. It has not been feasible during this evaluation to make a detailed assessment of the quality and timeliness of the delivery of allocated resources. However, interviews with stakeholders indicate that resource delivery was fully satisfactory in respect of these dimensions.

It is expected that the SP budget for Outcome 9 was fully used at the end of the budget period, i.e. as per 31 March 2014. The NP budget had been used to 68% at the end of February 2014. It is expected that this budget will be fully used at the end of the agreement period. It appears that ACT/EMP demonstrates a good ability to manage voluntary funds provided through the OBPF modality.

Impact: It usually takes time until development changes can be measured. For this and other reasons mentioned in the report, it is not realistic to expect that it should be possible to trace such changes in a short time perspective. It is obvious though, that both SP and NP funded interventions have contributed to the creation of various kinds of potentials for development change.

Sustainability: The development of EO membership is a crucial factor for the sustainability of the results of EO capacity development. It is therefore positive to note that the EO survey showed a clearly positive membership trend among many of the EOs that responded to the questionnaire. At the same time country case studies raise some concerns regarding the potential for sustainability of results of NP and SP funded interventions at country level.

Although the evaluators were not able to make any in-depth assessment of the various GP elements that have been funded by NP and SP, the general impression is good. E.g. the tools for assessing various dimensions of EO capacity and for planning EO advocacy efforts are excellent. There appears to be an interesting potential for these and other GP elements to benefit a much wider spectrum of agencies within the development community in the future.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up: The evaluation has resulted in the following list of recommendations:

- **On planning and reporting structures:** Rely on one single structure for planning and reporting irrespective of funding based on ILO's standard CPO and GP model (and avoid creating a separate logical planning framework for donor funded activities).

- On donor support: Continue to support the creation of strong, independent and representative EOs. Give priority to broadening of the membership base and strengthening of EO capacity for analysis and advocacy related to business environment reform and gender equality.
- On capacity development: Experiment with the methods for supporting capacity development. Learn from others e.g. by learning partnerships (and possibly also twinning arrangements) between EOs in different countries. Consider partnerships with various local institutions, like local economic think-tanks.
- Safeguarding sustainability of EESE: Consider available options for ensuring the sustainability of updating over time the EESE report and data base at country level, like cost-sharing with others for periodic enterprise surveys.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Look for ways to improve the monitoring and evaluation of EO capacity development. The EO audit tool in Module 1 of the EESE toolkit may offer an interesting opportunity. The possibility to make more active use of data on EO membership development should also be considered.
- Mainstreaming of gender equality: Look for opportunities to make successful gender initiatives “fertilise” the various organisational structures of EOs as well as EO advocacy processes like the national business agendas.
- Dissemination of EESE: Look for ways to disseminate the EESE toolkit as a “public good” to the global PSD development community, e.g. through the DCED (Donor Committee on Enterprise Development) and its Business Environment Working Group (presently chaired by the ILO). Other actors may also provide useful feed-back to the toolkit.

Important lessons learned:

The lessons that may be learned from this evaluation are all related to the special challenges that characterise capacity development of membership-based organisations.

1. The evaluation has clearly demonstrated the importance of the specific country context in which an EO partner operates and of the need to adjust design and management of EO support flexibly to a dynamic country context.
2. The successful Honduras action illustrates the importance of working with EOs that is truly representative of the private sector and therefore able to apply a broad perspective on the needs of business environment reform.
3. There are several examples of capacity building activities which have led to results which may not be possible to sustain without continued support from the ILO. EO membership is a critical factor to strengthen the financial capacity and representativeness of EOs.
4. Initiatives for promoting gender equality often remain as fairly “isolated islands” within organisations.
5. Constraints related to staff capacity constitute a major challenge to EO support.

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