



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

More and Better Jobs for Women: Women's Empowerment through Decent Work in Turkey – Midterm evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Turkey*

Mid-Term Evaluation: *October-November 2015*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *CO-Ankara*

Technical Office: *EMP/CEPOL*

Evaluation Manager: *Irina Sinelina*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *Lotta Nycander*

Project Code: *TUR/13/02/SID*

Donor(s) & Budget: *Sweden (US\$ 3,446.824)*

Keywords: *gender equality, jobs for women,
employment policy*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The *More and Better Jobs for Women: Women's Empowerment through Decent Work in Turkey* is a three-year Project, launched in March 2013. It addresses issues of unemployment of women in the country, which in the Project Document are described as "chronic" and existing despite economic growth in the country. Gender-based segregations in the labour market and the lack of awareness on gender equality and labour standards are related

aspects that the Project is addressing. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to women's empowerment in Turkey by providing decent work opportunities through capacity development of relevant institutions, active labour market policies interventions and enhancing awareness on gender equality, women's human rights and rights at work. The Project is aiming to contribute to the development of employment policies that benefit women and which are to be implemented within the framework of decent work and gender equality. It shall also strive to increase employability of women and unemployed women who are entering the labour market - through effective job counseling and active labour market policies. Finally, it intends to contribute to the integration of ILO's rights-based approach into existing vocational training programmes, and raising awareness on gender equality and labour standards.

The national implementing agency is İŞKUR, the National Employment Agency, under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, while the Provincial Directorates are the implementing organizations for the outputs related to employment at local level. The Project is in operation in four provinces, namely in Ankara (where it is also based within the ILO country office), Bursa, Konya and Istanbul. The project team consists of Project Coordinator, Communications Assistant and Finance/Administration Assistant - all of whom are based in Ankara - and a Field Focal Point who is based in Istanbul within the offices of İŞKUR, where he works closely with the Project's Focal Point

and Provincial Director and Deputy Director in Istanbul İŞKUR Office. He and the Project Coordinator visit Konya and Bursa approximately every three months where his contacts mainly are with the project focal points within İŞKUR and Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Boards (PEVTBs).

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

Mid-term is a critical stage in the life of a Project and a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) can provide an opportunity for the staff, and stakeholders, to pause and reflect on experiences and learning, and determine how to proceed to best reach the goals. The purposes of this evaluation were according to the Terms of Reference to:

1. Determine if the project has made progress towards its stated objectives and outcomes and explain why/why not;
2. Provide recommendations on programme improvement and further action; and
3. Where necessary, identify the possible need to refine strategy.

The scope of the evaluation was to assess the Project's implementation from the start, covering all four provinces where it operates i.e. Ankara, Bursa, Konya and Istanbul. In terms of stakeholders, the ToR foresaw that the ILO management in the country office including the project staff would be involved, as well as the tripartite constituents, key partner organizations (researchers, academics), civil society organizations, the donor agency, as well as the unemployed women, who are the ultimate and indirect beneficiaries of the project. All of the above-mentioned would also be the clients (users) of the evaluation.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation criteria applied were relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact potential and sustainability, as well as validity of project design. Gender equality and integration of gender concerns were dealt with as a crosscutting issue in the overall process. The objectives of the evaluation were translated into relevant and specific key questions which were linked to the five evaluation criteria to enable the development of the methodology, as well as the assessment and use of the evaluation criteria.

Qualitative methods (for both qualitative and quantitative data) were used - the latter provided through secondary sources, mostly provided by ILO but also by other Project stakeholders.

The evaluator collected data and information from multiple sources through a comprehensive document review including studying the Project Document and the Project results framework. The sources of the information and data were many and include (but are not limited to) national policy documents, UN, EU and Sida policy documents, ILO Project Document, Progress Reports and annual reports, other technical reports, action plans and strategic documents of the implementing partner, and financial reports.

The other methods included a visit to Turkey, including Ankara, Istanbul, Bursa and Konya provinces between 19th – 28th October 2015 in which in-depth interviews were done and visits to the Project operational areas, including observations, interviews and discussions and a validation meeting presenting the preliminary findings. E-mail correspondence was also used to gather data and a visit to ILO Headquarters in Geneva for a brief discussion with two officials about the Project. Methodological triangulation/cross-checking of information has been applied in the analysis as much as possible to increase the credibility and validity of the results and to minimise any bias. The evaluation process was as participatory as possible in all its aspects enabling key informants to provide and share information.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Generally, it was found that the Project in the eyes of civil society, academia/researchers, media actors, is acknowledged for its important role in helping change prevailing attitudes in society that impact negatively on women's rights and opportunities to participate actively in the labour market, for example notions and traditional/conventional views that women's most important role consists of staying at home and taking care of the children. The evaluation assessed that in the eyes of the İŞKUR, the Project's main contribution is the work on increasing employment opportunities for women, and the institutionalization goal of the Project was highlighted.

Project relevance

Relevance is here understood as relating to the extent to which the Project's activities and objectives are in line with the priorities and policies of the country/stakeholders and (direct, indirect, ultimate) beneficiaries, as well as the ILO itself and the development partner. It was found that the Project and all of its planned outcomes are highly relevant.

Project effectiveness

Effectiveness is understood as relating to the extent to which activity/strategies reach or contribute to meeting the stated objectives. It was found that the activities under Outcome 1 (National Action Plan on Women's Employment/NAP) have been quite effective in terms of developing the actual NAP, which came about through good cooperation between members of the National Technical Team/NTT. At the time of the evaluation mission, İŞKUR had not yet given the Project its comments on the plan. Once implementation of the plan is set in motion, effectiveness should once again be assessed – perhaps at the time of the Project's final evaluation. In view of the delays that were apparent in the area of capacity development and training (Job Counsellors and beneficiaries) this evaluation criteria can obviously not be applied yet. Regarding Outcome 3, activities and strategies were found to have reached a good level of effectiveness, and the project has for instance established important communication channels and spread the Project's messages to the public in diverse ways.

Project efficiency

Efficiency is here understood as a measurement of the outputs (qualitative and quantitative) in relation to the inputs. It is applied to assess/determine whether the least costly resources possible were used to reach the intended results. The level of efficiency is not easy to determine at this stage. The budget delivery of the project was only about 29% - due to delays of e.g. the training programme, but this is expected to increase once it takes off.

Sustainability

Sustainability is here understood as the benefits of the activities, or benefits that are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. At Mid Term it was obviously too early to detect any sustainability since the Project had not yet moved

into a number of key activity areas at the time of the evaluation. However, it is one of the most important aspects. If the NAP for Women Employment actually is implemented in a serious way as intended, with resources allocated for the tasks – there is likelihood of sustainability in the sense that İŞKUR may institutionalise initiatives that are gender-responsive, enabling/allowing more unemployed women to find jobs through for instance the application of modified survey instruments now including gender responsive questionnaires. Regarding to trainees in the upcoming project-initiated training program (beneficiaries), it is expected that training will not just be one-time events and the Project/stakeholders will follow up and monitor their post-training status and their job situation, and perhaps their knowledge/attitudes in some way.

A joint evaluation exercise may be beneficial to increased ownership and change of attitudes which in turn may have effects on sustainable systems and establishing procedures and services e.g. the new ways to undertake labour market studies, or improved systems of job counselling that in turn may have an effect on empowering women job seekers.

Impact potential

Potential impact is here understood as the potential positive and negative changes that may result from the Project's interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. It is not likely that one single activity area in isolation will lead to any impact once the Project has been fully implemented. However, combined they may generate positive changes that, for instance, enable and/or empower more women to claim their rights in accessing decent work, as well as affordable and quality day care centres for their children, or better care for the elderly – which are the areas belonging to women's traditional reproductive roles and responsibilities, and that are found to pose as hindrances for women to seek, access and maintain jobs.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The Project management and its tripartite constituents should ensure that a final National Action Plan on Women's Employment (NAP) is produced and submitted to İŞKUR (Turkey Employment Agency) by the first quarter of 2016

followed by training and monitoring to ensure at least the start-up of its actual implementation and that allocation of human and financial resources for specified tasks are made.

2. Because of the delays of certain key activities the ILO Country Office should in good time before the end of the first quarter in 2016 officially request Sida/Embassy of Sweden to approve a no-cost extension of the Project beyond June 2016.

3. The Project management should engage itself even more with completing a quality Review of Public Employment Services that meets the requirements of both ILO and İSKUR, preferably together with the consultant who produced it, and if needed, with more technical support from EMPLOI/CEPOL department, ILO HQs. Discussions should be held with ILO colleagues in Ankara and at EMPLOI/CEPOL to reach a decision on how to deal with this review to meet the quality standards of both ILO and İSKUR. This discussion should also consider options to outsource a revision of parts of the study – even if this requires that fresh data be collected.

4. Shortly after the evaluator's visit in Turkey, municipalities' TVET courses were identified (replacing İSKUR) to serve as new platforms for the Project's training and capacity building programme on human rights and gender equality. A) The Project management and Country Office should make all efforts to ensure that there are no administrative obstacles (regarding the Agreements) for the training to take off. B) They should also closely monitor the implementation, and ensure that a realistic plan is in place to follow-up training to determine any impact. If the Project cannot move on this by the first quarter of 2016, ILO should cancel the Agreement and a call for fresh bids should be made.

5. Regarding its work on media, communication, knowledge products and promotional activities - the ILO country office and Headquarters, as well as the development partner should be mindful that the Project is able to express its messages freely to the public and that political interests do not impact on the activities that have been agreed upon.

6. The Project management should make more efforts to increase ownership of the Project among its stakeholders, through the National Technical Team and the provincial project stakeholders. The various "pillars" at national and provincial levels need

to be more connected, e.g. through more sharing of documents and better communication; more joint field trips to implementation areas, more efforts to engage the stakeholders in the whole project and e.g. joint internal evaluations.

7. The Country Office should be mindful about the suitability of officials participating in study visits to other countries. If undertaken in a Project environment, these comparatively costly activities should not just be seen as learning exercises, but should clearly aim at producing results in terms of improvements and changes in institutions in home countries. Thus, it is sound practice that the organisation that invites government officials to such visits asks them to document what follow-up actions they will carry out in their organisations upon return.

8. The Project management should develop (or use existing ILO formats) the monitoring tools and some system to keep track of the project related activities in Ankara, Konya, Istanbul and Bursa – this is important in particular once the training programmes get under way and to be able to present sufficient and reliable gender disaggregated data and information for the use of indicators of performance/achievement.

9. The ILO Country Office/Technical Unit should request the Project to report more frequently than once a year.

10. The Technical Unit/Country Office and ILO Headquarters (Procurement unit) should in the future ensure that large capacity development components of a Project are not commissioned to only one implementation partner, in particular not when the cost constitutes a large part of the Project's total budget.

11. Even if the Project is extended beyond June 2016, the Project management, with its partners, stakeholders, should keep the subject of sustainability in focus in its discussions with the stakeholders, which involves not only İSKUR but also the other actors/organisations that took part in developing the NAP. The Project should initiate the planning for a Closing Conference early in 2016, with key results and challenges to be brought to the relevant audience/public for discussions - an event that will also be the platform to present the exit strategy that elaborates the sustainability of the impact of the project activities.