



# Evaluation Summaries

## Evaluation: Mobilizing Action on the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (China)

**Final Evaluation:** July 2006

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**Technical Area:** InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration

**Evaluation Management:**

**Evaluation Team:** Margareta de Goys, external evaluator

**Project Start:** May 2004

**Project End:** August 2006

**Project Code:** RAS/03/52/UKM

**Donor:** The United Kingdom (1,700,000 US\$)

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The ILO Project “Mobilizing Action on the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking” is a sub-regional project, financed through the DFID Partnership Programme for 2003-2006. The project addresses the needs and concerns of domestic workers who work in Indonesia and the Philippines, or in a recipient country: Hong Kong (China), Singapore and Malaysia; and who are among the most vulnerable to forced labour and trafficking.

The development goal was to contribute to strengthening the protection of domestic workers, whether international migrant domestic workers or internal domestic workers.

The immediate objective of the project was the eradication of the worst forms of abuse of domestic workers in Asia, through an integrated programme of law, capacity building, organization and self-representation and targeted interventions.

The project has encompassed six strategic components; namely to strengthen the knowledge base, to strengthen the policy and legislative protection of domestic workers; to strengthen the advocacy for the protection of domestic workers; to strengthen the outreach and organization of domestic workers; to raise public awareness and awareness among domestic workers; and to improve assistance services available to domestic workers.

#### Present situation of project

The project was implemented in Indonesia and the Philippines, with activities also in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore; including training activities with the migrant workers organizations and their trade union counterparts in the neighbouring destination countries.

#### Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to review and assess the project’s progress and achievement to date. As such, the evaluation was supposed to draw on lessons learned in a forward-looking manner so that the findings of the evaluation could be taken into account in the development of a proposal for a new phase.

## Methodology of evaluation

The evaluator visited Indonesia and the Philippines, where key actors were met. The consultant also undertook phone interviews and reviewed project-related documents. The interviews were semi-structured and undertaken with the use of interview guidelines.

A field visit was also effectuated, while in Indonesia, and during this visit the evaluator was able to meet and discuss with a group of domestic workers.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

In the evaluator's view, this is a relevant and worthwhile project. ILO is creating value added and there are many important synergy effects and good levels of cooperation with other ILO projects and agendas. ILO has brought expertise, quality, insight and credibility to domestic workers issues and to the various programmes and activities implemented through the project. The project has benefited from fruitful collaboration with many ILO staff members and has greatly benefited from the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and other projects.

The knowledge, commitment and competence of many NGOs were impressive and many programmes initiated seemed efficient and effective. They usually operated in a limited geographical area and it is important to ensure that good practices can be disseminated and multiplied. In fact, the outreach and sustainability of various programmes and activities aiming at protecting and empowering domestic workers remain a challenge.

As concerns the project's focus of protecting domestic workers from trafficking and forced labour, the project has been able to create awareness in the sub region of prevalent practices and has addressed many outstanding issues, such as the absence of information and awareness, the need for outreach and empowerment programmes directed towards domestic workers and inadequate legislation and regulation. Most importantly, the project

has managed to change the mindset of many national stakeholders who have been rather slow in taking on the domestic workers' issues but who are now actively promoting legislative and regulatory reform.

The project has been able to involve key stakeholders in the countries of coverage and, furthermore, promoted efficient networking between national partners and partners in the sub-region, between countries and between governments and NGOs. In many instances, the project has created a platform for discussions between governments and NGOs and this has promoted the accountability of various duty bearers. The project has also been effective in raising the level of awareness of domestic workers' issues. It was a good strategy to develop a sub-regional project and to work simultaneously on sending and recipient country problems and on problems of "domestic" workers at home and abroad.

The project started out as a project dealing mainly with trafficking and forced labour, but has successfully managed to get an entry point to a dialogue on many other issues of concern to domestic workers.

In general, a more rights-based approach would have been an advantage and the project could in this sense have focused on *empowering domestic workers (the rights holders) to know and to claim their rights and on the duty bearers to live up to their obligations*; be it ministries of manpower, foreign affairs, the police, recruitment agents etc.

In this respect, the ILO has got certain uncontested advantages; being an international organisation with valid instruments and direct relationships to many national partners in the sending and recipient countries. As such, it is in a good position to inform duty bearers of their obligations and in assisting them in living up to them. Also, its mandate and experience allow the ILO to empower rights holders through organising (unionising) or just through providing information about rights.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

### Main recommendations and follow-up

As this is a highly relevant project with many positive accomplishments, it is strongly recommended that the project be prolonged into a second phase of a duration of two to three years. The focus should be more clearly on the empowerment of rights holders and the accountability of duty bearers, and the latter should incorporate prevention of trafficking and forced labour. An intensified dialogue with the governments is important in order to have them becoming increasingly committed and to assume their obligations and responsibilities. The ILO is competent to take on such a task and has accumulated a lot of information and knowledge to back up this dialogue. We would thus recommend a focus on empowerment of rights holders to claim their rights and on strengthening duty bearers to perform their functions and duties.

The project implemented many interesting and worthwhile activities, and produced valuable outputs in many different areas: legislation and policies, studies and research on domestic workers and on trafficking and forced labour, practices and regulations of recruitment agencies and domestic workers training centres, education of domestic workers and their communities, empowerment and outreach programmes for domestic workers, training of staff of government agencies, trade unions and NGOs, and awareness raising campaigns.

There are indications of progress towards a more secure environment for domestic workers, but more needs to be done in order to empower domestic workers to claim their rights and reduce their vulnerability, thus the importance of enabling the project to build on its achievements during a second phase.

The non-recognition of domestic workers as workers and the invisibility of domestic workers need to be further addressed and efforts to register domestic workers and disseminate information on how they contribute to the national economy need to continue. In fact, the limited awareness about the importance and plights of domestic

workers, of the general public, of employers and of service providers, is an area of concern.

Due to the size and complexity of the issues at stake, it is important to focus on strategic areas and catalytic interventions where an agency with relatively small financial means, such as ILO, can have a strategic impact. This requires an in-depth analysis of the situation of domestic workers, of the roles and capacities of partner organisations and of existing problems and constraints. During a next phase, the project should strive to obtain the critical mass needed for substantial changes and be working towards realistic and measurable objectives and results. Below follow some more specific recommendations:

As part of the programme preparation for a next phase, a comprehensive situation analysis should be carried out, encompassing a portfolio and stakeholder analysis for the identification of best practices and potential for outreach and impact.

A problem identification and objective formulation participatory workshop should be held before or at the beginning of the next phase and aim at the development of a problem-solving and results-oriented project with a high level of ownership of main collaboration partners.

National strategies should be developed for each country in order to promote a holistic approach and national ownership and commitment. The project document should clearly indicate responsibilities and functions of all parties.

National or sub-regional partners need to become more directly engaged in the implementation of project activities in order to foster ownership and sustainability of the outputs.

Activities at the national level should encompass the empowerment of domestic workers and improved legislation and a regulatory framework for the sector in order to combat situations of abuse and promote rights of domestic workers. Special emphasis should be given to the recognition of domestic workers as workers and the provision of social security and health coverage.

Efforts should be made, whenever feasible, to include government officials, trade unions, employers, academics and civil society representatives in the same workshops and seminars in order to promote pluralistic discussions and to contribute to improved contacts and dialogue between representatives of various sectors of society and increased accountability.

The ILO should continue to play a role in the fostering of bilateral agreements on the rights of migrant domestic workers.

Domestic workers associations, NGOs and trade unions that are willing to reach out to domestic workers should be supported in their efforts to empower domestic workers.

The project should combat negative stereotyping of domestic workers and give precedent to empowerment as a way to combat abuse of domestic workers and enable them to claim their rights, in accordance with ILO's fundamental labour standards.

A specific component for the empowerment of domestic workers should be developed and encompass training of domestic workers and their leaders, support to activities aiming at organisation and representation of domestic workers and education and vocational skills development for domestic workers.

For the sub-projects, to be financed by a future project, the sustainability, outreach and impact should be emphasized and there should be more strategic focus and problem orientation. One criterion for reviewing proposals from partners should be the expected contribution to achieving the project's objectives and potential for outreach and impact.

There should be more collaboration with local governments and awareness raising activities at this level as well as capacity building of local partners in the development of local ordinances.

The ILO has been able to benefit from established relationships with relevant stakeholders in various countries but in order to do this and in order to achieve envisaged results, the project has had to look beyond the traditional ILO tripartite constituencies. If the project had adopted more of a problem

oriented strategy and a proper stakeholder analysis for each problem area, some of the time and efforts that were put into mobilising the tripartite partners could have been saved.