



# Evaluation Summaries

## Independent Thematic Evaluation of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme II 2004-2007

### Quick Facts

**Evaluation Type:** Final Report

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent, Nov. 2007

**Technical Area:** Employability and Gender

**Evaluation Management:** ILO Evaluation Unit, Geneva

**Evaluation Team:** Seetharam Mukkavilli evaluation team leader, Judith Hoyles and Patrick Empey

**Project Start:** 2004

**Project Code:** INT/04/66/IRL, INT/04/64/IRL, INT/04/65/IRL

**Project End:** 2007

**Donor:** Ireland

### Background & Context

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

The objective of WEDGE and DEWD is to develop entrepreneurship among women, particularly for women with disabilities using a three-pronged strategy built on knowledge creation and dissemination, advocacy, and service delivery. The objective of PEPDEL is to improve the employment opportunities of disabled persons through better legislation. Its strategy consists mainly of knowledge building and technical support to key partners for developing such legislation.

All three projects were inter-regional projects with sites in various countries in Asia and Africa. All were at the end of their second

phase aspiring to continue through new funding from the new Irish Aid-ILO Partnership Programme.

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

The thematic evaluation aims to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme II 2004-2007 to build sustainable capacity development of their strategic and implementing partners in mainstreaming disability and women entrepreneurship. The intention is to draw lessons from the interventions in how to support capacity development in the future. It is targeted at senior managers in Irish Aid and the ILO as well as the national stakeholders. The thematic evaluation covered three components (technical cooperation projects) funded by the Irish-Aid-ILO Partnership Programme: *Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality* (WEDGE), *Developing Entrepreneurship among Women with Disabilities* (DEWD), and *Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation* (PEPDEL).

#### Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was carried out by a team led by an independent consultant and consisted of representatives of the Irish Aid and the ILO.

The methodology included desk reviews and short field visits to Lao PDR and Vietnam in Asia and Zambia in Africa. The primary data was gathered through key informant interviews and discussions with stakeholders in the ILO and the partners. All arrangements including selection of countries, drawing up program schedules, identification of respondents and logistic arrangements were done by the ILO.

A major limitation of the evaluation was lack of adequate time for desk review, field observation and reflection within the evaluation team. In the report, each key evaluation question is discussed along with the pertinent observations and findings, conclusions and recommendations. The report includes six good practice illustrations, two country case studies and lessons learnt.

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

The evaluation found that the activities supported through the Partnership programme fitted well with both the Regional Office and Country Programme priorities. In all the countries visited, the ILO was an important player. The activities were relevant and consistent with the needs of the partner organisations.

In terms of a definition for capacity building or a strategy, the Partnership Programme does not appear to have one. In practice, capacity building meant use of a cascade model with development and adaptation of WEDGE tools and guides for training, conduct of training of trainer and entrepreneur training activities, trade fairs, vocational training and advocacy for legislation favouring the employment of persons with disabilities.

In case of WEDGE, there was near universal recognition of their utility and commendation

for the tool-kits developed. The programme was included as part of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes in two of the visited countries (Zambia and Vietnam). It was mainstreamed into other ILO projects such as ILO-IPEC Project on "Combating Trafficking in Women and Children" in Lao PDR and the "ILO Time Bound Project on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour" in Cambodia. An impact assessment showed that women entrepreneurs in the target provinces in Lao PDR significantly increased their sales and profits.

Following the recommendation of the mid-term evaluation, DEWD and WEDGE were combined in Africa to mainstream disability concerns into the women entrepreneurship development programmes. This experience has not been conclusive though inclusiveness was well appreciated.

Programme country selection does not appear to be systematic based on clear criteria. There was a lack of systematic approach to capacity building required by the partners. Selection of participants lacked clear criteria in some places. In order to improve programme effectiveness and efficiency, the ILO should reinforce its side of the partnership with technical support in the field as the amount and location of the ILO's existing technical support appears to be inadequate. The recommendations address these in order to strengthen the programme and offer suggestions for improvement.

## **Recommendations & Lessons Learned**

### **Main recommendations and follow-up**

The main recommendations of the evaluation were the following:

1. Develop clear-cut policy and guidelines for the field staff on how to identify capacity gaps and the specific role the stakeholders could play in this regard

2. Match individual capacity building with organisational capacity building of the partner organisations.
3. Extend the programme to the next phase in order to sustain results
4. Invest in creating appropriate infrastructure for the full participation of persons with all types of disabilities
5. Support vocational training of persons with disabilities in readily marketable skills.
6. Streamline performance measurement and impact assessment at different levels of the results chain.
7. Develop a comprehensive ‘knowledge management’ strategy to widely share the rich experiences, lessons and models emanating from the Irish Aid Partnership programme
8. Strengthen technical support in the field in the realm of mainstreaming disability.
9. Decentralise programme management from region/sub-region level to country level.
10. Develop an exit strategy for phase-out from programme countries.
11. Maximise the knowledge base of both the partners to mainstream gender and disability.
12. Consider setting up centres of excellence aimed at policy and systemic changes in programme countries in collaboration with local institutions.
13. Establish a small ‘Task Force’ of experts in the ILO to extend the reach of the training resources globally.
14. Develop training material on ‘quality assurance’ of entrepreneurship development activities.

### **Important lessons learned**

Knowledge base creation in the form of situational assessments could inform the capacity building initiatives, provided the results of such assessments are considered at the stage of programme planning.

Stakeholder engagement through project planning workshops is likely to have beneficial effects in terms of timely execution of the activities.

Programmes targeting deprived groups such as disabled women are more likely to succeed if they integrate entrepreneurship development along with vocational training and basic education.

In the absence of effective provision for access to finance, entrepreneurship development alone may be of limited value in terms of job creation.

In terms of the entry points to reach the vulnerable, it is clear that for macro level change the federal and provincial level government seems to be a good entry point whereas for micro-level change BDS providers, community based associations and NGOs provide a good entry point.

Integrating women’s entrepreneurship development can help while dealing with problems such as illegal human trafficking, child labour, etc.

Use of national project advisory groups provides a forum for members from various stakeholder groups such as government, employers’ organisations and trade unions to engage in a dialogue and learn from each other’s knowledge and experience.

Enabling the direct beneficiaries to organise themselves tends to increase their access to critical inputs such as financial capital and develop linkages with business service providers.

