



Evaluation Summaries

Strengthening the institutional mechanisms for social dialogue (Original report in Spanish)

Quick Facts

Countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

Final Evaluation: April-May 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Social dialogue

Evaluation Management: Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Project Start: May 2004

Project End: May 2007

Project Code: RLA/02/M06/SPA

Donor: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain (U.S. \$ 1,472,457).

Keywords: social dialogue

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project's overall objective was to contribute to the consolidation of social dialogue through the recognition, relation and consensus between government and social actors, with specific objectives as following:

- Promote mutual recognition of government and social actors and a dynamic of dialogue that might lead to different kinds of agreements and with various contents.

- Establish or strengthen mechanisms and permanent institutions with the possibility of regular activity.
- Qualify technically social actors and government officials for their participation in the institutions and mechanisms of social dialogue.
- Qualify members of the institutions of dialogue for the establishment of consensual dialogue agendas.

Present situation of project

Project implementation has been deeply influenced by the context of electoral processes developed in several countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru). In the last phase of the project in two of these countries (Brazil and Ecuador), electoral processes have led to a second round, extending the deadlines of the electoral process and causing further delay in project management.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation were, first, analyze the strategy and project implementation and, secondly, to provide recommendations that help improve its effectiveness and impact.

The purpose of the Final Evaluation is to provide an analytical and independent view on the project's ability to achieve its objectives

and results, especially considering the performance (achievements), efficiency, sustainability and transferability, highlighting strengths, opportunities and weaknesses of the implemented actions.

Methodology of evaluation

Interviews were conducted with government representatives, organizations of employers and workers in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru, tripartite bodies for dialogue and external consultants who had participated in the project. Also, a meeting was held with ILO experts and directors of other projects in an internal evaluation workshop which took place at the ILO Subregional Office for the Andean countries in Lima.

Besides the aforementioned interviews, the following documents were analyzed:

- Project Documents
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- The Midterm Evaluation Report (May 2005)
- Work Plans by country
- Mission Reports
- Final Report
- Budget Information
- Miscellaneous products of the project (publications, brochures, technical documents ...).

Main Findings & Conclusions

- A first conclusion concerns the design of the project. There is a too extensive geographic coverage, covering countries with very different socio-economic realities, and also far apart physically; goals, ambiguous in some cases and unrealistic in others; non-specific indicators that did not allow a measurement of impacts ; an incomplete planning matrix in which sources for verification, external factors, and so on were not considered.

- The selection criterion of some instances of social dialogue is debatable, which resulted in the project's impact being, in some cases, largely irrelevant.
- The relationship of the project with the Subregional Office for Andean Countries (SOAC) and the Regional Office for the Americas (ROA) has been uneven and not always smooth. This has affected in a substantive way the development of the project in some countries and the dialogue with certain actors.
- The visibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain, an aspect in which the evaluation report of the project had already given special emphasis, has been seen as desirable.
- The project did not include in its activities the gender perspective, at least one sustained and determined, as recommended in the evaluation report.
- Activities have focused excessively to obtain products such as reports, rather than learning methodologies on the process of dialogue. This by itself does not create an activity or a different dynamic and a better functioning of the organs of social dialogue, which is more linked to the goal of institutionalization and raises a reasonable concern about the sustainability of these products once the project will be over.
- The project focused, perhaps excessively, on formal issues. An example is the design of logos for institutional instances of dialogue that, as stated in the Final Report of the project, suppose "performance enhancement of the visibility and identity of the instances of dialogue".

- The project did not raise specifically the validity of international labour standards essentially linked to social dialogue: that is, Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of labour union and collective bargaining, Convention 144 on tripartite consultation or Convention 154 concerning the promotion of collective bargaining.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Any project of development cooperation should be formulated on the basis of a previous diagnosis of the situation in the sector looked at in each of the beneficiary country; the intervention should be integrated into the policies of individual governments and in their national development strategies. This is directly linked to the sustainability of the actions that should generate lasting structures, beyond the support of international cooperation.

- The project document should have included an analysis, at least briefly, of the situation of social dialogue in each country, together with an expression of political will of each of them to drive these processes.

This last point is critical as it makes the recipient countries of aid in genuine cooperation partners and allows the alignment of their policies of cooperation with the actions promoted by the different actors. This, in no case has been taken into account in the draft and it is here that most likely originated much of the deficiencies that have been detected.

- A preliminary consultation and greater coordination with stakeholders, especially the workers would have helped to adjust the project to the national realities. Either way, this could have occurred once the project

started by a restatement of the contents of the planning matrix that was never raised.

The task of the Evaluation Mission has not been easy when we consider that the indicators and sources of verification were not properly defined (the latter not even appear in the planning matrix). Also, the project objectives were ambiguous. For example, Objective 1 was aiming at getting agreements of different nature and diverse content. It was not specified how many agreements, what kind, what period of time.

- An indicator should be much more specific, include a source of verification and a time reference. If not, it is practically impossible to measure the achievement of the objectives.

The indicators of Objective 3, related to the training of social actors and government stakeholders, to take another example, are not specific on how many leaders will be trained, in what period of time, or that this training should take into account the gender perspective.

Despite these shortcomings, the Evaluation Mission did the appraisal of the recipients of the project, especially the social actors, and the result is also far from being uniform. In that sense, although the project contributed to the development of a wide range of documentation and helped promote a future activity of some of the instances of social dialogue in the beneficiary countries or the agreements that, at some point, have been taken, or the regulations of such instances, however, this in itself does not mean the institutionalization of social dialogue, the general objective of the project, which should be measured from different indicators.

- It has been found that the impact on processes of social dialogue is more effective in the long run, if the focus is on activities not directly or exclusively

linked to the institutionalization of the same.

- The primary objective should be to promote a genuine culture of dialogue that would allow it to be seen as something natural and permanent in the relations between social actors. This will be achieved through awareness raising and training of social actors.
- The institutionalization should be understood not as the creation of bodies/specific institutions or the strengthening of existing ones, but very relevant as the recognition of actors as representative and valid agents at the time of negotiation.

This may have been a mistake of the project, already in its title, having insisted on labour and in strengthening the existing tripartite bodies in the countries, taking as a model the Economic and Social Council of Spain, organ where strictly speaking do not "do" social dialogue, but is specifically a governmental advisory body whose opinions, while of great benefit to the parties and of recognized social prestige, are not binding.

- Another recommendation, also associated with the development of the project is related to an inadequate geographical coverage in regard to an excessive number of countries with very different socio-political situation, which, made difficult, to a large extent, the achievement of objectives and conditioned the planning of actions. This caused, in some countries, that the activities that took place had been practically forgotten now that they had passed, in some cases, almost two years between its completion and the time of the Evaluation Mission.