

# Quick Facts

## ► Independent high-level evaluation of DWCPs in South Asia, 2018-21

► September 2021

### ► About the evaluation

Each region is the subject of a geographic independent high-level evaluation once every five years. In 2021 Asia and the Pacific was due and the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) examined the ILO's programme of work in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The purpose of the [evaluation](#) is to determine how well the ILO's programmes have achieved the Decent Work Agenda in the four selected South Asian countries during 2018-21. Given the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the evaluation includes consideration of the ILO's support to countries to address emergent decent work challenges. The evaluation examines the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the programmes, how well they achieved them and under what conditions. It also seeks to contribute to organizational learning by identifying lessons learned and emerging good practices. This information will inform future ILO strategy.

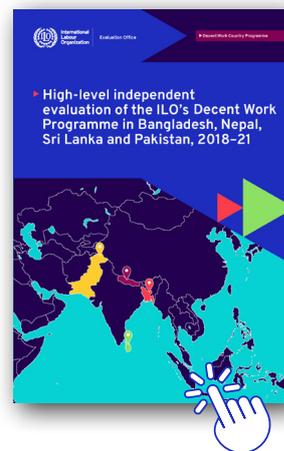
### ► Evaluated topic

A [Decent Work Country Programme](#) (DWCP) is the main vehicle for delivering ILO support to countries. DWCPs integrate decent work as a key component of national development strategies, and are developed by ILO tripartite constituents with assistance from the country offices. DWCPs are intended to provide the ILO with a results-based framework to plan and organize how to deploy its knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation to advance the Organization's Decent Work Agenda in each country.

Each DWCP identifies country programme priorities and desired outcomes. These are further detailed in an implementation plan, with complementary monitoring and evaluation guidelines. The country programme priorities and outcomes should reflect the strategic results framework of the ILO, adapted to national situations and priorities.

### Evaluation methodology

The evaluation followed EVAL's high-level evaluation [Protocol for Strategy and Policy evaluation](#). The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Data was derived from various methods:



Comprehensive document review



193 interviews with stakeholders



Synthesis review of 17 project evaluations



2 surveys administered to constituents and ILO staff



80 ILO programme beneficiaries and implementing partners participated in focus groups

### Methodological challenges of remote data collection

While most ILO stakeholders appeared comfortable using online communication methods, there was most likely some loss in the depth and quality of communication relative to face-to-face methods. To mitigate the effects of this limitation, the evaluation team used the respondents' preferred communication platforms. The team also conducted easier-to-manage, small group interviews rather than larger focus group discussions. The number of in-person interviews was limited in cases where respondents' access to technology was a major obstacle and COVID-19 health and safety advisories permitted face-to-face meetings (Nepal and Sri Lanka).

### KEY GOOD PRACTICES



Produce and use data to guide policy and decision-making



Comprehensive strategy targeting micro and small enterprises COVID-19 recovery



ILO country offices' active involvement in UN country development framework design



Bringing trade union federations together in Workers' Resource Centre (Bangladesh) capacity-building activities



Employment-intensive investment programmes to bring employment and improved infrastructure to rural communities



Sustainable local economic development linking buyers with local producers



Mobilize workers in factory improvement initiatives

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 ILO provides various types of assistance to help address COVID-19 impacts, such as mobilizing resources for recovery efforts in some countries. Constituents reported medium-, and long-term recovery needs that aligned with current ILO work streams. However, responsiveness to constituents' immediate needs is constrained by limited resources, ILO's limited financial and administrative mechanisms, as well as by the nature of its expertise. ILO programming was aligned with national, regional and international development strategies, as well as with the results of the ILO's Programme & Budget.
- 2 ILO made noteworthy contributions to policy and legal framework strengthening, institutional capacity building, knowledge creation, and awareness raising in various areas including labour administration, industrial relations, employment, migration, social protection, and fundamental principles and rights at work. The volume and key areas of accomplishment, as well as gaps in planned versus actual results, varied by country.
- 3 ILO's policy and institutional capacity building interventions are highly sustainable but achieving results in these areas require long-term investments. National ownership, institution building, development of exit strategies, and documenting good practices and lessons learned contribute positively to long lasting impact.
- 4 ILO's technical expertise, strong in-country relationships, relatively long-term investments in some programme areas, as well as complementary efforts from external stakeholders (brands, buyers, trading partners) to be key success factors. However, development cooperation projects' limited timeframes and funding, turnover in project and counterpart personnel, persistent counterpart institution capacity deficits, external disruptions from political change and COVID-19, as well as ILO's own internal management shortcomings, were often cited as limitations.
- 5 The ILO made efforts to promote synergies within its project portfolios by clustering projects in the same geographic or thematic areas, sharing resources and improving coordination between projects, and with other UN agencies.
- 6 The ILO's administrative and financial management procedures and systems are unnecessarily complex and unwieldy, and often contribute to project implementation delays.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design future projects, mobilise and allocate resources to achieve a more balanced distribution of ILO technical assistance and resources between constituents and national and sub-national governance levels in line with DWCP priorities, social partners' needs and capacity, and available ILO resources.
- Improve monitoring of the progress of DWCPs, in some countries, by establishing practical and feasible DWCP performance monitoring plans; and in all countries, monitor and report progress against DWCP outcomes more regularly.
- New projects and programme strategies should focus on work streams that are critical for medium-term COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and that will contribute to mitigating lasting negative effects on marginalised populations.
- Building on Bangladesh's and Sri Lanka's emerging good practices with geographic or thematic programme clusters, ILO country offices should design future intervention strategies in ways that favour operational and thematic synergies and that facilitate resource sharing between ILO projects and with sister UN agencies.
- Review the technical and oversight responsibilities of country office programming staff and establish a clear organisational structure, delineating individual officers' responsibility for constituent relationships, technical oversight on thematic areas, monitoring and evaluation and communications.
- Transition from existing subregional models for delivering ILO specialist expertise to more decentralised and flexible approaches.

## QUOTES

### ► Voices from constituents

"The development of the DWCP process started in 2018. We had lengthy discussions during the process. The contribution of all tripartite constituents was taken into account."

"The ILO piloted a tripartite council at the provincial level. It is working well, and I hope it will be expanded to the other six provinces."

### ► Voices from ILO staff

"Although environmental sustainability and climate change are explicitly included at priority and outcome levels in the current DWCP, internal reporting on programme progress shows that the cross-cutting policy driver was the least consistently and systematically applied overall, to date."

"We have done a lot of activities, but results on-ground are only few."