



Evaluation Summaries

Employers' activities in the ILO/Danida Programme

Quick Facts

Countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe and Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands

Final Evaluation: March 2003

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: ACT/EMP

Evaluation Management: ACT/EMP

Project Code: INT/01/27/DAN

Donor: Denmark

Keywords: Employers' organizations, role of Employers, social dialogue

Methodology

Primarily two sub regions have been selected to be the focus of the evaluation. One is the sub region covered by the ILO/SAMAT (ILO/Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team) based in Harare, Zimbabwe. The countries covered by ILO/SAMAT include Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The countries in this region, which have been targeted by Danida assistance, include Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. The other sub region is covered by LO/SEAPAT (ILO/South-East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory Team) based in Manila, the Philippines. Countries covered by ILO/SEAPAT include Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands. The countries in this sub region, which have been targeted by Danida assistance, are the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

To further broaden the scope of the evaluation, a select number of Employers' Organisations located in 1 or 2 additional sub regional ILO Multidisciplinary Advisory Teams in Asia and Africa respectively have been included.

From a methodological point of view, the evaluation team has been faced with a number of difficulties. First and foremost, measuring impact and results of programmes intended to strengthen capacities primarily through seminars and workshops is notoriously difficult, particularly when impact indicators have only been embryonically developed within the programme and follow-up activities only sporadically carried out. Secondly, measuring in particular impact of the Danida funding has proved difficult as such funding has generally not been perceived neither by Employers' Specialists nor by target beneficiaries as easily identifiable, as funding to the programme, whatever the origin of the funding, has been seen as part of ILO's overall programme of assistance. Only in a few cases have stakeholders been able to directly relate activities carried out to the Danida funding provided.

In addition, the evaluation team was constrained by a very tight mission schedule where, first, South East Asia (the Philippines and Indonesia) was covered by a one week evaluation programme and then, secondly, Africa (Zimbabwe and Kenya) covered by another one week programme. Although the evaluation team felt that a good impression of the programme, its achievements and results, were given, yet it is obvious that the time restrictions implied clear limitations as to how far in depth the evaluation was able to go.

In order to remedy these evaluation conditions, and trying to accommodate for the limitations imposed, the following steps were taken: First, the team leader met in Roskilde, Denmark with the Director of the ACT/EMP programme and his colleague, Mr. Henrik Møller, Programme Manager, who was identified as resource person for the evaluation mission. During this meeting, which took place in February 2003, the team leader was given a general introduction to the Danida funded programme as well as to the activities of ILO in general. Also the TOR was discussed on this occasion.

Secondly, a desk review of documentation took place and briefings were held at ILO Headquarters in Geneva early March. The team leader took part in these briefings, while the whole team had the opportunity of familiarizing itself with relevant documentation, readily provided by the ILO.

Thirdly, it was decided to try to obtain as much information as possible prior to the field visits, in order to optimize on time used during the visits. Therefore, short questionnaires were prepared for each group of respondents, which were sent to the ACT/EMP Employers' Specialists as well as to the heads of Employers' Organisations. – The information gathered through these measures proved to be very valuable, although answers to the questionnaires naturally varied in quality and extent, and in cases were received rather late, either during the mission itself or afterwards.

Fourthly, the mission relied much on an previous experience by ACT/EMP, namely the so-called self-evaluation workshops, where participants, both Employers' Specialists and heads of Employers' Organisations, during a one-day workshop gave a presentation of achievements and constraints in each their case. Again, this mode of operation – given the time constraints – proved to be extremely valuable, also because the workshops were well prepared, following a scheme of presentation required by ILO on beforehand.

The workshops were followed up by the evaluation team conducting supplementary, in

most cases individual, interviews with both heads of Multidisciplinary Teams, Employers' Specialists and heads of Employers' Organisations. In addition, the evaluation team had the opportunity of meeting with staff of EO's on a number of occasions (particularly professional staff, providing services to members), ministerial representatives (primarily in Ministries of Labour or Labour Departments) as well as others having had relations to or were familiar with Employers' Organisations in a given country (for instance, consultants who had assisted in building capacities, or who from an enterprise point of view could provide insights on the value and efficiency of a given Employers' Organisation).

Main Findings & Conclusions

The Danida funded programme in support of employers' activities falls within the ILO's fourth strategic objective:

“To strengthen tripartism and social dialogue”. This broad objective includes a number of more detailed objectives, as outlined in the 1998 Danida Policy Document. They include:

- to support strong, free and independent organisations;
- to strengthen their capacity to address the issues and challenges linked to their countries' economic and social development as well as enterprise competitiveness, and to develop services relevant to their members' needs;
- to develop their capacity to participate more effectively in tripartite/bipartite framework contexts;
- to integrate ILO concerns into their programmes, including: Decent Work and employment generation; ensuring a safe, healthy and improved working environment and conditions; the practice of bipartism; and the creation of a national enterprise-level framework conducive to sound employment relations; and
- to associate Employers' Organisations with the work of the Office.

Based on the evaluation carried out, covering countries in two of the five ILO programmed regions, namely South East Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa, it is the general conclusion of the evaluation team that the above-mentioned

objectives have been met to a considerable extent.

It is among the findings of the present evaluation that the Danida supported ILO programme is assessed as being effective, relevant and efficient, and has in several cases provided lasting impact. Capacities of Employers' Organisations have been strengthened so that they more effectively can act as legitimate partners in tripartite and Social Dialogue processes. Through this and by other means, they may thus be able to address more appropriately and with greater impact countries' economic and social development as well as assisting members and individual enterprises in their strategic developments, by providing services believed by members to be relevant to current and future needs. Considering the rather limited amount of funding made available to ACT/EMP through the Danida programme, this is no small achievement.

The overall validity of design has been assessed as being relevant and effective and the project identification process has in general proved to be able to transform needs assessments into work plans and strategies.

At present, ACT/EMP operates with indicators of achievement mainly related to increased membership services, extended representation of Employers' Organisations and influencing economic and social policies.

The evaluation team finds such indicators to be too broad effectively to be able to act as monitoring instruments, in support of adjustment, redirection or modification of activities. In consequence, it is suggested that ACT/EMP make a particular effort in further sharpening its indicators and benchmarking, in order better to be able to monitor and measure impact of its programme. In this connection, it is also recommended that systematic follow ups to activities be pursued, including the conduct of tracer studies or similar evaluation efforts in order to assess how course and seminar participants have been able to make use of information and knowledge gained.

Needs assessments are usually conducted, leading to the formulation of well grounded and

justified work programmes. However, such needs assessments are in most cases carried out in a rather informal way and based on the established dialogue and good personal contacts and interrelations between the ACT/EMP Employers' Specialists and the heads of the EOs.

Such good relations between the ACT/EMP Employers' Specialists and the EOs are invaluable for project quality and outcome. However, a more formalised and structured approach to needs assessments, using for instance Logical Framework Approach techniques, would in the opinion of the evaluation team be of particular value not only for the focussing of activities and identification of well defined targets, but would also facilitate the monitoring and measurement of activities and their impact.

To strengthen this part of the project cycle, it is recommended that the ACT/EMP Employers' Specialists be offered training in such more structured and formalised needs assessment techniques. Training in LFA and other techniques could also help facilitate reporting from activities.

The evaluation team found that certain standardised packages of activities often existed and were, in cases, routinely offered as instruments of assistance. In particular are seminars, workshops and courses offered as among the most important and most frequently used activities, in support of capacity development and capacity strengthening. Such "standard toolbox" approach ought to be revised and updated with a view of creating more flexible and adaptable means and instruments of support, of particular relevance to the particular local context in which capacities are to be built.

Adapting course contents to the local contextual situation, for example, may not be sufficient to take into account the enormous variety which exists in different parts of the developing world, where EOs are subjected to very different sets of preconditions for their work, and where EOs are in different phases of their development. In conclusion, the evaluation team finds that the programme is well justified and largely living up to expectations. As a result, continuation of Danida funding is strongly recommended.

However, the recently experienced difficulties in maintaining the otherwise adopted programming cycle have given rise to a number of uncertainties regarding the availability and amount of Danida funding. In addition, information about the funding actually being made available has also arrived very late, constraining planning and programming and thereby the efficient implementation of activities. The programming concept is from all points of view regarded as advantageous, and ought to be adhered to, in accordance with what has previously been agreed to by Danida and ILO. If for some reason reverting to a programming cycle of at least 2 years may not be possible, funding on the basis of individual projects with a certain time frame and implementation modus may turn out to be preferable compared to the recently experienced difficulties in effectively implementing a programming approach.

While it is the general impression of the evaluation team, that the programme has been beneficial in building capacities and strengthening organisations, there is still room for improvements.

In the opinion of the evaluation team, quality of the programme could be further enhanced if the Danida support would be concentrated in fewer countries and be more focussed. As of now, there is an obvious risk of spreading resources too thinly, constraining impact.

In order to create more flexible and adjustable instruments of assistance, able to act in a more proactive way given the specifics of the concrete, local situation with its enabling and constraining elements, it is recommended that the ACT/EMP reviews and reconsiders its modes and, in particular, means of intervention.

In line with this, a more differentiated, strategic approach to capacity development should be developed in accordance with EOs and their specific stages of development. Newly established “infant” EOs obviously would be in need of more basic and fundamental assistance, where the elements of such assistance could be heavily drawing upon the availability of the “tools” in the box, while the more “mature” and well established EOs on the other hand would be

in need of more sophisticated, flexible and adaptable instruments of assistance than what may immediately be available in the “tool box”.

Furthermore, such differentiated approaches to the ACT/EMP assistance ought also to include a more differentiated time perspective for the assistance, adapted to the stage of development in which each EO may find itself. Emphasis on sustainability, financial and managerial autonomy and administrative professionalism, in short ability to generate own funding and sustaining own service delivery capacities, should be in focus for the more “mature” EOs and lead to a relatively brief period of external ACT/EMP support. In contrast, the “infant” EOs would possibly be in need of a much longer period of assistance, ensuring that in due course they would be able to stand on their own footing.

As a corollary to a differentiated strategy would, thus, also be a phasing out strategy, where ACT/EMP should develop certain criteria and benchmarks, the fulfilment of which would indicate that the external support would be about to terminate. A particular challenge for ACT/EMP in this would be to adapt a more “business-like” approach to organisational development and capacity building, moving from the image of a “funder” or “donor” to that of a “partner”, emphasising the role of EOs as professional organisations working in a business climate – and working on the basis of the very same fundamental conditions as those prevailing for any business.