

Quick Facts

► High-level independent evaluation on ILO's strategy and actions for promoting fair and effective labour migration, 2016-20

► September 2021

► Description of the evaluation

This high-level evaluation (HLE) provides insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ILO's work in promoting fair and effective labour migration from 2016-20. It also looks forward, identifying lessons learned that might inform the ongoing development of the organization's strategy and approach, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It concentrates on the work of the ILO's Labour Migration Branch, but covers all ILO activities on labour migration in both headquarters and regions.

► Evaluated topic

The evaluation examined all of ILO's work on fair labour migration with an in-depth focus on fair recruitment. This included predominantly Outcome 9 on labour migration (2016 – 2019) and output 7.5 (2020). Special attention was given to Outcome 5.3 on skills of labour migrants.

► Evaluation methodology

The evaluation followed the ILO Evaluation Office's High-level evaluation [protocol for policy outcomes and institutional evaluations](#). Four methods were used for collecting data and information:



Comprehensive document review

Synthesis review of 23 relevant project evaluations



Special focus on Fair Recruitment case study

Following requests from the constituents, the HLE had a special focus on Fair Recruitment. 3 case studies were conducted to examine the migration corridors of Philippines-Hong Kong, Nepal-Jordan and Guatemala-Mexico.



2 surveys

One was sent to 239 ILO staff and the second to 117 constituents, donors and partners. Overall response rate was 32%.



Interviews/case studies

64 semi-structured interviews, with 108 participants. Among these, 65 were women and 43 were men. Case studies were conducted in/on Ethiopia, Thailand, Tunisia, ILO's support to the Regional Conference on Migration in Latin America, and the Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa project (FMM).

Methodological constraints

Fully remote data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to challenges in data collection and connecting with stakeholders in a timely manner. The team also considered that given the internet environment certain stakeholders were not comfortable to be open and frank in the interviews and that remote data collection made it difficult to create an environment of trust. Online data collection also prevented the evaluation team from having an immersive experience of the case study destinations and to speak to a wide range of stakeholders, including beneficiaries. Finally, as countries continue to be affected by COVID-19, national constituents' and stakeholders' attentions were turned towards the crisis response rather than the evaluation.



KEY FINDINGS

- 1 The ILO's work is unique in the global area of labour migration, particularly due to its ability to connect migrants to the labour market. It is the only agency that addresses labour migration through social dialogue and tripartism, an added value compared with other agencies.
- 2 The topic of labour migration was considered highly relevant to all constituents, including donors and migrant workers themselves and remained so during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Organization managed to adjust its activities and enhance its focus on returnees and access to social protection, the most pressing issues of the time. Some of these topics, such as returnees, were not previously prioritized by the ILO, which shows the flexibility of the Organization to switch its fields of work to address urgent arising needs.
- 3 While the ILO's added value is known, its achievements and interventions are not always clearly visible to all stakeholders. In fact, several stakeholders consider that the ILO sometimes "gets lost" in the plethora of labour migration actors.
- 4 In almost all instances, the ILO achieved its programme and budget targets, and also exceeded some of the expected results under indicator 9.1 (2016-17).
- 5 The Fair Recruitment Initiative – the general principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment, as well as the definition of recruitment fees and related costs – has high potential to respond to Member States' needs and respective legal systems.

KEY FINDINGS CONT'D

6 The ILO's cross-cutting work on international labour standards and gender equality was mostly effective. The advancement of compliance with international labour standards positively affected social dialogue and inclusion of relevant stakeholders. Environmental sustainability is growing as a concern.

7 The ILO's work on mitigating the effects of the pandemic was perceived as one of its most effective fields of work over the

evaluation period (by 57.3% of survey respondents). This includes the ILO's technical support to Member States on protecting the rights of migrant workers, on negotiating with other countries on wage payments, as well as research on the effects of COVID-19 on labour migration.

8 The most visible and clear impact of the ILO is the adoption of legislation and policies facilitating fair labour migration.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

I Increase ILO visibility by expanding capacity to communicate and by strengthening its participation in global, regional and country-level groups and networks.

I The ILO should continue and enhance its work on migration corridors and regional economic communities, through capacity-building and sharing of best practices with regional economic communities and constituents

I The ILO should ensure that its development cooperation work explicitly identifies a sustainability plan and follow-up, and provides for greater technical support at the country level.

I The ILO should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation approaches on labour migration at the global, regional and national levels.

I The ILO should continue strengthening its work on fair recruitment, particularly to better translate global outputs to the national level, and enhance synergies between its projects and between ILO initiatives and other organizations' initiatives on fair recruitment.

I The ILO should enhance its efforts to address the challenges caused by COVID-19 on social protection for migrant workers and refugees in the labour market, engagement with both origin and destination countries on decent work opportunities, skills recognition and protection, both in the short-term and in the longer-term.

KEY LESSONS

I Despite its growing project portfolio, the visibility of the ILO as a key player in the area of labour migration is not always guaranteed particularly in joint projects. An important lesson is therefore that in multi-partner projects or networks, the ILO should consider what other approaches to visibility and dissemination can be taken to address this challenge.

I An important lesson learned, for the future design and budgeting of interventions, is that impact for labour migrants is not automatically achieved with the adoption of laws: constituents need additional support to ensure monitoring by the government (e.g. labour inspection), ensure compliance by employers and recruiters, and disseminate information for public awareness.



QUOTES

► Voices from constituents

"ILO needs to be creative and innovative to develop interventions to improve fair and effective migration."

ILO's most useful service is, *"creating an awareness that migrants do have the right to access social services just like any national so that they will not be socially discriminated."*

Future ILO work should include, *"More attention paid to disability inclusion."*

► Voices from ILO staff

"Due the crisis generated by pandemic (which) impacted severely women, all strategies should be gender sensitive from design to implementation."