



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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CARIFORUM Civil Society in the Regional Development and Integration Process: Challenges to CARIFORUM Labour, Private Sector and Employers - Final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Haiti*

Final Evaluation: *March - June 2018*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *DWT/CO-Port of Spain*

Technical Office: *DIALOGUE*

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Project Code: *RLA/13/03/EEC*

Donor(s) & Budget: *EU (€2,015,000)*

Keywords: *Social Dialogue, Capacity development*

Background & Context

In October 2008, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Dominican Republic, being

members of the Forum of the Caribbean Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM), signed the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU). Haiti signed the agreement in December 2009, but has not yet applied it, as it still has to be ratified.

The first objective of Article 1 of the Agreement indicated that the EPA is expected to contribute to “the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty through the establishment of a trade partnership consistent with the objective of sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and the Cotonou Agreement” but also to promote regional integration, economic cooperation and good governance, and to improve CARIFORUM States' capacity in trade policy and trade-related issues.¹

In the context of the implementation of this EPA, the ILO Decent Work Team (DWT) for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean based in Trinidad and Tobago put together, with the financial support of the EU, the project “Support to Facilitate Participation of CARIFORUM Civil Society in the Regional Development and Integration Process: Challenges to CARIFORUM Labour, Private Sector and Employers to Fulfil their EPA Obligations”. It targeted all CARIFORUM countries and was to be implemented between 2015 and 2018. This project is herein after referred to as the “ILO-EU Project”.

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http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/february/tradoc_137971.pdf

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project was designed to address a number of needs identified by ILO in the region, most notably: the limited knowledge about social aspects of the EPA, the existence of few support programmes with regards to these aspects, labour legislation in all CARIFORUM countries need updating, labour information systems in most countries are weak, dialogue on labour and social aspects issues is limited, child labour remains a problem in a number of CARIFORUM countries and occupational health and safety (OHS) training is required across the region.²

The overall development objective of the ILO-EU Project was to allow employers and workers, through their national and regional organizations, to engage effectively in social dialogue processes, to contribute to the design and implementation of social and economic development policies for Caribbean regional integration, and to drive the monitoring process of the social aspects of the CARIFORUM-EC EPA. As such, the main beneficiaries of the ILO-EU Project were the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and their national constituents, National Employers' Organizations (NEOs) and National Trade Unions (NTUs).

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

The project's objectives, as initially conceptualized, are generally aligned with regional and national development agendas promoting social dialogue and greater participation of non-state actors in the regional integration process. The document review allowed concluding that the project is fully aligned with the CARICOM's priorities and, most notably, to its Carter of Civil Society and to its Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The project is consistent with the ACP-EU

² ILO. 2014. - Description of Action- Challenges to CARIFORUM Labour, Private Sector and Employer to fulfil their EPA Obligations: Caribbean Employers Federation

Cotonou Agreement, the 2012 Joint Caribbean EU Partnership Strategy and the 10th EDF. Most participating countries ratified the ILO Convention No. 144 on Tripartite Consultations (1976) thus demonstrating their commitment to promoting social dialogue. The project is also aligned with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, the ILO's programme and budget and, more broadly, with the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework 2017-2021 and Sustainable Development Goal 8.

Beneficiaries at the regional and national levels generally considered the project to be highly relevant because it responded to some national employers' organizations and national trade unions' training needs. All were interested in participating in social dialogue and in the development of national policies. Both the CEC and the CCL had worked with ILO in the early 2000s and had been looking at ways to obtain additional project funding ever since. CARICOM also had an incentive to work with ILO given their commitment of all EPA parties to comply to internationally recognize core labour standards. At the national level, employers' and workers' organizations generally appreciated the training opportunities and how the project revitalized their relationships with the CEC and the CCL

The project activities were perceived as being relevant for both men and women despite the fact it did not address in any way the effect of trade policies and trade liberalization on women.

Design

The design of the project was based on the key findings of an assessment of the social aspects concerning CARIFORUM's commitment under the EPA conducted in 2010 by a consulting firm. The design was complemented by a participatory process that considered the perspectives and needs of the CEC, the CCL and their constituents. Yet, not all national constituents believed they were sufficiently consulted. Furthermore, considering the project aspired to achieve a number of results in the areas of

(CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) component of the support to facilitate Participation of CARIFORUM Civil Society in Regional Development and Integration Process

monitoring the implementation of the EPA, of education and of labour legislations, collected evidence indicated other key actors were insufficiently consulted and involved, most notably CARIFORUM, EPA implementation units, TVET institutions and Ministries of Labour.

The overall project's design is coherent to the extent its 12 intermediate outcomes and underlying activities are broadly linked to the general objectives of strengthening the CEC, the CCL and to promote social dialogue at national and regional level. The logical link between intermediate outcomes and the specific objectives of the project is generally unclear given the absence of specific, measurable and attainable objectives and indicators (at both outcome and specific objective levels) and of a theory of change explaining how all elements come together into a coherent intervention.

Overall, the project's objectives were generally too ambitious given the timeline, the available resources and the strategies employed to reach the expected results. There was also little evidence indicating gender was purposefully mainstreamed in the project beyond the legislative gap analysis conducted across 13 CARIFORUM countries that assessed equal remuneration between men and women.

Effectiveness and Management Arrangements

The joint CEC and CCL component of the project had four intermediate outcomes. Collected evidence generally indicated that the most significant result achieved was the early integration of the CEC and the CCL within the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). Having a recognized status within the COHSOD puts both CEC and CCL in a privileged position to influence the CARICOM's social and economic policies. At the time of the evaluation, they had not been able to gain a recognized status within the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) whose responsibilities include the promotion of trade and economic development of the CARICOM and oversight of the operation of the CSMEs.

The establishment of legislative models to enable harmonization has been on the regional agenda for some time. Yet, the project made little progress in the

process of legislative harmonization. Activities related to the alignment of education outcomes with the needs of the labour market also took place (i.e. regional survey on the mismatch between the labour market and job applicant skills, joint letters addressed to COHSOD and contributions to CARICOM Regional Education and Human Resource Development Strategy), yet, the evaluators did not find compelling evidence indicating changes of education outcomes were achieved. Finally, the fourth intermediate outcome, aimed at supporting NEOs and NTUs participating in the implementation, governance and monitoring the effects of the EPA did not attain expected results. The evaluators did not find evidence that a clear and realistic strategy was implemented to put in place to establish EPA monitoring mechanisms at regional or national level. There is however evidence that activities conducted under the joint CEC-CCL component such as the Brussels Study Tour and the Bipartite Meetings at national and regional level favoured bipartite dialogue between the CEC and the CCL and their national constituents.

Impact

The ILO-EU project was effective in revitalizing the relationship between the CEC, the CCL and their own constituents, and in successfully promoting intra-regional social dialogue. There was however insufficient evidence at the moment of the evaluation to affirm whether the project will have a longer-term impact.

Efficiency

The project was implemented within budget despite several administrative and programmatic factors moderately delaying the implementation agenda. A misalignment between the ILOs' reporting and the EU's requirements led to delays in disbursements, which ended up delaying the project for approximately three months.

In terms of human resources, the ILO prioritized hiring two NPOs to work with the CEC and the CCL. Despite counting on NPOs during the implementation of the project, interviews indicated that the level of effort that was required by ILO staff was underestimated.

In terms of project management structure, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was tasked with meeting every six months. It met, however, only once (in October 2015) and was thus unable to contribute in “providing policy guidance and coordination among all institutions and groups involved” to the project.

An analysis of the budget shows the largest portion of the project’s financial resources were dedicated to the implementation of national and regional workshops, which is consistent with the types of results observed.

Sustainability

The ILO project allowed the CEC and the CCL to hire NPOs to support the project’s implementation. By not relying exclusively on consultants, the ILO aspired to ensure both organizations had project ownership and to maximize the chances the achieved results would be somewhat sustainable. The CEC and the CCL, however, were unable to retain the services of the NPOs due to a lack of financial resources.

- 1) Many other aspects of the project could be sustained beyond the lifetime of the project depending on the level of ownership of the CEC and the CCL. The website and communication tools developed for the CEC and the CCL, the strategic plan, sustainability plan and communication plan for the CCL, and also the role both can now play in COHSOD meetings will fully depend on their willingness to build upon the opportunities that the ILO-EU project created for them.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

- 1) ILO-POS should seek additional donor funding to support the CEC and the CCL in their efforts to raise awareness on the social chapters of the EPA and create capacities among NEOs and NTUs so they can play a constructive role in the implementation, governance and monitoring of the social aspects of the EPA.
- 2) ILO-POS should strengthen its monitoring system to ensure that it reports to its donor in a timely

manner, to improve the evaluability of its interventions and to facilitate learning.

- 3) The CEC and the CCL should pursue their concerted efforts to influence social and economic policies at the CARICOM level
- 4) The CCL should implement and operationalize the resource mobilisation work programme conceptualized in its strategic plan as well as its financial sustainability plan.
- 5) ILO-POS should conduct of finance further research on the effects of the implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA on the most vulnerable populations, specifically women given the effect of trade policy on economic and social activities tend to be different between men and women.
- 6) The CEC should disseminate information on the implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA and on its social chapters on an ongoing basis using the communication tools that were developed during the project.
- 7) A project steering committee and an advisory committee comprised of thematic experts, academics and key actors with high stakes in the EPA implementation process should be constituted and utilized if a similar project was to be replicated.
- 8) Given CEC’s and CCL’s comparative advantage does not lie in the provision of trainings, established national institutions with experience designing, implementing and following up on trainings should deliver training-based, capacity-building intervention in partnerships with the CEC and/or the CCL.