

EIIP



Employment Intensive Investment Programme



Paraguay Project Brief:

Local Resource Based Approach for Routine Road Maintenance

This project brief describes the technical assistance that the Employment-Intensive Program of the ILO provided to the Ministry of Public Works and Communications of Paraguay for the development of Decent Work within the nationwide "Program for Improvement, Management and Maintenance of Roads (PMGM)" in Paraguay from 2010 to 2012. This pilot project financed by the World Bank, enabled the establishment of indigenous microenterprises for the improvement, management, and maintenance of roads in a context of strong social and cultural barriers.

Project Background

The three departments of Caaguazú, Caazapá, and San Pedro, situated in the central and oriental part of Paraguay, are home to a high proportion of indigenous people. There are 92 indigenous communities in the 3 referred departments, which live mainly in rural areas (76%). The main ethnic groups that inhabit the three departments are Mbya Guaraní, Ache y Avá Guaraní.

The traditional livelihoods of Indigenous people in Paraguay have come under pressure due to various factors, including overexploitation and loss of their lands, military conflicts and climate change. Indigenous people mainly develop subsistence activities (agriculture, hunting, and food collection). A small percentage of the rural population (1.8% of Caazapá and 10.3% of San Pedro) works as farmhands in agribusiness companies (of cereals, oil, and beef cattle) existing in the area.

The Project

ILO started to implement the Pilot Project in 2010 and finished it in 2012. This project took place within the framework of a signed agreement between the ILO and the Ministry of Public Works and Communications of Paraguay

The general objective of the Pilot Project was to set up the conceptual, institutional and operational model for routine road maintenance, implemented through the contracting of local micro-enterprises. Further, this model would include gender and ethnicity as crosscutting approaches. The Pilot project also intended to create Decent Work opportunities through the establishment and formalization of microenterprises funded by indigenous peoples, as well as by mixed groups (indigenous and mestizo).

The ILO Action in Latin America

The ILO is supporting the elaboration of laws and mechanisms on indigenous peoples' consultation and participation in multiple countries in the region, including Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Costa Rica, and Honduras. In Nicaragua, Panama, and Paraguay, within the framework of its Employment-Intensive Investment Programme, the ILO supports the implementation of water and sanitation programmes, as well as road maintenance in Paraguay.

These programmes contributed towards employment generation in indigenous communities. Studies have also been conducted on the situation of indigenous women (with a focus on rural areas), in several countries. Furthermore, the ILO has been providing training on indigenous peoples' rights to trade union leaders from countries across the region, and more recently, also on Convention No. 169 for employers' organizations.

During the first phase of the Project, EIIP developed a plan to support the implementation of the Program for Improvement, Management and Maintenance of Roads in the territory of indigenous communities. The unit also carried out a set of studies to facilitate the contracting of local microenterprises for the management/governance of road maintenance:

1. Socioeconomic study of the area to identify the type of microenterprises suitable for routine road maintenance
2. Legal analysis for establishing microenterprises for the routine road maintenance
3. Technical aspects of routine road maintenance with intensive use of local labour

Subsequently, the ILO implemented the recommendations of these studies, through a one year 'Pilot Project' for the routine road maintenance in Caaguazú, Caazapá, and San Pedro. The World Bank financed this project through the PMGM.

The project's implementation took place in various stages:

- 1) Capacity building of selected local ILO staff to implement the pilot project,
- 2) Selection of the members of the future microenterprises,
- 3) Setting-up and formalizing the legal framework of local microenterprises,
- 4) Capacity building of micro-entrepreneurs and,
- 5) Road maintenance operations.

Achievements

As a result of the pilot project, 6 microenterprises were created for the project, 2 in Caaguazú ("*Yhuense*" and "*San José Obrero*"), 2 in Caazapá ("*Aba*" and "*Guarani Teeté*"), and 2 in San Pedro ("*La Esperanza*" and "*Unión Florido*"). Among those, one was on solely composed of indigenous people.

Each enterprise had 6 to 12 members. As every microenterprise could employ a maximum of 7 members, those who have more than 7 members worked on a rotational basis. Through this rotation mechanism, 12 indigenous people were trained in public work maintenance. From the 6 created enterprises, 5 got legal recognition, which took between 3 and 5 months.

Gender balance was achieved in the administrative level of the project. In the microenterprises, the participation of women fluctuated between 27 % and 40 %. In four of the microenterprises, women were elected as members of the board (as treasurers and secretary). Only in the indigenous microenterprise, women were not elected as part of the board. The project thus contributed to fighting the perception that infrastructure works are only for men.

The training activities were adapted to the cultural and literary background of the participants. The ILO local staff have appropriated the ILO's approaches (gender, ethnicity, and LRBA) and labour standards, and transferred this knowledge to the beneficiaries of the project, including to the staff of the Ministry of Public Works and Communications. The level of understanding and strengthening of the knowledge and skills acquired by the members of the microenterprises confirmed the relevance of this methodology. It also allowed its adaptation to the cultural context. The indigenous people have shown great satisfaction with their achievement, which contributed to their empowerment.

The fact that the indigenous microenterprise got the training in their own village, and in their own local language, encouraged other members of the community to participate, expanding the reach of the project. The adaptation of the training activities to the local activities and schedule, also allowed the community members to participate without having to adapt their daily activities.

Finally the project managed to engage the Patrol of Highways of the MOPC to conduct the workshops of the 'Road Safety'. During training, the participants have learned about security equipment. These workshops helped to integrate the indigenous communities of the same department. Before this, the members of the microenterprise of the indigenous community of Cerrito preferred not join to the other microenterprises in the different workshops and discussions organised as part of the work Plan.

Key ILO resources

- Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programmes: Capacity Building for Contracting in the Construction Sector Geneva, International Labour Office, 1999
- Employment-Intensive Investment in Rural Infrastructure for Economic Development, Social and Environmental Protection and Inclusive Growth. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2015
- Local Resource-Based Approaches for Infrastructure Investments – Source Book. Employment-Intensive Investment Programme, Advisory Support Information Services Regional Programme for Africa, 2009
- Decent Work for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the Rural Economy, 2017
- Promoting decent work for indigenous and tribal people through employment and investment programs, Employment Policy Briefs 2018

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For more information on Local resource-based approaches and community infrastructure, visit our web site of the Employment Intensive Investment Programme

www.ilo.org/eiip

