



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Strengthening African trade unions' capacity to address gender inequality in the world of work through basic education and legal literacy

Quick Facts

Country: Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Tanzania

Final Evaluation: December 2005

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Gender

Evaluation Management: Africa

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Project Start: March 2004

Project End: April 2006

Project Code: RAF/04/55/NET

Donor: Netherlands (US \$ 500,000)

Key words: Decent Work Agenda, Selection of beneficiary countries, Information flow, enlarging the scope of the partners.

Background & Context

Project Background: The project was set up to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) to implement and consolidate its gender equality policy and programme. In addition, the project aimed to promote basic education and legal literacy programmes for selected national affiliates of OATUU to address gender inequality issues in the world of work, particularly in relation to poverty, the informal economy, and HIV/AIDS.

The project strategy was essentially to “train trainers” for the six targeted countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and

Tanzania) as well as to build on, and adapt, existing ILO tools in the designated areas. In particular, the project would draw on existing tools and networks to produce training materials for the labour movement in the areas of gender equality, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS and the informal economy. The training of trainers was to be followed by national, sub-regional, and regional workshops. Intended outputs for the project included: i) at least 24 staff of national OATUU affiliates trained as trainers, in particular, gender focal points and education officers; ii) executive officers sensitized on gender dimensions of poverty, HIV/AIDS and informal economy; iii) members at the community level trained on basic education and legal literacy for gender equality; iv) OATUU training tools revised to integrate gender issues and disseminated; v) existing gender tools adapted for trade union use at national and community levels.

Evaluation Context: The evaluation mission interacted with OATUU leadership, project coordination staff, and different actors within the Ghana country level activities, including field visits and meeting with all the trainers who had taken part in the project national programme and nationally elected officers from the trade unions who took part in the national project. Further telephone discussions or email messages with national focal points and those backstopping the project in various countries were held when communication links were possible.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The ownership of country specific programmes was achieved due to involvement of trade union leadership, trade union officers responsible for policy implementation such as education, gender, and research. Furthermore, leaders and members from appropriate collaborating civil society organizations were included in all levels of planning and implementation of the project.

The importance of trade union leadership taking part and being sensitized on project objectives, particularly on strategies and inter-linkages between gender, informal economy, poverty and HIV/AIDS was crucial to ensure an adequate understanding from union leaders and sustainable results.

Sharing of country experiences through the training of trainers' workshop from six different countries provided more motivation and insights among participants on how to improve their own efforts in their organizations and at national level to effect gender mainstreaming and the special issues stated above.

The selection of one male and one female focal person at national level assisted in practical planning and implementation at national level. This provided coherent work teams and laid a basis for strategies for future work in mainstreaming gender. Often these collaborative efforts created a gender balance in training initiatives for the first time in some of the organizations concerned.

The involvement in decision-making at national level of those engaged in project implementation has helped to improve on the efficiency and relevance of the project.

The lines of backstopping and authority and alternative strategies need to be carefully assessed according to ILO structures and procedures in projects that have many partners and countries, requiring different financial, reporting and administrative procedures such as via UNDP offices.

Adequate administrative training of project coordination staff and the roles and responsibilities of OATUU Secretariat need to

be addressed to ensure timely administrative support. Letters of Agreement with the beneficiary organizations would give precise definition of their roles and responsibilities to the project.

The communication between project coordination staff and participating organizations was complicated by lack of email facilities, thus requiring national focal points to often use their own resources to access computers in internet cafes.

The interventions between the Project Coordination staff and ILO Gender Specialists and Workers' Activities Specialists need adequate resourcing and clear indications as to their roles to ensure smooth coordination and problem solving.

Furthermore, the selection of consultants for training and development of manuals require clear criteria based on ILO expertise and experience to ensure scope and specialized knowledge of ILO mandate and the resulting quality of output.

Knowledge sharing has led to additional motivation and insight between project beneficiaries, shared tools, and experience gained to help counterparts and other trade unions to tailor these for their own use.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned: Selection of countries (and their cultural, linguistic and communication needs) require careful consideration and criteria to ensure that project design, financing, backstopping and implementation are practicable.

National focal points need access to email for smooth functioning with the project coordination.

Training of trainers is an excellent means to achieve sustainable results in participating organizations.

Selection of both men and women focal points ensure gender balance.

Knowledge sharing is an important element to give confidence, motivation and to provide

sustainability, but it requires adequate inputs to be effective.

Development of training materials is most effective with use of appropriate consultants with knowledge and experience of all issues defined and the organizations concerned.

Ownership of projects is the result of involvement of actors at various levels in the design, implementation and reporting.

Careful consideration is required to find acceptable but effective strategies, particularly concerning lines of reporting and decision-making regarding project objectives within hierarchical structures.

Support from the highest office in participating organizations is crucial, not only for implementation but for sustainability.

In projects where there are many beneficiary organizations and levels of decentralization, letters of agreement would simplify administrative procedures as well as making clear project responsibilities and roles.

Gender mainstreaming projects are not only useful but also extremely strategic to assist international and regional structures to develop or further integrate gender policies and programmes in their on-going work with their national affiliates.

Decentralization of issues such as gender mainstreaming and specific issues of informal economy, poverty, HIV/AIDS requires well-informed and strategic inputs from all organizations involved.

The ILO provides particular comparative advantage to reach partners/constituents, which can effect change on socio-economic issues at international, regional, and national level and integrate gender effectively into these issues.

Projects, which require extensive backstopping in various sub-regions, require systematic ILO over-view and very specific lines of authority, decision-making, and problem solving to ensure timely delivery of financing, implementation of activities and reporting.

The input from the ILO Gender Bureau is crucial to ensure that gender issues are reflected and sustained and oversight

maintained. The input from the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities provides cohesion and authority within the framework of workers' organizations and future sustainability in workers' education programmes in the region. The ILO regional/sub-regional offices provide the cohesion of programming and administrative in the region and integration of projects and their objectives where appropriate in the ILO Decent Work Programmes at national level.

Recommendations: The ILO Decent Work Programmes are important policy instruments at the national tripartite level and engage in the specific issues of poverty, informal economy, and HIV/AIDS. As the GEPATU project also had the objective of highlighting gender mainstreaming of these issues, both would have benefited if there had been a mechanism (informal and/or formal) to enable a systematic exchange of information and experience in these areas.

Furthermore, gender sensitization in trade union organizations in Africa would require carefully targeted follow up measures to ensure sustainable results, particularly regarding implementation of policy and integration of gender mainstreaming in overall union structure, research and training.

A second phase of the project is recommended, taking into consideration findings and lessons learned in the first project and careful consideration of how to more effectively set up coordination of the project with ILO structures, using the expertise developed among project coordinators and trainers trained in the first phase, while perhaps enlarging the scope of the partners.