



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Capacity building for effective social dialogue in poverty reduction strategies and PRSPs in selected low-income countries

Quick Facts

Countries: Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Peru and Viet Nam

Final Evaluation: Ethiopia and Peru, May 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration

Project Start: October 2002

Project End: July 2006

Project Code: INT/02/M79/UKM

Donor: The United Kingdom (790,000 US\$)

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project falls within the conceptual framework for taking forward the ILO's work on poverty reduction, which is grounded in the Turin concepts of entitlement and equity. The ILO is fundamentally concerned with social justice, and in the fight against poverty, this refers to the promotion of the right to participation, social protection, access to decent jobs and decent incomes. The project

had the following objectives: to empower social partners to influence, by engaging in social dialogue, the drafting and implementation of poverty reduction strategies; to incorporate the Decent Work Agenda into the PRSPs; to influence government ministries in charge of drafting and implementing the PRSPs to incorporate therein the fundamental principles and rights at work and social protection, and to seek the input and participation of the social partners.

Present situation of project

The project was carried out mainly through technical advisory services and workshops and through tripartite activities aimed at obtaining information on the processes and experiences in other countries, formulating a national strategy on poverty reduction which involved all social actors, and disseminating material and information on PRSPs.

The roles and inputs required of the various partners were clearly defined in the project document. Throughout the implementation of the activities, the strong commitment on the part of the tripartite constituents was evidenced by the various interventions and actions taken by them in designing and implementing the poverty reduction strategies.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Performance

All interlocutors in Ethiopia were of the opinion that the needs and problems identified at the beginning of the project activities remain largely unchanged. Although the social partners had been aware of the existence of the PRSP II (the so-called PASDEP), they have not been invited to any workshop other than those organized by the ILO. They also reported an inability to study the PASDEP document on their own, which they considered too big and complicated.

In Peru, the project focused its main activities on the promotion of social dialogue between the social partners to enable them to articulate poverty reduction measures. When asked about the performance of this project, our interlocutors replied that the social partners and the public authorities, in particular the Ministry of Labour, need continuing assistance in formulating policies to address the complex poverty issues.

Most beneficiaries agreed that the project raised awareness of the PRSP in general and of the gender aspect in particular, although the Ministry of Labour in Ethiopia was more sceptical. However, through the project activities the social partners in both Ethiopia and Peru acquired the capacity to formulate policy strategies dealing with poverty issues. In particular, it was noted that the knowledge and skills gained by the social partners and the staff members of the Ministry of Labour put them in a better position to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction strategies, although much more technical assistance was needed. All in all, the monitoring and evaluation process of the project activities enabled the tripartite constituents to provide feedback on ongoing programme effectiveness, allowing for adaptation during implementation. Especially in Peru, this participation ensured that the project beneficiaries felt ownership of the entire process.

As far as the visibility of the project was concerned, in Ethiopia the constituents said that it was relatively low. In Peru, however, the project had a better visibility, aided by the participation of officials from SRO Lima.

As to the level of backstopping support given by the field offices and the ILO HQ, some constituents (trade unions) underlined having received backstopping from the ILO field office; all others commended the general support for the PRSP, which was given in workshops.

Efficiency

The activities were organized in such a way to make sure that the funds were spent in an efficient way. In Peru, the social partners used the research results obtained within the framework of the project in formulating national poverty strategies. In particular, research was carried out on minimum wage and social security coverage. Both issues were discussed for several months by the tripartite constituents in the National Labour Council.

In both countries, concern was expressed about insufficient information in the invitation letters which resulted in misunderstanding as to which organizations were to be invited to take part in the activities, resulting in the poor preparation of participants.

Sustainability

As far as sustainability is concerned, in Ethiopia and Peru the various position papers were produced by the beneficiaries themselves and submitted to the relevant government institutions. These position papers continue to be vital tools for the tripartite constituents in the implementation of poverty reductions strategies. The involvement of the social partners and the regional labour offices in the PRSP/PASDEP discussions, however, ceased when the project activities ended. However, in Ethiopia there was a consensus that continuing external support is necessary to sustain the level of participation of the constituents. In Peru, social dialogue is continuing, although more recently the poverty issues are no longer

central themes of discussions and negotiations in the National Labour Council.

When asked whether the conditions exist to ensure that the project results will have long-term results, the constituents replied in the affirmative. In Ethiopia, discussions on the PRSP/PASDEP are held in regular tripartite meetings in the National Labour Board and at the regional level. Nevertheless, external support is necessary in measuring the real impact of the social partners in both the planning and implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

Causality

In Ethiopia, the project activities set the stage for better and broader understanding of the PRSP among the social partners, and the elaboration of the position papers will be vital in the planning of future activities (all internal factors to the project). However the lack of institutionalized mechanisms on poverty reduction (internal/external) as well as the lack of feedback from the Government (external) has affected sustainability. In addition, the unstable political situation in the country has further hampered the involvement of civil society organizations in general (external).

In Peru, as previously mentioned, the constant changes in the staffing of the Ministry of Labour as well as the political conflicts in the National Labour Council hampered the development of the project activities. The fact that it was difficult to reach consensus on several poverty reduction strategies has delayed the planning of such strategies at the national level.

Unanticipated effects

No significant unanticipated effects (with the exception of the sudden staffing changes in the Ministry of Labour) can be reported.

Special concerns

All the activities in both countries were carried out with a view to linking international labour standards and poverty reduction strategies.

With regard to gender issues, in Ethiopia the project activities stressed the gender

dimension of the PRSP. The Government commissioned a study on gender-related issues in Ethiopia and subsequently developed a National Action Plan for Gender Equity (2006–10) which has been integrated into the PASDEP document. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions has also developed a gender policy and introduced a quota of 30 per cent women delegates to be elected to the trade union congress. As mentioned in the mission reports, the participation of women in the workshops steadily increased during the implementation of the project activities.

In Peru, a report prepared by Toyama & Tostes on the level of application of minimum wage and social security coverage – specifically addressing wage-earners in MSEs, revealed disparities between men and women in these areas. Following tripartite discussions on the topic, a committee was set up in the National Labour Council with a view to addressing these issues.

In both countries, training tools were developed and tested which will become part of an ongoing process of familiarising and sensitizing the social partners and the public authorities on gender issues. Emphasis was placed on analysis tools to identify gender specific constraints, risks and opportunities in mainstream social, economic and political policies and institutions.