



Evaluation Summaries

Women's Employment Concerns and Working Conditions (WEC-PK)

Quick Facts

Countries: Pakistan

Mid-Term Evaluation: December 2007-
January 2008

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Women's
employment/Formal Sector

Evaluation Management: Manzoo Khaliq

Evaluation Team: Ms. Themrise Khan (Team
Leader) and Mr. Irfan Khan (National
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Project Start: March 2005

Project End: December 2008

Project Code: PAK/05/MO1/CAN

Donor: Canadian International Development
Agency (CIDA) (US\$2,132,273).

Keywords: Women, equal opportunity,
working conditions, social dialogue

Background & Context

The employment issues and conditions of working women in Pakistan include not only the exclusion of women from the workforce, but also their invisibility within the existing workforce, especially in the form of informal labour. In the formal sector, women's employment is concentrated mainly in the traditional occupations of education and health. However, intensive surveys of industrial establishments have shown that women are relegated to temporary, casual or contract

work that is very poorly paid and labour regulations are often not observed.

To effectively minimize all these problems and to achieve the objective of better quality of life for women through decent employment, the International Labor Office (ILO) in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has developed a 3-year project titled "Women Employment Concerns and Working Conditions in Pakistan (WEC-PK)". Through a tripartite consultative process, a two-pronged approach was developed for implementation:

1. Creation of a supportive environment through institutional strengthening of relevant ministries and other social partners.
2. Provision of direct assistance to women to secure decent employment.

This was to be implemented through four main components:

Component 1: Capacity enhancement of the Ministry of Labor, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis and the Ministry of Women Development to promote decent employment and women workers' rights.

Component 2: Direct assistance to both the women and the key social actors to improve the quantity and quality of employment for women with the view to promoting their empowerment whilst improving the welfare of the families.

Component 3: Promoting Gender Equality in private sector organizations in Pakistan.

Component 4: Promoting women's participation and leadership in trade unions in Pakistan.

Evaluation Background

This is an independent mid-term evaluation of progress made through the project to date. The key purpose of the mid-term evaluation (as prescribed in the evaluation TORs) is to:

- review the ongoing progress and performance of the project,
- examine the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives,
- examine the delivery of the project inputs/activities,
- identify successes and constraints to be able to derive a set of lessons learned,
- identify the potential impact on policy and strategies and suggest a possible way forward for the future.

The WEC-PK approach is a relatively new one, therefore it is constantly evolving and adapting to the needs and demands that it encounters along the way. This also being a mid-term evaluation, some activities are either still ongoing or have been planned for the next quarter. A final expanded evaluation/impact assessment exercise is planned to take place towards the end of project implementation.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by a two member team of national consultants, consisting of one female (Team Leader) and one male (National Consultant) member. The mid-term evaluation was carried out using the following main methodological elements:

- A desk review to establish the specific evaluation instrument;
- Visits to project sites for consultations with project staff, project partners, and other key stakeholders;

- Discussions with key stakeholders and other informants.

The evaluation team was asked to address the four overall ILO evaluation concerns of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability as defined in the *ILO Guidelines for the Preparation of Independent Evaluations of ILO Programs and Projects*. In addition, the evaluation team was asked to come up with a set of lessons learned which encapsulated two main elements: what worked in this project and what did not. Subsequently, these lessons were to be incorporated into a set of recommendations.

Selection of the partners was done by the evaluation team on the basis of an even spread of government, NGO, donor and private sector. The selection of the NGO partners for Component 2 was done on the basis of an even geographical spread and large vs. mid-size organizations. Meetings with key stakeholders were conducted in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar in December 2007 and January 2008. The evaluation met with only the project management staff of all organizations. Beneficiaries such as women trained in Component 2, or trainees of government institutions, were not included under the purview of this evaluation, since the focus was on evaluating the overall impact of the project design, rather than evaluating beneficiary impact.

Present Situation of Project

Since the four project components have began in late 2005, below are some of the key targets that have been achieved, as of January 2008:

Component 1: Training and capacity building of government officers and state functionaries has been conducted in all four provinces. International linkages have been developed through the ILO School in Turin and academia has been sensitized through university research grants.

Component 2: Contracts have been signed with 11 organizations in four provinces for business development training of 6,000 women. Orientation workshop commenced to discuss technical and financial reporting framework. Project activities have been kicked off from June, 2007 and trainings are being held in specific regions of Pakistan.

Component 3: Background research and documentation for situational analysis of women in the private sector have been conducted by the partner organization. Series of training workshops have been conducted in seven cities across the country for women executives and interactive advocacy workshops to sensitize employers towards gender equality. A Gender Equality Policy has been drafted for the private sector.

Component 4: Background research and documentation for situational analysis of women in trade unions have been conducted by the partner organization. Gender Sensitization seminars aimed to raise awareness on women workers rights and laws have been conducted in six regions. An Advanced Leadership Programme for Women TU leaders/ Office Bearers has been completed in six regions.

Main Findings

Overall, the WEC-PK project has succeeded in achieving its objectives to build institutional capacity, create awareness, develop a resource base, both knowledge and skill based, and provide direct assistance to women. However, the project has had its share of design and implementation related issues that could be improved for the future.

1. The four project components do not come across as integrated as the strategy envisioned.
2. The project components have focused more on capacity building of organizations such as the MoL, EFP and PWF. In such a scenario, the role of direct assistance has not been so much of a balancing factor in the project design, as was originally envisioned.

Furthermore, direct intervention can prove less effective when there is such a limited time span (10 months), as in the case of Component 2.

3. There has not been a visible effort made to link the WEC-PK project with any of the existing programmes within the ILO Office for Pakistan. For instance, the Labour Market Information Systems Project (LMIS) could provide a good statistical linkage for the project on which to also women's employment interventions by collating data.

4. While several partners in all four components have developed knowledge resources which include baseline surveys and industry-wide surveys, and awareness materials in Urdu and English, the element of targeted qualitative issue-based research has been missing overall. Process documentation that focuses on, for example, why a partnership or collaboration did not work, is wanting.

5. The project has been very successful in engaging partners at different levels, spreading knowledge on the decent work agenda and rights and needs of working women. It has developed very good working relations with several non-traditional partners such as academic institutions, the corporate sector, semi-autonomous institutions, etc.

6. The WEC-PK project has been successful in targeting the relevant stakeholders such as government, employers, activists and NGOs. It has been fairly efficient in its approach of piggybacking on existing initiatives or building on its pool of fellowship awardees as a technical resource for partners. In the long-run however, sporadic and minimal involvement in activities of other programmes are good to provide a platform for sensitization, but not efficient in creating any lasting impact. This also leads to compromising the effectiveness of the project and achieving the targets surrounding women's employment concerns. This will then have a negative knock on effect for sustainability of the project, as

several planned initiatives or outcomes of the project will close with the project itself, and may not be internalized by partner organizations.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

The WEC-PK project has several aspects that merit recognition in terms of sound project design and replication.

- i. Successful organizational partnerships with different organizations
- ii. Diverse partner base and outreach
- iii. Broad media coverage
- iv. Effective use of international expertise
- v. Innovative partner linkages
- vi. Valuable resource development
- vii. Efficient resource utilization

Keeping in mind the lessons and issues emerging above, the evaluation team recommends the following actions for future replication or extension:

- There needs to be more active involvement by the lead Ministries in projects such as this, even if it means intensive handholding. The Ministry must also be given more responsibility to increase its ownership of the project.
- Direct assistance components must be avoided as part of pilot initiatives that also aim at policy level work, unless they form the bulk of the programme. Otherwise, the pilot should be linked with refinement/development of models, in addition to documenting learning for future programming.
- The projects should avoid supplementary or one-off inputs that may dilute overall impact.
- For future intentions, it may be more relevant if the project is designed in a way that there are several sector-specific initiatives such as the agricultural sector, women in the

informal sector, or the industrial sector, etc. Such an approach could be more consolidated and focused and would be able to generate greater policy impact.

- Periodic stakeholders' forums should be facilitated to encourage linkages between partners and to keep them abreast of each other's progress.
- It is recommended that the remaining project time be spent in consolidating the key lessons emerging from each component, to be able to come to some sort of policy analysis of the interventions that are required in order to address the concerns of working women on a broader level. This could also perhaps be done by commissioning a set of research briefs that highlight the major issues.