



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation Unit

## Promoting and Implementing the Rights of the San Peoples of the Republic of Namibia - Final Evaluation

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Namibia  
**Final Evaluation:** December 2012  
**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent  
**ILO Administrative responsibility:** DWT/CO-Pretoria (ILO DWT for Eastern and Southern Africa and ILO Country Office for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland)  
**Technical Area:** Indigenous Peoples' Rights, PRO 169, NORMES  
**Evaluation Management:** Caroline O'Reilly, DECLARATION programme  
**Evaluation Team:** Jennifer Hays (lead author); Jakob Kronik (secondary author)  
**Project End:** December 2012 (with 1 year no-cost extension granted to December 2013)  
**Project Code:** NAM/09/50/SPA  
**Donor:** Spain (AECID) (US\$919,704 for Namibia component, US\$6,617,000 approximate total project budget)  
**Keywords:** Indigenous Peoples' Rights, ILO Convention No. 169, San Peoples of Namibia

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

"Promoting & Implementing the Rights of the San Peoples of the Republic of Namibia" is

one component of the ILO PRO169 project on *Promotion and Application of Indigenous Peoples' Rights*, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) under the AECID-ILO partnership programme (2008-2012). The overall project objective is that the rights of indigenous peoples, in the framework of ILO Convention No 169, are applied in Latin America, and in public policies and development strategies in Africa and Asia, with a focus on Namibia. The project's immediate objective for Namibia is to contribute to reducing poverty and to improve the socio-economic situation of the San peoples, through a rights-based approach. As former hunters and gatherers who have been steadily dispossessed over recent centuries, the San are by virtually all socio-economic measures the most disadvantaged population group in Namibia.

The three main strategies employed by the project are *Capacity building*, *Awareness raising* and *Policy development* on indigenous peoples' rights. It was designed to complement other national initiatives that focus on building the capacity of San organizations, improving livelihoods, and promoting the rights of San peoples in Southern Africa. The main partners for the project are government ministries and departments, in particular the Division for San

Development (DSD), in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The project is managed by a National Project Coordinator (NPC) based in Windhoek, supported by the Decent Work Team in the ILO Pretoria Office, and technically backstopped by the PRO169 programme staff in NORMES Department, ILO Geneva. It functions independently of the other project components operating in Latin America.

### **Present Situation of the Project**

The project was due to end in December 2012, but is currently running on a no-cost extension to the end of 2013 as approved by AECID.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation is first, to assess the progress made by the Project since its inception, and the relevance of its underlying strategy and design, and second, to provide recommendations to strengthen its future implementation. Recommendations are made both for the period of the project's no-cost extension (to end of 2013) and also beyond, in the event that further donor funding is secured and for national partners in the possible absence of ILO support.

The main clients of the evaluation are:

- ILO Project management and staff of the International Labour Standards Department and the global PRO 169 team, and other concerned ILO departments and field offices
- AECID
- Partners of the PRO 169 programme in the field, including ILO's national constituents and partners, and the Project's ultimate beneficiaries.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

Research for this evaluation included a desk study of relevant documents, and interviews with stakeholders in Namibia, Pretoria and

Geneva. Five days of fieldwork were conducted in Namibia, during the week of 12-16 November 2012. Additional interviews were undertaken by skype or telephone, including with individuals in Geneva and Pretoria. Workshop reports and participant lists, project materials, and documented evidence of concrete steps toward policy decisions were also analysed.

As the project did not gather data describing stakeholders' perspectives before and after ILO activities, the evaluation draws upon self-assessments by national stakeholders of the extent to which their capacity in indigenous rights principles have improved as a result of the project.

The draft evaluation findings and conclusions were presented to key stakeholders in a teleconference held in January 2013. Based on feedback received at that time and in subsequent written feedback, the report was finalised.

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

Although funding was committed for the period 2008-2012, the project office in Namibia was opened only in mid-2010. Despite the initial delay, followed by an abrupt start-up in October 2010, the evaluation concludes that the project has registered some important achievements in Namibia. These include the following:

- 1) Raising awareness of indigenous peoples' rights within government and civil society.
- 2) Capacity building through training workshops and advanced courses about Indigenous peoples' rights
- 3) Support for creation of regulatory framework on indigenous rights
- 4) Collaboration between the ILO and the Ombudsman's office to launch Indigenous peoples' rights guide booklet

- 5) Cooperation and synergy with other international indigenous peoples' rights efforts
- 6) Contributing to a regional dialogue on indigenous peoples' rights and a model that can be followed by other regional actors
- 7) Potential for ratification of C169 by Namibia and South Africa

One of the most important developments towards the application of indigenous rights in Namibia is the movement towards creation of a regulatory policy framework. The support and networking of the project in this process has been important, and will continue to be so in the future.

This evaluation includes three "highlights" that describe key elements of the project and the ways in which they corresponded with other international and national indigenous rights efforts: 1) *International instruments, Indigenous Rights and the Namibian government* describes Namibian government responses to international human rights recommendations, and effective strategies of the ILO project to promote C169; 2) *A Namibian Regulatory Framework on Indigenous Peoples Rights* describes process leading toward the creation of such a policy, and the multiple influences at work in this process; and 3) *The Ombudsman's office, the San Council, and the ILO PRO169 Project in Namibia* illustrates how the launch by the project of a booklet on indigenous peoples' rights promoted awareness and capacity in multiple ways.

These advances were achieved in spite of several obstacles that stood in the way of progress, and which affected the project's strategy and achievements. They include:

- 1) A lack of official discourse on "indigenous peoples" in Namibia

- 2) A lack of understanding among key stakeholders about ILO objectives and strategies
- 3) Difficult relations among key partners in government and civil society
- 4) Low profile of the project, as well as indigenous rights, within Namibia
- 5) Length of time needed for government decision making processes
- 6) Lack of time in which to fully develop processes begun within the country (partially due to delay in starting project) and to respond to the challenges described here.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

### **Main recommendations and follow-up**

The overarching recommendation is that the project should continue to operate in Namibia, to nurture the processes it has started and to seek new strategies for mainstreaming indigenous peoples' rights into Namibian policy and development processes at all levels.

Priority recommendations for ILO for 2013 include:

- **Improved Coordination and Networking:** Currently there is a lack of coordination among development efforts targeted at San communities. During 2013, the PRO 169 programme should seek to improve coordination in two areas in Namibia: indigenous peoples' rights and livelihoods. In addition, the Programme should continue to facilitate good regional networks on indigenous peoples' rights, especially as South Africa becomes a stronger player in this field.
- **Information Dissemination:** The ILO office urgently needs to develop coherent strategies for the dissemination of information about indigenous peoples' rights in general, and also about the role of the ILO. Many stakeholders are seeking

clarification and accurate information about indigenous peoples' rights issues.

- **Project Steering Committee:** It is recommended that the ILO PRO169 project broaden its steering committee to include other important partners, notably the Ombudsman and the Namibia San Council.
- **Profile of Indigenous Rights:** The ILO should lobby effectively on indigenous rights issues in Namibia. In particular, it is recommended that the project seeks to identify an individual that can act as an advisor or champion for indigenous rights in Namibia.
- **Workshops and Capacity-building:** In addition to the *Advanced Seminar on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Namibia* already planned for 2013, other specific training workshops should be prioritized as listed in the report.
- **Evaluation and Monitoring:** There is a need to develop a clear Evaluation and Monitoring process for the ILO PRO 169 programme overall, and specifically for the project in Namibia. In particular, the impact of training workshops and capacity building efforts should be continuously assessed.

The following recommendations are directed to other stakeholders, in which the ILO should be involved to the extent possible:

- **The creation of a working group on indigenous rights:** This committee should be initiated and coordinated by the government.
- **Studies:** Suggestions for on-going or further study of indigenous peoples' rights in Namibia include some that should be led by the ILO, and others that the ILO could reasonably support. Those led by the ILO for 2013 should include: an analysis of media and other public portrayal of indigenous peoples'

rights and the San in Namibia since independence; and studies to contribute to the formulation of a coherent indigenous peoples' rights regulatory policy framework.

### Important lessons learned

The short period of ILO activity in Namibia has seen the project through a steep learning curve. The lessons learned during this time have relevance not only for future progress in Namibia, but also have broader strategic implications – especially for Africa. In particular, close attention should be paid to the following areas:

- Partnerships within government: On-going networking and the development of strategic partnerships within government are of critical importance.
- Need for national policy: Equally important is working simultaneously to create permanent structures and policies.
- There is a need for much better communication about the ILO's special role and approach, which are not always immediately understood.
- Importance of awareness of political sensitivities within Namibia, as with any country.
- Importance of understanding and balancing existing relations between stakeholders.
- Need for higher profile of ILO to ensure that indigenous rights are understood by the public and the government as a human rights issue.
- Need to recognize rights implementation as part of a *process*.