



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Social Protection and Gender in Cambodia Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Cambodia

Final Evaluation: 2 September – 6 November 2012

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Social protection

Evaluation Management: Akiko Sakamoto and Sutida Srinopnikom, Decent Work Team, Bangkok

Evaluation Team: Ms. Hariette K. Mingoen, independent international evaluator and Team leader; Mr. Sak Choeun, national evaluator

Project Start: 1 January 2010

Project End: 6 November 2012

Project Code: CMB/09/04M/SPA

Donor: Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), US\$ 1,358,693.00

Key Words: Social Protection, Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure The Social Protection and Gender Project, further referred to as SPG, is a two years project funded by the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID). Actual implementation of project activities started in August 2010, although the project was approved for implementation in January 2010. A mid-term assessment conducted in November 2011, was followed by an extension of the project into 2012. As the project is ending on 6 November 2012, the ILO commissioned an independent final evaluation. This took place from 2 September – 6 November 2012 (includes programme of visits in Cambodia from 3-13 September and reporting process).

SPG was conceptualized in a time when economic and social conditions in Cambodia were seriously affected by the global financial and economic crisis in 2008. It was intended to help in mitigating the impoverishing effects that were observed among workers in the garment industry, consisting of predominantly women workers from poor rural families. The reason for the ILO to target them in a project that addresses their vulnerabilities through interventions that seek to improve their health and well-being and to broaden their employment and economic opportunities through life skills and business training. At the same time the project seeks to influence policy makers to enhance gender responsive workplace policies, in accordance with international labour standards and national labour law. The rationale of the project is in line with the ideas of creating a social protection floor which, in this particular case of garment workers, focuses on increasing the workers' resilience against economic shocks, helping them to adapt to a changing economic and social environment, contributing to improved skills (human capital development) which in turn are expected to improve their well-being and stimulate greater productivity.

The project has three objectives: 1) improving the well being and health of women workers and enhancing gender responsive workplace policies; 2) promotion of women's participation in workplace level decision making and 3) creating pre-induction and post- factory employment opportunities.

Present Situation of the Project

The project started 1 January 2010 and ends on 6 November 2012. Actual project implementation started after the arrival of the project management team in August 2010. A mid-term self-assessment facilitated by a consultant took place in October/November 2011, after which the project

was extended at no extra costs until 6 November 2012.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

- assess the overall and specific outcomes and impacts of the project in terms of sustained improvements
- draw lessons for designing future action towards improving the productivity and well being of garment factory workers
- Review models of interventions, in particular on economic and social empowerment of workers, that may be used in other ILO projects with a similar thematic focus
- Address the ILO overall evaluation concerns such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as defined in the 2011 ILO Evaluation Guidance materials

The scope of the evaluation encompasses the Social Protection and Gender project implemented in Cambodia and includes the assessment of all the project activities including the implementation of direct action programs and projects by local partners

Clients of the evaluation are the Decent Work Team (DWT), the Regional Office (RO) Bangkok, the Country Office (CO) for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, the Joint Projects Office for Cambodia, Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Program, Geneva, the SPG project including its implementing partners, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) of Cambodia, and the Trade Union Confederations involved in the project.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation team visited Cambodia from 3-13 September for interviews, meetings and visits to project sites. Methodologies comprised of interviews with key informants and major stakeholders. The team reviewed documents and tools and held focus group discussions with (i) garment factory workers; (ii) infirmity service providers in two factories; (iii) two HIV/AIDS Committees; (iv) Self-help groups supported by WDC in Kampong Chhnang and IVY in Svay Rieng; (v) beneficiaries of the Pre-Industrial Life Skills training (PILS) in Prey Veng. The evaluation team also attended workshops, in particular the workshop to validate stories of change and good

practices that was facilitated by an external consultant on 5 September, as well as the SPG final workshop on 5 November. This closing workshop brought implementing partners together for a final review, knowledge sharing, strengthening of partnerships and networking for further engagement in promoting decent work and rights of women workers in the garment industry.

Main Findings & Conclusions

- *Relevance:* The project has strong social relevance against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, which impacted severely on Cambodia's economy and government's efforts to alleviate poverty but a number of strategies, outputs and activities have been found to be too ambitious given the short duration of the project.
- Project implementation was plagued with many challenges, mainly related to the short duration of the project versus the ambitious strategies and the broad range of planned outputs and activities. Partners of diverse disciplines had to be invited to come on board. Their engagement with the project did not start at the same time. Each partner focused on the implementation of its own component without a moment of joint reflection on the overall direction, indicators, and expected outputs of the project. There was little opportunity for the implementing partners to share and learn.
- Overall the project carried out most activities with the exception of a few, which realistically could not be achieved within two years. Interventions have been merely piloted, without time for refinement and consolidation. MSIC is the only partner who could implement a program of over 21 months. Other partners had considerable lesser time.
- *Project Effectiveness:* Despite the challenges, the three objectives of the project have been partially met. The level of achievement is highest in objective 1, and there are signs of impact. Outputs and indicators related to health under objective 1 have been accomplished through the interventions of MSIC, focused on strengthening access of workers to essential women's health services at factory level, as well as on improving the knowledge and awareness of garment workers on issues related to maternal health (MH), sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and family planning (FP), including where to go for safe abortion and long term family planning services.

- Objective 2, promotion of women’s participation in workplace level decision-making’ has been partly reached. The studies, development of material and trainings, intended for influencing policy makers under immediate objective 2, have been undertaken at a later stage of project implementation. Ideally these should have been more at the forefront, to serve as a base for informed interventions agreed to by all stakeholders. This is critical for committing stakeholders, as well as for enhancing the understanding of gender equality and the many faces of discrimination at work.
- The project collaborated well with other ILO projects, such as the ACTRAV Trade Unions for Social Justice project, HIV/AIDS Workplace Education project, ILO/Norway Gender Mainstreaming project, as well as the MDG/F Joint Program for Children, Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia. The project however collaborated less with Better Factories Cambodia (BFC), although it has been conceptualized as the social component of the latter. This is very unfortunate as opportunities have been missed to connect elements of SPG’s in-industry interventions to BFC’s advocacy work and mandate of compliance monitoring. Collaboration with the ILO/EU Improving Social Protection and Promoting Employment project, which is implemented as a response to the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) of the government of Cambodia has also been very limited. Despite SPG not being directly linked to the NSPS, its objectives are in line with the NSPS. The ILO/EU project is looking into possibilities to connect the outputs of SPG (such as the SPG Social Protection Network) with the NSPS structure.
- *Efficiency:* The project did not have budgetary constraints but the project could have done more to leverage the resources from the BFC project and the ILO/EU project on improving social protection and Employment. Another question which arises here is, would it not have been better to use the funds for 2012 to consolidate the activities that were carried out in 2011 and to do what was needed towards achieving sustainability.
- *Impact and sustainability:* Signs of impact are particularly related to the interventions on SRH and FP carried out by MSIC, measured through pre- and post intervention baselines. WE also reported workers’ changing behavior on the basis

of pre- and post training test. Half of the SHGs are reported to function well in savings and loans and lastly, there is strong commitment, expressed repeatedly by seven Confederations of Trade Unions to enhance women’s leadership in trade unions and to promote gender equality.

- The state of the outputs at the end of the project is such that no hard statements can be made about sustainability. At most, the evaluation team can talk about opportunities for follow-up and continuation of SPG’s work, based on intentions expressed by implementing partners. Of MSIC, CBCA and WE can be said that their institutions’ core business and track record offer potential opportunities to continue what they have done under SPG. However, realization of intentions depends highly on funding which is cited as a constraining factor.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations

1. Ensure within six months after the project, that the MSIC Tool Kit *Healthy Workers Better Factories*, be validated, published by BFC and disseminated to the management of factories; that BFC, possibly in collaboration with MISC, advocates for implementation of the Tool Kit and monitoring of implementation is integrated in BFC’s compliance monitoring work <to SPG and BFC >
2. Ensure as part of the advocacy for implementation of *Healthy Workers Better Factories* that factories continue the audio broadcasting of messages on SRH, FP, safe services, MSIC Hotline, maternal health, nutrition and breastfeeding at factory level <to MDG/F project and BFC >
3. Ensure that the work of HIV/AIDS Committees is supported by factory management and that strengthening of HIV/AIDS Committees be continued through advocacy by ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Education project, possibly in collaboration with CBCA < to ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Education project >
4. Ensure before closure of the project that the studies carried out under the project are published, and arrange that they are properly followed up by other ILO projects/programs involved in recommendation 5 and 6 below < to SPG, ILO Joint Projects Office, ILO CO for Thailand,

***Cambodia and Lao PDR and Gender Specialist
DWT-RO Bangkok >***

5. Ensure that the activities related to the strengthening of Gender Focal Points in Trade Unions (TU), be followed up and consolidated within six months after the end of project, through the ILO/Norway Gender Mainstreaming Project, the ACTRAV Trade Unions for Social Justice project. The momentum gained with the TU should not be lost and needs to be capitalized < ***to ILO CO for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, Gender Specialist and Workers Activities Specialist in DWT-RO Bangkok*** >
6. Ensure follow-up within six month after the end of project, of the training related to Convention 111, Equality and Non-Discrimination at Work, involving the tripartite constituents, through the ILO/Norway Gender Mainstreaming project and the ACT/EMP Strengthening Employers' Organizations for Effective Social Dialogue and Promotion of Gender Equality project < ***Gender Specialist DWT-RO Bangkok, ILO Joint Projects Office Cambodia>***
7. Ensure that the intended meeting to introduce NSPS and the ILO/EU Social Protection project to the SPG implementing partners takes place within three months after the closing of the project. The objective is to create a better understanding of social protection and how it is taking shape in Cambodia, in view of the plans to introduce the SPG Social Protection Network for participation in the CARD Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Social Protection. <***ILO Joint Projects Office Cambodia and ILO/EU project>***.
8. Ensure that the SPG Social Protection Network is introduced to the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Social Protection coordinated by CARD, if possible during its next meeting < ***ILO Joint Projects Office Cambodia and ILO/EU Project>***.
9. Consider continuation of the SPG Social Protection Network by linking the network to the ILO/EU Improving Social Protection and Promoting Employment project, so that SPG's networking efforts are not wasted and the network be put to use for the objectives of the ILO/EU project < ***SPG and ILO/EU project>***
10. Consider to arrange with WE to conduct a few more PILS trials within six months after the project, as part of their own training and education program

for youth, with a view to refine and consolidate the PILS curriculum as an ILO/WE tool. If feasible and possible, consider using remaining project funds for this purpose < ***SPG, WE and AECID>***

11. Ensure printing more copies and dissemination of the comic book ***Threading the Needle*** among rural youth receiving training in PILS < ***ILO Better Work and WE>***

Important lessons learned

- When designing a project of short duration it is important to be cautious and not plan overly ambitious strategies, outputs and activities.
- In a project with multiple implementing partners, it is critical to bring partners together, preferably at the beginning of the project, to ensure that the objectives of the project are understood by all, to discuss the direction of the project, agree on indicators and ensure that activities are coherent and aligned.
- Sharing and learning as well as capacity building of partners should be an integral part of project implementation.
- When starting project implementation it is wise to review which strategy is the most critical to achieve the best outcomes. In the case of this project it is felt that the interventions on Equality and Non-Discrimination at Work, including the action oriented study on Gender Equality and Working and Living Conditions of Garment Factory Workers in Cambodia should have been more at the forefront, followed by interventions as action oriented responses. This would have resulted in a stronger involvement of government, employers and workers than has been seen in the project.
- Commitment doesn't come easy from factory owners and factory management who are generally not interested in the well being of women workers, but only in timely delivery of quality orders. It would have been wise to have made arrangements with the factories about their share in responsibility, for instance, in investing in better factory infirmaries and in the supply of commodities. Arrangements should also have been agreed on allowing time to workers to attend training. This could have been done in some sort of cost-sharing arrangement with gradual phasing out of the subsidy. Arrangements should also have been agreed with factory management, regarding the funding of the activities of the HIV/AIDS Committees, since the Committees are mandatory by Ministerial regulation.