



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

From the Crisis towards Decent and Safe Jobs in Southern Caucasus and Central Asia

Quick Facts

Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan

Final Evaluation: December 2013

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

ILO Office Administratively backstopping the Project: DWT/CO-Moscow

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: INTEGRATION

Evaluation Manager: Irina Sinelina

Evaluation Consultant: Alexey Kuzmin

Project End: February 28, 2014

Project Code: RER0905FIN

Donor & Project Budget: Finland (US\$ 5,200,000)

Keywords: employment policies; employability of vulnerable groups; working conditions; OSH management systems; social security policies and systems; maternity protection

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The *development objective* of the Decent Work Project (DWP) was to support employment security and to promote sustainable social development through the implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes and the Decent Work Agenda, taking into account the mandate of the ILO and the priorities set by the constituents in each of the project

countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan.

The DWP had three main areas of focus (Pillar 1. Employment; Pillar 2. Occupational Safety and Health; and Pillar 3. Social Security), in which the ILO provided support to its tripartite constituents in the Project countries for the implementation of their Decent Work Agenda, with or without formal Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

The DWP was the first project of its kind in the sub-region. It explicitly aimed at integrating the project into DWCPs and ILO's regular activities to achieve greater impact, which would be sustained by effective social dialogue and knowledge management through a large expert network and the use of sub-regional and international best practices. It is also based on an integrated multiple-pillar technical approach to align the project more efficiently with the DWCPs priorities. The drive for such an integrated approach is unique and therefore represents both a major challenge and an important opportunity.

Management arrangements

The project activities were implemented by the Project Executive Team (PET) coordinated by the Chief Technical Advisor and comprised of the DWT/CO Moscow specialists on Employment, Social Security, Occupational Safety and Health. There was a Project assistant in each of the DWCP countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

and Tajikistan, who assisted in implementing activities in coordination with the ILO National Coordinator (NC) in each of these countries. In countries without an NC, there is was a Project Coordinator (Georgia, Uzbekistan).

Present Situation of the Project

The three technical components of the project were implemented as planned in five countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It was not possible to implement the project in Turkmenistan for the reasons that were beyond the project control. In Uzbekistan the project was limited to only one technical component - occupational safety and health, - for reasons of compliance with the ILO principles and standards. The project national partners in Georgia included mainly trade unions and employers' organisations as well as municipal and regional authorities.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the Final Independent Evaluation was to look at the achievement of project results and outcomes, and on how the project approach could be improved for the future, i.e. applied to this and other regions of the world.

The evaluation covers the project as a whole, 2010 – 2013, in all three technical pillars. Since the main project results in Armenia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan had been assessed during the field missions in the framework of the mid-term evaluation (October – November 2012), this final evaluation extensively used the findings of the mid-term evaluation, and field research therefore focused more on Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan

The evaluation serves the following - external and internal - clients' groups:

- ILO tripartite constituents and national project partners
- The Donor
- ILO management and technical specialists (in the ILO /Moscow and cooperating departments at the Headquarters)
- Project staff

Methodology of evaluation

The criteria that guided this evaluation exercise were the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

The methods used included a desk review of project documentation and other related literature. From 4 November 2013 to 23 November 2013, three field missions were conducted in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. The evaluator used individual and group interviews to collect data from ILO staff, national constituents, and strategic partners.

Limitations of evaluation include limited time available to conduct field research and limited access to information on the three countries that were not visited in the course of the final evaluation (Armenia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan).

Main Findings & Conclusions

All three strategic priority areas of the project (Employment, OSH and Social Security) were relevant in six out of eight countries. The project intents were not supported in Turkmenistan and were only partially supported in Uzbekistan in the OSH area. The relevance of the project for these two countries turned out to be low and it became apparent that the assumptions made at the design stage had been unrealistic: the project was not able to take into account all the complexities and factors that were outside of the project control. In the six actively participating countries the *project was highly relevant* and very flexible. Its design could be called *emergent* since many project activities were undertaken in response to the emerging needs of the constituents, which was very good. All of the project interventions were aligned with their respective Country Programmes (DWCPs) and Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), since the project strategic priorities were harmonized with the ILO strategy in the region and the overall Strategic Policy Framework 2010-2015.

The traditional ways of presenting the DWP, however, in terms of using logical frameworks and ILO RBM templates did not work well.

They were unable to adequately reflect the project intentions or represent the complicated and flexible nature of the project approaches. What has become apparent is that *the approaches used to describe the project could not accommodate the nature of the actual work being accomplished.*

All interventions were in line with the strategic objectives of the project and contributed to the respective outcomes. They were implemented in a professional manner. *While most interventions were effective in producing their expected results, they were rather fragmented and synergetic effects were rather limited.*

The DWP organizational structure is very minimalistic and the organizational arrangements make perfect sense. The project workflow system is well-organized. *The use of resources was efficient.*

There were many instances in which the project effects at the individual level will likely be sustainable. These include attitude changes and capacity development of the people who participated in DWP events such as participatory trainings, workshops and study tours. *There were few instances in which DWP interventions lead to potentially sustainable changes at organizational and sectoral levels.* These were capacity building efforts aimed at ILO constituents (mainly the TUs) and timely OSH interventions in the mining industry in Georgia.

The DWP contributed to a *number of initiatives that could have long-term development results at the national level such as:*

- implementation of a national system for employment of persons with disabilities in Armenia
- development of the new Labour Code in Kyrgyzstan
- ratification of ILO Conventions No. 156 (Workers with family responsibilities) and No. 183 (Maternity protection) in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan

- development of the new National Employment Policy 2020 in Kazakhstan
- formation of the National Tripartite Social Council on Safety and Health at Work in Azerbaijan
- modernization of the labour market information system in Tajikistan
- development of measures towards employment formalization in Kyrgyzstan

Most of these cases mentioned above involved situations in which DWP implemented timely and relatively small-scale, but strategically important interventions that contributed to long-term development effects.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. It is recommended to develop and implement future projects based on an adaptable approach. *The emergent design and adaptability of DWP activities* allowed the project to meet the needs of the countries and constituents in a most effective and timely manner. These were DWP strengths and ILO DWT/CO should be consistent and explicit in developing and implementing such approaches.
2. The ILO DWT/CO should look for *more relevant formats to present complicated initiatives* like the DWP. Managing and presenting complex initiatives using simplistic linear approaches is like forcing “a square peg into a round hole.” *Systems thinking* models and *social innovation* techniques may prove to be particularly helpful by providing tools better suited to ILO’s more complex aims and interventions.
3. *When interventions are emergent and fragmented, it is very important to treat them as stand-alone projects with an*

explicit internal theory or logic. If each intervention is based on its own theory, it will be easier for the ILO to see the potential synergies and to assess the overall effects of initiatives like DWP.

4. While using *logframes*, ILO DWT/CO and the projects should *pay special attention to the quality of the indicators used.* Currently, in many cases indicators look more like expected results, which can hardly be used to monitor project progress. Under these circumstances, one is forced to develop additional indicators to measure the existing indicators.
5. The ILO might *use the experience of consulting companies* in planning, organizing and assessing its own work, particularly the performance of its staff and contractors. The operating mode of the ILO DWT/CO is somewhat similar to the functioning of an international consulting unit. While fully acknowledging the unique setup and nonprofit nature of the ILO's work, this analogy could be very fruitful, so ILO might discover some areas of competence that it wishes to develop further.
6. In evaluating the results of its work, the ILO should make a distinction between countries' progress in the Decent Work area and the actual results of its interventions. ILO interventions include such activities as providing expert advice, training and capacity building with its constituents and partners. When implemented effectively, this assistance can contribute to countries' progress in the Decent Work area, for instance, by raising constituents' awareness in DW-related fields, increasing their knowledge, improving their skills, and affecting their attitudes. These results can be attributed to ILO activities. By contrast, results such as the development of a new labour code or a national employment strategy are

produced by ILO constituents and other interested parties — with the assistance of the ILO described above. Hence, such results need to be described as countries' progress in the Decent Work area, not the result of ILO interventions.

Important lessons learned

1. The DWP was designed and implemented in a way that allowed it to respond to emerging needs in the target countries and contribute to achieving CPOs. The emergent design and adaptability of activities allowed to meet the needs of the countries and constituents in a most effective and timely manner.
2. Logical frameworks are relevant to present relatively simple initiatives and are not relevant for presenting complex initiatives. The traditional ways of presenting the DWP, such as logical frameworks and the RBM templates, did not work well. They were unable to adequately reflect the project intentions or represent the complicated and flexible nature of the project approach.
3. The experience of consulting companies might be useful for the ILO in planning, organizing and assessing its own work.