

Board of the Centre

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CC 78/3

FOR DISCUSSION AND GUIDANCE

THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Independent evaluation of training and learning activities on the thematic area of “Promotion of gender equality and diversity”

I. Introduction

1. In the *ILO Field operations and structure, and technical cooperation review* (2013), concern was expressed about the relevance of the Centre’s services to ILO constituents. In response to this concern, the Centre committed to conduct independent evaluations of thematic technical areas of expertise on a cyclical basis. An independent evaluation of a selected number of academies was undertaken in 2014.¹
2. In 2015, the thematic area of expertise selected for independent evaluation was the “Promotion of gender equality and diversity.” The objective of the evaluation was to provide the Centre with evidence of the relevance and effectiveness of its training and learning activities related to this area of expertise. The findings and recommendations will inform decisions about the further development and evolution of the Centre’s portfolio of training and learning activities in this area in the 2016-17 biennium, and beyond.²
3. The evaluation reviewed selected training and advisory services of the Centre aimed at promoting gender equality and diversity, including interventions to:
 - promote an enabling environment for gender equality and non-discrimination, including through equal pay for work of equal value; strengthening the role of collective bargaining; promoting women in business and leadership; ensuring adequate social protection coverage for disadvantaged groups; designing inclusive maternity, paternity and childcare policies, and promoting inclusion and diversity;

¹ CC 77/4.

² The full text of the report of the independent evaluator is available at: <http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/board-documents/board-2015/item-3-evaluation-report>

- overcome social, policy, legal, and institutional obstacles faced by women and categories of marginalized workers who are particularly vulnerable to discrimination including persons with disabilities, members of indigenous communities or ethnic minorities, persons living with HIV or affected by HIV or AIDS, and migrant workers;
 - address deficits in the representation of women and give a voice to women, as well as categories of marginalized workers.
4. The evaluation covered a representative sample of the relevant training and learning activities implemented during the one year period from May 2013 to May 2014. This allowed for a time lapse of at least 12 months between participation in the activity and follow-up evaluation. The evaluation focused on activities to promote gender equality undertaken by the International Labour Standards, Rights at Work, and Gender Equality Programme (ILSGEN). In accordance with the Centre's policy and strategy to mainstream gender equality across the portfolio of all training programmes, the sample also included selected activities organised by other training programmes. The ten activities sampled were selected from a list of 37 group training activities and 16 advisory services, including all activities linked directly to the thematic area of gender equality and diversity, and four other activities pre-identified by the Centre using the gender marker as a filter.³

Assessment criteria

5. The evaluation focused on the relevance of the selected activities to the needs of the participants, and where applicable, to the institutions supporting their participation; the validity of the activity design; efficiency; effectiveness, and impact.

Assessment criteria	Questions to be addressed
<i>Relevance and outreach of the activity:</i> Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of the activity are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, and partners' and donors' policies.	How well did the activity operationalize the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-2015, the Gender Result-Based Action Plan 2012-15 of the Centre and the four corresponding programme and budgets of the Centre?
<i>Validity of the activity design:</i> The extent to which the design of the activity was logical and coherent.	Were the intended results of the activities logical and realistic? How likely was it that the intended results were to be achieved? Did the end of activity evaluation and (where applicable), the follow-up activity evaluation effectively measure results and progress?
<i>Effectiveness:</i> The extent to which the activities immediate objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	What results have been achieved/what progress has been made/what change has taken place since the implementation of the activities? Which gaps remain and how could these be addressed through follow-up activities? To what extent have the activities been an effective instrument to help promoting gender equality in the world of work?

³ See Appendix for the list of activities reviewed for the evaluation.

<i>Efficiency of use of resources:</i> A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results	Have the resources invested into the delivery of the activities been used in the most efficient manner? How economically were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) converted to results? Did the results justify the cost? What time and cost efficiency measures could have been introduced without impeding the achievement of results
<i>Effectiveness of management arrangements:</i> The extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place supported the achievement of results	Were the roles and responsibilities of Centre officials, including programme management, who were responsible for the implementation of the activities clearly defined and understood? Were the current arrangements for implementing the activities effective? Were the activities coordinated across technical programmes?
<i>Impact orientation of the activity:</i> The strategic orientation of the activity towards making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes, and whether the changes have been durable/were replicated by beneficiaries	How likely is it that the results of the activities will be maintained or up-scaled by the participants? What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits from the activities (differentiated by groups)? What evidence exists of Constituents benefiting from the activities? What actions might be required for achieving long-term impact?

Methodology

6. The following quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were used:

- *Desk research:* The systematic analysis of existing documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the activities, including final reports about their outputs and outcomes, and other evidence.
- *Participants' survey:* An online survey was carried out in French, English and Arabic to obtain in-depth information from participants about their impressions or experiences of the activities. The survey was sent to 283 former participants from nine courses, selected from a combination of six gender-focused courses implemented by ILSGEN and four courses that integrated gender from other technical programme areas. The survey had a 31 per cent response rate. A total of 113 people participated in the evaluation process.
- *Interviews with key informants:* The evaluation conducted face-to-face interviews with the Centre's senior management, the manager of the ILSGEN Programme, and the activity managers of the relevant training courses.
- *Focus group discussions:* The evaluation also conducted in-depth key informant interviews with relevant staff from the Institute of Nuclear Physics of Italy to support the development of a case study to document a technical assistance and support process used in the Centre's work with the Institute as an alternative form of learning and capacity-building.

II. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

Summary of conclusions⁴

Relevance

7. The courses and other learning activities are relevant. They represent a blend of the Centre's more traditional approaches to work with ILO constituents combined with treatment of cutting-edge themes that attract a wider audience or which help ILO constituents apply innovative ways to integrate gender into their work. The way they have been set up address the commitments made in the *ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15*, the *Centre's Gender Result-Based Action Plan 2012-15* and the corresponding four programmes quite solidly. However, while it is apparent that the Centre is addressing gender within all its technical programme areas, it was not clear with the data available how evenly or to what extent this has been done across all technical programme areas.
8. The Centre's learning activities related to gender equality are reaching all ILO's constituents as well as a growing group of civil society organisations (CSOs), academics and other UN agencies. The Centre has also been successful in achieving high rates of female participation in its gender-focused or integrated courses, but not in increasing these participation rates in all of its other learning activities. It has a high rate (relatively speaking) of male participation in most but not all gender-related courses. There may thus be a need for additional outreach to ensure that men are adequately represented in some specific courses. It also appears that the Centre is not reaching people with disabilities to the degree in which they are represented in the population or labour force.

Results and effectiveness

9. The overall results arising from the Centre's approach to gender within its learning activities have been quite positive and significant in multiple areas for all ILO constituents, with 62.1 per cent of evaluation survey respondents indicating concrete results. Many of these they believe to be sustainable and provided concrete evidence that this was the case. It was also possible to document that at least half of the evaluation learning activity sample had generated results that have already been replicated or scaled up despite these courses or learning activities only having been completed within the past year and a half. This also represents a significant outcome.
10. The extent of immediate results and of up-scaled or replicated results also represents quite a high rate of return for learning activities - even more so for activities related to the promotion of gender equality which typically require a long time to effect visible and significant change. The most cost efficient learning modality combines on-line and face-to-face courses run within the context of a technical cooperation project or with a longer-term partner, particularly where there are project or partner personnel in the countries where the participants are concentrated.

Validity of activity design

11. Learning activities are generally well designed from a logic perspective but sometimes try to include too much material in a short time period. With this exception, course

⁴ Full text of the conclusions can be found in the evaluation report (pp. 34-36).

learning objectives are realistic. This is reflected consistently in the high level of post-course results as well as in the end-of-course evaluations.

12. End-of-course evaluations allow for a consistent comparison of course and learning quality across the board, but not for the tracking of specific course results. They can only accurately track course results to a limited degree as questions about future results can only be speculative in nature. Some final reports for courses are also incomplete and do not include course evaluation results or an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the course. Follow-up evaluations are also not conducted systematically across the board (it was not clear if there are the resources to do this). Activity managers find the gender question in the course evaluation to be unclear. As a result, it generates rather mixed results which activity managers do not think necessarily reflect the actual treatment of gender within course material.
13. Follow-up evaluations are generally well designed (although a bit generic in nature) but are not conducted systematically for all courses. This limits the degree to which the Centre can document and track longer-term results. This also limits the degree to which activity managers are aware of or able to track post-course results and use these to strengthen future programming or provide additional technical support to past participants.

Efficiency of use of resources

14. The level of both immediate results and extent of up-scaled or replicated results represents quite a high rate of return for learning activities and even more so for activities related to the promotion of gender equality. Overall, the use of blended on-line and face-to-face courses run within the context of a technical cooperation project or with a longer-term partner where there are project or partner personnel in the countries where the participants are concentrated was the most efficient use of learning activity resources. Where the thematic area permits, for targeted courses, holding them in the region or country where the participants are concentrated made the learning activities both more accessible and less expensive and therefore was a more efficient approach.

Management arrangements

15. The Centre generally does a good job of informing participants of logistical arrangements and course content prior to course implementation and has effective management arrangements in place. However, it does not make systematic use of social media as a tool to enhance learning. Where it does, it is seen to be effective by participants and appears to add to the achievement of learning results in the blended course options.
16. While the Centre has integrated gender into all its technical areas, it is not clear how evenly this has been done across the board, with some technical areas appearing to have more gender-integrated courses than others. There is also no longer any formal system in place to ensure that this gender integration takes place and the Centre could benefit from the reinstatement of its peer review process or other kind of cross programme review system which could be used as a tool to ensure a more systematic integration of gender into other technical programme areas.

Overall conclusion

17. To sum up, the Centre's approach to the gender equality thematic area is serving ILO constituents well, has done a good job of attracting the participation and experience of other sectors and is generating a high level of both immediate and longer-term results.

Outstanding concerns are that activity managers do not yet have access to a systematic means for tracking course or learning activity results and that there still remains a significant minority of course participants who do not feel they can apply the skills and knowledge they learned related to gender effectively. Overall, however, the Centre's reputation as a cutting-edge training institution with regard to gender is merited and its overall approach to this thematic area is highly relevant and well implemented.

Lessons learned⁵

18. The key lessons learned from the evaluation findings are as follows:

- to maintain relevance within the gender equality area while still being cost effective, the Centre needs to continue to reach out to groups and sectors beyond the traditional ILO tripartite constituents. Indeed, the inclusion of these other groups and sectors as target audiences is serving to provide ILO constituents with increased learning and opportunities by exposing them to more diverse gender networks and shared experiences at a national, regional and global level;
- strategic partnerships such as those with UN Women not only expand the reach of the Centre's learning activities but also often serve to reinforce course results and are generally a cost effective way to deliver training. They allow for greater access to specialized expertise and a diverse target audience as well as a sharing of the workload;
- the success of the technical support approach used with the GENIS Lab project showcased the effectiveness of a longer-term approach where much of the learning takes place outside of the classroom in an applied learning setting. It also demonstrated the strength of the ILO Participatory Gender Audit methodology. Funding permitting, it would be worth the Centre exploring where else they might apply this kind of learning approach;
- end-of-course and follow-up evaluations are insufficient tools to track the significant and very concrete results of the Centre's learning activities related to gender equality. It may be that a greater use of social media to help establish and maintain networking among course participants could serve to both reinforce results stemming from learning as well as provide a more systematic conduit for activity managers to obtain feedback about course results in the intermediate and longer term;
- to coordinate the integration of gender equality across all technical programmes in a systematic way requires a formal mechanism to do so as opposed to relying primarily on the interest of individual activity managers and goodwill and availability of inputs from ILSGEN staff;
- although blended courses are more expensive since they are longer in length and require additional resources to develop and deliver, they appear to be more cost effective as they attract more committed learners and provide more opportunities to interact with participants. Both these factors increase the likelihood of the blended gender-focused or integrated courses offered having significant results following course completion.

⁵ See pp. 36-37 of the evaluation report.

Recommendations⁶

19. Based on the evaluation findings, the evaluation recommends the following actions to address gaps identified in each evaluation category.

Activity relevance and outreach

20. The Centre should set and track concrete targets for male participation in gender-focused courses or learning activities.
21. The Centre should add a category in its application forms and course evaluations to allow participants to self-identify as having a disability, being from an ethnic or other minority, and by age. This would allow the Centre to track if the degree of their participation in the Centre's learning activities is proportionate to their representation in the population or among constituents so that if it is not, additional outreach to these groups can be added.
22. Future progress reports should include an analysis of female participation rates by technical programme area and not just as a Centre average. This will help the Centre determine if it is actually meeting its female participation targets in each area.

Validity of course design

23. The Centre could consider revising its end-of-course evaluations to include a question or questions on specific results tailored for each course or learning activity.
24. The question on gender needs to be revised for greater clarity. One possibility is to divide the question into two: e.g. "How well did the course address the specific needs of both women and men within the course's sector or theme?" and "To what extent did this course/learning activity give you any tools, skills or knowledge to address gender equality in the sector in which you work?" A variation on this latter question should also be included in the follow-up evaluation format.
25. Final reports on courses should always include the end-of-course evaluation results and a response and analysis of these results.
26. To the extent that the Centre budget and staff time permits, it should increase the number of follow-up evaluations conducted so that this is done more systematically for each technical programme area.

Effectiveness

27. There is a need for activity managers to review each gender-focused or integrated course to determine how to increase the number/percentage of participants who feel they have sufficient skills, confidence and knowledge following course completion to be able to apply these to affect positive change related to gender equality within the organization or sector in which they work. The actions needed may be different for each course and that is the reason why there is a need for a course-by-course review.
28. The Centre should find ways to showcase the success and results of their gender-focused and integrated courses and learning activities in public fora and among its

⁶ See pp. 37-38 of the evaluation report.

constituents to both provide recognition of the high quality work its staff are doing and as a means to promote increased participation in the Centre's related course offerings in the future.

Activity impact orientation

29. The Centre should consider if it is possible to make greater use of social media as a means for activity managers to track the longer-term gender impact of its courses more systematically. Social media could also be used to help facilitate networks among course participants since this will also reinforce course results. This will also depend upon the resources available, but it may be possible to establish a partnership with the private sector as a potential donor to provide these services for some courses.

Efficiency of use of resources

30. The Centre should consider reinstating the course/learning activity peer review system to both enhance a systematic review of gender integration across all technical areas as well as foster increased communication across technical programme areas regarding on what projects and courses each area is working. An alternative is to review the Gender Focal Point Network to enable it to take on this gender integration role. That, however, would require that additional resources be allocated to support the increased coordination of this network by ILSGEN.

III. Management response

31. The Centre welcomes the findings of the independent evaluation. It notes in particular that the evaluation found that the overall results of the gender equality related training and learning activities of the Centre were positive and significant in multiple areas for all ILO constituents; that it was possible to document that at least half of the evaluation learning activity sample had generated results that have already been replicated or scaled-up; the courses and other learning activities were found to be relevant, and that learning activities related to gender equality are reaching all ILO constituents as well as a growing group of Civil Society Organisations, academics and other UN agencies.
32. The following paragraphs set down the management response to the issues raised and the recommendations made by the independent evaluator.

Activity relevance and outreach (recommendations 1, 2 and 3)

33. The Centre will set outreach targets for the participation of men in activities linked to the theme of promotion of gender equality and diversity. For courses linked to other areas of expertise, a detailed in-house analysis of the participation rate of women for each technical programme has been launched. The findings will help determine how effectively the participation targets for women are being achieved in each area of expertise. Supportive measures to increase this will be implemented, where necessary.

Validity of course design (recommendations 4, 5, 6, and 7)

34. The Centre will revise the gender question of its end-of-course evaluation questionnaire. As recommended, the question will be divided into two questions as follows: "How well did the course address the specific needs of both women and men within the course's sector or theme?" and "To what extent did this course/learning activity give you any tools, skills or knowledge to address gender equality in the sector

in which you work?" The revised questions will be tested with a sample of participants in the last quarter of 2015, and if necessary, further refined before being introduced for all courses in 2016. As in the past, the results of the end-of-course evaluations will be documented and annexed to all activity reports.

Effectiveness (recommendations 8 and 9)

35. The ILSGEN Programme will facilitate a review of all activities linked to the theme of gender equality promotion implemented by the Centre in the one year period from mid-2014 to mid-2015. The focus of this review will be on increasing the number/percentage of participants who feel they have sufficient skills, confidence and knowledge following course completion to be able to apply these to effect positive change related to gender equality within the organization or sector in which they work. The findings will guide the implementation of concrete actions for selected courses in 2016. The ILSGEN Programme will be supported to promote the success and results of their gender-focused and integrated courses and learning activities in public fora and among ILO constituents in order to further increase participation in the Centre's gender equality related courses.

Activity impact orientation (recommendation 10)

36. The Centre will put greater emphasis on the use of social media as a means for activity managers to systematically track the longer-term gender impact of its courses. Social media will also be used to help facilitate networks among course participants since this will also reinforce course results. To promote the more effective use of social media, the Centre will review its current practices in early 2016. Based on the outcome of that analysis, support will be provided to technical programmes, including staff training, to increase their capacity to more effectively use social media, and to upgrade the existing social media mechanisms available to them.

Efficiency of use of resources (recommendation 11)

37. The Centre will review and update its Gender Action Plan for 2016-17. This will include a review of the effectiveness of the Network of Gender Focal Points. With the aim of further increasing communication across technical programmes on the theme of promoting gender equality, incentives will be introduced to promote the use of the Network of Gender Focal Points to conduct peer reviews of existing training activities through a gender lens.

The Board is invited to provide its comments and guidance on the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluator and on the management response, so that these comments and guidance can be taken into account by the Director in the follow-up.

Turin, 12 August 2015

APPENDIX

Title	Number of participants	Dates	Region/country	Language
2013 Gender Academy	159	11-22 November 2013 Turin	Global	English French Spanish
ILO participatory gender audit facilitators' certification	13	Blended 27 May-28 June (distance) 8-12 July 2013 (face-to-face) Turin	Global	English
Gender equality for development effectiveness	25	26-30 May 2014 Turin	Global	English
Gender and Organizational Change	34	31 March-4 April 2014 Turin	Global	English
Atelier 1: Planification et budgétisation selon le genre dans le cycle budgétaire du Burundi	33	12-16 August 2013 Burundi	Burundi	French
Vínculos entre migración laboral, género y desarrollo en América Latina	34	19-23 August 2013 San José, Costa Rica	Latin America and the Caribbean	French Spanish
Capacity building for trade unions on mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women workers	14	10-21 March 2014 Turin	Middle East	Arabic
Employers' organizations and women entrepreneurs: how to reach out?	17	7-10 October 2013 Kingston, Jamaica	Caribbean	English
Making markets more inclusive for women and youth to promote entrepreneurship and job creation in Kenya	15	Blended 2 September 2013-30 March 2014 (distance) 27- 29 January 2014 (face-to-face) Nairobi, Kenya		
Advisory services to INFN	N/A	2011-14	Institute of Nuclear Physics (Italy)	Italian