



Independent evaluation of the ILO’s strategy and actions to promote skills development for jobs and growth (2010-2015)

October 2016

Why focus on developing skills for job growth?

Skills development is a fundamental component of decent work. Not only does it increase the value and output of labour, it enriches the lives of workers by improving their access to the labour market while also helping them better adapt to a constantly changing, technologically-driven and globalized world. Recognizing this importance, the ILO supports skills development by providing policy advice, contributing to capacity building initiatives, implementing technical and training programmes, facilitating partnerships and supporting constituents develop skills-related legislation.

This evaluation explores the extent to which the ILO’s strategy, programme approach and interventions to promote skills development for jobs growth achieved their intended results from 2010-15, and makes recommendations for improvement. The evaluation draws from comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. Evaluation methods include document reviews, analyses of financial and survey data, interviews with more than 180 key informants (ILO constituents, staff and partners in skills development), as well as case studies and direct observations from field visits.

Field visits and case studies:

Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Uruguay (CINTERFOR), Zambia, Zimbabwe, the Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform and the G20 training strategy project.

What are the main findings from the report?

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The ILO’s skills activities are well aligned with the work of other partners and can contribute to the SDGs, most notably SDG 4 (ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning) and SDG 8 (promote inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all).

Effective recognition: Stakeholders see the ILO as a natural leader in the area of skills work and the recognition given by the G20) in asking the ILO to develop the strategy “A Skilled Workforce for a Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth: A G20 Strategy” has positioned the ILO as a global influence in skills development work. It has a unique comparative advantage that is recognized by stakeholders which distinguishes it from other organizations.

Good adaptability: Despite the stark variations in country-level development, the ILO’s approach proved to be adaptable and responsive to the different needs of its constituents.

Gender: Gender concerns were considered throughout skills activities, however this was not thoroughly reflected in the reporting of results.

Lack of clarity: There is insufficient clarity with respect to how the ILO’s skills strategy is defined and composed. Staff and constituents cited a range of policy documents as the ILO skills strategy, but there was no consensus.

Skills activities are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 4 & 8



Effective coordination: There is a positive perception among ILO staff and stakeholders of the level of complementarity between the ILO, its partners, and multilateral and bilateral organizations with respect to skills work.

Operational constraints: There are significant constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness. These include the number of staff in country or regional offices with adequate technical expertise, the time required for internal decision making and the ability to secure additional funding.

Impact results: Some impact has been achieved on policy development, institutional capacity and training opportunities as a result of the ILO's work on skills development. In other areas, such as in the countries' ability to align training supply and demand, is less evident.

Achieving sustainability: Policy development and training system reform offers greater potential for sustainability than that of more community-based approaches that test delivery mechanisms, although such approaches offer more visible and immediate results for beneficiaries. The evaluation observed cases of sustainable results for individuals, although sustainability of the intervention itself was not certain. Overall, ILO staff and stakeholders perceived sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services.

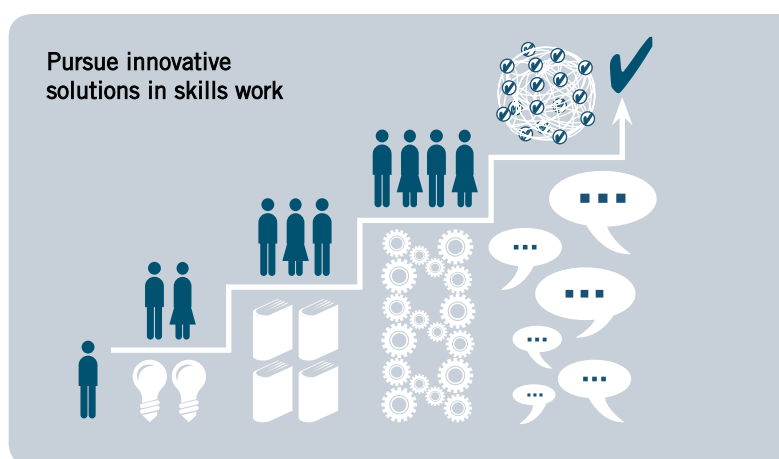
What did the evaluators *recommend* the Office do?

Coherence: Enhance coherence between key policy documents and the Programme and Budget (P&B), which outlines the ILO's strategic objectives, expected outcomes and resources required to implement the results every two years, and map current skills work with the P&B indicators in an effort to improve coherence between them and the SDGs.

Technical support: Provide adequate technical support and consider providing specific skills-related activities to target countries or regions.

Clarification and resources: Communicate the ILO's skills agenda to its offices and constituents, in addition to producing resources to better integrate skills activities into development projects.

Innovation: Allocate funding for the pursuit of innovative solutions in skills work that are effective, scalable and cost-effective.



Capacity: Strengthen the capacity of the ILO's tripartite constituents (governments, workers' and employers' organizations) to engage in skills-related activities and ensure that relevant government ministries identify and address skills priorities.

VOICES FROM CONSTITUENTS

- Workers' organizations would also like to see that occupational safety and health is embedded in skills training – “there are many people who don't know how to operate industrial machines properly or safely.”
- “The ILO can show us what's worked elsewhere, why it worked, and how we might make it work here.”
- “We will need ILO to be quickly responsive to day-to-day problems and changes.”

VOICES FROM ILO STAFF

- “Skills development must be one of the core priorities of the Employment Department. It is expected of us, even if it is imperfectly reflected in the SPF (Strategic Policy Framework).”
- “Because of countries' different development levels and available resources, we need the strategy to be adaptive.”

