



Governing Body

326th Session, Geneva, 10–24 March 2016

GB.326/PFA/6

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section
Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment

PFA

Date: 19 February 2016

Original: English

SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Knowledge Strategy 2010–15: Achievements, lessons learned and the way forward

Purpose of the document

This paper summarizes the main achievements and lessons learned related to the implementation of the 2010–15 ILO Knowledge Strategy and seeks the Governing Body's guidance as to how these lessons can help the Office to improve its work on knowledge management in the future (see draft decision in paragraph 28).

Relevant strategic objective: All four strategic objectives.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: None.

Author unit: Office of the Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P).

Related documents: ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization; Resolution on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization; Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15; GB.304/SG/DECL/1(Rev.); GB.306/PFA/12/3; GB.306/PFA/12/1.

Introduction

1. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and its accompanying resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2008 drew attention to the strategic importance of strengthening the research capacity of the International Labour Organization (ILO).¹ Accordingly, its implementation plan² and the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15³ adopted by the Governing Body at its 304th Session (March 2009) lay out a framework for strengthening technical capacities, in particular the Office's knowledge management, in order to provide reasoned policy advice and services to constituents, while also promoting ILO objectives among other partners and actors.
2. As part of the results-based management strategies 2010–15, the ILO Knowledge Strategy for the corresponding planning period was endorsed by the Governing Body at its 306th Session (November 2009).⁴ It consists of three interrelated outcomes and their accompanying results framework: evidence-based analysis, knowledge exchange and dissemination of ILO knowledge. In that context, the strengthening of evidence-based analysis seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between policy actions and outcomes in order to better support ILO policies, programmes and actions.⁵ The exchange of this knowledge is a way to improve its quality, encompassing not only institutionalized knowledge-sharing frameworks within the ILO, but also exchanges with constituents and external partners, such as other United Nations (UN) agencies and other international organizations, partnering institutions, academic and research institutions, and the public.⁶ Finally, the dissemination of ILO knowledge is important for shaping thinking and policy-making globally, in regions and at the country level. Digital media facilitates the implementation of all outcomes.⁷
3. This paper summarizes the main achievements and lessons learned through the implementation of the ILO's 2010–15 Knowledge Strategy and looks at how these lessons can help the Office to improve its work on knowledge management in the future. The 2010–15 Knowledge Strategy continues to serve as a basis for the future work of the Office in this area, in particular with regard to a wide range of knowledge management activities to be undertaken by the Office in 2016–17 and the new strategic plan for 2018–21.

¹ ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, Annex II(D); ILO: *Resolution on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization*, International Labour Conference, 97th Session, Geneva, 2008.

² GB.304/SG/DECL/1(Rev.).

³ GB.304/PFA/2(Rev.).

⁴ GB.306/PFA/12/3; GB.306/PFA/12/1.

⁵ GB.306/PFA/12/3, paras 7–13.

⁶ *ibid.*, paras 14–20.

⁷ *ibid.*, paras 21–28.

Achievements

4. Evidence-based analysis was significantly strengthened by the establishment of a high standard of research, review and quality control for the flagship reports, namely the *World Employment and Social Outlook* (WESO) and its *Trends* edition (previously the *World of Work Report* and the *Global Employment Trends*), the *Global Wage Report* and *World Social Protection Report*. In addition to rigorous internal peer review for each of these reports, an independent Research Review Group was established at the end of 2014 to review ILO research, including that released through the WESO. These higher quality flagship reports have generated growing interest among researchers and in the media, as the ILO establishes a reputation as a publisher of robust and trustworthy research and analysis.
5. Several other major new reports were launched over the period, based on significant new research and data collection. These reports are designed to fill knowledge gaps and provide evidence essential for informed policy-making at the country level. Of particular note are reports providing new quantitative estimates of child labour, forced labour, domestic workers and migrant workers.⁸
6. Partnerships with academic publishers have brought additional rigorous processes of selection and peer review. Over 2010–15, 24 academic co-editions were published in English, including a new series of academic studies launched with Palgrave Macmillan, the ILO Advances in Labour Studies series.⁹ The ILO Research Paper series was also launched, which makes relevant, high-quality research available more rapidly than in book or journal form.
7. The statistical foundation of the research and analysis reflected in these publications has been strengthened by: (a) the ILO's new statistical short-term indicators database, which now covers 102 countries and territories, and contains timely information on issues related to all of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda; (b) the launching of a new compilation of annual data; and (c) the significant increase in the technical assistance provided to member States to enable them to produce more and better-quality statistics on labour and decent work. In addition, Office-wide consistency and coherence in terms of data use, country grouping and estimation methods has been gradually but significantly improved, particularly through an internal data coordination working group under the leadership of the Department of Statistics.
8. The statistical capacities of constituents were strengthened through regional and global initiatives. Together with the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin (Turin Centre), a new Academy on Labour Market Statistics and Analysis was introduced in 2015 targeting labour statisticians, policy-makers and senior managers. Regional initiatives included capacity-building workshops on work statistics for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and workshops on informal economy statistics for the

⁸ ILO: *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–12* (Geneva, 2013); ILO: *World Report on Child Labour: Economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour* (Geneva, 2013); ILO: *World Report on Child Labour 2015: Paving the way to decent work for young people* (Geneva, 2015); ILO: *Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour* (Geneva, 2014); ILO: *Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva, 2013); and ILO: *ILO global estimates on migrant workers* (Geneva, 2015).

⁹ Additionally, seven research studies were co-published with Spanish academic publishers and one in French.

Asia and the Pacific region in collaboration with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP).

9. Work on statistical standards advanced through formation of tripartite working groups to follow up on various resolutions adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) held in 2013. These topics included: advising the Office to revise the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93); sharing good practices, discussing and developing a workplan for defining international standards on labour migration statistics; and preparing a manual on methodologies to measure earnings and other work-related income. Recommendations of these working groups will be presented at the 20th ICLS to be held in 2018.
10. In the follow-up to the resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization adopted by the 19th ICLS, experimental pilot studies were launched in ten countries to test different question sequences and ascertain which provided the best basis for measurement in line with the new standards. This initiative was launched in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the UN Foundation.
11. Efforts to collect and disseminate statistics covering each of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda were intensified, contributing to an expansion of the ILOSTAT database from 8 million data values to over 35 million. This included the dissemination of new data collections prepared for the *Global Wage Report*, social security indicators, and data on labour migration for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, as well as the updating and consolidating of existing data collection of yearly indicators, labour force estimates and projections, and the global data base on youth labour market indicators (Youthstats). In addition, the *Key indicators of the labour market (KILM)* remains a core reference, published in its ninth edition in November 2015.
12. Bringing together constituents, partner organizations and other external stakeholders in conferences and workshops has improved knowledge exchange and the analytical underpinnings of the ILO research agenda. Knowledge networks, such as the social protection network and the regulating for decent work network, have been developed to exchange up-to-date research findings and methods with a wide range of experts.
13. New Global Technical Teams (GTTs) were established in 2015 to bring together ILO experts both in headquarters and in the field in the major areas of the ILO's mandate. GTTs in the areas of statistics, research, employment policy, social protection, work quality, governance, enterprises and international labour standards ensure the exchange of state-of-the-art technical knowledge between specialists in headquarters and the field, including ILO technical specialists from extra-budgetary cooperation projects. For example, the GTT on research includes senior regional research officers in Africa, Asia and Latin America in addition to those in the Research Department and will reinforce the synergies between global analytical findings and country operations.
14. Knowledge building and sharing has also involved the collaboration of different task teams across ILO headquarters, field offices and/or the Turin Centre as well as with other UN agencies, research institutes and expert groups. Emphasis has been given to strengthening the link between knowledge exchange and capacity building, which is often needed to enable social partners to participate in knowledge-sharing activities. Multi-level partnerships involving governments, the social partners, and international and regional institutions have been considered as best practice in this area.

15. Dissemination of robust, evidence-based research has enabled the Office to position the ILO as an influential player in global and regional debates, including at the G20 and in engagements with other international organizations, by providing new and high-quality analysis.
16. The Office, in partnership with constituents, was successful in ensuring the inclusion of decent work objectives into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will provide opportunities and challenges for the Office in the next biennium as it starts investing in collecting statistics to measure the progress of various SDGs.
17. The visibility and dissemination of research by the ILO has been greatly increased by digitalization of the publishing processes, expansion of the media coverage to social media, development of new multimedia products and more effective use of the ILO's website. Information management systems were improved to increase usability and disseminate knowledge through worldwide networks.
18. In 2014, the Office launched the ILO Information and Knowledge Management Gateway, an ILO portal that collects, aggregates and shares relevant country-specific information and data across strategic knowledge dimensions: policy, standards, statistics, programmes, projects, results, publications and good practices. It is accessible on the public website through a single entry point, "Countries",¹⁰ with cross-reference links to ILO national and regional websites.
19. The Knowledge Management Coordination Team (KMCT) was established in 2014 to lead the Office's work on knowledge management. The KMCT is facilitating the development and implementation of the ILO Knowledge Management Strategy; undertaking coordination, knowledge sharing and collaboration activities to implement the strategy and connect staff and key knowledge management stakeholders; building capacity; monitoring progress; and measuring impact of knowledge management initiatives. In terms of coordination, the KMCT currently serves as the secretariat for the working groups on policy issues as well as data coordination, and hosts the secretariat for the ILO Publishing Committee.
20. ILO research and policy analysis is disseminated and discussed at newly created departmental seminar series, such as the ILO Research Seminar series; joint conferences organized with external partners, such as the conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network, now in its fourth year; and dialogue with the Research Review Group. Information is also made available through departmental newsletters and the ILO Twitter account dedicated to research and publications.
21. There has been a major increase in the total number of visitors to the ILO website. The fully integrated website now regularly receives 980,000 visits representing 670,000 people and 3.5 million page views per month. The aggregation of content has been enhanced through well-defined thematic and country portals, breaking down the silos of information. The website can be viewed across a range of mobile devices, enhancing user experience and making content more accessible. New agreements with the main digital partners will continue to provide the ILO with an opportunity to expand the dissemination of specific ILO apps and "mobile-friendly" publications such as EPUBs. These new types of digital knowledge products – mobile apps and interactive digital narratives – communicate the ILO's technical advice, statistics, research and policy in innovative and engaging ways, for a broad range of constituents. ILO InfoStories is an example of this new approach.

¹⁰ <http://www.ilo.org/global/regions/lang--en/index.htm>.

22. Edited and live videos, data visualization applications, social media threads and slide shows regularly contribute to a richer user experience. Dissemination of ILO material through the website and on mobile platforms is enhanced by an integrated social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Flickr as well as YouTube. The ILO's following on Twitter increased steadily from 25,000 in April 2013 to 62,500 in September 2015.

Lessons learned and the way forward

23. In 2018, the ILO moves to a four-year planning cycle aligned with that of the UN. Therefore, the Office foresees updating and further developing its Knowledge Strategy for the 2018–21 period, in line with other integrated management strategies on human resources and information technology. In the interim, the 2010–15 Knowledge Strategy's main goal of improving the quality and policy relevance of ILO knowledge work is still relevant. Progress will continue on strengthening evidence-based research and analysis, knowledge exchange and improved dissemination. The Programme and Budget for 2016–17 underlines the continued importance of strengthening the ILO research function as “a principal source of expertise on key employment and social policy issues”, as well as on making “research findings accessible to constituents and the general public”.¹¹ Similarly, the goal of consolidating the ILO's position as the world's reference on labour statistics remains relevant.¹² The Office will continue to focus on fostering statistical capacity to contribute to more effective research. Future technology-based efforts will focus on building systems to enhance the use of the Office's data, knowledge expertise and experience in addressing complex research, policy and statistical measurement challenges.
24. The Publishing Committee was established as part of the implementation of the new ILO publishing policy.¹³ It will oversee efforts to improve the quality, timeliness, relevance and coherence of ILO publications. In particular, the Publishing Committee will ensure comprehensive internal review and quality control of flagship and other major publications, and will help to improve planning to allow sufficient lead time for review and revision of publications. The Committee will also work to move the Office to the digital-first model.
25. In 2014–15 the Office started a pilot project aimed at documenting and analysing existing technical knowledge and know-how, and helping staff to better use available resources. Such pilot projects have been conducted in two units at headquarters and in three field offices. Similar projects will be conducted in other units and field locations in 2016–17. The Office has also begun, in 2015, to gain experience with state-of-the-art knowledge management tools and techniques for aggregating qualitative data from field sources. Depending on the results, further applications along these lines could be envisaged. In 2014–15 the Office conducted capacity-building activities, including a Knowledge Lab in April 2015 in Turin for ILO staff. A similar Knowledge Lab will be conducted in Turin in 2017, along with additional courses on various aspects related to knowledge management. The Turin Centre, as a global knowledge hub,¹⁴ provides the means to reach a global audience for such training activities in a cost-effective manner. In addition, the Office is

¹¹ ILO Programme and Budget for the biennium 2016–17, para. 207.

¹² *ibid.*, para. 217.

¹³ Director-General's Announcement, *The ILO publishing policy*, IGDS No. 458 (version 1), 24 Dec. 2015.

¹⁴ ILO Programme and Budget for the biennium 2016–17, para. 222.

currently discussing the possibility of convening a meeting involving other UN agencies, donors and stakeholders to share recent experiences with knowledge management work in various organizations.

26. The development of the Knowledge Management Gateway has revealed a number of opportunities to improve data collection, quality, validity and use. Such improvements – within and among technical departments, as well as between headquarters and field offices – should be accompanied by measures to foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing among staff, taking full advantage of existing and still-to-be-developed collaborative work arrangements within the Office.
27. The Office will work to ensure that the ILO’s knowledge base is supported and expanded through budgets and workplans. Emphasis will be given to strengthening the underlying databases maintained by technical departments, leveraging information and data, expanding coverage and improving functionality, and ensuring targeted access to relevant knowledge products. Sustained investment in the development of collaborative knowledge-sharing techniques, capabilities and habits will allow the ILO to become a true “learning organization”.

Draft decision

28. *The Governing Body takes due note of the implementation of the Knowledge Strategy 2010–15 and requests the Director-General to take into account its guidance in preparing the new strategic plan for 2018–21.*