

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTER OF THE ILO ACADEMIES

ILO EVALUATION OFFICE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	Areas of Critical Importance
ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
FIERI	Forum Internazionale Ed Europeo Di Ricerche Sull'Immigrazione
GMG	Global Migration Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISSA	International Social Security Association
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
SED	Sustainable Enterprise Development
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
UN	United Nations
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The International Training Centre's (ITCILO) programme offering mainly consists of three product lines: Academies, open/standard courses and tailor-made training services.
2. Academies are usually global events that target a large number of participants (often around 40 or more). Through a modular approach, they combine a core curriculum with elective and individualized learning paths. Global Academies are held at the Turin Centre and are offered in multiple languages. In some cases, the ITCILO also offers such modular training at regional levels.
3. The Academies have recently emerged as a key ITCILO programme offering. While the Centre has hosted and provided logistical support to the Boulder Microfinance Training Programme since 2005, the first ITCILO designed Academy was offered in 2008: *The ILO Enterprise Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development*. Since then, there has been a rapid increase in the number of Academies offered by the Centre: in 2013, 11 global and regional Academies were offered.
4. Based on the 2010 report, *Internal Review of the Operations of the International Training Centre*, it may be concluded that Academies emerged into prominence for the following reasons (these are not listed in order of importance):
 - Financial – Such large-scale events offer more revenue opportunities and are particularly attractive in terms of fixed cost absorption.
 - Needs of the constituents: The demand for specific and contextual training is growing. This demand is not met through open courses that are by definition standard. While tailor-made activities can address such needs, they are often ad-hoc in nature. Academies can potentially meet this demand as they: 1) offer a choice of multiple inter-related courses under a large umbrella topic, 2) provide a platform for experience sharing among international participants and among participants and multiple world-renowned experts over a relatively long period (about two weeks).
 - Visibility of the Centre: To the extent that the Academies become successful in becoming prestigious global events, they provide strong support to promotional and capacity building efforts of the ITCILO and the ILO.
5. The Governing Board of the ITCILO has requested an evaluation of the Academies. Ten Academies (two recurring editions of five Academies) that took place between 2011 and 2013 constitute the evaluation sample. The ITCILO's Evaluation Unit was responsible for conducting the internal evaluation. At the request of the ITCILO's Director, the ILO Evaluation Office agreed to manage the subsequent independent evaluation. This involved preparing ToRs, recruiting the consultant, organizing the field mission and reviewing deliverables for suitability and acceptability.

6. The first deliverable of the external evaluation – Inception Report – was provided to the ILO Evaluation Office on June 4, 2014. The second deliverable of the external evaluation – Draft Evaluation Report – was provided to the ILO Evaluation office on June 30th, 2014.
7. This report represents the third – and, final – deliverable of the Academies Evaluation. It is divided into three parts: evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations. The detailed evaluation findings are organized by the evaluation questions outlined in the ToR. The findings are based on an analysis of internal evaluation reports, desk review of documents, and interviews at the ITCILO and ILO.
8. Summary of Evaluation Findings:
 - i) The Academies are uniquely positioned to:
 - a) Bring together:
 - individuals from diverse nationalities, backgrounds and roles (representatives from the public sector, Employers’ or Workers’ organizations)
 - renowned Resource Persons with expertise in various fields
 - b) For the purposes of:
 - Sharing, across a variety of topics,:
 - best practices
 - experiences from the field
 - latest/cutting-edge thinking
 - Networking:
 - among participants
 - among participants and Resource Persons
 - among different Resource Persons
 - c) Through a modular format that allows learner autonomy and flexibility, which theoretically, should lead to a more effective learning process
 - ii) The Academies have demonstrated strong relevance to the ILO’s SPF in terms of contribution to various objectives, outcomes and emphasis on partnerships. The SPF also outlines gender equality as central to the achievement of its objectives. While the ITCILO offers a Gender Academy, the integration of gender issues in other Academies has the potential to improve - this is indicated by the Gender Marker ratings as well as average scores on the EoAQ.
 - iii) In practice, the ten Academies in the evaluation sample have unevenly demonstrated the conceptual model’s competitive strengths (as described in point 7.i):
 - a) There appears to be a high degree of regional homogeneity among participants. While this points to the presence of region-specific training needs, it also suggests a dilution in the Academy’s ability to serve as a truly “global” training platform.
 - b) The Academies have been able to target practitioners – many participants have over five years of experience in the broad topic covered by the Academy. At the same time, with

regard to specific electives, various indicators point to a high degree of diversity in participant background by depth (basic/advanced) and type (theoretical/practical) of knowledge. Generally, when there is a high degree of heterogeneity among participants, training events run the risk of becoming either too specific or too general for different participants.

- c) The majority of Academy participants represented public sector institutions with limited participation from Workers' and Employers' organizations. This is due to multiple reasons: 1) the high cost of Academy participation and specific fellowship policies for Workers' and Employers' organizations, 2) diffused relevance of a broad-scoped training event to the specific training needs of Workers' and Employers' organizations, and 3) at least for representatives of Employers' organizations, the long duration of the Academies. However, the low participation of representatives from Workers' and Employers' organizations is not limited only to Academies – it is also seen in other open courses that are not planned and offered by ACTRAV/ACTEMP. It is important to note that in comparison to global Academies, regional Academies experience higher participation from representatives of Workers' and Employers' organizations.
- d) The expertise of Resource Persons has been highly regarded by participants in all Academies. In turn, the Academies have also proved to be a platform for Resource Persons to update themselves. However, in some cases, participants have called for an improvement in the pedagogical skills of Resource Persons. Participant comments also point to the need for: 1) increased regional diversity among Resource Persons, and, 2) Academy alumni as Resource Persons.
- e) With regard to Academy contents:
 - The topics of electives and plenary sessions were relevant to the needs of the participants. Further, there is evidence that Technical Programmes were able to tailor successive Academy editions (in terms of elective and plenary session offerings) based on participant feedback received in prior editions.
 - A majority of participants commented on the “lack of sufficient time” for absorbing the information shared during the electives. This is an important concern as it relates to effectiveness of learning at the Academies. Further, as indicated in participant comments, there could be multiple reasons behind this comment:
 - too many electives relative to the two week duration of an Academy
 - too much content relative to the assigned time for an elective,
 - too much depth/complexity relative to the assigned time for an elective,
 - difficulty in following content due to interpretation delays
 - time management by the Resource Person – with a heterogeneous audience, it often takes time to get everyone to the same level of understanding,
 - all of the above factors may be operating at once

- While there was some variation on this across Academies, the need to improve experience sharing among participants was noted by many.
 - Some participants also commented on the need for case studies and training materials from developing countries. In addition, others specifically requested regional training in follow-up questionnaires.
 - A comparison of open courses and Academies reveals that when a two-week open courses is transformed into an Academy format, care should be taken to adapt the course elements to the realities of the new format – higher number of participants, complex courses in the context of simultaneous interpretation, variation in background of participants, variation among Resource Persons and so on.
 - Participants commented that Academies were effective in introducing them to new topics and in providing theoretical clarity on important issues. The training was also seen as directly applicable to participants’ jobs. As a result of attending an Academy, many participants noted a “large improvement” in their ability to “identify problems and provide solutions” at their workplaces.
 - The success of the modular format is underpinned by the presence of sufficient preliminary information regard Academy offerings. Accurate and comprehensive advance information allows participants to effectively choose elective courses. There is evidence that in some cases, the preliminary information was sparse (for instance, only the title of the elective was provided – the sub-title, description and elective-specific learning objectives were missing.) In other cases, the titles were misleading. The Gender Academy was able to improve on this in its second edition by providing detailed preliminary information and by offering a guided selection of electives for all participants.
 - Conceptually, the provision of simultaneous interpretation in multiple languages allows the Academies to train participants of diverse nationalities. Further, it also enhances the extent of experience sharing among these participants at the training. However, in practice, many participants were dissatisfied with the quality of interpretation. Participants also noted that in some cases training materials (slides, readings) had not been translated in multiple languages.
- iv) In their first editions, a large percentage of Academy participants were either self-paid or funded through their own institutions. From this perspective, Academies make good business sense. However, in 2014, the SED Academy was cancelled due to insufficient demand. The fate of the Labour Migration Academy was also unclear for the same reason. Thus, Academies involve a considerable amount of risk – especially when they don’t break even and have to be cancelled at the last minute. Two factors were found to moderate this degree of risk:

- a) *Frequency of Academies*: Currently, except for the Gender Academy, all Academies in the evaluation sample were offered on an annual basis. Among these, only the Skills Academy saw a large (26%) increase in participation from the first edition to the second. The participation for the Labour Migration Academy increased negligibly (four participants). The participation for the SED and the Social Security Academy *decreased*. On the other hand, the Gender Academy saw a 31% increase on a base of 121 first-edition participants. The low yield in participation among annual Academies is further outweighed by invisible costs that include: 1) development costs of planning an Academy, 2) planning an Academy that remains “cutting-edge” on an annual basis, 3) costs of implementing an Academy in terms of a Programme Manager’s time.
- b) *Number of Academies offered by a Technical Programme in a Year*: There is potential for internal competition among Academies when related Academies are offered by the same Technical Programme in the same year. For instance, both an SED Academy and a new Academy on Green Economy were planned for 2014. The SED Academy was subsequently cancelled due to insufficient demand.
- v) Currently, the ITCILO does not offer a systematic mechanism to continue the learning process after an Academy ends. Further, there is variation in how different Academies manage course alumni.
- vi) There is a need to come up with certain minimum standards to define “Academies” and for those standards to be consistently applied across all ITCILO courses.

9. Lesson Learned:

The Academies model is conceptually strong. However, the degree to which this “conceptual effectiveness” is translated into “actual effectiveness” depends upon how Academies are implemented in practice. Factors like provision of accurate and comprehensive preliminary information, quality of simultaneous interpretation, balance between elective content and complexity relative to assigned time for an elective, degree of heterogeneity (in background) among participants, quality of pedagogical training, frequency of Academies, number of Academies offered by Technical Programs in a given year, and so on, have the potential to influence the success of the Academies model.

10. Evaluation Recommendations:

- i) Instead of a one-time event, a sequenced and harmonized training package should be planned, where an ITCILO Academy at Turin is offered every alternate year, complemented with regional workshops in intervening years.
- ii) The ITCILO should continue its efforts to increase tripartite relevance in Academy design. This is likely to improve participation from social partners as well as provide a mechanism for transferring ILO’s tripartite values to external partners who may or may not share this priority.

- iii) Various strategies should be undertaken to improve the design of the Academies. These include: identifying the appropriate balance between elective content and duration, tailoring the Academies by participants’ depth of knowledge, enhancing emphasis on experience sharing among participants, ensuring the mitigation of language barriers, investing in high quality Resource Persons in terms of both, expertise and pedagogical skills, provision of guided selection of electives, enhancing sharing of information before and after the Academy and, inclusion of wrap-up sessions and quizzes.
- iv) To reduce unpredictability of funds, training needs should be budgeted in advance. Currently, Programme Managers engage in quite a bit of negotiating and bargaining for fellowship funds until the very last minute. To the extent possible, emphasis should be placed on incorporating funding for Academies in the ILO’s biennium budgeting process.
- v) Before a new and improved version of ITCILO Academies is launched, an effort should be made to ensure consistency among courses that have the term “Academy” in their title. The ITCILO should consider changing the title of those courses (for example, the Maritime Labour Academy) that do not share certain minimum features with global Academies. Further, regional trainings should not be referred to as Academies. In this way, the ITCILO can consolidate the brand identity of Academies.

DESCRIPTION OF ACADEMIES & EVALUATION PURPOSE, CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY¹

Description of Academies

The design and implementation of Academies is underpinned by an approach that differs from most other activities implemented by the Centre. Academies have been defined as: “Learning events which cluster different standard/open courses in a given area of expertise and offer participants a choice of individualized learning paths among a variety of thematic and linguistic options”.

The table below illustrates the key characteristics of academies:

Characteristics	Academies
Size of the audience	Conceived for a relatively larger audience (30-40 participants or beyond).
Languages	Implemented in more than one language.
Flexible and/or modular approach	In addition to plenary sessions, academies offer parallel electives on related topics

¹ This section was taken directly from the Evaluation Terms of Reference provided to the consultant

An additional feature is that academies are longer than the average duration of standard/open courses. The learning objectives of the academies are crafted in relation to their contents and aligned to the participants' profile. The academies are underpinned by the following specific features:

- To approach training through multiple learning paths in line with participants' learning needs and profiles. The possibility to choose learning paths by individual participants will increase the effectiveness and the impact of learning.
- To enhance networking opportunities: opportunities to establish networks among participants and their organizations are often embedded in the activity design and implementation.
- To allow a more in-depth learning of the themes/topics covered due to the flexibility of the approach (personalized learning paths) and to the longer duration of the activity.

The evaluation of the academies is considered critical as it is expected to provide evidence and knowledge on the overall value added of the academies to the Centre's strategic objectives. In particular, the aim is to assess whether they are increasing the effectiveness and impact of learning and hence, to inform the usefulness of mainstreaming and scaling up this approach.

Purpose, Scope and Clients

Using data collected in Phase I (internal evaluations), Phase II (external evaluation) of the evaluation is intended to assess the overall value added of the academies in terms of their overall concept and approach. It will be an independent evaluation underpinned by the following criteria: relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, appropriateness and innovation.

The recipients of the evaluation will be:

- The Board of the ITCILO/ILO
- The Director of the ITCILO/ILO
- The managers of the Academies

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

ILO evaluations usually focus on the relevance to institutional priorities and beneficiary needs, efficiency and effectiveness, the impact of the results and the potential for sustainability. For each criterion, the evaluation sought to answer two or three specific questions (below).

Relevance

- How did the Academies approach contribute to ILO's strategic objectives and to Decent Work Country Programmes?

Efficiency

- How did the social partners participate in the academies (numbers, relevance, role and value added)?

Effectiveness

- What is the overall effectiveness of the Academies approach in terms of generating increased knowledge and skills?

Impact

- To what extent have Academies reached higher scores, compared to the Centre's benchmark courses, in terms of participants' satisfaction, learning, application of learning and impact?

Sustainability

- To what extent do the investments made and the results obtained justify the continuation and institutionalization of the approach and possible future investments?
- What lessons have been learned to inform the Centre's overall approach to training and learning?

Methodology

Sampling

In order to answer the questions posed above, the ITCILO selected a sample of Academies based on the criteria found below:

1. An audience of over 40 participants;
2. The presence of alternative learning paths;
3. Implementation in different languages;
4. A minimum duration of two weeks; and

The following table indicates the academies that the ITCILO proposed that the evaluation analyze. As can be seen, there were five academies repeated in two editions.

Academy	Dates
A905132 Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development	23/04 – 04/05/2012
A905098 Academy on Social Security	24/09 – 05/10/2012
A905033 Academy on Skills Development	15/10 – 26/10/2012
A905016 Academy on Labour Migration	02/07 – 13/07/2012
A904030 Gender Academy	21/11 – 02/12/2011
A906067 - Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development	17/06 – 28/06/2013
A906122 Academy on Social Security	23/09 – 04/10/2013
A906153 Academy on Skills Development	25/11 – 06/12/2013
A906115 Academy on Labour Migration	06/05 – 17/05/2013
A906059 Gender Academy	11/11 -- 22/11/2013

Analysis

The independent evaluation employs a mixed-methods approach. The defining characteristic of this approach is its use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This helps to assure dependable feedback on a wide range of questions; depth of understanding of particular programmes; a holistic perspective; and enhancement of the validity, reliability, and usefulness of the full set of findings. Some of the evaluation questions are answered through meta-analyzing the results from the ITCILO's own internal evaluations. Others were answered by comparing the results from the Academies with matched open courses.

To complement the quantitative methods, data was collected using qualitative methods such as document analysis. The evaluator conducted group and individual interviews with key stakeholders and direct observation during a field mission to the ITCILO in Turin, Italy. The evaluator made it a special effort to interview administrators from programs that do NOT offer Academies in order to get a balanced perspective.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance of Academies

This section examines the relevance of Academies to the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework, the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes, the ACIs and needs of the training participants.

Relevance to the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) 2010-2015

1. The SPF calls for a renewed focus on building capacity of ILO constituents. A desk review of documents suggests a direct conceptual relevance of each Academy's objectives to this overarching SPF strategy.
2. For the most part, each of the five distinct Academies in the evaluation sample offers training in substantive areas that closely correspond to different *strategic objectives* outlined in the SPF. For instance, the Academies on Sustainable Enterprise Development (2012 and 2013) and Skills Development (2012 and 2013) mainly relate to the strategic objective on "Employment," while, Social Security (2012 and 2013) and Labour Migration (2012 and 2013) are most directly relevant to the strategic objective on "Social Protection." The Gender Academy is a cross-cutting Academy which offers training on topics that in turn are essential to the realization of each of the four strategic objectives. It is important to note that the ITCILO also offers Academies that relate to the strategic objective on "Social Dialogue," however, these were not included in the evaluation sample.
3. The modular training format, which combines a core curriculum with elective courses on various topics, allows Academies to potentially influence a range of *outcomes* within and across the four strategic objectives. For instance, by offering electives on "Skills Development for Entrepreneurship," and "Skills Recognition and Labour Migration," the Academy of Skills

Development (2013) related to Outcome 2 (Skills Development) and Outcome 3 (Sustainable Enterprises) under the strategic objective on Employment, as well as Outcome 7 (Labour Migration) under the strategic objective on Social Protection. Similarly, the Gender Academy (2013) offered electives on “Safety and Health at Work,” “Maternity Protection at Work,” and “Organizing the Informal Rural Workers.” In this way, it was able to lend itself to Outcome 6 (Occupational Safety and Health) and Outcome 4 (Social Security) under the strategic objective on Social Protection as well as Outcome 1 (Employment Promotion) under the strategic objective on Employment. In another instance, the Labour Migration Academy (2012 and 2013) offered multiple electives under its “Protection” track that related to a variety of outcomes, including Outcome 7 (Labour Migration), Outcome 15 (Forced Labour), Outcome 17 (Discrimination at Work) and Outcome 11 (Labour Administration and Labour Law). These examples suggest that the Academies have the potential to demonstrate the interrelated nature of the four strategic objectives in the SPF, thereby fostering systemic thinking among participants.

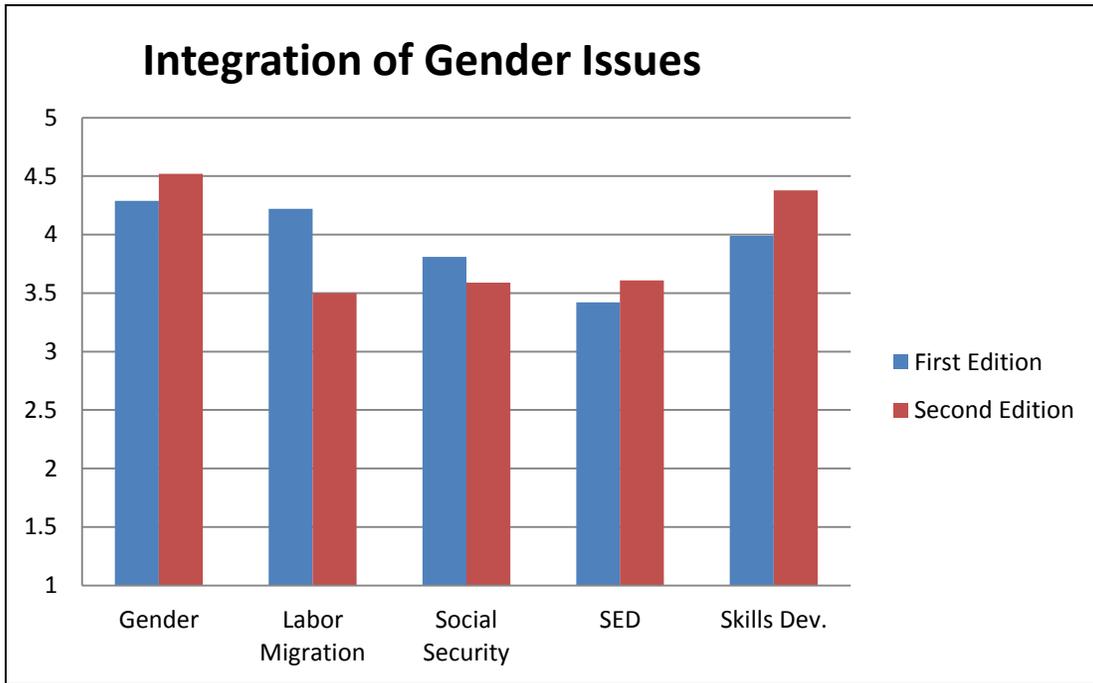
4. While capacity development for ILO constituents is central to all ITCILO training offerings (open courses, tailor-made activities and so on.), the Academies in particular are strategically positioned to contribute to another overarching SPF focus: Partnerships and Communications. The SPF reiterates the 2008 Declaration that calls for “the promotion of effective partnerships within the UN and multilateral systems to strengthen ILO operational programmes and activities or otherwise promote ILO objectives.” The Academies exhibit strong alignment to the SPF in this context as each Academy is offered in collaboration with the ILO (as the main counterpart) and multiple state and non-state entities. These partner organizations include:
 - a) UN agencies, International Financial Institutions and other intergovernmental organizations. Key collaborations over various editions of the Academies include: UN Women for the Gender Academy; UNIDO for the Sustainable Enterprise Development Academy; and GMG and IOM for the Labour Migration Academy.
 - b) Bilateral aid agencies. For instance, German Development Cooperation, Lux Development, French Development Agencies, Swiss Development Cooperation for the Skills Academy
 - c) Training institutes and other international organizations. For instance, ISSA (for the Social Security Academy); European Training Foundation and World Skills International (for Skills Development Academy); European University Institute and FIERI (for Labour Migration Academy)
 - d) National governments. The Skills Academy (2013) was offered in partnership with the National Government of Portugal among other partners.

Interviews with programme managers and an analysis of Academy flyers indicate that each Academy has been able to maintain and in some cases expand partnerships over the course of the two editions in the evaluation sample. For instance, the Academy on Skills Development partnered with three organizations in 2012 and expanded to nine partners in 2013. Similarly, in the case of the Gender Academy, there were no structured partnerships in the first edition (2011), but in the second edition, a number of formal partnerships were formed, mainly with relevant UN

Agencies. In an important collaboration, a MoU was established with UN Women's Training Centre in Santo Domingo in order to jointly offer the second edition of the Gender Academy. Academy partners do not take any financial interest in the event. The partners usually contribute their expertise during the design phase (by providing input on potential Academy modules) as well as during the implementation phase (as resource persons). Further, the partners use the Academies to strategically train their own representatives and stakeholders –they identify and fund participants to attend the Academy. The partners also promote the Academy among their networks and in-country counterparts. From this perspective, such partnerships support the ITCILO Academies technically and financially, as well as, lead to increased visibility of these events. In turn, the Academies also benefit the partners: they provide partners with a platform to network with their own national counterparts as well as with representatives from other agencies; in addition, when partner representatives participate as resource persons, they gain feedback on and increase the exposure of their own strategies.

5. The Academies have the potential to demonstrate increasing relevancy to the SPF in terms of other kinds of partnerships as well. The SPF calls for “a method of work ... that accentuates collaboration across the Office at headquarters and with the regions and the International Training Centre in Turin.” Interview responses from Programme Managers at ITCILO and from technical staff at ILO headquarters in Geneva reveal that both parties closely collaborate to design and implement the Academies. For instance, they work together to come up with the course and module plan for each Academy. As ILO technical staff and ITCILO programme managers also serve as resource persons during the Academy, the two provide technical feedback on each other's course materials. This also leads to reduced redundancies between presentations. In some cases, ILO staff also support by identifying training participants from various countries.
6. The SPF outlines gender equality as being central to the achievement of all four strategic objectives. In the context of the Academies, this goal is supported through the provision of an entire Academy on Gender as well as through certain plenaries and elective courses in other Academies that draw attention to relevant gender issues. However, except for the Gender Academy, the participants in other Academies generally gave relatively low scores (below 4) to the following question in the End of Activity Questionnaire (EoAQ): “Have gender issues been adequately integrated in the training?” The graph below demonstrates the average score (on a scale of 1 – 5) received by each Academy in their first (2012 for Labour Migration, Social Security, 2011 for Gender) and second editions (2013). Note – the Skills and Sustainable Enterprise Development (SED) Academies were offered before 2012 as well, so the “first” edition for these Academies in the graph relates to the first year of these Academies in the evaluation sample (2012).

Figure 1: Integration of Gender Issues in Academies



Some comments on the figure 1:

- For obvious reasons, the Gender Academy received a high score on this question in 2011 and the highest among other first edition Academies in 2012. (Note the first edition of the Gender Academy is a different year than the first edition of all other Academies in the sample.) Both Gender Academies also received the highest Gender Marker rating – 3.
- In 2012, Labour Migration was the only Academy to receive a score higher than 4 on this question. However, it is troubling to see that the score on the same question dropped to about 3.50 in 2013. Responses to other questions in the EoAQ for the two editions of the Labour Migration Academy did not display this trend. This is mainly explained by the fact that the Gender Marker rating for the 2013 Labour Migration Academy was 1 and that for the 2012 Academy was 2. This reduction may also be because the plenary session “Labour Migration and Gender” received a lower score in the 2013 Academy. In addition to a plenary session, gender issues relevant to labour migration are also discussed under the electives in the “Protection” track. In 2012, participants had a choice of six electives in the “Protection track,” while in 2013, there was a choice of four electives in the same, one of which was offered only in French. Finally, a higher percentage of women participated in the first edition as compared to the second edition.

- There was a similar trend in the Social Security Academy as well – there was a decrease in the score for this question from the first edition to the second. However, the decrease was not too large in this case. Similar to the Labour Migration case, this decrease may also be explained by the difference in Gender Marker rating for the two Social Security Academies: the Gender Marker rating for the 2013 Social Security Academy was 1, while that for the 2012 Social Security Academy was 2.
- Scores for SED and Skills Academy increased between the two editions. However, the increase for SED was small. As recorded in the 2012 report for the SED Academy, the score for this question dropped from 3.87 in 2010 to 3.83 in 2011 and then to 3.42 in 2012. From this perspective, the maintenance of the score at about 3.50 is relatively good news. The 2013 response rate for the Skills Academy EoAQ was only about 50% - it is possible that the high score in Skills 2013 is a result of a response bias. However, it is important to acknowledge that Skills Academy did have a relatively high score on this question in 2012 as well when the response rate was 85% - this despite the fact that the Gender Marker rating (for both editions of the Skills Academy) was 1.

Relevance to Decent Work Country Programmes

7. Given their global scope, the Academies have a unique potential to encourage cross-fertilization and peer-learning among ILO constituents from countries with shared Decent Work Country Programme Priorities and developmental challenges.
 - To assess the degree of international-level peer learning at Academies, the diversity of participants (by region of origin) was examined. In the 2012 SED Academy, 63% of the participants were from Africa. There was very limited participation from Asia Pacific and the Arab States. Further, there was no participation from Europe and Central Asia. Similarly, in the 2013 Social Security Academy, 66% of the participants were from African countries – there was no participation from the Americas and very little participation from Arab States and Europe and Central Asia. This trend was also seen in the Skills Academy in 2013 where at least 65% of the participants represented African countries. Finally, in the 2013 SED Academy, about 85% of all participants were from Africa (about 26% were from South Africa alone). These findings indicate a relatively high degree of regional homogeneity within Academies. This may be a result of funding considerations and/or region-specific training needs. However, it is important to note that excessive regional homogeneity can compromise the extent to which Academies provide a “global” platform for knowledge sharing.
 - Peer-learning was also assessed by examining the degree to which the Academies facilitated sharing of experiences among participants. All ten Academies scored above 4 on the following question in the EoAQ: “Did the group of participants with whom you attended the activity contribute to your learning?” In addition, each Academy improved its score on this question from the first edition to the second (except for Labour Migration Academy, which maintained its score from 2012 to 2013).

There appears to be variation in the extent to which Academies facilitated sharing of experiences among participants. For instance, both the first and second-editions of the Skills Academies offered “Innovation Sessions” where a structured effort was undertaken to enable experience sharing among Academy participants. Other Academies also offered similar sessions. As a result, some positive comments relating to participants’ satisfaction with experience sharing were noted. For instance:

- *“It's good to have participants from all over the world including Africa and Asia in sharing their experiences and the challenges faced by each region.”*
- *“The Course Coordinator did provide ample opportunity for participants to share their experiences in relation to the subject matter”*
- *“Very interactive that participants shared their experiences back to their countries”*
- *“Got lot of insights from other colleagues and realized the wealth of knowledge other people have”*

At the same time, many other participants commented on the need for strengthening experience sharing at Academies. For instance, when asked to provide observations/comments on electives and on the overall Academy, some participants indicated:

- *"More experience sharing exercises"*
- *"To have more time dedicated to exchange of experiences"*
- *"I think there should be more group work and interaction where participants get to share what they know so there is optimum benefit by all in the training, including the resource persons"*
- *"More group exercises, more participation from trainees, more experience sharing, less lectures"*
- *“Include more participant's experience”*
- *"Il faudrait donner un peu plus de temps aux differents echanges"*
- *"More time should be given for participants to share their experience"*
- *"Some space may be provided for exchanging of experience among countries"*
- *" Donner plus de temps aux échanges"*
- *"Le temps imparti aux ateliers est insuffisant par rapport aux discussions et aux échanges de pays (expériences)."*
- *"Asking participants to share experiences from their countries"*
- *“Merci de penser aux partages des expériences entre candidats”*
- *"The content of the training needs to be tailored more in terms of expectations of the participants. Increasingly some of us are getting the sense that there is much more we could have gained by exchanging practical experiences and learnings. The discussions sometimes turn too general and academic. "*

- *“(Des façons globales) Utiliser un approche moins académique, impliquer plus les participant pour valoriser leurres expériences, présenter des réalités et pas seulement de théorie”*

Relevance to the ACIs

8. The ILO established eight “Areas of Critical Importance” in Programme & Budget 2014-2015 document with the aim of achieving greater focus and collaborative action on key issues in the world of work. Preliminary analysis from interviews reflects that the ITCILO is making increased efforts in developing new training tools and upgrading existing ones in relation to the ACIs. This is evidenced particularly in the case of Academies. For instance, in 2014, eight global and regional academies are to be offered (not including Boulder and SED Academy). Of these eight, four are directly related to individual ACIs (Youth Development, Informal Economy, Rural Development, and Social Security). There is also some indication that these new Academies have tighter budgetary integration within the ACI framework.

Relevance to the Participants’ Needs

9. According to the interviews with programme managers as well as background information found in flyers, Academies are mainly aimed at “practitioners.” For instance, the course background for Gender Academy 2013 states that “it is recommended for specialists and practitioners who already have familiarity with gender issues.” Similarly, the course background for the 2012 SED Academy states that, “the Academy was designed for policy makers and enterprises development practitioners.” There is some evidence that the Academies were actually able to target experienced participants: for instance, in the 2012 SED Academy, about 71% of the participants had more than five years of experience in enterprise development. Similarly, in the 2013 Social Security Academy, about 60% of participants had more than five years of experience in the field of social security. Information on participants’ previous experience could only be found in the internal evaluation reports of these two Academies.
10. With regard to topics covered in Academies, there is evidence that Technical Programmes tailor successive Academy editions based on participant feedback received in prior editions. For instance, in the 2012 SED Academy, participants indicated “Green Jobs” and “Economic Rural Development/Cluster Development” as potential topics to be included in future Academies. Subsequently, in the 2013 SED Academy edition, “Green Jobs for Youth” and “Rural Entrepreneurship Promotion” were included in the elective offerings. Similarly, a common participant comment in the 2012 Labour Migration Academy called for more information on “South-South Migration,” and in the 2013 edition of this Academy, “South-South Labour Migration” was included as a plenary session. Further, for all Academies, there was a consistent edition-to-edition increase in EoAQ score on the “appropriateness of activity contents.”
11. While there is evidence that Academy contents are tailored to some extent based on participants’ needs, all Technical Programmes do not consistently and systematically engage in a formal training needs assessment before the activity is offered. Thus, Academies may be able to tailor by topic area but not by depth (basic/advanced) and type (theoretical or practical) of knowledge

within a particular topic. This potential mismatch (between participants' background and level/type of training offered) is indicated in participant comments for some Academies. For example, participants noted:

- *“Je pense qu'il faut des prérequis pour participer à certains ateliers. Le niveau inégal des participants a considérablement ralenti la progression du groupe et n'a pas permis à beaucoup de profiter au mieux de l'expertise de l'animatrice de l'atelier.”*
- *“Profile participants and sit minimum levels of knowledge/experience required to follow an elective workshop track.”*
- *“It might be interesting to structure the training in a way that allow delivery for medium and more advanced sessions; especially some workshops suffered from the need to bring all participants at the same level of understanding before going in-depth the topic addressed” [From Follow-up Questionnaire]*
- *Le niveau des participants est très différent, en plus la présentation n'a pas été bien préparée et présentée.*
- *Workshops' contents were good, but sometimes we couldn't cover all the topics because of the participants' number and participation. Also the variety of participants and the different experience made some workshops a bit slow and therefore they were focused on definitions instead of moving to technical issues and further learning.*
- *“Este es un tema medular pero siento que el nivel de los contenidos bajó porque mezclaron a personas que tenemos experiencia en el tema con aquellas que no tenían ninguna experiencia”*
- *“Le public était très hétérogènes. Il est difficile de satisfaire toutes les demandes.”*
- *“Faire évaluations des connaissances des participant(e)s dans le domaine du genre avant les sessions.”*
- *“I wonder if it is possible to determine, with a simple questionnaire, the level of knowledge of the participants, especially regarding the elective courses, to give the trainer a better idea on how much further he/she can go into the details of the topic”*
- *“Les critères de choix des participants devraient permettra d'obtenir un niveau égal de participants”*
- *“The academy was also advertised as an advanced course requiring prior knowledge of gender issues but in reality has simply provided a basic introduction to a diverse range of topics.”*
- *“More practical examples combined with theory. Some lectures too basic or generic.”*
- *“I think we are all more or less experienced in the subjects offered at ITCILO, so the trainers can go a bit further into details during their courses*
- *“So far the presentations were much too general/academic. Many of us are practitioners that need to report back with concrete suggestions for lines of actions, project ideas and potential implementing partners”*

- *“On pourrait mieux atteindre les objectifs si on avait tenu compte au préalable du niveau des participants en termes de genre et gestion de projet. Ceux qui n'ont pas eu du tout de connaissances peuvent ne pas bien profiter des contenus.”*

Further, for the 2013 Gender Academy, while one participant noted that, *“For the benefit of some colleagues who are new to the field, it will be important for resource persons to focus on defining some concepts and key steps,”* another commented: *“The morning lectures were a little irrelevant and basic: while useful for some, many people found them not interesting or relevant.”*

In the 2012 Labour Migration Academy, responding to a question on “Would you recommend this activity to your colleagues,” some participants stated:

- *“It depends on their profile. For researchers, definitely. For NGO workers, not really. Too theoretical and not practical enough.”*
- *“Yes, but depends on their current level of understanding of labour migration. For those with a lot of experience the academy would be less useful”*

In addition, in the 2012 Skills Development Academy, in at least 20% of electives, at most 55% of participants felt that the elective was “about right,” while the rest felt that it “tried to cover too much,” or “the course should have gone into greater depth.” In the next edition of the Skills Academy, the appropriateness of elective contents improved, though there were still an elective where only 43% of participants felt that the elective content was “about right.” Similarly, in the first edition of three Academies, the EoAQ included a question: “Given your level of prior learning and knowledge, how appropriate were the activity's contents?” For two of the three Academies (SED 2012 and Gender 2011), the average score on this question was below four.

Thus, multiple sources of evidence demonstrate a need for systematically tailoring course content to participants’ prior knowledge and background. It is important to acknowledge that Technical Programmes do make an effort to use the online platform to understand pre-existing competencies and training needs among participants. However, the extent to which different Programmes utilize this information to tailor contents within electives and plenary sessions seems to vary widely across Academies.

12. An analysis of participants’ comments also reveals a spatial mismatch between the countries of origin of the participant and that of the Resource Persons. In addition, other participants commented that case studies referenced examples from developed countries which were relatively less relevant to the participants, a majority of whom came from developing countries. For instance, some participants noted:

- *“Most participants in this academy were Africans, most references were made to Europe”*
- *“Look at the countries represented in class and use examples from their countries”*
- *“I would suggest to give preference in the selection of resource persons and speakers to persons with experiences on the field and in the regional offices instead of people more focused on reporting and involved in the headquarters.”*

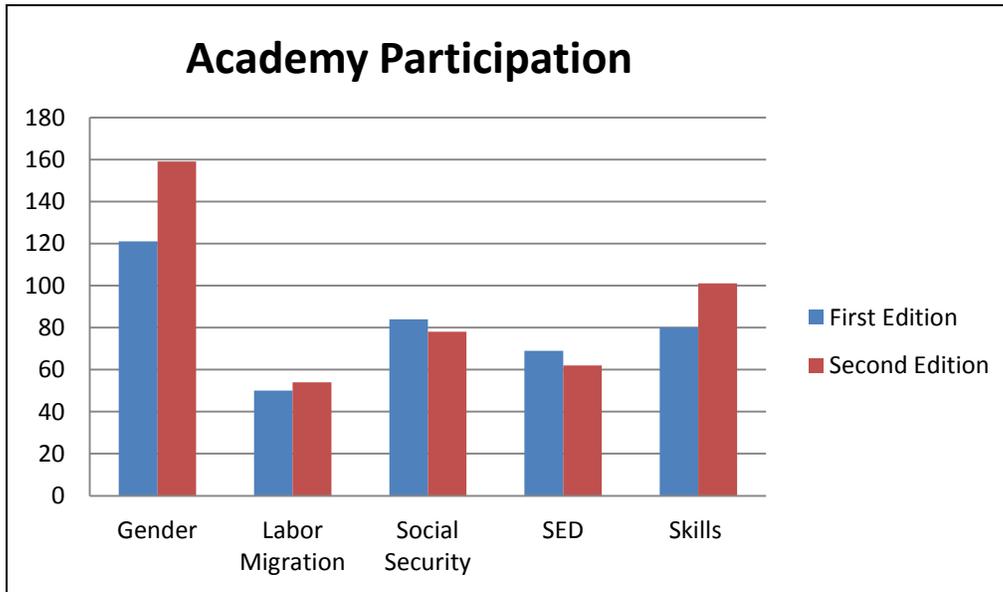
- *“I think some of the resource persons have very limited exposure to developing countries experience on TVET.”*
- *“Also, even though it is impressive how this academy have access to high level and diverse resource persons, they come too frequently from European countries and hence most presentation are about Europe, whereas most participants do not work in Europe. Hence more resource persons from Africa and Asia would be better.”*
- *“Muitos dos exemplos foram de países desenvolvidos daí que é importante também buscar exemplos de sucessos nos países menos desenvolvidos ou procurar obter contactos caso existam pessoas a discutirem temas sobre competências no seu país.”*
- *“Approfondir vos recherches en Afrique dans ce domaine pour mieux prendre en charge nos préoccupations par rapport à nos contextes socio-économiques.”*
- *“More African Facilitators for African Courses”*
- *“There is very apparent nonpromotion of African facilitators throughout the Course and in the ITC Centre generally as Africans have a very minimal representation.”*
- *“usar exemplos de casos mais dentro da realizados da maioria dos países participantes”*
- *“Course graduates should be given an opportunity to act as resource persons in the succeeding labour migration academies.”*
- *The course should be more country centered. Countries with similar social security schemes can be grouped and share ideas on how best to improve the scheme.*

This issue of enhancing regional diversity among Resource Persons and case study examples relates not just to relevance of Academies to participant needs but also to relevance of Academies to Decent Work Country Programmes.

Efficiency of Academies

13. Between the first and second editions, three Academies (Gender, Skills and Labour Migration) demonstrated an increase in overall participation. In particular, the Gender Academy, which is offered in alternate years, noted a 30% increase (on a base of 121) in participation. Participation for the Social Security and SED Academy dropped slightly from the first edition to the second. However, this decrease was less than 10%.

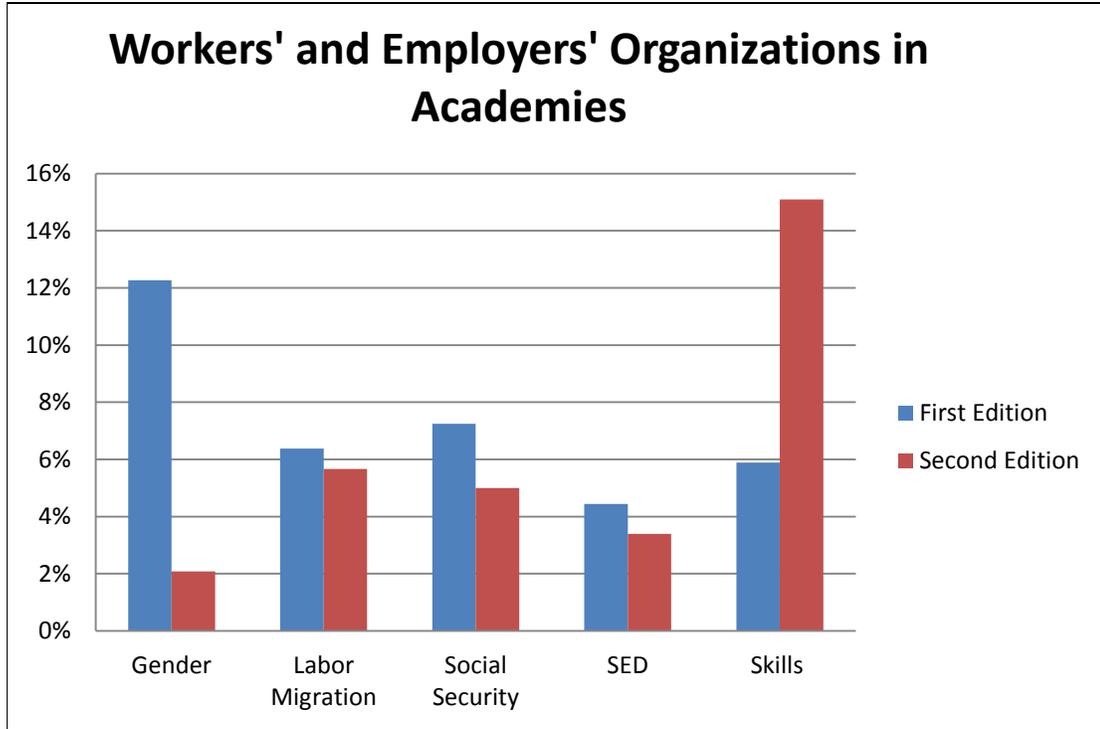
Figure 2: Participation in Academies



14. The large majority of participants in global Academies represented public institutions. As demonstrated in the graph below, there is a general trend of limited participation from Workers' and Employers' organizations. Unfortunately the data on number of representatives from Workers' and Employers' organizations is only available for those who responded to the participant satisfaction/EoAQ questionnaires.² This influences the accuracy of the percentages reflected in the graph, rendering year-to-year or across Academy comparisons difficult. For instance, consider the 2013 Skills Academy, where eight participants out of a total of 53 who responded to the questionnaires belonged to Workers' and Employers' organizations. This suggests a social partner participation rate of 15%. However, the actual number of participants in the 2013 Skills Academy was 101 (response rate was 53%). Thus, the true percentage of social partner participation could be as low as 8%. It could also be higher than 15%. For this reason, the numbers on this graph should be interpreted with caution. Where response rate was close to 100% (2012 and 2013 Labour Migration Academies and 2013 SED Academy), we find that Workers' and employers organizations comprised about 6% and 3% of the total participants respectively. While Workers' Organizations have higher participation rates in both editions of Labour Migration Academy (as compared to Employers' organizations), Employers' organizations have higher participation rates in both editions of the SED Academy (as compared to Workers' organizations).

² MAP data was provided to the consultant at a late stage and thus could be analyzed.

Figure 3: Participation of representatives from Workers' and Employers' Organizations



For reference purposes, the response rate across Academies is provided below (these may be considered in conjunction with Academy participation rates provided in Figure 2 on page 22)

Table 1: Participation Satisfaction Questionnaire Response Rates

Questionnaire Response Rates		
	First Edition	Second Edition
Gender	88%	60%
Labour Migration	94%	98%
Social Security	85%	53%
SED	65%	95%
Skills Development	82%	77%

15. Interview responses from ITCILO and ILO staff suggest that a key reason for low participation from Employers' and Workers' organizations is a financial policy that calls for the provision of full sponsorship/fellowship to representatives from Employers' and Workers' organizations. However, the high price of attending an Academy (€3,250, not including travel and other incidentals, which is more than other standard courses) makes it difficult to always provide full scholarships to these representatives. Ironically, this policy was set up to promote the participation of representatives from Employers' and Workers' organizations in training activities. Some Programme Managers felt reluctant to always offer full scholarships to representatives from Employers' and Workers' organizations even if resources were available because a guaranteed scholarship has the potential to influence the seriousness and the general attitude with which training is taken-up by participants.
16. The relatively steep cost of Academy participation notwithstanding, interview responses from Programme Managers indicate that a low participation of Employers' and Workers' organizations is not limited only to Academies: it is also seen in other open/standard courses that are not offered by ACT/EMP or ACTRAV. For instance, there was no participation from Employers' or Workers' in the 2009 open course on "Mainstreaming Gender Equality" (this course is offered in the years when the Gender Academy is not offered). Thus, the low participation of representatives from Workers' and Employers' in non-ACT/EMP or non-ACTRAV planned trainings should be examined by the ITCILO as a larger issue, one that goes beyond the Academies.
17. According to ACT/EMP's Programme Manager, in some cases the format of the Academies may offer a "blurred" training scope when compared to the "specific training demands of ACT/EMP's constituents." In addition, the Programme Manager noted that the long duration (two-week) of the Academy also posed a challenge to representatives of Employers' organizations.
18. Programme Managers of both ACT/EMP and ACTRAV indicated that while contents of all Academies are generally relevant to their constituents, some Academies are more relevant than others. For instance, as compared to a relatively broad-spectrum Academy on "Youth Development," the Social Security Academy is more relevant to the training needs of ACT/EMP representatives and Labour Migration is more relevant to the training needs of ACTRAV representatives. This suggests that expecting an across the board increase in participation of representatives from Employers' and Workers' organizations in all Academies might be unrealistic.
19. In recent times, Programme Managers from Technical Programmes offering Academies are making increased efforts to enhance participation of Workers' and Employers' organizations. For instance, one strategy (employed by the Skills Development team) focuses on inviting tripartite delegations from partner countries. Another strategy (employed by the Social Security team) offers electives focused on the interests of Workers and Employers. In other examples, Programme Managers are also attempting to reach out to ACT/EMP and ACTRAV in planning and implementing Academies. While the Programme Manager for ACTRAV acknowledges that, on their part, they could be "more effective in realizing these collaborations," these efforts are already leading to important changes: ACTRAV is involved in the planning for the regional Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy (2014) with an eye to make the Academy experience

more relevant for representatives from Workers' organizations. Specifically, electives are being planned in such a manner that when Workers' representatives attend the Academy, they will be able to spend a third of their time on electives specific to workers' issues (these electives will be open to all Academy participants), a third of their time on other electives in the Academy and finally, a third of their time on additional courses that will be offered to Workers' representatives after the Academy ends.

20. It is important to note that participation of representatives from Workers' and Employers' organizations is higher in regional Academies as compared to global Academies. Till the date, three regional Academies have taken place: 1) *Academia Latinoamericana – Desarrollo Empresa Sostenible* (Lima, Peru; 2013) 2) Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy – An Opportunity to Enhance Youth Employment (Agadir, Morocco; 2013) and, 3) Social and Solidarity Economy Academy (Montreal, Canada; 2011). Of these three, the first (*Academia Latinoamericana – Desarrollo Empresa Sostenible*) is most comparable to a global Academy (SED) in terms of focus area. In this Academy, at least 36% of all participants (7 from Workers' and 11 from Employers' organizations) represented Workers' and Employers' organizations. This percentage takes the 84% EoAQ response rate into account. The other two Academies, while less comparable to a global Academy in terms of the topic, also noted a relatively higher (as compared to global Academies) participation on representatives from Workers' and Employers' organizations: 12% in the 2013 Academy and about 8% in the 2011 Academy. It is possible that Employers' and Workers' organizations are more likely to participate in "regional" Academies due to increased relevance of training (given the localized focus) and/or reduced price of participation. In that case, it is unclear the extent to which the 2011 Social Solidarity Economy – which took place in Montreal, Canada – can be considered "regional." Thus, it becomes important to differentiate between those regional events which offer training (in Academy format) in response to the needs of individuals/institutions belonging to a particular region versus other trainings in Academy format that are simply offered outside of Turin.
21. With regard to composition, in all ten Academies the majority of participants represented government agencies (including Ministries of Labour) and/or public institutions. This was generally followed by non-governmental organizations (except in Social Security Academies) and participants from the ILO (except in 2013 Labour Migration Academy). Further, in both editions of the Skills Development Academy, representatives from training/academic institutes constituted a large share of participants. Finally, in the 2013 Gender Academy, a sizeable percent of participants represented UN Agencies.
22. In general, a majority of Academy participants were men – except for the two editions of the Gender Academy. This might be because a large number of Academy participants came from government agencies and public institutions where women may be underrepresented. It is important to note that in the 2012 Labour Migration Academy, there was just about equal participation among men and women. This Academy also had a high Gender Marker Rating. Given its contents, the Gender Academy saw extremely high participation from women (over 80% in both editions). However, in their comments, many participants noted the need to encourage male participation at the Gender Academies in order to "*steer clear of making gender ... a women's issue.*"

Invisible costs: These can influence the overall cost-effectiveness of Academies

In discussion with Programme Managers, the following invisible costs of Academies came to light:

23. Development costs of planning and designing a training event like an Academy (with multiple plenary sessions, electives and resource persons) are substantial in general. These costs are further intensified when Academies are planned on an annual basis (all Academies in the sample except for Gender were offered on an annual basis) where Programme Managers are under pressure to put together sessions which are at once “cutting-edge” and non-repetitive in comparison to last year’s content. If some electives are repeated every year then the degree to which Academies can present up-to-date thinking on the same topic on an annual basis is likely to be diffused. This has the potential to influence the relevance of Academies to participants. If Academies are indeed able to offer latest thinking on a host of issues, then the likelihood of repeat participants increases.
24. Because training needs are not budgeted in advance, there is pressure on Programme Managers to negotiate funding for participants until the last minute. In addition, during the actual training, the ITCILO Programme Staff are completely consumed by the logistics and technical aspects of the event (many participate as Resource Persons). This distracts them from other commitments.
25. Most Academies are planned around the same time in the year (June-December). Further, because Academies are structured to have multiple electives at one time, the logistical need for each Academy in terms of allocation of training rooms is considerably large. This influences the availability of Centre resources for other courses being offered simultaneously as the Academies.

Effectiveness of Academies

26. Measuring the degree to which Academies resulted in increased knowledge among participants is a difficult task. This is because no pre- and post-test information on participant’s understanding of topics was collected before and after the Academies took place. Only one Academy – Social Security – conducted a “Mega Quiz” after the completion of electives and plenary sessions (incidentally, this session was also one of the most appreciated sessions). However, even for this Academy, there is no pre-test information for comparison purposes. If the ITCILO wishes to evaluate the extent of knowledge generation resulting from the Academies, the inclusion of pre- and post-tests before and after the activity becomes important. The inclusion of a pre-test can also provide a means of doing training needs assessments, thus enabling a more relevant course offering as well as a more effective elective choice by the participant.
27. Across all Academies, a large majority of participants commented on the “lack of sufficient time” for absorbing the information shared in the electives. These comments were observed in both Participant Satisfaction questionnaires as well as six-month Follow-Up questionnaires. Additionally, the 2012 SED Academy was the only Academy to ask participants to score the following question in the EoAQ: “Was the time devoted to each subject appropriate?” The average score for this question was only 3.47. This is an important concern as it has implications

for the degree to which participants can deepen their knowledge at the Academies. In many cases, these comments related to the balance between elective content and course duration.

In particular, participants noted that certain electives could use a whole week of instruction on their own. In some cases, it was also suggested that the Academy reduce the number of electives in order to spend more time on a few key themes. Some participants went so far to propose that, *"If the course (the Academy) took one month it would be worth it because there are deep issues to be discussed," "Cette académie devrait ou pourrait se tenir en 3 ou 4 semaines,"* and *"This course needs to be offered as a semester long course."* These comments hint at the fact that in some cases, content shared in elective courses likely remains at a superficial level.

Given the training context of simultaneous interpretation and the presence of a wide variety of backgrounds, many comments also related to the lack of effective time management within electives. While a majority of participants felt "rushed" and that the courses were too "compressed," it is important to acknowledge that a few participants did think that the Academy ran too long. For instance, one participant noted, *"I think the course could be done in one week, it's a great course but it is very hard to leave work and family for more than one week."* However, these comments were in the minority.

28. There seems to be a lot of variation in participant comments across Academies for how the training benefited participants' understanding. This could be due to the actual differences in quality across Academies, and/or the type of open-ended questions that participants were asked after the completion of electives and plenary sessions. In any case, at least for some Academies :

Participants' comments suggest that the Academies were effective in **introducing new topics**. For instance, it was noted:

- *"The course exposed me to so many things I have not thought about"*
- *"Le dialogue social en matière de protection sociale a été une notion nouvelle pour moi"*
- *"La experiencia ha sido enriquecedora, aprendí conceptos que desconocía. En mi país se necesita un mayor esfuerzo para proporcionar el tema de género ya que aún se piensa que la igualdad de género no es prioritaria y se piensa que es una cuestión femenina."*
- *"Learned about very simple techniques but effective"*
- *"I realized that Social Budgeting is a very important component of government public expenditure planning and the related fiscal space available for financing and sustaining systems and programmes"*

Others stated that the training provided **theoretical clarity** on issues:

- *"The course covered all the hypothetical questions I had about social cash transfers"*
- *"Very good in clarifying theory and underlying principles"*
- *"This will help me do wide range of models to have a very good PhD thesis on social security and poverty reduction"*

- *“Overall the course was very useful and met my expectation, it gave clarity most of the confusing issues I had about value chain, role of microfinance and other related issues.”*
- *“This was an excellent course. Gave me a clearer understanding of the role of legal standards in the administration of Social Securities.”*

As a result of attending an Academy, some participants **felt better prepared to tackle challenges at their workplaces:**

- *“Since in Tanzania, we are undergoing reforms in the social security sector, this course has given me basic tools to be used in that rigorous processes to come.”*
- *“Glad to have participated, has provided me with additional skills on the my current responsibilities. As I intend to develop a second career in training this will help me a great deal. I intend to continue developing my skills.”*
- *“The part of course on Investment is very relevant to my work and has provided me with options on how to deal with investments”*
- *“Ce cours me permet d'améliorer mes compétences en matière de sécurité sociale en vue d'aider mon pays à mettre en place un socle de protection sociale”*
- *“My job as a lawyer of the pension fund demands to have extensive knowledge of social security both in terms of national laws and international conventions, and this course offered just that to me”*
- *“Extremely educative and practically implementable”*
- *“Mind changing. Tackled a lot of relevant issues that can be implemented in own situation”*
- *“Stimulating course! Excellent mix of practical hints and conceptual tools”*
- *“The workshop has provided me with a great learning luggage in terms of tools”*

29. In order to assess the degree to which Academies resulted in the generation and development of new and existing skills, responses to follow-up questionnaires were examined. [Note: It is commendable that the Evaluation Unit at the ITCILO is able to collect follow-up data from participants at six-months after the completion of an Academy. In addition, it is also to their credit that the follow-up response rate for most Academies is at least 20%. Further, it is also worth noting that the follow-up response rates for the 2013 Gender Academy and the 2013 SED Academy were 37% and 32% respectively.] Specifically:

- Out of 15 unique competencies, over 50% of respondents in every Academy (except 2012 Sills Academy) stated improvement in one or more of the following as a result of attending the training: 1) “Identifying problems and providing solutions,” 2) “Analyzing,” 3) “Planning and Organizing projects and/or people,” and 4) “Networking.” Across all Academies, “Identifying problems and providing solutions” was the most common competency that saw an improvement. In fact, for the second edition of all Academies, a majority of respondents in each Academy noted this as a competency that was improved as a result of the training.
- In the first editions:

- At least 50% of respondents in all Academies (except 2012 Social Security) stated that their competencies saw a “large improvement.”
 - None of the respondents stated that their competencies saw “no improvement.”
 - In three first edition Academies, at least a few respondents noted that their competencies saw a “very large” improvement.
 - With regards to the 2012 Social Security Academy, 53% of the respondents stated that their competencies saw a “moderate” improvement.
- In comparison to the first editions, responses for the second editions saw an enhancement:
 - At least 50% of respondents in all second edition Academies (including 2013 Social Security Academy) stated that their competencies saw a “large improvement.”
 - Similar to the first editions, none of the respondents stated that their competencies saw “no improvement.”
 - In all second edition Academies, at least a few respondents noted that their competencies saw a “very large” improvement.
 - The follow-up questionnaire asks participants the frequency with which they have “made use of the networking opportunities developed at the Academy”. While there was some variation across responses, in the first editions, a substantial percentage of respondents stated that made use of networking opportunities either “sometimes” or “often.” For all Academies in the first edition, at least one respondent noted that s/he “never” made use of networking opportunities. The second editions saw a similar trend.
- In both first and second edition of many Academies, the most common activities undertaken as a result of attending the Academy included one or more of the following: “training (within and for other institutions),” “development of new programmes/policies,” and/or “strategic partnerships.”
 - For almost all Academies, a majority of participants responding to the follow-up questionnaires noted that attending the Academy was “mostly” or “completely” a good investment. Only in the case of 2012 Labour Migration Academy and the 2012 Social Security Academy, a majority of respondents indicated that participating in Academies was a “moderately” good investment. However, in subsequent editions, both these Academies improved their score on this question.
 - Respondents noted a few concrete examples to demonstrate the utilization of Academy training:
 - *“Suite à la formation j’ai une facilité d’analyse des besoins en ressources humaines dans mon pays. L’identification des problèmes d’emploi et sur dans le secteur informel surtout aussi l’utilisation des statistiques du travail”*
 - *“When I look at a government plan and budget I am able to see if gender consideration has been included.”*

- *“Decisões baseada em dados concretos, pesquisa aplicada”*
- *“Capacity to better define goals and concepts”*
- *“We now have a joint committee with the government solely to deal with migration issues”*
- *“The knowledge on the operation and challenges facing pension systems has helped me in dealing with challenges our scheme is facing especially on liquidity issues”*
- *“Understanding on how to engage stakeholders in TVET provision”*
- *“We have established a strong tourism forum in our area with partners we interacted with during the course. SMME seminars have been established with major partners in our area in conjunction with ILO participants. Various projects have been embarked on as a result from the networking and skills we obtained. The ILO My Coop course will be rolled out soon in our area to the existing agricultural co-ops.”*
- *“It's made my colleagues pay more attention to people with special needs and particularly LGBTI's which we don't think too much of”*

30. In follow-up questionnaires, participants specifically requested regional training. For instance, they note:

- *“As a first of its kind, it was a very good initiative. I think it can also look at regional training that can zero in on the issue unique to regions for better impact upon returning home.”*
- *“Régionaliser cette formation Réduire sa fréquence d'organisation”*
- *“Would like to see the training being done regionally or locally. It was an expensive exercise for my Department and we were not able to send many participants who would have also benefitted.”*
- *“Avoir moins de présentations théoriques et parfois inadaptées à nos situations nationales/ régionales et notre vécu, et opter beaucoup plus aux jeux de rôle (notamment de négociation internationale que j'ai trop apprécié)et aux séances interactives entre les participants dont les échanges de connaissances”*

31. Interviews with Programme Managers and Technical Representatives at the ILO headquarters suggest that, in addition to participants, the Academies also benefited the Resource Persons. Specifically, experience sharing among international participants enabled Resource Persons to build comparative knowledge. Additionally, Resource Persons were also able to update their knowledge on relevant topics by attending presentations of other prominent Resource Persons. In other words, Academies have a unique potential to help bridge research silos among technical staff.

Design Issues vital to the Effectiveness of Academies

32. *Preliminary Information*: Evaluation analysis reveals that the pre-course information supplied to participants before the Academy is often weak in terms of accuracy and comprehensiveness. The quality of pre-course information is crucial to the effectiveness of Academies as the model is underpinned by participants' choice of electives, which are made mainly on the basis of course flyers and other preliminary information. In addition to accurate and comprehensive course flyers, reading materials or presentations sent in advance can allow participants to better prepare for the actual training – especially in the context of relatively complex electives. A prepared audience can also enable the Resource Person to more effectively manage time during sessions.

In their comments, some participants noted:

- *“The title of the workshop did not match the content.”*
- *“The topics of tracks were good but were quite misleading and addressed a narrow area rather than the broad perspective”*
- *“The course Programme (especially the names of resource persons) could have been shared earlier. Sometimes the title of the session omitted the sub title and hence it was a little misleading.”*
- *“It would have been so helpful to know more about the actual content about the modules in advance. Titles were often too broad or even misleading.”*
- *“Much better description of courses should be distributed beforehand so to have more information to decide on the best course”*
- *“Course outline/syllabus would be informative in helping us choosing the course better”*
- *“Some more information in terms of the topics under themes will deal with would be helpful for better course selection”*
- *“Training materials should be distributed before the training”*
- *Information I would have liked before the activity: “Slightly detailed course content.”*
- *“It would have been better if we had full copies of the relevant documents on the WTO articles and the Bilateral agreements and Regional/ multilateral agreements”*

This concern regarding the quality of pre-course information is also observed in participants' scoring of the following question in the EoAQ: “Before participating in this activity, were you clear about its objectives, contents and methods?” All Academies (in both the first and the second editions) scored below 4 on this question. Further, between the first and the second edition, while Labour Migration remained unchanged in terms of its average score on this question, the Social Security and the SED Academy dropped slightly – though the decrease was negligible. The Skills Academy achieved a relatively high score on this question in 2012 – 3.87. The score for the 2013 Academy saw a small increase to 3.93.

It is important to note that Gender Academy saw a substantial improvement in its score for this question between the two editions. In 2011, the average score across all participants for this question was 3.53 (the lowest among all first-edition Academies), while in 2013, the same

increased to 3.96 – the highest among all Academies in 2013. There are two key reasons behind this:

- The 2013 Gender Academy provided a more detailed description of each of the electives (as compared to the first edition), including specific learning objectives for each track.
- Another important reason behind this improvement was the provision of a counsellor-like service where a “learning advisor” assisted participants with “guided and negotiated” selection of electives based on the participant’s background/resume and the content of elective tracks. This service was offered much in advance of the Academy. Keeping in line with general principles of adult education, such a service plays an important role in providing assistance especially to those who may not have had a formal education and thus may be completely confused regarding the very concept of plenaries and electives, much less about their actual content.

While this service was also available in the first-edition of the Academy, it was less effective because it had not been pilot tested. In addition, according to the Programme Manager, in 2011, *“we were creating the event from scratch...we were ourselves less knowledgeable about what we had to communicate.”* With regards to the cost for this service, the Programme Manager noted: *“the work of the learning advisor for assisting participants in the choice of elective workshops corresponded to two months of junior professional staff (or equivalent collaborator). In the overall economy of the activity, other tasks were assigned to the same official, so the cost was spread over various functions and results.”*

In interviews with other Programme Managers, it was revealed that a similar service is also among the chief reasons behind the success of the Boulder Microfinance Academy. In discussing the Boulder case, the Programme Manager for Enterprise Development stated, *“The Institute of Microfinance has a person who ensures the match between elective tracks and participant profiles. Otherwise a tremendous opportunity is lost given the stature of Resource Persons who come in and the overall cost of the activity.”*

33. Language Barriers: Global Academies are usually offered in multiple languages. For instance, in 2013, the Academies on Labour Migration, SED and Social Security were offered in English and French. In addition, the Academies on Gender and Skills Development were offered in English, French, Spanish; and English, French and Portuguese respectively. The provision of training in multiple languages allows international participation. It also increases the global visibility of the Academies as training events. Theoretically, multiple languages also enable the sharing of best practices and country experiences among international participants at the training event.

However, an analysis of participant comments suggests that in many cases, the provision of multiple languages was often a barrier to participants’ understanding of the content shared at the Academies. A majority of their concerns related to the quality of interpretation. This included the extent to which interpreters were able to translate technical terms and the ability of the interpreters to keep up with the facilitator. Some participants were also dissatisfied with the language in which training materials were presented.

Specifically, the participants noted:

- *"The interpretation sometimes didn't provide the statements/jargons that were used by the trainer"*
- *"La traduction de l'anglais en français ne permet pas de saisir toutes les subtilités du cours"*
- *"Il faudrait penser à le Programmer pour les francophones car la traduction ne suivait pas"*
- *"Some topics covered in Spanish/French made understanding difficult. It would be nice to have critical topics in different languages"*
- *"La traduction en français nécessite d'être amélioré"*
- *"The young female English interpreter was slower than the Spanish facilitator. That put a lot of stress on me"*
- *"The interpreters should try to be faster"*
- *"The entire presentation was good but the only problem for me was to follow the instructor when he switches the language to French and i am not sure that some of the translations were accurate. That affects my understanding of some issues."*
- *"Je suis francophone et j'avoue que j'ai eu des problèmes de compréhension. La traduction était d'un niveau moyen ce qui ne me permettait pas de bien appréhender tous les concepts. La présentation aussi était trop technique avec beaucoup de graphiques qui sont souvent illisibles."*
- *"Choisissez les meilleurs interprètes"*
- *"Vérifier les traductions, qu'elles soient toutes faites avant la présentation."*
- *"Hay que mejorar la traducción"*
- *"The participation of the trainees could be increased with a better interpretation. Language barriers were a limit."*
- *"Ma seule critique c'est les diapos toujours en anglais bien que le cours est bilingue"*
- *"Donner des vidéos bilingues"*
- *"The facilitator should speak in her language and have someone translating, she should be prepared some of her slides were in her language and that made it difficult for us to understand."*
- *"Dans les exercices de simulation, on a accordé plus de temps aux groupes anglophones. Il faut améliorer la traduction en français"*
- *"La traduction des documents en français nous seraient très utiles"*

Based on these comments, it may be concluded that benefits of the Academy training varied by the participants' language. This is also observed in the EoAQ results in some cases. For instance, in the 2011 Gender Academy, participant satisfaction results were disaggregated by language – The average for Master classes was about 3.90 for French speakers, while it was 4.19 and 4.18 respectively for the Spanish and English speaking groups.

Additionally, in certain Academies, some electives were offered only in one language – the inability of some participants to take those tracks because of language constraints was brought up in participant comments as a negative aspect. For example, a participant stated: *"Ouvrir certains*

ateliers a tous les participants interessés. La langue a également constitué un handicap dans le choix de certains ateliers très intéressants pour les francophones”

It should be acknowledged that some participants had high regard for the interpretation services. For instance, one participant commented: *“Le cours a été dispensé en anglais et en français et cela a permis aux francophones de comprendre un peu le mécanisme des pensions dans le monde.”* However, such comments were few and far between.

34. *Resource Persons’ pedagogical skills*: The expertise of many Resource Persons was widely appreciated by a large majority of participants. For instance, participants noted:

- *“Il maîtrise parfaitement ce domaine du dialogue social et est par ailleurs expérimenté et disponible”*
- *“He is extremely brilliant on the subject and has many years of experience. I think he should always be invited even if he retires to talk about this subject area. He is simply very good about the issues both past, current and the future.”*

However, there was also some dissatisfaction with regard to Resource Persons’ pedagogical skills. For instance, participants indicated:

- *“They are expert in their chosen field but we must consider the effectivity of the speaker. Some speakers cannot speak clearly and do not command the language which is the purpose of hearing and learning from them. Information is important but the way they will convey it is also very important.*
- *“Also, many of the resource persons surely have a high level of technical expertise, but somehow lacked effective teaching methodology. The combination of expertise and teaching methodology should bring much better results.”*
- *“Resource persons, in great majority, did not prepare enough their presentations to make it lively, participatory and context related. A lot of information in presentations could have been read from diverse resources as ILO booklets and conventions.”*
- *“Train the trainers”*
- *“The Academy should ask for the resource persons’ presentations well ahead in order to avoid having people who are not well prepared.”*

35. *Format of Electives*: In interviews with Programme Managers and through analyzing Academy time tables, it was noted that while most Academies offer electives in a horizontal format (two electives each week with the first elective offered each morning for three days and the second elective offered each afternoon for three days), a few Academies offer electives in a vertical format (the same elective is offered continuously for a day and a half or so). Both formats have their advantages and disadvantages. A horizontal format allows Resource Persons to have a flexible approach which allows adjustment of content on the basis of participant needs. A longer time span also allows participants to digest the information better giving them a chance to bring up their concerns and questions. The vertical format, on the other hand, enables the training to be more continuous. It also puts fewer demands on the time of the Resource Person. It is difficult to tell whether the format of electives influences the effectiveness of Academies as comparisons are

hard to make – most participants have experience with only one type of format. However, a best practice may emerge through internal discussions among Programme Managers.

Additionally, certain Academies (Social Security and Skills Development) include *wrap-up sessions* where a summary of all electives is shared with participants. These sessions are led by the same Resource Person who facilitated the elective. According to Programme Managers for these Academies, such sessions have two key benefits:

- The obvious benefit is that those who did not choose certain electives are now able to gain some information about them.
- Secondly, a summary also helps the participants who attended the elective to better retain the information.

In their comments, participants from other Academies have also expressed the need for such sessions. For instance, one participant in the 2012 SED Academy noted: “*As there are sessions running parallelly, it would have been good if all can get a summary of the discussions for other groups. Recording the outcome may help others.*”

36. *Continuity of Contact*: Programme Managers use a variety of methods to maintain contact with Academy participants. In some cases (Social Security Academy), the programme staff uploaded videos of, and other resources from electives and plenary sessions on the online platform (or “Phase III” as it is called). This enables the participants to go over the training at their own pace. In addition, participants who did not attend certain electives now had access to the training. Other Academies like Gender, Labour Migration, and SED have a Facebook page devoted to the event. The Gender Academy also maintains an alumni email list.

Impact of Academies

37. In an effort to assess the degree to which Academies achieved higher scores as compared to the Centre’s standard courses, a comparison sample of open courses was created. To be included in the comparison group, open courses were matched on the basis of content and duration. Thus, only those open courses that were similar to their respective Academies in terms of content and duration were included in the comparison sample. On the basis of these criteria, not all Academies could be matched to an open course.

Two open courses (both of two weeks duration) were selected as part of the comparison group. These include:

- i. **Mainstreaming Gender Equality: Concepts and Instruments** (2012) - this will serve as a comparison for the Gender Academy in 2011 and 2013
- ii. **Promoting Effective Skills Policies and Systems** (2009) – this will serve as comparison for the Skills Development Academy in 2012 and 2013.

The open courses and the Academies were not offered in the same year. The open course on Gender Mainstreaming is offered in even years, whereas the Gender Academy is offered in odd years. While similar to the Academy in many respects, the open course on Gender mainstreaming

is relatively more specific and focused on certain approaches and tools. The Academy, on the other hand, is much broader. The open course on Effective skills, Policies and Systems was a precursor to the Skills Development Academy. Its content was transferred to the first Skills Academy in 2011 (not in this evaluation sample) and it is no longer offered by the Programme. The open courses and Academies also differ in terms of number of participants and the number of languages the training is offered in – The open course on Gender had 17 participants and similarly, the open course on Skills had 21 participants. On the other hand, the Academies had much higher number of participants. Both open courses were offered only in English. A key difference between the open courses and Academies relates to the fact that in open courses, all participants attend the entire course – they are offered the same experience. However, in Academies, participants are flexible to design their own training path.

38. An examination of scores on the EoAQ reflects that the degree to which Academies achieved higher scores in comparison to open courses varied by Academy. For instance, in the case of Skills Development, participants in the open course scored higher on almost all items on the EoAQ in comparison to both the 2012 and 2013 Skills Academies. However, in the case of gender, there was variation across individual items on the questionnaire between the groups. This indicates that it may be counterproductive to simply transform a successful open course into a new modular format without making analogous changes in topic areas and course content that are adapted to the realities of the new format – higher number of participants, complex courses and simultaneous interpretation, variation in background of participants, variation among resource persons and so on. The large difference in the average score for “appropriateness of learning methods” between the Skills open course and the two Skills Academies is further evidence that by simply substituting an open course for an Academy, the Programme Area may be trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. The average score for this question in the Skills open course was 4.71, whereas in the 2012 Skills Academy the average score was 3.76 and for the 2013 Academy it was 4.06. The only item on the questionnaire where the score for the open course did worse than the Academy related to the following: “Before participating in this activity, were you clear about its objectives, contents and methods?” However, the difference was not too large in this case.
39. With regards to Gender, there was no clear trend in participant scores between Academies and the open course. As with the skills case, the open course on Gender Mainstreaming scored less than both, first and second edition Gender Academies, for the question on “clarity of objectives before participation.” In terms of “achievement of training objectives,” the open course (2012) did slightly better than the first Gender Academy (2011) and slightly worse than the second Gender Academy (2013). As the open course fell between the two Academies temporally, it is possible that it utilized lessons from the first Academy and informed the second one. Interestingly, despite the fact that the open course was also gender-specific, it scored much lower on the question: “Have gender issues been adequately integrated in the training?” as compared to the two Academies. The average score for this question in the open course was 4.06, while in the 2011 and 2013 Gender Academies, this score averaged 4.29 and 4.52 respectively. There was not much difference in the score for “quality of Resource Person contribution” between the Academies and the open course. Both the open course and the second Academy scored higher than the first Academy on “Did the group of participants with whom you attended the activity contribute to your learning?” This is probably in part due to the uneven backgrounds and competencies of

participants in the first Gender Academy. This is reflected in the fact that quite a few participant comments noted in point 18 of this report – regarding variation in participant backgrounds and the need for course prerequisites – came from first edition of the Gender Academy. Finally, participants in the open course were less “satisfied overall” on average, as compared to the participants in the Academies.

40. The follow-up questionnaire was introduced in 2011. For this reason, it is impossible to compare the Skills open course – which was offered in 2009 – with the respective Academies on follow-up responses. With regards to Gender, the follow-up responses were quite similar in terms of types of competencies gained and the nature of activities undertaken as a result of the three trainings.
41. It is important to recognize that while the two open courses in our sample are more similar to respective Academies in terms of content and duration, there exist important differences between the two formats. Thus, if there are large, systematic differences in the objectives of each course and type of participants targeted by each, then the comparison of the two modalities may be less meaningful. Cohort differences (since these courses are not offered in the same year) among participants may also limit the usefulness of this analysis.

Sustainability of Academies

42. Theoretically, the “Academy model” is financially attractive because it allows for a large percent of fixed cost absorption. This model, however, relies on being able to attract an adequate number of participants who are either self-funded or funded by their own institutions. There is some variation across Academies towards the achievement of this goal:
 - Table 2 provides the percentage of enrolees in each Academy that received a full tuition fellowship from the ITCILO (Funding type: “Italy MAE,” “Italy – MENA,” “Surplus,” or “ILO-RBTC”). Table 3 provides the percentage of Academy enrolees who either fully paid for themselves, were funded by their own institution or through the ILO. The difference between these numbers generally reflects those who were provided partial fellowships.
 - In their first editions, the Skills Development and Social Security Academies were able to attract a large number of participants (over 70). In addition, full scholarships were awarded to very few participants. For instance, the 2012 Social Security Academy awarded no full fellowships. Further, for this Academy, only 13 partial fellowships were awarded by the ITCILO – the rest of the participants (83%) were either self-funded or paid through their institutions. Similarly, for the 2012 Skills Academy, of the 83 enrolees, only four (5%) were awarded full scholarships and 58 (70%) enrolees were funded through external sources. The ITCILO provided partial fellowships to 21 participants (25%) through Italy-MAE and ILO RBTC funds.
 - In the 2011 Gender Academy, a slightly higher percentage of enrolees (13%) were offered full scholarships. This mainly included a delegation from Haiti and participants who were jointly funded by Italy-MAE and ACTRAV funds. Additionally, a relatively large number of

participants (41%) were also awarded partial scholarships through Italy MAE funds. About 46% were fully funded through external sources.

- In comparison to other Academies in 2011 and 2012, the first edition of the Labour Migration Academy saw relatively fewer enrolees. At the same time, only a few full scholarships were awarded and a large percentage of individuals were fully funded through external sources. (Note: For this calculation, funds from *Compagnia di San Paolo* were treated as external funds – if that is not the case, the results would be very different)
- For the Academies with a “*” next to their names, there appeared to be a large difference in the number of participants noted in the internal evaluation report and the number of enrolees presented in the respective NOAA.³ For instance, while the internal evaluation report stated that 69 individuals participated in the 2012 SED Academy, the NOAA report included only 36. Similarly, for the 2013 Gender Academy, while the internal evaluation report put the number of participants at 159, the NOAA included only 99. Due to these inconsistencies, calculations described in Table 2 and table 3 were not carried out for these Academies.
- In general, the Academies seem to utilize fewer funds from the Italian government in the second edition of most Academies. “ILO slippage” is used to provide most fellowships.

Table 2: Full ITCILO Fellowship

Full ITCILO fellowship	First Edition (Enrolees)	Second Edition (Enrolees)
Gender	13% (127)	*
Labour Migration	17% (47)	*
Social Security	0% (77)	*
SED	*	*
Skills Development	5% (83)	5%(106)

Table 3: Funding from External Sources

Full non-ITCILO funding (own/external sources)	First Edition (Enrolees)	Second Edition (Enrolees)
Gender	46% (127)	*
Labour Migration	68% (47)	*
Social Security	83% (77)	*
SED	*	*
Skills Development	70% (83)	95%(106)

³ Updated versions of the NOAAs were provided to the evaluator after the draft evaluation report was submitted. There was lack of sufficient time to reanalyze the new data.

43. Currently, not all Academies are breaking-even. For instance, the SED Academy for 2014 was cancelled due to inadequate demand. The Labour Migration Academy for 2014 is also uncertain (as of May 2014) for the same reason.
44. Based on interviews with Programme Managers, there is potential for internal competition among Academies when related Academies are offered under the same Technical Programme in the same year. For instance, both an SED Academy and a new Academy on Green Economy are planned for 2014. If both Academies are generally pitched to a similar audience, then given the high cost for sponsoring a participant, external institutions may exhaust resources on one Academy or spread out resources across the two Academies. As a result, one or both Academies could experience inadequate participation.
45. A review of the ITCILO course calendar (2014) suggests that a variety of trainings offered by the ITCILO have the term “Academy” in their title. In some cases, there are no shared features among these trainings (for instance, between the “Maritime Labour Academy” and the global Academies included in our evaluation sample). In other cases, there is some, but not complete overlap in training format (for example, between “Regional Academies” and the global Academies included in our evaluation sample). Thus, to a prospective participant, these unique trainings may not be easily differentiable. On the other hand, there are other trainings that share the features of a global Academy, but do not have the word “Academy” in their title (for example, the “Learning Forum on Innovation in Public Investment and Employment Programme” that offered multiple tracks and languages, was attended by more than 40 participants, and ran for about two weeks.) These inconsistencies have the potential to create brand confusion regarding the various ITCILO training offerings, especially in the context of the Academies.

Lesson Learned

46. The Academies model is conceptually strong as it is uniquely positioned to bring together a multitude of individuals and Resource Persons for the purposes of sharing best practices, field experiences and latest/cutting-edge thinking on a variety of topics. Further, the modular format is said to allow for increased learner autonomy which, in turn, is likely to improve the effectiveness of learning. However, the degree to which this “conceptual effectiveness” is translated into “actual effectiveness” depends upon how Academies are implemented in practice. Factors like provision of accurate and comprehensive preliminary information, quality of simultaneous interpretation, balance between elective content and complexity relative to assigned time for an elective, degree of heterogeneity (in background) among participants, quality of pedagogical training, frequency of Academies, number of Academies offered by Technical Programs in a given year, and so on, have the potential to influence the success of the Academies model.

Recommendations

Given their unique strategic positioning and financial potential, the ITCILO should continue with the provision of Academies. However, the following adjustments (presented here in order of priority) may be considered to improve the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of these activities:

1. **Instead of a one-time event, a sequenced and harmonized training package should be planned.**

In such a sequenced and harmonized training package, an Academy should be offered every alternate year, complemented with regional workshops in the intervening years. The regional workshops should be developed based on the needs identified by the ITCILO Academy in the previous year. The Academy can also serve as a needs assessment for developing new open and tailor-made courses. For instance, in many Academies, participants noted that certain electives could use a whole week of instruction on their own. Programme Managers should consider these electives as candidates for new open courses. The Academy and regional workshop package should complement, not substitute open and tailor-made courses. Further, the Academies and regional workshops should also be marketed as a comprehensive package: containing a series of trainings that aim to encourage systemic thinking.

With regards to the benefits of a sequenced training package,

A biennial Academy enables:

- The presentation of latest/cutting-edge thinking on issues. This is also less likely to be repetitive.
- More sought-after participation, as evidenced by the Gender Academy. There might also be a higher possibility of enrolling repeat participants if the Academies are offered on an alternating basis. An increased participation mitigates exposure to risk and unpredictability.
- Reduced development costs and less logistical pressure on Programme Managers. Additionally, Programme Managers will have more time to effectively use feedback from six-month follow-up surveys in designing new editions
- Technical Programmes to offer different Academies in different years. This will reduce the potential for internal competition among Academies, thus further limiting exposure to risk and unpredictability

As a complement, a regional workshop in the intervening years enables:

- Continuity of training after the Academy ends
- The ITCILO to effectively manage the challenge of providing a global training platform (through the Academy) and yet be relevant to participant's region-specific training needs
- Increased participation from representatives of Workers and Employers' organizations, as evidenced by *Academia Latinoamericana – Desarrollo Empresa Sostenible*, held in Lima, Peru
- The ability to overcome language barriers as regional workshops can be offered as a monolingual modality

- The development of a local Resource Person talent pool – these individuals can be potentially invited to deliver electives/plenary at ITCILO Academy, thus increasing diversity among presenters

Regional workshops are also relatively cheaper to provide. However, when developing regional workshops, it is important to keep in mind that the agenda for such training events may need to be negotiated with local governments and other partners. Further, additional effort will have to be made to ensure a consistent level of quality across various regional workshops

2. The ITCILO should continue its efforts to increase tripartite relevance in Academy design:

As indicated in the evaluation findings, there is limited participation from social partners across all Academies. While improving participation of Workers’ and Employers’ representatives is an important outcome by itself, it should be considered within a larger goal of transferring ILO’s tripartite priority through the Academies training platform. In order to achieve this, the Academies should strengthen the level of tripartite offering in Academy design. To the extent possible, there should be increased emphasis on ensuring that the course content (mix of plenary and elective offer) is genuinely tripartite. Programme Managers should seek interest of ACTRAV and ACTEMP at the technical planning stage of each Academy. Such efforts have already been initiated across various Technical Programmes. In addition to enhancing the relevance of Academy contents for social partners, the degree of tripartism in training design is also important to consider because Academies are usually offered in coordination with multiple external partners who may or may not share ILO’s tripartite interest. From this perspective, the Academy may be seen as a vehicle that promotes a visible transfer of ILO’s tripartite values.

It is important to note that the ITCILO is committed to enhancing the tripartite dimension in all its training programs. This is indicated in the 2013 MINUTE titled “Guidelines on Tripartism and Social Partners’ Involvement in the Training Programs of the Centre.” The document outlines various steps that the ITCILO plans to undertake in order to improve the “relevance of the Centre’s curricula to a tripartite audience,” and for “enhanced participation of social partners in training activities.”

3. Improving the design of Academies.

The ITCILO should organize a workshop where Programme Managers come together to discuss the findings of this evaluation and engage in a fresh strategic positioning exercise. As an outcome, a clear identity for the Academies product should emerge. How the Academies fit in the overall product mix of the ITCILO should also be taken into consideration. Towards this, Programme Mangers, as a group, should also engage in a purposeful and focused effort to:

- **Identify the appropriate balance between elective content (amount and type) and duration:** The amount and type of information shared at electives should be adapted to ensure that participants have sufficient time to deepen their knowledge on a particular topic. Towards this, Programme Mangers may consider the following questions: Should all electives have the same duration? Should more technical electives be offered for a longer duration? Should the number of electives be reduced

in order to cover each elective in greater depth? Does the balance between theoretical and practical information within need to be re-examined? How should content shared in open courses be adapted to the Academy format?

- **Tailor the Academies by participants' depth of knowledge.** Tailoring of content may be achieved by conducting a systematic Training Needs Assessment through the online platform. (Note, a pre-test administered for the purposes of needs assessment can also be used in the evaluation process.) Programme Managers may also elicit feedback on training needs through application forms. This may require additional resources in terms of Programme Managers' time. Alternatively, entire Academies can be offered in levels – for instance, an introductory level Academy may be offered in one year which can be followed-up with intermediate and advanced level Academies in subsequent years. This can also encourage repeat participation in multiple training events.
- **Enhance the emphasis on experience-sharing among participants.** Currently, there is varying degree of experience sharing among participants at different Academies. Since this is a key differentiable feature of the Academies, Technical Programmes should ensure the presence of an enabling environment that encourages experience sharing among participants in a structured way. For example, Technical Programmes may consider building-in time for experience sharing within each elective. Another strategy would be to involve participants in facilitating or co-facilitating certain sessions.
- **Ensure the mitigation of language barriers.** Towards this, the quality of interpretation services should be improved. Final presentations from Resource Persons should be locked down earlier and provided to interpreters with a glossary of technical terms much in advance of the Academy. Further, there should be a concerted effort to ensure that participants who speak different languages are not alienated in their own groups. Technical Programmes may consider offering plenary sessions in multiple languages and inviting participants to share country-profiles in their own languages.
- **Invest in high quality Resource Persons in terms of both expertise and pedagogical skills.** The expertise of most resource persons was highly regarded by a majority of participants. However, many participants were dissatisfied with the pedagogical skills of certain trainers. The ITCILO may consider offering Training of Trainers workshops to Resource Persons. Further, an effort should be made to invite technical persons from other institutions and countries. This may require additional resources.
- **Provide a guided selection of electives** by offering a counsellor-like service in advance of an Academy where a “learning advisor” assists participants with “guided and negotiated” selection of electives based on the participant’s background/resume, training needs and the content of elective tracks. This has the potential of ensuring a better match between the participants and the electives.

- **Enhance sharing of information before and after the Academy.** In general, preliminary information on electives should be more detailed than simply the title of the track. To the extent possible, it should include specific learning objectives for each elective. Technical Programmes should also provide participants with a sample time table in the preliminary information packet. At the Academies, sessions should be taped and after the completion of the Academy, all videos, along with training materials, should be shared through the online platform. This may require additional resources in terms of Programme Managers' time.
- **Include wrap-up session and quizzes.** In wrap-up sessions, a summary of all electives is shared with participants. These sessions should be led by the same Resource Person who facilitated the elective. In addition, participants should be tested on their knowledge by administering a post-test at the end of the activity. This combined with a pre-test (administered during the training needs assessment phase) can help the Programme Manager evaluate the extent of knowledge gain as a result of the Academy. Completing a quiz in the last plenary session may facilitate a reflection of information shared during the Academy. Further, the knowledge of an end-of-activity quiz can also engender greater seriousness among participants during the Academy.

4. To reduce unpredictability of funds, training needs should be budgeted in advance.

Currently, the Programme Managers engage in quite a bit of negotiating and bargaining for fellowship funds until the very last minute. To the extent possible, emphasis should be placed on incorporating funding for Academies in the ILO's biennium budgeting process. For example, planned Academies and regional workshops should be taken into consideration when RBTC funds are budgeted for the Centre and the regions. In addition, Technical Units in Geneva should also prioritize budgeting of training needs in the field during the biennium planning process. This in turn may encourage the country offices to budget effectively for training as well. Further, Academies like "Informal Economy," that may not have a Technical Unit in Geneva should be linked to the ACI planning vehicle. It is important to acknowledge that the ITCILO's service-oriented business model is different from that of the ILO's. To collaborate more effectively, there exists a need for greater mutual understanding and recognition of each other's strategic interests.

5. Strengthening consistency of the Academies brand.

Before a new and improved version of ITCILO Academies is launched, an effort should be made to ensure consistency among courses that have the term "Academy" in their title. The ITCILO should consider changing the title of those courses (for example, the Maritime Labour Academy) that do not share certain minimum features with global Academies. Further, regional trainings should not be referred to as Academies. In this way, the ITCILO can consolidate the brand identity of Academies.

ANNEX:

Interviews at ILO Headquarters
Interviews at the ITCILO

Interviews at ILO HQ:

Mr. Guy Thijs, Director, EVAL
Mr. Craig Russon, Senior Evaluation Officer, EVAL
Mr. Waltteri Katajamaki, Officer, COOP
Mr. Craig Churchill, Unit Head, Social Finance Unit
Ms. Susan Maybud, Senior Specialist, Gender
Mr. René Robert, Inspection Specialist, Labour Administration
Mr. Gian Rosas, Unit Head, Youth Employment
Mr. Ryszard Cholewinski, Specialist Migration Policy, MIGRANT
Mr. Jean-Paul Barbier, Senior Employment Specialist, CEPOL

Interviews at ITCILO:

Ms. Patricia O'Donovan, Director ITCILO
Mr. Andreas Klemmer, Director, Training Programme ITCILO
Ms. Jeannette Shalabi, Chief, Programme Development and Regional Cooperation Service
Mr. Robin Poppe, Chief, Learning and Communication Service, and Manager, Distance Education and Learning Technology Applications Programme
Mr. Alessandro Patrone, Officer, Evaluation Unit
Ms. Rute Mendes, Officer, Evaluation Unit
Mr. Peter Tomlinson, Programme Manager, Enterprise, Micro-finance and Local Development Programme
Ms. Luisa Guimarães, Programme Manager, Social Protection Programme
Ms. Miriam Boudraa, Programme Officer, Social Protection Programme
Ms. Irene Nori, Programme Assistant, Social Protection Programme
Ms. Marion Christophe, Activity Secretary, Social Protection Programme
Ms. Bente Sorensen, Programme Manager, Social Dialogue Programme
Mr. George Jadoun, Chief, Sustainable Development and Governance Cluster
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