INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO

Board of the Centre

82nd Session, Geneva, 25 October 2019 **CC 82/3**

THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Independent evaluation of training and learning activities on the thematic area of "Labour Migration"

I.   Introduction

1.   The 2018-21 Strategic Plan of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Centre) envisions the Centre to be a world-class provider of capacity development services for ILO constituents.[1] The Results-based Management Framework underpinning the 2018-19 Programme and Budget of the Centre identifies service quality as one of the key vectors guiding Management in the pursuit of this vision, and tracks participant satisfaction, new knowledge acquisition rates and new knowledge application rates as high-level outcome indicators.[2] To verify new knowledge application rates after training, the Centre commissions annual independent evaluations of activity clusters linked to one its areas of expertise.[3]

2.   In 2019, the thematic area of expertise selected for the independent evaluation was "Labour Migration". The objective of the evaluation was to assess the performance and impact of the Centre's training and learning activities in the area of labour migration, to identify relevant contributors and barriers, and to facilitate organizational learning for better planning and delivery of the Centre's training offers. The findings and recommendations will guide the further development and evolution of the Centre's portfolio of training and learning activities in this area in the 2020-21 biennium.[4]

3.   The evaluation covered learning activities delivered from the beginning of 2017 till mid-2018. Two groups of activities were assessed: The first group consisted of activities directly linked to the thematic area of labour migration and mainly delivered by the Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism (SPGT) Programme; the second group was made up of activities with primary link to other ILO policy outcomes, but explicitly referencing labour migration topics as part of the agenda. The inclusion of the second group served the purpose of validating to what extent ILO policy messages in the field of labour migration had been mainstreamed in the broader activity spectrum of the Centre.

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[1]   ITCILO 2018-21 Strategic Plan, p.16
[2]   ITCILO 2018-19 Programme and Budget, p.20f
[3]   Refer to CC 77/4, CC 78/3, CC 79/2, CC 80/3 and CC 81/2 for further information on the findings of the evaluations carried out since 2014.
[4]   The full text of the report of the Independent Evaluator is available at: http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/board-documents

4. The evaluation was carried out during May - July 2019 and covered a sample of 15 training activities implemented between early 2017 and mid-2018. That time period allowed a one- to two-year post-course period to measure implementation of knowledge and skills acquired and impacts achieved by application of training. Activities covered included Labour Migration Academies, thematic courses, country specific trainings and worker/trade union trainings, as well as an international working group setting global labour migration statistical standards. The first group covered all 12 activities with a primary link to the ILO policy outcome on "Labour Migration" during the reference period. The second group consisted of three activities with a secondary link to the ILO policy outcome on Labour Migration implemented by the Workers' Activities Programme (ACTRAV), the SPGT Programme and the International Labour Standards, Rights at Work and Gender Equality (ILSGEN) Programme.

Assessment criteria

5. In line with ILO EVAL's evaluation framework, the evaluation focused on the following criteria: Relevance of the selected activities to the needs of the participants and, where applicable, of the institutions supporting their participation; the validity of the activity design; efficiency; effectiveness; impact and sustainability. The guiding questions for the evaluators are listed below:

Evaluation criteria and guiding questions
Relevance
How did the activities contribute (or not) to the strategic priorities of the international development agendas, the member States, the UN, the ILO and the ITCILO?
To what extent did the training assess and responded to the need of the stakeholders, including that of the tripartite constituents and that of both men and women?
Did the training meet the expectation of the participants and, if applicable, the sending organizations?
Validity of the design
Was the design of the training activity valid and coherent for its expected contribution (e.g. in the thematic discourse, to the pre- conditions, for increased awareness, etc.)?
What factors did the training design seek to influence, and in which way? Are the factors valid and effective in achieving the objectives of the training?
How were the curriculum and learning method designed to achieve knowledge increase, skill acquisition and attitude change of the participants? Are they adequate and effective?
Effectiveness
To what extent has the training achieved its objectives?
To what extent has the training increased the knowledge of the participants on the topic?
To what extent has the training equipped the participants the skills and methods to apply their learning at work(place)?
To what extent has the training influenced the confidence and attitude of the participants in working with labour migration related issues
Efficiency of resource usage
Have the resources invested in delivering the activity been used in an efficient manner? How economically were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, fellowships etc.) converted to results in outreach and performance? Do the results justify the costs?
What time and cost efficiency measures could have been introduced without impeding the achievement of results?
Effectiveness of management arrangements
Have the roles and responsibilities of Centre officials and programmes for designing and delivering training activities in the area of labour migration been clearly defined and understood? Are they effective in developing and delivering training activities?
What have been the management arrangements in place to facilitate the promotion of training activities in the area of labour migration? Are they adequate and effective?
To what extent have the quality and performance of the training been monitored and evaluated?
Impact and sustainability
To what extent and in which way have the participants applied their learning?

Evaluation criteria and guiding questions
What tangible changes have been accomplished by the participants and their organizations in the area of labour migration, because of the training activity?
To what extent and in which ways has the training contributed to the policies, thematic discourse and practices in labour migration?
What are the key contributors to and barriers from making an impact in this area, respectively?
Have the changes and initiatives that the participants and organizations have made due to the training been – and will they be – able to sustain over time? What are the enabling factors and obstacles for sustaining long-term impact in the area of labour migration?

6. In addition to the above-mentioned evaluation criteria, the evaluation also assessed the training activities according to the Centre's crosscutting policy drivers: 1) innovation and learning; 2) gender equality and diversity; and 3) tripartism, social dialogue and international labour standards. The assessment on gender equality and diversity followed the requirement of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and the ILO Guidelines on Considering Gender in Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects.

Methodology

7. The evaluation relied on several data collection techniques. This "mixed methods" approach combined both hard and soft evidence and involved multiple means of analysis:

   - Desk review: analysis of the documentation related to the training activities under evaluation: flyers, training needs analysis, former evaluations reports, end-of-activity questionnaires, follow-up surveys and other documents reporting evidence on the training covered by the evaluation.

   - An online survey, to ask participants about the impact and results of the training activities. A total of 493 participants were surveyed, with a response rate of 22 per cent.

   - Face-to-face interviews with staff of the Centre, including selected Programme Managers and Activity Managers as well as Management.

   - Interviews with former participants and with organizations who had sponsored these former participants in training activities of the Centre, to explore tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from the activities.

   - Interviews with ILO staff from the Labour Migration Branch and with ILO staff from field offices and projects.

   - Case studies of former participants applying the knowledge acquired during training.

II. Conclusions and recommendations made by the Evaluator[5]

Conclusions

8. The Conclusions of the evaluation, taking account of the findings across the evaluation criteria, are formulated in a framework: of Attributes, Expectations, Challenges, Risks, and Constraints. This presentation intends to build on its strengths, recognize opportunities, address challenges and reduce constraints to realizing its [the Centre's] potential as a global centre of excellence in this arena.

9. Attributes

- ITCILO is carrying out substantial, well-appreciated training activity in the migration field comprising Labour Migration Academies, specialized thematic courses, and country and constituency-specific activities.

- The ITCILO with its knowledge base and methodology combined with the unparalleled infrastructure is acknowledged as a global centre of excellence for training on migration for employment/labour migration.

- The core ILO and ITCILO values, strategic themes and technical approaches are incorporated in the agendas and content of ITCILO-organized migration activity trainings, with particular reference to *decent work, international labour standards, sustainable development, social dialogue,* and *social protection.*

- "Gender balanced" participation was generally promoted in the labour migration courses, if not always realized due to factors beyond ITCILO influence. Attention to gender was "*mainstreamed*" in the content of most activities.

- The ITCILO-designed and delivered courses reflected relevance and coherency of design in joining ILO and ITCILO concerns with participant needs and expectations.

- ITCILO methodologies and techniques are the core learning approaches in all of the training activities in this area; their added value includes a highly participatory approach and emphasis on practical exercises.

- The migration courses received very high participant evaluation ratings for learning process.

- All participant interviewees and nearly all of the 108 respondents to the survey of migration-related course participants cited explicit and substantial use made of knowledge and skills imparted by the training.[6]

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[5] The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluator are quoted *verbatim* from the final evaluation report, p. 77-81

[6] "Striking in the findings were the very high level (67 per cent) and extent of implementation of knowledge and skills learned in the training, and the large impact achieved resulting from the training. Among the most salient findings: an overall high level of satisfaction on meeting participant training needs and priorities on migration issues, 74 per cent saying *fully* or *to a great extent*, and another 21 per cent indicating *sufficiently* --meaning 95 per cent were satisfied or more than satisfied. Regarding *implementation*, nearly all respondents indicated that the course either provided *"a significant input to daily work*" (46 per cent) or was "*helpful in solving specific questions"* (49 per cent), together 95 per cent of respondents. A majority, 67 per cent, of all respondents assessed *very large* (20 per cent) or *large improvement* (47 per cent) in their competencies. Another 31 per cent indicated moderate improvement. Similarly, a total of 67 per cent indicated either *very large improvement* (19 per cent) or *large improvement* (48 per cent) in their job performance." Final evaluation report, p.4.

- A large majority cited specific tangible impact outcomes attributed to training learnings and skills enhanced by the trainings.[7]

- The implementation and impact of several ILO Technical Cooperation projects has been strengthened by cooperation with ITCILO and constituent participation in ITCILO trainings.

- The Centre counts on highly competent and dedicated staff for the activity cluster in SPGT.

- Staff in other ITCILO programmes, particularly the Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the International Labour Standards, Rights at Work and Gender Equality (ILSGEN) Programmes are also highly engaged.

- The evaluation exercise itself was a substantial measurement of results of the training in the migration area; it obtained verifiable evidence of considerable change accomplished resulting from the training. It is nonetheless understood that, in the complex context of migration, no one factor can be said to be solely responsible for achieving outcomes.

10. Expectations

- Specific and highly relevant ITCILO training on migration; the recognizable need worldwide is for substantive, standards-based, and technically competent training with an integrated approach to migration, migration for employment and international skills and labour mobility.

- A large potential audience awaits beyond ITCILO and ILO constituents, such as regional and national parliamentary staff, executives and policy-makers in other than labour/employment ministries, human and labour rights institutions, CSOs-NGOs, etc. in all regions.

- There is unmet need for ILO-based training on the migration dimensions of application of International Labour Standards; on social dialogue and tripartism regarding migration; on decent work and labour inspection for migrant workers; on gender and migration; and on equality and anti-discrimination for migrants.

- ILO technical cooperation activity should and often does incorporate training components that naturally should be implemented in close collaboration with ITCILO.

- New interest and commitment to develop migration activities is signalled by the Centre's Employers' Activities Programme (ACT/EMP).

- ACTRAV intends to retain its strong ongoing strategic commitment by an annualized programmatic training approach on labour migration.

- There is recognition of topical importance and interest to engage on migration in other ITCILO Technical Programmes.

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[7] "64 respondents (60 per cent of the total respondents) provided identification of specific tangible changes in legislation, policy and practice demonstrating impacts resulting from their application of course learnings. These *impacts* included new legislation introduced or passed in parliament; new national policy proposal in process; new measures to protect migrant workers in own country, instances of strengthened social dialogue/cooperation on migration; enhanced coordination mechanisms or forums on migration; new attention to migration in own institution and/or a new mechanism on migration in own organization." Final evaluation report, p. 4.

11. Contextual Challenges

- A major preoccupation is the increasingly hostile environment for migration and for protection of migrants in many places worldwide –despite growing objective needs for both labour and skills mobility and protection of human and labour rights to maintain economic viability and social development everywhere.

- The widespread predominance of migration control approaches and measures is impeding the realization of existing and emerging regional free movement systems.

- Low ratification rates and absence of promotion of normative instruments on migrants for employment is undermining rights protection for migrant workers and facilitating their exclusion from coverage by and/or enforcement of labour standards.

- Social partner involvement in labour migration / migration is widely excluded or absent in legislating, policy-making and implementation.

- Control institutions of some States are pre-empting responsibilities of labour ministries and social partners on migration for employment and protection of migrant workers.

12. Risks for ITCILO

- Institutional underestimation of the importance and the potential of the topical area for the future of ITCILO.

- Competition by other actors asserting competency on labour migration:
  - capturing resources for training on migration/mobility for employment, eclipsing ITCILO;
  - soliciting ILO constituent participation in competing activities;
  - seeking joint ventures acquiring ITCILO knowledge and materials, building on ITCILO credibility, and identifying constituents to recruit to engagement on differing agendas.

- A parallel risk is loss of *market share* and loss of credibility to maintain the primacy of ILO competencies and knowledge as the core content of training on *labour migration*.

- Institutional incoherency and inadequacy to meet constituent needs and contextual challenges in absence of well-integrated approach among the ILO labour migration branch and the migration training activities at ITCILO.

- Institutional budgetary limitations and/or internal contentions also risk posing constraints to meeting the challenges and opportunities in this area of training.

  Insufficient documentation and publicity on the specificity, the added value, the uniqueness and the multiple advantages of the ITCILO migration training.

- Maintaining an *ad hoc* approach to training in this arena with "stand-alone" learning and skills acquisition exercises rather than a strategic vision and programmatic definition commensurate with the global importance and constituent need for training in the arena.

- Need for more optimal consultation and coordination among multiple activity locations across various ITCILO programmes engaging in *de facto* parallel activity.

- Less than potential integration of training in ILO migration activity overall, including in TC projects on labour migration.

- Careful and consistent selection of resource persons familiar with ILO values and approaches needs reinforcement in all ITCILO migration-concerned activities and similarly, ensuring trainers represent top specialized expertise in the fields of ILO competency.

- Less than proportionate participation by social partner participants in some activities.

Recommendations

13. Recommendation 1: Define a strategic, programmatic approach for ITCILO training in the field of migration.

a. Affirm *migration for employment* as a programmatic area of the ITCILO training curriculum.

b. Re-brand ITCILO as it *de facto* is: the global training and capacity-building *centre of excellence* on migration for employment, labour migration and international skills and labour mobility.

c. Articulate a strategic vision for training on migration as a programmatic cross-sector topic area of the ITCILO, with a definition of strategic objectives, core content and deliberate outreach, with implementation remaining "decentralized" across concerned ITCILO Sectors.

14. Recommendation 2: Strengthen deliberate incorporation of ILO and ITCILO "basics" in a written core curriculum and in specific topical/thematic activities concerning migration for employment as well as guiding activities with external partners.

a. Articulate a core model curriculum to serve as a basic guide for all migration-related courses; use the core model curriculum to ensure adequate ILO content for co-sponsored and/or externally-commission activities.

b. Develop migration-concerned thematic activities/courses on: adoption, supervision and reporting on relevant International Labour Standards; social dialogue and tripartism regarding migration; decent work and labour inspection for migrant workers; gender and migration; and equality and anti-discrimination for migrant workers and their families.

c. Reinforce selection of training experts and facilitators knowledgeable and supportive of ILO principles and approaches and with highest level knowledge on technical topics.

15. Recommendation 3: Enhance cooperation on training with ILO technical cooperation (TC) projects, including by incorporating training components in all ILO TC projects on migration-related concerns**:**

a. Mobilize support, resources and cooperation through Technical Cooperation (TC) projects in cooperation with constituents and partners to expand delivery of activities - without necessarily increasing core budget - in view of availability of such resources "in the field".

b. Propose inclusion of training components in all ILO TC proposals/projects addressing migration and/or with migration components from the outset, to be implemented in cooperation with ITCILO.

c. Identify roles and relationships permitting training organization and implementation to be shared with TC project staff and budgets, and where viable and appropriate, with partner entities.

d. Strengthen ITCILO outreach and enrolment-recruitment for migration-concerned activities to and through TC projects, to constituencies that TC projects can reach, including parliaments, other government institutions addressing migration concerns particularly development, social protection, foreign affairs, as well as labour/employment ministries and social partners.

16. **Recommendation 4:** Enhance dialogue, synergies, coordination and mutually-defined cooperation across the Centre and with the ILO on migration activities.

a. Consider convening a regular meeting forum among concerned ITCILO actors to facilitate coordination and enhance cooperative synergies regarding (labour) migration; such a forum could contribute to collectively developing ITCILO strategy and activities in this area.

b. Strengthen coordination with concerned technical units at ILO, notably the Labour Migration Branch, particularly in developing a strategic programmatic approach to training in the arena of migration.

c. Promote *mainstreaming* of migration components in ITCILO activities in Academies and other training activities.

17. **Recommendation 5:** Develop a strategic approach on communications for promotion of ITCILO activities and knowledge sharing on migration for employment, in particular beyond the core "constituencies".

a. Engage in promotion of ITCILO training on migration to regional and national parliamentary bodies for participation in academies, and as possible, specialized courses.

b. Identify and target other constituencies and networks potentially interested in and benefiting from participation in ITCILO migration Academies and topic-specific courses.

18. **Recommendation 6**: Build implementation and impact monitoring into the agendas of constituent organizations, TC projects and other partner activity so that monitoring is conducted in the direct context of application of learning and skills and activity intending to obtain impacts.

III.   Management response

19. The Centre welcomes the findings of the independent evaluation. It notes the positive results of the training activities directly linked to the thematic area on Labour Migration and also the fact that, in many cases, labour migration messages of the ILO have been effectively promoted in other activities of the Centre. The evaluation has shown that a large majority of all participants reported increased knowledge as a direct result of training and that they went

on to implement this knowledge to the benefit of their organization. The Centre acknowledges that additional efforts can be undertaken to better reflect the rights-based labour migration approach of the ILO in its training activities, and to differentiate ILO messages from messages communicated by other organizations. The following paragraphs set down the management response to the issues raised and the recommendations made by the Independent Evaluator.

20. In response to recommendation 1, the Centre reaffirms labour migration to be a programmatic area of its training curriculum. The Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism (SPGT) Programme will develop a capacity profile that articulates the full spectrum of the labour migration training and advisory services offer of the Centre and that explicitly draws the linkages with the 2020-21 Programme & Budget of the ILO.

21. In response to recommendation 2, the SPGT Programme will compile the core policy messages from the ILO guidance documents on labour migration, and make this publication available to all Programmes offering courses with migration-related content (see also recommendation 4).

22. In response to recommendation 3, the SPGT Programme, in consultation with the Partnerships and Programme Development Services (PRODEV) in the Training Department, will map the ILO development cooperation projects linked to labour migration and reach out to the decision-making units in these initiatives to promote the capacity profile of the Centre (see also recommendation 1).

23. In response to recommendation 4, the Centre will convene a knowledge-sharing event in the Training Department to disseminate the compendium of ILO policy guidance documents on labour migration, and to discuss avenues for unlocking synergies and scale effects among training activities linked to the theme of labour migration. The Centre will invite the Labour Migration Branch to take part in this knowledge-sharing event and to make a presentation about the ILO programmatic approach in the arena of labour migration during the 2020-21 biennium.

24. In response to recommendation 5, and beyond the universe of ILO-facilitated development cooperation projects on labour migration, the SPGT Programme, in consultation with PRODEV, will develop a targeted awareness-raising campaign to promote the capacity profile of the Centre in the field of labour migration training among policy-level decision makers linked to ILO constituents and other ILO development partners.

25. In response to recommendation 6, and closely linked to recommendation 2, the Centre will explore the demand among ILO constituents and ILO facilitated development cooperation projects for monitoring and evaluation processes and tools to assess the outcomes of their own capacity development activities in the field of labour migration. Pending feedback, the Centre will determine whether to develop a new training or advisory service on the subject.

The Board is invited to provide guidance on the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation and on the management response.

Turin, August 2019