



International
Labour
Organization

DECENT WORK: AN ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE

South-South and Triangular Cooperation in ILO public-private partnerships

As a growing form of partnership, South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) is playing an increasingly important role in the ILO's public-private partnerships. Southern partners, with similar experience in development, bring particularly relevant and helpful experience in assisting the development of the Global South. In 2005, the Government of Brazil and the ILO initiated systematic horizontal cooperation in the field of combating child labour within Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. Since then the ILO has more formally strengthened its

role as a bridge between development partners of the South. Until mid-2015, several SSTC projects were concluded among the public private partnerships in place. The areas of cooperation included employment promotion, skills development, sustainable enterprises, HIV/AIDS, workers' organizations and child labour. Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development concerns global partnerships, including South-South Cooperation, as a key target.

What is South-South and triangular cooperation?

South-South and triangular cooperation is a partnership among equals, which involves a learning process or exchange of expertise derived from effective initiatives for development that have been implemented in southern countries. South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives can be held in the form of study tours, knowledge-sharing platforms, etc., with the purpose of exchanging resources and technology or facilitating the transfer of knowledge and experience to develop skills and capabilities. Processes such as the IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil, South Africa) favour horizontal exchanges between southern countries.

Examples of areas of work

Promoting youth employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with the collaboration of PAO Lukoil : The project seeks to strengthen the impact of policies and programmes on youth employment in order to support the creation of more and better jobs for young people through establishing a regional knowledge-sharing platform. The triangular cooperation element is the support of the Russian private company and governmental authorities to the CIS countries.

Faced with the escalating youth employment crisis in the CIS countries, technical cooperation funded by Lukoil and implemented by the ILO goes beyond training individuals and goes directly to the root of the youth employment problems by means of policy interventions at regional, national and local levels. The SSTC aspect includes the sharing of information between these countries and the establishment of a network of cooperation in this field.

Building capacity for social compliance of investments in agriculture: The partnership with the Africa Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund (AATIF) sets out to develop a methodology to assess the social and environmental risks of investment in agriculture in Africa, in order to uplift Africa's agricultural

potential for the benefit of the poor. This includes the South-South and triangular cooperation approach, as it aims at strengthening ties between African countries and institutions in the field of agricultural investments, while promoting regional and sub-regional networking. The project successfully collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and together they: reviewed the AATIF's social and environmental safeguard guidelines; developed a methodology and conducted assessments in nine projects; contributed to AATIF's public relation materials; developed a research framework for measuring impact; provided specialized technical assistance to partners' institutions, supporting them to improve their social and environmental management systems; and increased project visibility through the development of a related ILO webpage.

Strengthening workers' organizations through South-South Cooperation: The partnership between the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and the ILO resulted in the signing of a South-South and triangular cooperation PPP that seeks to strengthen the technical capacity of union leaders and activities of the Asia and Pacific region for developing effective trade union policies and strategies on protecting and promoting the members' fundamental rights. In partic-



ular, the project aims to build the capacities of trade unions to negotiate and carry out collective bargaining, participate in national development efforts and enhance other related skills, thereby facilitating communications between the ACFTU and trade union organizations outside China – so as to promote the sharing of information and experiences in selected subject areas. This contributes to greater cooperation amongst unions in the region and creates a better understanding of union development and restructuring. It also fosters communication capacities and skills within and among trade unions.

A promising example of engagement with the public-private sector in SSTC: The National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI) is one of Brazil's major players in South-South Cooperation and it has been internationally recognized as a model of technical vocational education and training in Latin America. Its cooperation with the ILO is mostly channeled through the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (ILO/Cinterfor) and the skills department. The institution is responsible for the training of 3 million professionals per year, as well as for the administration of a network of 817 mobile and fixed operational units – with 58 million students having been enrolled since its creation.

Through South-South and triangular cooperation, ILO/Cinterfor has promoted the collective construction of knowledge, the sharing of technological resources and the strengthening of existing capabilities in countries. This has made it possible to form a technical support network, which involves multiple institutions in a spirit of solidarity, disseminates information, and cooperates in the process of regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

ILO/Cinterfor focuses on achieving a global, regional, sub-regional, national and/or local perspective; identifying existing capabilities; promoting technical sharing; developing quality information support; providing technical assistance; encouraging research opportunities; training; and supporting public policies.

Looking forward

The following examples demonstrate a number of potential areas of work in engaging with the private sector through SSTCs:

Triangular cooperation for vocational training and skills development is one of the most promising areas of South-South and triangular cooperation. There are multiple examples to illustrate this.

One of the most recent ones is the partnership between the SENAI, the Vocational Training Institute of Peru (SENATI) and the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ), supported by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI). The ILO is currently analysing the intervention model applied in this triangular arrangement, as it can be easily replicated and is grounded on a solid partnership between vocational training institutions that are part of several networks in and outside the region.

Green entrepreneurship is another area in which South-South and triangular cooperation is expanding. For example, the study *Skills for Green Jobs: Egypt (2012)*, part of a global research project within the ILO's Green Jobs Initiative, creates an inclusive community dialogue to showcase the benefits of green business ventures, stressing the facilitating role that the Government should play in support of green projects.

The project demonstrates the potential of



creating green jobs through successful and profitable businesses, which, in turn, will contribute to address one of Egypt's most pressing and chronic problems. It is also relevant for other countries in the region to find ways to integrate green policies and simultaneously create knowledge hubs and gather research material to reinforce public governance and policy decision-making.

Discussions are under way to replicate the success stories survey and the green economy scoping study for other countries in the Arab region through SSTC. The success stories can be used as lobbying and evidence-based material that attest to the success of green-related initiatives vis-à-vis governmental institutions and investment organizations, such as banks, in order to obtain the required funds for young people to start their own green businesses.

Youth employment is arguably the biggest challenge for SSTC. The Spanish cooperation Agency (AECID) and the ILO, in collaboration with the International Organization of Employers (IOE), the Global Network Apprenticeship (GAN), and the constituents of Morocco, Tunisia, Colombia and Mexico, have launched a triangular cooperation initiative to reinforce decent work for youth through practical work experience. The final goal is to create employment opportunities for young people through PPPs that offer work experience and to improve their employability.

Barefoot College – Empowering women through the social electrification of rural villages: Barefoot College (India) has adopted an innovative approach in women's empowerment. It trains annually about 100 grandmothers from India and 80 grandmothers from international rural villages from the Global South. The grandmothers complete a comprehensive six-month solar

engineering training programme at the Barefoot College campus in India, where they learn how to light up solar home units, solar lamps, and charge controllers. India's experience has raised the interest of other Arab countries in the initiative. There is therefore the potential of drawing on India's experience to implement the initiative in other countries with similar cultural and linguistic contexts. This would reduce the length of training – and manuals would be provided in the local language. The Barefoot College has branches in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The sharing of this technology developed in India with other Southern countries is a perfect example of the SSTC principle.

GLOBALIZING SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY (SSE) THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION (SSTC)

SSTC has been a driving force in the development of SSE. Fair trade and community-supported agriculture (CSA) practices promote the globalization of SSE by linking solidarity-based community enterprises in developing countries to fair trade and organic buyers in developed countries. These SSE initiatives are on the rise in Asia and widespread in Latin America, as well as in Africa. The transfer of knowledge, experience and technology among SSE partners are premised on their shared interest in the common undertaking.

The Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) is a case in point. The capabilities of ASEC for organizing dialogues have been strengthened over the years. Results of SSTC initiated by ASEC and its national focal points are the following: a compilation of studies on SSE practices in Asian countries, which are currently used as references for research, training and round table discussions; and exchange visits by ASEC partner organizations, RIPESS (Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy), and other international organizations.

The ILO can put its strategic advantage – as a unique tripartite institution comprising representatives of governments, employers and workers – to a broader application and impact on public policies and programmes by encompassing both “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches to mainstreaming its Decent Work Agenda.



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