



International
Labour
Organization

EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION PROJECT AFTER THE MIANZHU EARTHQUAKE IN CHINA

In May 2008, an earthquake registering 8.0 on the Richter scale struck Sichuan province in China. Official statistics state that over 45 million people were affected, including 69,163 deaths. Approximately 6.5 million homes were destroyed and many people had to relocate. Around 30

million people lost the majority of their productive assets, and almost 2 million people lost their livelihoods. The most important issue at hand was to help affected persons develop new livelihoods and seek new sources of income in a new context.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Red Cross Society of China (RCSC); PlaNet Finance

Beneficiary country:
China

Timeframe:
January 2010 –
February 2011

Budget:
USD 234,000
USD 1.6 million in
additional funding
directly provided to
training institutions

THE RESPONSE

By July 2008 the ILO had launched an Emergency-Start and Improve Your Business project (E-SIYB) in Sichuan province. This one-year project, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and executed by the ILO Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (ILO/CRISIS), provided small business start-up training.

The intervention established or reestablished over 2,400 small businesses, creating 14,107 jobs within one year.

When, in 2009, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescents Societies (IFRC) engaged in supporting affected farmers who had been relocated to new areas in Mianzhu, Sichuan Province – one of the hardest hit areas in the province – they turned to the ILO as a key partner for the provision of vocational and business training.

Here, the ILO focused on developing new skills and increasing the access to finance among the relocated earthquake affected populations, so they could establish or rebuild livelihoods and generate income. With a specific focus

on families with disabled persons, the programme provided financial support through micro-finance in combination with vocational and/or business training. The training offered included:

- Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) – a management training programme with a focus on starting and improving small businesses. Successful trainees devised a viable business plan and were eligible for government support measures for micro and small enterprises. The analysis of value chains was also introduced to support the identification of feasible economic activities;
- Demand-driven skills upgrading, which included national labour skills training certification courses and Community-based Training. This improved employability in the changed context;
- Enterprise-based training that offered basic technical training to farmers, providing them with a greater opportunity of finding employment.



"We feel like we were helped; not just helped during the class, but that the support is ongoing,"

Mr Liu-Project beneficiary

RESULTS

The project successfully helped many affected people get back on their feet.

- In total, 6,000 beneficiaries – including 5,400 farmers who had been relocated due to loss of farmland, and 600 disabled persons or family members of disabled persons – were offered a wide demand-driven selection of training courses. For example, these courses included culinary skills, SIYB, embroidery, construction, basic computer training, pig breeding, rabbit breeding, welding, and walnut and bamboo cultivation. Women accounted for 69 per cent of the beneficiaries.
- Over 86 per cent of those who participated were able to pass the relevant occupational skills exam and received qualification certificates.
- Over 65 per cent of participants either found a job or started their own business within two months of completing the training.
- In 2010, the difference in gross income per capita between households with at least one member trained and those with no members

trained was 2,927 Yuan (approximately USD 430, or a 59 per cent increase).

- 90 per cent of farmers believed they could benefit further from more advanced training in the future.
- Training was delivered cost-effectively, with an average investment of 741 Yuan (approximately US\$109) per participant.

With long-term sustainability and quality in mind, the ILO conducted evaluations of six training institutions and provided specific suggestions for each institute to help improve their capacity to conduct high quality training. Suggestions for improvements were made under a range of areas – from better understanding the priorities for livelihood recovery in Mianzhu and their capacity to recruit trainees, to the capacity of meeting trainees' needs and maintaining follow-up service. The ILO also conducted a SIYB Training of Trainers programme for the six institutions, which now conduct SIYB training to a high and certified standard.



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BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The ILO has technical expertise in the design and provision of training and in-depth knowledge of both global and national labour markets. This guarantees that a high percentage of trainees either find a job or start their own business following training.

The working method is cost-effective and sustainable: the intervention includes: improving the capacity of training centres through targeted suggestions; dispensing training for trainers; providing access to technical tools such as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), Community-based Training and Value Chain Analysis; and establishing training needs assessment modules adapted to post-disaster settings.

The ILO was identified as a partner by the RCSC and the IFRC because of its technical expertise in disaster and conflict response, and in employment and livelihoods recovery in crisis aftermaths. The ILO provides capacity development in disaster response, and in disaster risk reduction for constituents and different institutions.