



Evaluation Summary



International
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The Way Forward after the Revolution - Decent Work for Women in Egypt and Tunisia - Midterm evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Egypt and Tunisia

Midterm Evaluation: February 2015

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Decent Work for Women

Evaluation Management: ILO Country Office in Cairo

Evaluation Team: Joseph Schechla

Project Start: 1 June 2012

Project End: 31 July 2016

Project Code: RAF/12/01/FIN

Donor: US \$3,109,453

Keywords: Women's empowerment, gender awareness, women's employment, labour market institutions, capacity building, cooperatives, maternity benefit, informal sector

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose

1. Develop awareness of gender issues as related to FPRW,
2. Increase participation of women in the representational and decision-making structures of the social partner institutions,
3. Improve women's skills toward employment and leadership,
4. Build labour market institutional capacity.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

- Assess the project as a whole, including issues of initial project design, implementation, lessons learned, replicability.
- Assess the extent to which its stated objectives and outputs have been achieved and estimate the progress made against these planned results (in %).
- Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the project implementation framework and management arrangements.
- Provide recommendations on the remaining period of implementation of the project, including revisions of scope, timeframes, implementation modalities, to ensure the achievement of objectives and their sustainability.
- Document lessons learned and good practices in order to maximize the experience gained.

SCOPE

This evaluation considers the project intervention as part of the ILO's wider programme in Egypt, Tunisia and North Africa. This evaluator has covered both fields of project operation (Tunisia and Egypt) through a series of site visits to project partners, interviews with stakeholders and a documentary review, including drafts of available studies and plans that shed light on the project's forward direction and progress.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation questions have been answered through three essential methods: (1) desk review of project-related documents; (2) individual interviews

and collective (focus group) sessions with project staff, partners and stake holders and (3) site visits (verification missions).

The evaluation has comprised the following key steps:

Step 1: Desk review of all relevant documents and related literature in the field of the project. This will include the project document, work plans, interim reports, documented deliverables and studies (at their respective stages) commissioned under the project.

Step 2: Preparation of an inception report based on the desk review and the terms of reference for the evaluation. The evaluation manager has cleared the inception report.

Step 3: On-site interviews with stakeholders, meetings with project staff and other ILO personnel, focus group discussions with project staff, project beneficiaries, social partners, subcontractors, the project advisory committee and other key stakeholders. Because of the particular timing and circumstances of this evaluation, the evaluator will travel to take advantage of his presence in Tunis in early December (with travel expenses covered outside the budget of this evaluation) to meet with ILO staff and project partners over four days. The timing of this on-site verification mission will be based on partial desk review, since not all project documents have been provided by this early opportunity. Because it has not been possible to arrange meetings at this short notice with all concerned parties (i.e., the donor, at least one external researcher, and the collective meeting of the project advisory committee), the evaluator will return to Tunis in mid-January 2015 under this evaluation plan for a two-day visit, in coordination with ILO-Tunisia.

Step 3. A debriefing meeting to present and discuss the preliminary findings and conclusions of the evaluation with ILO Cairo management. That has addressed any factual errors, clarified ambiguities or issues of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, and any gaps with respect to the present TORs.

Step 4: The evaluator has submitted the first draft of the evaluation report to the evaluation manager, who will share this with key stakeholders, ILO management and the project team. Comments received will be provided to the evaluator for consideration, no later than 2 weeks after reception of the first draft.

Step 5: The evaluator will present clearly (with a comments log and/or using track-changes mode on MS Word) how the comments have been addressed in the revised draft. The final draft will be approved by the evaluation manager in consultation with ILO Eval at Regional Office.

PROJECT RELEVANCE

The relevance of the project's results framework to the development priorities of the governments of Egypt and Tunisia, and ILO, is high. The outcomes and products generally show great potential for their integration within the committed national efforts to achieve decent work for women.

The project innovations of engaging CSO partners (Egypt) and quantifying the implementation of labour rights (Tunisia) were relevant and thought provoking. The relevance of partnerships extended also to cooperation with local authorities in Egypt, which partners assisted in land access for cooperatives.

Alignment of "The Way Forward" with ILO's global, North Africa and country-specific strategies is nearly seamless. However, the project objectives appear promising, but ambitious, given the pace and political context tempering project reform of institutionally bound policies and structures.

ILO's tripartism and norm-based comparative advantages are highly relevant and suited to this project and its objectives. The ILO-norm focus is especially timely as related to project inputs in Tunisia, although less obviously in the Egypt dimension of the project. The norms most relevant to Tunisia are ILO Convention No. 183 and the fiscal details of its implementation. The most relevant normative issue in Egypt involves—but is not limited to—the freedom of association.ⁱ

PROJECT COHERENCE

On its face, “The Way Forward” appears to have weak internal coherence, due to its seemingly divergent targets and approaches in the respective countries. Internally, however, the project actions and objectives are compactly interlaced, although they operate in two distinctly different contexts.

The Tunisia aspect of the project seeks to “upstream,” immediately policy-relevant objectives that include improving the roles of women within the statutory regulation and institutional functions of all tripartite partners. At the level of the Government of Tunisia (GoT), the project seeks to enable legislative reform that includes, but is not limited to, the state’s ratification of C183 and compliance with its increased maternity-leave provisions for women. Within the employers’ institutions, “The Way Forward” creates the conditions, including the indispensable knowledge base, for integrating women in the representative and decision-making bodies of UTICA and CNFCE. The UGTT is the subject of knowledge creation and capacity building to enable the adoption of a proposed quota system to ensure greater women’s participation in the structures serving workers’ interests.

This internal coherence, alignment and balance among project interventions in Tunisia are reflective also of the improved context for social dialogue. That indicates coherence also with the conditions both created and enhanced by the Social Contract (2013) that the ILO’s Social Dialogue project has supported. While “The Way Forward” in Tunisia involves important links to capacity building and skill building at the level of women workers by coordinating efforts with more downstream ILO projects in the country, the bulk of its efforts rest at the level of policy reform in the relevant government and social partner institutions.

It is difficult to draw clear lines between the Tunisia side of the project and all of the interventions in Egypt. The upstream results indicators in the Egypt operation remain, in large part, theoretical. This is due to two principal factors: (1) The socio-political environment differs

from that in Tunisia in that the social dialogue is relatively less developed and (2) the greater emphasis targets women’s agricultural and handicraft cooperatives in remote governorates, where the benefits are less felt in the capital.

Rather, in the case of Egypt, the project is giving special attention to applying ILO assets that develop models of intervention that build skills and capacities in ways that eventually can be up-scaled and, thus, help address the implementation challenges at the policy level.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

In the first year of implementing, the project underwent a consolidation, focusing on 11 key indicators at objective level. The PAC in Tunisia developed its oversight of project effectiveness. However, in Egypt, no PAC has been formed to guide “The Way Forward.” Nonetheless, in both countries, the project has been effective in building knowledge upon which to base upstreaming decisions, where there is political will to do so.

Project management innovated an effective choice, in Egypt, partnering with local NGOs and CBOs to deliver the downstream benefits of the project. Participants uniformly affirming the effectiveness of training and capacity building activities. Their ability to coordinate with local authorities and, later, the central Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, in Egypt, has been instrumental in accessing land for the agricultural cooperatives. The effectiveness of training in soft-skills for job-placement candidates cannot be evaluated with available data. However, life skills and technical capacity building and management of cooperatives are knowledge transfers that are effective by ILO staff and implementation partners with ILO tools.

Constituent trust of ILO personnel and knowledge products emerges as a positive factor in project effectiveness. This presents itself in project effectiveness at convening partners, including those who do not otherwise work together. Related to this, ILO’s nonpartisanship in presenting the gamut

Recommendations

A. LONGER PROGRAMMING PERIOD

Of high importance is the extension of the short implementation period of “The Way Forward.” The upstream (policy- and legislative-level) outcomes eventually pursued are strategic and respond to opportunities in their environment. However, these long-term objectives are contrasted with the view, and particularly in the light of this mid-term evaluation, that all parties (donor, ILO, PAC) need a more-realistic project timeframe to realise them. Considering the good progress that the project has made, the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes require a combination of (1) current project extension, (2) add-on or supplemental funding to ensure ambitious outcomes, including the needed public information and promotional efforts to secure ratification and implementation of C183 in Tunisia.

B. MORE PUBLIC INFORMATION

Related to the challenges facing the ambitious objectives of improving the legal and policy framework and, in particular, implementing entitlements enshrined in an ILO Convention not yet ratified and reforming the statutes of employers and workers organisations, the public information aspect is vital. Both ILO and tripartite partners need to transmit messages through more media channels to (1) celebrate the tripartite cooperation achieved (e.g., in Tunisia); (2) demonstrate cross-sector solidarity by publicly acknowledging and appreciating the respective and parallel processes among workers, employers and—at least in Tunisia—central government institutions to enhance the participation and engagement of women in their decision making bodies and promote women’s decent work, in general.

C. EVALUATE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Quality assurance for training programs could improve with an integrated training database.

ILO may benefit from the creation and maintenance of such a tool for North Africa (and Middle East) that would aid the tracking and evaluation of

outcomes from this major investment of ILO programming. It also could help avoid duplication and assist in matching content to participants’ needs and backgrounds.

D. REFINE HUMAN RIGHTS METHODOLOGY AND MESSAGING

The quantification of rights is a rich field and offers practicality to human rights implementation. The project’s actuary study for extending and standardizing the maternity benefit in Tunisia promises to set many economy-minded sceptics at ease. However, relegating human rights and non-discrimination to a subject of negotiation over a financial sum may eviscerate the meaning of the “right.” In order to avoid this conceptual misunderstanding for the provision of maternity benefits or any other rights may require both ILO and partners to provide a more-principled explanatory message to accompany presentation of the study’s progress and findings.

E. NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY DATA

The specific objective 3.5: “five innovative women’s enterprises supported” and immediate objective 4: “capacity building for the national agencies for statistics and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., employment observatories)” will need data to indicate the degree of their fulfilment by the end of the project. While these objectives are not as elusive as the grand policy and legislative advancements sought in specific objective 2.2: “Improved legal environment for women who participate in labour markets,” they do form a challenge going into the final months of the project.

F. CONSIDER FURTHER PROGRAMMING PROSPECTS

ILO in the subregion and at headquarters should consider how future programming prospects could pursue the real and intended outcomes of “The Way Forward” and replicate them in line with the current ILO Strategy for North Africa.

ⁱ ILO Convention No. 87 obliges the state party to enable independent labour unions.