



Evaluation Summary



International
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Creation of a regional action plan for economic development and employment creation for youth in Tunisia - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Country: Tunisia

Final Evaluation: August 2015

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical area: Youth Employment, Local Economic Development

Administrative Office: EAT/BP Cairo-

Evaluation Manager: Mr. Joseph Momo

Evaluation Consultant: Emile André Damiba

Project Start : 01/01/2013

Project End: 30/06/2015 (including extension)

Project Code: TUN/12/03/NET

Donor & Budget: Netherlands (1.080.777 US\$)

Keywords: Local Economic Development and Youth Employment Program

Background & Context

Development Objective

The project aims to generate better opportunities for young women and men to find decent employment through participatory strategies for local economic development in three governorates. The approach to business creation, based on cooperatives and solidarity should help unlock some specific barriers to success in the fight against unemployment.

The immediate objective 1: "A development strategy for each of the selected priority areas of the Regional Action Plan is implemented in each governorate."

The immediate objective 2: "Public, private and civil institutions are strengthened for the accelerated implementation of action plans to develop the priority areas in each governorate (Gafsa, Kef, Ariana)."

The immediate objective 3: "Key stakeholders at the national level support and promote a framework for decentralized promotion of youth employment

strategies (women and men) and local economic development."

Beneficiaries and target groups

Direct beneficiaries: the direct beneficiaries are young women and young men in the three governorates, specifically young women and men graduates, under-qualified, unemployed and workers in the informal sector.

Indirect beneficiaries: Indirect beneficiaries are members of the regional steering committees, members of their subcommittees, the coordinators of the process of local economic development, including facilitators. It also includes the administration of the governorates or targeted municipalities (governors, mayors, rural councils, etc.), as well as service providers for the orientation and training of young people.

Present Situation of the Project

The environment and the characteristics of the context of Tunisia are not quite conducive to traditional entrepreneurship development. Most young people do not have the skills to open a business mainly because the education system does not provide them the necessary knowledge in this direction. In addition, creating a business is considered risky because of difficulties of access to credit and limited repayment ability. Also, to reduce unemployment and limit the phenomenon of youth migration, it is appropriate to take action to address the challenges of getting a job.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation is about the following:

- Give an independent assessment of changes and / or positive impacts of the project on beneficiaries and other stakeholders given the planned objectives and outcomes, and based on the performance indicators;

- Give an independent assessment of (i) the strategies chosen for the implementation arrangements, (ii) the established partnerships, (iii) the constraints and opportunities;
- Highlight lessons learned and provide recommendations for a possible extension of the project at regional and national level or any other similar initiative in Tunisia.

The independent assessment covers all the planned results in the project, including the three governorates / target areas namely El Kef, Gafsa and Ariana.

Methodology of evaluation

Regarding methodology, the evaluator used a highly participatory approach throughout the process. He realized the carried out the assignment in close collaboration with key stakeholders and partners at various levels (national, regional and local). The evaluator used two main sources to collect information and they are: document review and interviews with partners and stakeholders.

Main Findings & Conclusions

RELEVANCY

To Government policies and strategies

A dialogue has already been going in Tunisia between government, social partners and civil society on the role of the social economy as a means to achieve sustainable economic development. In this regard, the project “Développement économique et plan d’action régional en Tunisie, (DEPART) “ the Economic Development project and regional action plan in Tunisia is very relevant, since it is based on a participatory approach strategy to create regional economic dynamics by enhancing local resources as a direct means of creating jobs for young people. The project has a direct link with the "Roadmap for Recovery and decent work in Tunisia," («Feuille de route pour la relance et le travail décent en Tunisie»), and more specifically the results of the country program "TUN103" developed in consultation with the ILO. Youth employment and social dialogue are pivotal elements in national priorities.

To the beneficiaries and social partners

The approach of the project “Développement économique et plan d’action régional en Tunisie” (DEPART), is to identify local and regional priorities by the representatives of various categories of the community, in addition to carrying out opportunities studies. Such an approach can only ensure the relevance of project interventions. Employment problems in the regions can be well solved through the consolidation of efforts of all representatives and local stakeholders around a value chain.

To the ILO

The mandate of the ILO is focused on sustainable development and poverty reduction by creating decent work opportunities for all. The International Labor Office supports the government in the development of decent work program in Tunisia. Moreover, being a tripartite organization, The Organization works with government and non-governmental organizations, as well as with representatives of employers and workers who are all key players in the implementation of the project DEPART, “Développement économique et plan d’action régional en Tunisie”.

RESULTS AND EFFECTIVENESS

At its start, the project did face challenges that directly affected its performance in terms of achievements. Examples of challenges:

- the national political instability and the precarious security situation in the targeted regions;
- the limited project duration compared to the volumes of activities;
- the six-month delay in the recruitment of national project coordinator.

Results at national level

- Development of a mapping of active stakeholders and regional employment policies: the study is available;
- Organization of a national workshop on regional employment policies: the project supported the Ministry of Employment for the design partnership program tools with the Regions for the promotion of employment; Organization of training on the Social and Solidarity Economy in favor of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA) and its regional agencies; Organization of a study tour to learn about the Turkish experience of social economy; Organization of a tripartite conference on social economy on May 19, 2015, to prepare a national plan for the development of the Social and Solidarity Economy in Tunisia.

Immediate Objective 1

- 3 regional committees were set up
- 3 priority areas for the action plan were selected and fully implemented
- The regional steering committees are established and are composed of the various regional stakeholders.

Immediate objective 2

- 30 training sessions
- capacity building provided to 24 local support structures
- 11 business were created
- 101 direct jobs created
- 16 studies were conducted (project feasibility study, analysis and value chain development, study

on the promotion of local products, local products and assessing their employment potential)

- 3,003 days of training provided
- 450 young people who have received training / coaching to start a social enterprise and solidarity
- Business models have been developed and were being implemented

Immediate objective 3

- The organization of a national workshop on regional employment policies: the project supported the Ministry of Employment for the design partnership program tools with regions to promote employment;
- Development of a mapping of active stakeholders and regional employment policies;
- A tripartite conference on social economy: the conference was held May 19, 2015
- Achievements in Regions

Ariana Region:

- Strengthening the capacity of Regional Steering Committee through the numerous and various training workshops, as well as the realization of value chains studies and activities to promote social entrepreneurship;
- 31 participants were trained in coaching young for the identification and development of project ideas and the development of business model.
- 32 community workers have been trained.

Gafsa region

- Strengthening of the Regional Steering Committee capacities through training, the promotion of agricultural cooperatives and artisanal products and the exploratory studies for the promotion of green jobs carried out.
- 25 people were trained in coaching youth
- 22 people took part in training on supporting businesses
- 15 people have been trained on the use of electronic sales platform

The outcomes of the project

- By supporting decentralized dialogue, self-assessment, ownership and active participation of local stakeholders, the project was successful in creating a real local dynamics to meet the needs at the local level and implement a model of job creation fully decentralized. It also added a crucial and innovative value in the development of an orientation course and training in close synergy with the regional economic development. The implementation of the project has the following impact:
- the promotion of social economy: the creation of: 11 projects of social economy resulting in the creation of one hundred (100) direct jobs;
- the development of value chains and the development of local products with high

employment potential;

- strengthening the entrepreneurial skills of young people in the sectors identified in the three target regions;
- the development of regional attractiveness that aimed at valuing wealth and economic, natural and cultural potential.

EFFICIENCY

The project's supervisory and management bodies

The project is implemented by the International Labor Office (ILO) in direct collaboration with the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training. The Employment sector being transversal, alongside the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, other technical ministries contribute to the achievement of objectives and strategies related to youth employment in Tunisia.

Role of the International Labor Office

The International Labor Office was assigned full responsibility for the project implementation and hence to provide technical support for capacities building of national partners in order to improve the environment of enterprises creation and to promote youth entrepreneurship.

Role of social partners: The social partners were closely involved in the implementation of the project, including through the various committees set up both nationally and in the regions. They have contributed to the design and monitoring of action plans.

The management and executive bodies: The project document had planned the recruitment of an international expert as Senior Technical Advisor of the project for the first year only. This international expert was not recruited as expected for operating cost reduction reasons.

The Steering Committees: The implementation of the project activities was carried out within a decentralized approach combined with a participatory approach to ensure the active involvement of local stakeholders in the project. As such, it was set up in the three governorates local technical committee composed of government officials and local administration, civil society and social partners.

Monitoring and evaluation:

The project monitoring mechanism was based on the standard of the International Labor Office, that is to say a "results-based framework" to ensure that the objectives and results are measurable and that the outputs can be achieved. An annual progress report was prepared for the donor, the ILO and the Government.

SUSTAINABILITY ASPECTS

i) Sustainability of the results:

- Training and other activities of capacity

building of beneficiaries will have a long term effect

- Tools and materials developed will continue to serve after completion of the project, because they can be used in similar cases in the future.
- The results of the evaluation of the project "Développement Economique et Plan d'Action Régional en Tunisie" (DEPART), with the participation of national and local stakeholders, will be integrated into the development of a political and national program
- However the question arises about the viability of associations and cooperatives created mainly because, firstly, there was not any plan for a longer coaching of the business created and secondly, the approach was innovative with respect to the local culture.

ii) .Sustainability with regard to the capacity of key national stakeholders to take over when the project is terminated: there is a high probability that the stakeholders involved in the project (as a active participants in the project implementation or as beneficiaries, or both) are prepared and equipped for the post-project, however, there may be a need for a continuous capacity building.

CONCLUSION

The project, despite a slow start due to the difficult national context (political instability at the national level and precarious security situation in the targeted regions) not only has been proven to be very relevant, but has produced significant results at national and regional level. The project also added a crucial and innovative value in the development of a job orientation and training in close synergy with the regional economic development. The beneficiaries are satisfied and enthusiastic and strongly wish the project to continue for another few years.

Recommendations

To the government

1. Develop a legislative framework to support and facilitate the development of the social and solidarity economy (institutionalize social economy), create a common framework for the harmonization / convergence of concepts.
2. Take all necessary measures to capitalize on the results of the tripartite meeting of 19 May 2015 on the social and solidarity economy, especially by implementing the resolutions adopted by the workshop.
3. Institutionalize steering committees at both national and regional levels. In fact those entities can take on other socio-economic development missions, including the consolidation of decentralization.

4. Ensure greater involvement of the public sector, including through branches and specialized departments such as the Agency for Promotion of Industry and Innovation, the Business Center, the Office of Crafts.

5. For a more dynamic, integrated and structured partnership, which takes into account the diverse interests at national level, towards a Public-Private-Association partnership.

6. Mobilize resources not only to facilitate the capitalize the project results, but also to extend the project to other areas, while giving priority to the most disadvantaged areas and taking gender into account.

To the International Labor Office

Because of the ILO's experience in the country and its comparative advantages, it is recommended to:

7. Continue and further strengthen its leadership in the promotion of decent work, including: (i) making strategic alliances and partnerships to get youth employment at the center of development programs at national and regional level; (ii) continuing and intensifying advocacy for the social economy; (iii) assisting the Government in mobilizing resources for similar interventions.

8. Continue and strengthen support to economic developers, to created cooperatives and to supporting structures, and also help in the marketing of the products for at least 6 months. Such support would contribute to the qualitative development and profitability of investments. The viability of the business created depends on such support.

9. Promote communication, knowledge sharing and visibility of activities between all stakeholders at both regional and national level.

10. Ensure specific training in results-based management at central and regional levels for all the stakeholders involved in the operational implementation, and the project management.

11. Plan the duration of such project for at least three years, which is an optimum time necessary to achieve the objectives as assigned, that is to say, achieving the desired changes in people's mentality and proving continued support to enterprises already set up until some degree of minimum development.

To Social partners and regional stakeholders

12. In order for the project "Développement Economique et Plan d'Action Régional en Tunisie" (DEPART), (and other similar projects in the future) might be very successful and be extended into the rest of the country, the developers of projects of social and solidarity economy, as well as members of local and national committees and other social partners, are called upon to conduct an awareness campaign and testimony in order to convince communities. Doing so will contribute to changing attitudes.