



International  
Labour  
Organization

# ► Emergency Response Plan progress update

How the ILO's employment-intensive investment approach is supporting recovery and resilience in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Photo: © Mohammed Abu Shabaan/ILO

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## ► Overview

The ILO is using an **employment-intensive investment programme (EIIP) approach** as a cornerstone of its response to the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – providing immediate relief in Gaza with an **emergency employment pilot**, and working to mainstream the approach across recovery schemes, including a **large-scale Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Investment Programme** that builds local capacities for recovery and resilience in Gaza and the West Bank. This factsheet outlines how the EIIP approach, grounded on decent work principles, is being implemented to achieve sustainable results.

Instead of providing cash for tasks that do not contribute to broader recovery, or setting up interventions parallel to national institutions, the ILO's EIIP approach ensures that employment-related relief and recovery efforts are well-targeted, optimized and will last. In the short-term, it provides paid employment for Palestinians able and willing to work. The income they earn, and services they provide, create multiplier effects that benefit communities and the local economy. In the long-term, recovery efforts become more sustainable by combining local participation with the utilization of locally available skills, technology, materials, methods, and decent work principles. For upcoming interventions, the ILO's Emergency Response Plan's Recovery Programme will support national systems and strengthen the role of tripartite constituents in implementing the EIIP approach with national ownership. To this end, the ILO will strengthen the operational and organizational capacity of Palestinian entities to ensure the effective execution and streamlining of recovery and resilience interventions as a public programme.



### Our approach

The ILO has led post-disaster labour market recovery programmes in a range of crisis situations, including in the Arab States region, using its unique **employment-intensive investment programme approach**. This approach links infrastructure development with decent work, poverty reduction, and local economic and social development.

The EIIP approach addresses the immediate need for employment creation while laying the foundation for longer-term recovery and reconstruction. It does so by strengthening the capacity of national partners and mechanisms to transition from a short-term cash-for-work approach towards an approach centred on creating more sustainable and decent job opportunities.

The EIIP approach is aligned with the principles of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN), the ILO's Decent Work Programme (DWP) 2023–25 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It is a core part of the **ILO Emergency Response Plan's (ERP) Recovery Programme**.

Photo: © ILO

## ► Spotlight: Emergency employment pilot in Gaza

The ILO is implementing a **pilot emergency employment programme in Gaza** in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and in collaboration with the Palestinian Employment Fund, the Gaza Cultural and Development Group, the Joint Services Council for Solid Waste Management, the Ministry of Labour and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. This pilot is **one part of the ILO's project** to stabilize livelihoods and restore essential services in Gaza using the EIIP approach, while laying the groundwork for early recovery efforts which will extend across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

### What we are doing

The emergency employment pilot has generated **short-term employment for 150 men and women in Gaza**, hiring them to provide vital **health and solid waste management services**. These are sectors devastated by the crisis, and identified as priorities through extensive consultations with local partners. In this way, the pilot is contributing to much needed income for vulnerable households, addressing critical economic needs, and enabling the delivery and restoration of essential services. The pilot is also strengthening national partners and mechanisms to shift from a cash-for-work approach – where the focus is on the infrastructure created, rather than on maximizing the number of jobs generated or ensuring the quality of these jobs – to a more sustainable employment intensive-investment approach.

The pilot **demonstrates the added value of the ILO's EIIP approach**, showing how employment-intensive infrastructure programmes can be implemented in emergency contexts, responding to the needs of communities by providing vital income, services, and laying the foundations for a resilient recovery.

### Key activities and results

Midway through its duration, the pilot has already achieved significant success by using flexible methodologies and innovative solutions to overcome challenges in an exceptionally volatile environment. In addition to employment creation, the pilot is improving working conditions for workers in both targeted sectors in a range of ways.



Photo: © Mohammed Abu Shabaan/ILO

### Key results in numbers

► **150** 

men and women employed  
(62 workers in the health sector and  
88 workers in solid waste management)

► **20%** 

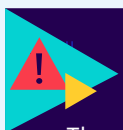
of these workers are women, reflecting  
the ILO's and UNDP's commitment to  
inclusivity and gender balance

► **13,500** 

working days created

For example:

- ▶ The ILO **reviewed and adjusted employment contracts** to comply with the Palestinian Labour Law. This helps ensure that workers receive fair compensation and have decent working conditions, even in incredibly challenging circumstances.
- ▶ A **code of conduct for emergency employment projects** has been developed, outlining workers' and employers' duties and responsibilities. This fosters a clear understanding of workers' rights, provides guidance on appropriate behaviour, and ensures that, even in the current crisis, workers are treated with dignity and fairness.
- ▶ Workers participated in online and face-to-face **orientation sessions on their rights and responsibilities**. This reflects the ILO's commitment to ensuring that workers are well-informed about workplace standards, their roles and rights, and helps set clear expectations.
- ▶ Workers benefitted from **training sessions on occupational safety and health (OSH)**, specially tailored to the health and solid waste management sectors, respectively.
- ▶ The ILO, in collaboration with local partners, **distributed personal protective equipment (PPE)** to workers despite logistical challenges, underscoring our dedication to workers' safety.
- ▶ **Brainstorming sessions** with workers have yielded innovative ideas for improving solid waste management through sorting and recycling, thereby contributing to environmental sustainability.
- ▶ The ILO is conducting a **comprehensive wage analysis** within Gaza's humanitarian sector to ensure fair compensation. This will offer valuable insights for setting equitable wage standards in future employment programmes.



### Why we are doing it: Crisis context

The war in Gaza has caused devastation on an unimaginable scale. Infrastructure has been decimated, with housing bearing the brunt of the damage, alongside large-scale damage to industrial and service sector buildings, agricultural land, and health, education, energy and water systems. As more and more people are confined in tiny devastated areas, without sufficient supplies or professionals able to provide services, critical systems are breaking down – from healthcare to solid waste management. This leaves millions of women, men, boys and girls in an increasingly hazardous environment. In the West Bank, violence has intensified with growing restrictions on movement both between and within Palestinian governorates since 7 October 2023. In late August 2024, Israeli forces launched a large-scale operation in the northern West Bank, leading to significant casualties, the widespread destruction of infrastructure and exacerbating humanitarian needs. Between 7 October 2023 and 2 September 2024, Israeli authorities destroyed, demolished, confiscated, or forced the demolition of 1,478 Palestinian structures across the West Bank, displacing more than 3,477 Palestinians, including about 1,485 children.<sup>i</sup> These challenges add a further layer of complexity to the colossal job and income losses across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

▶ **\$18.5 billion**

in direct damage caused to Gaza's built infrastructure by the end of January 2024<sup>ii</sup>

▶ **0.5 million**

jobs have been lost across the Occupied Palestinian Territory<sup>iii</sup>

▶ **1.9 million**

people in Gaza have been displaced as of September 2024<sup>iv</sup>

▶ **79.1%**

unemployment rate in Gaza, and an average rate of 50.8% across the Occupied Palestinian Territory<sup>v</sup>

<sup>ii</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #213: West Bank", 4 September 2024.

<sup>iii</sup> World Bank, EU and UN, *Gaza Strip Interim Damage Assessment*, 29 March 2024.

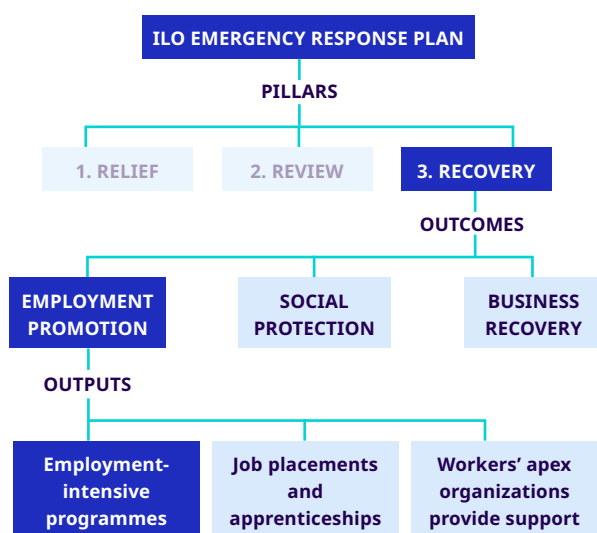
<sup>iv</sup> ILO and PCBS, *Impact of the War in Gaza on the Labour Market and Livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No.3*, ILO Brief, March 2024.

<sup>v</sup> UN estimates cited by OCHA, "Occupied Palestinian Territory", 3 September 2024.

<sup>v</sup> ILO and PCBS, *Impact of the War in Gaza on the Labour Market and Livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 4*, ILO Brief, June 2024.

## ► The bigger picture and what happens next

The emergency employment pilot is a prototype that the ILO intends to replicate, as it offers valuable insights and a strong foundation for scaling up interventions in Gaza. This will be part and parcel of the ILO's work to **mainstream the employment-intensive investment approach in all other emergency employment programmes implemented** by the UN and other development partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This work includes developing a **large-scale Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Investment Programme**, initially targeting around 1,250 workers for three months (700 from Gaza and 550 from the West Bank, both skilled and unskilled, and both women and men), generating 112,500 working days. In addition to providing incomes in line with the national minimum wage and the minimum survival basket, this programme will aim to restore the livelihoods and dignity, enable the transfer of knowledge and skills, and promote economic and social stability. Crucially, the ILO's work will also **focus on developing national mechanisms and capacities** for a large-scale employment project as part of the ILO **Emergency Response Plan's Recovery Programme**, specifically Outcome 1 (Employment Promotion).



### Key ongoing and planned activities

- Strengthening the capacity of national institutions and mainstreaming the ILO's employment-intensive investment approach are crucial for an effective crisis response. This is why the ILO is actively **working to establish a resource pool and develop standardized procedures**.



Photo: © Mohammed Abu Shabaan/ILO

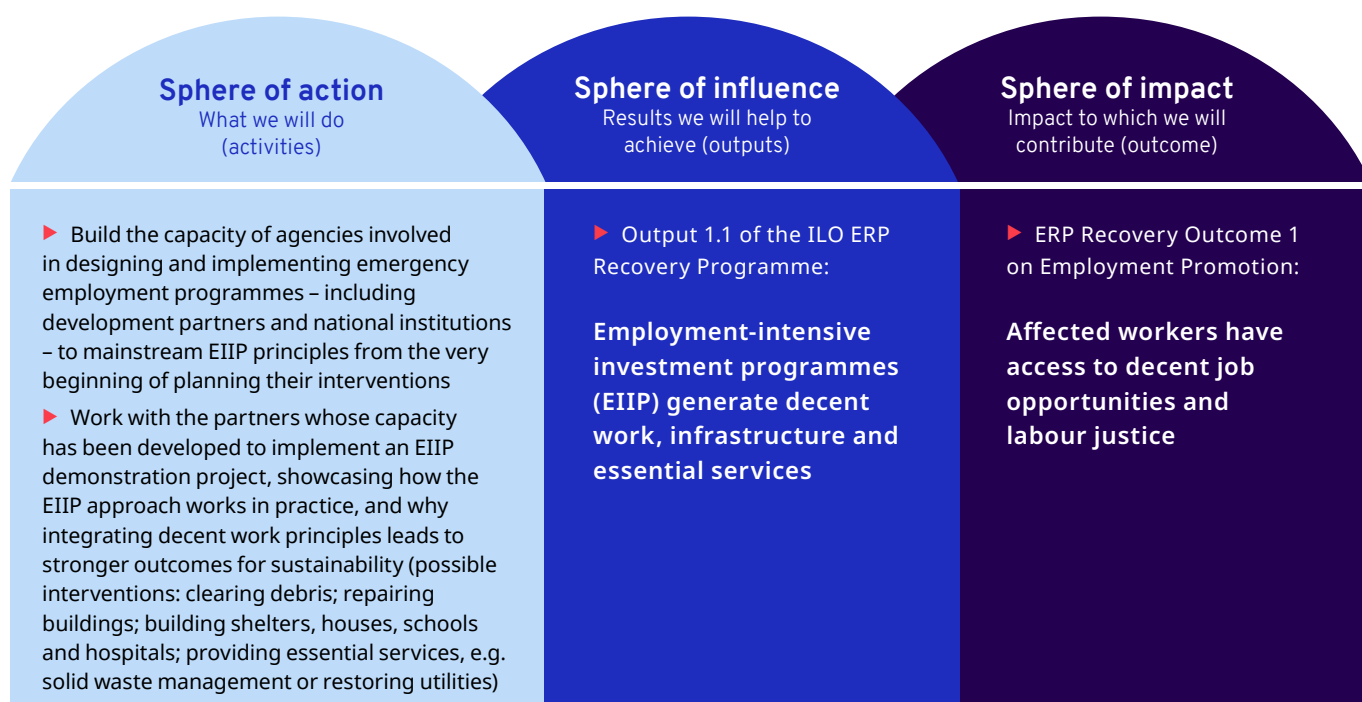
- Leveraging its extensive experience of the EIIP in diverse post-crisis contexts, the ILO is **introducing the EIIP approach to key stakeholders** through a series of introductory meetings.
- The ILO aims to **build the capacity of stakeholders involved in recovery efforts** by providing them the necessary expertise to design and implement emergency employment programmes that integrate the EIIP approach. This capacity building will enhance their skills in implementing, monitoring and reporting on EIIP projects to ensure effective oversight and evaluation. Specifically, the ILO will strengthen the operational and organizational capacity of a key national institution, the Palestinian Employment Fund (PEF), to effectively lead and implement recovery interventions geared towards employment promotion.
- Designing and supporting a **public employment programme (PEP)** is also envisaged in the medium to longer-term for a nationally streamlined employment guarantee scheme, to be managed and run by the Palestinian Employment Fund, with the ILO's technical support and in partnership with employers' and workers' representatives. With its tripartite representation, the PEF will coordinate and enhance the capacity of local community organizations.

Additionally, the PEF will offer employment services, including project management, job matching, and referrals, through an updated platform designed for these purposes.

- ▶ The ILO plans to support a **multi-donor coordination mechanism** for employment promotion initiatives in the West Bank and Gaza. Through this committee, the ILO will advocate for setting benchmarks for proper working conditions, wage values, and implementing social and environmental safeguards necessary for effective cash-for-work (C4W) initiatives implemented by various agencies. The goal is to ensure that these initiatives have meaningful, long-term impacts that contribute to broader recovery efforts. This approach will lay the foundation for different agencies to align their C4W and emergency employment programmes with international labour standards, including appropriate wage setting, safe and healthy working environments, and the integration of skills and employability enhancement as a comprehensive package during the early recovery and reconstruction process.



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