

Creating Decent Work Opportunities for Somali Internally Displaced People (IDPs), Returnees and Host Communities through Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Improvement



International
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Introduction

Since 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO), with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) through the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) development bank is implementing the "Creating Decent Work Opportunities for Somali Internally Displaced People (IDPs), Returnees and Host Communities through Employment- intensive Infrastructure Improvement" in Baidoa, Somalia. The project has created decent employment opportunities and improved access to social and economic amenities for internally displaced persons and host communities in Baidoa, Somalia. The ILOs Employment Intensive Investment (EII) and local resource-based approaches have been adopted for the rehabilitation of existing and construction of new infrastructure. Improved capacities in public institutions (Ministry of Public Works, Baidoa District Authority) and private sector (local contractors) have ensured not only maintenance of the infrastructure but also institutionalization of the approaches and systems established. In addition, skills upgrading for women and youth has enhanced opportunities for employment and access to the labour market. This project aligns with ILO's broader mission of promoting decent work and sustainable economic growth by focusing on employment development in Somalia.

Project Impact and Achievement

Infrastructure Development and Connectivity

The project has successfully constructed and rehabilitated over **14.5 km of roads**. The improved roads connect displacement camps to urban centers, allowing for improved mobility and access to essential services.

According to Abdullahi Ali Watiin, Mayor of Baidoa, "This project has played a major role in restoring hope for both displaced people and the local residents. The roads have not only improved transportation but have also made Baidoa more accessible and secure."



In addition, The Minister of Public Works, Reconstruction, and Housing Daahir Abdi Abdullahi, noted the project's impact in terms of preventing perennial floods and increasing connectivity. "The newly constructed roads have also addressed flooding issues that frequently affected Baidoa. The roads are reliable and durable, preventing waterlogging thus enhancing mobility within the city"

For the IDPs, returnees and host communities the infrastructure rehabilitated/developed has:

- Improved access to social services such as healthcare and education
- Enhanced security and connectivity, making travel safer and more efficient.
- Provided better economic opportunities, as IDPs and host community members can now access market and jobs.

Local Economic Development

The enhanced road network has sparked a surge in business activity, benefiting local entrepreneurs through a boost in customer traffic and improved supply chain efficiency.



Residents have experienced significant improvements in mobility. Ali Abdi Isaaq, a Bajaj (auto-rickshaw) driver, shared, "Previously, we struggled with dust, potholes, and challenging roads. Now, my trips have increased, making my work much easier and more profitable."

Hawo Luul Adan Abshir, a small business owner, highlighted the transformation: "Before the road construction, transportation was a major problem, and business was slow. Now, my shop is thriving, and I see new businesses opening up along the newly constructed roads."



Access to employment opportunities for IDPs & Host Communities

A key impact of the project is the creation of job opportunities for IDPs and host communities. Displacement and conflict have severely restricted access to employment and livelihoods, posing a significant challenge to these communities in meeting their basic needs. The project has created direct and indirect job opportunities for an estimated 5000 beneficiaries comprising of IDPs, returnees and host communities.

According to Mohamed Sufi Aden, Director General of the Ministry of Labour, "This project aligns perfectly with our goal of providing employment for young people in Baidoa. Thousands of direct and indirect jobs have been created, offering stable income to families and supporting economic growth."



Women gained skills in cobblestone production and paving: 60

Abdi Abdullahi Keinan, ILO National Programme Officer, emphasized the broader impact: "So far, around 5,000 beneficiaries have received direct or indirect support, allowing them to sustain their families. Moreover, nine roads have been completed, contributing to local economic upliftment."



Strengthened capacities of public sector institutions and private sector

Beyond infrastructure development, the project has played a pivotal role in strengthening both government institutions and private sector actors in areas related to labor-based methods and the utilization of locally available resources for infrastructure service delivery. The enhanced capacities have led to:

- Improved planning, supervision, monitoring, and implementation capabilities for the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) and the Baidoa District Authority on infrastructure development and maintenance. For the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on monitoring labour standards and occupational safety and health.
- Strengthened collaboration and coordination between various government agencies and international development organizations on infrastructure development
- The implementation of environmental safeguards and social accountability measures.

The project's infrastructure development aligns with Baidoa's broader urban development plan, complementing World Bank funded projects and making the city more resilient and sustainable.

Security & Social Stability

The project has had a significant positive impact on security by improving access to previously inaccessible areas and reducing crime rates. Prior to the road construction, many areas were unstructured and difficult to monitor, which posed safety risks for residents.

With the improved road network, law enforcement and emergency response efforts have become more effective, fostering greater overall urban stability.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Despite its successes, the project has faced some challenges, including:

- COVID-19 Pandemic** - International restrictions slowed progress resulting in implementation delays
- Security risks**: Insecurity in the region sometimes limited mobility and access.
- Severe weather conditions**: Heavy rains at times halted construction. However, the project has established strategies to navigate these challenges which include strengthening local capacities, quality assurance and monitoring

Looking forward and Sustainability

To ensure the long-term success of the project, ILO has integrated **sustainability measures** into the implementation strategy. This includes:

- Institutionalisation of systems, tools and strategies allowing for replications and sustainability
- Strengthening public-private partnerships to encourage future investments.
- Promoting community ownership by involving residents in decision-making processes.

According to Abdi Abdullahi Keinan, ILO National Programme Officer, "This project is a model for inclusive development, ensuring that future initiatives build upon the foundations we've established here."

Conclusion

The project has not only improved **infrastructure and connectivity** but has also positively impacted on **economic growth, job creation, urban planning, and social stability**.

The collaborative approach between **ILO, government institutions, and the community** has been key to the project's success. With continued investment in **infrastructure and community-led development**, Baidoa is on a path toward greater economic resilience and **sustainable urban growth**.

Project brief in numbers:

Short term jobs created 2,562 16.4 % women, 70% youth	Number of workdays 83,966	Income earned from unskilled labour US1,029,258
Small scale contractors trained 14	Training in labour standards, occupational safety & health 10 contractors, all 2,562 workers	
Infrastructure constructed: 8 roads, 13. Km, pedestrian walkways- 18 km, 1 market for 100 traders:		