



International
Labour
Organization

The background features a large, stylized gear wheel divided into segments. Each segment contains a white icon: a group of people, a globe with a plant, a person, a gear with a lightning bolt, and a triangle. Below the main title, there is a large gear wheel with a map of the Arab States Region inside it, and another gear wheel with a target icon. The entire design is set against a blue background with a white diagonal stripe.

► Synthesis Review of Main Findings, Recommendations, Lessons Learned, and Good Practices from Evaluations conducted in the ILO Arab States Region

Evaluations from 2018 to 2023
DECEMBER 2024

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2025
First published 2025



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International. See: (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). The user is allowed to reuse, share (copy and redistribute), adapt (remix, transform and build upon the original work) as detailed in the licence. The user must clearly credit the ILO as the source of the material and indicate if changes were made to the original content. Use of the emblem, name and logo of the ILO is not permitted in connection with translations, adaptations or other derivative works.

Attribution – The user must indicate if changes were made and must cite the work as follows: *Synthesis review of main findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices from evaluations conducted in the ILO Arab States Region*, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2025. © ILO.

Translations – In case of a translation of this work, the following disclaimer must be added along with the attribution: This is a translation of a copyrighted work of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This translation has not been prepared, reviewed or endorsed by the ILO and should not be considered an official ILO translation. The ILO disclaims all responsibility for its content and accuracy. Responsibility rests solely with the author(s) of the translation.

Adaptations – In case of an adaptation of this work, the following disclaimer must be added along with the attribution: This is an adaptation of a copyrighted work of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This adaptation has not been prepared, reviewed or endorsed by the ILO and should not be considered an official ILO adaptation. The ILO disclaims all responsibility for its content and accuracy. Responsibility rests solely with the author(s) of the adaptation.

Third-party materials – This Creative Commons licence does not apply to non-ILO copyright materials included in this publication. If the material is attributed to a third party, the user of such material is solely responsible for clearing the rights with the rights holder and for any claims of infringement.

Any dispute arising under this licence that cannot be settled amicably shall be referred to arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). The parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of such a dispute.

For details on rights and licensing, contact: rights@ilo.org.

For details on ILO publications and digital products, visit: www.ilo.org/publns.

ISBN: 9789220423424 (web PDF)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/JYWW8818>

The designations employed in ILO publications and databases, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the ILO concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. See: www.ilo.org/disclaimer.

The opinions and views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, views or policies of the ILO.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the ILO, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

► **Synthesis Review of Main Findings, Recommendations, Lessons Learned, and Good Practices from Evaluations conducted in the ILO Arab States Region**

Evaluations from 2018 to 2023

Prepared by Chris Morris

DECEMBER 2024



Contents

Acronyms	6
Introduction and Methodology	7
Purpose of the Review	7
Methodology	8
Findings	12
Overall Summary	13
Country Profiles	30
Employment	70
Skills	80
Enterprise	88
Labour Statistics	95
Labour Migration	100
Crisis and HDP Nexus	108
International Labour Standards, Labour Law, FPRW	118
Disability Inclusion	130
Social Protection	135
Social Dialogue and Tripartism	143
Just Transition to Environmental Sustainability	150
 Annex A: Bibliography	 155
Annex B: Scoring Rubric	158
Annex C: Scoring of Research Questions	162
Annex D: Gender Equality Summary	164
Annex E: Consultancy TOR	166

Acronyms

CAS	Committee on the Application of Standards
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
EIIP	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GEDI	Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Branch
HDP	Humanitarian, Development, Peace
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LM	Labour Market
LMI	Labour Market Information
KAB	Know About Business
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEP	National Employment Policy
NORMES	International Labour Standards Department
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme & Budget
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
ROAS	Regional Office for the Arab States
RPL	Recognition of Past Learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction and Methodology

In May 2024, the ILO's Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) commissioned a synthesis review of the main findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices identified in evaluation reports undertaken in the Arab States Region between 2018 and 2024. This report presents the findings of the synthesis review.

Decentralised evaluations are a key element of the ILO's approach to accountability, learning, and knowledge generating. Evaluations provide reflections on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the ILO's work, and help the ILO to hold itself accountable for its actions to its tripartite constituents, development partners, other partners its works with, and the communities it works in. The ILO's policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (4th edition, 2022)¹ identifies the types of evaluations that are undertaken. Decentralised evaluations include thematic, project, regular budgetary supplementary account (RBSA), impact, and joint evaluations. Depending on the size and length of the intervention, these can be internal evaluations, managed by the project management structure, or independent, managed by an ILO evaluation manager who is independent of the project. The EVAL unit in Geneva also manages centralised evaluations, including high-level evaluations, independent strategy evaluations, and evaluations of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

ROAS's decentralised evaluations are supported by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, through the Regional Programme Service Unit, who in coordination with EVAL provides oversight of decentralised evaluations in the region.

The ILO's work in the Arab States is overseen by its Regional Office that was set up in 1976. The region includes Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The ILO ROAS also maintains a local presence in Qatar, Jordan and Yemen, as well as representative offices in Kuwait and Jerusalem. Arab States in North Africa are covered by the ILO's Regional Office for Africa.

►► Decentralised evaluations are a key element of the ILO's approach to accountability, learning, and knowledge generating.

► Purpose of the Review

In 2022, ROAS assessed the utilisation of evaluation reports in the region. One of the recommendations was to conduct synthesis reviews of the evaluation findings, and the use of their recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices.

This synthesis review analysed all evaluation reports commissioned since 2018 that were identifiable through i-Eval Discovery or shared with

the consultant, and compiled and synthesized the findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices derived from evaluations. The goal was to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and recommendations, and provide tailored information on the individual countries and working areas that can be used by relevant specialists, country coordinators, and other staff in planning and design of projects and programmes.

1. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/ilo-evaluation-guidance>

► Methodology

This synthesis review was conducted via a desk-based review of ILO evaluations conducted in the Arab States Region since 2018, including global projects that are implemented in one or more countries in the region that had relevant points for ROAS.

Key Stages of the Report

Extraction and Development of the Inception Report

A sample of 44 reports were included in the sample, including projects and programmes implemented solely within ROAS and global and interregional projects where ROAS plays a significant implementing role. The sample was extracted from i-eval Discovery² by searching for evaluations tagged to ROAS and reviewing all inter-regional and global evaluations to identify if ROAS was involved. All evaluations were included with limited exceptions. One evaluation was excluded due a low score on its external quality review. Two evaluations for global projects included one country from ROAS but only in a limited manner and thus these evaluations were also excluded from the sample. Evaluations

that had been misclassified and had been conducted before the review period were excluded or didn't actually involve ROAS were also excluded. A list of the sample is found in Annex A. Additional documents considered in the review included ILO's high-level evaluations and meta-analyses, relevant research papers such as the report into ILO ROAS engagement in the Humanitarian, Development, Peace (HDP) Nexus, and strategy documents pertaining to the region. A draft evaluation report that has not been finalised of a regional social protection project and an evaluation of the ILO's COOP work in the Occupied Territories of Palestine was also shared with the reviewer and used for additional data.

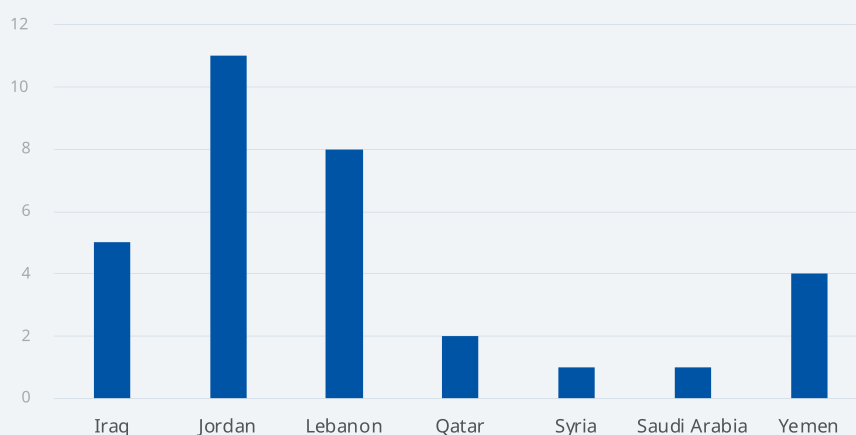
Following the extraction and initial review of the reports, an inception report was submitted to ROAS for review and feedback. Small amendments were made based on the feedback and the inception report was finalised.

The reports can be classified in the following categories:

Countries

The geographical distribution of the evaluations reflects the uneven distribution of projects within the ROAS region. The most featured countries were Jordan and Lebanon. For projects that focus specifically on one country, there were 5 reports for Iraq, 11 for Jordan, 8 for Lebanon, 2 for Qatar, 1 for Syria, 1 for Saudi Arabia, and 4 for Yemen.

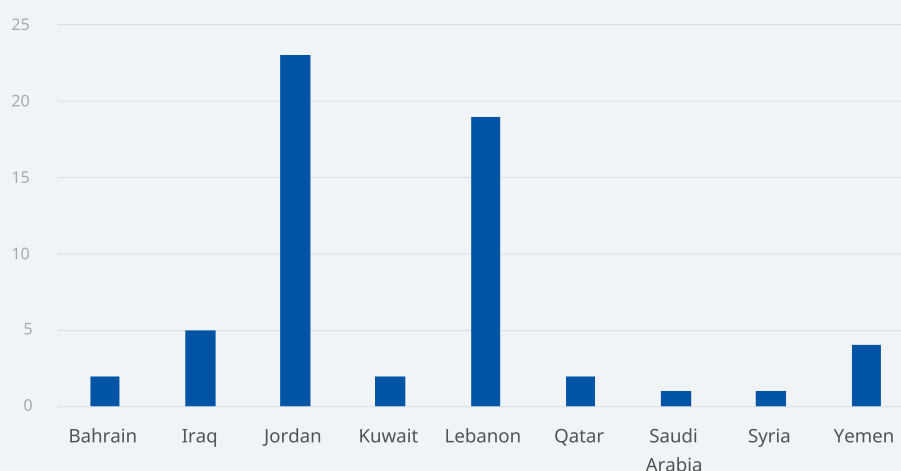
► Evaluations of Projects Implemented in Individual Countries



There were an additional ten evaluations of multi-countries programmes and projects. As a result, Jordan features in 22 evaluations overall (both individual and multiple countries within the region), Kuwait 2, Lebanon 18, Iraq 5, Syria 1, OPT 2, Bahrain 2, Qatar 2, Saudi Arabia 1, and Yemen 4.

Within this sample, 13 evaluations were for global/ inter-regional programmes that included some of the Arab States region countries in the programme. Three of these programmes were regional programmes spanning the Arab States region and countries in North Africa. The other 11 were more broadly global.

► Overall involvement of countries in evaluations



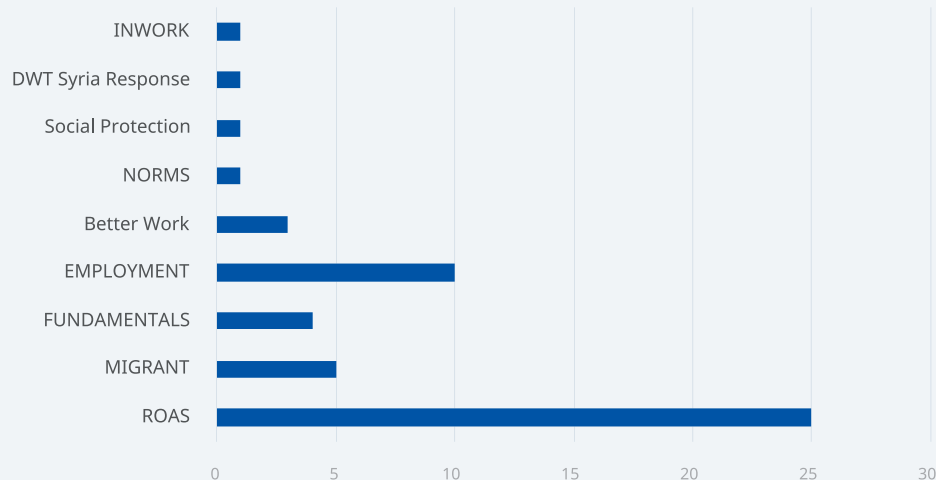
Backstopping Units

Backstopping was provided by the regional office and various ILO departments. Every ILO evaluation includes the technical unit that officially backstops the project on the cover page of evaluation reports. This will match the unit identified in the PARTNERSHIPS minute that officially approves the project. Other backstopping units may be involved in the project.

Counting just the official technical unit listed on the cover page of the evaluation reports, the following can be identified from the sample. The Decent Work Team in ROAS is the most frequently listed technical unit. DWT/ROAS is listed individually as the technical unit in 20 of the reports, and as a joint technical unit in a further five projects. Other technical units identified include MIGRANT, 5 reports, FUNDAMENTALS, 4, EMPLOYMENT, 10

(SKILLS 4, DEVINVEST 6, EMPLOYMENT without specifying a department 2), Better Work 3, NORMS 1, SOCIAL PROTECTION 1, DWT Syrian Response 1, and INWORK 1. Additionally, one programme, the Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (ILO/ PROSPECTS) is a large multi-discipline ONEILO programme that lists ENTERPRISES (SME, COOP, SOC/FIN), EMPLOYMENT, (SKILLS, DEV/INVEST, EMPLAB), FUNDAMENTALS, SOCIAL PROTECTION, WORKQUALITY (GEDI, MIGRANT, INWORK), ACTRAV, and ACTEMP as the technical units. It should be noted that even when the backstopping unit is officially listed as a unit in Geneva, the technical experts in the DWT-ROAS play a significant role in providing technical support.

► Backstopping Units



(the graph excludes the PROSPECTS programme due to the large number of backstopping units involved).

Analysis

The analysis was guided by the over-arching questions included in the assignment's terms of reference (TOR) and the sub-questions that had been developed as a reference point during the inception period.

The guiding review questions were:

1. What is the current situation under each of the above-mentioned categories? (A quantitative rating under each criterion is expected to visually highlight the situation).
 - 1.1. What are the main interventions that can be mapped from the different evaluation reports?
 - 1.2. What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?
 - 1.3. What are the main gaps in interventions?
 - 1.4. What are the trends over the years, has the focus been intensified or has it been shifted to other categories?
 - 1.5. What are the main conclusions?

2. What are the needed action points and recommendations to enhance ILO's interventions and work in the region?
 - 2.1. What are the main recommendations from the different evaluation reports?
 - 2.2. What are the trends and how these recommendations have changed/ not changed over the years?
 - 2.3. What has been the management response to those of independent evaluations?
 - 2.4. What are the synthesized recommendations for the next biennium (based on the recommendations from the evaluation reports and the synthesis of information under this review)? What are the necessary steps to address these recommendations?

A full copy of the review matrix is included in annex B, which includes sub-questions to help address the main questions. A quantitative rubric was also developed to help score the evaluations in certain categories. These rated the performance of the project in individual questions on a four point-scale of unsuccessful, partly successful, successful, and highly successful. This is based on the scoring scale used in several previous ILO synthesis reports. These are utilised in the report and overall scores presented in annex C.

The report details findings per thematic area. The thematic areas are:

- ▶ **Employment.** This includes the ILO's work on national employment policies, the projects aimed at increasing employment opportunities for particular groups and enterprise development. Skills, which is part of the ILO's Employment branch, is addressed separately in the section directly below employment.
- ▶ **Skills**
- ▶ **Enterprise**
- ▶ **Labour Statistics**
- ▶ **Labour Migration**
- ▶ **Crisis and the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus**
- ▶ **International Labour Standards (ILS) and Labour Law:** this section includes information on each of the five fundamental principles and rights, as well as reflections on the use of other

areas of the ILO's normative framework. As such, ILO ROAS's work on child labour, OSH, forced labour, and freedom of association and collective bargaining are reviewed here. There is some information on gender equality and non-discrimination, but as ILO ROAS has commissioned a separate review into gender equality and disability inclusion is a cross-cutting issue, the information is more limited than the other fundamental principles.

- ▶ **Social Protection**
- ▶ **Social Dialogue**
- ▶ **Disability Inclusion**
- ▶ **Just Transition to Environmental Sustainability**

The report also includes summaries of the portfolios of individual countries included in the evaluations, namely, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Limitations

Interpretation of evaluation reports

The review relies on the interpretation of other evaluators' work. Scoring given for a particular question is thus based on trying to interpret how the author of the evaluation report has assessed a particular topic. The interpretation of the author of the synthesis review may vary from that of the evaluator. The limitation is mitigated the scoring matrix, modelled on previous ILO synthesis reports, giving clear criteria to assess evaluations. Large number of evaluation reports

The review included all the relevant evaluation reports delivered between 2018 and 2024. This provided considerable data for the report but also limits how much detail can be obtained from each report.

Limited to projects that have been evaluated

Not all ILO projects are evaluated, and the types of evaluations utilised varies. Projects under a \$1 million threshold do not require an external and independent evaluation. Some of the projects under this threshold conduct internal evaluations, where there is less independence of the management of the evaluation. Internal evaluations follow EVAL guidelines but do not require a management response to the recommendations. This particularly impacted including countries with less ILO activity in the review. Bahrain, Kuwait, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Oman all had activity during the review period but only featured briefly in one or two multi-country evaluation reports.

Additionally, there is a time lag between evaluations and projects. As such, the review will potentially miss emerging trends because the projects have not been evaluated yet. .

Drawing out conclusions relevant to ROAS from inter-regional projects

Several evaluations are of inter-regional projects that include ROAS country offices. The review thus tried to extract lessons that were relevant for ROAS. Scoring on the different criteria was also done as much as possible based on its relevance to implementation by ROAS country offices but the evaluations are overall assessments of the project and many of the judgements and recommendations are relevant to other regional offices rather than ROAS.

Gender

The ILO commissioned a separate report entitled, Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in the Arab States (2018-2023). To avoid duplication of work, this report did not address gender in the same detail as other subjects. Key points from the gender synthesis review have been quoted at certain points in this report and the summary sheet for gender based on the findings of the synthesis review is included as an annex. This report should be read in conjunction with the gender synthesis review.

Findings



► Overall Summary

The report includes findings per thematic group as set out in the TOR. These are presented below in the overall summary. The overall summary sets out a synthesis of the findings per each question included in the TOR.

What are the main interventions that can be mapped from the different evaluation reports?

The ILO in the Arab States region has implemented a wide variety of projects during the period 2018-2024. Thematic areas that received the most attention were employment, labour migration, occupational safety and health, enterprise, and child labour. Projects, although at a lower volume, were also implemented in social protection and labour statistics. Cross-cutting themes such as disability inclusion, gender equality, the just transition to environmental sustainability, and social dialogue were included in some of the interventions during the review period.



Employment

Employment was the largest field by number of projects. Among the employment field, the ILO implemented activities in various sub-sectors, including employment creation for vulnerable groups, national employment policies, and skills, such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), entrepreneurship training, and financial management, as well as a limited focus on enterprise creation. There was a particular emphasis on employment intensive infrastructure programmes and employment for crisis-affected communities. These were implemented through several phases in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen. During the period, the ILO started to phase away from more immediate and short-term employment as a humanitarian response to try to connect more to sustainable approaches.



Skills

Skills programming in ROAS has also been closely linked to the response to the regional crises, particularly the Syrian refugee crisis. The region has participated in the PROSPECT project, whose Pillar 1 focuses on supporting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, the provision of apprenticeships, and the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Skills activities have also been

included in work with host and refugee communities in other projects implemented during the period. There has also been a focus more recently on the inclusion of vocational training in the employment intensive infrastructure programmes, as well as attention to skill development families of children in or at risk of child labour in some of the projects focused on the elimination of child labour.



Labour Statistics

The sampled evaluations contained details of the ILO's work with national statistical bureaus to improve the quality of labour statistics in the member states in order to provide quality data for evidenced based policy development. This included working with national statistics bureaus in Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan. The ILO's work on labour statistics in the region included both projects whose main focus was on labour statistics and the inclusion of outcomes and outputs related to improving statistics in other projects.



Enterprise

The ILO's work included in the evaluation reports has included projects where the main focus is on one of the key themes of the Enterprise Department such as small and medium (SME) development, improving entrepreneurship capacities and opportunities, green jobs, and the formalisation of the economy. The ILO has also worked on cooperatives during this period, but the main projects in this area had not had published evaluations by the time of the sampling of the reports for this review. Work in this sub-theme has also been conducted as part of projects focusing on other sub-themes, such as a child labour prevention project in Yemen, employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, and the formalising of access to the labour market for refugees and host communities in Jordan. Enterprise development is also a critical element of the PROSPECTS programme.

Labour Migration

The ILO's labour migration activities were mainly, although not exclusively, implemented as part of multi-regional programmes, consistent with the goal of addressing labour migration governance at both ends of the migration corridor. As such offices in concerned countries and the DWT ROAS played significant roles in the implementation of the ILO's Work in Freedom, FAIR recruitment, and FAIRWAY programmes. The ILO's work also intersected with labour migration through projects implemented by other departments in contexts with a significant proportion of migrant workers, including Better Work programmes and the ILO-Qatar technical cooperation project. More recently the ILO has begun to address the issue of access to social protection for migrant workers.

International Labour Standards and Labour Law

On international labour standards and labour law, the ILO ROAS has implemented several projects linked to aspects of the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW). Aligned with the findings of the High-Level Evaluation of the ILO's strategies and action on fundamental principles and rights at work, 2018–23, the evaluation reports did not show particular evidence of an integrated approach of the five fundamental principles. Projects were more generally focused on one particular principle. The fundamental principles that were addressed most regularly in specific projects were the elimination of child labour and the right to a healthy and safe working environment. The reduction of forced labour and efforts to combat trafficking in persons was limited to activities within the labour migration projects. Work on freedom of association and collective bargaining has been quite limited. Although some projects worked to strengthen social dialogue and increase the capacities of employer and worker organisations, any focus on collective bargaining and freedom of association has been mainly limited to workplace activities rather than broader structural and policy level action. ILO ROAS did not evaluate a project under Outcome 6 of the P&B, 'gender equality and equal opportunity and treatment in the world of work' during the review period. Work in this field was done through mainstreaming

into other projects. A separate review of ILO ROAS's work on gender equality is being conducted, and thus reflections on this field are limited within the review. With the exception of a focus on domestic work within the Work in Freedom project, the evaluation reports themselves did not suggest the region has leveraged the increased attention being paid to the care economy. However, a theory of change for the care economy is being developed by ROAS, the Lebanon office is implementing a project on the care economy, and the Jordan office is currently implementing six projects related to Outcome 5 of the Programme and Budget (P&B), 'Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all', and thus may receive evaluations in the near future. Attention to disability inclusion has been limited, with the notable exception of a few good practices in a small number of projects. There does not appear to have been work linked to discrimination on the basis of sexual and gender orientation or HIVAIDs status during the review period.

The evaluations demonstrated mixed use of the ILO's normative framework³. Only two evaluations reference comments and observations by the ILO's supervisory mechanisms⁴. There was more demonstrated alignment and use of ILO's conventions, although there does not appear to have been particular attention to the ratification of conventions within individual projects.

Crisis and Refugee Response and the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus (HDP)

ILO ROAS's response to the significant crises experienced across the region cuts across different departments. ILO ROAS's work to address the crises have included employment projects that provide work opportunities for host and forcibly displaced communities, projects that address the drivers of child labour within crisis situations, including the forced recruitment of children into armed conflict, and OSH projects that responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are only limited references to the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus. This includes evaluations of projects that do appear to be working on the Nexus. This is probably a reflection both of limited awareness of the Nexus among evaluators and a lack of a clear strategy and understanding with the ILO on its positioning within the Nexus.

3. A series of legal instruments on international labour standards formalised in the ILO's conventions, protocols, and recommendations. <https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards/conventions-protocols-and-recommendations>

4. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the International Labour Conference's Tripartite Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CAS). <https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo/how-ilo-works/ilo-supervisory-system/mechanism>



Social Protection

Work on social protection in the evaluation report sample was limited to two main projects on developing an inclusive national social protection system in Lebanon and strengthening mechanisms for coordinated implementation of national employment and social protection interventions in Jordan. Additionally, a draft evaluation report of a regional project extending social protection to migrant workers in the Gulf States was shared with the consultant and reviewed. There is also some attention to social protection in a small number of other projects focused on other thematic areas. Although a small sample, these projects have demonstrated significant results, and there are other social protection projects yet to be evaluated in the region, suggesting an increase in the focus on social protection more recently.



Tripartism and Social Dialogue

There were very few projects that were key objective of the project is to promote social dialogue. The Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development was one example of a project that had an overall objective directly including improving policies for social dialogue. Another example was the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme. Pillar three of the programme focused on improving social dialogue. The Social dialogue for formalization and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) included Lebanon as a target country. Other projects did focus on improving social dialogue as a means to achieving objectives on specific themes. Various projects did not have an emphasis on social dialogue, such as the employment intensive infrastructure programme where the short-term nature of employment opportunities limited the space for social dialogue.



Just Transition to Environmental Sustainability

The review of the evaluation reports suggests that a just transition to environmental sustainability has not been a high priority in the region during the review period, with the exception of work in Jordan. However, several projects being implemented with strong links to just transition have not yet been evaluated, and as such future synthesis reviews may identify more activity. There is also a need to ensure that evaluators are considering just transition as a cross-cutting theme in their reports. Many evaluations did not address just transition making it difficult to assess whether projects included a focus on the just transition or not. From the evaluation reports that did include references to just transition, the Jordan office has addressed the topic more regularly than other offices, particularly with a focus on green jobs and infrastructure in its employment programmes responding to the refugee crisis. Elsewhere, while there have been notable successes such as the heat stress legislation in Qatar, these have been limited to a small number of projects.



Disability Inclusion

Only a small number of projects were identified as being successful in ensuring disability inclusion is mainstreamed into their actions. There were also only limited details about disability inclusion in many evaluation reports, including evaluations which have questions linked to disability inclusion in the design but do not report on the results. However, there are some projects have demonstrated attention to disability inclusion. Successes have included the development and launching of Lebanon's National Disability Allowance, the institution of Law Number 10 (2023) in Jordan that amended the labour law to, among other groups, provide protection for persons with disabilities against discrimination, and achievement of targets for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan.

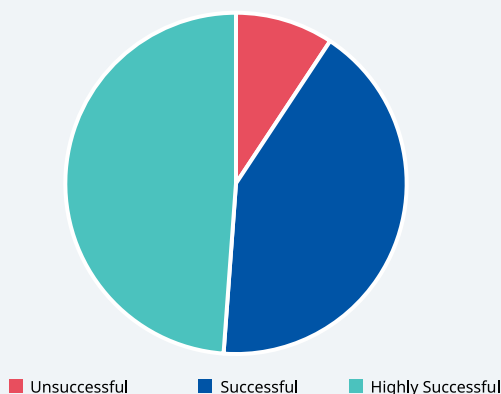
Meeting the needs of tripartite constituents, target communities, and other stakeholders

The synthesis review analysed if the evaluation reports considered if the ILO had been successful in ensuring projects met the needs of the tripartite constituents, target communities and other stakeholders, and the level of consultation in the design and implementation of projects.

The relevance of the projects was assessed to be high by the evaluation reports. Taking the overall

question of whether the projects were considered relevant to the needs of the various stakeholders, the projects scored an average of 3.41 out of 4 (based on the four point scale of unsuccessful, partly successful, successful, and highly successful), suggesting the projects ranged from successful to highly successful in being designed to meet the needs of key stakeholders.

► Relevance of design of projects to stakeholders



The major drivers behind the high scoring of the evaluations were the projects aligning with government strategies, policies, and priorities, and meeting the needs of ultimate target groups by direct delivery of services to vulnerable communities.

Alignment with government strategies and needs were seen in projects that focused on system strengthening or policy development. This included work to develop national employment policies in Iraq and Lebanon, strengthening the capacities of national and local authorities to respond to child labour in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Yemen, and improving collection and analysis of labour statistics in Lebanon and Iraq. The ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation project and the Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development project in Saudi Arabia also successfully supported these governments to address notably gaps in their regulatory framework and capacities on international labour law.

Several evaluations raised the limitations of tripartism in the Arab States region and noted the projects had less relevance and involvement of the employer and workers' organisations. While the employer and workers' organisations were integral parts of some projects, there was less clear involvement than governments and in many cases CSOs.

The context the ILO works in within the Arab States region contributes to the challenges of tripartism. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) identifies the politicized splintering and the collapse of legal institutions as being a challenge for tripartism and notes that this is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts despite it being a fundamental assumption of the ILO's model.

The review also identified the theme of projects delivering results at a grassroots level that goes beyond the ILO's traditional focus on tripartism and system strengthening. ILO ROAS's response to crisis has included the provision of income generating opportunities for host and forcibly displaced communities and the building of infrastructure in coordination with local municipalities. CSOs representing vulnerable communities have also been empowered through the ILO's interventions, with several projects working with CSOs, particularly in cases where the regulatory framework or the capacities of trade unions limited opportunities for working with workers' organisations. The main limitation on relevance to CSOs identified by the evaluation reports was their limited involvement in the design of projects.

What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

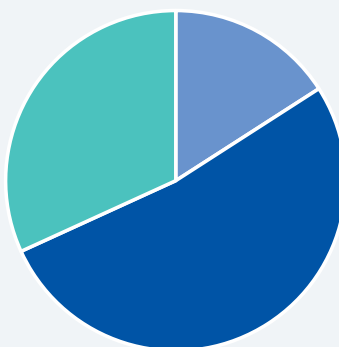
Achievements

Overall, the evaluations identified the projects had been successful in achieving planned results. Of the 44 evaluations assessed, 14 were highly successful and 23 successful in achieving their planned results, giving an average score of 3.16.

3.16

average score of project success in achieving planned results

► Effectiveness of delivering expected results

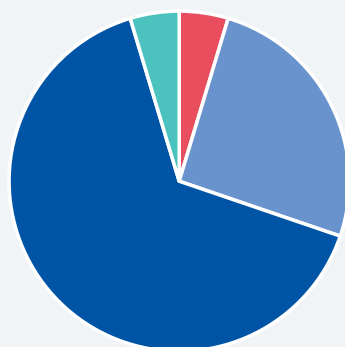


■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

The overall impact of the projects was rated less successful than the achievement of planned results. This is reflective of the fact that much of what the ILO seeks to achieve in systems change requires a long-term approach that often spans more than one project length. Ambitions of projects were often assessed to have outstripped the available time and resources. The monitoring structures of the projects often were insufficient for measuring change, limiting the ILO's ability

to understand the impact of its projects. Overall, the review assessed an average score of 2.70 for impact, suggesting projects were partly successful to successful in achieving impact. A limited number of projects were assessed to be highly successful. This was often due to additional work being needed to finalise policy gains or institutionalise impact.

► Impact of the ILO's projects



■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

Achievements of ILO ROAS during the period can be seen at different levels, including in policy reform, capacity building, knowledge generation, and empowerment of vulnerable groups. There are numerous achievements and not all can be highlighted, but some of the most significant include:

The ILO has leveraging opportunities to ensure enhanced attention to OSH



The Covid-19 pandemic and the other crises experienced in the Arab States region, along with the addition of the rights to safe and healthy work environment to the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work has led greater attention to safety and health at work. ILO ROAS has been able to leverage this to ensure the inclusion of OSH in several projects. Iraq and Syria had specific projects designed to strengthen OSH in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Iraq, the 'Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq' project worked to strengthen the labour inspection system and raise awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH, and in Syria, one of the projects in the cluster evaluation, Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria also focused on mitigating the impacts of Covid-19 in the workplace.

Other institutional strengthening has occurred, most notably, in the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme, the project was successful in supporting the upscaling of the former OSH unit into a fully-fledged OSH Department in the Ministry of Labour. ILO ROAS also supported the development of draft national action plans for OSH and child labour in Syria.

In terms of policy, a significant achievement during the review period was the support given to the Government of Qatar in passing the heat stress legislation that set working hours and other regulations to limit workers exposure to extreme heat.

Despite these successes, the slow increment of change was identified by evaluation reports, that stressed the importance of continued attention to the issue by the ILO. The evaluation report of aforementioned project in Iraq identified:

"Despite these sustainable approaches, most results achieved by the project were found to be unsustainable without further ILO support, given that this project was originally designed to be a first phase in a larger programme. In other words, the project has only laid the groundwork for further action and developments to the Final Evaluation of ILO's project inspection and OSH systems, and there is still a need of further capacity building." (IRQ2003, p. 7 - 8)

Strengthened capacities of labour inspectorates in the elimination of child labour and OSH



The review period saw various initiatives to strengthen the capacities of the labour inspectorates, particularly in respect to child labour and trafficking in persons, OSH, and factory compliance. Achievements included system strengthening and enhanced data, awareness of senior ministry officials and labour inspectorates on key issues, and strengthening the capacity of labour inspectors to conduct inspections. As identified above, this is a long-term process that takes several cycles of a project and will need to be continued in future.

One caveat to these achievements, is there was not reported by the evaluations to have been an integrated approach to strengthening the labour inspectorates on the different issues. For example, child labour projects focused on enhancing capacities of labour inspectors on identifying indicators of child labour but not on issues related to OSH or social protection registration.

Improved social cohesion in employment projects involving host and forcibly displaced communities



Evaluations in Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen reported there had been improvements in social cohesion in projects involving host and forcibly displaced communities. The evidence was stronger for Jordan, where a measure of social cohesion found a positive trend between the different phases of the programmes. Qualitative feedback showed that where the employment intensive infrastructure programmes allowed host and refugee communities to work together on common projects community tensions were reported to have reduced. These projects are implemented in a challenging context for working on refugee and migrant labour issues. The ILO struggled on project outputs linked to the provision of work permits for Syrians in Jordan and thus the achievements of improved cohesion at the community level is significant.

Measurement of the impact of the ILO's programming on societal cohesion is limited though. A desk-based research study on how the ILO Programmes

Contribute to Social Cohesion between Refugees/IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region⁵ found that the ILO was unable to produce evidence of any impacts on social cohesion of its programming in Iraq and Lebanon, and that measures of social cohesion were usually not embedded into results frameworks.

Provision of short-term income for vulnerable communities



The ILO's response to the crises in the Arab States region has included several projects that provide short-term income for vulnerable communities. Although this is not a long-term durable solution, the injection of cash through income generating opportunities has proved short-term relief for affected communities.

Development of the first ever social protection strategy in Lebanon



The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project supported the development of a social protection strategy. This was considered a highly successful achievement that occurred as a result of the successful cultivation of relationships with the national authorities, the technical skills of both UNICEF and ILO staff, strong collaboration between UNICEF and ILO, and the personal involvement of the Resident Coordinator to ensure high level engagement in the strategy.

▀▀ Evaluations in Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen reported there had been improvements in social cohesion in projects involving host and forcibly displaced communities.

5. ILO, (2022). How ILO Programmes Contribute to Social Cohesion between Refugees/IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_854504.pdf

Good Practices

Addressing migration governance at both ends of the migration corridor through projects that collaborate with other ILO regional offices

Participating in multi-regional programmes that address labour migration at both ends of the migration corridor has allowed the ILO to support a more holistic approach to labour migration governance. The approach improves support and options for migrant workers at both ends of the migration corridor for both countries of origin and destination, as well as enhancing inter-governmental cooperation. This is perhaps more relevant to governments of countries of origin who have struggled to influence policy towards their nationals in the countries of destination, but it is also important for governments and other stakeholders in countries of destination to help improve services offered to migrant workers.

Enhancing worker voice through strengthening the capacities of CSOs while simultaneously working to improve trade union capacities.

ILO ROAS has engaged civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders that provide voice to vulnerable workers including migrant workers and domestic workers. The previously discussed limits of tripartism in the region, means CSOs often are the strongest voice for vulnerable workers. However, it is important partnerships with CSOs do not come at the cost of tripartism, and the ILO continues to strengthen the capacities of workers' and employers' organisations alongside working with CSOs. Projects that worked with CSOs while simultaneously working to strengthen the capacities of trade unions to engage in social dialogue and organise these workers, were positive examples of the ILO proactively addressing this challenge. These approaches should be replicated throughout the ILO's interventions.

Joint programming

Several evaluations identified strengths of projects that involved joint programming with other UN entities. The context ILO ROAS works in provides opportunities for joint programming, allowing the ILO to blend its comparative advantages of tripartism, expertise in decent work, and focus on longer-term system strengthening, with the expertise of other UN agencies in areas of overlapping mandates, including labour migration, humanitarian relief, and the elimination of child labour. Challenges to joint programming were identified. An initial partnership with UNDP on employment intensive infrastructure was ended and the evaluation of this noted limited gains from the partnership. Other evaluations suggested potential administrative and financial gains from joint programming had not particularly materialised and that coordination in some cases could be improved. However, the partnerships with UNHCR and UNICEF in particular on social protection, child labour, and response to the Syria crisis in particular, have produced positive results and enhanced overall impact. It should also be noted the evaluation of the ILO's joint programme in Yemen that did involve UNDP, as well as FAO and WFP provided positive examples of the value add of the four agencies working together. The personal involvement of the Resident Coordinator in Lebanon was cited as an important best practice in joint programming that enhanced engagement at a senior level.

►► The context ILO ROAS works in provides opportunities for joint programming, allowing the ILO to blend its comparative advantages.

Lessons Learned

It is important to ensure the ILO articulates clearly the importance of decent work in the HDP Nexus and leverages its comparative advantages when working in this field

The ILO's tripartite framework and the relationships it has built with different institutional actors means it is ideally positioned to work on the transition from humanitarian response to longer term developmental approaches in the HDP Nexus. The evaluations though contained mixed evidence on how effectively ILO ROAS was achieving this. The cluster evaluation of the projects in Syria gave positive feedback on the perceptions of other actors on ILO's positioning. It was suggested that the ILO had effectively utilised child labour and OSH as more neutral entry points for discussion on programming. However, the same evaluation also suggested the ILO needed to more systematically promote itself among other actors in the HDP Nexus field:

“there should be more systematic promotion of the ILO's work in situations of protracted crisis in child labour and occupational safety and health, drawing lessons from these projects in Syria and the challenges that were encountered.” (SYR/16/01/RBS, SYR/20/01/CEF, SYR/20/01/RBS p.12).

The Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) also identified that there was a lack of coherent framework for working on the HDP Nexus and this limited the ILO's ability to situate itself effectively within the HDP Nexus.

There is a need to transition to longer-term solutions on employment programmes

Workers who participated in evaluations of ILO ROAS's employment programmes for host communities and forcibly displaced persons, identified the lack of long-term opportunities as a limitation of the ILO's work. Evaluations of the more recent projects recommended that the ILO should change its approach to support more durable solutions for the targeted populations, including working on longer-term employment opportunities and linking workers to vocational training. There is some evidence that this is starting to be integrated into the ILO's programming, although the relevance of the longer-term approach dependent on the stage of crisis. The early stages of a crisis, such as may be expected in Lebanon's recovery effort from the recent Israeli bombing will probably require more immediate income injection responses than a crisis that has moved further into post-conflict recovery.

Programming needs to be of sufficient length to ensure longer-term gains

The length of programming is addressed more in the section below. A key lesson from many evaluations was that programming needs to be of sufficient length to ensure the ILO meets the ambitions of the programming and that sufficient time is given for policy and other systematic changes. Projects that had multiple phases of sufficient length often demonstrated the most progress on longer term successes.

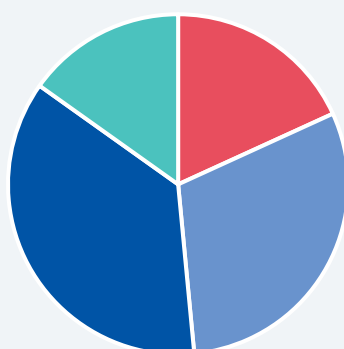
What are the main gaps in interventions?

Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluations reported significant challenges linked to monitoring and evaluation of projects. These included understaffing/under-capacity of monitoring officers, results frameworks that lacked coherence and missed outcome indicators for

monitoring change, and limited theories of change. Not all evaluation reports assessed the quality of the monitoring structures, but from those that did, the review assessed an overall average score of 2.48, meaning that projects were only partly successful in ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

► Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks



■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

The review also identified areas for improvement in evaluations. While the evaluations are generally of high quality, there are consistent gaps that should be addressed. The attention paid to ILO's cross-cutting themes is very inconsistent. Gender equality is considered in a separate review but a review of the available quality assessments of the evaluations show that while there has been an improvement during the period in the gender SWAP requirements of the evaluations, gaps still remain. The majority of evaluations between 2018 and 2020 missed the requirements of the gender SWAP. This improved slightly in 2021, albeit with a very small sample of quality assessments that year, and continued to improve in 2022 and 2023. In 2022 and 2023, the majority were approaching requirements and none were missing the requirements. That said, the number of evaluations that meet the requirements for the gender SWAP is still low and work is needed to ensure evaluations improve from approaching to meeting requirements. Disability inclusion is ignored in reports, including in reports which state in their methodology that the evaluation will consider disability inclusion. The just transition to environmental sustainability is also only rarely reported upon. The absence of environmental sustainability and disability inclusion from reports maybe a reflection that they are not considered sufficiently in the ILO's programming, but there is also some

evidence, particularly with environmental sustainability that evaluations are not adequately capturing the work being conducted by the ILO. However, even in this scenario, evaluators should at a minimum be required to include a short paragraph explaining this to be the case. While there is greater attention paid to the cross-cutting issues of social dialogue and ILS in the evaluation reports, these are also inconsistently included, making comparison between evaluations harder.

There is also some inconsistency in the criteria used in the evaluations. As criteria are almost always set in the TORs, this issue is linked to the initial commission of the evaluations. Aligning the evaluations as much as possible with the OECD-DAC criteria utilised by the ILO in high-level evaluations would help comparison between evaluations. Additionally, there does appear to be limited creativity in the methodologies used by evaluations. Methods utilised are usually key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Approximately 15% of the evaluations used a survey. None of the evaluations used more participatory methods such as most significant change or outcome harvesting. Particularly given many of the projects include direct support to target populations, the use of these methods would help increase their voice and give fresh perspectives on the change felt by these communities.

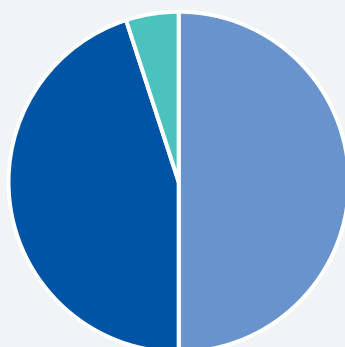
Ambition vs reality

A recurrent theme among evaluations was the over-ambition of projects compared to what in reality could be achieved. Many of the projects had time management issues, which stemmed both from project management problems leading to delays in implementation (often delayed recruitment of key staff) and from unrealistic expectations of partners considering their capacities. Not all evaluations discussed the timeframe of the project but of those that did, the review assessed that on average the ILO was only partly successful in securing funding for a sufficient length of time to meet the ambition of the project. The review gave an average score of 2.70 for the evaluations that reviewed this. While as noted above, the projects were often successful in achieving outputs and immediate objectives, the systematic change the ILO is hoping to achieve takes longer. Projects that had multiple phases were often best able to mitigate

this concern, but even projects with multiple phases struggled to achieve long-term change if each phase was too short. The employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan and Lebanon are an example of this, although there is evidence the concern about the short-term nature of the projects has been addressed more as the phases have progressed.

Linked to these challenges, evaluations assessed the sustainability of the ILO's interventions at a lower level than the other OECD-DAC criteria. Overall, projects were assessed to have an average score of 2.55, suggesting some but quite limited success at ensuring sustainability. The key drivers behind this were not being able to achieve policy or other system change within the time frame, the lack of an exit strategy, and limited capacities of the tripartite constituents to take forward the activities after the project has ended.

► How successful has the ILO been in ensuring the sustainability of its interventions?



■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

Disability inclusion

There are some positive examples of disability inclusion in projects. The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national social protection system for Lebanon project delivered effective and innovative results to ensure persons with disabilities were included in consultation for the design of the national social protection system. In addition, the Government of Lebanon launched a National Disability Allowance. However, in general there was limited attention paid to disability inclusion. Many projects had not addressed the topic at all and for most of the few that did there did not appear a deliberate strategy on disability inclusion. There were very few examples of organisations of persons with disabilities being involved in the design or implementation of projects. A lack of capacities to address disability inclusion was identified as a challenge for stakeholders in projects that had tried to be disability inclusive.

Tripartism

The challenges the region faces in tripartism and social dialogue are reflected in the evaluation reports. There were mixed findings on tripartism and social dialogue. Many projects were credited with promoting social dialogue and including tripartite constituents in projects. However, limited capacities of tripartite constituents often meant the results were quite narrow, and in many cases, it was identified that tripartism had been sidelined in order to promote smoother implementation. ILO ROAS has also faced a tricky balancing act of promoting tripartism plus by engaging CSOs and other stakeholders such as academic institutions where the capacities of interest of the ILO's traditional tripartite partners is limited, but while also needing to ensure the core value of tripartism of the ILO is not lost.

That said there are positive examples of projects including social dialogue. The Better Work programmes have worked on social dialogue at the factory level in Jordan and several collective bargaining agreements have been finalised. This has also supported the ILO's projects on labour migration governance that have been implemented in partnership with Better Work.

Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria cluster evaluation reported that the projects have empowered the tripartite constituents to engage social dialogue on child labour and OSH. Additionally, the work on supporting the development of a national employment policy in Lebanon was reported to have created an environment for social dialogue that had been previously absent.

Many projects were credited with promoting social dialogue and including tripartite constituents in projects. However, limited capacities of tripartite constituents often meant the results were quite narrow, and in many cases, it was identified that tripartism had been sidelined in order to promote smoother implementation.

Trends

Evaluations only give a snapshot of the ILO's work, and as noted in the limitations, this is often delayed given the timing of the evaluation. However, it was possible to pick up on some trends or themes that emerge from the review:

Social Protection

The focus on social protection appears to be strengthening following successful projects implemented in both Lebanon and Jordan to support the development of social protection frameworks. More recently the ILO has also implemented a programme aimed at improving social protection for migrant workers in the GCC countries. Several projects in Lebanon are also currently being implemented but are yet to be evaluated. Moving forward, it would be advisable to consider how to integrate social protection more closely with the ILO's work on FPRW, particularly on the elimination of child labour through ensuring families are registered and through OSH by ensuring labour inspectors trained on OSH are also trained on understanding social protection registration processes.

HDP Nexus

The relevance of the ILO's mandate on achieving social justice through decent work to the HDP Nexus is very clear. The ILO has responded to the various crises in the region through programming on refugee response and post-conflict development. The ILO's normative framework is relevant to the Nexus and is reinforced by Recommendation 205⁶. It appeared apparent that the ILO has continued to engage on the Nexus and worked to integrate itself further into multi-agency response with effective partnerships with UNICEF and UNHCR in particular. There is some evidence that employment programming has begun to shift away from humanitarian approaches such as cash for work, to longer-term approaches. However, it was also identified that the ILO needs to be stronger in engaging with other actors at the start of crises to ensure the importance of decent work is recognised, and also needs to be clearer about its strategy and goals with regards to the Nexus.

OSH

The ILO appears to have been able to leverage the greater attention paid to working conditions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and other high-profile circumstances, such as the World Cup in Qatar, to increase its programming on OSH.

Multi-phase programming

ILO ROAS has implemented several projects that have been implemented over more than one phase. For example, ILO ROAS has been part of several multi-regional programmes that have been implemented over various phases. The same trend can be seen in the implementation of the employment intensive infrastructure programming. The implementation of projects over stages allows for learning and subsequent adaption of approaches. Lengthy collaboration helps strengthen relationships and builds trust with key stakeholders and supports the ILO to support longer term policy change that can take several years. One caveat to this approach is that if the phases are too short, this can impact the ability of the projects to consider the longer-term picture. This concern was reflected in the evaluations of the employment intensive infrastructure programmes, particularly the earlier evaluations.

There is some evidence that employment programming has begun to shift away from humanitarian approaches such as cash for work, to longer-term approaches.

6. R205 - Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), <https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::>

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation findings suggest the ILO has achieved some important successes in meeting its core mandate in the Arab States region. The importance of the ILO's interventions is demonstrated by the high level of success the project and programme design has had in addressing constituent needs. The projects generally were rated high in terms of relevance and were found to support the plans of member states and meet the needs of the target communities. Most of the project activities have taken place in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen. Other countries in the region have been involved in either one to two individual projects or as part of a multi-country programme.

The ILO has had reasonable success in implementing the planned activities and results of the projects. This is particularly the case for outputs and short-term objectives. The delivery of services including income generating opportunities and training to affected communities and capacity building to key stakeholders were achieved in many projects. Longer-term objectives such as policy change were often more limited by the short length of projects and delays in implementation. Some project management concerns were identified, particularly monitoring systems that did not capture outcomes effectively.

The ILO has operated in a difficult environment during the assessment period. The Covid-19 pandemic affected all countries in the region. The impact of the Syrian conflict continues to be felt by many countries in the region, as does the conflicts in Iraq and Yemen. Additionally, the military action by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon has not yet been reported in evaluations but must be impacting ILO's operations in the area. In this context, the ILO has engaged on work on the HDP Nexus to respond to the multiple crises. Other sections such as migration governance that have also been affected by the crises are also a key element of the ILO's work. Findings on the ILO's interventions on the Nexus are mixed. The ILO is uniquely placed among UN agencies to address decent work in this context but a lack of understanding of the Nexus and the ILO's approach to it has reduced the effectiveness of the work.

The evaluation reports presented a mixed picture as to how effective the ILO was in achieving impact and the sustainability of results. Short-term projects were a challenge in this regard and several evaluations stressed the need for continued support to constituents, partly on policy development, as part of their recommendations. That said, notable impacts could be identified including the development of a national social protection policy in Lebanon, the ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) in Iraq and the subsequent passing of the pension and social security law for private sector worker No. 18 in 2023, and the passage of heat stress legislation in Qatar.

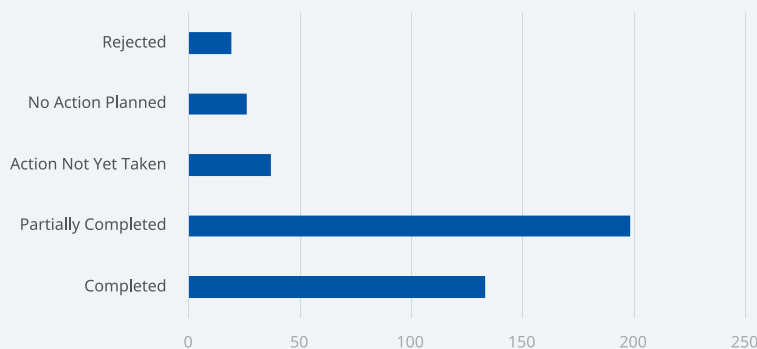
Overall, the evaluation findings suggest the ILO has achieved some important successes in meeting its core mandate in the Arab States region.

Recommendations and Next Steps

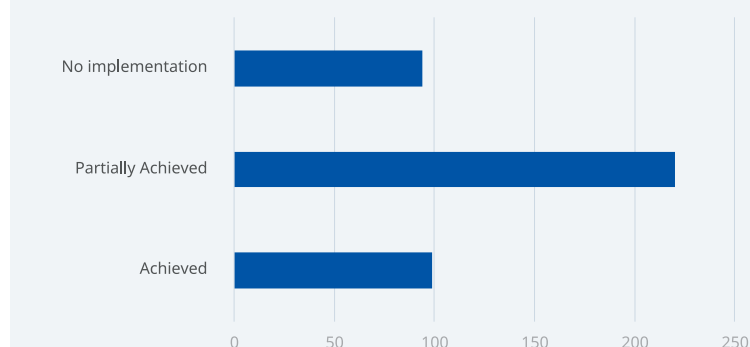
Analysis of i-Eval database shows that of the evaluations that had management responses, there were 413 recommendations. The management response to these show that most are accepted by the project teams. Eighty percent had either been completed or partially completed. Those that were rejected were generally because they were considered outside of the remit of the project, for example altering ILO policies, recommending actions that it was not believed the tripartite constituents would take, or considered unrealistic. The evaluation with the most rejected recommendations was actually the one removed from the sample (so not included in the 413 recommendations) due to a low-quality appraisal score, which included noting limitations in the recommendations.

The progress on the recommendations shows 99 had been achieved, 220 were partly achieved, and 94 had no action. There is a higher percentage of no action than in the original management responses and a lower ratio of completed to partially completed than of achieved to partially achieved. From the website it is hard to assess why, but it appears possible that for some evaluations, where the project team considered the recommendation already achieved at the stage of the management response, they then tag the recommendation as no action taken in the progress section. Many evaluations also do not have any comments included under the progress section.

► Management response to evaluation recommendations



► Progress on Recommendations



This is a snapshot of progress as the management responses are not regularly updated. The management responses suggests that overall, projects accept most but not all of the evaluations recommendations and develop approaches to work on them. However, it is difficult to trace implementation as it would require regular updating of the management response on i-Eval discovery. Currently the management response is completed once and not revisited. There is evidence from projects that have multiple phases or mid-term and final evaluations, that at least some recommendations from previous evaluations are acted upon. However, evaluations generally don't comprehensively go through previous evaluations and list which recommendations were acted upon and which were not. The majority of recommendations in evaluations are directed towards the ILO, with a handful being made to donors and tripartite constituents.

Based on the synthesis review, the following overall recommendations and next steps are identified. More specific recommendations and next steps for each category are included in the different sections of the report.

- Identify ways to provide integrated programming on the different fundamental principles and rights at work. This would align with the sub-recommendation of the high level evaluation of the ILO's actions and policies on FPRW to promote integrated approaches to FRPW at the country level.
- Ensure ROAS staff are familiar with newer conventions and recommendations and build the use of them into the support given to tripartite constituents in projects.
- Strengthen attention to monitoring and evaluation, particularly ensuring that outcomes are measured to understand the change and impact ILO ROAS's work is contributing to. Both the regional office and individual projects should ensure resources are available to strengthen staffing responsible for monitoring and evaluation functions.
- Develop a response tracking system for monitoring follow up to the management responses to evaluation report recommendations.

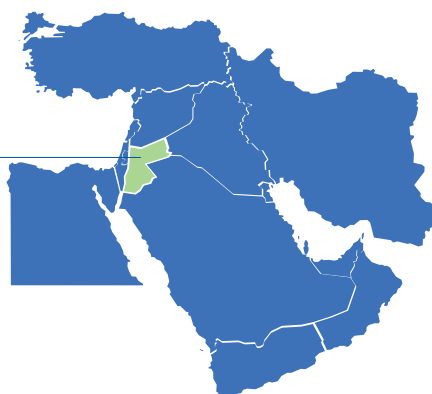
- ▶ Train ROAS staff on disability inclusion, particularly on GEDI's guidance on the inclusion of organisations of persons with disabilities in all aspects of programme development.
- ▶ Ensure employers and workers' representatives and CSOs are included at the design phase of the project.
- ▶ Develop a strategy to engage more clearly on freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- ▶ Conduct capacity assessments of tripartite partners and other partners prior to a project to ensure the ambition of the project aligns with the reality of capacities and expectations.
- ▶ Develop a regional strategy on the HDP Nexus, outlining how the ILO will position itself among other stakeholders, and ensuring that peace programming is understood and integrated into programming. This would require strengthening knowledge among ROAS staff on the HDP Nexus to ensure that the ILO is positioning itself effectively to leverage its expertise on decent work.
- ▶ Leverage the progress made on social protection by ensuring it is included in other programming, particularly on those linked to the elimination of child labour and OSH.
- ▶ Ensure crisis related employment programmes continue to transition to more durable solutions for vulnerable workers including connecting to vocational training opportunities and longer lasting jobs.
- ▶ Prioritise joint action programmes with UN agencies that understand the ILO's tripartite approach and respect its mandate. Where there are challenging relationships with particular agencies, (the evaluation reports suggested in some cases with UNDP), advocate with the ILO's HQ to revise and reaffirm MOUs with that agency.
- ▶ Ensure project design includes articulating exit strategies that demonstrate a long-term vision for how tripartite constituents and other stakeholders will take forward the progress of the project and ensure changes are sustainable.
- ▶ Ensure cross-cutting themes including gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion, and the just transition to environmental sustainability are introduced early during project design and in the development of project indicators.

▶▶ The majority of recommendations in evaluations are directed towards the ILO, with a handful being made to donors and tripartite constituents.

Country Profiles



Jordan



Jordan was the country with the most evaluations in the review sample. Fourteen evaluations were for projects solely implemented in Jordan. A further six projects evaluated included Jordan as one of the countries of implementation.

The DC dashboard shows that Jordan had a total of 74 projects during the reporting period. Of these projects, 30 crossed the threshold of \$1 million that would require an independent evaluation (although internal evaluations are sometimes conducted for smaller projects) conducted by consultant evaluators external to the ILO. Not all of these are completed and thus would not have necessarily gone through an evaluation. The employment intensive infrastructure projects that went through various stages of implementation were evaluated in cluster evaluations of multiple stages and some of these evaluations included similar projects in Lebanon funded by the same development partner. Seventy-five and a half million US dollars was tagged under P&B Outcome 3, 'Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all'⁷ and a further \$12.18 million specifically under Output 3.3 'Increased capacity of Member States to formulate and implement policies and strategies for creating decent work in rural areas'. Output 8.5, 'Improved coherence in support and action to promote decent work in crises and post-crisis situations', was the only other output with more than \$10.76 million allocated to it. Smaller amounts were allocated to social protection, developing employment policies, inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects, preventing discrimination at work, adequate and effective protection at work for all, and strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue.

74 projects

in total, making Jordan the country with the most evaluations in the review sample

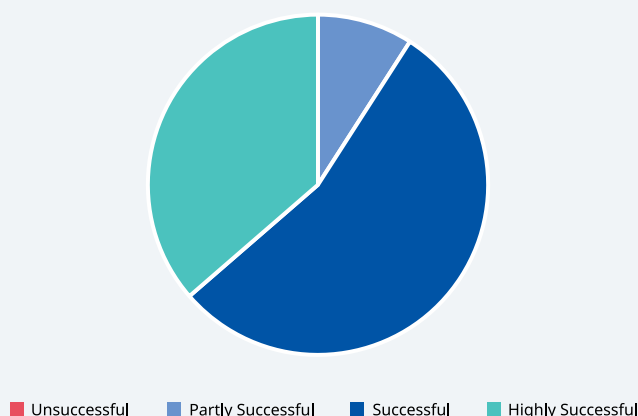
The funds allocated to employment and crisis response are a reflection of the impact the Syrian refugee crisis has had on Jordan. The evaluated interventions included in the review reflect this. The evaluations covered several of the thematic areas addressed by ROAS during the period. Employment projects, particularly projects that responded to the Syrian refugee crisis such as the employment intensive infrastructure programme projects were implemented. In addition to the employment intensive infrastructure projects, other employment projects such as the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector included both refugees and host communities. Jordan is also the only country in ROAS to have a Better Work programme, and the evaluation sample included three Better Work evaluations. Jordan is also part of the PROSPECTS project.

Jordan has also participated in labour migration programmes. Jordan is part of the Nepal-Jordan migration corridor included in the fair recruitment initiatives, as well as being part of Work in Freedom and FAIRWAY. These programmes have been implemented over several phases. Additionally, projects aimed at supporting the elimination of child labour have been implemented in Jordan. One project focused on social protection, the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project.

7. ILO's Development Cooperation dashboard lists outcomes and outputs as per the most recent P&B biennium. All P&B outcomes and outputs listed here thus refer to the 2024-25 P&B. The dashboard adapts funding from previous biennia to fit into the updated outcomes and outputs.

What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

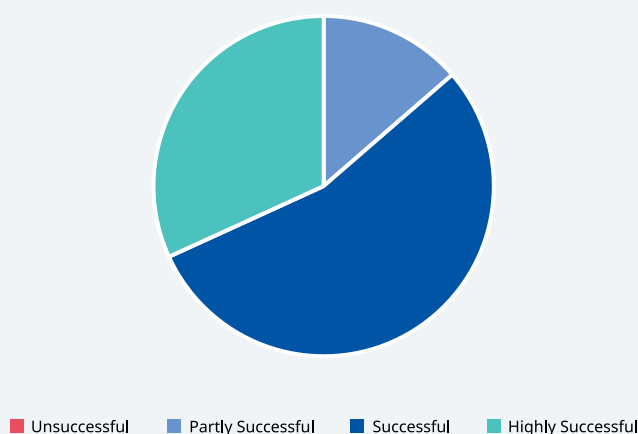
► Relevance of design of projects to stakeholders- Jordan



The relevance of the projects was assessed to be high by the evaluation reports. Taking the overall question of whether the projects were considered relevant to the needs of the various stakeholders, 90% of the projects were either successful or highly successful in being designed to meet the needs of key stakeholders. Projects were identified as tackling areas of significant need in Jordan, including addressing employment for host and refugee communities, community cohesion, unemployment challenges faced by young people, and the migration governance. Projects were identified to align with government policies and priorities including the Economic Modernization Vision of Jordan.

Some concerns linked to relevance were noted particularly linked to labour migration and support given to refugees. Evaluations of migration programmes noted that the willingness and capacities of trade unions to support migrant workers was often limited, and as a result, programmes often worked with civil society organisations to address this gap. Some tensions were reported on the balance of support to refugees and host communities in the employment programmes, with advocacy on the issuing of work permits for refugees often proving challenging.

► Effectiveness of delivering expected results- Jordan



Overall projects in Jordan had been successful in delivering expected results. Around 70% of projects were successful or highly successful in ensuring outputs and intermediate outcomes were achieved. The reasons for the underachieving of

results included delays in project start-up and the recruitment of key personnel, overly ambitious project design when considering the length of the project, and pandemic related delays.

Key achievements in Jordan included:

Improved social cohesion in employment projects involving host and forcibly displaced communities



Evaluation reported there had been improvements in social cohesion in projects involving host and forcibly displaced communities. In Jordan, the ILO contributes to the Jordan Response Plan and Jordan compact approach. The employment intensive infrastructure programmes, PROSPECTS, and other employment projects have been part of this support. A study conducted by the ILO found a positive trend towards social cohesion between the different phases of the programmes⁸.

Qualitative feedback from the evaluation reports showed that where the employment intensive infrastructure programmes allowed host and refugee communities to work together on common projects community tensions were reported to have reduced. These projects are implemented in a challenging context for working on refugee and migrant labour issues. The ILO struggled on project outputs linked to the provision of work permits for Syrians in Jordan and thus the achievements of improved cohesion at the community level is significant.

Provision of short-term income generation opportunities for host communities and refugees



The employment intensive infrastructure programme has implemented several projects that have provided support to vulnerable host and refugee communities to access short-term income generating opportunities. Although this opportunity is often short-lived, the ability to access income

was appreciated by the affected communities. In more recent projects, the ILO has also moved towards a focus on longer term employment opportunities and the provision of vocational training.

Planting of trees



The evaluation reports indicate Jordan included an important focus on the just transition to environmental sustainability. The employment intensive infrastructure programme has supported the Government of Jordan's goal to 10 million trees over five years. The evaluation of phases 3-5 of the employment intensive infrastructure programme in Jordan recommended future projects increase the focus on tree planting. This demonstrates an improvement from the earlier evaluation of the Phase II: Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry project raised concerns over the sustainability of the tree planting approach due to the survival rate of seedlings and limited municipal budget for maintaining them:

Jordan garment factories endorsing zero fee legislation



The FAIRWAY programme provided technical inputs into the draft amendment of article 12 of the national labour law of Jordan that included a provision to prohibit the charging of fees to migrant workers. This was endorsed by the garment factories and included in the review of the collective bargaining agreement in 2019.

8. ILO, (2022). How ILO Programmes Contribute to Social Cohesion between Refugees/IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_854504.pdf

Improvements in capacities of government stakeholders



Several evaluations noted increases in the capacities of government stakeholders. An example of this was the utilisation of the Transform programme in the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project. This had strengthened capacities among key focal points in relevant ministries. The translation of the training curriculum into Arabic was highlighted as a good practice that would allow it to be rolled out to other countries in the region.

Asset Creation / Infrastructure development



The importance of asset creation and encouraging local ownership of maintenance was identified as a good practice in several of the evaluations of EIIP projects. This was acknowledged to be a work in progress in the evaluations. Approaches such as ensuring commitments from the municipalities at the handover of the asset were highlighted as one element but with a need to ensure the value of the community is of sufficient value to ensure maintenance.

Good Practices

Using TVET to promote social cohesion

ILO ROAS's report on the ILO's contribution to social cohesion in the Arab States Region identified the contribution that the PROSECTS project had made to promoting social cohesion through the use of TVET in Jordan. TVET had been used to both strengthen positive contact between different groups and promote messages of peace and respect.

Corridor Approach

ILO Jordan participated in multi-regional labour migration programmes with a migration corridor of the country of origin and Jordan. As the country of destination being included in the project. Jordan participated in the FAIR recruitment programme that saw Better Work garment factories in Jordan participate in relation to their employment of migrants from Nepal. This practice allows for migrants to receive support prior to departure, including considering the option of not migrating, and also have support in the country of destination through trade unions, CSOs, and migrant resource centres.

Lessons Learned

Transition from cash for work modalities

The EIIP model was highlighted as being a successful approach to address the stresses crisis affected communities were facing. The cash for work element had provided both host community members and IDPs and refugees with much needed injections of cash, while asset development had helped strengthen municipality engagement. However, it has been noted in the evaluations the ILO needs to move beyond the cash for work element to focus on more sustainable approaches to long-term employment and emphasis the value add of the EIIP approach beyond cash for work.

Coordination with ROAS and utilisation of technical expertise is crucial

Most evaluations found there had been good communication between the project team and the technical expertise available in the DWT of ROAS, and where relevant, experts in Geneva. Projects where the interaction had been more limited were rated lower on efficiency and impact than their counterparts who maintained a good interaction. For example, the Formalizing Access to the Legal Labor Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II project evaluation found that technical experts had not been adequately consulted during the design and implementation of the project. The project framework was identified as one of the challenges that limited the project's impact as a whole.

Involvement of tripartite constituents increases potential for success of the project

There was mixed reporting on the involvement of the tripartite constituents in the evaluation reports, but projects that had succeeded in ensuring the involvement of all constituents in project implementation and monitoring often demonstrated high levels of success in implementing activities and strengthened possibilities for sustainability.

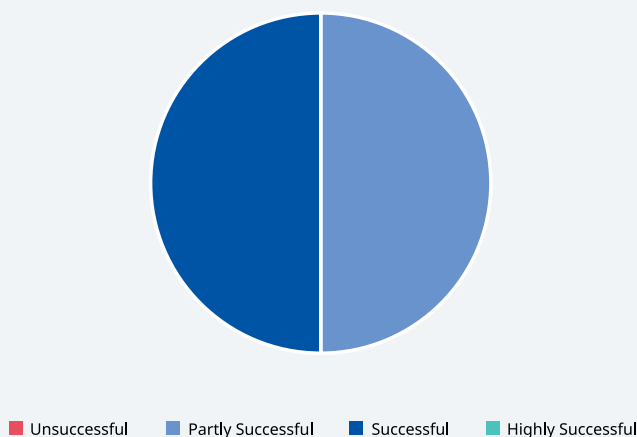
Payment of stipends to attend training may create competing motivations

The provision of financial incentives for refugees to attend training was identified as creating potential concerns about the motivation to attend. It was noted that without the payment of stipends, beneficiaries would not attend the training, thus raising questions about the sustainability of the initiative. Concerns were also raised over competition for beneficiaries contributing to this issue as larger stipends as a means of competing with other organisations in attracting beneficiaries. This is particularly the case in projects supporting Syrian refugees who have limited opportunities to utilise the skills as a result of restrictions on working in the host country.



What are the main gaps in interventions?

► Impact of Projects- Jordan

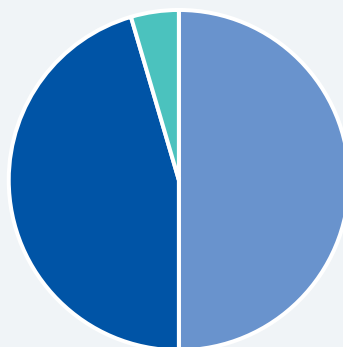


Overall, projects in Jordan during the assessment period appear to have some success in achieving impact. Fifty percent were adjudged to have been successful and the other half to have been partly successful. The length of the projects and the intensity/level of training and other support that could be given were often cited as factors than affected impact. Many had achieved some short-term impacts but without further support, longer-term impacts would not be achieved. The short-term nature of many projects also made it difficult for evaluations to judge what the impact would be in the long-term.

“The Evaluation has built capacity among the ILO Labour Inspector and supported the creation of a new Inspection Unit at the MOL. However, the project has not engaged the MOL to continue the training. To sustain the project, more inspectors will have to be trained; after obtaining experience, they in turn will be able to train their peers. The Evaluation as noted previously found that the project requires an exit strategy for the training of the Labour Inspectors.” (JOR1854, p. 63)

The evaluation reports suggest the ILO in Jordan has only been partly successful in achieving sustainability. Important progress had been achieved but often additional work was needed to ensure institutionalisation of the changes. A lack of exit plans or sustainability strategy was noted in several evaluations, and the short-time frame for the projects often contributed to challenges in sustainability. The EU-ILO collaboration in the monitoring of labour aspects in the implementation of the EU’s rules of origin initiative for Jordan – Phase II project gives one such example:

► How successful has the ILO been in ensuring the sustainability of its interventions? Jordan



Unsuccessful Partly Successful Successful Highly Successful

Indicators for measuring social cohesion

Although the study commissioned by the ILO on social cohesion was able to identify that projects in Jordan had positively impacted social cohesion, it also reported a lack of indicators to effectively measure this in the ILO's projects.

Tripartism and Social Dialogue

Evaluation reports suggested there had been limits to the involvement of the tripartite constituents and a reduced focus on social dialogue. This is reflective of challenges noted throughout the region. For example, the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project identified there had been limited connections to social dialogue:

“The programme is not specifically relevant to social dialogue or labour standards, although contributions were noted around improved dialogue around NSPS implementation, as well as work with employers around social insurance models.” (JOR2001, p. 6)

Similar findings were identified in the work on the elimination of child labour. The Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan project found:

“The project's lack of engagement with employer representatives translated into a difficulty in working with individual farm owners and obtaining the cooperation of each in this project. This should be avoided in future project which must strive to always engage with ILO's tripartite constituents.” (JOR2052NOR, p. 50)

Disability Inclusion

There was only limited evidence to suggest that disability inclusion had been addressed in projects. Many evaluations did not refer to disability inclusion and the majority of those that did indicate that the projects had not taken disability inclusion into account. There were some positive examples though. Despite not being included in the design of the project, the Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan project had included children with disabilities in its case management protocol and the Towards Improved Knowledge on Labour Market and Employment Conditions of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon project had included persons with disabilities in surveys, although had faced challenges in reaching them during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns.

Utilising the ILO's normative framework

There were limited references to the ILO's normative framework in the evaluation reports. The evaluation of the Research Partnership for Improved Livelihoods of Jordanian & Syrian Youth explicitly notes a gap in the knowledge of stakeholders on the ILO's supervisory mechanisms.

“Enhancing knowledge of the stakeholders and updating on the status of the implementation of the ILS ratified by Jordan drawing the attention of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) to Jordan government would have strengthened the knowledge of the stakeholders, allowed to bridge the knowledge gap in the ‘problem’ areas and enhance accountability of tripartite constituents in future policy development.” (JOR2104 MUL, ps. 49 & 50)

“63% of workers did not believe their project experience would help them find a job. Most workers did not expect working with the project would lead to the possibility of future employment opportunities. Most preferred that their employment with the project should continue for longer.” (JOR1909ITA, p. 31)

That said, more recent evaluations have identified attempts by the ILO to focus more on asset development and vocational training for longer-term employment and less on cash for work and link this to market-based vocation training opportunities:

“As the programme has evolved, it has started to focus more on longer-term employment in line with the intent of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme model. Phase IV has opened opportunities for the participation of workers in labour market oriented vocational training for longer-term employment.” (JOR1805DEU EIIP Jordan Phase III-V Evaluation, p. 26)

Lack of long-term job opportunities

The short-term nature of most of the employment opportunities meant it was difficult for the evaluations to identify long-term impacts. The nature of the work meant that workers did not expect to maintain long-term positions but would prefer longer opportunities if available:

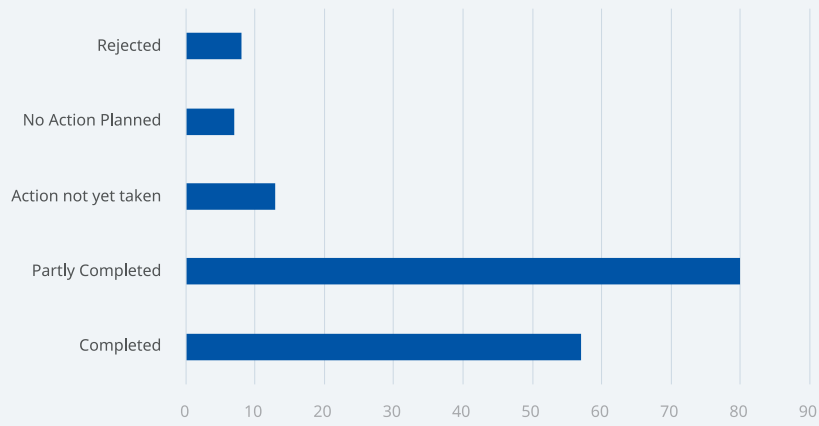
Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks were limited in many projects, reducing the ability of the ILO to measure progress and understand the impact of its projects. Indicators were often limited to the output level and did not include outcomes.

Recommendations

I-eval discovery lists 165 recommendations from evaluations conducted in Jordan during the review period that have management responses. The responses suggest that the vast majority of recommendations are acted upon in some manner. Fifty-seven were reported as being completed and 80 as being partly completed.

Action had not yet been taken on thirteen recommendations, and this was most usually linked to the recommendation being considered useful but not feasible without an additional project or funding. Recommendations that were rejected or had no action taken were usually considered out of the scope of a project, such as requiring change in government or ILO policy, or not relevant to the project.

► Management Responses - Jordan

Some of the themes that emerged included:

Conduct capacity assessments

To ensure the ambitions of the project do not outstrip the capacities of the partners the ILO expects to work with in a project, a recurring recommendation focused on conducting capacity assessments prior to a project's inception.

Beneficiary and partner selection

Several evaluations had findings suggesting the need to review or improve the selection of beneficiaries and/or partners. Selection of beneficiaries was identified as challenging for EIIP projects, where there were often differences between local authorities, contractors, and the ILO and other partners as to the best approach to select participants. Ensuring participants had the necessary skills to participate in training or that the training was adapted to accommodate those with limited skills such as literacy was also referred to employment projects that had a training component to them.

Transition away from CfW to asset creating and infrastructure enhancement

The evaluations in the sample have noted an evolution of the ILO's approaches to EIIP and other employment programmes during the review period. The evaluations have recommended the ILO continue to shift away from cash for work modalities to focus more on asset creation and

infrastructure enhancement. Strengthening the capacities of local authorities, communities, and private sector actors to maintain the assets will help contribute to the long-term ownership, and thus sustainability of the assets. The involvement of social partners with a clear role in projects has been identified as a priority by the ILO for EIIP projects and HDP Nexus work.

Longer term employment opportunities-vocation training and job placement

Linked to the previous recommendation, several evaluations also recommended a stronger focus on longer term employment opportunities rather than short term opportunities such as cash for work. Recommendations including linking beneficiaries to vocational training institutions and mentoring opportunities. Mentoring for employers who undertake to be part of the employment schemes was also a recommendation emerging from the evaluations.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation approaches

Monitoring and evaluation approaches and structures were often rated poorly by the evaluation reports, which noted projects often lacked outcome indicators and the effective means to measure change and impact.

Next Steps

Based on the findings of the evaluations and the recommendations made, some of the next steps ILO Jordan could consider include:

Develop a strategy to work with employer organisations and engage both trade unions and CSOs on strengthening worker voice and ensuring the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining for all workers, including migrant workers, are advocated for.

The multi-stakeholder approach the ILO has taken to mitigate capacity gaps of workers and employers' representatives has been identified as a key success of the work of the ILO. However, several evaluation reports also cautioned about the potential impact on tripartism if hard work to address the gaps of the social partners are not taken. It is important to continue to design projects that support the capacities of the social partners, and identify space and opportunities to further increase workers' and employers' representatives' capacities to engage on key topics while still supporting other organisations to be involved in this work as well.

Enhance awareness of the ILO's normative framework and supervisory mechanisms among key stakeholders

Several ILO instruments are useful for advancing decent work in Jordan, including the fundamental conventions, as well as newer instruments such as the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation 205, Employment and Decent Work for Peace. Ensuring there is strong understanding of these among ILO staff and the tripartite constituents would help support the embedding of ILS in projects.

Develop a strategy to engage organisations of persons with disabilities

The lack of attention to disability inclusion could be addressed by developing a strategy to engage organisations of persons with disabilities. The disability inclusion unit within GEDI developed operational guidelines for the inclusion of organisations of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of projects and programmes in 2023, and has several resources available on this.

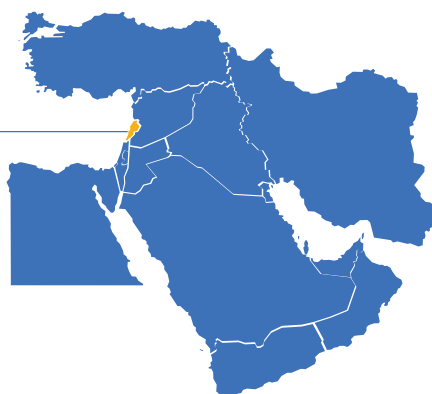
Develop a measurement of social cohesion that measures the impact and change the ILO is contributing to.

Programming in Jordan has been assessed as having improved social cohesion. However, this finding came from an externally commissioned study rather than through monitoring indicators embedded into programming. Improvements in social cohesion are an important in work on the HDP Nexus and thus developing tools to measure it would help the ILO deliver a more coherent approach to working on the Nexus.

Engage with ROAS to support the development of a clearer strategy on the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus including theory of change

As noted in various evaluations and other reports, the ILO occupies a unique position to work on the HDP Nexus, but is limited by a lack of understanding of the ILO's work and potential on the Nexus both internally and among tripartite constituents. Developing a theory of change should probably be done regionally, but it is important for Jordan to contribute and for specific contextual issues to be taken into consideration.

Lebanon



The second largest country by both budget on the DC Dashboard and number of evaluations in the sample was Lebanon. Seven projects implemented solely in Lebanon were included in the sample with a further 11 projects including Lebanon as part of multi country projects. The DC Dashboard shows a total budget of \$100.85 between 2018 and 2023 and 37 projects. Of these, 14 cross the \$1 million threshold for an independent evaluation. The largest allocation of funds per P&B outcomes and outputs during the review period was for Output 8.5. Improved coherence in support and action to promote decent work in crises and post-crisis situations with \$24.4 million allocated, followed by \$23.1 million for Outcome 3, 'Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all'. \$14.4 million was allocated for output 3.2 on skills. No other output had more than \$3.5 million allocated.

The evaluation sample reflects the multiple crises that Lebanon has faced during the review period. Lebanon has had a significant volume of employment projects implemented during the review period, mainly focused on vulnerable host and refugee communities. These include the employment intensive infrastructure projects funded by the Government of Germany and often evaluated jointly with the Jordan projects. Lebanon is also part of the PROSPECTS project. The sample also included two projects focused on skill development, the Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon implemented just in Lebanon, as well as the global SKILL UP project. The reform of the Lebanon social protection system was supported by the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project. Although there was only one project on social protection, the project achieved significant results. Three other projects focused on social protection are currently active and may receive evaluations at some point.

There have only been limited actions to address the elimination of child labour, with one project implemented, the PHASE II Ending Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) amongst Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities project which was less than one year and ended in 2019. Action on forced labour has been limited to participation in global migration programmes. Lebanon was part of the FAIRWAY and Work in Freedom projects.

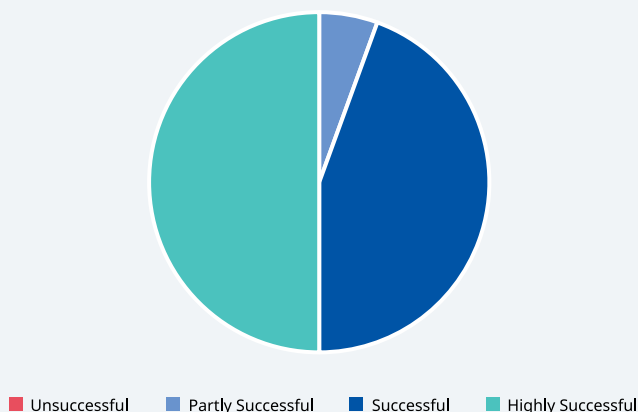
\$24.4 million

allocated in support and action to promote decent work in crises and post-crisis situations.



What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

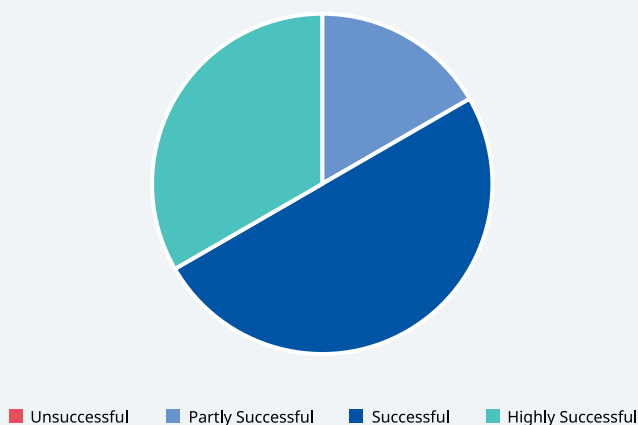
► Relevance of design of projects to stakeholders- Lebanon



The relevance of the projects was assessed to be high by the evaluation reports. Taking the overall question of whether the projects were considered relevant to the needs of the various stakeholders, almost 95% of the projects were either successful or highly successful in being designed to meet the needs of key stakeholders. Projects were identified as tackling areas of significant need in Lebanon, including the development of an inclusive national social protection system, addressing employment for host and refugee communities, addressing gaps in the TVET market, and migration governance. Projects were identified to evidence-based policy making through the improvement of government statistics.

There were some concerns about how effectively the migration programmes and projects working on the refugee crisis aligned with government priorities, especially given the financial crisis, the impact of Covid-19, and the Beirut port bomb. Some tensions were reported on the balance of support to refugees and host communities in the employment programmes. Evaluations of migration programmes noted that the willingness and capacities of trade unions to support migrant workers was often limited, and as a result, programmes often worked with civil society organisations to address this gap.

► Effectiveness of delivering expected results - Lebanon



The ILO was adjudged to have been relatively successful in achieving planned results in Lebanon. Fifty percent of the projects suggested the ILO had been successful and a further seventeen percent that it had been highly successful. In Lebanon there were similar findings to other countries in the region in the projects that had been less successful. Delays in the inception of projects and the length of projects against the ambition of the results framework were often cited as challenges. Projects that had important successes were at the same time often challenged by over-ambitious

targets. For example, the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project was successful in achieving 2 of its 4 milestones, including the improvement of labour market statistics for policy making, but the project was unable to achieve its last milestone, that of developing and adopting a national employment policy.

Key achievements in Lebanon included:

Asset Creation / Infrastructure development



The importance of asset creation and encouraging local ownership of maintenance was identified as a good practice in several of the evaluations of EIIP projects. The projects had worked with the local municipalities in Lebanon to identify suitable projects to work on. This was acknowledged to be a work in progress in the evaluations. Approaches such as ensuring commitments from the municipalities at the handover of the asset were highlighted as one element but with a need to ensure the value of the community is of sufficient value to ensure maintenance.

Provision of short-term income generation opportunities for host communities and refugees



The employment intensive infrastructure programme has implemented several projects that have provided support to vulnerable host and refugee communities to access short-term income generating opportunities. Although this opportunity is often short-lived, the ability to access income was appreciated by the affected communities. In more recent projects, the ILO has also moved towards a focus on longer term employment opportunities and the provision of vocational training.

Providing support to migrant domestic workers



As part of the multi-regional migration programmes, the ILO worked on the provision of support to migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. The Work in Freedom programme has had success in contributing to the strengthening of legal systems, policies, and practices in the field of safe labour migration and counter-trafficking, including working with the judiciary to addressing reforming practices related to litigation.

“In Lebanon, the work addressing the judiciary will likely help in reforming the practices of litigation involving Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) and strengthen a human rights perspective, which could reduce the number of women detained on false charges...” (RAS1711GBR, p. 37)

Development of the first ever social protection strategy in Lebanon



The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project supported the development of a social protection strategy. This was considered a highly successful achievement that occurred because of the successful cultivation of relationships with the national authorities, the technical skills of both UNICEF and ILO staff, strong collaboration between UNICEF and ILO, and the personal involvement of the Resident Coordinator to ensure high level engagement in the strategy.

Good Practises

Application of social and environmental safeguards

Evaluations for the EIIP projects identified the application of social and environmental safeguards through inclusion in manuals and safeguard officers to be an important best practice. In Lebanon this involved technically qualified Social Safeguards Officers who combined environmental and social safeguards compliance with site visits. This was found to have allowed workers a voice to raise concerns. It had helped improved gender equality and disability inclusion by fostering an environment where women and persons with disabilities feel more comfortable in the workplace.

Involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities in developing products related to their needs

The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project showcased an important good practice for disability inclusion that was missing from most of the ILO's work in the region during the reporting period. The inclusion of organisations of persons with disabilities is critically important in ensuring projects represent the needs of persons with disabilities effectively. This project demonstrated an important good practice that helped ensure the social protection system was disability inclusive.

Coordination with UN agencies

There were examples of positive coordination with UN agencies in several evaluations. The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project involved a positive partnership between the ILO and UNICEF. The ILO also worked effectively with UNICEF in the Towards improved formal and non-formal technical and vocational education and training in Lebanon project, funded by UNICEF. The evaluation found that the ILO has been proactive in working with UNICEF and other key stakeholders including UNHCR, UNRWA, FAO and UNDP. The ILO has also coordinated with UNHCR through the PROSPECTS programme. The partnership with UNDP in the early phases of the employment intensive infrastructure programme was less successful and abandoned for later phases. This appears to have been driven by a lack of coordination between the agencies, the expected gains from UNDP's ability to identify infrastructure programmes quickly not materialising, and a failure to make cost savings from the partnership.

Lessons Learned

Involvement of tripartite constituents increases potential for success of the project

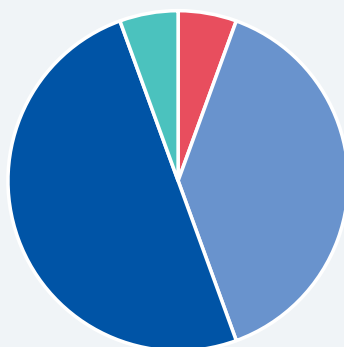
There was mixed reporting on the involvement of the tripartite constituents in the evaluation reports, but projects that had succeeded in ensuring the involvement of all constituents in project implementation and monitoring often demonstrated high levels of success in implementing activities and strengthened possibilities for sustainability. The convening power of the ILO was identified as an added value in the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs

Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks. This noted the space developed for social dialogue as a result of the project:

“Creating an environment for social dialogue, which has been absent for years before, is one of the most sustainable results achieved by the project. Interviews highlighted that social dialogue is required at different stages of drafting the policy. It is a very important aspect needed across all projects that aim to support the Lebanese context in general. After all, consulting with different constituents is key to the success of initiatives.” (LBN2001, p. 24)

What are the main gaps in interventions?

► Impact of Projects - Lebanon



■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

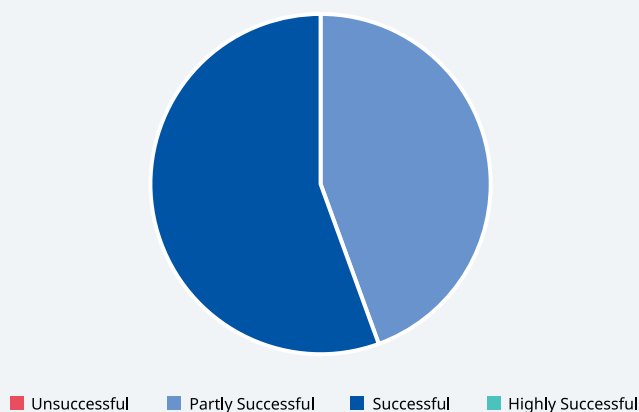
There were mixed findings on the impact of the ILO's projects in the evaluation reports. Fifty-six percentage of reports suggested the projects had been successful or highly successful in achieving impact, and thus just under half found the ILO to be only partly successful or unsuccessful.

Meaningful policy change had been achieved in some projects, including the development of the first ever social protection strategy in Lebanon. However, various projects were considered too short to have the opportunity to influence policies and guidelines. Projects that focused on responding to the refugee crisis achieved shorter term impacts, such as improved access to financial resources for host and refugee communities through employment opportunities, but these were generally short-lived. The employment intensive infrastructure programme was adjusting to incorporate longer term employment and training opportunities in its later stages. Infrastructure development was also considered to have been an important impact for the municipalities the ILO worked with. This impacted the overall findings on sustainability as well, with many evaluations reporting additional work was needed to institutionalise the changes the projects had contributed to.

56%

of reports suggested the projects had been successful or highly successful in achieving impact

► How successful has the ILO been in ensuring the sustainability of its interventions? Lebanon



Tripartism and Social Dialogue

Evaluation reports suggested there had been limits to the involvement of the tripartite constituents and a reduced focus on social dialogue. This is reflective of challenges noted throughout the region. Projects would sometimes involve one tripartite constituent but not all. This challenge was noted with workers' organisation in the Towards Improved Knowledge on Labour Market and Employment Conditions of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon project:

"During the evaluation mission, meetings were held with both employers' and workers' organizations in the two countries. Whereas employers' organization in both countries have been involved, workers organizations have not. In Jordan, the workers' organization remained supportive of the project. In Lebanon, however, the workers' organization FENASOL felt they were not meant to participate. FENASOL felt employers had "more bargaining power" for this project. "There seems to be a tendency for excluding workers from these activities. ILO could push for more tripartism. ... At the first workshop, you could see in the employers' faces that we were not welcome." FENASOL mentioned they had only participated in the launch of the project and wondered whether there were any further meetings, or whether there was a steering committee." (RAB1601RBS, p. 64)

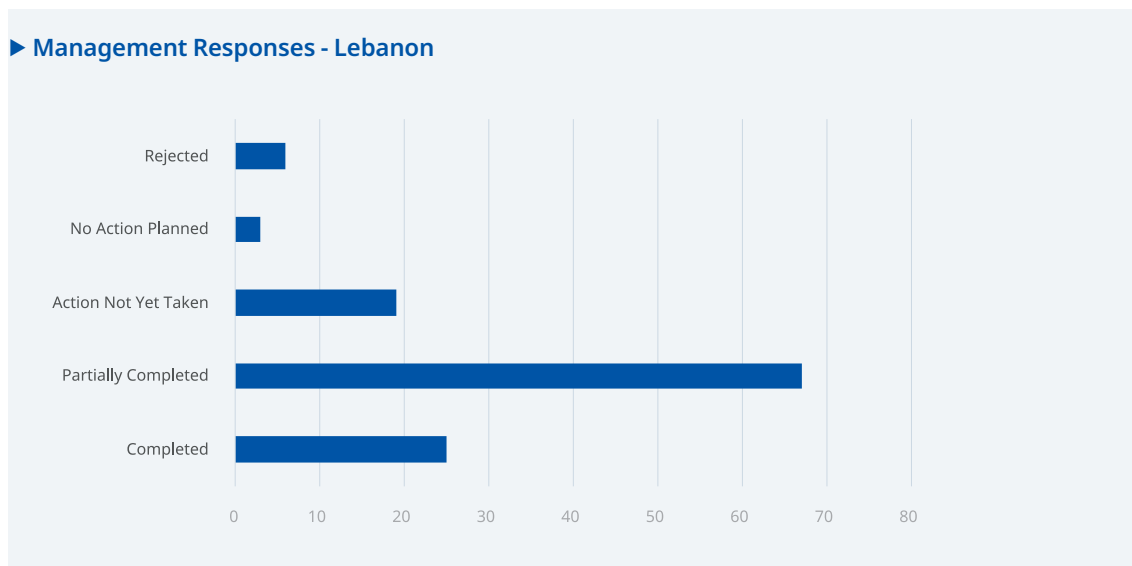
Just transition to environmental sustainability

There has been relatively little attention to the just transition to environmental sustainability in Lebanon, although the employment intensive infrastructure programme did include a focus on green jobs in later stages. It was reported that the municipalities the ILO worked with were not interested in green initiatives as part of the infrastructure programme, which had harmed the ILO's efforts to work on this. In other fields, just transition does not appear to have been considered by projects.

Recommendations

From the evaluations that have a management response, 120 recommendations were reported. Most of these were accepted by the project team, based on the response of completed (21%) or partially completed (55%). The recommendations that had a rejected or no action planned response were mainly because the project team considered the recommendation outside of the scope of the project or resources were not available to act on them.

Additionally, a small number of recommendations were rejected because it was felt they would change the nature of the project, such as the recommendation work with migrants who are men as well as women in the Work in Freedom project, which the project team believed would alter the nature of the interventions which were specifically tailored to contexts of patriarchy and women's distress.



Key recommendations include:

Clarify divisions of responsibilities between partner UN agencies

This recommendation was aimed at the partnership between ILO and UNDP in the employment intensive infrastructure programme which was not continued. Other evaluations suggest strong collaboration between the ILO and UNICEF in particular, suggesting this recommendation has been addressed.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes

Several evaluations raised concerns about monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as some other aspects of project management. Recommendations included ensuring the funding of monitoring and evaluation officers in projects, developing monitoring plans, ensuring the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and conducting follow up surveys and tracer studies with project participants to measure change. The review of the ILO's work on social cohesion also noted that projects do not have indicators for measuring changes in social cohesion, a key element of the HDP Nexus.

Review the process of beneficiary recruitment/selection

This theme in the recommendations suggested that, particularly in employment programmes, there were some tensions between the ILO's focus on vulnerable and marginalised communities and the desire of contractors to select people they knew or had worked with in the past for reasons of productivity and continuity.

Strengthen involvement and capacities of workers' and employers' organisations

The challenges of tripartism in the region are well documented in evaluation reports. There are also examples of the effectiveness of programmes that successfully include all partners and conversely gaps in programmes that are unable to do so. Strengthening the capacities of the social partners to participate in projects is repeated as a recommendation in the evaluation reports.

Continue programming

A common theme in evaluations are recommendations to continue programming, providing support, an engaging in the different themes the ILO has worked on. This suggests the relevance of the programming the ILO has conducted is high.



Next Steps

Based on review of the reports and the recommendations of the evaluators, some suggested next steps are proposed for discussion among the ILO team in Lebanon:

Engage with ROAS to support the development of a clearer strategy on the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus including theory of change.

As noted in various evaluations and other reports, the ILO occupies a unique position to work on the HDP Nexus, but is limited by a lack of understanding of the ILO's work and potential on the Nexus both internally and among tripartite constituents. Developing a theory of change should probably be done regionally, but it is important for Lebanon to contribute and for specific contextual issues to be taken into consideration.

Develop a measurement of social cohesion that measures the impact and change the ILO is contributing to.

Although some evaluations identified improvements in social cohesion, a study conducted by the ILO on social cohesion did not find notable differences in Lebanon. There are indicators for measuring changes in social cohesion. Improvements in social cohesion are an important in work on the HDP Nexus and thus developing tools to measure it would help the ILO deliver a more coherent approach to working on the Nexus and identify whether ILO's work is having an impact on this issue.

Develop a strategy to work with employer organisations and engage both trade unions and CSOs on strengthening worker voice and ensuring the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining for all workers, including migrant workers, are advocated for.

The multi-stakeholder approach the ILO has taken to mitigate capacity gaps of workers and employers' representatives has been identified as a key success of the work of the ILO. However, several evaluation reports also cautioned about the potential impact on tripartism if hard work to address the gaps of the social partners are not taken. It is important to continue to identify space and opportunities to further increase workers' and employers' representatives' capacities to engage on key topics while still supporting other organisations to be involved in this work as well.

Ensure the engagement of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) across all sectors

The work on developing a national social protection system actively included OPDs in the design of products relevant to them. This involvement is generally missing in most other projects and sectors. The Disability Inclusion team in GEDI has developed guidance on the engagement of OPDs in all aspects of the project cycle, which would support the ILO to achieve its commitments under indicator 5 of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. This guidance and the lessons learned from the social protection system project should be utilised in projects implemented in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region.

Iraq



Five projects implemented in Iraq solely were evaluated. Iraq has also participated in the PROSPECTS project. A total of \$29.09 million between 2018 and 2024 is listed on the DC Dashboard. Only six projects were over the \$1 million threshold for an independent evaluation. Twelve million six hundred thousand US dollars were tagged under Output 8.5: Improved coherence in support and action to promote decent work in crises and post-crisis situations, with a further \$5.2 million under Output 7.3. Increased capacity of Member States to harness social protection for inclusive life and work transitions and structural transformations. Outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all, Outcome 7: Adequate and effective protection at work for all and Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work, were the only other outcomes and outputs with more than \$1 million. Each was allocated approximately \$3 million.

The projects included in the evaluation sample included employment programmes focusing on developing a national employment policy through support to Kurdistan and using labour market statistics nationally, and employment intensive infrastructure programmes. The elimination of child labour is addressed in the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq project and OSH is addressed through the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq.

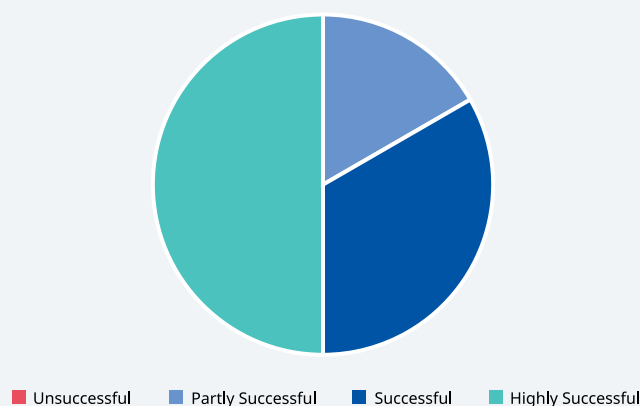
\$29.09 million

total of projects between 2018 and 2024



What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

► Relevance of design of projects to stakeholders - Iraq

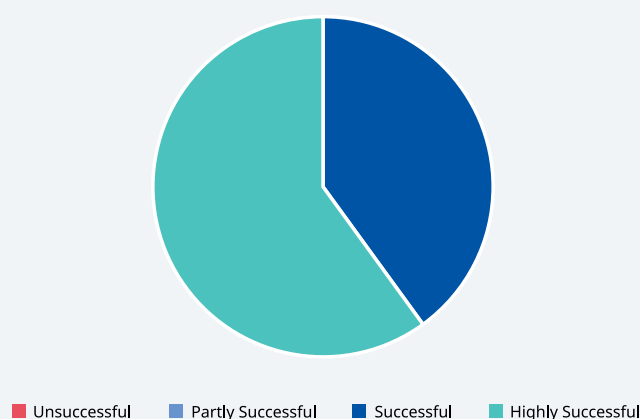


The evaluations indicated that the ILO's interventions in Iraq between 2018 and 2024 have been of relevance to key stakeholders and appreciated by the tripartite constituents. This aligns with the findings of the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), that rated the relevance as 5 out of 6 on its assessment scale. Projects were aligned with government plans and priorities, and the inclusion of affected communities in the projects' activities meant grass-root needs were addressed as well. Relevance was reduced in some cases though by limitations in the involvement of tripartite constituents in the design and implementation process, and the design of

projects being over ambitious considered both the length of projects and the capacities of the tripartite constituents for the roles assigned to them.

Overall, the projects had also been effective in implementing the planned outputs of the projects, with the caveat that time constraints had led to the non-achievement of a small number of outputs. Notable achievements include the delivery of income generating opportunities for marginalised communities, strengthening awareness and capacities of communities and policies makers on child labour, including the provision of skill training for the family members of child in or at risk of child labour.

► Effectiveness of delivering expected results - Iraq



Key achievements in Iraq included:

Use of ILS



During the reporting period, Iraq ratified the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (no.102). This is attributed to successful policy engagement with the Government of Iraq. A comprehensive social protection law was enacted after the ratification of C.102. The ILO also supported the government to enhance its capacities to report on the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), through the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 in Iraq project. ILS were also central to the implementation of the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project. The National Action Plan Against Child Labour was developed to align with ILS and capacity building on the two fundamental child labour conventions was conducted for tripartite constituents.

The development evidence-based policies for national labour inspection and OSH that were validated by the social partners



The Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 supported tripartite committees to develop and validate policies for labour inspection and OSH that are being utilised in Iraq. The guidelines and other activities of the project contributed to a substantial increase in labour inspections (99%) and OSH inspections (from 686 to 12,215).

Improvements to the national legal and policy frameworks for child labour



The ILO in Iraq worked on the elimination of child labour through the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project. A notable achievement of this project was the inclusion of international labour standards into Iraq and Kurdistan's legal and policy framework. This was combined with reported increased capacities of stakeholders at the policy dialogue level.

Conducting a labour force survey exercise



The Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI (labour market information) Systems and LM (labour market) Statistics project was able to conduct a labour force survey exercise and this included ensuring the survey was fully compatible with the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS 19) resolution and the Iraqi context. An important driver of this achievement was the support given to the two national statistics offices (Iraq and the autonomous Kurdistan region) which strengthened capacities within the offices. A reported unexpected outcome was the strengthening of relationships between the two offices.

Entrepreneurs applying what they have learned from training to their businesses



The Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project evaluation report highlights the success the project had in ensuring beneficiaries had the knowledge to utilise the Start and Know your Own Business training in their own businesses, including in marketing and financial management.

Good Practices

Enhancing the capacity of partner organisations

The Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project and the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 in Iraq project both identified enhanced capacities of partner organisations as a result of the capacity building work carried out by the ILO. Questions about sustainability remain though, including whether the organisations will have the means to continue to implement activities once the support of the ILO has ceased. It was also noted by one of the technical specialist in feedback to the first draft of this report that there has not been capacity building for employers federations in the last three years and thus this is a notable gap in the ILO's work in Iraq.

▀▀ In general there was limited attention to disability inclusion.

Disability inclusion in labour force survey

While in general there was limited attention to disability inclusion, one project, the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project had ensured the inclusion of indicators specific to persons with disabilities in the labour force survey:

“Both the LFS and policy components of the project integrated people with disabilities, such that indicators specific to PWDs may be produced by the survey results, and PWDs are included explicitly in the NEP with specific policy actions directed towards PWDs.” (IRQ1801RBS, p. 22)

Holistic approach to child labour programming

The evaluation of the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project in Iraq identified that the project utilised an integrated approach focusing on policy level work to align Iraq's laws with ILS, enhanced services at the level interventions, and capacity strengthening and awareness raising of key stakeholders. This ensures that the project is addressing the issue of child labour at multiple levels and can lead to policy related to child labour being relevant at the grassroots level, and that programmes can be piloted at the grassroots level that are potentially replicable by policy makers outside of the project.

Lessons Learned

Mismatch of project ambitions with resources, time and capacities of partners can lead to unfulfilled targets and results

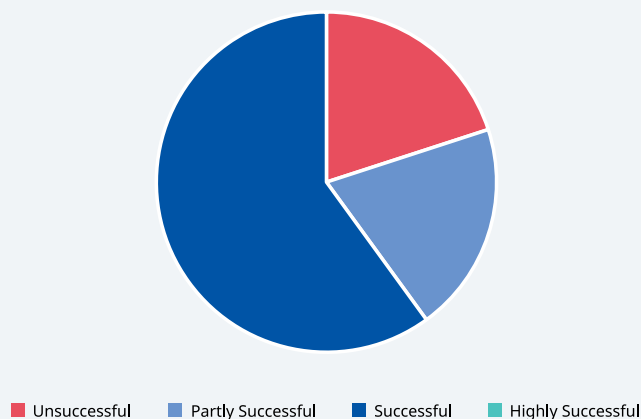
Designs of projects that are overly ambitious for various reasons including time allocated, project resources and the capacities of constituents and other partners can lead to unfulfilled project outcomes and can particularly impact sustainability.

Addressing staffing gaps promptly and ensuring strong communication between the country office

Two of the evaluations identified staffing challenges as causing problems for the timely delivery of projects. One of these, the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics was as a result of the untimely passing away of the project manager. In this case the absence of a force majeure policy for addressing these challenges was identified as a lesson learned by the evaluation report. The other, Support the Ministry Of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan to develop an action plan for the implementation of the employment policy project came from delays in recruiting a Chief Technical Officer.

What are the main gaps in interventions?

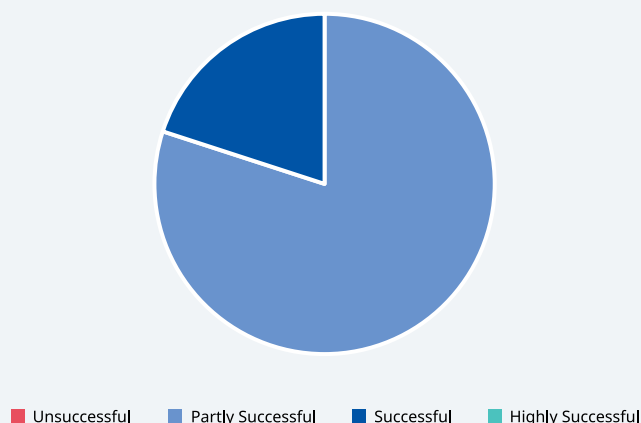
► Impact of Projects - Iraq



Although the projects have demonstrated important achievements and impacts, particularly for short-term objectives, the evaluations assessed impact mainly to have been only partly successful or successful. None of the evaluations suggested the projects had been highly successful in impact. This is partly a function of the length of time needed for impact to be achieved and identified. As is noted, the projects are often just the first step in achieving policy or behavioural changes and considerable continued support is needed. The time allocated for projects

is often 2-3 years which is a short period for policy change to be achieved. An example of this is the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project. This had successful achievements such as the delivery of a labour force survey but was unable to achieve the goal of developing and validating a national employment policy. Impact of the project is thus dependent on continued support in future interventions to ensure the policy is successfully developed¹⁰.

► How successful has the ILO been in ensuring the sustainability of its interventions? Iraq



10. The ILO has reported that it has subsequently worked on the National Employment Policy which validated and endorsed by the Government of Iraq in November 2024.

Overall, the evaluation reports assessed sustainability of the ILO's work to be only partly successful. The limited length of projects versus the ambition of them means that policy achievements are not finalised and improved capacities are tenuous. The need to continue programming is highlighted in the evaluations. The otherwise successful project, Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project was not able to complete the milestone of developing a national employment policy and the evaluation recommends the ILO continue to support the development of the national employment policy in future (this has subsequently been achieved, emphasising the importance of continued work beyond short-term project timelines).

The capacities of project partners to carry out expected activities was also reported as a challenge in evaluations. The lack of capacity assessments prior to project implementation was cited as a reason for the projects being over-ambitious at times. Both the Support the Ministry Of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan to develop an action plan for the implementation of the employment policy project evaluation, which was conducted in 2018, and the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project evaluation conducted in 2022 for a project implemented between 2018 and 2021 recommended the ILO conduct capacity assessments prior to implementing projects.

Social Dialogue and Tripartism

The evaluation reports reflect similar challenges with social dialogue and tripartism across the region. Projects have made attempts to involve tripartite constituents and have worked on capacity building initiatives but limitations in tripartism impact this effort. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) states that “effective tripartism is a fundamental assumption within the ILO intervention model itself, yet addressing splintering is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts. Instead, discord and disagreement are sometimes sidestepped for the sake of project implementation” (p.10). This finding is supported by other evaluations. For example, the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour

amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project noted that employers' organisations had not been involved. The Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project evaluation also noted the project could have done more to involve tripartite constituents. Concerns about the level of ongoing communication with key project stakeholders were raised, which has an impact on the level of engagement of the tripartite constituents.

Disability Inclusion

Despite the one example highlighted above, there was limited evidence of disability inclusion within the evaluation reports. The Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project evaluation report states that the project had not considered disability at all and was disability blind. The three other evaluations do not assess the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Just Transition to Environmental Sustainability

The evaluations did not refer to just transition to sustainability with the exception of one fleeting reference to trainees struggling to understand the concept of recycling. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) noted there had been limited progress on environmental sustainability with only ad hoc approaches in projects.

Coherent peace building approach/Measurement of peace building objectives

The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) identified the ILO lacks a coherent framework for collecting indicators on peacebuilding outcomes. Project evaluation reports have very limited references to the HDP Nexus and other studies have suggested ILO ROAS lacks a common understanding of the Nexus and its application in the region¹¹.

11. ILO, (2023). ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities. p.19

Recommendations

Four of the evaluations had a management response. Of the 35 recommendations included in these evaluations, 23 were listed as completed, 7 as partially completed, 1 as not action taken yet, and 4 were rejected. The four rejected recommendations were those considered outside of the scope of the project to address, such as suggestions for changing ILO's pay grade scales and providing institutional capacity support with un-earmarked funds, or related to projects that have ended with no next phase planned.

Recommendations from the reports included:

Undertaking capacity assessments prior to the projects

To ensure the expected contributions of project partners match their capacities and allow the project design to be realistic, capacity assessments should be done during the design of the project.

Ensure project ambitions match the time and resources available

Several projects had over-ambitious targets relative to the time and resources available for the project, meaning that not all outputs were achieved. This particularly has an impact on long-term impact and sustainability.

Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation functions

Several evaluations raised concerns about monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as some other aspects of project management. Recommendations included ensuring the funding of monitoring and evaluation officers in projects, developing monitoring plans, ensuring the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and conducting follow up surveys and tracer studies with project participants to measure change. The review of the ILO's work on social cohesion also noted that projects do not have indicators for measuring changes in social cohesion, a key element of the HDP Nexus.

Strengthening communication between projects and constituents

As part of the process for strengthening the involvement of the tripartite constituents, it was recommended that the ILO work to strengthen communication throughout the project cycle with key stakeholders, particularly tripartite constituents. Enhancing coordination mechanisms between the government, tripartite constituents, the private sector and other stakeholders was also recommended.

Ensure continued assistance on policy development and capacity building to ensure gains from projects are maintained

A common theme in evaluations are recommendations to continue programming, providing support, an engaging in the different themes the ILO has worked on. This suggests the relevance of the programming the ILO has conducted is high.

Improve the focus on gender and disability inclusion

The Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq project recommended more targeted approaches to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and addressing the gendered aspects of child labour. Although not included as a recommendation in other evaluations, the limited attention to disability inclusion was notable in the projects reviewed¹².

12. ILO ROAS is conducting a separate synthesis review of the ILO's work on gender equality in the region, and thus this was not explicitly considered in this review. This is mentioned here as it came from the same evaluation and there are synergies with the theme of non-discrimination and disability inclusion.

Next Steps

Based on review of the reports and the recommendations of the evaluators, some suggested next steps are proposed for discussion among the ILO team in Iraq:

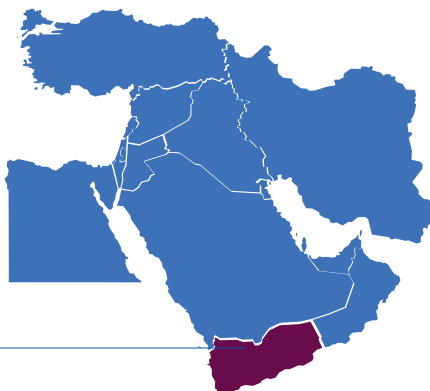
Engage with ROAS to support the development of a clearer strategy on the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus including theory of change.

As noted in various evaluations and other reports, the ILO occupies a unique position to work on the HDP Nexus, but is limited by a lack of understanding of the ILO's work and potential on the Nexus both internally and among tripartite constituents. Developing a theory of change should probably be done regionally, but it is important for Iraq to contribute and for specific contextual issues to be taken into consideration.

Develop a communication strategy to improve communication with key stakeholders.

This would help the projects address the challenges of communication that was identified by some of the project evaluations. It should also support the ILO's work on tripartism as well as the development of the strategy should support ensuring constituents are kept up to date with projects and thus more likely to be engaged in project activities.





Yemen

Four projects included in the evaluation sample were implemented in Yemen during the review period. Between 2018 and 2024, the DC Dashboard shows \$12.59 million being allocated to Yemen. This was mainly (\$9.64 million) from funding from the UN. Five programmes were above the \$1 million threshold.

Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work (\$3.2 million), Output 4.3. Increased support for enterprises – especially MSMEs – to achieve decent work and improve productivity (\$2.3 million), and Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market (\$1.5 million) were the largest P&B outcomes and outputs.

Projects in Yemen included in the evaluation sample focused on addressing the crises faced in Yemen. Employment programmes included the strengthening the resilience of rural communities to address crisis through food security and livelihoods project, a joint UN project which the ILO focuses on skill development and entrepreneurship, and an employment intensive infrastructure project. One project addressed child labour through the recruitment of child soldiers. Work in Yemen has included a further focus on skill development through supporting the development of a national TVET framework.

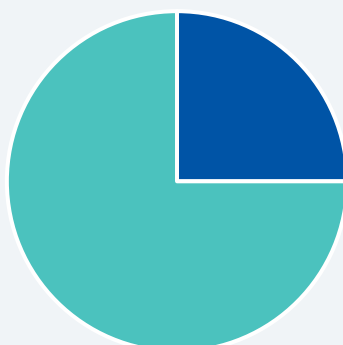
\$12.59 million

allocated total of projects between 2018 and 2024



What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

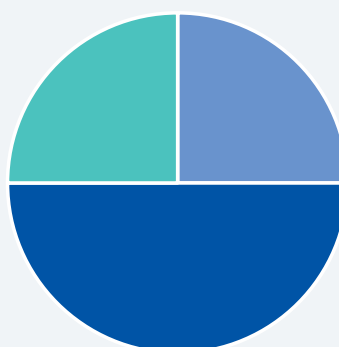
► Relevance of design of projects to stakeholders - Yemen



The evaluations indicated that the ILO's interventions in Yemen between 2018 and 2024 have been of relevance to key stakeholders. This aligns with the findings of the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), that rated the relevance as 5 out of 6 on its assessment scale. The humanitarian needs in Yemen are significant and the ILO's approach to addressing humanitarian needs utilising its development lens is relevant to the context. However, stakeholders did question the alignment of the projects with Yemen's capacities needs, where low capacities impacted the abilities of the constituents to support the projects. Limited consultation with the constituents in the design of projects was highlighted as one of the causes of disconnected between the projects' ambitions and achievements. Additionally, the complex political nature of Yemen was reported to have harmed the implementation of projects in North Yemen due to very limited relationships with the de facto government authority in this area.

The ILO has been relatively effective in achieving the intended results of the projects. One of the projects, the Supporting Resilient Livelihoods and Food Security in Yemen joint programme (ERRY II) - through UNDP project was identified as having achieved most of its planned outputs. Two projects were able to ensure a significant number of its planned outputs were completed, but not all. One project, the Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) & Decent Employment for Women in Yemen project was reported to have only achieved 40% of its activities. For all projects in Yemen, the precarious political situation and ongoing conflict are challenging factors that increase the difficulty of achieving project targets.

► Effectiveness of delivering expected results - Yemen



■ Unsuccessful ■ Partly Successful ■ Successful ■ Highly Successful

Key achievements in Yemen included:

2022–24 Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)



The ILO has supported the Government to produce the 2022–24 Strategic Framework for TVET. This aims to build capacity in the private sector and match the needs of the labour market to the skills of Yemeni workers.

Improved income generation for project beneficiaries



The focus on downstream activities has led to important results for grassroot communities and individuals. The two projects focused on enhancing the resilience of rural communities, supported apprenticeship opportunities that have enhanced job opportunities. The second phase of the project reported that 70% of participants who had receiving training on small projects had increased their income.

Attention to environmental sustainability in the ERRY project



The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) identified there has been an impressive focus on environmental sustainability through the solar panel maintenance programme.

Provision of a unique project focusing on protection and livelihood



The evaluation of the Protecting Children and Youth from Recruitment and Use in Armed Conflict (CRUCSY) project reported that as far as the evaluator was aware, this project was unique in addressing both protection and livelihoods and thus crucially important for work within the HDP Nexus.

Good Practices

Quality of ILO's training

The quality of the ILO's training was identified as a key achievement by evaluations. The evaluation of the Protecting Children and Youth from Recruitment and Use in Armed Conflict (CRUCSY) project was reported to have effectively adapted the SCREAM¹³ methodology to the country context and provided an 'exemplary apprenticeship model'. Curriculum materials developed by the ILO for the Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen have been adopted nationally by the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. These successes are though tempered to an extent by information in the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) that reported that while stakeholders were pleased with the engagement on TVET, challenges linked to the destruction of training centres in the conflict and the difficulty in working with the de facto authorities in the north have limited the impact.

Building on existing initiatives

There is evidence the ILO has built on previous programming in the design of their interventions. The rural resilience programme has had two phases and the employment intensive infrastructure programme leveraged the resources, exposure and project staff of the rural resilience programme.

Provision of opportunities for collaboration

Evaluations identified the opportunities the projects gave for coordination between stakeholders to have been important for project achievements. This is despite some concerns about the involvement tripartite constituents in the design of the projects. The evaluation of the Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) & Decent Employment for Women in Yemen project reported that OSH training had provided an opportunity for collaboration, while the Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen project had ensured coordination between government ministries, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs.

Lessons Learned

Effective collaboration with authorities is critical for implementing in a politically fragile and conflict affected location.

The fragmented nature of the authorities in Yemen has presented the ILO with challenges in comprehensively fulfilling its mandate. Implementation has been most effective when the ILO has successfully nurtured relationships.

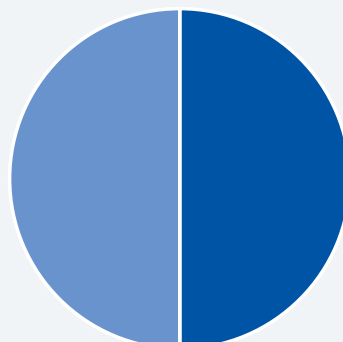
Involving technical experts in the ILO ROAS DWT helps ensure more coherent projects.

Projects in Yemen that successfully leveraged technical expertise from ILO ROAS DWT were able to address many project challenges more effectively than those that did not manage this.

13. SCREAM is Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media. SCREAM is an education and social mobilization programme, to help educators worldwide promote understanding and awareness of child labour among young people.

What are the main gaps in interventions?

► Impact of Projects - Yemen



Social dialogue and tripartism

Yemen experiences similar challenges to tripartism as those identified elsewhere in the region, particularly in conflict affected countries. Evaluation reports noted that tripartite constituents believed they should have been more involved at times in the design and implementation of projects. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) noted that 'during the time scope of the HLE, tripartism and social dialogue had largely, but not entirely, stalled in Yemen due to fragmented political authority; there are signs this could change, and it must if the ILO wishes to advance its model of intervention in Yemen.'. Other evaluation reports make limited or no references to social dialogue and tripartism.

Disability Inclusion

Disability inclusion is almost completely missing from the evaluation reports. The evaluation of the Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen II (ERRY II) identifies the project includes a targeted focused on marginalised groups including persons with disabilities but does report on whether the project achieved this. The other evaluations do not refer to disability inclusion at all.

Coherent peace building approach/ Measurement of peace building objectives

The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) identified the ILO lacks a coherent framework for collecting indicators on peacebuilding outcomes. Project evaluation reports have very limited references to the

HDP Nexus and other studies have suggested ILO ROAS lacks a common understanding of the Nexus and its application in the region.

Building ministerial capacities

The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) reported that the ILO in Yemen had taken a down-stream approach, addressing more grass-root humanitarian needs rather than addressing capacity building at the ministerial level. This finding is supported by assessments of activities in the project evaluations. This was seen as particularly pertinent to the ILO's work on skills and TVET. Government stakeholders were critical about the level of involvement they had had in the ILO's programme. However, it should be noted the ILO is constrained by the UN policy in engaging with warring parties, which limits capacity building to activities that are essential for project implementation.

Project management challenges

Project management concerns were raised in different evaluation reports. These included challenges in recruiting staff on a timely basis, communication between ROAS and the project teams in Yemen, the need for stronger inclusion of technical experts in the implementation of the programme, and communication of project goals, achievements and lessons learned with key stakeholders. The challenges of communication between ROAS and the project teams and the inclusion of technical experts came from an evaluation in 2019. the later evaluation in 2023 of the Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) & Decent Employment for Women in Yemen identified responsive back-stopping as a good practice, suggesting the previous concern had been addressed.

Recommendations

Only one of the evaluations for Yemen has a management response, thus it is not possible to analyse how recommendations were received by the ILO's project teams. Recommendations from the reports included:

Strengthen project management

To ensure the expected contributions of project partners match their capacities and allow the project design to be realistic, capacity assessments should be done during the design of the project.

Strengthen the training curriculum and capacity building activities

The ILO has worked on strengthening the TVET capacities in Yemen as well as providing training to communities to build resilience in rural communities. Recommendations from the evaluations included continue to strengthen the training curriculum and capacity building activities to build on the successes the ILO has achieved to date. It was suggested that the effectiveness of the ILO's skills training could be improved by providing post-finance training and market linkage support to trainees.

Ensure engagement of government stakeholders

The engagement of government stakeholders was identified as challenging given the political context. The Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen project recommended, 'Periodic meetings between ILO, local implementing partners, and local authorities will establish a more efficient and effective communication mechanism, and local authorities and government agencies should be involved with all phases of implementation, including any encountered challenges'. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), also stressed the importance of the engagement of all tripartite constituents in the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus.

A common theme in evaluations are recommendations to continue programming, providing support, an engaging in the different themes the ILO has worked on. This suggests the relevance of the programming the ILO has conducted is high.



Next Steps

Based on review of the reports and the recommendations of the evaluators, some suggested next steps are proposed for discussion among the ILO team in Yemen:

Engage with ROAS to support the development of a clearer strategy on the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus including theory of change.

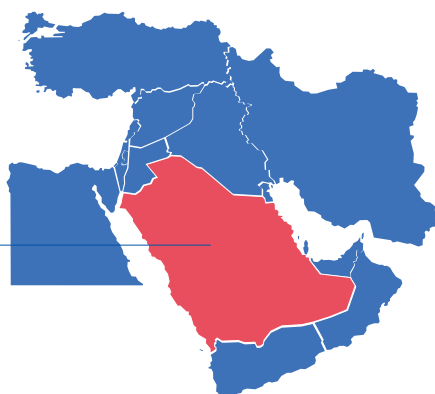
As noted in various evaluations and other reports, the ILO occupies a unique position to work on the HDP Nexus, but is limited by a lack of understanding of the ILO's work and potential on the Nexus both internally and among tripartite constituents. Developing a theory of change should probably be done regionally, but it is important for Yemen to contribute and for specific contextual issues to be taken into consideration. For example, Yemen's work on skill development, such as the skills development and enhanced employability of 3,800 vulnerable youth is an example of contribution to HDP Nexus that should be part any regional theory of change.

Identify avenues for disability inclusion

The evaluation reports suggest there has been limited attention to disability inclusion in Yemen. The ILO should consider ways to improve this. Strategies could include drawing on successful examples of disability inclusion from elsewhere in the region, conduct a mapping of organisations of persons with disabilities to identify potential partnerships, and ensuring project developers include outputs outcomes linked to disability inclusion.



Saudi Arabia



One project implemented in Saudi Arabia was included in the evaluation sample. This was the Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development project. Four projects and \$3.69 million are listed for Saudi Arabia on the DC Dashboard. Only the project evaluated crosses the \$1 million threshold for independent evaluations. \$1.5 million is tagged against Outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.

The one project included in the sample focused on addressing deficits in international labour standards and improving the capacities in Saudi Arabia to support social dialogues. The project also supported the assessment of child labour in Saudi Arabia and identified solutions for its elimination, as well as working to improve women's employment through more inclusive policies. The limited sample of evaluations for Saudi Arabia means in-depth synthesis analysis is not possible.

\$3.69 million

listed for Saudi Arabia on the DC Dashboard

Qatar



The DC dashboard lists five projects. These are three phases of the ILO Qatar Technical Cooperation programme and two secondments (from NORMES and LABADMIN OSH) in support of T/C programme. The first two phases of the T/C programme are included in the evaluation sample. The vast majority of funds are tagged against Outcome 2: International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision (\$14.3 million) and Output 1.2. Increased capacity of constituents to drive effective application of international labour standards (\$10 million).

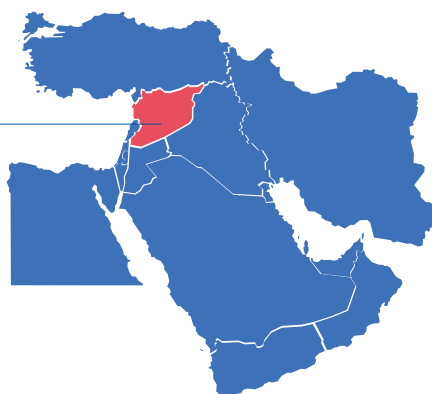
The T/C programme was designed as a response to observations of the CEACR on serious deficits on the fundamental principles and rights at work in Qatar. The programme has worked to improve respect for decent work and FPRW, support policy amendments to improve working conditions, and engaged on labour migration governance. The limited sample of evaluations for Saudi Arabia means in-depth synthesis analysis is not possible.

\$10 million

increased capacity of constituents to drive effective application of international labour standards



Syria

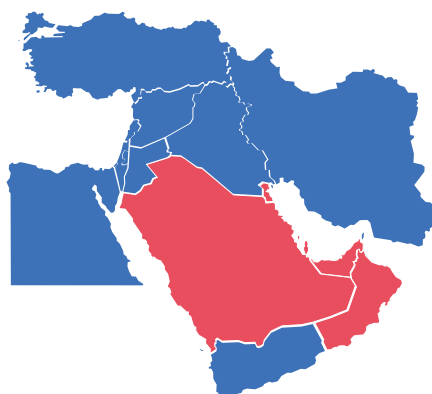


The DC dashboard lists 6 projects and \$2.91 million for the review period. The evaluation report included in the sample was a cluster evaluation featuring 3 of the projects. Most of the programme funds are allocated to Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue (\$1.1 million).

The projects included in the cluster evaluation focus on the elimination of child labour, improving the capacity of the labour inspectorate to strengthen labour inspection and occupational safety and health services, and to promote social dialogue and compliance with national labour legislation and international labour standards. The limited sample of evaluations for Syria means in-depth synthesis analysis is not possible.

During the process of producing the final version of this report, the fast-moving events in Syria, led to the fall of the Assad regime and the establishment of a new government. At the time of finalisation, it is too early to say what the trajectory of Syria will be, how successful the government will be in assuming control of the country, and what openness to international labour standards the new government will have. An important next step for the ILO in Syria would be to conduct rapid assessments of the opportunities that may arise and consider how to position itself in what will presumably be a period of change and reconstruction. It may be possible for ILO ROAS to consider if an integrated 'one-ILO' approach could be used here to serve as an example/lesson learning process for the rest of the region.

Other



No other country has a project implemented solely in the individual country included in the evaluation sample but many do feature in multi-country projects that are evaluated. The OPT is included in two evaluations, with Kuwait and Bahrain featuring in one each. Additionally, the Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries project which the Synthesis Review analysed the draft evaluation report included Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman.

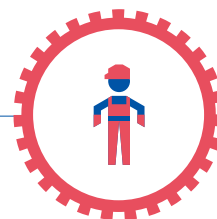
The DC Dashboard indicates that the OPT had 34 projects and a budget of \$20.3 million, Oman had 7 projects and a budget of \$1.4 million, the UAE had 2 projects and a budget of \$400,000, Bahrain had one project and a budget of \$104 million, and Kuwait had 8 projects and a budget of \$2.77. For most of these countries, the projects are small in nature and thus would not cross the threshold for an external and independent evaluation unless they are part of a bigger multi-country evaluation.

Two projects in the OPT are scheduled to end in 2024 and may receive evaluations, these are the Strengthening nexus coherence and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection sector and Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine projects. The Establishing an Independent Social Security Institution for the Administration of the New Social Security System for Private Sector Workers and their Family Members project in Palestine was above the \$1 million threshold for an independent, evaluation and ended in 2023, but does not yet appear to have been evaluated, which

may be related to the security situation in the OPT at the moment. The mid-term evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine was not published by the time of the sampling for this review, but was quickly reviewed during the final drafting of the report to provide more detail on the ILO's work on cooperatives.

There is not sufficient involvement of these countries in enough evaluations to provide a synthesis analysis of the findings.

Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries project which the Synthesis Review analysed the draft evaluation report included Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman.



Employment

Main types of Interventions

The largest sub-category of the ILO's work that has been evaluated in the Arab States region has been under employment. This has included employment intensive infrastructure programmes (EIIP), support for the development of national employment policies, strengthening of capacities of statistics bureaus on employment data, and support for enterprise development. The ILO's EMPLOYMENT department has also supported ILO's work on skills, addressed in a separate sub-section directly below this section. There is also considerable overlap with other categories of the ILO's work including crisis and the HLP nexus, enterprise, social protection, and cross-cutting elements of the ILO's work such as gender equality, social dialogue, and ILS.

Much of the ROAS employment programmes, particularly in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq, have been influenced by the response to the ongoing Syrian and Iraq refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) crises. Significant elements of the ILO's work have touched on HDP nexus. Employment intensive infrastructure programmes have been implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. These have focused on providing short-term job opportunities to host community members and Syrian refugees through the delivery of municipal level infrastructure programmes.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Overall, the evaluations assessed the ILO to have been successful in ensuring the interventions were relevant to stakeholders and addressed identified needs. The synthesis review assessed an average score of 3.3 among the projects, meaning an average of slightly higher than successful.

In general, the projects that were considered the most relevant for national stakeholders were those that ensured the involvement of the tripartite constituents and other key partners, and were able to address the needs of the communities they targeted.

For example, the evaluation of the Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II project identified the engagement of employers by implementing partners and provision of training on emerging sectors to be crucial in ensuring needs were addressed:

“The evaluation has found that overall, implementing partners who actively involve and work closely with employers, ultimately provided more market-driven trainings and skill sets. In other

words, the more that an implementing partner is engaged with employers, the more relevant the training is for job-matching.” (JOR1905US, p. 30)

Projects where there was less ownership by the tripartite constituents struggled more in various aspects of the evaluation. For example, the evaluation of the EU-ILO collaboration in the monitoring of labour aspects in the implementation of the EU's rules of origin initiative for Jordan – Phase II found that the Ministry of Labour had had very little involvement in Outcome 1 of the programme, leading to limited commitments from stakeholders:

“The Evaluation found that ILO has led Outcome 1 with little participation and collaboration from its principal stakeholder, the MOL. The Evaluation found that there was no interaction between ILO and the stakeholders nor had stakeholders collaborated in the project activities. The Evaluation concluded that there was no commitment from the stakeholders including the MOL to Outcome 1.” (JOR1854EUR, p. 12)

While the overall relevance of the EIIP projects was assessed to be strong, in some evaluations, it was identified that the modality of employment approach was not as relevant to some municipalities, who while they in general valued the infrastructure projects, preferred to utilise contractors rather than manage the recruitment of workers themselves, and in some cases in the earlier projects, disagreed with the project's aims on the types of infrastructure projects to be addressed.

“Finding a balance in the trade-off is a critical factor affecting the sustainability to EIIP model, which relies on the choice of municipal officials to use the model. Currently, the ILO's approach focuses on employment creation, with inclusion and social stability. This to the extent that the infrastructure Output is not included in the project's Logical Framework, including as “green” innovation. In contrast, the priority of Municipal stakeholders appears to be the delivery of quality infrastructure, for they are accountable to the communities. Evidence from the project is that officials would prefer professional companies deploying skilled labour.” (JOR1909ITA, p. 42)

The balance of Syrian and host community beneficiaries selected for the programmes was also reported as a challenge to relevance. Differences between the ILO and donor, and the host government on what the percentage of Syrians to host community beneficiaries should be were reported in the evaluation reports, with host governments wanting a greater focus on the host community, and the granting of work permits for Syrians proved challenging in several interventions.

In general, though, the EIIP approach and other projects linked to the Syrian crisis were seen as relevant for refugee and host community workers, local authorities, and other stakeholders, with the above issues being concerns but certainly not disqualifiers of the entire projects.

The projects were assessed to be relevant to workers and communities who were often the ultimate targets of the interventions. This was unsurprisingly more clearly articulated in projects that directly targeted these communities including EIIP and other employment programmes, enterprise development projects, and projects that provided links to vocational training for workers. In

the current context, the work done to support and advocate for work permits for Syrians was highly relevant, even if politically challenging.

Interventions more focused on policy and government capacities were identified as relevant to government officials. Projects in Lebanon and Iraq focusing on strengthening the capacities of various stakeholders to collect, analyse, and use labour statistics. This has strengthened the ability of government officials and others to use labour statistics in the development of policies and guidelines.

▀▀ The projects were assessed to be relevant to workers and communities who were often the ultimate targets of the interventions. This was unsurprisingly more clearly articulated in projects that directly targeted these communities including employment programmes, enterprise development projects, and projects that provided links to vocational training for workers. In the current context, the work done to support and advocate for work permits for Syrians was highly relevant, even if politically challenging.

Main Achievements

Provision of much needed short-term income for host and refugee communities



The ILO's employment programmes have provided much needed injections of income generation opportunities for host, IDP, and refugee communities. This is timely given the lack of employment opportunities and the impacts of Covid-19 and inflation on vulnerable communities. Evaluation reports include examples of positive feedback from the job seekers and evidence that the additional funds had been important for them and their families.

Trust and cooperation between communities



Trust and cooperation between refugee and host communities as a result of working together on the infrastructure projects was highlighted in the sampled evaluations. The intersection of the ILO's work on employment and on the HDP is demonstrated by this finding in evaluation reports.

The majority view from the surveys of workers in the two countries and from other stakeholders was that the programme has decreased tensions between members of the host and displaced communities participating in the programme with wider positive effects. (LBN 2003DEU, p.8)

Asset Creation / Infrastructure development



The importance of asset creation and encouraging local ownership of maintenance was identified as a good practice in several of the evaluations of EIIP projects. This was acknowledged to be a work in progress in the evaluations. Approaches such as ensuring commitments from the municipalities at the handover of the asset were highlighted as one element but with a need to ensure the value of the community is of sufficient value to ensure maintenance.

Enhancing of abilities to collect relevant statistical data as groundwork for National Employment Policy (NEP) development



The sample included three projects that had goals of supporting the development of National Employment Policies (NEP) through enhancing capacities to collect and utilise statistical data. The reports identified that solid frameworks had been developed that would allow for the NEPs to be refined and adopted by the relevant authorities.

"The project positively impacted the development process of a NEP which, when completed, will impact the world of work and constitute a solid framework that everyone will abide to. (LBN2001RBS, p. 23)"

It should though be noted that none of the projects achieved the end goal of having the NEPs approved. The amount of time needed to develop and implement the NEPs was longer than the project length. The ILO was credited with developing capacities, knowledge, and data that can support the adoption of new NEPs but this required more follow-up.

Knowledge generation



Evaluations noted that the ILO had been successful in strengthening knowledge and capacities among key stakeholders throughout the different sub-themes of the employment projects. The inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in training and workshops had ensured the successful transfer of knowledge. This included the traditional tripartite constituents, particularly the Ministry of Labour, other relevant ministries, NGOs, workers who participated in the income generating activities, municipalities, and contractors. The main challenge linked to capacity building links to the monitoring and evaluation gap discussed below and the lack of approaches that monitor impact on a long-term scale:

“Training provision for both government officials and contractors has been welcomed and is appreciated. Evidence from progress reports indicate the numbers of participants and the results frameworks indicate proportions of participants with increased knowledge. However it is unclear as to how this training is leading to better practices for contractors, improved institutional systems and better policy and regulatory frameworks” (JOR1805DEU EIIP, p. 4)

Various projects also developed knowledge products that also contributed to the overall body of knowledge. For example, the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” project evaluation identified this as a key strength of the project.

“The programme generated a significant number of publications, outlined in Annex 14. Like the other publications produced by the Taqueem programme, the policy briefs were appreciated for their high quality. Along with these publications 9 policy forums and roundtable workshops were held. Policy strategy papers were also developed for 3 countries – Morocco, Jordan and Egypt -- with the ultimate goal of improving labour market outcomes for young women and men in rural and urban areas through the production of evidence based policies and programmes. These strategy papers map out a 4-step process for influencing policy, called the Policy Influence Plan (PIP)” (GLO1424, p. 37)

Social Dialogue



The evaluations reported mixed evidence on social dialogue in the employment related projects. This matches the findings of the High-Level Evaluation of ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) that found “Tripartism and social dialogue face challenges in post-conflict settings – namely, politicized splintering and the collapse of legal institutions. Effective tripartism is a fundamental assumption within the ILO intervention model itself, yet addressing splintering is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts. Instead, discord and disagreement are sometimes side-stepped for the sake of project implementation”¹⁴.

In this review, certain projects, such as the Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development project in Saudi Arabia had explicit goals on social dialogue. The specific objective of this project was to ‘Improve policies and mechanisms for inclusive employment, working conditions (particularly for Women) and social dialogue in the Kingdom’, and thus social dialogue, albeit from a low baseline, was a key focus of the project.

There were also examples of social dialogue being an effective tool for driving policy development, as highlighted by the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector

“Social dialogue fostered by the Project set the ground for improvement of the regulatory framework in the agriculture sector with the high share of informal economy. The unified contract for Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers, training on OSH for workers and the employers, training of labour inspections in the agriculture sectors are the major results contributing to decent work prospects in floriculture sector.” (JOR1902 AUS, p. 54)

Some evaluations reported that social dialogue had been a feature of the design of the project, but limited involvement of the tripartite constituents had reduced the effectiveness of this element of the project:

“Having said that, the project could have done more to involve ILO's tripartite constituents throughout the implementation period as was originally planned, to keep them involved and engaged with the project, and to provide oversight to the LFS process, which ultimately contributes to a higher level of national ownership. This meant that the project was not very effective in fostering ILO constituent's active involvement through social dialogue throughout the implementation of the project, as was originally intended.” (IRQ1801RBS, p. 26)

There were also very limited references to social dialogue in the evaluations of the EIIP projects implemented during the review period. Many of the evaluations themselves did not address social dialogue and there was limited reference to the involvement of the tripartite constituents. It was noted in the evaluation of phases 3-5 of EIIP in Jordan that notes the short-term nature of the work opportunities in the EIIP approach does limit the opportunities for social dialogue.

Gaps

Capacity of tripartite constituents and other partners

The capacity of tripartite constituents was raised as a challenge by several evaluations. Evaluations in both Jordan and Iraq that sought to enhance capacities to collect statistical data with the goal of supporting a national employment policy, were praised for their relevance to the constituents but identified as being too ambitious given existing capacities. The reports suggested more detailed needs analyses could have reduced the ambition of the projects to be more in-line with existing capacities. This finding was also identified in the High-Level Evaluation of ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), which noted, 'At the design level, independent project evaluations reviewed note frequent gaps related to key outcomes concerning the strength of initial capacity assessments. This problem has been most pronounced in Yemen, where tripartite constituents questioned whether project design was coherent with the country capacity needs.'¹⁵

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation was identified as a weakness in many of the projects. Of the evaluations that assessed project monitoring and evaluation structures, most were rated as partly successful or successful. Only one was rated as fully successful.

The projects that rated the weakest for monitoring and evaluation were those that had weak monitoring or results frameworks, or no framework at all, and had targets and indicators that were output based rather than outcome based.

"The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is not sufficiently robust or resourced to meet the project's accountability and learning objectives. Project design is not theory-based, and the plan monitors at the Activity and Output levels. By design, the plan does not consider the relationship between Outputs and Outcomes, nor does it monitor Outcome achievement. The utility of reporting as an input to operational management and learning on the EIIP and Women do Business models, therefore, is limited." (JOR1909ITA, 2023, p. 8)

Evaluations found that monitoring indicators focused on quantitative data and collected less information on the quality of the projects, and this particularly limited the measurement of progress in areas such as ILS and social dialogue.

"The majority of indicators measure the quantity side of events (ex. Number of trainings, number of meetings) and lack measuring tools of the quality side of the conducted interventions, especially the ones which measure improvement of the social dialogue and better understanding of the ILS." (JOR1902 AUS, p. 36)

There is some evidence that M&E structures have improved over time. The various phases of the EIIP projects in Jordan and Lebanon show evidence of improving attention to M&E. However, this does not seem to have necessarily been replicated in similar projects in other countries. The EIIP project in Yemen was reported to have not have an M&E function to follow up on project implementation and responsibility was left to a junior member of staff who was new to the ILO.

The benefits of strong M&E structures were reported in evaluations where the M&E was rated highly, such as the Independent Final evaluation of "Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa" project.

The production of the M&E Guide served as an effective means to help sustain the program through capturing teaching and learning under the Taqueem programme, while serving as an effective resource for future M&E training. The Guide was very well received as a highly useful and practical resource by youth employment practitioners. Particularly effective was its contribution on cutting edge topics such as chapter 2 on youth employment indicators and chapter 7 on evidence uptake in policy formulation. (GLO1424IFA, p. 42)

Length of time

The short-term nature of several projects was a concern raised by the evaluations. This is particularly a challenge for projects funded through humanitarian assistance funding streams, such as the EIIP projects. Most of the evaluations on EIIP assess the projects to have been too short in nature.

“The report has spoken at length about the challenges of short phases. The short duration of phases does not correspond to go development outcomes and focuses efforts on short-term results and simple head counts of jobs linked to a specific methodology. By promoting longer phases, the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme allows time for better implementation and management and also supports better engagement and the promotion of other outcomes. It also fosters a focus on evaluative efforts as time is provided to assess and measure changes in key areas of work.” (JOR1805DEU p. 75)

That said, the consistent funding of new phases of the projects in Jordan and Lebanon allowed some mitigation of this. The short-term nature of the work also made it harder to influence policy around work permits for refugees as well.

“The short-term nature of work and contracts makes it difficult to influence long-term changes. The promotion of longer-term work arrangements would contribute positively to possible changes in work permit arrangements and would potentially facilitate more timely approvals and awards.” (JOR1805DEU, p. 6)

Evaluations of other employment projects also identified time constraints. The results frameworks were often seen as too ambitious for the length of the project. This is demonstrated in the projects that included the development of NEPs as an outcome, where despite the positive initial stages, the actual development of the policy had not been possible within the project. ILO’s administrative and human resource approaches were also reported to affect the timeliness of projects. Recruitment of staff, particularly international staff, the development of implementation agreements with partners, and delays in government approval were all cited as challenges that impacted the smooth project management of the reviewed projects.

As a result, the impact and sustainability ratings for the projects was more limited than those for effectiveness and relevance. The average score for impact was 2.6 and 2.7 respectively.

Lack of long-term job opportunities

The short-term nature of most of the employment opportunities meant it was difficult for the evaluations to identify long-term impacts. The nature of the work meant that workers did not expect to maintain long-term positions but would prefer longer opportunities if available:

“63% of workers did not believe their project experience would help them find a job. Most workers did not expect working with the project would lead to the possibility of future employment opportunities. Most preferred that their employment with the project should continue for longer.” (JOR1909ITA, p. 31)

That said, more recent evaluations have identified attempts by the ILO to focus more on asset development and vocational training for longer-term employment and less on cash for work and link this to market-based vocation training opportunities:

“As the programme has evolved, it has started to focus more on longer-term employment in line with the intent of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme model. Phase IV has opened opportunities for the participation of workers in labour market oriented vocational training for longer-term employment.” (JOR1805DEU EIIP Jordan Phase III-V Evaluation, p. 26)

Good Practices

Application of social and environmental safeguards

Evaluations for the EIIP projects identified the application of social and environmental safeguards through inclusion in manuals and safeguard officers to be an important best practice. This was found to have allowed workers a voice to raise concerns. It had helped improved gender equality and disability inclusion by fostering an environment where women and persons with disabilities feel more comfortable in the workplace.

Inclusion of other ministries and departments

An important good practice reported by the evaluation reports was the involvement of a broad range of government ministries and departments, often going beyond the traditional tripartite partner of the Ministry of Labour. This applied to projects working on different themes of employment. The evaluation of the project, 'Support the ministry Of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan to develop an action plan for the implementation of the employment policy' identified this as a good practice.

"Many stakeholders were involved in the Employment Policy project and in its implementation, making the project a broad participatory programme. Stakeholders included the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, Municipality and Tourism, and Higher Education. Furthermore, stakeholders included the tripartite partners of the Trade Union, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Operating Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Investment Authority and focal points of 18 relevant ministries. This broad participatory approach allowed for a broad support of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Employment Policy." (IRQ1301IRQ p. 46)

The use of focal points in key ministries was identified as a good practice in various employment projects including the development of NEPs and the EIIP projects. The cluster evaluation of phases 1-4 of the EIIP programmes in Jordan and Lebanon identified the role of advisors in key partner ministries in Lebanon as being of value in capacity building and policy influencing.

Capacity building

The inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in capacity building activities as highlighted in the achievements section was an important good practice utilised by different projects.

■ ■ An important good practice reported by the evaluation reports was the involvement of a broad range of government ministries and departments, often going beyond the traditional tripartite partner of the Ministry of Labour.

Recommendations

Fourteen of the evaluations included in the sample that had elements linked to the employment theme had management responses to the evaluations. Data extracted from the i-Eval database shows these evaluations had a total of 123 recommendations. Of these 24 were rated as achieved, 73 as partly achieved, and 31 that had no implementation. The vast majority of evaluations direct the recommendations towards the ILO. Only three evaluations had recommendations for tripartite constituents or development partners.

Some of the key themes emerging from the recommendations were:

Conduct capacity assessments

To ensure the ambitions of the project do not outstrip the capacities of the partners the ILO expects to work with in a project, a recurring recommendation focused on conducting capacity assessments prior to a project's inception

Beneficiary and partner selection

Several evaluations had findings suggesting the need to review or improve the selection of beneficiaries and/or partners. Selection of beneficiaries was identified as challenging for EIIP projects, where there were often differences between local authorities, contractors, and the ILO and other partners as to the best approach to select participants. Ensuring participants had the necessary skills to participate in training or that the training was adapted to accommodate those with limited skills such as literacy was also referred to employment projects that had a training component to them.

Positioning focal points inside Ministries

One good practice identified in more than one evaluation was ensuring either the placement (and initial funding) of a liaison officer in a relevant ministry or working to identify focal points from existing ministry staff whom the project can work with. This was seen as a good means of ensuring ownership of the project and recommended to be extended to other projects in similar circumstances.

Project management and M&E systems

The strengthening of project management and M&E systems was a recurrent theme in many of the evaluations. This included developing stronger and more coherent results frameworks, designing theories of change, ensuring outcome indicators had clear indicators for measuring change, ensuring staff and partners had sufficient capacities to conduct monitoring of projects, and strengthening ongoing learning in projects through more regular monitoring, stronger reporting, and mid-term evaluations.

Transition away from CfW to asset creating and infrastructure enhancement

The evaluations in the sample have noted an evolution of the ILO's approaches to EIIP and other employment programmes during the review period. The evaluations have recommended the ILO continue to shift away from cash for work modalities to focus more on asset creation and infrastructure enhancement. Strengthening the capacities of local authorities, communities, and private sector actors to maintain the assets will help contribute to the long-term ownership, and thus sustainability of the assets.

Longer term employment opportunities- vocation training and job placement

Linked to the previous recommendation, several evaluations also recommended a stronger focus on longer term employment opportunities rather than short term opportunities such as cash for work. Recommendations including linking beneficiaries to vocational training institutions and mentoring opportunities. Mentoring for employers who undertake to be part of the employment schemes was also a recommendation emerging from the evaluations.

Next Steps

Continued engagement of tripartite constituents and stronger inclusion of social dialogue into project designs.



There were mixed findings on social dialogue in the reports, with it being noted that shorter term employment opportunities have impacted the opportunities for social dialogue and that the political situation in many of the countries in the Arab States Region had proved challenging for tripartism and social dialogue. Continuing to engage with the government, employers, and workers remains important though and should be a key element of projects.

Continued transition to longer-term employment and asset creation approaches



Evaluation reports noted that there had started to be a transition to longer-term modalities. Ensuring this process continues would help ensure the longer-term sustainability of the interventions as well as contributed to stronger impact and supporting the ILO's work on the HDP nexus.

Greater outreach to organisations of persons with disabilities



Disability inclusion has been limited in the projects reviewed. Increasing outreach of organisations of persons with disabilities could help ensure improved attention to disability inclusion. Ensuring disability inclusion is addressed in each evaluation, even if this is to reference that the project had not been disability inclusive would also help keep attention to disability inclusion among ILO staff.

Identifying longer-term funding opportunities and ensuring project ambition matches the length of time available and the capacities of the partners involved in implementing it.



The efficiency of the projects reviewed was reduced by problems linked to the time allocated from projects and project management issues such as recruitment that led to delays compared to the ambition of the project's results frameworks. This proved to be less of a challenge with longer programmes. It is acknowledged that the funding situation is dependent on the approaches of the development partners, and in humanitarian and post-conflict contexts, funding cycles often tend to be shorter. Where feasible though, it would be advisable for the ILO to identify more long-term funding opportunities, or where these do not exist, ensure the ambitions of the project are realistic.

Strengthening of monitoring and evaluation structures, particularly focused on ensuring the measurement of outcomes and change



Concerns were raised in the evaluations about monitoring systems, results frameworks and indicators, and evaluations, although with some indication that these had improved in projects that had gone through multiple phases. The ILO should capitalise good practices and ensuring solid M&E frameworks are embedded in every project, particularly new initiatives.

▀▀ The ILO should capitalise good practices and ensuring solid M&E frameworks are embedded in every project, particularly new initiatives.





Skills

The SKILLS branch, as part of the ILO's EMPLOYMENT department works on the need to develop an agile and skilled workforce, whose skills match those needed by employers. Work on technical and vocation training (TVET) and the reskilling of workers forms part of the ILO's work in this field. During the review period, ILO ROAS participated in the ILO's Global Skill-Up project, implementing activities in Lebanon. The project aims to assist ILO member states to adapt their skill systems in responding to changing context and the challenges and opportunities provide from drivers of change such as trade integration, technological change, and migration. In ROAS, this programme was implemented in Lebanon.

Skills programming in ROAS has also been closely linked to the response to the regional crises, particularly the Syrian refugee crisis. Pillar 1 of the PROSPECTS focuses on skills and education and has supported the enrolment of thousands of individuals in skills courses at TVET institutions, the recognition of prior learning (RPL), and provided apprenticeships for on-the-job training. Other projects have also worked to provide training opportunities for host communities and forcibly displaced

persons, such as two projects evaluated under the cluster evaluation, 'Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon' and the 'Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II' project. ILO ROAS also included access to vocational training as part of its attempts to support the elimination of child labour, such as in the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq project and Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria. These projects aim to ensure parents and older siblings of children in or at risk of child labour can assess skills opportunities as a means to enhance their income generation potential and thus reduce incentives for putting children into the labour market. ILO's interventions in Yemen also included skills elements such as the provision of vocational training to women and youth on solar microenterprises in the Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen II project and utilising the SCREAM methodology¹⁶ in the Protecting Children and Youth in Yemen from Recruitment and Use in Armed Conflict (CRUCSY) project.



16. SCREAM is Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media. SCREAM is an education and social mobilization programme, to help educators worldwide promote understanding and awareness of child labour among young people.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Projects that had elements related to skills were generally assessed to be relevant to the needs of key stakeholders. Overall, an average score of 3.30 was assessed against these projects, meaning the projects were between successful and highly successful. In particular, the projects responded effectively to the needs of government institutions and departments that work on skills development, building capacities where relevant and addressing gaps in the TVET market. This included working with government ministries as well as national and local training providers. The projects were also provided important training opportunities to vulnerable host and forcibly displaced communities. The main caveat to the relevance of the projects for individuals receiving skills training was that the political context regarding work permits for refugees was often challenging and thus skills developed could not always be utilised, at least in the short-term.

The crises faced by the region have heightened the need of the ILO to support skills training. The high level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) found that conflict in the region had profound direct effects, such as the destruction of training centres, and indirect effects such as the 'brain-drain' of skilled professionals from the country. The ILO has incorporated skills training into its crisis response work in several projects.

There was mixed relevance to the employers and workers organisations, reflective of the general challenges linked to tripartism in the region. Examples of successful engagement of the employers and workers organisations included the Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon project. The evaluation of the project identified that TVET governance in Lebanon is highly centralised and there is no mechanism in place to engage the tripartite constituents, however, the project had ensured contributions from all tripartite constituents as a result, the project had supported the development of a code of conduct for employers and the signing of a Tripartite On the Job Training agreement. This marks a considerable improvement from a previous phase of the project, where the 2018 evaluation noted that

“Despite the fact that ILO was very keen to engage the private sector in a more effective way, with a lot of effort exerted, greater involvement of the private sector – including employers and business people – should be promoted to ensure their meaningful participation and contribution through a specific coordination mechanism suited to their commitments.” (LBN1607ITA-LBN1608CEF, p. 50).

Other gaps in tripartism could be identified, for example the evaluations of projects related to skills in Yemen have only fleeting references to trade unions and employers' federations and the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq is only reported to have included trade unions and not employers' groups in its implementation.

3.30

average score assessed against projects that had elements related to skills, meaning the projects were between successful and highly successful.

Achievements

The projects that included skills elements were assessed as being successful in implementing their planned outputs and outcomes. Overall, the projects had an average score of exactly 3 on the four-point scale. The projects with skills elements scored 2.5 for impact, meaning they were on average rated as between partly successful to successful for achieving impact.

Key achievements included:

Development of a National Strategic Framework for TVET in Lebanon



The ILO and UNICEF supported the development of the National Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2018–22). Much of this work was done slightly prior to this review period, in 2017 but under a project, that continued until 2023. The project has since supported the roll-out and implementation of the framework. Work was conducted in 2022 to update the framework in collaboration with the government, UNICEF, and GIZ, and a draft proposal for a renewed strategy developed.

Development of Strategic Framework for TVET in Yemen



In addition to Lebanon, ILO ROAS supported the production of the 2022–24 Strategic Framework TVET in Yemen. The high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) identified both successes and constraints in this achievement. Stakeholders were reported to have appreciated the support given for this work, comparing it favourably to other more strictly humanitarian organisations. However, there were concerns about the practicality of rolling it out in a conflict affected situation. Additionally, the ILO had very limited relationships with the de facto authorities in North Yemen, which limited the potential impact of this work.

Provision of training opportunities to families of child in or at risk of child labour



Projects in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen utilised the ILO's expertise in the skill sector to provide training opportunities, including TVET and on-the-job training for youth in or at risk of child labour and recruitment to armed conflict and the family members, such as older siblings, of children in or at risk of child labour. There were some concerns about the quality of the training in the Syria project and the length of the training in most projects but evaluations also provided some evidence of the training creating change for families impacted by child labour. As an example, on project evaluation, among others stated:

“Hevin Mala Ali is a Syrian refugee who fled to Dohuk, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq nine years ago. She recently took part in a vocational training programme specialised in sewing. During the month-long training, Hevin acquired many new skills; from learning how to sew to writing a CV and numerous life skills. She has also been given a sewing machine to help her set up a small home-based business, which she hopes will generate some income. Most importantly, Hevin hopes that by providing for her family, her young son will no longer have to work. “I will try to make use of the sewing machine, and generate an income for myself and my family, so we are not reliant on anyone,” said Hevin. “My son will no longer have to work on the streets.” (IRQ1902MUL, p. 47)

Protecting Children and Youth from Recruitment and Use in Armed Conflict (CRUCSY) project in Yemen also demonstrated the impact of skills training. The apprenticeship model for youth aged 18–25 years was identified as exemplary in the good practices of the project. The Phase II Ending Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) amongst Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities identified the inclusion of psychosocial and life skills into academic and vocational training for children and families affected by child labour as a good practice. Although the

evaluation noted a number of concerns with the overall implementation of the project, this aspect was identified as an important achievement. This particularly came through the use of the SCREAM methodology that improved awareness of the of worst forms of child labour and the right to withdraw from child labour to light work and/or return to school.

The Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project in Iraq provided training for vocational training school students through the provision of Know About Business (KAB) and Start and Improve your Business (SIYB) training in Iraq. This addressed gaps in entrepreneurial skills that exist within Iraq. Teachers at the vocational training school acknowledged its utility to students:

“One of the university lecturers said: “My students are saying they have learned from one-week SIYB training more than what they have learned from four-year university curriculum”. (IRQ1903DEU, p. 29)

Stakeholders were reported to have appreciated the support given for this work, comparing it favourably to other more strictly humanitarian organisations.

Provision of vocational training relevant to women leveraging opportunities for better economic opportunities



The Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in Arab States Region, 2018-23 identified that the area where the ILO had implemented the most actions related to gender equality and women's empowerment was on skills. This included “Vocational training in sectors where women are either underrepresented or where they can leverage skills for better economic opportunities. Training often covered areas such as handicrafts, catering, business management, and other trades.” Other skill training related to enterprise development and management has also been provided by the ILO.

14. Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-23), <https://www.ilo.org/publications/independent-high-level-independent-evaluation-ilos-post-conflict-and>

Gaps

Measuring impact on training recipients

Several of the evaluations raised concerns about the monitoring and evaluation processes for skills projects. In particular, the measuring of the long-term impacts of the training on recipients should be addressed. A more impact focused approach would move beyond measuring the immediate knowledge gains to more detailed investigation into how the skills acquired are utilised and what impact it has on individuals and families including increases in household finances, accessing services such as healthcare, and maintaining children in education for longer, as well as other well-being aspects such as self-esteem and mental health.

participation and the limited training on the job and vocational training post-participation incorporated in the programmes. The employment programme model referred to in relation to the exit strategy referred to above suggests a model which could address both these aspects. (LBN 2003DEU EIIP, p. 9)

The cluster evaluation of the Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria found that by rushing the TVET aspect of the project, the quality and hence sustainability had been impacted:

“Several key informants highlighted that although the results achieved in terms of numbers of beneficiaries reached was exceptional, the quality of certain activities could have been better. Examples given were the TVET/apprenticeship component of the UNICEF child labour project, and the National Occupational Safety and Health Profile and Policy of the RBSA OSH project, both of which were rushed and not developed to the level envisaged by the projects” (SYR 10601RBS, p. 30)

Integration into some crisis related projects

Evaluation reports of projects that aimed to provide employment opportunities for host and forcibly displaced communities suggested that skill development and opportunities for vocational training had been limited during the projects. This was particularly the case for short-term projects and harmed the sustainability of the projects. The evaluation of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programmes in Lebanon (Phase III & IV) & Jordan (Phase V) projects found that limited on the job training and TVET opportunities had been available to participants:

On the improved livelihoods of participants dimension of sustainability, the issues are the short-lived livelihood improvement from EIIP

There were positive examples though of the integration of skills within crisis projects. The PROSPECTS project has provided skills training to a significant number of individuals. This project has a longer time span than many other crisis projects and thus reduces concerns over rushing training or limited timespans of job placements.

Good Practises

Joint programming

The ILO has implemented joint programming with UNICEF and UNHCR to support the work on skills. While there are some concerns over the efficiency of joint programming, and in particular increase administration costs, there are strong examples of positive gains from the partnerships with the comparative advantages of the different entities providing strong value add to the projects:

“Together, UNICEF and ILO offer a substantial and in-depth experience with implementing skills development projects on the ground in Lebanon as well as in the broader Arab States region. Due

to the complementary mandates and expertise the ILO and UNICEF have managed to leverage their respective strengths to provide comprehensive and complementary support to the TVET system in Lebanon.” (LBN1608CEF and LBN1804ITA, p. 6)

Using TVET to promote social cohesion

ILO ROAS's report on the ILO's contribution to social cohesion in the Arab States Region identified the contribution that the PROSPECTS project had made to promoting social cohesion through the use of TVET in Jordan. TVET had been used to both strengthen positive contact between different groups and promote messages of peace and respect.

Lessons Learned

Payment of stipends to attend training may create competing motivations

The provision of financial incentives to attend training was identified creating potential concerns for the impact and sustainability of skills training, as it may lead to situations where participants are attending to receive the stipends rather than a motivation to improve skills. This is particularly the case in projects supporting Syrian refugees who have limited opportunities to utilise the skills as a result of restrictions on working in the host country. The reports included stakeholders reporting that the competition among agencies for beneficiaries to fulfil project targets had led in some cases to training attendees analysing which UN agency or NGO provided the best stipend in order to decide which training to attend.

Time is needed to ensure the opportunities given to particular groups are relevant

Several evaluations included examples of feedback from training recipients that more time or support was needed to ensure a meaningful impact on their lives. This included longer training courses, as well as support in utilising the skills in the workplace, such as grants for setting up businesses or training on soft skills:

“Furthermore, an assessment into necessary skills for women revealed that they did not only need sewing skills, but also community development skills, which was not followed up.” (YEM/19/01/EUR, p.7)

Evaluations also noted that projects were often too short to address system gaps such as curriculum weaknesses or revising national policies.

Recommendations

Design a long-term integrated strategy/ programme on skills development and lifelong learning for Lebanon

An integrated strategy on skills development and lifelong learning was recommended for learning, although this recommendation could be applied to other countries as well.

Support the development of institutional capacities of social partners

Aligned with recommendations in other thematic categories, strengthen the capacities of the social partners to contribute to skills programming is recommended. This would help strengthen social dialogue within this area and ensure programmes are not just government driven.

Next Steps

Ensure EIIP projects include opportunities for vocational training with a view to longer-term employment



There was evidence from the EIIP evaluations that vocational training is being considered more in project design with the goal of shifting from short-term employment opportunities to longer-term employment and skills development. Developing a strategy to ensure meaningful vocational training opportunities are provided to project beneficiaries would enhance the impact of these programmes.

Ensure that skills are included in the overall strategy for the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus



As recommended in the section on the HDP Nexus, the ILO should develop a comprehensive strategy, including a theory of change, on the HDP, that helps strengthen understanding internally and externally of the ILO's role, opportunities, and goals for working on the Nexus. Skills should be a key element of this. This should include identifying good practices that are currently used by the ILO and other UN agencies such as promoting work-based learning, upgrading work-based learning apprenticeships to longer-term employment opportunities, and an incremental approach to upskilling.

Promote lifelong learning (LLL) for vulnerable and marginalised populations



Many vulnerable and marginalised populations often have lower education levels and are in occupations that offer less access to ongoing learning opportunities than workers in more skilled occupations. Promoting the provision of LLL for marginalised and vulnerable populations would help address this gap.

Support the development of sector skills bodies



Sectoral skill needs differ dependent on the context in each country. The development of sector skills bodies, considering each country's economic, social, and institutional contexts would help address specific labour market gaps in each country.

Strengthen the capacities of both tripartite constituents and CSOs to support the delivery of ILO tools



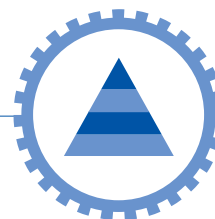
Many of the ILO's projects include the delivery of skills training by entities outside of the government's vocation training institutions. While it is important to strengthen formal government TVET capacities, the reality is that other entities will be needed to meet the demand for skill training. The ILO's social partners and CSOs can play a role in delivering ILO's tools and supporting initiatives such as apprenticeships. To do this, capacities need to be strengthened to deliver the technical aspects of training, provide ongoing support, and monitor the outcomes of the work.

Utilise ILO's Recommendation 208 to promote quality apprenticeships



The ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208) provides a strong framework for strengthening common understanding of key elements of quality apprenticeships. Activities linked to Recommendation 208 include jointly advocating its importance, promoting knowledge sharing of good examples and challenges, and helping member countries identify a way to promote quality apprenticeship, considering each country's economic, social, and institutional contexts.





Enterprise

ILO's promotion of sustainable enterprises is managed through the ENTERPRISE department. The work focuses on the contribution of enterprises to job and wealth creation, productivity growth, the formalisation of enterprises, and the just transition to environmental sustainability. This encompasses support to small and medium enterprises through to multinational businesses.

Main types of Interventions

The Enterprise Department comprises of six units¹⁸. Within the ROAS region, the work of the ILO has focused mainly on projects linked to the work of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), the Cooperatives Unit (COOP), and the Green Jobs. The projects that were included in the sample for this synthesis review had a focus on SME and green jobs. Apart from being an element of the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 in Iraq, the evaluations included in the sample did not cover the ILO's work on COOPS in the region. The ILO has worked on COOPS in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), but these evaluations had not been published on i-Eval Discovery by the time of report sampling in May 2024. As they were published before the report was finalised in December 2024, a quick review of the reports was undertaken and key points extracted.

The ILO's work included in the evaluation reports has included projects where the main focus is one of the six pillars of the Enterprise Department such as the Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project and SOLIFEM, focused on formalisation and employability in Lebanon and the OPT. Work in this sub-theme has also been conducted as part of projects focusing on other sub-themes, such as a child labour prevention project in Yemen, employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, and the formalising of access to the labour market for refugees and host communities in Jordan. Enterprise development is also a critical element of the PROSPECTS programme.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Overall, the evaluations assessed the ILO to have been successful in ensuring the interventions were relevant to stakeholders and addressed identified needs. The projects identified as having links to the ILO's work on enterprise development were had an average rating of between satisfactory and highly satisfactory. Projects demonstrated evidence they had addressed the needs of government officials and direct beneficiaries. For example, the Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project was found to be aligned with the National Development Plan for Iraq 2018-2022, responding to the challenges of entrepreneurship in Iraq, and reflecting the priorities of refugees and host communities, particularly the youth and women. The Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen II project was similarly adjudged to have aligned with the priorities of the Government of

Yemen's plans on resilience for rural communities.

There was less evidence in the evaluation reports of the involvement of the social partners, with the exception of the unions in the work on COOPS in the OPT. Evaluations linked to enterprise development generally did not reference the involvement of either trade unions or employers' federations. There were some exceptions to this, the evaluation of PROSPECTS identified that the programme had emphasised the need to engage all three tripartite constituents to address previous gaps in the involvement of employers' and workers' organisation. The project had done this through multi-stakeholder consultations, advisory committees, and direct involvement of the social partners in implementation. However, this approach appeared to be the exception rather than the norm during the review period.

Achievements

Supporting institutions to provide support to beneficiaries



The ILO's enterprise development work was identified by stakeholders as a comparative advantage of the ILO that has been effectively utilised in key projects. Key stakeholders in the PROSPECTS project noted the provision of capacity building to institutions that provide services to the target beneficiaries, including in areas linked to enterprise development was a key strength of the project.

"ILO/PROSPECTS has been particularly successful when it comes to supporting institutions and organisations with capacity building, technical advice, and dialogues to provide better services to beneficiaries...for example... In Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Jordan select BDS and financial institutions were trained to roll out entrepreneurship trainings and support services." (GLO1918NLD, p. 57)

Utilising existing ILO resources effectively



The ILO has a number of global resources for strengthening local capacities to start and manage businesses, such as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead). For example, the evaluation of the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 project noted that:

"The project was able to effectively leverage ILO's global tools, resources, and guidance to complete a large range of activities within a limited period of time. In addition to the heavy technical and administrative support received by the project from the ILO ROAS and HQ as well as the cooperation made with the ILO's ITC, the project utilized and adapted a significant number of ILO global tools in its implementation of field activities including ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services Tool, GetAhead, SYIB, COOP tools, and the strategic compliance model. The evaluation found that this leveraging of existing resources has raised the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation." (IRQ2003EUR. P10)

Other project such as PROSPECTS and the Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq project have also utilised these and other tools during implementation. For example, a good practice identified in the MSME project in Iraq was that Know About Business (KAB) had been effectively used to encourage unemployment people to develop start-ups, as well as for existing micro-businesses.

The mobilization of partner organisations



Where the ILO has had success in mobilising partner organisations, evaluation reports identified the possibility of multiplier effects and favourable conditions for sustainability. The mobilization by more than 20 partner organizations for the institutionalization of ILO's tools in Iraq was cited as one such example.

Improved productivity of farms through green job initiatives



The ILO has worked on the development of green job initiatives in Jordan. The evaluation of the Phase II: Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry project found the productivity of the farms had increased through improved water management. Similar results were found in the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector project evaluation.

Gaps

Putting capacity gains from training into practice

Evaluations reported that some concerns from recipients of enterprise development related training in terms of putting what they had learned into practice. For example, participants in the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 project who had received training such as SIYB training had hoped the project would also provide them with financial support such as grants to enable them to put the training into practice. While the training was appreciated, many did not have access to financing to implement what they had learned:

“SIYB Individuals who received skill development trainings (i.e on food processing, GetAhead, and SYIB), indicated how the trainings “opened our minds to new horizons that we haven’t thought of before” in terms of learning how to start and maintain a business. Participants praised the training that they received but most indicated that they were hoping for the project to continue with them and provide them with grants, at least to the top achievers, to enable them to start up their project, given that these training courses are on entrepreneurship. In other words, many indicated that they cannot apply what they learned due to their limited financial capabilities.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 33)

Other concerns about putting the training into practice were identified by the same evaluation on the work that had been done with agricultural coops.

“Agricultural coop members appreciated the project’s support in raising their awareness of the importance of official contracts for workers and OSH. Participants indicated strongly that the project helped address some of their needs, especially on how to deal with workers, which has helped raise their confidence in their work. However, participants indicated the same thing that was heard from beneficiaries of other training interventions; i.e. there are significant challenges in applying what they learned during the training. Examples given include that the issue of workers having fears about signing written contracts (especially that many are illiterate) was not addressed during the session. They also hoped for a less theoretical, and more practical training.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 33)

Post training follow-up

One of the gaps that was identified in evaluations concerned the lack of post-training follow-up or a more systematic process for continuing training. The evaluation of COOP support in the OPT noted the need for a more sustained approach to maintain positive outcomes:

“However, the analysis highlights a potential gap in the project’s design—the absence of systematic follow-up in the post-training phase. This underscores the need for a more comprehensive and sustained approach, encompassing enduring results and outputs for the sustainability of positive impacts.” (PSE/19/01/ITA, p.25)

The towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development in Jordan project noted similar gaps related to the follow-up of training of officials on the EIIP model:

“There appears to be an unsatisfactory possibility of impact related to Outcome 1. Output 1.1 produced a cadre of officials and engineers familiar with the EIIP model, but there is no evidence of follow up or engagement on actual use of the model.” (JOR/19/09/ITA)

Coordination for joint programming

Joint programme was identified as positive in many projects as it allowed UN agencies to utilise their comparative advantages in synergy with each other. However, gaps in communication between agencies were identified that limited efficiencies in some cases.

Disability Inclusion

Evaluation reports did not suggest that the ILO had been successful in considering disability inclusion within its enterprise work. There were no examples of the engagement of organisations of persons with disabilities in enterprise development work.

Good Practises

Use of transparent and merit-based beneficiary selection involving national stakeholders

Projects that had used transparent and merit-based beneficiary selection processes were seen as being well regarded among the target community:

“The ILO and project Stakeholders used transparent and merit/criteria-based selection processes for the EIIP worker and Women Entrepreneur candidates. For the EIIP Outcome, the use of a lottery brought the perception of fairness to the process and mitigated reputation risk. For the Entrepreneurship Outcome, selection and two-tiered training process produced a qualified and motivated group of candidates, increasing the possibility of success.” (JOR1909ITA_final evaluation_2023, p. 9)

As noted in other themes in this report, selection processes were criticised in some projects, with it not always being clear the selected participants were the most relevant or in need. In contrast, this positive example demonstrates the effect transparent processes can have on projects.

“Taking a “green” approach to designing project outputs

Where practiced, a good practice identified on green jobs was the integration of the ILO’s Green Works concept into its employment-intensive infrastructure model. The Towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development in Jordan project evaluation reported that the work leveraged existing EIIP and Women do Business services had aligned with national priorities for climate risk mitigation, environmental conservation and disasters prevention.

Engagement of relevant stakeholders in cooperative development

The evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine identified that the project had been successful in engaging the relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the project, including cooperative members, unions, government bodies, and CSOs. This is a noted success considering some of the challenges identified elsewhere in this report regarding the engagement of trade union and employer federations.

Lessons Learned

Limited access to finance can limit the effectiveness or sustainability of start-up and entrepreneurship programmes.

The PROSPECTS evaluation identified that entrepreneurial support can be a great means for members of host and refugee communities to improve self-reliance through creating economic opportunities. However, it was identified that participants frequently faced difficulties in access financing for capital to utilise their newly acquired skills.

“It would have been great if we were given the opportunity to be given in-kind support with the basic tools needed to repair the machines; I could start my own business as I succeeded with flying colours in the theory and the trainings, my teachers and bosses said that I was perfect. (testimony from beneficiary)” (GLO1918NLD p. 154)

The evaluation did though share examples of groups of beneficiaries who have overcome these challenges through pooling resources or identifying innovative rental opportunities for machinery.

Communication about the expectations of project participants from training is critical-provision of grants/long-term employment etc.

Linked to the above lesson learned, evaluations identified a challenge of beneficiaries expecting or hoping for more support from the ILO than was included in the project. Clear communication is needed to ensure expectations are not raised.

Adding enterprise work on skills or employment programmes has its limitations

There have been some limitations identified from adding enterprise initiatives into projects more driven by skills and employment. While it is important that the ILO work across branches to help target synergies and maximise its added value, there can also be limitations to this approach if the work on a particular branch is not systematic enough. Implementing programmes where the main focus is enterprise development can help address this.

Projects did not necessarily include enough time to learn necessary skills for working in green jobs.

Offering short-term employment opportunities can temporarily boost incomes of vulnerable groups but does not necessarily lead to longer-term opportunities for work in the sector the placement is not long enough to learn the necessary skills.

Recommendations

Enhance access to financing for entrepreneurship.

The recommendations in evaluation reports included looking at several routes to financing for beneficiaries including referrals to financial institutions, the provision of grants, and reviewing the private banks' procedures in allocating loans to the creditors.

Invest in building capacities of Ministry of Labour trainers on ILO's tools, such as SIYB, as this will enable integration of the ILO program into training institutions

Taking a training of trainer approach to the ILO's tools and directly targeting Ministry of Labour staff will help institutionalise the use of these tools, which currently rely on ILO itself or NGOs/CSOs and trade unions delivering them.

Enhance communication with beneficiaries to better manage expectations

Strongly linked to the recommendation on financing, evaluation reports noted that beneficiaries often had different expectations for what the project could deliver to them than what was actually planned and resources. In a crowded field where UN agencies and NGOs are often offering multiple opportunities for training and participation in projects, ensuring clear communication with beneficiaries is critical.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to understand the impact of the ILO's work on the target communities.

Monitoring frameworks could be improved to ensure the ILO is fully capturing the impact of its work. For example, the Towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development in Jordan project recommended commissioning

“a tracer study of the 124 women (Output 2.1) and the 60 women (Output 2.2) that received support, to better determine Outcome level results, the factors influencing results and sustainability, and lessons learned to strengthen the WDB model” (JOR1909ITA, p. 47).

The evaluation of the Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq recommended improvements to ILO tools should be made through blending experiences from successful entrepreneurs into the training. This requires an effective monitoring system to ensure they are identified.

Empowering women and youth to have positions of leadership within the cooperatives.

Women and youth are often denied leadership roles in trade unions due to entrenched leadership bureaucracies. Promoting the next generation of leaders through positions of leadership with cooperatives is recommended as one approach to address this.

Next Steps

Address concerns over access to financing that are raised in evaluations



Approaches to address this could include conducting assessments prior to or in the inception phase of projects to address if there are entry points for individuals or groups to utilise training without financial support or avenues that the ILO can direct beneficiaries to for financial support would help them put training into practice. Approaches could include referrals to financial institutions, increasing awareness of financial institutions of barriers to access and the benefits of supporting certain groups, the direct provision of grants, or the development of self-help groups that can work collectively to finance initiatives.

Utilise a twin-track approach to project development by both designing enterprise specific projects and also ensuring the inclusion of enterprise development in projects led by other units, such as crisis, employment, and social protection.



The inclusion of enterprise activities in projects led by other branches is important but has its limitations. The ILO should ensure a mix of interventions that sees both direct enterprise development projects as well as enterprise development included in projects led by other branches such as employment, crisis, and social protection. The later will require careful coordination between branches to ensure lessons learned from past projects are addressed in project development and implementation.

Build stronger follow-up mechanisms into project designs to provide



ongoing support to project beneficiaries. Ensuring projects have a sufficient timeframe and focus on the quality rather than the quantity of outputs and beneficiary numbers.

There is an inherent trade-off in projects in terms of trying to ensure funds are used to reach as many people as possible while still maintaining the quality of services provided. Enhanced pressure from donors and from reporting on achievements for the Programme and Budget can exacerbate these tensions. However, evaluation reports noted concerns about sustainability where there was not a sufficiently robust enough follow-up process or long enough training curriculum. A mitigation strategy could involve sharing lessons from previous projects with project designers to help them build in sufficient time and resources. This should be pro-actively led by technical specialists and programme officers with knowledge of previous interventions.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation structures to enhance lesson learning and project and tool improvements.



Common to most of the sub-themes in this report, evaluations recommended the strengthening of monitoring frameworks. Developing common indicators that measure change that can be used when designing monitoring frameworks would help address this. This also would need to be led by technical specialists, programme officers, and the regional evaluation team to ensure it is shared with project designers and implementers.

Conduct a mapping of organisations of persons with disabilities who are able to partner with the ILO on enterprise development projects



Approaches to address this could include Inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of projects is recommended. Creating an initial directory of organisations of persons with disabilities who the ILO will be able to approach for partnership in these projects would assist project designers and implementers in promoting disability inclusion.

Strengthen the “green” dimension of enterprise development through highlighting and replicating successful green jobs and entrepreneurship initiatives, such as training on solar panel repairs in Yemen or water harvesting in Jordan.



Although only captured to a limited extent thus far in evaluation reports, there are positive examples of green jobs initiatives that could be replicated elsewhere. For example, the ERRY project in Yemen has built the capacity of youth to offer maintenance services for solar panels, a key source of energy in rural Yemen.

Work closely with ACTRAV, GEDI, and the Regional Gender and Diversity Expert to promote women’s leadership within COOPs in order to promote the next generation of trade union leaders.



Following up on the recommendation of the evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine, the promotion of women (and youth and disability) leadership in local COOPs and unions, will help empower the next generation of union leadership and address some of the entrenched leadership challenges in the region.



Labour Statistics

International labour statistics are a critical element of providing governments with a solid knowledge base to make evidence-based policy decisions and allowing others to conduct informed advocacy. Many governments lack the resources and technical knowledge to collect and analyse work-based data and trends. The ILO provides technical support to address this gap and supports the International Conference of Labour Statisticians every 5 years. The work on statistics is led by ILOSTAT.

In the Arab States region, the ILO's work has included working with national statistics offices to strengthen data on the effects of trade and investment policies, and using labour statistics to formulate employment policies and develop social protection frameworks. This has included projects directly focused on enhancing the capacities of national labour statistics bureaus such

as the Labour Force and Households' Living Conditions Survey project in Lebanon and the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI (Labour Market Information) Systems and LM (Labour Market) Statistics. Programmes with an overall focus on other topics have also included outcomes related to strengthening the use of labour statistics, including the ILO Qatar Technical Cooperation Programme, the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians" in Jordan project, and ILO Partnership with the Regional Development and Protection Programme for Jordan (RDPP II). Research Partnership for Improved livelihoods of Jordanian and Syrian Youth project. As such social protection and employment programmes have supported the improvement of labour statistics.



Achievements

Improved evidence on the situation of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon



The Towards Improved Knowledge on Labour Market and Employment Conditions of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon project has made progress in improving knowledge on the situation of refugees and host communities impacted by the Syrian crisis and laid a foundation for policy development and tripartite discussion.

“In Lebanon, the project succeeded in providing an evidence base for policy development and in filling knowledge gaps on informality and vulnerability among refugees and host communities, a tripartite dialogue with key stakeholders was held after project conclusion. As for Jordan, all stakeholders confirmed that knowledge has been evidently advanced on the impacts of work permits on employment and decent work, which has subsequently created an evidence base which feeds into advocacy and can be used for policy making.” (RAB1801FOR, p. 6)

“The introduction of the statistical bulletin has led to a more data-driven and transparent approach to data publication, and more evidence-led thinking, and this should be fostered and encouraged. The statistical bulletin, and the successful integration of the ISU within MoSD are also good examples of the replicable impact of the programme.” (JOR2001EUR, p. 37)

Drafting of National Employment Policy based on updated labour statistics



The Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project supported the drafting of a national employment policy. A crucial element of this process was the collection of updated and sex-disaggregated labour market data and statistics collected for evidence-based policies through a survey that the survey adopted aligned with the latest statistical standards established by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

Involvement of social partners through tripartite dialogue



Projects that had contributed successfully to enhanced use of statistics in policy making reported positive collaboration of the social partners. Ensuring tripartite involvement was important for enhancing credibility and use of the statistics (although multi-ministerial involvement is also critical). An example was the development of the National Employment Policy in Lebanon which followed a process of improving statistical data and evidence on the labour market in Lebanon and engaging the tripartite constituents to utilise the data to develop and implement policies.

“The contribution of the government, parliament, and social partners was crucial in the discussion and establishment of a permanent tripartite structure to oversee the implementation of the Policy and review employment-related issues across Lebanon.” (LBN2001RBS, p. 9)

Inclusion on indicators on persons with disabilities



There is evidence that the ILO has worked with statistical offices to improve data on disability within their surveys. The Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project evaluation noted:

“Furthermore, the project design also took into account cross cutting issues including the inclusion of people with disabilities, ILS and social dialogue. Both the LFS and policy components of the project integrated people with disabilities, such that indicators specific to PWDs may be produced by the survey results, and PWDs are included explicitly in the NEP with specific policy actions directed towards PWDs.” (IRQ1801RBS p. 22)¹⁹

Some challenges were also noted. The Covid-19 pandemic limited door-to-door data collection methods, and the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project had been unable to find a way to ensure disability inclusion in the remote methods it was using. There was also no evidence in the evaluation reports of the utilisation of the Washington Group Questions on disability in any of the capacity building of statistical bureaus.

Publishing of statistical bulletins



The publishing of statistical bulletins in Qatar and Jordan was identified as an important achievement that had supported a stronger evidence-based approach to decision making:

19. It is acknowledged by the author of this report the use of persons with disabilities instead of PWD is recommended because as noted in the United Nations' disability language guidance, the term should always be written in full to keep the focus on people, and not as a homogenous group reduced to an acronym. However, the above is a direct quote from an evaluation report, and thus has been left as originally written.

Gaps

Translation of improvements in labour statistics into policy development

Several of the projects identified important progress in strengthening the capacity of national statistics bureaus, other ministries, and the tripartite constituents, but those projects had not necessarily managed to translate this into policy changes, such as the development of national employment policies. The main reason for this was time management of the projects, with delays to initial activities limiting possibilities of policy change. As such, the evaluations identified the projects as having laid foundations for policy change but this would need follow up to be achieved.

Connecting labour statistics to FPRW

Based on the evaluation sample, there appears to have been only limited connection between projects focused on FPRW and labour statistics. The ILO Qatar Technical Cooperation project did include a focus on strengthening the publication of OSH statistics and the Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan had provided technical support to the Department of Statistics to integrate child labour issues into the agricultural workers' survey that it periodically conducts, but projects on child labour in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, OSH in Iraq, and the regional labour migration projects that included the reduction of forced labour do not appear to have included labour statistics in their work.

Good Practises

Having access to a broad range of technical experts

The limited staffing and capacities of government's statistical bureaus in some technical areas was identified as a challenge by evaluations. The ILO utilising both its internal expertise and also maintaining a database of external experts who could be contracted for support was identified as a good practice by the evaluation of the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project.

►► The limited staffing and capacities of government's statistical bureaus in some technical areas was identified as a challenge by evaluations

Lessons Learned

Engagement of a broad range of partners is needed

While the mandate for the collection of national statistics is usually housed within a national statistics bureau and can be quite technical, ensuring the use of the statistics is a much broader responsibility. As such, including a broad range of stakeholders who have mandates for utilising such data, to ensure they have the capacity to understand and analysis the data is important.

to have a significant positive impact on the policy development process in Iraq. Despite that the policy component of the project could not be implemented within the project timeframe, the high quality LFS data and indicators produced by the project, will be indispensable for the future development of policy, since any meaningful policy development must be based on analysis of concrete data.” (IRQ1801RBS, p. 27)

Projects require sufficient length to ensure the policy outcomes that can result from improved data are followed up on

Evaluations showed evidence of projects that had achieved positive results in improving labour statistics but did not allow time for the next step, which would be the utilisation of these. As such some planned policy gains had not been realised by the end of the project. The evaluation of the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics found that the project had the potential for impact, but this had not been realised by the end of the project:

“As a result of the various challenges faced by the project that severely delayed implementation, there was no time left in the project to implement the policy component of the project which was concerned with the development of a NEP for Iraq... Having said that, the project is expected

Good communication between project team and ILO's technical experts is important

The evaluation of the Labour Force and Households' Living Conditions Survey project in Lebanon found that there has been limited coordination between the project and technical backstoppers, as well as other experts, and this had limited the effectiveness of the project:

“The evaluation did not find evidence of consultation with potential data users including ILO ROAS subject matter specialists and the UN agencies. In fact, several informants indicated that the LFHLCS was a lost opportunity; according to them, their direct involvement on this project would have broaden the range of users as they reach the ILO tripartite constituents, local researchers and stakeholders to promote the project and bring knowledge on survey taking and the utilization of statistics in policymaking.” (LEB1401EEC, p. 26)

Recommendations

Undertake capacity assessments of partners prior to the project

It was identified that limited capacities of partners provided challenges in projects meeting the ambitions of their results frameworks. Undertaking assessments of partners prior to starting the project is highly recommended

Continue support to policy makers in projects that were not able to achieve policy change objectives

To ensure the sustainability of interventions, ILO ROAS should ensure they continue to provide support to policy makers to utilise improved availability of labour statistics and make evidence-based decisions that translate into policy reforms.

Next Steps

Identify ways to connect work on labour statistics to the ILO's work on FPRW.



Access to quality labour statistics is important in supporting the ILO's work on FPRW and remains a challenge in the region. Addressing this could include ensuring that projects designed on child labour and OSH, and migration programmes that include a focus on forced labour, incorporate working with national statistics bureaus into their design.

Provide training on integrating the Washington Group Questions in labour force surveys



As recommended in the section on the HDP Nexus, the ILO should develop a comprehensive strategy, including a theory of change, on the HDP, that helps strengthen understanding internally and externally of the ILO's role, opportunities, and goals for working on the Nexus. Skills should be a key element of this. This should include identifying good practices that are currently used by the ILO and other UN agencies such as promoting work-based learning, upgrading work-based learning apprenticeships to longer-term employment opportunities, and an incremental approach to upskilling.

Develop a capacity assessment tool for partners



In order to ensure capacities of project partners, particularly government ministries is understood prior to implementing a project, assessments should be carried out during the design phase. Developing capacity assessment tools would support project designers to achieve this.



Labour Migration

Main types of Interventions

Seven evaluations were identified of programmes and projects that either focused on labour migration governance as their main theme, or had a significant element linked to labour migration governance. Two additional evaluations were of Better Work projects that aim to offer significant benefits to migrant workers, given the high proportion of migrant workers, of which women comprise a significant majority, who work in the Better Work factories in Jordan. Labour migration is also touched upon in some other interventions as well.

Most labour migration programmes/projects are multi-country. This is a reflection of the importance the ILO places on addressing both ends of the labour migration corridor. The global nature of the work on migration means most of the programmes/projects are multi-regional and thus officially backstopped by Geneva units. The Regional Decent Work Team (DWT) Specialists, such as the Senior Labour Migration Specialist in ROAS take responsibility for backstopping the elements related to the Arab States on behalf of MIGRANT or FUNDAMENTALS. With the support of DWT-ROAS, three of the global programmes were backstopped by MIGRANT, two by FUNDAMENTALS, and one jointly by FUNDAMENTALS and MIGRANT. Three projects were based in one country, a Better Work project in Jordan, and the two technical cooperation programmes in Qatar, which included a focus on migration governance, which were backstopped by NORMES and ROAS. There was an additional global Better Work evaluation which included activities in Jordan.

Fair recruitment has been a significant focus of the ILO's labour migration programming in ROAS, applying a corridor approach to address issues in both origin and destination countries. From the perspective of ROAS, the countries involved from the region are destination countries. The FAIR, FAIRWAY, REFRAME, and Work In Freedom were all multi-regional projects that the Arab States region was involved in. Additionally, the two technical cooperation programmes with Qatar included a focus on fair recruitment, although was not the main focus of the programmes that

had several pillars of work Programming connects closely to the ILO's General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs²⁰. Fair recruitment was an important element of six of the projects/programmes evaluated.

The reduction of forced labour and trafficking in persons was another theme of the work of the ILO during this period. The Work in Freedom programme in particular sought to reduce the vulnerability of women migrant workers from South Asia to forced labour and trafficking. The FAIRWAY project addressed forced labour and trafficking of migrant workers (and especially domestic workers) through its work on advocating for policy reforms to the kafala (sponsorship) system. The Qatar technical cooperation programme was also initiated as a result of a complaint on non-compliance with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) lodged in 2014.

Most labour migration programmes/projects are multi-country. This is a reflection of the importance the ILO places on addressing both ends of the labour migration corridor.

20. The General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment were developed in 2016 and the Definition of recruitment fees and related costs in 2018, adopted by tripartite meetings of experts, and endorsed by the ILO Governing Body for publication and dissemination in 2016 and 2019 respectively

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Overall, the evaluation reports found the interventions to be highly relevant, with every migration project report being scored as either successful or highly successful in the synthesis review.

The relevance to the tripartite constituents was mixed. It was noted in multi-region evaluations, that the buy-in of governments and social partners in destination countries in the Arab States was often more politically sensitive than in the origin countries in South Asia and Africa. There were though some examples of successful tripartite constituent involvement. Employers were said to be supportive of Better Work's interventions in Jordan, and the Government of Qatar was reported to be very engaged, and wanting to disseminate further, the work that had been done on heat stress legislation and minimum wage legislation. In Lebanon, the FAIRWAY project was reported to have the support of the National Federation of Worker and Employee Trade Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL) and the Domestic Workers Union on various activities.

It was acknowledged in several evaluation reports that engaging the tripartite constituents was challenging. The perception of the need to address issues related to labour migration governance varied. High unemployment rates and economic crises that have arisen in the region, along with a reluctance as a result of vested political interests to address the Kafala system and other elements linked to labour migration governance, has meant government interest in the projects is not always present.

“The political commitment of the governments co-operating with WIF (Work in Freedom) was not always present, which poses a significant threat to attaining long-term results and impacts. Without an increase in governments' commitment, it is unlikely that the positive impacts can persist or multiply after the programme ends.” (RAS1711GBR p. 45)

Similar challenges were identified in the interest of the workers' and employers' representatives. This aligns with the findings of the high-level evaluation of ILO's strategy and action for promoting fair and effective labour migration policies, 2016-20 that found that a 'nationals first approach' exists among some trade unions. Limitations in the capacities of trade unions in the region affected their participation in projects, and employers' organizations also had limited roles in the projects.

“The evaluation has found that there were opportunities to further align more closely with all the outcomes and targets of the National Development Strategy. For example, government stakeholders who were interviewed during the evaluation mentioned that securing buy-in from the employers and business community is essential but proved challenging” (QAT2101QAT p. 23)

The ILO's labour migration work was identified as highly relevant and responsive to the needs of migrant workers and the organisations who represent them. Several projects were praised for addressing representation gaps by both engaging CSOs and working to build relationships between CSOs and trade unions. The corridor approach was reported to contribute to this, through working with men and women before they migrate in ways that empowers them to access decent work in the countries of destination. Interventions were reported to have offered opportunities to CSOs that they would not have without the convening power of the ILO.

“In their interviews, in addition to capacity building, organisations like Sandigan (Kuwait) see the overall relationship with ILO as valuable in two ways: a) it provides them with regional and international platforms to speak about migrants' lived experiences, and b) it provides a kind of safety net of international recognition that helps deflect intimidation and threats from local actors as the organisations are unregistered in Kuwait.” (GLO1906CHE p. 29)

Main Achievements

Overall, the evaluations have adjudged the ILO to have been very effective in achieving the intended results of the interventions set out in results frameworks. The synthesis review identified that all projects were either successful or highly successful in reaching their planned outcomes.

Key achievements identified included:

Knowledge Generation



The ILO's work in the region since 2018 has contributed a significant amount of knowledge products, bolstering the body of evidence on labour migration in the region and across the Asia-Arab States and Africa-Arab States labour migration corridors. This has included studies on industrial relations in Jordan that have contributed to an understanding of working conditions in the garment sector, research on living and working conditions in the domestic work sector, research on absconding and how it is being used as a means to undermine kafala reforms in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and a baseline study on occupational injuries in Qatar.

Migrant Workers' Empowerment



Empowerment of migrant workers, particularly women was identified by several evaluation reports as an important achievement. This has come through the implementation of migrant resource and workers' centres and strengthening the capacities of CSOs to provide support. Improving knowledge of rights and awareness of how to access resources and support both prior to departure and during migration is a feature of ILO's migration projects, and is an important element of the empowerment described below in the evaluation of the Work in Freedom project.

"In both Lebanon and Jordan, centres which provided women a safe space to express grievances, remained strongholds for representing female labour migrants' voices. The centres could reach any migrant workers and were especially effective in changing migrants' attitude toward their entitlements and rights. As

a coordinator expressed in Jordan: "Out of 100 cases that we receive at Workers' Centre we can get justice for hardly 20-30 workers. However, the whole process gives workers the confidence that yes, they can report these grievances, and should not be silent on these things." (RAS1711GBR, p. 34)

Policy



The evaluations reported mixed evidence of the influence of the ILO on policy makers with regard to labour migration. The challenges are linked to the reported issue that the relevance of the interventions is less to the governments of countries of destination than countries of origin. The impact of the extended refugee crisis on the Arab States, and in Lebanon, the financial crisis and Beirut port explosion, have had an impact on the willingness of governments to address labour migration governance. The Covid-19 pandemic probably had a mixed impact on policy development towards labour migration. On the one hand the pandemic exacerbated some of the existing societal and economic pressures in the region and governments' initial reaction was to prioritise support to its own citizens. On the other hand, the pandemic helped raise the profile of many of the problems of migration governance and encouraged governments to address gaps in the region. This has included the recent reforms in some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries related to social protection for migrant workers, including end-of-service indemnity reform.

Some policy achievements were noted by the evaluations. It is possible to see the benefits of long-term programmes from several of the interventions that had multiple phases evaluated. The Work in Freedom programme has had success in contributing to the strengthening of legal systems, policies, and practices in the field of safe labour migration and counter-trafficking.

"In Lebanon, the work addressing the judiciary will likely help in reforming the practices of litigation involving Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) and strengthen a human rights perspective, which could reduce the number of women detained

on false charges... In Jordan, the Programme provided help to the government when working with various policies. For example, prior to the implementation of the amnesty for migrant workers, WIF provided recommendations for the Ministry of Labour, taking into account the experience of previous amnesties for migrants. Furthermore, the Programme played a key role in developing the existing domestic worker's regulation, using its capacity and expertise, that otherwise would have likely not been available, to provide technical inputs." (RAS1711GBR, p. 37)

Capacity Building and Empowerment of CSOs



A recurrent theme of the labour migration focused evaluations is the effective collaboration with CSOs that goes beyond the ILO's traditional tripartite structures. This is identified as a reflection of the fact that trade unions do not always have the capacity or the willingness to represent and organise migrant workers.

"At destination, the adoption of a hybrid flexible strategy involving traditional established or emerging unions and non-traditional actors e.g. non-government organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) allowed WIF to explore different methods and learn lessons on how to reach out to and organize migrant domestic workers (MDWs). This ensured safe places for gathering, discussing, confronting and therefore shaping an otherwise absent common professional identity, which may be considered as a first step toward voice-building and self-representation." (RAS1355UKM_Eval_Final_2019, p. 9)

The recognition of the challenges related to trade unions representing migrant workers also led to changes in the indicators for measuring success to ensure actual empowerment of women in trade unions was measured and not just raw membership data.

"Another relevant factor highlighting the Programme's adaptability is the implementation

of lessons learned. During the Programme, it became visible that trade unions were not always able to represent the needs of workers. This led to the ILO expanding its focus from relying solely on trade union membership to also including the ability of women to articulate their own demands as an indicator of organization." (RAS1711GBR p.22)

The lack of or limits to freedom of association in many countries in the region, also extenuates the challenges of working with trade unions and validates the approach of also working with CSOs in addition to trade unions. However, this needs to be done in parallel with work to push for freedom of association for migrant workers (and workers in general) in the Arab States.

"The assumption of the need for supportive unions is therefore validated and in the absence of freedom of association, access through NGOs and CSOs may be a useful strategy but has its limitations and should not detract from the need to influence policy for permitting freedom of association to migrant workers." (RAS1355UKM p. 38)

Gaps

Results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation

Several of the projects identified important progress in strengthening the capacity of national statistics bureaus, other ministries, and the tripartite constituents, but those projects had not necessarily managed to translate this into policy changes, such as the development of national employment policies. The main reason for this was time management of the projects, with delays to initial activities limiting possibilities of policy change. As such, the evaluations identified the projects as having laid foundations for policy change but this would need follow up to be achieved.

While some evaluation reports identified a satisfactory monitoring and evaluation system, a number identified problems with the M&E approaches. The lack of indicators to measure change, results frameworks not being SMART, and a lack of dedicated staff for M&E were among the challenges identified.

“Further steps are needed to monitor outcomes at policy level, small steps towards larger policy change may be identified as interim targets, which would enable to better assess and highlight Fairway’s contribution to broader goals. Room for improvement exists at the behavioural change monitoring level and for the monitoring of media-related activities.” (RAB1503CHE, p.8)

“The project strategies and structures has limited coherence and logical correlations between the objective, outcomes, and outputs The project document presented an implementation plan but several core elements were not comprehensively included; it did not include a full logical framework with clear outcomes, outputs, along with pertinent indicators, baseline and target values were not clear, nor an M&E plan with baselines, targets, and means of verification or frequency of data collection. The project also lacked a Theory of Change (ToC) to illustrate the causal links between the activities and the different result levels towards the achievement of the project desired impact. Cause and effect links would have allowed for a better understanding of the efforts of the project and its contribution towards a comprehensive legal and policy framework, in line with international labour standards.” (QAT2101QAT, p.26)

Good practices could be identified related to M&E in some evaluations. In particular, the first and second phase of the Work in Freedom programme had effective M&E structures, including developed feedback mechanisms to monitor relevance for beneficiaries and ensure feedback to stakeholders. Attention to M&E also appears to have improved in the later evaluations. The evaluations conducted before 2022 were given an average score of approximately 2.5 out of 4 on monitoring and evaluation by the synthesis review and those conducted from 2022 onwards had a score of approximately 3.5.

Disability inclusion

There was very limited evidence of disability inclusion being a consideration for the labour migration projects evaluated in the review period. Many of the evaluations did not address disability inclusion in the findings, including two which stated their methodologies were disability inclusive but contained no evidence of this in the findings. The evaluation that did review disability inclusion noted the programme design did not consider disability.

Social dialogue

Evaluation reports had mixed findings on social dialogue for migrant workers. Overall, the synthesis report identified an average score of 2.75 on the four-point scale of how successful the projects had been in including elements of social dialogue. There were examples of good practices, particularly at the individual enterprise level, but gaps in the capacities of the tripartite constituents and entrenched political interests, reduced opportunities to work on social dialogue. Enterprise level policies were identified as achievements in the Better Work and other programmes. Worker-employer committees had functioned in factories in Jordan and workplaces in Qatar, that offered opportunities for social dialogue often not available at the national level.

Intersectionality of climate change and health and safety for migrant workers

Evaluations on labour migration had limited reflections on the just transition to environmental sustainability, suggesting it is currently an under-addressed topic.

The lack of reflection on environmental sustainability in the other evaluations suggests both a gap in programming and also in the evaluations themselves. It should be noted that evidence to date of climate induced migration suggests it is mainly a phenomenon that occurs within countries and as the ILO's projects have mainly been focused on international migration, this topic has yet to feature much in the ILO's programming.

One key achievement should be noted though. The Ministerial Decision on working conditions, including working hours, to protect workers from heat stress had significant impacts on the health of migrant workers in Qatar, with the Qatar Red Crescent reporting the number of people who visited its clinics for heat-related disorders went down from 1,320 in 2019 to 629 in 2021 (after the legislation had been adopted). Another evaluation, (GLO1808CHE) did recommend the ILO choose shorter migration corridors to work with in order to reduce CO2 emissions on air routes. However, this was rejected in the ILO management response, based on the reflection that the ILO is not seeking to develop or restrict corridors, but working where there is the most need to ensure migrant workers in those corridors are empowered to make decisions and can access decent work.

Coordination with UN Agencies

The evaluations suggested there was limited coordination with other UN agencies on migration governance. Coordination with IOM, a natural partner for collaboration with the ILO was noted, but opportunities to involve other agencies do not appear to have been taken up.

►► The Ministerial Decision on working conditions, including working hours, to protect workers from heat stress had significant impacts on the health of migrant workers in Qatar.

Good Practises

Sectoral selection

The Work in Freedom project evaluation identified the selection of sectors to work in, particularly the domestic work sector, as being significant in addressing a sector that has had limited political will to change but high needs of beneficiaries and important gendered issues that need attention.

Working with CSOs and migrant representative groups, while still trying to engage trade unions

Several evaluations noted that approaches by the ILO that saw the engagement of CSOs and other migrant worker representative groups, while still working to improve the capacities, interests, and political space of workers' organisations was a highly effective strategy.

Corridor Approach

The corridor approach of working in both the countries of origin (usually outside of the Arab States region) and

the countries of destination was identified as a good practice. It allowed for migrants to receive support prior to departure, including considering the option of not migrating, and also have support in the country of destination through trade unions²¹, CSOs, and migrant resource centres. The programmes were also praised by the evaluations for allowing flexibility in programming in different countries and addressing changing needs during the different stages of the labour migration cycle.

Long-term programmes

There have been a series of programmes that have had multiple phases, including the Work in Freedom, FAIRWAY, the work around fair recruitment, and the Qatar technical cooperation programme, and this has strengthened the credibility of the ILO's interventions and trust with partners. This also helps mitigate against one of the challenges identified, that of the ambitious nature of results frameworks against the time allocated for achieving change.

21. Leo Bernardo Villar and Pong-Sul Ahn, (2023). Trade union-led Migrant Worker Resource Centres in ASEAN and Jordan. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/trade-union-led-migrant-worker-resource-centres-asean-and-jordan-case>

Recommendations

Recommendations made in the reviewed evaluations were varied but some consistent themes appeared across the reports. Five of the evaluations have management responses and four do not. Of those that have management responses, out of 46 recommendations, the response identified 13 as being completed, 28 as partly completed, 1 as not completed, 1 as no action, and 3 as rejected.

Improving awareness of goals and successes of the ILO's labour migration work

Improving communication of the goals and aims of the ILO programmes, and awareness of instruments and tools promoted by the ILO featured in seven recommendations. Evaluation reports noted that the ILO had produced several knowledge products on labour migration, and these should be more broadly disseminated. This included recommending media campaigns to promote a culture of respect for labour law in Qatar, building greater awareness of the concept of fair recruitment across the region, and focusing on disseminating existing knowledge products rather than producing more.

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation structures

M&E was a feature of recommendations. Seven recommendations were made on strengthening M&E structures and improving results frameworks and

theory of changes. This aligns with the findings above and the findings of the HLE on the ILO's strategy and action for promoting fair and effective labour migration policies, 2016-20, that found the measurement of change for labour migration interventions was often weak. The evaluations conducted later in the assessment period found more positive results, suggesting the management responses agreeing with early evaluation recommendations were acted upon.

Strengthening migrant worker voice

Strengthening migrant worker voice and improving social dialogue also featured in seven recommendations, including addressing how to strengthen the capacities of trade unions to represent migrant workers, increasing collaboration between trade unions and migrant worker representative organisations, and identifying ways to engage businesses more in projects.

Improving the focus on gender equality and disability inclusion

Linked to the strengthening of migrant voice, were several recommendations on improving the focus on gender equality and non-discrimination. This included ensuring the interventions were mainstreaming disability inclusion and gender equality, or working to build opportunities for organisations and representation of women migrants.

Next Steps

Operationalisation of the newly developed common migration strategy.



More than one evaluation recommends developing a more coherent migration strategy and programmatic strategy or conducting a thematic evaluation on migration programmes in the region. This was completed in the first half of 2024, and outlines a regional strategy on labour migration from 2024-2027. This was developed as a response to a recommendation in the evaluation of the FAIRWAY programme. The strategy included internal consultations with the ROAS DWT and other colleagues working on labour migration projects and an

external consultation with the regional Migration Advisory Group. The Strategy was shared with the Labour Migration Branch (MIGRANT) in HQ, also as input to internal discussions on the development of a global ILO strategy on migration and the world of work. The strategy includes as an annex a tentative theory of change that was developed in 2018. Updating and finalising the theory of change would align with recommendations included in the evaluation reports.

Continue to identify ways to engage trade unions and employers' organisations.



The multi-stakeholder approach the ILO has taken to mitigate capacity gaps of workers and employers' representatives has been identified as a key success of the work of the ILO in the assessment period, but the evaluation reports also stress the importance of continuing to identify space and opportunity to further increase the workers' and employers' representatives capacities to provide support to migrant workers.

Strengthen collaboration with other UN Agencies



A recommendation in the 2022 FAIR evaluation was to develop a resource mobilisation strategy with other ILO and UN projects, including IOM's projects. The management response suggested the action plan for this recommendation had been carried out for FAIR phase 3. It is less clear that this is applied to other labour migration projects, although there was coordination with IOM for the Qatar Technical Cooperation programme. Other evaluation reports do not specifically refer to coordination with UN agencies. The practicalities of developing a formalised resource mobilisation strategy given the differing approaches from different UN agencies, may mean this work should focus more on identifying opportunities on a more case by case basis. Preparatory work could include identifying specific sub-areas where work with other UN agencies including IOM, UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNHCR is feasible, as well as ensuring there is understanding how the ILO would want to structure partnership and on the clear red lines that would make partnership not possible in certain areas.

Consider ways to ensure ILO's cross-cutting themes of gender equality, disability inclusion, and the just transition to environmental sustainability are more prominently featured in interventions.



Findings on attention to gender equality in the projects were mixed, with many projects such as Work in Freedom and FAIRWAY being assessed to have strong gender-related components. Findings on disability inclusion were much weaker, with very few projects taking steps to address the needs of persons with disabilities. Additionally, with the exception of the Qatar Technical Cooperation programme, none of the projects considered the just transition to environmental sustainability.

Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for labour migration programmes, particularly in measuring behavioural change of migrants, employers and authorities.



This would help ensure the impact the projects have on migrants is identified. It should be noted though that most of the evaluations conducted later in the review period (2022 and 2023) rated the projects higher on monitoring and evaluation than the earlier evaluations. The exception to this was the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme where the later evaluation was much more critical of the M&E structure than the evaluation of the first phase would align with recommendations included in the evaluation reports.



Crisis and HDP Nexus

The ILO's normative instruments demonstrate the key role for the ILO and the importance of decent work in crisis settings. These include statements embedded in the founding documents of the ILO, the fundamental conventions and the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as well as other conventions. The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019) called on Member States to reaffirm their commitment to achieve social justice and universal and lasting peace. An additional normative instrument, Recommendation 205 was added to the ILO's framework in 2017. Recommendation 205 places the ILO squarely within the humanitarian, development, peace (HDP) nexus, reaffirming the importance of decent work in promoting peace and responding to crisis. It encourages member states to ensure action on employment and income generation opportunities, rights, equality, and non-discrimination, education, vocational training, and guidance, social protection, labour law, labour administration and market information, social dialogue and the role of workers and employers' organisations, migrants affected by crises, and refugees and returnees.

Many countries in the Arab States region are impacted directly or indirectly by the various crises playing out across the region. The Syrian crisis, now ongoing since 2011, has been one of the largest drivers of pressure in the region. Along with exceptionally high levels of death, injury, and destruction in Syria itself, neighbouring countries including Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (as well as Turkey which is part of a different regional office for the ILO) have seen large influxes of refugees that have often overwhelmed the local response capacities. Iraq, along with Yemen, has also been affected by internal conflicts, leading to mass internal displacement. The OPT continues to be affected by Israel's illegal occupation and more recently the war following the Hamas attack of October 7th. Lebanon has experienced intense internal turmoil from a combination of the collapse of the Lebanese pound, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the port bomb, and more recently the Israeli military action. Other countries in the region were

also severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of the finalisation of this report, the Assad regime had been replaced in Syria, leading considerable uncertainty about the

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, ROAS has adopted a strategy that is cross-cutting development and employment focused for the neighbouring countries of Syrian affected by the crisis that has transitioned into ROAS operating within the HDP nexus in countries of crisis.

ROAS has undertaken two large reviews of its work on crisis in the last two years. It commissioned a stock-take of its work in the region to understand the lessons learned and recommendations from its work²². The ILO's Governing Body also approved EVAL's workplan for 2023 which included a high-level evaluation of ILO's DWCPs in the Arab States region. Based on assessment of needs and consultation, it was agreed that the evaluation would focus on the ILO's work on crisis in the last two biennium with detailed focus on Iraq and Yemen, but also looking at Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Many countries in the Arab States region are impacted directly or indirectly by the various crises playing out across the region. The Syrian crisis, now ongoing since 2011, has been one of the largest drivers of pressure in the region.

22. ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities (2023).

Inclusion in Evaluations

One of the key findings of the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) was that “[at the regional and global levels, an emerging body of reports and strategy documents positions the ILO as an agency with an HDP Nexus mandate. As yet, at the project level, there remains a lack of systematic understanding of, or reporting on, impacts of the Nexus.](#)” (p12). Despite the fact the large volume of programming in crisis affected locations and projects appear to support the ILO's mandate on the HPD nexus, there is surprisingly limited references to it in the evaluation reports. Only six evaluations reference the Nexus. Three of these are in Yemen, one in Syria, one in Lebanon, and the multi-country PROSPECTS programme.

Similarly, the stock-take of the ILO's engagement in the HDP nexus also found that there was weak engagement on the peace element of the Nexus. There are slightly more references to peace, but still only eleven of the evaluations make any reference to peace building.

Recommendation 205 (2017) is a key normative instrument for the ILO's HDP nexus and crisis work. However, reference to R205 is even more limited in the evaluation reports. Only two evaluations refer to it in the main body of the report, the evaluations of PROSPECTS and the Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria project. Many of the projects implemented by the ILO in the region would though be relevant to R.205. The lack of reference to it could be linked to both a lack of awareness of R205 by evaluators and limited understanding of it from ILO staff and constituents. The global evaluation on the ILO/PBSO Programme to sustain peace and foster development through employment creation in conflict-affected situation concluded that “[the ILO global vision \(Rec. 205\) for employment and decent work for peace has yet to be fully mainstreamed across the organization](#)” (p.6).

Types of Intervention

ROAS has undertaken interventions on various thematic areas to respond to the crises the region has experienced. These have included responses more linked to humanitarian relief as well as the ILO's more traditional longer-term development and system strengthening approaches. The region has been part of the global PROSPECTS programme that aims to alleviate the long-term challenges and needs of forcibly displaced persons and host communities in eight countries across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Greater Horn of Africa, and implements programming in four pillars, education and learning, employment and livelihoods,

protection and inclusion, and partnership and new ways of working. Other projects implemented solely in ROAS have included the strengthening of employment opportunities for host communities and refugees, particularly employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Yemen, projects focused on the elimination of child labour in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and the strengthening of national social security systems in Lebanon and Jordan. The ILO also responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in various projects throughout the region.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

The evaluation reports rated the relevance of the projects as high. In general, the projects had met key needs of various stakeholders including government stakeholders as well as ultimate beneficiaries such as workers in the host and refugee communities. The broad range of approaches have helped increase the relevance, as noted in the evaluation of the PROSPECTS project:

“Several PROSPECTS partners stressed that the project is one of a few interventions responding to protracted displacement with a holistic approach – through the three pillars of education and learning, employment and livelihoods, and protection and inclusion – in which “the basic principles that everyone agreed to in the Grand Bargain, the Global Migration and the Global Refugee Compact come together”, as one interviewee put it. The project is also regarded as relevant for and because of a diverse group of partners who can combine humanitarian and development approaches.” (GLO1918NLD, p.29)

Many of the projects have provided direct support to host communities and refugees, thus providing immediate support, most usually through the provision of jobs and training. As noted in the Employment section, this is seen as highly relevant by the target communities, targeting humanitarian needs, with the caveat that the job provision in particular has often been short-term, and a longer-term approach would be appreciated.

The ILO’s interventions were also generally aligned with government priorities. The high-level evaluation of the ILO’s post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) noted that in Iraq as the country has moved more into a period of stability, the ILO’s work has become more aligned with government priorities. Evaluations did though note the challenges around the political context of hosting refugees. Tensions that have existed since the early days of the Syrian crisis have increased as a result of the economic downturn in Lebanon and the Covid-19 pandemic across the region, that has led to a more toxic political discourse towards

refugees. Challenges in persuading the Lebanon and Jordan governments to issue work permits has had an impact on the overall relevance of the projects.

The relevance to the employers’ and workers’ organisations was less clear as involvement was often limited and is probably a reflection of the key finding of the high-level evaluation of the ILO’s post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) that

“Tripartism and social dialogue face challenges in post-conflict settings – namely, politicized splintering and the collapse of legal institutions. Effective tripartism is a fundamental assumption within the ILO intervention model itself, yet addressing splintering is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts. Instead, discord and disagreement are sometimes sidestepped for the sake of project implementation.” (p10).

That said there were positive examples of tripartite involvement. The high-level evaluation found that the decent work agenda linked to crisis response and the HDP Nexus was appreciated by the tripartite constituents. For individual projects, the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project evaluation report highlighted the importance of the tripartite constituents and other government stakeholders in the development of the oversight structure of the new policy:

“The contribution of the government, parliament, and social partners was crucial in the discussion and establishment of a permanent tripartite structure to oversee the implementation of the Policy and review employment-related issues across Lebanon.” (LBN2001RBS _RBSA Final, p. 9)

Strengths

Overall, the ILO has been relatively successful in achieving the targets of projects linked to crisis and the HDP Nexus. Projects have delivered many, if not all, of the targets of a project. Where there have been limitations in the project meeting expected objectives, this is often linked to challenges in project management including delays in starting projects and staffing challenges. The ambition of the design of the project compared to the time available and the capacities of tripartite constituents and other partners is also an issue.

Normative framework

Despite the limited references to R.205, the ILO's normative framework was still identified as a strength for the organisation in its crisis response and work on the Nexus. The ILO's focus on decent work and social dialogue was identified as a key value add. The strength of the normative framework went beyond R.205 and included other key conventions. The importance of promoting FPRW was also identified by evaluation reports. The key principles including the freedom of association and non-discrimination provide critical entries in post-conflict contexts and can help support peace-building opportunities.

ILO's added value

Successes in coordinating with other UN agencies was identified in the evaluation reports. The ILO's experience in working through the national structures of its tripartite constituents (bearing in mind the noted limitations), focusing on policy, and greater attention to longer term development, allowed the ILO to complement the work of more humanitarian focused agencies including UNHCR and UNICEF. The evaluation of the enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria project identified this as being a key strength for the ILO:

“Key informants gave positive feedback regarding the perception and positioning of ILO's child labour and occupational safety and health projects within the overall Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Syria. Several interviewees commented on the highly political nature of programming

in Syria, in light of sanctions and other political restrictions, which make donors reluctant. In terms of child labour and occupational safety and health, these are perceived as neutral thematic areas for ILO intervention in a complex programming environment, i.e. a complex humanitarian situation and within a UN humanitarian response process. As a development actor, ILO is often on the outside of these mechanisms. However, a number of UN system actors recognized the contribution of the three ILO projects. For example, UNHCR was pleased to partner with ILO in the area of child labour, given its child protection mandate which complements ILO's child labour mandate.” (SYR/16/01/RBS, SYR/20/01/CEF, SYR/20/01/RBS, p.26)

The ILO is seen as a natural convenor given its tripartite structure and its close links to other stakeholders within the tripartite plus approach. As a result, the ILO is well positioned to enhance the contributions of key stakeholders that might otherwise be left on the sidelines. The stock-taking exercise of the ILO's engagement in the Nexus in ROAS identified that the ILO was seen as the partner of choice by social partners as a result of its mandate and the persistent decent work-related challenges they face. At the same time, the attitude towards partnerships among other stakeholders varied between humanitarian partners, who viewed the partnership through a short-term transaction lens, and development partners who valued the partnership itself more²³. As a result, partnerships with development partners generally had more potential for longer-term partnership, capacity building, and a focus on sustainability and policy development that aligned with the ILO's mandate.

Social Cohesion

An important element of the theory behind the ILO's work on the HDP Nexus is that decent work can contribute to improved social cohesion in crisis affected communities by the provision of inclusive employment and social dialogue. Evaluation reports identified improvements in cooperation between host and refugee communities in the EIIP projects in Yemen, Lebanon, and Jordan. This was linked to the provision of opportunities for different communities to work together.

23. ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities (2023), (p.21)

“The majority view from the surveys of workers in the two countries and from other stakeholders was that the programme has decreased tensions between members of the host and displaced communities participating in the programme with wider positive effects.” (LEB/20/03/DEU, p.8)

“The evaluation has found that the project, in its training activities and accreditation activities, contributed significantly to social cohesion in the communities between Jordanians and Syrians. According to most implementing partners who provided training under this project, Jordanians and Syrians developed friendly relations during the course of the training, and such relations were more pronounced in training courses that tackled soft skills and life issues before the actual technical training. According to one Syrian female beneficiary “The most important thing I gained from this project was the friendships I built.” (JOR1905USA, p22)

Measurement of the impact of the ILO’s programming on societal cohesion is limited though. A study on how the How ILO Programmes Contribute to

Social Cohesion between Refugees/IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region found that the ILO was unable to produce evidence of any impacts on social cohesion of its programming in Iraq and Lebanon (although one of the evaluations reported improvements in Lebanon), and that measures of social cohesion were usually not embedded into results frameworks.

Provision of employment and income generation opportunities

The ILO has undertaken several projects that offer short-term employment opportunities to host communities and refugees. This have often been in the form of employment intensive infrastructure projects. The interventions have provided significant cash injections for vulnerable communities while also enhancing workplace skills and improving local infrastructure and assets.



Gaps

Coherent strategy

A concern raised by the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) was there was a lack of a coherent framework for working on the HDP Nexus. This was supported by the stock-taking exercise that found that the “ILO's social and implementing partners in the region noted the lack of attention to the “bigger picture” and to the quality of the partnership that translated into missed opportunities to work more strategically and efficiently. External stakeholders also observed a disconnect among the many ILO projects and programmes in different countries in the region” (p.18). These findings are supported by the lack of reference to the HDP Nexus in the evaluation reports in the sample and the fact that many of the evaluations identified short-termism as being a challenge in the project.

Length of projects

The length of several projects was identified as a challenge. The funding periods for humanitarian response are often shorter than for traditional development projects, and several of the evaluation reports suggested the length of the project reduced opportunities for long-term outcomes. This had impacts in terms of policy development that can often take several years, as well as reducing opportunities for social dialogue.

Monitoring and evaluation

Concerns about monitoring frameworks were raised in several evaluations included in the sample. A repeated issue was the lack of indicators that would measure long-term change. Results frameworks were often found to focus mainly on output indicators. One of the recommendations of the high-level evaluation was for the ILO to review its monitoring and evaluation processes to help improve them in future projects.

There are examples of concerns about monitoring systems being raised in evaluations of one phase of the project, and the evaluation of the next phase finding the system to be much improved. The evaluation of the Enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities project in Yemen

found serious failings in the monitoring system, however the evaluation of the second phase of this project had very positive reflections on the monitoring system. The same is true of the EIIP projects in Lebanon and Jordan, where improvements in the monitoring system can be identified.

Failure to promote itself among humanitarian actors

There were indications in some of the evaluations that the ILO was not positioning itself as a key player in post-conflict and crisis work as effectively as it could have. For example, the cluster evaluation of the child labour projects in Syria found that “there should be more systematic promotion of the ILO's work in situations of protracted crisis in child labour and occupational safety and health, drawing lessons from these projects in Syria and the challenges that were encountered.” (p.12).

Disability Inclusion

Aligning with findings from other sub-sections of the report, there is very limited evidence of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the ILO's programming on crisis and HDP Nexus. Although a small number of projects had included targets on outreach to persons with disabilities, the large of projects had not done this and there was not evidence that the ILO had reached out to organisations of persons with disabilities to support their work on crisis and HDP Nexus.

There is very limited evidence of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the ILO's programming on crisis and HDP Nexus.

Good practices

Joint programming

The nature of the crises experienced in the region means there is considerable scope for joint programming with other UN agencies, leveraging the different comparative advantages of the entities. The ILO's comparative advantages include its normative framework, its convening power that allows it to ensure key national stakeholders are involved, and its focus on longer-term development. These help compliment the strengths that other agencies have. The evaluations described effective partnerships that had been developed between the ILO and other agencies but there are also some examples of the potential pitfalls that need to be avoided.

Good practices included developing good working relationships, strong communication, and complementarity in approaches, as demonstrated in the "Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians" project:

"The relationship between both implementing agencies has been positive, and a good degree of alignment has been noted throughout the programme, and reflected in this report. It is important to draw attention to the division of roles between ILO and UNICEF with regards to this programme. Staff from both agencies report a close working relationship, and an understanding and acceptance of the division of responsibility. ILO lead on the decent work portfolio whilst UNICEF are working to design and develop a shock-responsive social protection system for Jordan. Both Agencies had a strong track record of working together, having done so in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq." (JOR2001EUR 2023, p. 26)

The evaluation of the PROSPECTS project found successful synergies had been developed with UNHCR and UNICEF:

"Interviews with key stakeholders and the document review identified many examples of successful synergies between ILO and PROSPECTS partners across the three pillars of education, employment, and protection. These synergies were particularly successful between UNICEF, UNHCR, and the ILO. Typical examples of synergies include utilising UNICEF comparative advantages in (basic) education and training, ILO's expertise in school to work transition and employment-related activities and UNHCR experience and contacts in the area of forced displacement. This collaboration has helped avoid overlaps, enhance resource utilisation, and improve effectiveness." (GLO1918NLD, p.52)

Benefits from joint programme though were not always apparent. The original EIIP project in Lebanon was designed as a joint project between the ILO and UNDP. However, the collaboration did not lead to expected synergies and the partnership was discontinued after the third phase:

"There was sound logic in ILO partnering UNDP in the EIIP in Lebanon during LP-III since UNDP had been operating in Lebanon since 2013. The partnership was discontinued at the end of LP-III because expected synergies did not materialise. (LBN 2003DEU EIIP Cluster Evaluation Report 2023, p. 6)

The challenges in the relationship appears to have been driven by a lack of coordination between the agencies, the expected gains from UNDP's ability to identify infrastructure programmes quickly not materialising, and a failure to make cost savings from the partnership. Clarity on roles and responsibilities appear to have been stronger in other partnerships.

Lessons learned

Strong collaboration between project teams and technical specialists supports effective results

Many of the evaluations found the collaboration between project teams and technical specialists, both in the ROAS DWT team and at Geneva to be effective and well-managed. Examples of this included the

PROSPECTS project where the involvement of the ILO's technical departments and global team was identified as one of the key factors supporting progress and effectiveness or the Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon projects where backstopping support had helped fill staffing gaps

“Due to the afore mentioned challenges and gaps in project staffing, the ILO Senior Skills and Employability Specialist of the Decent Work Team at the Regional Office; the ILO HQ Skills and Employability Branch staff; and the ILO/ITC Skills Development/TVET Programme Officer stepped up to provide extensive technical support to backstop the National Project Officer. This implied a significant effort and time investment by ILO specialists in supporting the planning and technical oversight of several project activities.” (LEB1608CEF and LBN1804ITA, p. 50)

Not all projects reported the same level of collaboration though, and the importance of communication between the project team and technical experts is demonstrated through few projects where coordination was reported to have not been as good, leading to project inefficiencies:

“Furthermore, the technical experts were not consulted during the process of selecting implementing partners and preparing the associated implementation agreements. One example is the lack of consultations made with the workers' specialist at ILO ROAS on how to best engage with the labor movement. ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) was also not engaged in the process despite its crucial role in providing guidance and advice on how to best engage workers and labor movements in ILO projects. Similarly, the Skills and Employability specialist was not adequately consulted on the types of trainings and skill development activities that were conducted during the project, which has resulted in a lack of strategic thinking behind the selected trainings.” (JOR1905USA, p. 35)

Specific attention is needed to monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Challenges with monitoring and evaluation have been identified across sub-themes by the review. This concern applies to ROAS's work in crisis and on the HDP Nexus but is amplified further because it is a relatively new area of work and there is a resulting lack of coherence across the ILO on how to measure progress, particularly related to peace work. As such the body of evidence that will allow the ILO to learn and adapt is more limited in this field. This heightens the need for well designed results frameworks with indicators that measure both short-term and long-term change.

Promoting decent work and ILO's added value is important in a crowded sector

One of the gaps identified in the evaluations was the lack of positioning itself in key fora in a manner that would allow the ILO to promote the importance of decent work in times of crises. One of the recommendations of the high-level evaluation of ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) is that the ILO should engage more quickly with other UN agencies at the onset of a crisis in order to be included in subsequent coordinated humanitarian and HDP Nexus response mechanisms. Other evaluations noted the absence of the ILO from key meetings and fora.

Considering local contexts

The importance of considering local context during design and implementation was highlighted in the evaluation reports. Both positive and weak examples were given, sometimes in the same evaluation report. The evaluation of the Improved and market-based provision of vocational training for Lebanese and refugees project identified how the failure to understand the local context had created negative effects:

“Towards improved formal and non-formal technical and vocational education and training...This happened when the facilitator could not understand the local context (e.g. the TREE training workshops), indicating that targeting both Lebanese and refugees with a special focus on refugees sometimes led to misunderstandings.” (LBN1607ITA-LBN1608CEF, p. 31)

The same evaluation report also though identified the development of a quality methodology by a facilitator who understood the local context as being a strong element of the project:

“The evaluation revealed that the CBT was successful and responded to output 2 of “competency-based training programmes relevant to labour market demand developed and initiated”. This was a result of the simple interactive methodology provided by a qualified facilitator who gave examples extracted from the local context and applied in practical exercises. Following the CBT training, MOSA initiated a long-term plan to adopt it.” (LBN1607ITA-LBN1608CEF, p. 48)

Recommendations

Review of the recommendations of the reports linked to crisis and the HDP Nexus led to various themes and key recommendations being identified:

Promote tripartism and social dialogue

the attention that could be given to social dialogue. The promotion of tripartism and the development of coherent strategies to address the challenges was recommended.

Ensure collaboration between technical specialists and project teams

Sampled evaluations found highlighted efficiencies and more effective programming where there was strong coordination between technical specialists and project teams. This included coordination both with the ROAS DWT and Geneva, and included the importance of collaboration with both thematic experts as well as cross-cutting specialists in topics such as monitoring and evaluation and gender mainstreaming.

Ensuring projects are of sufficient length to address the longer-term challenges and transition along the Nexus

The length of projects, often linked to the humanitarian nature of the funding sources, meant that longer term policy engagement and capacity building could not be

achieved. There is evidence that there has been some evolution of approaches during the review period. For example, the EIIP projects were beginning to move away from cash for work approaches to linking more to vocational training and long-term employment opportunities. However, several evaluations had results frameworks that were too ambitious for the length of the project and missed out on longer-term impacts as a result. As such, where possible identifying longer-term funding opportunities is recommended.

Strengthen partnerships with other UN entities

The review found positive examples of joint programming and collaboration with UN agencies that have strengthened the overall outcomes, as well as projects where coordination was limited and the ILO had not been maximising opportunities to promote the role of decent work in crisis response. This is a particular problem in crisis and Nexus programming as traditional coordination mechanisms are often dominated by humanitarian organisations, especially at the start of a crisis, thus giving less priority to development focused issues. Evaluations recommended ensuring that the ILO inserts itself into key fora to attempt to rectify this concern and ensure the ILO's comparative advantages are recognised by key stakeholders.



Next Steps

Develop a regional strategy, including theories of change, on the ILO's work on the Nexus.



The fragmented approach and varying understanding of the Nexus has been reported to be a challenge. Developing a coordinated regional strategy that includes theories of change would help address this. This would support recommendation 4 of the high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23)

Ensure evaluators address the Nexus and the relevant areas of the ILO's normative framework during evaluations.



The lack of references to the HDP Nexus in evaluations is notable. It is not clear if this is linked to a lack of understanding of evaluators or project staff or both about the HDP Nexus but ensuring more detailed analysis in evaluation reports would help the ILO to address short-comings in its approach.

Ensure staff are aware of R205 and are utilising in the design and implementation of their projects where relevant.



The ILO's normative framework is a key comparative advantage that allows the ILO to position itself as a critical partner working on the Nexus. Reports suggest there is limited awareness of R205 among ILO staff. Improving awareness of it should improve the use of it in projects.

Ensure good practices from projects are shared throughout the region.



There were examples of the areas where the ILO had improved upon during the evolution of response in one country but that came up as concerns in other countries. An example of this would be the improvements in the monitoring framework which the EIIP projects in Lebanon and Jordan appear to have attained. However, a similar EIIP project in Yemen still faced challenges with monitoring and evaluation, suggesting that some of the lessons from implementation in Lebanon and Jordan were not shared effectively with the project designers and implementer for the project in Yemen.

Conduct early engagement with relevant humanitarian actors to ensure the role of decent work and the ILO's comparative advantages in delivering in the Nexus are recognised.

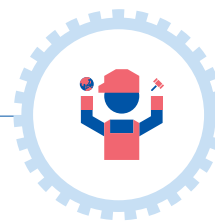


This is linked to the ILO positioning itself effectively as a critical partner working on the Nexus. Humanitarian agencies are more experienced in quick response during crisis which may lead to the crowding out of more traditional development partners such as the ILO. Developing a more pro-active approach would help address this concern.

Continue to identify best practices to engage tripartite constituents and consider a regional-wide strategic approach, while still ensuring local context drives the process.



Awareness of tripartite constituents about the ILO's work on the Nexus was reported to be limited. Evaluations also noted that tripartism is often sidelined for expediency in implementing projects. A strategy to help define the role of tripartite constituents and how the ILO will engage them on the Nexus would help mitigate this concern.



International Labour Standards, Labour Law, FPRW

Since its inception, the ILO has developed and encouraged the adherence to key international labour standards that are defined through legally binding conventions and protocols and non-binding recommendations. In 1998, ILO Members recognised four key areas as being fundamental to social justice and decent work, namely freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of discrimination at work, the abolition of child labour, and the elimination of forced labour. ILO Members adopted the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at work and included eight ILO conventions and one protocol as fundamental conventions²⁴. In 2022, the 1998 Declaration was revised to add a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and include two more conventions as fundamental²⁵. In addition to the fundamental conventions, the ILO also has governance and technical conventions as well as a series of recommendations and guidelines, that provide the basis for international labour standards.

The ILO's work is grounded within its normative framework and thus, most, if not all, of the projects evaluated will have some component linked to ILS. Its work includes supporting member states to align national laws to ILS, preparing member states for ratification and enforcement of ILO conventions, supporting employer and worker organisations to understand and advocate for the ratification and enforcement of conventions, and providing technical support when labour laws are revised.

Under the ILO's evaluation guidelines, ILS is considered a cross-cutting issue. Evaluators are supposed to review how effectively projects have included concerns related to ILS into their design and implementation. The inclusion of this consideration within the evaluations included in the sample is mixed. Although the majority do include reflections on ILS, the issue is not included in about a quarter of the evaluations, including

some which explicitly state in the methodology they will include questions on ILS, which makes it difficult to assess how effectively these projects have utilised the ILO's normative framework during implementation.

Under the ILO's evaluation guidelines, ILS is considered a cross-cutting issue. Evaluators are supposed to review how effectively projects have included concerns related to ILS into their design and implementation.

24. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (C87), 1948, Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (C98), 1949, Forced Labour Convention (C29), 1930, Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 2014 (P29), Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (C105), 1957, Minimum Age Convention (C138), 1973, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182), 1999, Equal Remuneration Convention (C100), 1951, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (C111), 1958

25. Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C155), 1981, Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (C187)

Main Interventions

FPRW

The ratification of the fundamental conventions is high among the Arab States countries. The main areas of non-ratification are P29, which only Saudi Arabia of the countries who feature in evaluations has ratified, and the OSH conventions which is probably not surprising given it was only adopted as a fundamental principle in 2022. Outside of P29, Iraq has not ratified C155, Jordan has not ratified C87, C187 and C155, Lebanon has not ratified C87, C155, C187, the Syrian Arabic Republic has not ratified C187, Saudia Arabia has not ratified C87, C98, and C155, and Yemen has not ratified C155 and C187.

Ratification does not guarantee adherence to the conventions though and limitations connected to the fundamental principles are noted in several evaluation reports throughout the region, particularly linked to the reduction of civil society space that impacts on the ability of trade unions and CSOs to organise workers and advocate for their rights and freedoms.

“While Iraq has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions, implementation and enforcement has been weak especially related to freedom of association, collective bargaining and labour inspection.” (IRQ2003EUR_Final Evaluation Report _2023, p.12)

Where there are challenges to obtaining fundamental rights at work, child labour and OSH often provide entry points for action that are less controversial than the other principles. While there may be political and societal push back, they do not link to political expression of freedom of association and collective bargaining, the cultural norms often associated with gender equality and non-discrimination, or debates over the presence and rights of migrant workers that are often linked to forced labour. Child labour and OSH were the most directly addressed of the fundamental principles in project objectives and outcomes in the sampled projects.

Child labour is the FPRW topic that has the most specifically designed projects. Projects to eliminate child labour have been implemented in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. This is a reflection of the vulnerabilities that

communities face towards child labour in times of crisis and conflict. The interventions are aimed at including child labour within the humanitarian response, providing livelihood and income generation opportunities for the families of children at risk of child labour, and working to prevent the recruitment of children in armed conflict. The ILO's interventions have also worked on strengthening the structural capacities of Member States to address child labour, including improving capacities of labour inspectors to recognise indicators of child labour, supporting national stakeholders to develop national action plans, and enhancing awareness of local and national authorities.

The right to a safe and healthy working environment is the newest of the fundamental rights and as a result also the least ratified fundamental conventions but the additional of OSH to the declaration on FPRW has provided an entry point for the ILO during the assessment period. However, both the Covid-19 pandemic and to a lesser extent the adoption of C155 and C187 as fundamental conventions have provided entry points for addressing OSH more recently. There has been significant attention to OSH in projects during the reporting period with approximately a third of the projects evaluated including some focus on OSH and safety at work. There have been a small number of projects that include a specific OSH objective as one of the main elements of the programme, such as the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase or the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation project. More commonly, projects included some training for government partners, labour inspectors, or social partners on OSH within a broader project. The PROSPECTS programme for example includes delivering OSH training to help translate ILO's normative standards into practice for cooperatives.

Projects that included a focus on **forced labour** were mainly linked to labour migration, including the Work in Freedom project, the Fair Recruitment project, the FAIRWAY programme, and the labour migration governance related aspects of the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme. One large global programme, the Measurement, awareness-raising and policy management (MAP)

project on child labour and forced labour in support of SDG target 8.7, included Jordan as a target country in one outcome. The focus with labour migration projects reflects the vulnerability of migrant workers to forced labour.

There were only limited projects that focused on **gender-equality and non-discrimination** as a stand-alone issue in the evaluation sample. Most of the work on gender equality and non-discrimination is conducted through mainstreaming or through one out of several project outcomes, and various projects have some level of gender orientation. The more explicitly targeted programmes were the Work in Freedom project, which has a specific focus on women migrant workers, the Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa project, and Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) & Decent Employment for Women in Yemen. Jordan is implementing several projects on gender equality but these have not yet been evaluated. No project under Outcome 6 of the P&B was evaluated, as none of the five projects implemented in the region crossed the ILO's mandatory budgetary threshold for conducting an evaluation. Although GEDI has provided support for projects through the Regional Gender and Non-Discrimination Specialist and from Geneva, projects directly backstopped by GEDI have not been evaluated during the funding period. The work on gender equality and non-discrimination is also mainly focused on gender equality. There has been limited work on disability inclusion, but no focus on the topics of LGBTIQI+ or HIVAIDs.

The Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in Arab States Region, 2018-23 identified different areas where the ILO put a focus on mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women. Skill development was identified as the area of contribution to gender equality from the ILO's projects. The Synthesis Review identified a total of 13 projects included skill development initiatives that were, to a certain extent, gender oriented. Nine projects on policy development and law reform, four on gender-responsive labour market governance, 3 on workplace activities, and 2 on collective bargaining were also identified as being gender oriented. The Review analysed 24 projects that were identified as being either gender responsive or gender transformative. The vast majority, 22 were considered gender responsive, meaning

they 'provided services specifically designed for women or men, addressing their differential needs to address equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, and rights' and only 2 were gender transformative, meaning 'they focus on changes in norms, power structures and the root causes of gender inequalities and discrimination'²⁶. The Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in Arab States Region, 2018-23 concluded that "Gender integration in ILO work in the Arab states is limited". The Synthesis Review reviewed all evaluations available and sampled only those that were gender responsive or gender transformative, meaning that approximately half of the evaluations available on i-Eval discovery for ROAS during the reporting period were not considered gender responsive or transformative.

Freedom of association and collective bargaining are politically sensitive topics in the region. In many countries, legal frameworks hamper the ability of trade unions to organise. Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have not ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and Qatar and Saudi Arabia have not ratified the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). There has been limited explicit focus on improving the freedom of association and collective bargaining through legal reforms and policy. Where progress has occurred, it has been at the enterprise level, for example through Better Work and other projects that include sustaining enterprise workers committees as an outcome and through initial steps to improve social dialogue, such as in the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme:

"Freedom of association and the right of collective bargaining: As indicated above, the joint committees were found a successful proof of concept and first step towards workers' representation. However, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are not recognised in Qatar." (QAT2101QAT, p. 45)

The limited focus on collective bargaining and freedom of association reduces opportunities for specific groups to enhance their ability to negotiate labour rights and decent work. Groups who are already excluded in some cases from being a focus of trade union action, such as women, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers, continue to be excluded if overall there is limited attention to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Other areas of the ILO's normative framework were addressed in projects that responded to some of the technical conventions and recommendations. Explicit references in the evaluations are made to the Private Employers Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No.129), the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), the Social Security Minimum Standards Convention, 1952, (C.102), and

the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No.142). The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (R195), the Transition from the Informal to Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (R.204), and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace Recommendation, 2017 (R.205) are also referenced as being utilised by projects in their implementation.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Where there has been a focus on ILS in the projects implemented by ROAS during the review period, the activities were seen as relevant to the context in the countries of implementation and to key stakeholders. This was particularly the case for children at risk of child labour and their families and government officials in national and provincial offices. However, there is a lack of tripartism, and the involvement of the employers' organisations in particular appears to be limited in many projects:

"The project engaged social partners in terms of MOLSA, DOLSA in both federal Iraq and KRI, as well as a union (workers' union in KRI). However, the project did not appear to engage employers' organisations (beyond involving the Chamber of Commerce, Dohuk in one meeting on prevention of child labour) in a systematic way, although it did involve employers through carrying out inspections of enterprises. The employers' organisations were not involved in the child labour monitoring system committees at governorate level." (IRQ1902MUL, ps.36- 37)

"The project's lack of engagement with employer representatives translated into a difficulty in working with individual farm owners and obtaining the cooperation of each in this project. This should be avoided in future project which must strive to always engage with ILO's tripartite constituents." (JOR2052, p. 50)

The evaluation of the Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria identified that child labour and OSH provide opportunities for engagement in politically complex circumstances:

"Key informants gave positive feedback regarding the perception and positioning of ILO's child labour and occupational safety and health projects within the overall Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Syria. Several interviewees commented on the highly political nature of programming in Syria, in light of sanctions⁸⁸ and other political restrictions, which make donors reluctant. In terms of child labour and occupational safety and health, these are perceived as neutral thematic areas for ILO intervention in a complex programming environment, i.e. a complex humanitarian situation and within a UN humanitarian response process" (SYR 10601RBS Cluster evaluation. p. 26)

There is a lack of tripartism, and the involvement of the employers' organisations in particular appears to be limited in many projects.

Achievements

Use of the ILO's normative framework

There is mixed evidence from the evaluations concerning how effectively the projects are utilising the ILO's normative framework. The successes that have been identified include some projects are explicitly designed to respond to issues related to ILS. The Technical Cooperation programme with Qatar was explicitly designed to respond to issues raised by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). The CEACR also noted that the Kafala system may promote conditions that lead to forced labour and asked governments to protect migrant workers, as referenced in the evaluation of the FAIRWAY project.

Some projects were reported to have effectively integrated the ILO's normative framework into the project. For example, the clustered evaluation of the Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon project found:

“The evaluation found that there is adequate integration of the continuum of International Labour Standards in the ILO projects, particularly in relation to ILO Recommendation 195 (2004) on Human Resources Development. This recommendation serves as a reference for both the UNICEF and AICS projects as it places people at the centre of economic and social development. Furthermore, Recommendation 195 aims to guide governments, employers, and workers in implementing effective education, training, and lifelong learning policies and programs.” (LEB1608CEF and LBN1804ITA, p. 31)

There was evidence in some projects that the fundamental conventions had helped guide the support given on policy reform:

“Regarding international labour standards, these were central to the project, particularly the fundamental ILO Conventions relevant for child labour. These guided project technical advice regarding law and policy reform, as well as capacity building and awareness raising.” (IRQ1902MUL, p. 8)

Within projects that included a focus on data and statistics, there was also indications that the ILO's normative framework had been integrated into the work. The global evaluation on Better Work, which

includes Jordan noted that one this element of the project there had been success:

“As already noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation, BW has made efforts in Phase IV to mainstream ILS in different industry initiatives for data sharing. For example, BW has supported the Social and Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) to transform its standard agnostic industry tool into a tool that measures compliance with ILS.” (GLO1755MUL, p. 40)

Similarly, the Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics project in Iraq identified that ILS and social dialogue were inherently part of the project given than the labour force survey and subsequent development of the national employment policy directly tackled both issues.

Child Labour



The elimination of child labour is the element of the Declaration that has received the most attention during the review period. A notable achievement was the development of a National Action Plan Against Child Labour in Iraq under the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project. This included a positive example of the involvement of tripartite constituents that included active involvement of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and workers and employers' organisations that was particularly notable given the evaluation identified a lack of involvement of the employers' organisations in the rest of the project. Draft National Action Plans in the areas of child labour and OSH were also developed in Syria as a result of the ILO's interventions.

The ILO's programmes on child labour have also directly targeted children in or at risk of child labour and their families. Strengthening livelihood opportunities for family members has provided alternative sources of income. Awareness of child labour has been provided through the SCREAM methodology that helps educators to promote awareness of child labour among young people.

Enhanced attention to OSH post-Covid-19



The Covid-19 pandemic and the adoption of the two OSH conventions into the Fundamental Declaration on FPRW has provided the ILO with a window to work on OSH in its programming. During the review period, the ILO has implemented programmes that are both programmes with a main focus on OSH and programmes that include improvements in OSH as one of the outcomes.

Heat Stress Legislation



The ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme included addressing OSH as one of its key pillars. One of the successes of the programme has been the passing of heat stress legislation that limits the time workers can spend working at high temperatures.

Figures produced by the Red Crescent suggest there has been a positive impact on workers from the legislation, although more detailed studies would be needed to prove causation of the legislation and that the reduction did not come from other factors:

“After the Ministerial Decision to set working hours and other measures to protect workers from heat stress, the number of people who visited the four Qatar Red Crescent Clinics with heat-related disorders went from 1,320 in 2019, and 1,520 in 2020, to 620 in 2021 (in other words, after the legislation had been introduced), and 351 from June to September 2022” (QAT2101QAT, p. 12)

Engagement of Labour Inspectorates



Work with labour inspectorates in ROAS has been in three main areas, namely training labour inspectors on OSH and work safety, increasing awareness of the indicators of child labour, forced labour, and trafficking in persons, and the engagement of labour inspectors in garment factories with the Better Work programme in Jordan. The evaluations show both the successes and limitations of the work undertaken by ROAS. Positive work on strengthening capacities was undertaken but systemic improvements to labour inspectorates, that are often very under-resourced, takes time,

and often projects do not have the resources or time to complete all planned activities. This was the case with the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq.

“Under the 1st and 2nd immediate objectives, the project was able to develop evidence-based national policies for labour inspection and OSH that were both validated by social partners and endorsed by the government in federal Iraq as well as in KRI. The project also built the capacities of labour inspectors & OSH experts, and upgraded the institutional capacity for labour inspection and OSH in both Federal Iraq and KRI. But due to limited resources, the project could not complete the setting up on an online/electronic labour inspection system, despite having accomplished related activities towards laying the groundwork to automating the inspection system. The ILO plans to complete the automation process through another ILO project.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 4)

A similar situation was noted in the evaluation of the EU/ILO collaboration in the monitoring of labour aspects in the implementation of the EU's rules of origin initiative for Jordan, Phase II:

“The Evaluation has built capacity among the ILO Labour Inspector and supported the creation of a new Inspection Unit at the MOL. However, the project has not engaged the MOL to continue the training. To sustain the project, more inspectors will have to be trained; after obtaining experience, they in turn will be able to train their peers. The Evaluation as noted previously found that the project requires an exit strategy for the training of the Labour Inspectors.” (JOR1854, p. 63)

Successes in raising awareness among tripartite constituents were noted in the response to Covid-19 project in Iraq:

“Under the 3rd immediate objective, the project was effective in raising the awareness of social partners on the role of inspection and OSH and established a tripartite labour inspection committee. However, there remains challenges in coordination within local tripartite structures and mechanisms in Iraq.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 4)

Gaps

Integrated Approach

The high level evaluation of ILO's strategies and action on fundamental principles and rights at work, 2018–23 identified that despite the integrated strategy on FPRW (2017–23), the ILO had only sporadically developed integrated programmes on the different aspects of FPRW:

“Even though FUNDAMENTALS’ integrated strategy on FPRW (2017–23) articulated a comprehensive theory of change, milestones and expected results, it was not widely utilized as a road map for action, monitored or evaluated. The actual impact of the strategy on levels of integration within its own portfolio and across other technical branches was limited. While ILO programmes frequently addressed child labour and forced labour together, the strategy led only to a few projects that integrated all aspects of FPRW.” (HLE of ILO’s strategies and action on fundamental principles and rights at work, 2018–23, p.8)

The review of the evaluations in ROAS suggested similar findings. The projects evaluated suggest there the fundamental topics are addressed in separate projects rather than in a unified manner. There are some limited examples, such as the ILO-Qatar technical cooperation project and some aspects of projects focused on labour migration, but these are exceptions rather than common place.

Convention Ratification

None of the evaluations explicitly credit the projects with have contributed to the ratification of any ILO Convention, although the annual report for 2023 of the ILO’s Global Flagship programme, Building Social Protection Floors for All suggests the ILO has supported the Government of Iraq to ratify C.102. There are though references to campaigns for ratification, as well as recommendations that the ILO should support ratification in future actions. Actions to encourage the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (no.189) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (no.190) are the conventions most regularly referred to regarding ratification campaigns, particularly in labour migration projects.

There is though surprisingly limited reference to projects encouraging the ratification of C155 and C187 despite there being gaps in ratification of these conventions within the region. This may be reflective of the fact that the right to safe and healthy working environment was only added to the Fundamental Declaration in 2022 and thus projects that include this have not yet been evaluated. There is also very limited suggestion of campaigns to focus on the ratification of C87 and C98 despite the real limitations on freedom of association and trade union activity in the region.

ILO’s Supervisory Mechanisms

There was limited evidence in the evaluation reports that the ILO’s supervisory mechanisms are being utilised to drive project interventions. One of the drivers for the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme was comments on multiple occasions from the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). The evaluation of the first phase of the FAIRWAY programme references the observations of the CEACR on the Kafala system to demonstrate relevance to governments, although doesn’t suggest that this drove the design of the programme.

The Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) issued several conclusions related to C182 for Iraq in 2019. These included taking measures to stop the forced recruitment of children into armed forces and armed groups, adopt legislative measures to prohibit the recruitment of children under 18 years of age for use in armed conflict, collecting information and statistics on investigations into the worst forms of child labour, taking measures to support children who have been victims of forced labour in armed groups and sexual trafficking, and developing education policies to address child labour. While the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq project has been implemented during the review period, its final evaluation does not reference the CAS conclusions and the project in general does not appear to be designed to respond to them.

The evaluation of the ILO Partnership with the Regional Development and Protection Programme for Jordan (RDPP II), Research Partnership for Improved livelihoods of Jordanian and Syrian Youth project noted that the project had not explicitly articulate international labour standards in the project and increasing awareness of ILO's supervisory bodies findings would address gaps in knowledge:

“Enhancing knowledge of the stakeholders and updating on the status of the implementation of the ILS ratified by Jordan drawing the attention of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) to Jordan government would have strengthened the knowledge of the stakeholders, allowed to bridge the knowledge gap in the ‘problem’ areas and enhance accountability of tripartite constituents in future policy development.” (JOR2104 MUL, ps. 49 & 50)

Use of the ILO's Normative Framework

In contrast to positive approaches in some projects identified above, in some of the other project evaluations, there was also a notable lack of the use of international labour standards and the ILO's normative framework suggesting there is an inconsistent use across the region's projects. Evaluations noted that the projects had not maximised opportunities to utilise what is a significant comparative advantage for the ILO.

“On the one hand, the cross-cutting concern refers to the provision of advice and technical assistance to social partners to ratify and implement International Labour Standards. This requires legal change at government level. The current evaluation has found limited evidence of advocacy to adopt new ILS by the BW countries, given that the main focus of the programme is factory-level services.” (GLO1755MUL p. 40)

Limited use in crisis related programming

The relevance of the ILO's normative framework to the HDP Nexus was highlighted in the evaluation of the child labour and OSH programmes in Syria. However, outside interventions linked to crisis and child labour, there was only limited evidence that the ILO was fully maximising its normative framework effectively in its crisis related programme. This was often as a result of the humanitarian nature of

the funding meaning the programmes were short. For example, the EIIP projects that have been implemented in several countries found there was often missing focus on areas of ILS.

“Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining along with “voice” at work are aspects of decent work. For short term employment, collective bargaining and freedom of association, though not excluded, are of limited relevance, though voice is important both for those who are employed and those who were seeking work on an EIIP project but were not selected.” (LBN 2003DEU, p. 26)

Support member states on reporting on conventions

Only one project appears to have supported the improvement of capacities of member states to meet their obligations to report on conventions.

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The review suggested there has been only limited work on freedom of association and collective bargaining. While projects worked to strengthen the capacities of worker organisations and supported social dialogue at both the national and enterprise levels, there is little evidence of work on improving the region's limited record on freedom of association. Collective bargaining has received some more attention, but this is mainly at an individual enterprise level rather than through national policies or system work.

Absence in Evaluations

One of the challenges of assessing the use of ILS in ROAS work based on the evaluation reports, is that many of the reports do not address ILS, making it more difficult to ascertain if the project did or did not contribute to the ILOs strategies on ILS. For example, the evaluation of the “Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians” project in Jordan includes questions in both relevance and efficiency that ask for how much the design and implementation of the programme included ILO's cross-cutting issues such as ILS. However, the subsequent sections only address gender equality and do not refer to ILS at all.

Connecting labour statistics to FPRW

As reported in the labour statistics section, based on the evaluation sample, there appears to have been only limited connection between projects focused on FPRW and labour statistics. The ILO Qatar Technical Cooperation project did include a focus on strengthening the publication of OSH statistics and the Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan had provided technical support to the Department of Statistics to integrate child labour issues into the agricultural workers' survey that it periodically conducts, but projects on child labour in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, OSH in Iraq, and the regional labour migration projects that included the reduction of forced labour do not appear to have included labour statistics in their work.

As reported in the labour statistics section, based on the evaluation sample, there appears to have been only limited connection between projects focused on FPRW and labour statistics.

Good Practices

Holistic Programming

The evaluation of the Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities project in Iraq identified that the project utilised an integrated approach focusing on policy level work to align Iraq's laws with ILS, enhanced services at the level interventions, and capacity strengthening and awareness raising of key stakeholders. This supports the project to address the issue of child labour at multiple levels and can ensure policy related to child labour is relevant at the grassroots level, and that programmes can be piloted at the grassroots level that are potentially replicable by policy makers outside of the project.

Success where there is broad involvement of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders

Positive results were noted in projects that ensured the broad inclusion of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders. While evaluations noted gaps in the involvement of stakeholders, particularly employers and workers organisations, where there was broad involvement, results suggested strong ownership and better potential for sustainability.

Capacity Building

Capacity building of key stakeholders has been an important approach used by the ILO during the review period. Approaches identified as good practices included peer visits, on-site mentoring, and training of trainer approaches:

“Incorporation of a significant amount of TOT activities across many of the project's activities leads to an enhanced level of sustainability of some project results and facilitates the implementation of future capacity building activities utilizing ToT graduates. ToT activities were implemented across various components of the project including TOTs on labour inspection, GetAhead, career guidance and employment services, cooperative development, and OSH. In other words, the project established a group of local trainers who may be utilized in further trainings during implementation of future projects, especially that this project was the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 11)

These approaches were valued by stakeholders. Peer visits allow trainees to see possibilities for implementation by exposure in locations where the approaches have already been utilised, the on-site mentoring helps ensure learning can be put into action on a day-to-day basis, and a training of trainer approach helps to strengthen sustainability.

Lessons Learned

Engagement with employer representatives is important to improve cooperation from individual businesses.

Evaluations noted some difficulties in engaging businesses on aspects related to ILS in projects where the employers' groups had not been actively involved.

Long-term approach to engagement with labour inspectorate is needed

A long-term approach should include working to strengthen electronic systems, enhancing awareness of their role regarding recognising child labour and supporting businesses to improve working conditions rather than just administer fines for non-compliance, and developing national policies. Integrating the different aspects of ILS into training for the labour inspectorates is important but also requires longer time frames to ensure knowledge gains translate into improved working approaches.

Child labour projects face a sustainability challenge linked to the gains of children being removed from child labour being maintained.

Evaluations of child labour programmes noted that the capacities of the local authorities to continue the support to the families with child in or at risk of child labour were limited and many families had identified the possibility their child would re-entry the workforce once the support provided by the project had been removed.

ILO projects do have a risk of contributing to "brain drain" if Ministry of Labour staff leave positions such as labour inspectors to work for the ILO itself, other UN entities, or the private sector.

Labour inspectors and other ministry positions often have low salaries that cannot compete with the private sector or the UN. It was noted in one evaluation that Ministry Staff had left to become Better Work Enterprise Advisors. Staff turn-over in government positions does present challenges related to sustainability and projects may inadvertently contribute to this.

Recommendations

Some key recommendations included in evaluation reports included:

Ensure full assessments of the capacities of partners and their awareness of international labour law is conducted prior to the project design to ensure ambitions match capacities.

Continue to enhance the capacity of social partners to engage in issues related to ILS, particularly ensuring social dialogue is a key element of the project

Next Steps

Ensure clarity among staff on utilisation of ILO normative framework in projects.



This is particularly relevant for newer instruments such as R205 and C190, as well as tailoring projects to respond to the comments and observations of the ILO's supervisory bodies.

Ensure ROAS actively supports efforts to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining, including the ratification of C87 in member states that have yet to ratify the convention.



Freedom of association and collective bargaining is a sensitive topic in the region. C87 is the least ratified of the original fundamental conventions and yet there has been very limited focus in projects on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Support ratification campaigns for relevant conventions.



This could include identifying where there is interest or entry points for ratifying conventions, particularly outstanding fundamental conventions and the newer conventions and ensuring inclusion in project activities.

Promote the use of the ILO's normative framework within crisis and HDP Nexus programming.



The ILO's normative framework is a key comparative advantage that allows the ILO to position itself as a critical partner working on the Nexus. Reports suggest there is limited awareness of R205 among ILO staff. Improving awareness of it should improve the use of it in projects.

Develop integrated programming that combines different elements of the Fundamental Declaration.



This would align with the recommendation of the International Labour Convention resolution in 2017 requiring the ILO to develop an integrated strategy for FPRW but was found to have not been implemented successfully by the 2023 high level evaluation on FPRW.

Ensure evaluations include reviews of the integration of ILS into the projects.



This is a cross-cutting requirement for ILO evaluations but is often under-addressed in evaluations. Evaluation managers should ensure there are questions linked to ILS and the final report addresses these in satisfactory manner.

Develop an employer/private sector engagement strategy for the region to ensure employers are more willing to accept alignment of national labour laws with ILS.



There has been limited involvement of employer federations and their absence can harm the willingness of businesses to address ILS concerns.

Improve reporting on how projects are promoting or contributing to ILS.



Evaluation reports noted there were gaps in the reporting of how projects contributed to ILS. This makes it harder to assess the ILO's success in encouraging the use of its normative framework and promotion of respect for international standards.

Continue to support national statistic offices and other relevant departments to collect data related to ILS.



Access to quality labour statistics is important in supporting the ILO's work on FPRW and remains a challenge in the region. Addressing this could include ensuring that projects designed on child labour and OSH, and migration programmes that include a focus on forced labour, incorporate working with national statistics bureaus into their design.

Ensure greater awareness of the ILO's supervisory mechanisms among tripartite constituents and project staff.



Very few projects referred to the ILO's supervisory mechanisms and projects did not appear to have been developed as a response to comments or observations (with the exception of the Technical Cooperation project in Qatar). Stronger inclusion in projects, combined with awareness raising among constituents and staff might raise the relevance of the mechanism to constituents.



Disability Inclusion

The ILO's Disability Inclusion Policy states that ILO will ensure that 'tripartite constituents, as beneficiaries of its programmatic work, and considering their key role in social dialogue, can fully contribute to disability inclusion in the implementation of the ILO decent work agenda' and that that ILO's 'policies, programmes, projects and operations contain a human rights-based, gender-responsive approach to disability inclusion'²⁷. Despite this, the ILO only approached requirements under its reporting on the implementation of indicator 9 (programmes and projects) under the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

(UNDIS) in the years 2019-2021 with the report on implementation of the Strategy to the Governing Body noting that 'available data indicates that disability inclusion perspectives are not being included sufficiently in ILO projects.'²⁸ More recently, the High-Level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-23), noted there was limited evidence of disability inclusion in projects in Iraq, although the evaluation did identify some policy successes in Jordan and Lebanon on disability inclusion as a result of the ILO's work.



Main Interventions

The evidence from the synthesis review aligns with the previous findings and suggests that projects have struggled to ensure disability inclusion. Of the 27 evaluations that reviewed disability inclusion, only 5 reports could be assessed that the project was successful in ensuring disability inclusion and 2 were highly successful. Eleven projects were reported to have no disability inclusion aspects in the design or implementation. Additionally, a further 17 evaluations made no reference to disability

inclusion, despite some indicating the evaluation would cover the topic in their methodology. It is not fully possible to know if these 17 projects do have elements of disability inclusion in and this was not recorded by the evaluation. The overall limited attention to disability inclusion within projects is consistent with findings from previous studies conducted by the disability inclusion team in GEDI and ILO's self-reported indicator on programming to UNDIS.

27. ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2020-23. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/ilo-disability-inclusion-policy-and-strategy-2020-23>.

28. GB.346/INS/INF/5, Report on the implementation of the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-23). <https://www.ilo.org/resource/gb/346/report-implementation-ilo-disability-inclusion-policy-and-strategy-2020-23>.

Relevance and Meeting the Needs of Key Stakeholders

The evidence from the synthesis review aligns with the previous findings and suggests that projects have struggled to ensure disability inclusion. Of the 27 evaluations that reviewed disability inclusion, only 5 reports could be assessed that the project was successful in ensuring disability inclusion and 2 were highly successful. Eleven projects were reported to have no disability inclusion aspects in the design or implementation. Additionally, a further 17 evaluations made no reference to disability inclusion, despite some indicating the evaluation

would cover the topic in their methodology. It is not fully possible to know if these 17 projects do have elements of disability inclusion in and this was not recorded by the evaluation. The overall limited attention to disability inclusion within projects is consistent with findings from previous studies conducted by the disability inclusion team in GEDI and ILO's self-reported indicator on programming to UNDIS.

Achievements

Involvement of organisation of persons with disabilities



Projects that were the most successful had actively involved the persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of the project, such as the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon project, which is a joint ILO and UNICEF project.

“As evidence suggested, the design of the SP (Social Protection) Strategy was carried out with direct engagement of the PWDs²⁹ and organizations advocating for the rights and needs of PWDs. This engagement was considered by the PWDs as truly empowering, elevating PWDs' engagement with a development intervention to a totally new level. On additional note, the ILO and UNICEF have developed disability related social protection system to be realized as part of the SP Strategy.” (LBN1951UND, p. 36)

This evaluation found that as a result of the attention to disability inclusion and in particular the engagement of persons with disabilities, the project had the important impact of creating important

preconditions for disability inclusive social protection. The project included the output ‘A platform of dialogue for civil society and academia, which enables participation from women and people with disabilities, to generate and build on inclusive contribution to the national discussion is established’, which the evaluation assessed to have been fully achieved.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in data collection protocols



Another good example of disability inclusion was in the report on Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics that noted inclusion of persons with disabilities in both policy and survey components of the project:

“Both the LFS and policy components of the project integrated people with disabilities, such that indicators specific to PWDs may be produced by the survey results, and PWDs are included explicitly in the NEP with specific policy actions directed towards PWDs.” (IRQ1801RBS, p. 22)

29. It is acknowledged by the author of this report the use of persons with disabilities instead of PWD is recommended because as noted in the United Nations' disability language guidance, the term should always be written in full to keep the focus on people, and not as a homogenous group reduced to an acronym. However, the above is a direct quote from an evaluation report, and thus has been left as originally written.

Gaps

Knowledge and skills to ensure disability inclusion

The evaluation of the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector project highlights that one of the challenges faced by project implementers who do want to address disability inclusion is a lack of knowledge and resources. The project's needs assessment was successful in ensuring the views of persons with disabilities were included in the assessment but during implementation, the project lacked the resources to improve accessibility and missed a deeper understanding of disability:

“In terms of adapting to the needs of persons with disabilities, the Project lacked resources to enhance the accessibility of the farms to the needs of persons with disabilities. It was also noted that in-depth research is required to understand which jobs in the floriculture sector could be occupied by persons with various types of disabilities.” (JOR1902 AUS, p. 41)

The flagship PROSPECTS programme that aims to alleviate challenges for forcibly displaced people and host communities in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Greater Horn of Africa is another example of where the ambitions of the design of the project were not fully achieved in the implementation. Efforts were made to integrate disability inclusion into the project and collaborate with the Disability Inclusion team from the Gender, Equality, and Diversity (GEDI) branch. Seventy-eight percent of stakeholders included in a survey believed the project was designed to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. This is quite a high percentage but is actually the lowest percentage of

any of the different topics of implementation included in the questionnaire. The report does note the project's global vision statement note only sporadically references disability and there are still gaps in addressing disability inclusion. Since the evaluation, PROSPECTS has published a report of the basic needs and social protection and employment gaps of persons with disabilities in Lebanon³⁰ suggesting disability inclusion is being considered by the project in the next phase.

No attention to disability inclusion

Many projects though were completely disability blind. This was reported on in the evaluation of Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq project and re-emphasised in the high-level evaluation of ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) that:

“Regarding inclusion of people with disabilities, the project design was completely disability blind, with no mention of people with disabilities in the situation analysis. Nor was there any explicit strategy to address disability inclusion in the project outcomes, outputs, activities or indicators. This is reflected in the inadequate visibility of disability inclusion in interventions under project and an absence of systematic disability mainstreaming, despite some discrete instances of focus on and engagement with persons with disabilities in project activities.” (IRQ1902, p. 26)

Good Practices

Consultation and participation of organisations of persons with disabilities in developing the national social protection policy in Lebanon

The inclusion of organisations of persons with disabilities in project development and implementation is critical for supporting the ‘nothing about us,

without us’, philosophy of the disability movement. The work on developing the social protection policy in Lebanon had ensured this, and this inclusion was probably one of the driving factors that led to the adoption of the national disability benefit.

30. Living with disabilities in Lebanon. A snapshot assessment of basic needs, social protection and employment gaps. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/living-disabilities-lebanon>

Lessons Learned

When facing project challenges, it is important to ensure that activities focused on persons with disabilities are not dropped due to time or other constraints

Modules on disability inclusion were dropped from labour statistics projects as a result of challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and time constraints. Ensuring an early focus on disability inclusion activities is recommended to help mitigate against this should the project face challenges.

Modules on disability inclusion were dropped from labour statistics projects as a result of challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and time constraints.

Recommendations

There were very limited recommendations on disability inclusion in the evaluation reports.

Include a project focus on the increased vulnerability of child labourers engaged in hazardous work to disability.

Target project activities towards children and families based on the following criteria: Need, Gender, Age, Disability, Education level, and Willingness of head of household to pledge not to send the children back to work.



Next Steps

Develop an action plan on the implementation of the ILO's policy and strategy on disability inclusion for ROAS



The evaluation of the ILO's policy and strategy on disability inclusion recommended that indicators be set for regional offices to help ensure the strategy was relevant at the field level. Developing an action plan for how ROAS will contribute to the ILO's strategy would help clarify responsibilities and ensure ROAS is able to hold country offices accountable for improving their action on disability inclusion.

Ensure continued regional engagement in the ILO's Disability Champions Network



As part of the ILO's efforts to implement its Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy and meet requirements under the UNDIS, the Disability Inclusion Team in GEDI set up a voluntary Disability Champions Network. This includes operational and programme staff from headquarters, regional, and country offices who focus on disability inclusion in their work. It offers the opportunity for expert support from the Disability Inclusion Team and peer support from others working on disability issues, with the hope that Champions will then support other colleagues to improve their awareness of disabilities inclusion. The network supported the roll out by GEDI of guidelines on consultation of organisations of persons with disabilities, as well as other guidelines on strengthening disability inclusion. ROAS has several staff who are members of the network, including in the senior management team and more attention has been paid to the topic in the region more recently and continued engagement, particularly from senior management, will help improve the region's performance.

Implement a disability specific project



Notably the region has not had a disability specific project during the reporting period though, which as part of the ILO's twin track approach to disability could also support ROAS's work on disability inclusion in the future.

Utilise the ILO's Disability Equality Training module to improve awareness of disability inclusion among tripartite constituents.



The ILO has developed an innovative and effective training module called disability equality training (DET) that is led by the disability inclusion team in GEDI. This had achieved remarkable results in increased awareness and understanding of disability inclusion. ILO ROAS should consider providing this training to tripartite constituents, with the consideration of increasing references to disability inclusion withing DWCPs.

Ensure ROAS is supporting the operational indicators of the ILO's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy as well as the programmatic indicators



The Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy as part of the ILO's commitment to implement the UNDIS has 13 areas, and include a focus on the ILO's leadership and operational operations as well as its programming. This includes ensuring accessibility of offices, events, and publications, improved recruitment of persons with disabilities, and disability inclusive procurement. Improvements made in these indicators should support improvements in programming by strengthening the enabling environment for persons with disabilities and improving awareness of disability inclusion among all staff.



Social Protection

The ILO's normative framework includes 16 up-to-date social security standards which helps guide the ILO's work on social protection. The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No.102) is the main normative instrument, although there are significant links to other ILO standards, including the Declaration on FPRW (1998). The ILO works with member states to strengthen their social security systems to meet minimum ILO standards in nine areas, health protection, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, employment injury benefits, family and child benefits, maternity benefits, disability benefits, and survivors' benefits.

Three countries, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon in ROAS are part of the ILO's Global Flagship programme, Building Social Protection Floors for All. In the Arab States, the ILO has supported the Government of Iraq to ratify C.102, worked with the Jordanian Social Security Corporation on an initiative called Estidama, which extends social security to vulnerable populations including refugees, and supported the Government of Lebanon to launch a National Disability Allowance and adopt the National Social Security Protection Strategy.

Within the evaluation sample, there were two significant projects focusing on social protection, the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project and the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project. The review also utilised the draft evaluation report for the Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries project, although as this is only at draft stage, it wasn't used in the qualitative scoring.

There are only limited references to social protection within the other evaluation reports. The Social dialogue for formalization and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) focused on strengthening the capacities of tripartite constituents for social dialogue and utilised the opportunity to strengthen understanding among trade unions about the issues concerning social protection and

informality. The ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation project did not originally include social protection in its intended outcomes, but utilised the opportunity to work the ILO conducted on consultations around extending social protection to migrant workers in the GCC countries as an entry point for discussion in Qatar. The PROSPECTS project includes collaboration with UNHCR on addressing social protection barriers for forcibly displaced persons and the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector provided the opportunity to implement the bylaw which extends the social protection to the workers in the agriculture sector.

▀▀ The ILO works with member states to strengthen their social security systems to meet minimum ILO standards in nine areas, health protection, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, employment injury benefits, family and child benefits, maternity benefits, disability benefits, and survivors' benefits.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Although the sample size is limited, evaluations identified the ILO's interventions on social protection as being highly relevant for key stakeholders. The gaps in social protection in the region are understood and recognised as priorities by governments and other key stakeholders. This was noted by one stakeholder in the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project:

“All Lebanese stakeholders irrespective of their background, professional affiliation, age or gender emphasized their personal relation with the goal of JPs (Joint Programme). Such an acknowledgment of the universal value of social protection for everyone in Lebanon became a strong unifying factor for the stakeholders to mobilize their resources and get involved. This sentiment was recorded in the context where there was extremely little space for policy discussion and the predominant focus of CSOs was on service provision and not policy dialogue. “This is not a UN exercise. This is part of our life.” (testimony from an interview). (LBN1951UND p. 26)

Relevance for workers was also assessed to be generally high. Some emerging themes provided entry points for the ILO's work on social protection in ROAS. The Covid-19 pandemic and the greater attention paid to OSH, and resulting needs of

workers, and the greater discussion, also linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, around the exclusion of migrant workers and refugees from social protection schemes provided entry points for the ILO. The need to access social protection schemes was identified as highly relevant to vulnerable workers, included those in the informal sector, migrant workers, and refugees, and the ILO's ability to address these areas was thus important. However, the evaluation of the Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq project did note that work on sensitizing workers to the importance of social security was needed:

“Finally, it is worth noting here that none of the workers met with during the FGDs was registered in social security. This was despite that the project held informational sessions on social security in selected farms during the project. While some of the workers did understand its importance, many indicated they have no interest in registering fearing the payment of high fees and not being fully knowledgeable about the system. A major factor behind this finding was that a new draft law for social security with major changes to the system (affecting agriculture workers) was already being discussed during the implementation of the project.” (IRQ2003EUR, p. 33)



Strengths

Policy

The ILO has been successful in Lebanon in shaping the new National Social Security Protection Strategy. The joint programme between several UN agencies set out the goal of developing a national social protection strategy. This was realised:

“As the reconstructed ToC indicated, the JP has reached its intermediary yet still ambition outcome of shaping national vision on SP in Lebanon. This was the first ever SP Strategy in Lebanon and it was adopted by the Government of Lebanon in May 2022, pending editing from the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee before the end of 2022.” (LBN1951UND, p. 29)

Since the conclusion of this project, the Government of Lebanon has adopted the Strategy and launched the national disability allowance scheme, both of which significant contribution can be attributed to the project.

Inclusion of the access of migrant workers in dialogue on social protection

There has been increased awareness of the need to ensure migrant workers can access social protection schemes and that benefits can be transferred to their home countries upon return. Review of the evaluation reports shows the successes of including dialogue on migrant worker's access to social protection in project activities. The Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries project is directly designed for this and showcases the ILO can use to enhance discussion on these issues. The ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme also successfully initiated discussion on this. There was less inclusion of social protection in other labour migration programmes, with only Work In Freedom addressing it at the origin country part of the corridor.

Improved data and statistics

The Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project identified the improvements in the management of data and statistics are being a significant impact of the project that contributed to sustainability. The introduction of a data dashboard and statistical bulletin had contributed to improvements in evidence-based decision making.

Improvements in capacities and knowledge in key ministries and among other stakeholders

Improvements in capacities of key government duty bearers were reported in the evaluation reports. An example of this was the utilisation of the Transform programme in the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project. This had strengthened capacities among key focal points in relevant ministries. The translation of the training curriculum into Arabic was highlighted as a good practice that would allow it to be rolled out to other countries in the region.

Gaps

Input of social partners

While the positive involvement of the social partners was highlighted in some evaluations, the challenges the region faces in tripartism was also highlighted as a gap in some projects. The draft report of the “Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries” project found there was limited focus placed on reaching out to and developing the capacities of workers’ organisations in the project. The Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project also identified there had been limited connections to social dialogue:

“The programme is not specifically relevant to social dialogue or labour standards, although contributions were noted around improved dialogue around NSPS implementation, as well as work with employers around social insurance models.” (JOR2001, p. 6)

The evaluation of the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project does not mention trade unions or employers’ organisations at all. ILO’s tripartite structure is a key added value that it can bring to joint programming with other UN agencies that do not have the same understanding of the importance of tripartism, but this comparative advantage does not appear to have leveraged by the ILO in its social protection programming in the Arab States region.

Limited inclusion in Employment programmes linked to crisis and HDP Nexus

The ILO has worked on programming that connects its work on crisis response and HDP Nexus with social protection, but this has not been clear in many projects. The Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project does work towards improved coordination among government departments in social protection and employment sectors, and includes a focus on transitioning people from cash

assistance into decent work. The PROSPECTS and Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians projects are the key examples of this work. However, the opportunity to connect work linked to employment creation in crisis situations and accessing social protection schemes does not appear to have been utilised effectively. It was recommended in the evaluation of phase 3 and 4 of the EIIP project in Lebanon that the ILO should advocate for a coherent targeted employment approach linked to public employment programmes to provide more social protection for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian workers.

Additionally, the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project Connection to child labour programmes also noted that while the project had included a cash element in it, opportunities for learning lessons from the cash distribution modality had been missed by the UN partners.

Limited synergies with child labour programming

Evaluation reports on child labour projects also did not provide evidence of the integration of social protection programming into work on child labour. Although the importance of strong social protection schemes is referenced in the backgrounds to evaluation reports, there appears to have been missed opportunities to strengthen integration of the programming:

“Key informants also noted that the project could have benefited from collaborating with other relevant ILO livelihoods initiatives in Iraq, such as the PROSPECTS Programme... Key informants thought there could have been scope for collaboration through PROSPECTS’s work on jobs, social protection, education, protection and legal status. It was a missed opportunity to integrate the child labour project into the broader ILO portfolio, which may have led to greater impact and sustainability if so.” (IRQ1902MUL, p. 72)

Good Practices

Joint programming

A clear theme from the evaluations of projects that focus on or include social protection as part of their mandates, was the success of joint programming with other UN entities, particularly UNICEF and UNHCR. Both the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project and the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project highlight the collaboration with other UN agencies as being significant. The success of the partnership with UNICEF in Lebanon led to the development of another project focused on social security, the 'Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon' project.

The refugee crises affected the region have also presented an opportunity for the ILO to partner with UNHCR. Evaluation reports cited positive examples of collaboration, including the aforementioned work on addressing barriers forcibly displaced persons face in accessing social protection in the PROSPECTS project, which is the continuation of a previous partnership with UNHCR on this issue.

The draft report of the "Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries" also notes successful collaboration with IOM linked to the shared mandate on migrant workers. However, this report does suggest that links with other UN agencies, with the exception of UNICEF, have been more challenging.

Disability inclusive programming

The Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon project offers one of the strongest examples of disability inclusion within a project from all the 45 evaluations considered. The evaluation found that the project was "unique and truly inclusive in its gender sensitivity and how PwDs contributed to the design of the SP system in Lebanon" (LBN1951UND p. 28).

The project had developed an informal platform of organisations of persons with disabilities to be consulted during the development of the social protection system. This contributed to the design of the National Disability Allowance that was launched in 2023. As a result, the evaluation found that the project "not only marked a new level of engagement with the PwDs but also created some important preconditions for the disability inclusive social protection in Lebanon" (LBN1951UND p. 36)

Utilisation of a corridor approach for migration worker programming

Two programmes with a focus on migrant workers included social protection in their programming. These were the Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries project which directly worked on the thematic issue, and the Work in Freedom project, which worked on improving social protection access for women in origin countries as an alternative to migrating. The advantage of the corridor approach is that it gives the projects the opportunity to work on social protection at both ends of the corridor and support improved cooperation between governments. In the draft report of the project in GCC, migrant worker organisations identified the corridor approach as a promising entry point for discussing shared responsibility. The portability of social security is becoming an increasingly discussed issue and thus through these programmes, ILO can position itself to influence this conversation.

Lessons Learned

Consultation needs to be in-depth

The evaluation 'Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon' project identified the importance of ensuring consultation with stakeholders has deep quality to it and not just a focus on increasing the numbers who attend. Several stakeholders in the evaluation indicated their willingness to have more in-depth consultation and reflected that "in some instances 'consultations' were merely confused with 'representation' and the focus was on having more people in the room rather than on a meaningful discussion" LBN1951UND, p. 30).

Delivery of programmes needs to be context specific

The opportunities for engaging in social protection activities will vary from country to country. The ILO needs to ensure its programming is nimble enough to react to different opportunities as they arise. The draft evaluation noted the thematic areas of successes of the project had varied. For example, Oman made progress on end of service indemnity and maternity and employment insurance, Bahrain on extending end of service benefits

for both migrants and non-migrants, and Qatar and Kuwait on access to health services. It was reported that ILO staff confirmed that activities in each country were developed based on political decisions and needs in each country.

Social protection projects involve a number of ministries and other stakeholders and requires careful coordination.

The evaluation of the Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians project in particular noted the large number of stakeholders involved in the discussions over revisions of the social protection system. The evaluation recommended improved coordination between stakeholders and the empowerment of the Higher Coordination Committee, and the MADAD Steering Committee Recommendations to address this issue. The recommendation was accepted by the project team and action taken to address it.



Recommendations

The two projects that have been evaluated that are specific to social security had a total of 27 recommendations. The progress update on implementing these shows that 1 has been achieved, 20 have been partial achieved, and 6 had had no progress. Key recommendations from these, the draft report on the GCC project, and the other projects that had links to social protection included:

Continue to build capacity of focal points in key ministries.

Working with focal points had strengthened the projects by ensuring key ministries were actively involved in the implementation. Continuing to strengthen the capacities of the focal points would help strengthen further coordination and contribute to improved knowledge of social protection within the departments the focal points work in.

Build the capacities of workers and employers organisations on social protection and promote social dialogue as a means to strengthen access to social protection schemes.

This would also help ensure there is stronger participation from the social partners in the projects

and strengthen ownership and thus long-term sustainability of the interventions.

Ensure strong coordination mechanisms are set up, including between UN agencies and between ILO and key government ministries and other stakeholders.

Building strong social protection systems requires inputs from many ministries and other stakeholders and a strong coordination system is needed early in a project to ensure project efficiency is not compromised.

When projects include 'ground-level' implementation activities with vulnerable groups, ensure there is clear communication about the benefits of social protection, and the impacts of the social protection schemes on other forms of assistance.

Concerns from some participants about losing access to forms of assistance they were receiving were included in evaluation reports. Clear communication on these issues to the affected communities was recommended.



Next Steps

Identify ways to mainstream social protection programming into projects focused on employment in crisis response, OSH, and the elimination of child labour.



This could include ensuring projects that engage labour inspectorates ensure labour inspectors are aware of national social protection schemes and checking if workers are enrolled in them.

Ensure labour migration programmes include dialogue on access to and portability of social protection schemes for migrant workers.



The portability of social protection schemes has taken on increased prominence globally since the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, ASEAN guidelines on portability are being developed. This is relevant for the Arab States region as well and provides an important lever for inter-governmental discussion.

Consider how to ensure that domestic workers and other workers in the care economy can access social security schemes in the region.

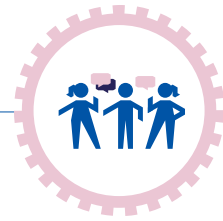


ILO's work on migration in the region has included a focus on domestic work. This work supports addressing migration governance through a gendered lens as it involves a profession that mainly employs women and also involves isolated work places (ie the employers' home). Being able to access social protection schemes is challenging for domestic workers but when achieved supports goals of improved empowerment and protection. As such ensuring domestic work and the care economy is prioritised in the ILO's work on social protection would be effective in supporting a group of marginalised workers. region's performance.

Ensure good practices on disability inclusion from the 'Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national Social Protection system for Lebanon' project are shared across the region.



This was one of the few projects to have a strong disability inclusion lens. Replicating this approach in other projects would ensure the ILO ROAS is ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its projects and supporting the implementing of the ILO's Strategy on Disability Inclusion.



Social Dialogue and Tripartism

Social dialogue and tripartism are key pillars of the ILO's mandate for advancing social justice. Effective social dialogue between government, employers, and workers is of critical importance in achieving the ILO's goals. Social dialogue and tripartism is acknowledged in several evaluation reports to be challenging in the Arab States region. The traditional government focused control of economies has led to a culture of limited space for employer, and particularly trade union voice in the region. This is demonstrated by the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) having the lowest ratification rate of any of the original fundamental conventions in the region. These challenges have been

exacerbated by the crises faced in the region. The politization of dialogue and the collapse of legal institutions creates increased challenges for tripartism and social dialogue. Capacities of the social partners in the region are often low as a result of limited resources and lack of space to operate.

The evaluation reports reflected these challenges. Attention to tripartism and social dialogue was reported in a majority but by no means all of the evaluation reports, and although many reports highlighted efforts by the ILO to include tripartite constituents, they also often reported limited achievements as a result of the aforementioned challenges.

Responding to the needs of different stakeholders

Despite these challenges, there is evidence that ILO ROAS has made efforts to promote social dialogue and tripartism and has achieved some significant results from this work. Most actions to promote social dialogue and tripartism have not been in projects explicitly designed to promote social dialogue but as part of work on other thematic areas. There have been a small number of explicit projects though. Social dialogue for formalization and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) included Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, along with several North African countries in the implementation. Two projects in Lebanon explicitly identified the importance of dialogue in their titles; the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks and the Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon projects.

Other projects included tripartism and social dialogue as part of outcomes or outputs. These included projects addressing the structural reforms in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, improving work-place negotiation such as through enhancing collective bargaining capacities, facilitating tripartite discussion on child labour and OSH, and ensuring tripartite input into the development of national employment policies. In certain projects, the ILO has managed to engage either the employers or the workers organisations, even where participation from the other was limited. This has contributed to some achievements in bipartite social dialogue and improved social partner capacity, even when full tripartism has been missing.

Main Achievements

Laying of foundations for system change



Some of the ILO's work acknowledges the low baseline they are starting from in many countries in the region. Progress that would be considered the bare minimum in countries with a stronger tripartite culture can be counted as a considerable achievement given the context. The strongest examples of this are in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development project in Saudi Arabia has ensured the ILO is:

“contributing to the learning process of KSA about social dialogue and tripartism and its structures that strengthening the mechanisms of social dialogue in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by establishing a unit for social dialogue within the Ministry seeks to activate the role more through the establishment of the tripartite council for social dialogue in cooperation with King Abdul-Aziz Centre for National Dialogue... The social dialogue pillar managed to create a foundation for tripartite dialogue and capitalized on the government buy-in paving the way for the establishment of a social dialogue unit within the ministry as a form of institutionalization that would enhance scalability and sustainability of results...The planned Social Dialogue unit is a positive step towards the institutionalization of social dialogue mechanisms in the government and for the promotion of social dialogue in the Kingdom. Furthermore, the MoU to be signed between the MHRSD and the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue (KACND) is likely to pave the way towards systematising national tripartite social dialogue, which is currently conducted only in an ad hoc way. (SAU1801SAU, ps. 5 & 6)

Even more introductory steps were achieved in Qatar:

“Joint committees have been effective in enabling dialogue, prevention, and resolution of conflict in the workplace, and members expressed strong interest for additional capacity development, scaling, and networking.” (QAT2101QAT, p. 11)

The evaluation acknowledged this:

“This does not equate to national level trade union representation and tripartite national dialogue modalities as set forth in international labour standards but can be considered as a successful proof of concept and first step towards workers' representation.” (QAT2101QAT, p.11)

Policy Change



Policy change related to or as a result of social dialogue was fairly limited but a small number of positive examples can be identified. In Jordan, the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector project supported the establishment of Labour Management Committees at the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions and cooperated with the relevant ministries and the sectoral employers' association address the regulatory framework in the floriculture sector as well as supporting the development of the unified contract on a tripartite basis for Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers.

Some of the challenges of policy change though are also highlighted in the evaluations. The FAIRWAY project and Better Work collaborated to highlight unequal wages for migrant and non-migrant workers in Jordan, and achieved acceptance of the equalisation of the minimum wage for migrant and Jordanian workers. However, this success was not realised at the final policy stage and the minimum wage only increased for Jordanian workers.

Creating space for social dialogue



The ILO's strength as a convenor of tripartism contributed to results in some projects. As a result of its unique structure, the ILO is often able to bring parties together who otherwise would not communicate. Creating the space for social dialogue is an important initial step. In addition to the progress made in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, other projects were able to facilitate a space for social dialogue, including the Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To

Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks project:

“Creating an environment for social dialogue, which has been absent for years before, is one of the most sustainable results achieved by the project. Interviews highlighted that social dialogue is required at different stages of drafting the policy. It is a very important aspect needed across all projects that aim to support the Lebanese context in general. After all, consulting with different constituents is key to the success of initiatives.” (LBN2001, p. 24)

Creating this space also had an impact in projects implemented in Syria:

“The projects have also built the capacity of tripartite stakeholders in social dialogue. The tripartite capacity building workshops emphasised the possibility of social partners participating in labour inspection in Syria, and have been the impetus for potential tripartite labour inspection going forward.” SYR 10601RBS, p. 10)

Non-traditional social dialogue



The challenges of tripartism in the Arab States region has led to the adoption of other approaches to ensure worker voice is enhanced, in particular working with CSOs on particular issues. This is a challenging balance for the ILO. Its mandate requires a focus on tripartism and the engagement of workers’ organisations but the limiting operating space for trade unions in the Arab States region and their subsequent limited capacities means that other organisations may at times be a more effective conduit for workers’ voice. This can particularly be the case for certain vulnerable groups the trade unions do not always see as a priority such as migrant workers or domestic workers.

The review period has seen some important achievements in the engagement of CSOs. Work on labour migration has in particular identified migrant workers organisations that can support the empowerment of migrant workers in the region. The evaluation of the FAIRWAY project notes engagement of migrant workers’ organisations is linked to the limitations of tripartite dialogue in the region, “Recognising the shortcomings of the tripartite dialogue in the region and the limited capacity of TUs to support MWs, the Fairway project has adopted a dual approach that supports grassroots models of

organizing domestic workers, as well as sensitizing unions on the importance of hearing the voices of migrant workers.” (RAB1503, p. 18).”

The transforming of a CSO, Sandigan, into a workers’ organisation is a good example of a positive achievement in this area. Additionally, in its work on social protection in Lebanon, the ILO ensured the inclusion of organisations of persons with disabilities in discussions on the revision of the national social protection system.

The ILO though does need a strategy on how to address competition between trade unions and CSOs in the region and ensure that it is able to work with both effectively while still prioritising the ILO’s tripartite structure. While engaging non-traditional constituents has been an important element of the ILO’s work, it needs to be done in a manner that is accepted by trade unions and not seen as undermining ILO’s traditional tripartism. Currently there appears to be challenges on coordination linked to competition for limited resources. This competition currently hampers the efforts of the ILO to enhance social dialogue and address the shortcomings of tripartism in the region.

Gaps

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The right to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining are fundamental pillars of effective social dialogue. Among the countries that had projects evaluated during the review period, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have all not ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and Qatar and Saudi Arabia have not ratified the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). However, there has not been a project implemented that focuses on the freedom of association or collective bargaining during this period. Collective bargaining was addressed in Better Work's projects in Jordan, with collective bargaining agreements being agreed, but success appears to be limited to this project.

Engagement of Employers and Workers Organisations

Although employer and worker representatives have participated in many projects, the absence of involvement was noted in some projects as having detrimental effects on the results. The Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan noted this as a challenge in the engagement of individual farm owners:

"The project's lack of engagement with employer representatives translated into a difficulty in working with individual farm owners and obtaining the cooperation of each in this project. This should be avoided in future project which must strive to always engage with ILO's tripartite constituents." (JOR2052NOR, p. 50)

A similar challenge with workers' organisation was noted in the Towards Improved Knowledge on Labour Market and Employment Conditions of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon project:

"During the evaluation mission, meetings were held with both employers' and workers' organizations in the two countries. Whereas employers' organization in both countries have been involved,

workers organizations have not. In Jordan, the workers' organization remained supportive of the project. In Lebanon, however, the workers' organization FENASOL felt they were not meant to participate. FENASOL felt employers had "more bargaining power" for this project. "There seems to be a tendency for excluding workers from these activities. ILO could push for more tripartism. ... At the first workshop, you could see in the employers' faces that we were not welcome." FENASOL mentioned they had only participated in the launch of the project and wondered whether there were any further meetings, or whether there was a steering committee." (RAB1601RBS, p. 64)

The Research Partnership for Improved Livelihoods of Jordanian & Syrian Youth project notes that even where tripartite constituents are involved in project monitoring committees, their involvement in the project may still be lacking:

"Business communities and employers though were consulted at the research interventions, were underrepresented in the PAC and project events limiting their voice in social dialogue; - Though the GFJTU was part of the PAC, the sectoral trade unions were not consulted at the research interventions limiting their presence of views in the research papers; - The Department of Statistics has not been the part of the PAC and has not attended the project events devoted to the validation of research findings and their official presentation." (JOR2104 MUL, p. 48)

Crisis response

The high level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23) noted challenges in social dialogue in post-conflict contexts and found social dialogue is often side-lined in the interests of ease of operation of the project:

"Tripartism and social dialogue face challenges in post-conflict settings – namely, politicized splintering and the collapse of legal institutions. Effective tripartism is a fundamental assumption within the ILO intervention model itself, yet

addressing splintering is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts. Instead, discord and disagreement are sometimes sidestepped for the sake of project implementation.” (p.10)

This aligns with the findings of other evaluations. The evaluations of the EIIP projects that have been implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, note the absence of social dialogue and tripartism. This is connected to the shorter-term nature of the employment opportunities being offered in the project:

“The short-term nature of work does not always allow for appropriate levels of social dialogue. For the programme, grievance mechanisms do not currently exist. Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining along with “voice” at work are aspects of decent work. For short term employment, collective bargaining and freedom of association, though not excluded, are of limited relevance, though voice is important both for those who are employed and those who were seeking work on a project under Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme but were not selected. However to address the issue, there is opportunity to strengthen national WOs and EOs to better represent and engage with workers.” (JOR1805DEU, p. 27)

Evaluations of projects in Yemen and Iraq also either identified the gaps in social dialogue and tripartism or did not cover the issue at all, further supporting the findings of the high level evaluation.

Some opportunities for improving social dialogue in crisis situations have been taken though. The evaluation

of the PROSPECTS project found that tripartite partners had had minimal engagement on forced displacement issues prior to the PROSPECTS project, as this was an area generally ceded to government, but the project had main efforts to ensure the participation of the social partners at various stages of the project.

Freedom of Association for Migrant Workers

The challenges related to freedom of association for workers in ROAS are even more pronounced for migrant workers. Several countries prevent migrant workers from forming or being members of trade unions, and even where this is possible, trade unions do not always see representing or organising migrant workers as being a priority.

“Among workers’ organisations too, it has not been possible to increase the participation of MWs within the unions by obtaining rights to vote, the lack of freedom of association more generally has made it difficult to integrate migrant workers and raise their voice even within workers’ organisations. (RAB1503CHE, p. 22)”

In the absence of trade union representation, ILO projects have often worked with CSOs who represent migrant workers to enhance worker voice. There have been notable successes with this approach, notably with the development of a Sandigan in Kuwait. However, this approach has to be balanced with the need to continue to prioritise strengthening ILO’s constituent partners’ willingness and capacities to represent migrant workers.

Lessons Learned

Engaging both employers and trade unions helps reduce potential challenges during implementation.

The examples shown above of the lack of engagement with both employers and trade unions help demonstrate the challenges projects may face from social dialogue limitations. Even where one of the workers and employers representatives are engaged in the project, the lack of participation of the other can harm implementation.

Capacities of tripartite constituents need to be adequately assessed before a project to ensure they are able to undertake their expected responsibilities.

The efficiency of some projects was hampered by the limited capacities of tripartite constituents to undertake expected activities. Evaluations noted that capacity assessments and full consultation should be taken during the design of the project to ensure delays or quality concerns will not arise during implementation as a result of limited capacities.

Recommendations

Ensure social partners are involved in negotiations on the development of new projects.

This will help encourage participation and ownership of the project and also reemphasize to all participants the importance of the involvement of employers and workers organisations in the project.

Even in contexts where there are limited capacities or political space, projects should give some opportunity to both workers and employer organisations to be involved in the project.

Although opportunities may be minimal for participation, ensuring some level of representation and involvement in certain activities would help drive the message of the importance of tripartism.

Conduct capacity assessments during the design of a project.

Some evaluations noted the limited capacities of the social partners did not match the ambition of the project and thus hampered effective achievement of planned results. Conducting assessments during the design of projects would mitigate this challenge and support the recommendation of ensuring social partners are involved in projects.



Next Steps

Develop a strategy on tripartism plus and how to engage both trade unions and CSOs in the region.



This should consider how to balance approaches between maintaining ILO's traditional tripartism, and empowering CSOs where there are gaps in trade union capacities. It should be done in a manner that promotes collaboration between CSOs and trade unions rather than competition.

Build projects based on the needs and capacities of the workers and employers' organisations.



Projects should be designed to ensure the maximum involvement of social partners possible and respond to their capacity building needs rather than designing projects and then identifying if and where the employers and workers' organisations can play a role.

Develop projects that have specific focus on freedom of association and collective bargaining and engage in advocacy on the ratification of C87 and C96.

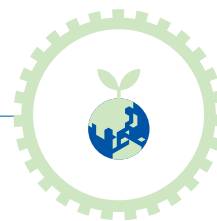


There were very few projects that had a specific focus on collective bargaining and freedom of association. This matches findings from the high-level evaluation on the ILO's actions and strategies on FPRW (2018-23), which identified this fundamental principle to have received the least attention during the reporting period. Developing specific projects would help address this gap.

Identify entry points for engagement in ILO's cross-cutting topics including the just transition to environmental sustainability, disability inclusion, and gender equality.



Trade union capacities in these areas are low. Coordinate with relevant technical experts to develop capacity building plans for trade unions in these areas.



Just Transition to Environmental Sustainability

One of the cross-cutting themes that evaluations should assess is the just transition to environmental sustainability. The ILO acknowledges that the climate, nature, and work are intrinsically linked. Jobs and businesses depend on a healthy planet, and if managed well, the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies can create up to 10 million jobs in the MENA region. However, climate change and environmental degradation are currently disrupting millions of jobs and are a significant driver of labour related migration. At its 102nd Session (2013), the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution concerning the just transition, and in 2014, the

Governing Body endorsed a proposal to hold a tripartite meeting of experts. This led to the development of non-binding guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all in 2015. Most recently, at the 111th International Labour Conference, the ILO constituents endorsed the ILO guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (ILO just transition guidelines, for short), as well as adopted a resolution and conclusions on just transition, cementing the ILOs mandate on just transition matters.

Main Interventions

Within the region there is only limited reference to the just transition to environmental sustainability among the evaluation reports³¹. The evaluation reports suggest that Jordan has the most projects addressing this issue. The employment programmes designed to respond to the Syria crisis included a focus on green jobs in many projects. Projects that address this issue in Jordan include the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector and the Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works and agricultural industry both addressed green jobs in the agricultural sector. The employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan also provided opportunities to focus on the environmentally friendly infrastructure upgrades.

►► The evaluation reports suggest that Jordan has the most projects addressing this issue. The employment programmes designed to respond to the Syria crisis included a focus on green jobs in many projects.

31. The ILO just transition guidelines cover 9 policy areas (macroeconomic and growth policies, industrial and sectoral policies, enterprise policies, skills development, occupational safety and health, social protection, active labour market policies, rights, social dialogue and tripartism). Therefore, any work on these topics as related to climate and environment issues would be considered just transition work. However, the just transition and green jobs receive limited attention in the evaluation reports.

Achievements

Heat Stress Legislation



A significant achievement of the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme was the development of heat stress legislation designed to protect workers from the effects of long exposure to high levels of heat. This legislation was promoted by the Government of Qatar to other countries in the region. The evaluation of the programme suggested the legislation had had positive impacts for workers (although it should be noted this is a correlation statistic and a more in-depth study would be needed to prove causation)³²:

“After the Ministerial Decision to set working hours and other measures to protect workers from heat stress, the number of people who visited the four Qatar Red Crescent Clinics with heat-related disorders went from 1,320 in 2019, and 1,520 in 2020, to 620 in 2021 (in other words, after the legislation had been introduced), and 351 from June to September 2022” (QAT2101QAT, p. 12)

Improved productivity of farms



The evaluation of the Phase II: Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry project found the productivity of the farms had increased through improved water management. Similar results were found in the Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector project evaluation.

Tree planting



The employment intensive infrastructure programme has supported the Government of Jordan's goal to 10 million trees over five years. The project has adopted biodegradable incubators for saplings to improve sustainability. The evaluation of phase 3-5 of the employment intensive infrastructure programme in Jordan recommended future projects increase the focus on tree

planting. This demonstrates and improvement from the earlier evaluation of the Phase II: Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry project raised concerns over the sustainability of the tree planting approach due to the survival rate of seedlings and limited municipal budget for maintaining them:

“The planting of trees has the potential of achieving impact in the future; however, the survival rate of the trees is a concern, as are the local perceptions of the forest. The project does not include sufficient consideration for what happens to the trees after the project ends, nor does it fundamentally change the system surrounding forestry. Thus, the tree planting provides a potential once off increase in the forested area of Jordan, but does not ensure its sustainability.” (JOR1709NOR, p. 42)

The positive reviews in later evaluations, suggests this challenge has been addressed by the ILO, although the evaluations do not produce evidence on the survival rate. In 2023, the ILO signed a new agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan to continue the initiative by afforesting 1.75 square kilometres of land under the sixth phase of the employment intensive infrastructure programme, demonstrating the Government considers the initiative relevant and valuable³³. Although not yet covered in evaluation reports, the ILO has reported that it has applied the lessons learned from tree planting projects in Jordan. For example, under the PROSPECTS programme, tree planting has taken place in Kurdistan

32. Although not included in the evaluation reports, the ILO has reported that the Qatar-ILO Technical Cooperation programme laid the ground for further work of the ILO on heat stress. In 2024, the ILO has been working with the Climate Vulnerable Fund to develop a heat stress map for Lebanon, which will be able to guide occupational health and safety policies in Lebanon as well as integrate decent work aspects into climate and environment policies.

33. <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/agreement-paves-way-planting-new-forests-across-northern-jordan>

Gaps

Migration

Migration patterns are increasingly driven by climate change. However, there appears to have been very limited attention paid to this issue to date in ILO ROAS's labour migration programming. This may be partly explained by the fact that most evidence to date suggests climate induced migration generally takes place within a nation's borders and the ILO's interventions have focused on international migration. However, as demonstrated by the success of the heat stress legislation work in Qatar, there are issues related to climate change that have a significant impact on migrant workers in particular and could be addressed by the ILO.

FPRW

The Recurrent Discussion Committee on FPRW at the 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) identified just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies as being one of the thematic priorities for the ILO's actions on FPRW. The evaluation sample did not present indication that currently ILO ROAS has incorporated environmental sustainability into the work it undertakes on any of the fundamental principles with the exception of the work undertaken by the ILO-Qatar Technical Cooperation programme on OSH and the impact of high levels of heat on the health of migrant workers.

Social protection

Social protection can provide a pathway to mitigating the risks posed to vulnerable communities from climate change. There does not yet appear to have been significant attention paid to addressing climate change through the ILO's interventions on social protection in the region, however, although not yet included in evaluation reports, the ILO has reported that a social protection diagnostics tool is being piloted in 2024 to assess the climate readiness of the social protection system.

Although not yet included in evaluation reports, the ILO has reported that a social protection diagnostics tool is being piloted in 2024 to assess the climate readiness of the social protection system.

Good Practices

Some of the good practices identified by the evaluations included:

The provision of environmentally friendly facilities can have multiplier effects

Providing farms with environmentally friendly facilities helps provides savings from the better utilisation of natural resources, and allows the farmers to invest the savings into green jobs.

Lessons Learned

Projects did not necessarily include enough time to learn necessary skills for working in green jobs.

Offering short-term employment opportunities can temporarily boost incomes of vulnerable groups but does not necessarily lead to longer-term opportunities for work in the sector the placement is not long enough to learn the necessary skills.

Long-term commitment is required

Working with government bureaucracies or fossil fuel dependent governments and economies, requires significant time and effort to change mind-sets towards environmental sustainability and ensure projects are improved. This change needs to be supported through several project cycles.

Recommendations

Recommendations made in the evaluation reports included:

Strengthen the “green” dimension of the current EIIP value proposition to stakeholders and broaden the range of infrastructure included in the programmes.

Support interventions that provide grants to farmers for environmentally friendly technologies

Include a focus on sustainability. The evaluation of the Phase II

Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works in agriculture and forestry suggested that while some activities may have an immediate environmental benefit, longer term sustainability was not fully considered in implementing the project. Later evaluations suggested this concern had been considered more carefully by the ILO.



Next Steps

Develop a strategy on how ILO ROAS will ensure the just transition to environmental sustainability is mainstreamed into its projects.



This should in particular address how the ILO aligns with key programmatic areas including elements of FPRW, labour migration, and social protection.

Action to address the recommendation to strengthen the green dimension of EIIP work



The recommendation included in the evaluation reports to strengthen the “green” dimension of the current EIIP value proposition to stakeholders could be done through improving biodiversity in road and pavement projects, applying nature-based solutions, the use of sustainable construction materials, and a new focus on labour intensive water harvesting solutions to address water scarcity in the region.

Continue to coordinate with the social protection department



Coordination should prioritise how to work with member states to ensure the national social protection systems provide protection to those adversely affected by climate change and offer incentives for sustainable and green investments.

Better capture the just transition and green jobs work across the 9 policy areas to showcase the broad support from the ILO in the region.



Particular attention could be given to policy areas such as enterprise development, social protection, OSH, skills development, and green job creation.

Ensure the successes of the employment intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan are utilised by other country offices during the development of programmes.



It is understood this is currently being done in Lebanon and Iraq but could be encouraged further throughout the region.

Ensure evaluations fulfil the requirement to assess the just transition and green jobs across the 9 policy areas.



Evaluation managers should insist on at least one evaluation question linked to this before signing off on an inception report.

Annex A: Bibliography

Evaluations included in sample

PARTNERSHIPS Code	Title
GLO/18/53/CHE	Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment (FAIR) - Phase II - Global and Hong Kong components - Final evaluation
JOR/20/50/USA	Better work Jordan mental health project - Midterm evaluation
RAB/15/03/CHE	Fair migration in the Middle East (FAIRWAY) - Final Evaluation
RAS/13/55/UKM	Fair recruitment and decent work for women migrant workers in South Asia and the Middle East - Regional Component - Final Evaluation
RAS/17/11/GBR	ILO-DFID Partnership Programme on Fair Recruitment and Decent Work for Women Migrant Workers in South Asia and the Middle East -Phase II - Final evaluation
GLO/19/06/CHE	FAIRWAY Program - Final evaluation
QAT/17/01/QAT	Technical cooperation project in Qatar - Final evaluation
QAT/21/01/QAT	Technical Cooperation Project for the State of Qatar – Phase 2 - Final evaluation
GLO/17/55/MUL	Better Work Global – Phase IV - Final cluster evaluation
JOR/19/02/AUS	Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector - Final evaluation
GLO/19/51/NLD	Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (ILO/PROSPECTS) - Midterm cluster evaluation
JOR/18/54/EUR	EU-ILO collaboration in the monitoring of labour aspects in the implementation of the EU's rules of origin initiative for Jordan – Phase II - Final evaluation
LBN/20/01/RBS	Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks
RAB/18/01/FOR	Towards Improved Knowledge on Labour Market and Employment Conditions of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon - Final evaluation
GLO/19/12/EUR	Mainstreaming Employment into Trade and Investment in the Southern Neighbourhood - Midterm evaluation
INT/20/02/EUR	Social dialogue for formalization and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) - Midterm evaluation
GLO/14/24/IFA	Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa - Final evaluation
JOR/17/09/NOR	Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green works and agricultural industry - Final evaluation
JOR/18/05/DEU	Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure in Jordan - Cluster evaluation
LBN/16/03/DEU	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programmes (EIIPs) in Jordan and Lebanon - Final cluster evaluation
LBN/20/03/DEU	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programmes in Lebanon (Phase III & IV) & Jordan (Phase V) - Clustered evaluation

PARTNERSHIPS Code	Title
YEM/21/01/RBS	Employment Intensive Investment Program (EIIP) & Decent Employment for Women in Yemen - Final Evaluation
JOR/19/05/USA	Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II - Final evaluation
JOR/19/09/ITA	Towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development in Jordan - Final evaluation
JOR/21/04/MUL	Research Partnership for Improved Livelihoods of Jordanian & Syrian Youth - Final evaluation
LBN/16/07/ITA	Cluster evaluation "Improved and market-based provision of vocational training for Lebanese and refugees" and "Towards improved formal and non-formal technical and vocational education and training..."
LBN/16/08/CEF	Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon - Final cluster evaluation
LBN/20/01/RBS	Enhanced Capacity Of The Government And Social Partners To Develop A National Labour Policy, And Mainstream SDGs Relating To Employment And DW Into National Development And Crisis Response Frameworks
SAU/18/01/SAU	Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in analysis, policy and capacity development - Final evaluation
IRQ/19/03/DEU	Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq - Final evaluation
INT/16/01/RUS	Applying the G20 Training Strategy (Phase II) - Final Evaluation
YEM/15/01/UND	Enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities (...) - Final evaluation
YEM/19/01/EUR	Supporting Resilient Livelihoods and Food Security in Yemen joint programme (ERRY II) - through UNDP - Final evaluation
IRQ/13/01/IRQ	Support the ministry Of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan to develop an action plan for the implementation of the employment policy - Final
IRQ/18/01/RBS	Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics - Final evaluation
IRQ/19/02/MUL	Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities in Iraq - Final evaluation
IRQ/20/03/EUR	Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq - Final evaluation
GLO/18/54/NOR	SKILL-UP Global (Upgrading Skills for the changing world of work) - Final Evaluation
JOR/20/01/EUR	Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians - Midterm joint evaluation
JOR/20/52/NOR	Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan - Final evaluation
LBN/17/02/NOR	PHASE II Ending Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) amongst Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities - Final evaluation
LBN/19/51/UND	Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon - Final joint evaluation
SYR/16/01/RBS	Child labour projects in Arab States - Final cluster evaluation (RBSA component)
YEM/18/01/USA	Protecting children and youth in Yemen from recruitment and use in armed conflict - Final evaluation

In addition to the above sample, the reviewer was sent two additional evaluations that were published or completed after the original sample was selected. These were used for informational purposes but were not included in the scoring of the evaluations:

PSE/19/01/ITA, Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT), mid-term evaluation

RAB/20/01/CHE, Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers: Exploratory Research and Policy Dialogue in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, final evaluation.

Other Evaluations

- ▶ Independent Strategic Evaluation, ILO's Safety + Health for All Flagship Programme (January 2016 to May 2023), EVAL and LABADMIN/OSH (2023)
- ▶ High-level independent evaluation of ILO's strategy and action for promoting fair and effective labour migration policies, 2016-20, EVAL (2021)
- ▶ Independent evaluation of the first phase of the ILO global flagship programme on building social protection floors for all (2016 – 2020), EVAL and SOCPRO (2020)
- ▶ Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), EVAL (2023)
- ▶ Independent high-level evaluation of ILO's strategies and action on fundamental principles and rights at work, 2018–23, EVAL (2023)
- ▶ Independent evaluation of the ILO's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-2023), EVAL and GEDI (2023)

Other Reports

- ▶ Annual Evaluation Report, 2022-23, EVAL (2023)
- ▶ Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2022, EVAL (2023)
- ▶ Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2021 and 2022 (partial), EVAL (2022)
- ▶ Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2019 and 2020, EVAL (2020)
- ▶ ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities, ROAS (2023)
- ▶ ILO Regional Office for Arab States Regional Strategy on Labour Migration 2024-2027, ROAS, (2024)
- ▶ How ILO Programmes Contribute to Social Cohesion between Refugees/IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region, ROAS, (2022)
- ▶ Building social protection floors for all ILO Global Flagship Programme Annual Report 2023, ILO, (2024)

Annex B: Scoring Rubric

Question	1. Unsuccessful	2. Partly successful	3. Successful	4. Highly Successful
1.1. What are the main interventions that can be mapped from the different evaluation reports?				
What are the different types of interventions that are taking place within each category and sub-category and can these be classified?	For example within migration, are the interventions focused on regional migration governance, nation policy and governance, empowerment of migrants, capacity building of CSOs, working to build receptiveness to working on migration among trade unions etc. Quantitative data on the different categories will be presented at the start of each sub-section of the report. Data will also be extracted from the DC Dashboard to identify what additional activities are taking place that have not been evaluated.			
What are the different types of interventions for each country?	The data from the above question will be presented per country as well.			
To what extent has the ILO's interventions been relevant to the needs of tripartite constituents? How effective have the interventions been in ensuring they deliver genuine results wanted/ needed by the constituents, other partners such as CSOs, and the ultimate beneficiaries (such as workers, companies, migrants etc)?	Project objectives do not demonstrate a clear link with the needs of the tripartite constituents, other partners, and ultimate beneficiaries. Partners do not have a clear understanding of what the project aspires to achieve	Some evidence of linking to the tripartite constituents, other partners, and ultimate beneficiaries. The link is not well reflected at the operational level. Some partners do not share the same understanding of what the project aspires to achieve	Clear and specific correlation between project objectives and policies of tripartite constituents, and goals of CSOs at both strategic and operational levels. Clear actions taken to ensure benefits to ultimate beneficiaries. Link reflected and translated into actions, and an understanding of what the project aspires to achieve is broadly shared.	Clear and compelling link to policies and of national governments, social partners, translated into a concrete set of goals and priorities at the operational level. Causal link broadly held among partners and partners have a clear understanding of what project aspires to achieve.
How successful has the ILO been in ensuring the consultation and involvement of tripartite constituents, CSOs, and other partners?	No evidence of consultation and involvement of the tripartite constituents, CSOs, and other partners during design or implementation.	Limited evidence of consultation and involvement of some of the tripartite constituents, CSOs, and other partners at some stage during design or implementation.	Clear evidence of consultation and involvement of most tripartite partners and where relevant CSOs and other partners during critical phases of the project cycle.	Clear evidence of consultation and involvement of all tripartite partners and where relevant CSOs and other partners during all critical phases of the project cycle.
How has effective has the ILO external coordination (with constituents, UN partners, World Bank and bilateral donors) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) been in promoting the achievement of the outcomes identified?	No evidence of coordination with donors, UN agencies or contribution to the cooperation framework. Different ILO programmes and group units function in silos; little or dysfunctional coordination between them, both internal and external.	Some evidence of coordination with donors, UN agencies or contribution to the cooperation framework. At least one UN partner is included in the Evidence of coordination between ILO programmes and units but challenges exist, both internal and external.	Good evidence of coordination with external partners-donors, UN agencies and others or contribution to the cooperation framework. All ILO programs and units function together with sharing of information and resources and pooling of resources; few coordination issues, both internal and external.	Comparative advantage of different UN partners and others and contribution to the cooperation framework. are identified and utilised during programming. Regular and effective integration between different ILO projects and group units with few coordination issues, both internal and external.; there is evidence that this integration has enhanced the project.

Question	1. Unsuccessful	2. Partly successful	3. Successful	4. Highly Successful
1.2. What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?				
What are the main achievements in terms of policy reform, strengthened knowledge base, increased empowerment of workers, gains in social dialogue, improvements in decent work?	The review will identify if there are discernible patterns within each category in terms of where the key achievements are coming from. This will also support identifying where the gaps are occurring in order to answer question 1.3			
What are the lessons learned and good practices in terms of policy reform, strengthened knowledge base, increased empowerment of workers, gains in social dialogue, improvements in decent work?	The above approach will also be applied to lessons learned and good practices			
How successful has the ILO been in achieving meaningful outcomes in terms of policy reform, strengthened knowledge base, increased empowerment of workers, gains in social dialogue, improvements in decent work?	There was limited achievement in these categories, they were delivered late for intended use or they were of poor quality and not relevant to the intervention area.	There was some achievement in these categories, many were delivered late for intended use or they were of limited quality and not relevant to the intervention area.	There was positive achievement in these categories, they were delivered mainly on time for intended use and they were of good quality and relevant to the intervention area.	There was substantial achievement in these categories, they were delivered in a timeframe that meant the achievements were used by the intended users and they were of excellent quality and very relevant to the intervention area.
How successful have the ILO been in ensuring the achievements are leading to long lasting change?	No possibility of maintaining the net benefits of the intervention or insights; no exit strategy; no ability to scale up or sustain advancements achieved by the intervention: 1) No ownership and commitment from stakeholders, 2) Stakeholders have insufficient capacity and resources to maintain or scale up advancements achieved	Limited possibility of maintaining insights or scaling up the net benefits of interventions. Weak exit strategy, if any. Partners have some ability either to maintain, scale up or innovate on the advancements achieved by the intervention. 1) There is limited ownership and commitment from stakeholders, 2) Stakeholders have limited capacity and resources to maintain or scale up advancements achieved	Some tangible possibilities of maintaining, advancing or scaling up existing net benefits/insights. Some thought to an exit strategy. Partners able to maintain, scale up or innovate on the advancements achieved by the intervention: 1) There is some ownership and commitment from stakeholders, 2) Stakeholders have some capacity and resources to maintain or scale up advancements achieved	Good possibility of maintaining or scaling up existing net benefits/insights. Preparation of exit strategy. Partners efficiently and effectively able to grow existing net benefits to meet evolving needs. 1) There is consistent ownership and commitment from stakeholders; 2) Stakeholders have full capacity and resources to maintain or scale up advancements achieved including if there are changes in the socio-political context.

Question	1. Unsuccessful	2. Partly successful	3. Successful	4. Highly Successful
How efficient has the ILO been in managing its projects?	Delays to the project design have occurred including start-up, recruitment, implementation of activities, that have severely impacted the final results of the project. Funding has not effectively used and led to major under-achievement of results. Little or no attention to M&E and learning. A M&E plan was not developed / implemented.	Delays to the project design have occurred including start-up, recruitment, implementation of activities, that have impacted the final results of the project, although some successes have been identified. Funding has been used effectively and led to some limitations in the achievement of results. Some attention to M&E and learning. Components of an M&E framework were established but some aspects were missing or information for monitoring performance was not identified.	Any delays to the project have been mitigated to limit any impact on the achievement of results. Funding has been used efficiently to achieve results. M&E framework was established to measure progress and evaluation activities were identified. Reporting mechanism present and based on indicators.	The project has operated on time from the inception period through the implementation of activities. Funding has been utilised effectively. Systematic M&E system and strong attention to project adaptation based on lessons learned. Reporting mechanism applied and based on outcome- level results or indicators.

1.3. What are the main gaps in interventions?

Is there a particular pattern to where gaps occur? (e.g. areas/topics omitted, involvement of tripartite constituents/ local ownership, inclusion of marginalised groups, coordination with other UN partners, use/ ratification of ILO conventions and recommendations etc). The answers to this question will flow from the findings from question 1.2	Has the ILO responded to gaps that were identified early in the review period and addressed them in later interventions			
How successful has the ILO been in ensuring sufficient funding and length of project in order to allow for the achievement of results and what impact does this have on gaps identified?	Projects are too short or do not have sufficient funds to achieve the proposed outputs and outcomes and ensure long-lasting results	Projects are too short or do not have sufficient funds to only achieve limited outputs and outcomes and ensure long-lasting results.	Projects have sufficient length and funding to achieve the main outputs and outcomes, and ensure some local ownership of the intervention and many of the results will be long-lasting.	Projects have sufficient length and funding to achieve all the outputs and outcomes, and ensure strong ownership of the intervention and that the results will be long-lasting.
Has the ILO been able to ensure the sustainability of achievements, including demonstrating exit plans and / or additional interventions to ensure the achievements of the project are not lost				

Question	1. Unsuccessful	2. Partly successful	3. Successful	4. Highly Successful
1.4. What are the trends over the years, has the focus been intensified or has it been shifted to other categories?				
Has there been a trend where they have been concentrating on different levels of interventions and has this changed over time?	Has there been a shift from higher level interventions to grassroots activities with beneficiaries for example? Are there indications of what has driven these trends?			
1.5. What are the main conclusions?				
What has been the overall success of the ILO in achieving its core mandate in the Arab States region?	Amalgamation of scores of the previous questions			
Where are the key areas where action is needed?	Amalgamation of findings from previous questions			

► **Table 2: What are the needed action points and recommendations to enhance ILO's interventions and work in the region?**

Question	Sub-Questions
2.1. What are the main recommendations from the different evaluation reports?	Can these be categorised into different groups? What themes within recommendations are emerging? Groups could include recommendations for design, consultation, collaboration, project management, particular subjects etc. Are the recommendations actionable? Has ROAS been able to act upon recommendations from global projects that include its countries?
2.2. What are the trends and how these recommendations have changed/not changed over the years?	Is there evidence that some recommendations that appeared more regularly the first biennia under review are appearing less in later recommendations? Is there evidence to demonstrate this is linked to learning from the ILO?
2.3. What has been the management response to those of independent evaluations	Is there evidence to suggest the ILO is utilising findings of evaluations? Are management responses demonstrating how the evaluations have been acted on? In addition to the management responses do the interventions that have more than one evaluation (either a mid-term and final, or two finals for different phases) show the findings of the early evaluations lead to course-corrections and changes in the later stages of programming?
2.4. What are the synthesized recommendations for the next biennium (based on the recommendations from the evaluation reports and the synthesis of information under this review)? What are the necessary steps to address these recommendations?	The findings from question 1 will be utilised, along with the review of the conclusions identified in question 2 to draw conclusions for synthesized recommendations.

Annex C: Scoring of Research Questions

The scores were allocated on a four-point scale, of unsuccessful, partly successful, successful, and highly successful. These are translated into numeric scores from 1-4 to allow an average to be calculated. Although 44 reports were included in the scoring sample, not all reports included information on every question. For example, only 33 reports gave sufficient information on the design and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation structures to allow a score to be assessed. The number of reports for each question is indicated by (n=44).

The scores are a reflection of the review consultant's assessment based on the information contained in the report rather than actual scoring from the evaluators who wrote the report.

To what extent has the ILO's interventions been relevant to the needs of tripartite constituents? (n=44)

Unsuccessful (1)	0
Partly Successful (2)	4
Successful (3)	18
Highly successful (4)	22
Average	3.41

How successful has the ILO been in achieving the planned outcomes of the interventions? (n=44)

Unsuccessful	0
Partly Successful	7
Successful	23
Highly successful	14
Average	3.16

How efficient has the ILO been in managing its projects? (n=44)

Unsuccessful	0
Partly Successful	9
Successful	21
Highly successful	14
Average	3.11

How effective have the monitoring and evaluation structures of the ILO been? (n=33)

Unsuccessful	6
Partly Successful	10
Successful	12
Highly successful	5
Average	2.48

How successful have the ILO been in achieving impacts including policy reform, strengthened knowledge base, increased empowerment of workers, gains in social dialogue, improvements in decent work? (n=43)

Unsuccessful	2
Partly Successful	11
Successful	28
Highly successful	2
Average	2.69

How successful has the ILO been in ensuring sufficient funding and length of project in order to allow for the achievement of results? (n=34)

Unsuccessful	1
Partly Successful	16
Successful	12
Highly successful	5
Average	2.62

Has the ILO been able to ensure the sustainability of achievements, including demonstrating exit plans and / or additional interventions to ensure the achievements of the project are not lost? (n=44)

Unsuccessful	0
Partly Successful	23
Successful	19
Highly successful	2
Average	2.52

Annex D: Gender Equality Summary

As gender was addressed in a separate synthesis review, this summary is included here for reference:

Gender Summary

Gender equality and women's empowerment were covered in a separate report and to avoid duplication, the TOR for this synthesis review identified that this assignment would not cover the gender dimension. However, in order to ensure linkages with the other study, key findings from the Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in the Arab States (2018-2023) have been included along with additional observations where relevant.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Gender integration remains limited in the Arab States region. The Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in the Arab States (2018-2023) selected 24 project evaluations where the project had been at least somewhat gender responsive or in 2 cases, gender transformative. This means only half of the projects evaluated during this period were sufficiently inclusive of gender to meet this threshold.
- ▶ Evaluations of ILO's projects have had limited success in meeting the evaluation standards of the UN-SWAP, although this has improved in the later half of the period. Between 2018 and 2020, very few evaluation reports that has a quality assessment approached or met requirements of the UN-SWAP. Since 2021, this has improved with the majority now approaching requirements, although still only a limited number are meeting the requirements.
- ▶ The Gender Synthesis Review identified Skills are the most common thematic area where interventions addressed gender equality and women's empowerment followed by policy development and law reform.
- ▶ There was very limited indication of interventions linking gender equality and freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Good Practices (page 39 of the Gender Synthesis Review)

- ▶ Gender mainstreamed approaches, including adding a gender focus to livelihoods, developing gender-sensitive operational guidelines, the inclusion of women purposefully on the basis of differential vulnerabilities between men and women, and the provision of vocation training based on contextual norms.
- ▶ Establishing connections between governmental agencies and programmes. This was particularly noticeable in labour migration programmes

Lessons Learned (p39-40)

- ▶ Very few evaluations (seven) have lessons learned related to gender.
- ▶ Gender should be included during the project design phase and in the development of project indicators.
- ▶ Positive activities included establishing WASH facilities for women on farms, considering women's perspectives to better address their needs in project rollouts, and upholding gender sensitivity when addressing the needs of make stakeholders.

Next Steps:

Next Steps	Details	Action Points
In lieu of developing a regional strategy, consider how to link global indicators to the regional work in a systematic manner.	The Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women's synthesis review included the recommendation to develop a regional strategy. The feedback sessions for the overall synthesis review suggested this might not be the best use of resources and aligning with global indicators would be a more efficient option.	Develop guides on how to include global indicators in results frameworks and where possible have standardised indicators.
Work with evaluation managers to raise the quality of evaluations under the UN-SWAP criteria.	Despite some improvement, very few evaluations meet the UN SWAP requirements	Evaluation managers should ensure a stronger focus on gender equality in TORs and inception reports and review methodologies to ensure they are appropriate with gender equity evaluation approaches.
Ensure the early inclusion of gender considerations in the design of projects, indicators, and monitoring frameworks.	It is much harder to retro-fit gender equality into projects rather than ensuring inclusion from the beginning.	Review project proposals and results frameworks for evidence of gender mainstreaming.
Strengthen awareness and capacities of gender specific budgeting.	The ILO has successfully implemented gender budgeting in various projects in different regions.	Best practices from these experiences should be shared with project designers and implementers.
Design and implement gender-specific programmes.	As part of a twin-track approach, gender-specific programmes should be implemented	Identify key donors and thematic areas for implementation Work with programme managers to develop new proposals

Annex E: Consultancy TOR

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Terms of Reference

Synthesis Review of Main Findings, Recommendations, Lessons Learned, and Good Practices from Evaluations conducted in the ILO Arab States Region

Introduction and context

1. Decentralized evaluations are conducted for ILO projects, based on the ILO Evaluation Policy and its guidelines¹. Decentralized evaluations may include thematic evaluations, project evaluations (internal or independent), RBSA evaluations, impact evaluations, and joint evaluations, as well as other forms of internal evaluations such as self-evaluations. The type of project evaluation is determined by a pre-set criteria including the project's timeline and budget.

1 [wcms_853289.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

2 <https://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/>

3 [wcms_901579.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

2. The main objectives of these decentralized evaluations are to 1) ensure accountability and 2) extract valuable insights that can improve the organization's effectiveness. These evaluations yield various outcomes, including recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices. By gathering these insights, the evaluations aim to provide a well of knowledge that informs strategic planning, programming, and project implementation.

3. The custodian of the ILO Evaluation Policy is the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL), which takes charge of a publicly accessible online platform known as "ieval discovery²." This platform serves as a comprehensive repository for evaluations (independent and internal), demonstrating a strong commitment to transparency. It contains recommendations from independent evaluations alongside corresponding management responses. Additionally, the repository provides direct access to lessons learned and good practices identified through these evaluations.

4. Beyond the individual project evaluations undertaken in accordance with ILO's evaluation policy, meta-analyses of all independent project evaluations are annually conducted by EVAL. Since 2011, EVAL has undertaken biennial effectiveness assessments based on independent project evaluations. The latest study Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2022³; provides an independent and comprehensive analysis of the ILO's decent work results, and is based on project evaluations completed in 2022. An important advancement in this report is the inclusion of linkages between evaluation projects and policy outcomes, specifically through the connection with Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs). By establishing these linkages, the report seeks to provide insights into the performance of the ILO's efforts by policy outcomes, thus enhancing understanding of the Organization's effectiveness as measured against the ultimate results-based framework, namely the programme and budget (P&B).

5. In 2022, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States, which covers 12 states, assessed the extent to which evaluations have been used in the region. The results highlighted a critical need to enhance the usefulness of evaluations. One of the key recommendations from this assessment was to conduct informative synthesis reviews as needed. In order to inform the design, planning and implementation of projects and programmes in the region and building on EVAL's latest meta-study: Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2022, a synthesis review of all evaluations conducted in the region during the last three biennia (2018-23) will be commissioned in April to finalize in July.

Purpose

6. The objective of this synthesis review is to compile, analyze, and synthesize the findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices derived from evaluations conducted in the Arab region. The review aims to extract key insights and identify overarching themes, patterns, and actionable recommendations to enhance the ILO's future programs and initiatives in the region. Its ultimate goal is to create a repository of tailored informative guidance (what is the situation and what are the recommendations) to each working area and country that can be used by the relevant specialists, country coordinators, and other staff at the ILO ROAS in their planning and design of projects and programmes. The outcomes of the consultancy will be presented in a workshop to ensure the dissemination and uptake of the recommendations. The synthesis review aims at complementing the findings from EVAL's meta-studies avoiding any duplication of efforts.

Scope and Selection of reports for the SR

7. This synthesis review is expected to base upon all extracted evaluations (approximately 52 reports – midterm and final; internal and independent) conducted in the Arab region during the last three biennia (from 2018 to 2023), a few reports produced in 2024 may be added as needed. However, some reports can be excluded based on:

a) Quality of the evaluation report: in order to achieve robust and reliable results, the quality of evaluations should be assessed on the grounds of the reports being comprehensive, evidence based and providing information relevant to the synthesis review questions. The consultant is expected to come with very clear inclusion/ exclusion criteria. i. For the specified period a rolling quality appraisal of most independent evaluation reports was done by an independent quality review team. EVAL will make this database available to the consultants to aid the inclusion/exclusion of reports.

Methodology

The synthesis review will employ a systematic and rigorous approach, encompassing the following steps:

Phase I

8. Extraction: The consultant will refer to I-eval discovery and extract all the evaluation reports from ROAS during the designated time. The initial search shows 52 evaluation reports. By the time the consultancy starts, 2 or 3 reports may be added.

9. Desk Review: Thoroughly review all extracted evaluation reports, including executive summaries, findings, recommendations, good practices, and lessons learned. The management responses for independent evaluations will be also examined. Additionally, EVAL's meta-studies covering the least three biennia will be reviewed. Come up with a clear inclusion/ exclusion criteria. An inception report is expected at this stage.

Phase II

10. Categorization and Analysis: Categorize the extracted information according to 1) ILO's areas of work in the region (International Labour Standards (ILS) and Labour Law, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), migration, labour statistics, employment, social protection, crisis and refugee response, skills, enterprise development, Humanitarian Development and Peace (HDP) nexus), 2) ILO's cross-cutting issues⁴ such as, social dialogue, disability and non-discrimination, environmental sustainability, etc. and 3) countries concerned with clear linkages to CPOs, 4) other categories depending on the type of information. Analyze the information to identify commonalities, gaps, and trends.

4 A separate synthesis review and thematic evaluation is planned on gender work in the region and thus this assignment will not cover the gender dimension.

Phase III

11. Synthesizing and Reporting: Synthesize the information to address the key questions. Prepare a comprehensive synthesis report in the ILO style, adhering to established guidelines and ensuring readability, coherence, and clarity. The report should be easily used to feed into different planning exercises of future work. It also should include a section highlighting the relevant findings to the region and the above categories from EVAL's reviewed reports.

Key Questions

12. Drawing from existing evaluation reports, the review should help answering two main questions: 1) What is the current situation under each of the above-mentioned categories? (A quantitative rating under each criterion is expected to visually highlight the situation). 2) What are the needed action points and recommendations to enhance ILO's interventions and work in the region?

Some sub questions to guide the synthesis review:

1) Under each category: 1.1. What are the main interventions that can be mapped from the different evaluation reports?

1.2. What are the main achievements, lessons learned and good practices?

1.3. What are the main gaps in interventions?

1.4. What are the trends over the years, has the focus been intensified or has it been shifted to other categories?

1.5. What are the main conclusions?

2) Under each category: 2.1. What are the main recommendations from the different evaluation reports?

2.2. What are the trends and how these recommendations have changed/ not changed over the years?

2.3. What has been the management response to those of independent evaluations?

2.4. What are the synthesized recommendations for the next biennium (based on the recommendations from the evaluation reports and the synthesis of information under this review)? What are the necessary steps to address these recommendations?

13. These sub questions should help guide a comprehensive assessment of the current situation and the necessary actions for enhancing ILO's work in the region across the specified categories. It should be noted that the recommendations should comply with EVAL quality checklist to ensure they are clear and actionable.

Timeline

14. The consultancy is anticipated to start in April with a kick off meeting and end in July 2024.

ilo.org

International Labour Organization
Regional Office for the Arab States
Aresco Centre - Justinien Street - Kantari
Beirut - Lebanon