



International
Labour
Organization



**ILO's Voluntary Core Contributions
(Regular Budget Supplementary Account – RBSA):
Success stories from the Arab States**

**Regional Office
for Arab States**

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Abbreviations

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
ATUC	Arab Trade Union Confederation
CLU	Child Labour Unit
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EIIP	Employment-Intensive Investment Programmes
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
JP	Joint Programme
KfW	Reconstruction Credit Institute
LMIA	Labour Market Information and Analysis
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MoSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
NES	National Employment Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PGA	Participatory Gender Audits
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RB	Regular Budget
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SRP	UN Strategic Response Plan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

1. The added value of RBSA

The ILO's voluntary core contributions (funding towards Regular Budget Supplementary Account-RBSA) allow the ILO to allocate resources when and where they are most needed in a flexible, fast and transparent manner. This funding modality provides a pool of un-earmarked resources allocated by the ILO to strategic areas, underfunded themes and new priorities. It was designed to complement earmarked funds such as assessed contributions (Regular Budget) and voluntary non-core contributions (Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation), which include lightly earmarked outcome-based funds, and specific project-based interventions.

ILO's voluntary core contributions are a key resource to deliver Decent Work, as they enable the Office to expand, accelerate, deepen and replicate existing technical cooperation programmes, allowing the ILO to serve those thematic areas and/or member states that do not attract voluntary funds as easily as others. This funding modality also lowers transaction costs for the ILO, and therefore justifies a reduced administrative support cost. Allocated to official development assistance-eligible countries, voluntary core contributions are instrumental in responding to challenges facing the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda in a strategic, coherent and efficient manner. The ILO uses these funds to:

- Launch innovative initiatives;
- rapidly address emerging needs;
- expand the scope and/or scale of existing programmes;
- mainstream cross-cutting issues in labour policies and programmes;
- leverage greater funding from other sources;
- increase sustainability of ILO assistance through partnerships with UN agencies;
- allow the ILO to formulate new project documents and expand on its activities; and,
- respond to needs in labour policies identified by national governments.

KEY RBSA FACTS

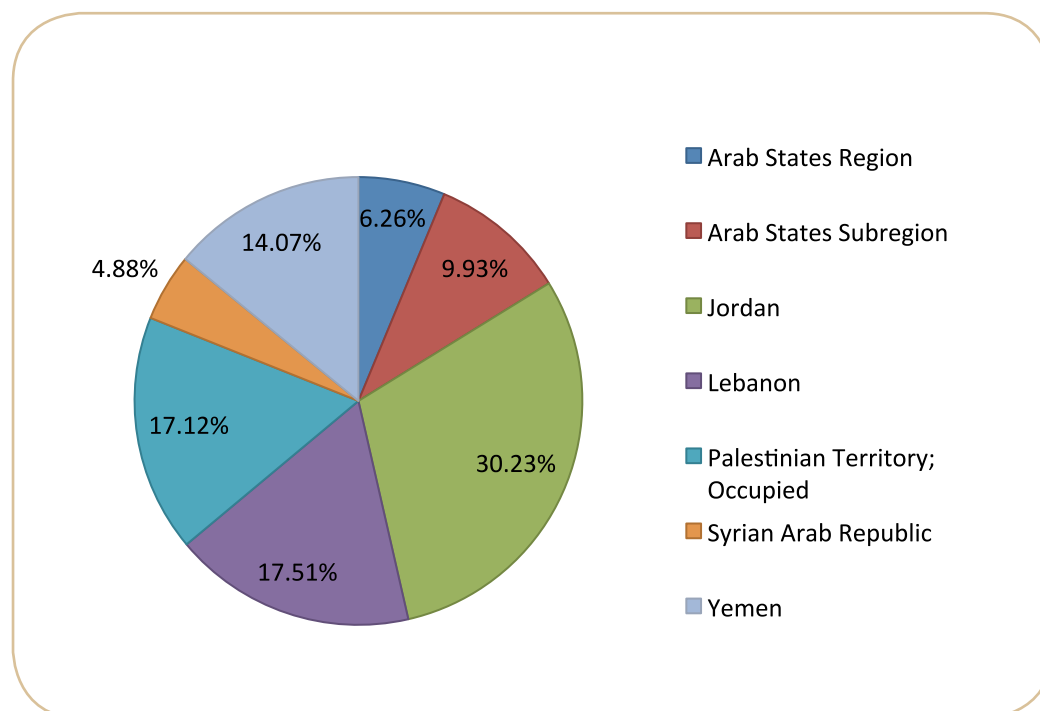
- Launched ahead of the 2008-2009 biennium
- Total worldwide funding of USD 172 million up to 2015
- Supported by eight countries over the course of the 2014-2015 biennium
- Total worldwide contributions for 2014-15 amounted to USD 40.3 million
- Total contributions allocated to the Arab States for 2014-15 amounted to USD 4.5 million
- Resources are allocated to ODA-eligible countries only
- Aligned with the results-based framework of the ILO
- Regulated by strict allocation rules, monitoring and evaluation
- Subject to a reduced administrative cost of 7 per cent

RBSA MANAGEMENT

This funding modality is treated as technical cooperation yet is subject to the same policy and governing instruments applicable to assessed contributions. The evaluation policies used to assess RBSA adhere to the overarching ILO evaluation policy that is formulated in accordance with UN standard practice, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) stipulations. RBSA resources are distributed according to outcome-based work-plans (OBWs). The bulk of the funds go directly towards Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) outcomes.

2. RBSA: some figures

RBSA allocations by region in the Arab States 2008-2015



Contributions to ILO core voluntary funding, all figures in USD ('000)

Development partners	2012-2013	2014-2015
Belgium	5,606	11,208
Denmark	7,015	8,534
Germany	814	2,341
Italy	612	485
Luxembourg	-	1,949
Netherlands	11,650	6,784
Norway	10,335	5,942
Sweden	-	3,050
TOTAL	36,032	40,293

3. The flexibility of RBSA-funded projects in the Arab States: our success stories

In the Arab States, the ILO has allocated RBSA funds amounting to more than USD 8 million to promote the Decent Work Agenda on both regional and country levels in a host of ways in the 2008-2015 period. RBSA funds allowed the ILO to conduct a variety of activities, funding more than 40 projects on employment, social protection, social dialogue, standards and integration – in short, mainstreaming Decent Work.

Regionally in the Arab States, RBSA has supported policy dialogue, strengthened the institutional capacity of workers' organizations, and conducted research on best recruitment practises, apprenticeships and employment services for youth employment, among other initiatives.

On the country level, RBSA has funded projects in Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, contributing to eliminating the worst forms of child labour, strengthening social protection, microfinancing decent work and supporting constituents to establish a national Social Protection Floor (SPF), among others initiatives. Concrete examples of these actions are as follows:

3.1. Regional programmes

3.1.1 Strengthening the institutional capacity of workers' organizations in the Arab States (CPO¹: RAB802)

Context

The popular Arab movements which began in 2010 highlighted issues affecting the people of the region, such as mass unemployment, low wages and lack of economic opportunity. In the delicate transition period that followed these protests in a host of countries, trade unions played a key role in defending the rights of citizens, but experienced strong restrictions on freedom of association and collective bargaining. The comparative success of the Tunisian democratic transition is partly attributed to the existence of a sufficiently free, strong and representative trade union movement. In some "Arab Spring" countries, the uprisings ushered in a new era of popular participation. They underlined the need for representative and democratic unions, which are free to play their essential role in shaping the future of their societies by building democratic regimes based on human rights, freedom and social justice. The 2012 ILO-UNDP report *Rethinking Economic Growth* stressed that "United Nations agencies should refuse to confine their role to acting as transmission belts for arbitrary and incoherent government policies, and should instead promote more inclusive approaches in their engagement with national constituencies by bringing in trade unions and their natural allies – the social movements struggling for workers' rights, social justice, political reform, and democratization."²

1) The Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs) reflect the strategic measurable results of the ILO required to move forward the Decent Work Agenda at the country level.

2) ILO-UNDP, "Rethinking Economic Growth: Towards Productive and Inclusive Arab Societies", 2012. Available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_208346.pdf

ILO response

The ILO leveraged RBSA funds to complement a US Department of Labour grant for the project “Strengthening workers’ organizations in the Arab States.” This project aims to build the ability of trade unions in the region to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as organizations that promote the interests of workers, as well as to reinforce their independence, internal democracy and representativeness. RBSA funds made it possible to expand the scope

and scale of a bridging phase for the project (August-December 2015), during which the ILO supported workers’ organizations in Lebanon, Jordan, Oman and Bahrain in reaching out to informal and migrant workers, as well as in building their institutional capacities.



ILO brought together employer and union representatives to explore successful collective bargaining and bipartite social dialogue structures and practices

Through this project, the ILO assisted the reform processes engaged by trade union structures in Arab countries, for example by supporting the development of by-laws towards more democracy and inclusiveness. The ILO also supported the creation of new workers’ organizations, especially in the informal economy. For instance, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Jordan established a unit for informal workers, while the National Federation of Workers and Employees Trade Unions in Lebanon reformed its by-laws, according to the principles of independence and internal democracy. RBSA funds were finally used to build the capacities and skills of trade union organizers, providing them, for example, with workshops and advocacy material on how to raise their presence in the media, and influence policy-making.

On the regional level, the ILO supported better coordination and cooperation among workers’ organizations, taking into account the increasingly transnational character of their demands. The ILO provided technical and financial support to the establishment of the new Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), the regional branch of the International Trade Union Confederation. This new platform enables workers’ organizations to share and learn from each other’s experiences, as well as to organize to defend their common interests.

The ILO put strong emphasis on supporting trade unions that reach out to those often left without representation in the Arab states: women, youth, and informal and migrant workers. The ILO played a key supporting role in launching the Domestic Workers’ Union in Lebanon, the first in the region, and in the inclusion of gender mainstreaming strategies into the structures of Arab trade unions.

3.1.2 Syrian Refugee Crisis Response

Context

Five years into the Syrian conflict, the ensuing refugee crisis remains one of the largest, most protracted and complex humanitarian emergencies of modern times. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) registration data, more than 4.8 million Syrians have now fled their country. Jordan – with its population of 6.4 million – has

an expanding Syrian refugee population of more than 640,000 women, men and their families. In Lebanon the refugee influx has taken on dramatic proportions: in April 2016 it was estimated that more than 1 million registered Syrian refugees lived in Lebanon.³ To this, hundreds of thousands unregistered refugees may have to be added: refugees now account for one in four people living in Lebanon. In Turkey there are nearly 2.7 million officially registered Syrian refugees; in Egypt 120,000; and in Iraq almost 250,000.

The effects of the Syrian refugee crisis are increasingly spilling over into the economic and social spheres – leading to stalled economic activity, loss of income, and shrinking access to quality public services in host countries that already had to contend with difficult socioeconomic conditions before the crisis began. Today, and in many ways, the crisis can be seen as a test for the accomplishment of the ambitious and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and its accompanying goals.

ILO response

The ILO response to the Syrian refugee crisis is aligned with the UN Strategic Response Plan (SRP) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)⁴, as well as the National Emergency plans in Jordan and Lebanon. While a large portion of the international community's response to the Syria crisis has focused on humanitarian aspects, the ILO's strategy is development-focused in its support to host communities and refugees in order to maintain and reinforce the social and economic stability of the affected neighbouring countries. In implementing this strategy, the ILO works closely with other UN agencies and multilateral institutions, including UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.

ILO action to respond to the crisis includes: supporting evidence-based policy development to ensure an employment-rich national response, embedded in the principles of decent work; contributing to building the resilience of host communities by enhancing access to employment opportunities and livelihoods; and strengthening institutional capacities and coordination to combat unacceptable forms of work, with a focus on child labour. RBSA funding has contributed to the launch of several programmes in the region, especially in Jordan and Lebanon.

3) As of 6 May 2015, UNHCR Lebanon temporarily suspended new registration as per Government of Lebanon's instructions. Accordingly, individuals awaiting to be registered are no longer included.

4) The 3RP is a country-driven, regionally coherent plan to address refugee protection and humanitarian needs and build the resilience of vulnerable people and impacted host communities and strengthen the capacity of national delivery systems in the five most affected countries neighbouring Syria.

Jordan

As part of the wider UN response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, the ILO initiated a series of pilot projects in 2013, working closely with local stakeholders in the two most affected governorates of Mafrq and Irbid, to support enhanced access to employment opportunities and livelihoods of host communities and Syrian refugees.



The Director General visiting the ILO's greenhouses in Jordan

The multi-faceted nature of this crisis cuts across existing interventions in Jordan, and the ILO has adapted its crisis response to fit the objectives of the Jordan Response Plan 2015 through three interlinked programmes, one of which is described below.

Enhanced access to employment opportunities and livelihoods in Jordanian host communities within the framework of the ILO response to the Syrian crisis (CPO: JOR 109)

Since the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, host communities have seen a large influx of labour supply, especially in low-income segments of the job market. As a result, increased competition over jobs is affecting livelihoods and social cohesion between refugees and host community residents.

Using USD 1.4 million of RBSA funding, the ILO has conducted participatory value chain development activities in agribusiness (tomatoes and olives) with local stakeholders. The ILO has also worked with host communities and local government representatives in selected sectors to identify economic opportunities, conduct gender-sensitive value chain analyses, formulate local socio-economic development plans and implement selected value chain interventions.

Furthermore, the ILO has supported entrepreneurship development, with a focus on enterprise start-ups, to spur economic growth. Small and medium enterprises in host communities receive ILO support with the overall objective of job creation, which includes self-employment.

Finally, the ILO also engages in employment-intensive and local resource-based infrastructure development pilot interventions in the crisis-affected governorates. These interventions aim to increase the scope of job availability amongst host communities and refugees, thus providing beneficiaries with almost immediate opportunities to earn a livelihood. Examples of such pilot interventions include rehabilitation of agricultural feeder roads in Irbid and establishment of water catchments in Mafrq. The ILO will soon launch a large scale Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) with the support of the Reconstruction Credit Institute (KfW) to expand on these pilot projects.

The RBSA funding has strategically positioned the ILO as a leading UN agency in employment and livelihoods in the Syria Crisis Response.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States is a partner in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-16.⁵ At present, the ILO contributes to realizing the objectives of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-16 through three programmes, one of which is described below.

Livelihoods, employment and income for vulnerable people in Northern Lebanon affected by the Syrian conflict (CPO: LBN103)

The programme's objectives are to improve access to employment opportunities and livelihoods for young women and men and other vulnerable groups in North Lebanon, and to increase employment and income generation in targeted agricultural sectors, specifically the potato and leafy greens sectors.

The programme targets vulnerable farmers in host communities, while paying specific attention through targeted interventions to highly vulnerable groups such as unemployed youth, women and children working in agriculture, most of them refugees. To implement activities ranging from value chain development to employment service provision and capacity building support, the programme works closely with line ministries and municipalities, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), employment services, vocational training providers, cooperatives and other enterprises in the value chains. The ILO is using the "Making Markets Work for the Poor" (M4P) approach to ensure the sustainability of economic gains and employment created for the poor and most vulnerable.⁶ Targeted value chain interventions include creating market linkages to boost domestic sales and exports, while working to upgrade the potato and leafy greens value chains in such a way for participation in the export business to produce greater income for vulnerable farmers and workers. In addition, the project is collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture to improve and strengthen the vocational training in agriculture

for youth. Based on the successful initial collaboration, the Ministry of Agriculture requested further support to increase the interest and employability of youth in the agriculture sector, which is critical in rural areas.

The programme aims to improve employment and income generation opportunities while also fostering social cohesion to reduce rising tension over jobs between refugees and host community residents. The allocation of USD 1 million through RBSA funding allowed the ILO to kick-start this urgent project, while the Government of Italy provided a further USD 437,000. The ILO is currently leveraging additional resources to continue working in value chain development in the agricultural sector and launch its first ever EIIP in Lebanon, jointly with UNDP.



The ILO works with the Ministry of Agriculture in training youth to become skilled agricultural workers.

5) The LCRP is Lebanon's country plan part of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-16. For more information, please see: <http://www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-2015-2016>.

6) The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development. See: <http://www.enterprise-development.org/page/m4p>.

3.2. Country level programmes

3.2.1. Occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

Extending social security coverage to private sector workers in the occupied Palestinian territory (CPO: PSE151)

Context

Social security is not only a universal human right and a necessity, but also plays a pivotal role in alleviating poverty, fostering decent work, and facilitating economic and social development. In the oPt, public sector workers benefit from social protection benefits, but most private sector workers are not covered in cases of unemployment, work injury or old age. Maternity and child benefits remain limited, while disability insurance has not yet been put into effect. As

a result, access to social protection is highly unequal in the private sector, as only employees of large companies and some NGOs are covered by provident funds. Social protection was identified as one of the key areas of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016 and the ILO's Palestinian Decent Work Programme 2013-2016, which lays down as one of its priorities the development of an integrated



Palestinian workers in Gaza's fishing sector

social security system and the extension of social protection to all those in need in the oPt. It is also an important element of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the State of Palestine 2014-2016, which aims to alleviate the economic and social impact of Israeli occupation.

ILO response

As a result of a tripartite process that was fully supported by the ILO, the first ever Social Security Law for private sector workers and their family members was adopted by the Palestinian Cabinet on 16 February 2016, and thereafter signed off by President Abbas on 2 March 2016 and published in the official Gazette on 20 March 2016, with entry into force after 30 days after publication. The ILO has intended to continue providing assistance to tripartite stakeholders in the implementation of the new system following the adoption of the law, including, among others, assistance regarding the investment of the new social security fund, the drafting of the related regulation, the establishment of the new independent social security institution, as well as capacity building of its staff. In addition, the ILO has planned to carry out a comprehensive awareness raising campaign.

Moreover, the ILO carried out an actuarial valuation of the different design parameters, and projected their costs for the future, as to guarantee the sustainability of the new social security system in the long-run. Also, to ensure the sustainability and adequacy of the whole social protection system, the ILO carried out an actuarial valuation of the social security schemes administered by the Public Pension Agency of Palestine.

In view of the implementation of the new social security scheme, an Administration Study was elaborated by the ILO to serve as a guiding document for the establishment

of the new administration, as well as the job descriptions for the key positions of the future social security institution. Also the ILO developed the Administration Manual for the new administration. In addition, assistance was provided for capacity building and in particular through eight- tailor made social security capacity building and training workshops for tripartite Palestinian social security task force. Those capacity building workshops were focused on legal drafting, social security financing and actuarial techniques, and the principles of social security administration, which will be complemented by training for the staff of the new administration on the day-to-day management issues. To foster south-south cooperation, the ILO also organized a study tour to the Jordanian Social Security Corporation.

This historic achievement was made possible by the use of RBSA funds that complemented a Kuwait funded technical cooperation project on social security. US\$ 3.7 million is needed to build on these achievements, and support the process of setting up the independent social security institution, build the capacities of its officials, expand the scheme's coverage, and raise awareness of the new scheme through a campaign targeting tripartite stakeholders. This new scheme will also constitute an important step towards the development of a national Social Protection Floor. To this end, the ILO is currently conducting impact assessments, actuarial evaluations and a mapping of existing social security systems. The ILO is also supporting the establishment of a task force and a road map to lead the SPF process.

Empowering women workers in the oPt (CPO: PSE101)

Context

In the oPt, women are largely excluded from the workforce. In 2013, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicated a participation rate of 16.7 per cent – one of the lowest in the world.⁷ A weak policy framework on job creation and social protection and the inability of the private sector to generate decent jobs with adequate social protection coverage have been identified as key impediments to women's access to decent work. Combined with entrenched patriarchal attitudes, this has resulted in confinement to the household for many women. Meanwhile, the weakness of the Palestinian economy has put a strong pressure on families, leading to increased poverty and aid dependency, as well as overcrowding of accommodation and increased violence against women. A household survey conducted in 2006 and again in 2011 showed that 26.5 per cent of married women surveyed reported physical abuse from their husbands, while more than 65 per cent reported psychological abuse.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is also common in the workplace: a 2011 study conducted by the PCBS, in partnership with the ILO and the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University, found that 22.8 per cent of surveyed women had experienced some form of violence in the space of a few months. Worryingly, this figure rose to 29 per cent in the 25 to 29 age group.



Women receiving training in carpentry in the oPt

7) PCBS, Labour Force Survey Database, 2013.

ILO response

Within the framework of the joint UN programme on gender equality and women's empowerment in the oPt (2009-2012), the ILO implemented a series of activities to increase women's economic and political rights. It laid substantive ground in the form of better gender awareness by the tripartite constituents, through the launch of a National Committee for Women's Employment and the production of Participatory Gender Audits (PGA). To build on the programme's achievements, the ILO devised a follow-up project on women's empowerment, funded by Kuwait. As this programme was designed and funding secured, the ILO relied on USD 204,230 in RBSA funds to sustain the transition between the two projects and maintain the momentum.

In this bridging phase, the ILO drew on the achievements of the joint project to develop a PGA Strategy aimed at institutionalizing PGA at the national level. The ILO conducted capacity building exercises such as workshops and training sessions for the National PGA Facilitators, a network of trainers. The ILO supported these facilitators in developing and implementing PGA meetings and workshops. The ILO put emphasis on capacitating the Ministry of Labour (MOL)'s gender unit, by supporting it in developing a strategy as well as conducting training and workshops pushing for gender mainstreaming within the MOL. In 2013, the MOL committed to fully include gender mainstreaming in its procedures and programmes, which served as an important basis for the ILO to advocate the introduction of similar practices in other Ministries.

The ILO carried out vital advocacy, awareness-raising and policy interventions on GBV. The ILO conducted two courses for students at Birzeit and Bethlehem Universities, raising the participants' awareness of GBV in the workplace, with a focus on sexual harassment, as well as human and labour rights. The course pioneered innovative participatory and creative learning, such as role plays or field "assignments" where participants were tasked to start a discussion on GBV in their social or family circles. This successful training was followed by a filmmaking workshop. Moreover, following a participatory gender audit training of trainers conducted to the Women Studies Centre at Birzeit University, with the support of the ILO, the centre conducted a series of gender audits within key departments in the University. Coupled with a questionnaire, the Centre highlighted significant patterns of gender-based discrimination in the workplace affecting female teachers' careers. A full report and a policy brief will be presented early 2016 to the board of the university with a key recommendation to introduce a gender monitoring system able to address issues of discrimination and encourage gender-sensitive human resource policies and practices.

Finally, the ILO equipped women working in 232 agricultural cooperatives with the skills to launch and sustainably manage their enterprises. It also consolidated the MOL's ability to support cooperatives by developing tools to identify business opportunities, assess management, and establish a database of cooperatives (including gender-disaggregated data such as the number of women managers or employees).

Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the oPt (CPO: PSE154)

Context

The economy of the oPt has remained fledgling. Rising unemployment, slow private-sector growth, inflation, and reliance on humanitarian aid for basic needs have precipitated a decline in living standards. In 2009, more than a fifth of the Palestinian population lived in poverty, with many more households concentrated just above the poverty line.⁸ By 2011, two in three Palestinians were affected by food insecurity.⁹ Adult household members are rarely able to provide for their households, forcing many families to rely on the work of children. A 2010 survey found that there were 65,000 working children (paid or unpaid) between the ages of 5 to 14 in the oPt, which represents about 6 per cent of the age group.¹⁰ In sectors such as agriculture (where the main incidence of child work is found), child labour is under-regulated, and working children are often subject to exploitative or dangerous working conditions. The social security system remains fragmented, and the weakness of the education system only exacerbates the issue of child labour. Although the Palestinian Authority has achieved some progress on the issue, the practice remains commonplace.



A child works on removing parts from a broken fan

ILO response

Working towards the progressive elimination of child labour, especially in its worst forms, is among the ILO's key areas of intervention. As a well-recognized provider of services and expertise in the oPt, the ILO has been able to achieve substantial progress towards establishing a policy and legal framework to combat child labour, build capacity for tripartite constituents, and raise awareness on the issue. The ILO committed USD 203,400 from the RBSA budget for these tasks. These funds allowed the ILO to conduct a wide range of activities as the necessary first steps towards a child-labour free oPt.

To build a hitherto absent knowledge base, the ILO conducted a desk review on child labour, providing a comprehensive summary of available data and reports, and mapping existing normative and policy frameworks, with the involvement of focus groups and an extensive network of stakeholders. This process culminated in a policy round table discussion, which provided a basis for future policy and legal framework activities. In parallel, a needs-assessment report was conducted on behalf of the Child Labour Unit (CLU) at the Ministry of Labour, to build the CLU's capacity, identify staff training needs and develop a strategic action plan. In June 2013 a Steering Committee against Child labour was established, comprising members from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the Ministries of Education and Labour.

8) World Bank, *Coping with Conflict: Poverty and Inclusion in West Bank and Gaza*, October 2011.

9) Ibid.

10) PCBS, *Palestinian Family Survey*, 2010.

The ILO promoted policy dialogue between unions, employers' organizations and the Ministry of Labour, through joint capacity building exercises. These activities provided an introduction to the socioeconomic dynamics of child labour in the oPt, the ILO framework to eradicate it, and the mechanisms and tools needed to monitor and combat the practice. To complete these interventions, the ILO organized a study tour for MOL Inspectors to Jordan, to draw on the Jordanian experience in implementing mechanisms to report on abusive child labour conditions. Finally, the ILO conducted a successful media and awareness raising campaign on the issue of child labour. The ILO produced posters, stickers, TV and radio spots, a short film and a photo album disseminated across the various segments of Palestinian society, and policy briefs targeting policy makers.

The flexibility of RBSA funding enabled the ILO to produce a range of complementary outputs, such as a reliable knowledge base, a new policy and legal framework, enhanced capacities for relevant stakeholders, and raised public awareness. These positive achievements reflect the ILO's comprehensive approach to the issue of child labour, and have become the bedrock for further action in addressing child labour in the oPt.

3.2.2 Jordan

Enhanced capacity of the Government and social partners to mainstream Decent Work into national development frameworks (CPO: JOR108)

Context

High levels of unemployment and low economic activity rates, especially among the youth and women, have long been a major concern for the Jordanian government. Over the past decade, unemployment rates have remained relatively unchanged: between 12 per cent and 15 per cent. Job creation has remained concentrated in low productivity sectors and in the expanding informal economy. An ILO survey found that the majority of working youth received a below-average wage and that the largest share of employed youth, worked an excessive number of hours. More than half of young workers (52.4 per cent) were affected by qualifications mismatch, whereby they worked in a job for which they were either overeducated or undereducated.

In 2011, the Jordanian Government adopted a National Employment Strategy (NES for the period 2011-2020) to tackle these challenges, specifically job-poor growth, high structural unemployment and especially high youth unemployment, low labour force participation of women, and lack of policy coherence. The NES looks at employment as a cross cutting theme in all aspects of the National Agenda, and central to all policies of the Kingdom related to investment, fiscal and monetary aspects, labour, public sector reform, and education. It aims to improve living standards of Jordanians through increased employment, wages and benefits, and productivity.

Since 2011 however, a series of developments, not least of which is the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on the Jordanian labour market, has put the current relevance of NES in question. In 2015, the Jordanian Government requested ILO assistance to conduct an evaluation of the NES and provide recommendations to increase the Government's ability to address challenges facing the Jordanian labour market.

11) Available at: http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_213477/lang--en/index.htm

ILO response

Mobilizing USD 32,471 in RBSA funds, the ILO conducted broad consultations with Jordanian stakeholders to establish the priorities and design of the review. Two consultants hired by the ILO carried out the evaluation. The evaluation reviewed (1) the NES design for its internal coherence and its relevance to the current Jordanian situation (taking into account exogenous shocks such as the refugee influx); (2) NES implementation modalities and their efficiency, (3) progress made on the proposed interventions at policy and implementation levels; and (4) the impact of these interventions against an agreed set of indicators selected among those proposed in the NES. At the end of the review, the ILO submitted a list of key recommendations to strengthen the coherence as well as the effectiveness of the interventions under the NES.



Government officials as well as workers' and employers' organizations meet with the ILO to discuss the Jordan DWCP

The use of RBSA funding allowed the ILO to respond effectively to constituents demands and, through consultations, to build a relationship with and between its tripartite constituents, to ensure that the process to revise Jordan's employment strategy is pluralistic and in line with best practice. The evaluation conclusions and recommendations will feed into the preparation of the next phase of the NES. The ILO will also support Jordan in organizing a large donor meeting, where necessary labour reforms to be undertaken as a result of the evaluation will be presented. The NES evaluation and its recommendations will hence not only improve the ability of the Government to better administer its labour market, it will also provide it with an umbrella for labour market reforms under which the Government will be able to gather further support from the international community.

Providing technical advice on the introduction of a Social Protection Floor in Jordan (CPO: JOR105)

Context

In recent years, Jordan has successfully pursued social and economic reforms in education, health, privatization and liberalization, and fostering stability and economic growth. Despite these achievements, however, Jordan continues to face a host of social and economic challenges that include high poverty and unemployment rates, a large informal economy and rising wealth inequality. Inadequate social security coverage has meant that the most vulnerable have been the hardest hit by the Syrian crisis, with regional instability and the high influx of Syrian refugees (over 629,245 by August 2015) putting further pressure on welfare and state services.

The ILO launched an initiative to implement a National Social Protection Floor in Jordan in 2012. SPF is nationally defined sets of rights and transfers that enable all members of a society to access a minimum set of goods and services, with particular attention given to marginalized and vulnerable groups. They are an increasingly popular approach to combat poverty, insecurity and inequality and meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Social protection and social security constitute a long-term investment in a productive society and economy, and serve as social and economic stabilisers in times of crisis. To mitigate the social emergency brought about by the global economic crisis, in 2009 the UN appointed the ILO to lead the Global SPF Initiative, which seeks to introduce SPFs in a host of countries, including Jordan.



Experts met to discuss ways to enhance social protection in Arab countries as well as examined successful international social protection experiences

ILO response

In cooperation with tripartite constituents, the ILO conducted a costing study for the introduction of an SPF in Jordan. These documents identified key gaps and issues in the provision of social security and poverty alleviation programmes. They highlighted, for example, that 21 per cent of the population did not benefit from any form of health insurance, or that care programmes for orphans and disabled children reached less than 10 per cent of them. The study uncovered severe disparities in living conditions and access to welfare services among age and socioeconomic groups, between men and women, and between local and refugee populations. To bridge these gaps and ensure adequate protection for all, the study advanced a series of recommendations and suggested flexible and carefully-costed packages to ease implementation. These packages ranged from the introduction of child support grants and a non-contributory pension allowance to an employment guarantee scheme and universal health care. The report found that the Jordanian social security system could deliver better results at a smaller cost if amended according to the ILO's suggestions.

Based on this study, the ILO supported the Jordanian Government in ratifying Convention No. 102 on Minimum Standards of Social Security, and in drafting the new Social Security Law adopted by Parliament in 2014. The ILO carried out awareness raising activities (including policy briefs, a video package and workshops) for stakeholders, and, as a result, secured their endorsement of a national SPF and legitimacy for the new SPF Advisory Board. Using RBSA funding, the ILO is currently supporting the Jordanian Social Security Corporation in the provision of sustainable pensions and social insurance benefits. The ILO is carrying out a study on universal health care, which will serve as the guiding document for the extension of healthcare coverage to all. The ILO has commissioned a number of follow-up studies such as an impact assessment of a national SPF on poverty, women's empowerment and child labour, a fiscal space study for the financing of the SPF, as well as an assessment of the delivery, management and governance of a national SPF. The ILO is also securing support from the Government of Mexico for the establishment of an SPF based on the Mexican Prospera Scheme.

Next steps include supporting stakeholders in developing a roadmap for the implementation of the SPF, establishing a task force on SPF data, and developing a unified database. This will contribute to the design of at least one pilot SPF benefit, with emphasis on the needs of host communities and Syrian refugees.

3.2.3. Yemen

Strengthening the capacity of the Labour Market Information Analysis Unit in Yemen (CPO: YEM151)

Context

The recent events in Yemen, as in many other Arab countries, have highlighted the need to develop a new paradigm to break the cycle of socio-economic insecurity and crises. In a context of widespread unemployment, a sizable informal sector, low wages and poor working conditions, the Government of Yemen has pursued the development of a National Employment Strategy with the ILO's assistance, with the aim of creating a fair and efficient labour market. But the absence of reliable data on occupational supply and demand, skills gaps, employment opportunities and employer needs, made drafting the NES difficult. This led the Government of Yemen to request assistance from international partners to reinforce its labour market analysis capacities.

ILO response

A Joint Programme (JP) between the ILO, UNDP, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL) laid the ground for the collection and analysis of the needed data. Upon the completion of this initial programme, in 2010, MoSAL requested further assistance to strengthen its labour market monitoring and policy analysis function. The ILO committed to support the work of the MoSAL's new Labour Market Information and Analysis (LMIA) unit by building its capacity to collect, process, analyze and disseminate quality data on Yemen's labour market. This commitment took the form of a new JP with UNDP, to which USD 392,000 were allocated from RBSA funds, complementing grants from Qatar's Silatech and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The JP provided the LMIA unit with the required equipment to implement the programme, and carried out a host of activities such as capacity building workshops and training of future trainers among LMIA unit staff. The ILO further delivered technical advice on the building, analysis and maintenance of labour databases, on labour market information system tools, as well as on the use of data and employment projections for policy-making. LMIA unit staff were trained and equipped to undertake advanced technical work on data collection, employment projections and labour market analysis for policy development and monitoring. The LMIA unit was also capacitated to carry out and disseminate policy-oriented studies on critical economic developments, their impact on employment and resulting recommendations. The project paid particular attention to raising the outreach and visibility of the LMIA unit by supporting the dissemination of its information to relevant stakeholders (other government bodies, workers' and employers' organizations). Finally, it served as a vehicle for the ILO to mainstream good practices in labour market information and analysis, for example through the building of gender-disaggregated datasets, adoption of quality standards for data collection, analysis and monitoring, and the involvement of social partners, women and youth.

The flexible nature of RBSA funds enabled the ILO to respond quickly to an urgent technical assistance request from a member state, and to build on a fruitful partnership with another UN agency. The project enabled the LMIA unit to support the drafting of the NES through the dissemination of data on the labour market. For example, in 2013 the Yemen Central Bureau of Statistics was able to conduct a Labour Force Survey with ILO technical assistance, which uncovered new data on unemployment, women's participation in the economy, levels of training, qualifications, wages and labour migration. By improving the quality and availability of labour market data, this project contributed to a better knowledge base and understanding of the country's employment and labour market situation. Continuing technical cooperation is key to ensuring the Government of Yemen's future ability to generate employment and reduce poverty.

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