

Global Employment Policy Review

Summary of Chapter 3: The transformative role of employment-intensive investment public employment programmes in peace and resilience

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This chapter outlines the potential for Employment Intensive Investment Programmes (EIIP) to respond to profound changes in an increasingly globalized economic system, which makes millions of workers either surplus to the requirements of the labour market or engaged in the market, but without earning a decent living wage. This situation is exacerbated by factors including technological advances, protracted conflicts, accelerating climate change and environmental degradation. All this is contributing to social unrest, migration and conflict. In this context, this chapter explains how ILO-supported EIIP play a transformative role in addressing these challenges, thus contributing to peace and resilience.

EIIP can take the form of both public infrastructure programmes (PIP), which increase aggregate demand within the national economy, and government implemented public employment programmes (PEP). PIP contribute to aggregate employment by promoting increases in the labour intensity of government expenditure and often combine the objectives of public asset or service production with reducing poverty. PEP create employment directly to address government responsibility to ensure that working age populations have access to adequate income and offer short term employment in response to temporary labour market disruptions. These interventions contribute to positive economic, labour market and climate change transformations and build on a century of ILO experience in this field as well as more recent ILO-supported programming innovations from around the world.

The chapter focuses mainly on PEPs and describes e.g. how ILO innovations in relation to EIIP can contribute to social justice, promote investment in capabilities, promote resilience through the sustainability of assets created, and contribute to peace building. It outlines how PEPs promote a human-centred agenda and attempt to address the challenges of inequality, exclusion and vulnerability by creating a more inclusive labour market. Moreover, the chapter outlines how PEP contribute to household and community resilience via the provision of quality infrastructure and sustainable assets, which are specified and constructed using engineering standards and appropriate technical and managerial inputs, as well as community and local government engagement. The analysis also describes how these programmes can be designed to contribute to a peace-building agenda using lessons learned from the Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR) programme.

Finally, the chapter explores how EIIP contribute to sustainable development, addressing income inequality and ending poverty, paying special attention to areas affected by conflict, disaster and other humanitarian emergencies. It concludes with the insight that the EIIP's operational experience over recent decades has illustrated that working together with both community-level and national stakeholders can strengthen and build local institutions and contribute to a more inclusive and productive society, and that finding the fiscal space to implement multi-sectoral national public employment programmes, which address today's economic, social and environmental challenges, may well be one appropriate response to building the more resilient and peaceful society that we need going forward.