

JOB CREATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES – EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE INVESTMENT STRATEGIES IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

This policy paper presents an overview of the approach promoted by ILO in Jordan and Lebanon to support the Government in creating immediate job opportunities for both Syrian women and men refugees and members of their host communities, while also improving local infrastructure and the environment.

This policy paper presents the approach, experiences and lessons learned from ongoing projects and some findings of project-level evaluations in the two countries.

BACKGROUND

Lebanon and Jordan are hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees, most of whom live in host communities. The increasing number of Syrian refugees has added pressure on basic services and overstretched national and local systems and structures. Most Syrians are working in the informal economy. This has a negative impact on the quality of the jobs provided such as sub-standard wages, poor working conditions and exploitative practices, including child labour. At the same time, the increased competition for jobs has led to social tensions between Syrians and their host communities. The protracted nature of the crisis requires an integrated response plan that bridges humanitarian support and broader socio-economic development.

INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOB CREATION

Lebanon and Jordan, both through the London Conference in 2016 and their national response plans, have indicated a strong need for assistance in infrastructure work to enable communities to cope with increased demand due to the refugee influx.



The ILO has in response partnered with national ministries and donors to launch projects that employ local and Syrian workers in areas hosting the majority of Syrian refugees. A number of so-called Employment Intensive Investment Projects (EIIPs) were launched in both countries funded by Germany (BMZ/KfW) and Norway while collaboration has been established to increase the employment potential of World Bank projects.

EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE INVESTMENTS

The ILO's Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) supports countries in the design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes aiming to address unemployment and underemployment through public investment, typically in infrastructure development. EIIP reinforces and builds institutional and operational capacity to provide productive and decent work that has an economic, environmental and social impact.

THE EIIP APPROACH

EIIP promotes employment-intensive approaches and local resource-based technologies in delivering public investments – in particular for local infrastructure. The interventions in Jordan and Lebanon cover roads, irrigation, water and soil conservation, small urban works and land terracing and forestry.

The infrastructure, environment and agriculture-related works are carried out with work methods that use both labour and equipment. While maintaining cost competitiveness and engineering quality standards, technologies use appropriate engineering and construction solutions that do not require highly specialized skills or equipment but favour solutions that as far as possible rely on locally available resources including labour and skills, and optimize employment opportunities. Depending on the nature of the work, equipment is used to ensure that the necessary quality standards are maintained.

EIIP promotes immediate job creation as an entry point for more sustainable livelihood development. It therefore equally introduces in Jordan and Lebanon a comprehensive longer term approach, including establishing an overall enabling environment. It does this by addressing both upstream policies, capacity and institutional issues, and the practical arrangements required at implementation level.

Box. Options to Increase Employment Impact

The three main options for increasing labour intensity in public investment programmes are:

1. focus on activities that are by default labour intensive (such as forestry works, land and environmental improvements, community works and sanitation);
2. add additional labour-intensive activities to required capital-intensive works (such as slope protection, drainage, construction of sidewalks) to enhance the overall employment impact;
3. modify technologies and increase labour intensities of selected construction activities.



The table below highlights different entry points for the interventions in Jordan and Lebanon.

Table 1. Levels of entry points for EIIP interventions in Jordan and Lebanon to increase employment opportunities for nationals and Syrian refugees

LEVEL	EIIP LEVELS OF INTERVENTIONS	
Policy	Advice to national stakeholders in the design of national employment-intensive investment policies, strategies and programmes, and the assessment of the employment impact of such strategies and programmes.	
	<p>Examples:</p> <p>In Lebanon, ILO and World Bank worked together to assess the employment impact of the Roads and Employment project. ILO provides technical inputs to help realize this employment potential and will demonstrate labour-based road maintenance as a strategy to maintain the assets produced under the project.</p>	<p>In Jordan, ILO and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing work together to increase the overall labour intensity of nationally funded road maintenance works by adding routine maintenance activities such as road side cleaning.</p>

LEVEL	EIIP LEVELS OF INTERVENTIONS	
Institutional	Institutional development and capacity building for the implementation of employment-intensive investment strategies and programmes with both the public sector (labour ministries, local governments and communities) and private sector (local contractors and engineering firms).	
	<p>Examples:</p> <p>In Lebanon, an EIIP advisor has been embedded in the Ministry of Social Affairs which is coordinating the refugee crisis response. This advisor helps the Ministry to employ the EIIP methodology in other projects.</p>	<p>In Jordan, ILO and the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) have signed an agreement to deliver training courses for engineers in local resource-based approaches. Modules have been prepared by ILO and a training of JEA trainers has been conducted. The five different training modules have been accredited by JEA.</p>
Project	Implement projects, demonstrate and evaluate the impact of employment-intensive investment strategies, and provide technical support to governments and donors to optimize infrastructure investments and increase the employment impact of decent working conditions.	
	<p>Examples:</p> <p>In Lebanon, the ILO implements in partnership with UNDP the Employment Intensive Infrastructure in Lebanon project to strengthen resilience of local host communities by improving livelihoods for host community members and Syrian refugees through job creation and infrastructure development.</p>	<p>In Jordan, ILO generates employment through its Labour Intensive Infrastructure Programme. The overall development objective of the programme is that Syrian refugees and Jordanians have better living conditions because of increased employment and improved infrastructure.</p>

EIIP IN JORDAN

The EIIP in Jordan is supporting the Government in creating immediate jobs for both Syrian women and men refugees and members of their host communities, while also improving local infrastructures. Work centers on improving agricultural roads as well as local agricultural infrastructure through the construction of water catchments and soil protection measures. Forestry projects are carried out and overcrowded and old schools will be rehabilitated and maintained. Various municipal works are implemented directly with the municipalities. These initiatives are being implemented in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Public Works and Housing, Education, Municipal Affairs and Labour.



BMZ/KfW is funding the programme with EUR 2 million while Norway is contributing Euro 3.8 million.

A recent evaluation of the EIIP Phase I programme in Jordan funded by Germany concluded that in a short time period, it has achieved a great deal: 4638 Jordanians and Syrians have received employment, 660 km of road has been repaired as well as numerous instalments in the agriculture sector, and municipalities have been supported in their functions. In a situation of worsening labour market conditions, the project has succeeded in rolling out decent work employment including reasonable wage rates, good working conditions and social security payments for workers. The project also introduced quota systems (for women, PWD and Syrians and Jordanians) which were for all accounts quite successful in addressing social imbalances.

In Jordan, the EIIP increasingly uses the Common Cash Facility (CCF) which is a platform used by UN agencies and NGOs to deliver more than 90 percent of the cash assistance provided to the most vulnerable refugees who live outside camps. Refugees can withdraw their wages every month from ATMs with their new ATM cards.

“We are grateful to ILO because providing opportunity for people to receive income with dignity and not based on handouts”.

Contractor Irbid

“I wish that there was another program because I just got out of the financial stress for three months and now I have to pay rent again and its stressful again”.

Beneficiary Mafraq

“The program has created the spirit of one team of bonding between the two cultures: Syrian and Jordanian”.

Male labourer Irbid

“At the beginning women weren’t so willing to work but at the end they had lines of female workers looking for work”.

Beneficiary, Hosha Municipality Mafraq

EIIP has also taken the lead in developing standard operating procedures for employment intensive programmes in Jordan in order to harmonize practices among agencies and a manual with common principles concerning do no harm principles, daily wage rates, good labour practices, work permits, social security, age, gender and disability has been produced.

EIIP under a Norwegian-funded project specifically employed labour intensive methods in the construction of green infrastructure to benefit local farmers and communities. Under the project activities, local farmers benefited from the construction of water cisterns, drip irrigation, the terracing of slopes, and tree planting. 30,000 workdays were generated through these activities, benefiting 800 Syrian refugees and Jordanians.

As employment-intensive investment strategies are relatively new in Jordan the EIIP has been approached to provide technical assistance to the Municipal Services and Resilience Project (MSSRP) funded under a World Bank Trust Fund to assess, monitor and increase the employment generation. The objective of MSSRP is to help Jordanian municipalities address service delivery impacts of the Syrian refugee influx and support investments that generate jobs and improve social and economic conditions in host communities.

EIIP IN LEBANON

EIIP in Lebanon is being implemented in the most vulnerable municipalities that host most of the deprived Lebanese and refugees. The first phase of the project is being implemented from 2017-2018 with a total budget of EUR 12 million. ILO is leading the overall implementation of the project in partnership with UNDP and in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs. A second phase of the programme will start in late 2018.

While the overall goal is “creating decent work opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities through infrastructure improvement, in Lebanon”, the project also enhances the capacity of the two ministries to facilitate the implementation.



BENEFITS AND IMPACT

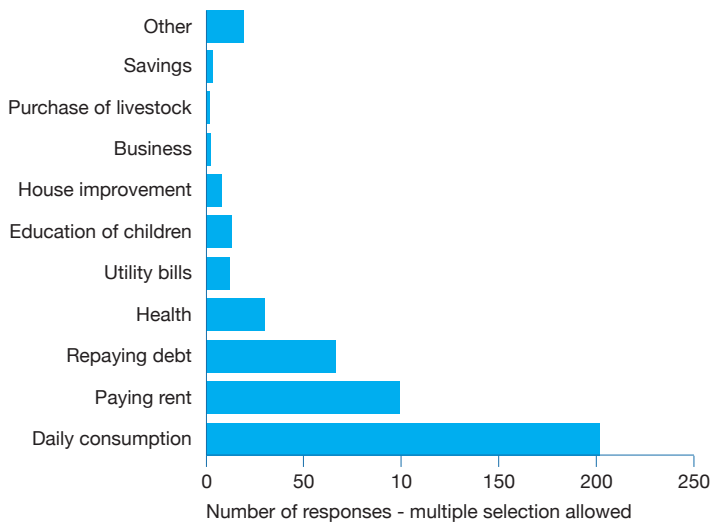
The impact of EIIP work is three-fold. In the short term, there are immediate effects resulting from the job creation activities, which provide much needed cash income to households who often rely on informal work and farming for their livelihoods. This income can be used to enhance people’s quality of life, such as by increasing assets, paying off debts, upgrading housing and financing health and education. The income-generating activities have multiplier effects through an increased spending on goods and services in the surrounding areas.

A workers’ survey showed that workers used their wages to cover basic needs including daily consumption but also allowed them to repay debt. The vast majority of the workers, around 80%, used some of their earnings to support daily consumption of their households. While 40% used some of their income to pay rent and around 27% used part of their income to replay debt. This further indicates that the workers come from vulnerable households who need additional income to meet their basic needs.



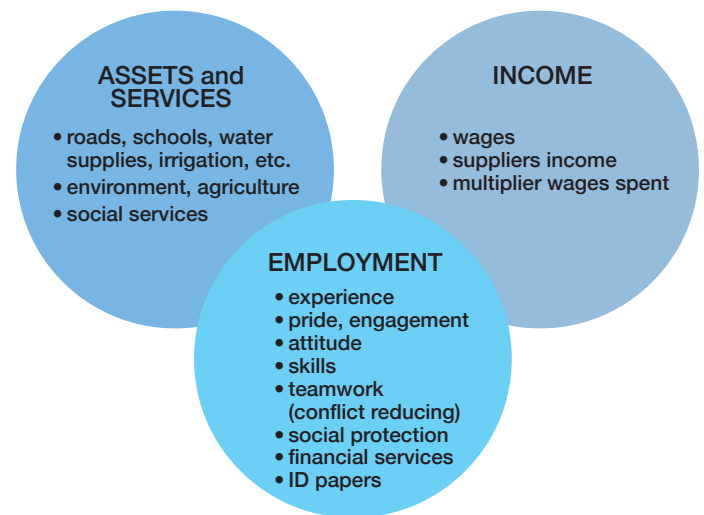
The long-term effect is the provision of quality infrastructure, which has an important impact on access to basic services such as education, health, clean water, and sanitation. Improved transport infrastructure also facilitates more trade through access to markets, jobs and other economic activities. In addition to these tangible and measurable effects, the use of labour-based work methods ensures the participation of the local community in the entire work process to secure maximum benefits for women, youth and other vulnerable groups. It also fosters ownership of the infrastructure. With technical and managerial support local communities can sometimes carry out entire projects.

The figure below depicts the typical benefits of EIIP projects. They can be grouped into the three categories: income, employment and assets, and services.



In the medium term workers gain job experience and benefit from being employed. Attitudes towards work, pride in engagement, participating in team work, contact with different groups in society all contribute to an increased employability and may help in finding future jobs. In addition workers improve skills and gain access to financial services and work related papers such as work permits. This enables local authorities, and local construction industries to build an experienced labour force and develop the skills necessary to manage infrastructure, environmental and community works, and build local capacity to deliver infrastructure and services.

Benefits of EIIP project



ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Private contractors usually implement infrastructure works. EIIP supports the development of a competent local construction industry. In Jordan and Lebanon contractors are well established and skilled in the design and implementation of infrastructure programmes. EIIP has developed training modules on labour-based works specifically for Jordan and Lebanon and works with contractors and their associations to allow them to participate in labour-based works and manage the workforce efficiently.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Construction workers gain and improve their construction skills during their engagement. Contractors and government officials are capacitated to design, implement and supervise labour-based works. In addition work activities can be coupled with life learning and other vocational skills to increase employability of workers once the EIIP work finishes.



The EIIP creates job opportunities and supports skills development of marginalized groups such as the Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. The construction sector in Jordan and Lebanon is male-dominated and gender awareness and increasing female participation is an essential part of the EIIP approach. It brings together local communities and refugees and contributes to a better understanding and appreciation of each other and hence contributes to peace and stability.

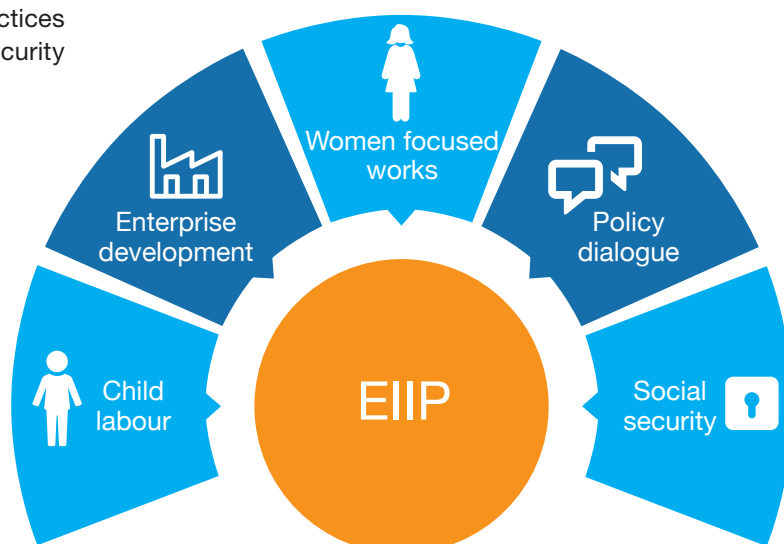
The EIIP adheres to international labour standards and works with ministries of labour to use its work as an avenue to introduce labour standards in construction.

The figure below depicts some entry points for decent work promotion in Jordan and Lebanon.

ENTRY POINTS FOR DECENT WORK

The EIIP in Jordan and Lebanon is an integrated approach. It provides entry points for work on other employment related issues.

Construction works face a number of challenges. The management of safety and health is an example. EIIP projects are used in Jordan and Lebanon to promote occupational safety and health (OSH) to improve working conditions. The risks involved with infrastructure and environmental works go beyond OSH. For example, not paying attention to labour issues and practices such as fair recruitment, wage setting, social security and insurance and the prevention of child labour.



CHALLENGES WHILE INTRODUCING EIIP IN LEBANON AND JORDAN

The teams introducing EIIP in Jordan and Lebanon, as in other countries where EIIP is an unknown approach, faced different challenges:

Jordan and Lebanon are middle income countries. Introducing a “new” technology that promotes the use of labour was initially perceived as backward by some government officials and engineers.

Although middle-income countries, there is sufficient demand for (temporary) work, both from local communities and Syrian refugees if the appropriate wage rates are set. A wage and labour supply study is important to determine these wages. Wages play a crucial role in determining how efficient the EIIP works are.

It is not always straightforward to balance the employment and infrastructure objectives, especially when donors would like to see large number of jobs while technical departments require good quality infrastructure.



Initial difficulties existed in terms of working with and through national partners (ministries) using existing national processes, procedures and practices that had to be adapted to accommodate more labour-based works.

Contractors are used to certain practices and technologies. The private sector (contractors) needs to be educated about the new social (employment) objectives and assisted in carrying out labour-based works.

It was not always easy to identify meaningful activities with sufficiently high labour intensity or where labour intensity can be increased.

While introducing new approaches that require more labour inputs teams equally need to safeguard the cost, quality and time of construction activities.

Defining appropriate tasks rates and determining the duration of employment is a challenging task particularly when a country moves from cash for work activities to more development-oriented EIIP works.

The projects in Jordan and Lebanon have been instrumental in facilitating the process and reducing the cost of applying for work permits. This offers opportunities for Syrian workers to find employment opportunities beyond the EIIP projects. This has been a challenging process.

Even in a traditionally male dominated sector, female participation in works can be encouraged and increased with the right strategies and interventions. However, increasing women’s participation in EIIP works in Jordan and Lebanon has been slow and requires careful planning and design of activities that offer acceptable employment opportunities for women.

Infrastructure works require materials and services and create indirect job opportunities along the value chains. Assessing these indirect employment impacts has been difficult as data is not easily accessible.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The EIIP activities raised awareness on the employment impacts of infrastructure investments and demonstrated approaches to realize such potentials. In Jordan and Lebanon, the EIIP projects have promoted and created equal work opportunities for host communities and Syrian refugees, men and women.

In order to expand the use of EIIP approaches to create more jobs and increase the needed investment in infrastructure, some practical recommendations are:

- To adopt and finance specific national policies and strategies that target vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly Syrian refugees and aim at enhancing job creation and quality of employment in the construction sector.
- The EIIP approaches should be scaled up in the municipalities due to the high pressure on the municipalities' services, their lack of resources to respond to increased demand and the need for employment.
- To improve the monitoring of employment in infrastructure projects. Recording of employment data on regular basis using simple spreadsheets. Employment data should include categories of workers, days worked by each, and average wages for each category. This data should be disaggregated by nationality and sex.
- Ensure that employment is part of the regular reports submitted by the contractors to implementing agencies and/or funding agencies. This may further increase the creation of employment in project implementation.
- Conduct analysis of completed projects to capture the employment impact of investment in infrastructure. This will facilitate future decision making and in particular, allows the assessment of trade-offs with other investment alternatives in which employment can outweigh other criteria.
- Enhance the employment content in the infrastructure portfolio of funding agencies and/or governments through considering balancing large-scale infrastructure investments with lower-cost local infrastructure investments, which tend to generate more immediate employment opportunities and designing projects with more emphasis on optimizing employment such as applying appropriate technologies, based on technical feasibility and economic justifications that would enhance the share of employment in the project.
- Organize vocational training, especially in rural areas, to help individuals become more involved in projects in their areas. This can also even improve their chances of finding employment in other areas once the works are completed. In addition, developing certification programs for unskilled and semi-skilled workers to also make those professions more attractive and career-path oriented.
- Encouraging contractors to use EIIP approaches, especially for small to medium sized projects in rural areas. Therefore, there is a need for policies that promote EIIP approaches and create for example an enabling environment for groups of local labourers to establish small enterprises to provide basic routine maintenance works for projects such as rural roads, school maintenance, small sanitation and water supply networks, and so on.

Key ILO resources

1. EIIP Programme Document – Creating Jobs through Public Investment. ILO 2018
2. Mid-term Review Report – Employment through labour-intensive investment in Jordan. ILO November 2017
3. The ILO Response To The Syrian Refugee Crisis, Geneva, International Labour Office. ILO 2016
4. Main Findings of Workers' Survey in Jordan. ILO 2018
5. Mid-term Independent Evaluation – Lebanon. ILO 2018
6. EIIP Mid-term Review Report – Jordan. ILO 2018
7. Final Evaluation Norway project – Jordan. ILO 2018

Contact

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For more information on links between infrastructure investment and employment creation, visit the website of the Employment Intensive Investment Programme:

<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment/lang--en/index.htm>

www.ilo.org