



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the Challenge in Qalyoubia and Menoufia – Final Independent Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Egypt*
Final Evaluation: *January 2017*
Evaluation Mode: *Independent*
Administrative Office: *DWT/CO Cairo*
Technical Office: *EMP/POLICY*
Evaluation Manager: *Lobna Kassim*
Evaluation Consultant: *Bassem Adly*
Project Code: *EGY/12/02/DAN*
Donor(s) & Budget: *DAPP Denmark (US\$ 1.6 Million)*
Keywords: *Employment, SMEs and skills development policies, entrepreneurship, Business Development services.*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

This project aims at creating decent work in particular for young vulnerable men and women in rural areas, engaged in agriculture and food industries. The project is designed specifically to address the challenges faced by youth in the labour market at the governorate level, namely, Qalyoubia, and Menoufia, as it proposes multi-dimensional interventions for youth employment

integrating supply and demand side as well as job matching programmes that enhance capacities and stimulate partnerships at the local level for employment creation. The project's territorial approach is based on the development of the Regional Employment Plans, which identify mid-term supply and demand side interventions that can lead to job creation, and Sectoral Jobs Pacts, which propose short-term interventions related to job creation in agriculture and food industries.

The anticipated outcomes of the project are as follow: (I) Local labour market institutions and the social partners design and deliver relevant policies and services for youth employment, with a focus on agriculture (II) Vulnerability of youth in the labour market is reduced through employability and job creation programmes in Qalyoubia and Menoufia.

Present Situation of the Project

The DJEP is a 4-year project, having initially a budget of USD 6 million, and funded by The Danish-Arab Partnership Program (DAPP). The project's contract was signed in December 2012, and officially launched in the beginning of 2013. In April 2013, a revision meeting with the donor concluded the amendment of the project's logical framework, with 2 clear targets for phase 1 and phase 2, and a lower number of outputs. The project had to be suspended afterwards by donor request due to political unrest. In March 2015, a Joint Cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MOMM) and the ILO was signed, based on the constitution formulation and the election of the parliament.

By June 2015, the project initiated coordination with the two governorates, after the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 234 on May 26, 2015, in order to implement the project activities. Based on the strategic shift of DAPP agenda, the allocated financial resources for phase two of the project were cancelled in October 2015. By the end of 2015, the project had a no-cost extension until December 2016, which is considered the project term subject of evaluation.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The final evaluation for the project started by end of the project duration in December 2016, guided by the Terms of Reference, ILO's Evaluation Policy, and the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards.

The main purpose of the evaluation was to produce a fair assessment of whether the Project as a whole provided the right type of support to key stakeholders to achieve its key objectives and outcomes, and to draw lessons learned for future implementers and policymakers.

In addition to providing an evidence-based assessment of the project based on the standard evaluation criteria, the Evaluator has developed concrete recommendations for the ILO to enhance the design and implementation of similar future projects and activities.

The evaluation process balanced the need for organizational learning with the purpose of ensuring ILO's accountability towards the Government of Denmark as a donor and the local counterparts.

Methodology of evaluation

The Evaluator used a highly participatory approach, seeking the views of all stakeholder groups, and a mixed methods approach was adopted to ensure an evidence-based assessment. The methodological mix included extensive desk study of relevant documents provided by ILO, semi-structured interviews, a quantitative survey, focus group discussions, and a debriefing workshop.

The fieldwork was carried out in Cairo, Qalyoubia and Menoufia by the independent evaluator, and data collection involved 14 trainers of different ILO tools and 33 direct beneficiaries.

Limitations of the evaluation

First, the project could not achieve its target output to support local institutions in designing employment

plans on the governorate level had not been achieved, as centralized governance in the country leads to persistently limited authority and weak capacity of governorate level institutions and creates a hindering environment for the development of effective local plans. This has resulted in a distortion in the project design, and made it impossible to test its overall theory of change.

Second, the design of the first phase of the project was not sufficiently revised to reflect its independence of a second phase, and thus it was difficult to conclude an overall assessment of progress from progress reports as outputs and activities did not directly correspond to a structured logical framework or implementation plan for phase one separately. Accordingly, this final evaluation gives a general review of the relevancy of planned outcomes, but the evaluation criteria mainly focus on the output level.

Third, some important ILO tools (e.g. Jobs pact) had only recently been introduced, thus assessing their outcomes at the time of the evaluation would have been premature as matching is only expected to create concrete results in at least a six months duration.

Finally, consolidated financial reporting that links expenditures to budget lines and results was absent, and thus an analysis of the Project's financial viability and efficiency was not possible.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance: The evaluation concluded that the overall project objectives are highly relevant to the Egyptian context in relation to the need to support young men and women in entering the labour market. This is built on an analysis of national and international employment strategies; including the Youth Employment National Action Plan - NAP (2010-2015), the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF (2007 -2011) & (2013-2017), and ILO's Employment Policy Framework.

The first outcome of the project to support local institutions in creating regional employment plans was not sufficiently aligned with the NAP and there was not enough evidence that this constitutes a national priority.

However, the second outcome, focusing on support to young men and women, was completely relevant and in line with the NAP, and the project was thus more successful in achieving its corresponding targets.

Efficiency: Despite facing severe external challenges pertaining to the political instability in the country and delays in the start of implementation, the project management was highly successful in creating effective partnerships in the two governorates and utilizing its available human resources. The project management was thus able to maximize the benefits of ILO tools that promote for entrepreneurship and employability skills for youth, under the second project outcome, and achieved most of the planned targets. In this regards, only a clearer segmentation of targeted beneficiaries would have resulted in greater effectiveness of the project's training activities.

However, another challenge was the donor's cancellation of the second phase, where the design of the project needed to be further revised due to the consequent invalidity of the project document. The lack of a proper results chain with clear vertical linkages and a monitoring framework with SMART indicators made it difficult to assess the project's first phase efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Finally, the project needed a clear exit strategy to identify the areas of strengths to build on and the areas of weakness to avoid, in order to ensure the sustainability of results and their scale up through future efforts.

Effectiveness: As mentioned above, under the first outcome to support local labour market institutions the project's first two outputs on local employment plans and job pacts were hardly achieved by the end of the project due to external challenges that were not accounted for during the project design. However, the project was successful in strengthening stakeholder capacity in delivering services for agricultural and agro-industrial development. It has successfully supported the establishment of a career guidance unit, an Agriculture Business Development Support unit, and a Biogas Services unit.

The project was highly effective when it came to the second project outcome to support youth in improving their labour market status. In regards to job matching, the project has supported the implementation of successful Job Search Clubs and the establishment and activation of career counselling. As for labour supply, it has trained around 500 workers in cooperation with

TRAINTEX and the Industrial Training Council. The workers have then been very successful in participating in "Your Job Next to Your Home" initiative and creating wage employment for themselves. Finally, in terms of labour demand, the project has supported the enhancement of the ability of youth to create their own businesses through the implementation of the "Know About Business" entrepreneurship awareness programme, and the "Start and Improve Your Business" entrepreneurship training, among other ILO tools, and further support to business development services.

Impact: Since the project does not define an overall objective, nor does it have a monitoring framework, it is very difficult to make significant conclusions regarding the impact of the project. However, some strong successes are worth mentioning. First, 500 youth trained by the project were able to create jobs through the Your Job Next to Your Home initiative, and 24 out of 56 youth trained on SIYB established their own ready-made garments enterprises. Second, according to a tracer study on 85 beneficiaries of the job search clubs, 16% were placed in jobs by the end of the project duration. Third, 10 fresh graduate engineers trained by the project, successfully established biogas enterprises.

Sustainability: The project successfully builds its efforts on effective partnerships with community stakeholders, and the three established unit mentioned above are institutionalised in local labour market institutions, including Banha University and the Youth Clubs of the Ministry of Youth. This creates a guarantee of the sustainability of these interventions.

Besides, the "Your Job Next to Your Home" initiative is widely supported by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. It creates financially viable enterprises integrated in the ready-made garment value chains and connected to large Egyptian export companies. Finally, the biogas units are also judged as successful for environmental sustainability and could easily be scaled up, as 10 new units are already being established by youth in the governorate.

However, the greenhouse established in Banha University, wasn't introduced based on a clear sustainability plan, nor as a business model to be efficiently managed. By the time of the evaluation, the greenhouse wasn't functioning due to the need of high cost maintenance.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

- 1- Relevance of the project design to the Youth Employment National Action Plan (NAP) as a national benchmark should have been stronger and objectives needed to be better aligned with the national context and priorities, in particular in relation to the first outcome.
- 2- A longer inception phase is recommended to be able to conduct baseline surveys, validate the project's main assumptions and risks, and design mitigation strategies to tackle potential challenges.
- 3- A clear results chain based on economic theory that is phrased out in a results based logical framework is required for an effective monitoring and evaluation system.
- 4- The project design should take into consideration the difference between the role of the ILO as an international organization promoting for new tools, techniques, and advocating for effective policies; and the role of public and private local institutions in implementation and direct service delivery to beneficiaries.
- 5- In case of distributing the financial resources into phases, same rationale should be reflected in the project implementation strategies. Each phase should have clear milestones that reflect its contribution to the overall planned outcomes and overall objective.
- 6- To increase the efficiency of the project beneficiary interventions, the project should clearly segment targeted youth into homogenous groups, and treat each intervention as pilot model using its results as evidence to advocate on the required employment policy on the regional and national level.
- 7- The ILO needs to develop financial reporting requirements, beyond delivery to measure the financial efficiency of projects in terms of results achieved in a cost benefit analysis.
- 8- An effective strategy for building the capacity of local stakeholders and potential partners (based on needs assessments) needs to be clearly articulated in the

project design, and to be allocated enough resources to ensure results are achieved.

- 9- Advocate for strengthening local institutions and decentralising government, to allow for a greater authority and capacity of national counterparts on the governorate level. And also work on enhancing stakeholders' capacity to monitor and evaluate results relevant to project activities to support the project's management in measuring results and tracing impact.
- 10- It is recommended to highlight the importance to formulate a successful business model, through enhancing the skills of service providers, to offer the ILO tools from a market based business perspective, which ensures the sustainability of the provided services and increase the outreach level especially for the invulnerable youth.

Lessons Learned

One of the most important lessons learned is to realize the balance between the field works on the micro level, and the coordination role at the macro level. Also, to liaise between field and executive works to reach the prompt TOT skills to provide them with the ILO tools, and make a direct benefit for youth targeted group, meanwhile observe their expertise and achievements on the micro level, then spread the idea to be implemented on the macro level.

The achievement that was done by the project to implement the JSC in the youth centres on the directorates and villages level, has deepened the project understanding working tools and its management style. On another hand, it strengthened communication channels with the Ministry of Youth on the central level, which was then eager to scale up the tool in all the other youth centres beyond the project's two governorates. As a step further, the ILO will be operating in the executive lab on the macro level, towards replicating and scaling up the results on the national level, more than providing direct services.