



Independent Interim Evaluation (IIE) Report: ILO Project “Promotion of Decent Work Opportunities for the Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Segments of Society”

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Pakistan, Italy

Evaluation date: 15 November 2023

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO Country Office (CO) Pakistan

Technical Office: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ILO RO-Bangkok)

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Key Words: Child labour, bonded labour, brick kiln sector, social protection floor, Pakistani diaspora, Pakistan, Italy,

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Project included three main components covering all parts of Pakistan and Northern Italy:

- ❖ Strengthening national capacities to **effectively eliminate exploitative labour practices** (child and bonded labour) with a particular focus on Brick Kiln Sector *and partially from a business development perspective*.
- ❖ Promoting coordinated **social protection system based on social protection floors** concept; and
- ❖ Engaging **Pakistani diaspora in Italy for jobs creation and entrepreneurship promotion** in Pakistan fostering a business-to-business environment (skills/capacity transfer) and exploring the benefits of reverse migration.

Present situation of the project

Ending on December 31, 2023

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

(A short description)

Methodology of evaluation

The interim evaluation's specific objectives were:

- To assess the extent to which this project has achieved its planned objectives till July 2023 , and whether any positive and negative factors have contributed to achieving (or not achieving) the project activities in three components.
- To assess whether the project components implemented by the ILO have contributed to the achievement of Decent Work Country Program¹ (DWCP 2016-2022) extended to 2022; CPOs (126, 129 and 131), ILO P&B 2020-2021 (Outcomes 7 and 8) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To assess whether social dialogue and tripartism has played a key role in the achievements of the ILO components.
- To assess whether and how the COVID19 pandemic has affected the planned objectives and whether the project was able to make adjustments to remain relevant.
- To document lessons learnt, impact with results and possible good practices.

The evaluation integrated the following cross-cutting issues: gender equality, disability inclusion, non-discrimination concerns, environmental

¹ This DWCP has extended to 2022: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/departments-and-offices/program/dwcp/WCMS_562091/lang--en/index.htm



issues, COVID-19, norms and social dialogue, and medium and long-term effects of capacity building initiatives.

The evaluation team held technical meetings (in-person and online) with the concerned ILO Program staff to develop/finalize review questions and reviewed project documents. The evaluation included semi-structured key informant interviews with the following: Project leads Implementing partners, Government officials and other stakeholders. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted in September 2023 with beneficiaries in selected field locations covering beneficiaries from different districts, villages, gender and other key dimensions. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) included open ended questions related to the key evaluation criteria and questions mentioned above. Two surveys were undertaken-one with brick kiln workers in Sialkot and one with migrant workers remotely in Italy (in Zoom). A total of 167 persons completed the Sialkot survey (132 men and 35 women). A total of 27 persons completed the online survey in Italy (10 men and 17 women).

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Findings

Project Design Validity: The project started in January 2019 with a two-year initial time frame. However, a three-year timeline from the start would have been more realistic given the complex nature of the outputs and activities of the project.

Relevance To Stakeholder Needs And Priorities: Component 1 of the project was highly relevant in terms of focusing on brick kiln workers who face poverty, child labour, insecurity, social and economic discrimination, lack of education, health and social security, lack of decent work conditions etc. The outputs and activities under component 2 were also relevant aiming to improve access of beneficiaries in social security institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Kashmir. Component 3 was highly relevant too, focused on Pakistani migrant workers in Italy, the project activities were aimed at the needs of the tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and recipients. All three component' outputs also aimed to support the goals outlined in DWCP Pakistan 2016-2020 extended to 2022; ILO P&B 2020-2021 (Outcomes 3, 7 and 8) and the relevant SDGs targeted.

Coherence: Overall, the linkages of the first two components with Component 3 were weak due to its location in Italy. However, coherence



existed between Components 1 and 2 and between interventions within the same component.

Effectiveness of Interventions: The key enabling factors were the extensive advocacy done by civil society and media on the rights of the brick kiln workers in recent years; the extensive level of provincial devolution of key government functions since 2008; and the highly facilitative roles of key stakeholders. The key hindering external and internal factors impacted activities were Covid-19, massive floods in Pakistan in 2022; migration patterns of brick kiln workers and monsoon season; overall law and order and security situation in KP and Balochistan, insufficient budget, economic and political turmoil in Pakistan. Despite these obstacles, the project was effective.

Management Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency: The project team strength and capacity was insufficient. In addition, there was no dedicated Finance and Administration position under the project. A dedicated staff for data management and analysis was also missing. The lines of authority for the project staff were also incoherent as both of them reported directly to the ILO Country Director. This project also did not have a dedicated Technical Officer in the ILO regional offices (New Delhi and Bangkok) given the wide range of technical activities covered by the project.

Potential Impact and Likelihood of Sustainability: Considering the wide range of activities and components and the major external challenges (i.e., COVID-19, floods etc.), the project has performed well and created impact in several key areas, e.g., in creating space for brick kiln workers to improve their awareness level to better understand and exercise their rights under component 1.

The strengthening of DVCs, the development of Social Protection Policy 2022, the formation of labour unions and their registrations with Department of Labour (DOL) are some aspects which will sustain after the end of the project period. However, all these interventions require more investment in capacity building and a clear exit strategy, which is missing for some activities. Under component three, Pakistani migrant associations have incorporated the informational packages produced by the project on legal and social protection issues and will continue to share them with migrants



in the future. Similarly, community volunteers plan to continue the language classes for women and children.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions

Project Design Validity

- 1) Ensure that the project length allows sufficient time (at least three years) to adequately deal with the complexities involved in creating impact with marginalized groups like brick kiln and migrants workers, the need for substantial awareness-raising, capacity-building and linkage development.
- 2) Identify and pick stakeholders carefully in light of the goals, activities and desired impact to ensure that all external stakeholders that have a significant influence in different project components are included in the social dialogue process to develop consensus and support for project aims.

Coherence

- 3) In designing the programme, ensure that it covers closely related vulnerable groups and activities for all key areas of vulnerability for which linkages and synergies can be ensured (e.g., brick kiln workers and the poor needing social protection)while excluding vulnerable groups and activities that are not related and do not easily provide scope for linkages and synergies.
- 4) In designing the programme, ensure that the project aims, target groups and activities can be easily linked with other ILO and United Nations (UN) programs and ensure the involvement of and linkages with the work of other UN programs and their available expertise.

Effectiveness of Interventions

- 5) Ensure attention to changing social behaviours that are currently enhancing the vulnerability of marginalized groups, e.g., the views of men on gender equality. Information about laws on women and sexual harassment must be provided to the communities.
- 6) Considering the complexity of the sector and the needs of workers, undertake long-term investment in multiple sectors (i.e., education,



health, socio-economic development, vocational training and gender-based violence) to eliminate child labour and ensure decent work while also engaging other UN agencies, funding partners and provincial governments to invest in this sector.

- 7) Ensure adequate capacity-building of provincial and district government institutions considering that KP and Balochistan are struggling to develop systems even after the 18th amendment, particularly in the context of child and bonded labour. More engagement and capacity-building support should be provided to the Department of Labour (DOL) particularly in KP and Balochistan to improve their monitoring capacity of child labour.
- 8) Focus on improving the education of children in brick kiln sectors with the coordination of different national stakeholders, social partners, including Non-Formal Education Authorities, UN agencies and other funding partners and civil society organizations while considering the issues related to migration and monsoon seasons that affect regular schooling for children.
- 9) Assist in enhancing the role of the Social Security Coordination Forum should be strengthened on issues of brick kiln workers like registration of workers, access to social security benefits, minimum wages and policy advocacy for increasing funds for social protection.
- 10) Keeping in view the small savings base of low-income migrant workers, include entities that can facilitate small-scale investment by workers in Pakistan; Develop a strong platform for linking migrant workers with private and public institutions in Pakistan as well as a dedicated online complaint mechanism and banking and NADRA facilities in Italy.

Management Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency

- 11) Ensure adequate human resources for complex programs with multiple activities and components, both for program management and program support issues like finance, administration, monitoring and data management and provide clear management lines with a designated Program Lead and clear support from designated technical staff in each component.



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| | <p>Potential Impact and Likelihood of Sustainability</p> <p>12) Include a clear sustainability strategy in program design which builds in clear sustainability mechanism during and after the project implementation, such as capacity building of counterparts, and a clear exit (pr sustainability) strategy towards the end of the project such as smooth and efficient hand-over of activities to tripartite constituents and local counterparts.</p> <p>Gender and Disability Inclusion</p> <p>13) Include gender equality and disability inclusion objectives, targets and indicators as an integral part of the project design and continuously monitor progress on these aims as well as devise corrective actions to overcome gaps.</p> |
| <p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p> | <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> <p>Component 1 and 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coherence among various interventions gives better results. 2) Working with vulnerable segments of society required more time for social mobilization and capacity-building and continuous efforts to engage with key stakeholders and influencers. 3) Initiatives or reforms initiated by one government official may not be taken forward by their successors, which impacts the progress of the project. 4) Gender mainstreaming/ equality adds to the effectiveness of the projects and requires dedicated resources to achieve, including human resources, targets and appropriate strategies when working with the vulnerable segments of society. <p>Component 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The tripartite approach used in carrying out the aforementioned activities has allowed for a broader debate with all the players involved on complex issues that require a multi-stakeholder approach. 2) The participation of representatives of the diaspora communities in the preparation and implementation of the territorial meetings and the final conference is key for strengthening the dialogue between representatives of the institutions and governments with the beneficiaries, bringing concreteness to the programming of upgraded policies. |



EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

Component 1 and 2

Using advocacy and campaign work to bring about change

The campaigns organized by BLCC to get commitment letters from parents, owners and other influencers for eliminating child labour was a good approach to make key stakeholders sensitized and accountable.

Establishing functional literacy centers

Opening school/ functional literacy opened the space for community dialogue and engagement.

Introduction of Zigzag technology

The project introduction of Zigzag technology helped to reduce the environmental carbon footprint of brick kiln plants. The Zigzag technology—stacking the bricks in a zigzag pattern instead of straight line—converts the brick kilns by better insulating the walls and the floors.

Component 3

Leveraging additional links and activities to enhance the effectiveness of the component 3 activities

A key good practice under component 3 was the ability to leverage additional links and activities to enhance the effectiveness of the component 3 activities.

Using community social channels for social mobilization and effectiveness

The use of **community social channels** represented an important dissemination tool not initially envisaged in this project.

Engaging women through online outreach

The involvement of women in online training activities has been a successful tool for reaching a hard to reach group.