



International Labour Organization

iTrack Evaluation

ILO EVALUATION

- Evaluation Title: **Independent Final evaluation of “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” project**
- ILO TC/SYMBOL: **GLO/14/24/IFA**
- Type of Evaluation : **Independent Final evaluation**
- Country(ies) : **Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon**
- Date of the evaluation: **July 2018-March 2019**
- Name of consultant(s): **Amy Jersild and Hanan Kwinana**
- ILO Administrative Office: **Employment Department, Youth Employment Programme, Geneva**
- ILO Technical Backstopping Office: **EMPLOYMENT**
- Date project ends: **31 July 2018**
- Donor: country and budget: **IFAD; USD 1.72m with matching contributions by the ILO**
- Evaluation Manager: **Mini Thakur/Jean François Klein**
- Key Words: **Evaluation, MENA, youth employment, RCTs, M&E**

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO’s evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Purpose and Methods	7
Findings	7
Conclusion	9
Recommendations.....	10
Introduction	12
Purpose and method	14
Data collection and analysis.....	14
Limitations	16
Findings	17
A. Relevance.....	17
<i>The programme's focus on evaluation of employment programming as relevant in the MENA region</i>	17
<i>Taqeem relevance to ILO's agenda and mandate</i>	18
<i>Taqeem relevance to IFAD mandate and interests</i>	19
<i>Taqeem relevance to other partners</i>	20
B. Validity of project design.....	20
<i>Coherence of the programme design</i>	21
<i>The Taqeem Advisory Council's role and function</i>	22
C. Management of the initiative	23
<i>Communication and relationship management</i>	24
<i>Implications of the Geneva-based management structure</i>	25
<i>Fundraising achievement</i>	26
<i>Process of grants management: decision-making and choice of grantees</i>	26
<i>Logistical and administrative challenges with implementation of studies</i>	29
<i>Programme M&E</i>	30
<i>Use of language</i>	30
D. Project effectiveness: progress made within each of the 3 components	30
<i>Effectiveness in promoting capacity development</i>	31
<i>Effectiveness in the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions</i>	34
<i>Effectiveness in promoting evidence-based policy development</i>	37
E. Sustainability	39
<i>Capacity development</i>	40
<i>Ownership over Taqeem</i>	40
<i>Online platform and network sustainability</i>	40
Conclusion	41
Lessons Learned	42
Good Practice	42
Recommendations	42
Annex 1: Summary table of project logframe	46
Annex 2: Evaluation TORs	47
Annex 3: Evaluation questions	59
Annex 4: Persons interviewed	61
Annex 5: Online survey	64

Annex 6: Online survey demographics	66
Annex 7: Project documentation reviewed	68
Annex 8: Inception Report	69
Annex 9: Summary response to evaluation questions	85
Annex 10: The programme’s focus on gender, rural and youth employment in the MENA region	89
Annex 11: List of CoP members under the IFAD-funded Taqueem programme	91
Annex 12: Process for decision-making on grantees by the Taqueem programme (2015).....	92
Annex 13: Online survey response to Question 5	93
Annex 14: Summary table on Taqueem research/evaluation implemented 2015-2018	94
Annex 15: Taqueem reports published 2015-2018.....	96
Annex 16: Main findings of impact studies produced for Phase 3	97
Annex 17: Policy Influence Plan	99
Annex 18: An approach to influencing policy in Egypt	100

ACRONYMS

3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programme
AUC	American University Cairo
AUS	American University Sharjah
BWJ	Better Work Jordan
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CAWTAR	Centre de la Femme Arabe pour la Formation et la Recherche
CDC	Cairo Demographic Centre
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil society organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DJEP	Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People
EEIP	Employment Emergency Investment Forum
ELMPS	Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey
ERF	Economic Research Forum
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
EYE	Egyptian Youth Employment Programme
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IE	Impact Evaluation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITC	International Trade Center
ITC/SFD	Industrial Training Council/Social Fund for Development
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoIIC	Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation
MoMM	Ministry of Manpower and Migration
MoP	Ministry of Planning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PIP	Policy Influence Plan
RCT	Randomized Controlled Trial
REO	Regional Evaluation Officer
RFP	Request for Proposal
SAD	Swiss Academy for Development
UN	United Nations
UNWRA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
YEI	Youth Employment Inventory
YEN	Youth Employment Network

Tables, Graphics, Charts and Boxes

Graphic 1:	Programme's 3-prong approach
Table 1:	Numbers interviewed representing stakeholder categories
Box 1	Relevance main findings
Box 2:	Validity of project design main findings
Box 3:	Management of the initiative main findings
Chart 1:	Breakdown of funds leveraged by the ILO Taqueem programme
Box 4:	Project effectiveness main findings
Box 5:	Sustainability main findings
Graphic 2:	Youth population and unemployment in the Arab world
Chart 2:	Percentage of Female Labor Force Participation in MENA Countries
Table 2:	Workshops, forums and trainings implemented by the program, 2015-2018, ordered chronologically
Table 3:	Impact studies implemented and completed by the program, 2015-2018
Graphic 3:	Taqueem Policy Influence Plan

Executive Summary

1. The “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” project began in July 2015 and finished in July 2018. Funded by IFAD in the amount of USD 1.72 million, it aimed to be a “window” of additional funds to Taqueem focused specifically on gender and rural employment. At the time the ILO anticipated continued funds from Silatech as its primary donor to Taqueem, with supplemental funds from IFAD. Due to internal restructuring and its board members favoring direct programming over research-focused interventions, Silatech did not renew its funds in 2015. IFAD thus became the primary donor when Silatech funds depleted in 2016.¹ Over the grant period, the project team leveraged funding to over double the original grant size, totaling \$1,694,575, above ILO’s original commitment of \$1,420,000. (Taqueem Project Completion Report, July 2018).

2. The “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation” project, like Taqueem itself, was based on the premise that there exists a dearth in research and evaluation demonstrating what works in the field of employment, as well as the need and demand for that evidence. The project aims to generate better evidence and build evaluation capacity among stakeholders, both policy-makers and program implementers, in the MENA region with a particular focus on gender and rural employment. Programme activities expanded into formalizing its network of interested academics and researchers into what was called the Taqueem Advisory Council. It also aimed to expand its work into the area of policy advocacy in the MENA region, using the results of studies generated and funded by Taqueem on what works in youth employment.

3. The Project Document outlines 2 objectives and related outputs, which aim to contribute toward its overall goal: improved project management and gender mainstreaming for organizations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E; and improved gender policy and investment for governments and international organizations. To achieve its overall goal and objectives, the project is organized around three distinct yet interlinked components: (i) capacity development to equip practitioners and policy makers with evidence and skills on monitoring and evaluation; (ii) the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions to learn what works; and (iii) policy influence through the dissemination of research findings and the creation of partnerships with policy makers to design evidence-based policies and programmes.

4. Activities implemented as part of the capacity building component included basic training courses in impact evaluation, and executive trainings on impact evaluation with a module devoted to the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). Activities under the second component activities included a call for proposals for impact research seeking to improve the effectiveness of employment and enterprise interventions in the Middle East and North Africa, with a specific focus on gender and youth employment outcomes. Experimental approaches to Impact Evaluation (IE) approaches are noted and prioritized, including Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental methods, as rigorous approaches that produce credible evidence. Further, the RFP indicates a preference for mixed methods, noting the value that qualitative data collection and analysis provides in supporting and interpreting the quantitative data generated by the experimental designs.² The few experimental studies that exist in the MENA region are noted as a rationale for prioritizing them. The formation of a Community of Practice (CoP) with technical assistance offered on project management and gender mainstreaming was also a focus in the latter half of the programme. Under the third component, activities included policy influence plans for impact evaluations for selected countries, the publishing of policy briefs, and implementation of high-level policy roundtable discussions and evidence symposiums.

¹

² RFP, Taqueem Programme, 2015.

5. The Project Document notes a large network of partners to deliver the project activities, including International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) for technical and financial inputs; ILO regional and country offices for coordination and support; ILO tripartite constituents; and Taqueem Advisory Council members representing academic institutions both within the MENA region and elsewhere, who are to provide strategic and technical advice to the project.

6. Another area of activity planned was the online knowledge-sharing platform, which was launched in beta-form at www.ilotaqem.org³ in the latter half of the 3-year programme. The objective of the platform is to share evidence, resources and opportunities related to rural youth employment in the MENA region. At the time of the evaluation the platform had 356 members.

Purpose and Methods

7. The purpose of the final evaluation is to indicate to the ILO, IFAD and its partners the extent to which the project has achieved its aim and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

8. The evaluation team collected primary data through semi-structured interviews and an online survey, and secondary data from a review of project documentation and other relevant sources. The evaluation team interviewed a total of 73 persons over a period of one month, from early July to early August. Follow-up interviews with selected interviews took place in September and October for further clarification on certain points. Interviews took place with stakeholders in Geneva, Cairo, and Amman, and via Skype with others based in Germany, Lebanon, Morocco, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and USA.

9. Data collected from interviews and the online survey were analyzed and triangulated to determine emerging trends. The project documentation was reviewed and interpreted along with the qualitative data collected and analyzed together. Findings were then articulated on the basis of this analysis.

Findings

10. **Relevance:** The programme's focus on the MENA region is of relevance given high rates of youth unemployment, rural unemployment and gender disparities. The programme's focus on Egypt and Jordan in particular is justified given their higher youth unemployment rates. The programme's efforts on building capacity on M&E and supporting evaluations is relevant in that there are many ALMP interventions implemented across the MENA region -- and particularly many duplicate ALMP pilots and programmes in Egypt -- which have not been evaluated. The activities of Taqueem fall broadly under the ILO's mandate in furthering understanding about youth employment in the region through providing evaluation and capacity building services. Taqueem's goal was to support youth and gender employment focused "implementing organizations" which included international organizations, governments and civil society. Workers and employers associations, traditionally ILO's tripartite partners, were targeted more indirectly from the policy angle as recipients of better evidence on what works. The programme was aligned well with ILO Egypt and Jordan country programmes. Other Taqueem partners and donors, including IFAD, IDRC, 3ie, and J-PAL, have a clear interest in Taqueem's work and view the ILO's close cooperation with government partners and the cultivation of a CoP in previous phases of Taqueem as their added value to the youth employment sector in the MENA region.

³ The knowledge sharing platform has been suspended since the end of the project in July 2018.

11. **Validity of project design:** The programme's 3-prong approach is logical and coherent in its vision for creating new knowledge and effecting change through M&E and evaluation, yet the large geographical scope of the programme and the management team's presence outside the region made the achievement of its overall development objective a challenge. While the Taqueem Advisory Council had a TORs drafted outlining its mandate, in practice stakeholders faced challenges with uncertainty about the Council's role in the programme and a certain conflict over whether Taqueem is an ILO programme or an initiative that is much larger than the ILO. Stakeholders playing multiple roles, and ILO programming benefiting from Taqueem's competitive process -- while internally in ILO may be viewed as productive and positive -- from an external perspective raises questions about transparency and conflict of interest in the context of a competitive RFP process.

12. **Management:** The management of the Taqueem programme required a complex set of functions related to partnership management and coordination among a wide range and types of individuals and institutions with varying interests and agendas; heavy investment of time in fund-raising; logistical and administrative tasks; and overseeing the writing and publication of reports. The programme team experienced communication and relationship management challenges among a number of stakeholder groups, including Council, donors, and other programmes/functions within ILO. The project management team was successful in raising funds to match and even exceed the amount of IFAD's contribution to Taqueem. One RFP process was successfully carried out in 2015, enabling identification of organizations with capacity building needs in M&E and programmes that could be studied through an impact evaluation. Yet the evaluation team found issues adversely impacting the Taqueem brand, including issues on transparency, as well as coordination with other donors. The programme alignment and partnership with the Egypt and Jordan country and regional programmes was positive, yet integration of Taqueem within country programmes was not achieved to the extent where policy influence could effectively be achieved. The centralized management structure in Geneva contributed toward this challenge. A definition of both impact evaluation and employment terms is needed to better facilitate understanding within the programme and to promote greater efficiency.

13. **Project effectiveness:** Trainings and workshops were highly appreciated by CoP members, both for their quality and opportunity to network. There was evidence of learning achieved through pre- and post-tests administered at the time of the trainings. The majority of Track 2 CoP members demonstrated new learning and application of their learning in their collaboration with technical advisors who provided ongoing assistance. Further, the CoP organizations were able to effectively internalize new learning and apply it to other programming. The evaluation team suggests that Taqueem's approach to building capacity of Track 2 CoP members, involving an in-house technical advisor over the long-term, yields a more significant investment as it is rooted in an understanding of both individual and organizational capacity and involves contextualized follow-up. Whereas the impact studies built some capacity yet it was uneven given the nature of the collaboration for Track 1. The extent to which these studies respond to an "evidence gap" in the youth/gender/rural employment field is unknown without performing an analysis of what that gap may be. Taqueem disseminated high quality and well appreciated policy briefs, impact briefs, and other products as a means to disseminate learning and influence policy. The evaluation team found some initial progress but very little evidence of policy influence and uptake having taken place during the scope of the programme. CoP capacity to influence policy themselves on youth employment as a result of their success -- a desired outcome for Taqueem -- was not realized and should be considered a long-term objective due to local political and contextual realities. ILO country program's lack of resources and ability to absorb the extensive material generated by Taqueem, coupled with Taqueem's centralized management in Geneva and limited time in the MENA region, has led to limited success with policy influence efforts. Further, demand for evidence, the supply of evidence and its timeliness are all factors in whether uptake is possible.

14. **Sustainability:** Track 2 CoP members' new learning and capacity achieved during the program has already been sustained as the result of that learning has been embedded within their respective organizations. The programme did not achieved substantial ownership over Taqueem in the MENA region, aside from the enthusiasm from CoP members who have directly benefited from its capacity building interventions.

Conclusion

15. Taqueem has employed a 3-prong approach focused on capacity building, implementation of impact research and evaluations, and policy influence as a means toward achieving its 2 development objectives: improving project management and gender mainstreaming for organizations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E; and improved gender policy and investment for governments and international organizations. Taqueem effectively engaged 17 organizations across the MENA region, which included governmental, non-governmental, international organizations, foundations and academic institutions, in providing capacity development support. The programme effectively achieved increased M&E capacity, particularly among Track 2 CoP members. Applied learning was achieved, as well as benefit at the organizational level. Trainings and workshops were highly appreciated by CoP members, both for their quality and opportunity to network, as well as the technical assistance provided for Track 2 CoP members.

16. The programme successfully carried out a total of eleven experimental evaluations, quasi-experimental evaluations, non-experimental evaluations and research studies across the region. The programme also struggled with administrative and logistical challenges and time delays. Taqueem produced high quality policy briefs, Impact briefs, and other products as a means to disseminate learning based on its studies and as a means to influence policy. These took place at different events, including workshops and high-level policy roundtables.

17. Taqueem made notable initial steps concerning policy influence through its contributions to the development of the EYE programme in Egypt and its collaboration on the YENA forum in Geneva, however, the evaluation team found no evidence of policy uptake having taken place. A combined approach of publications and policy forums has not been sufficient, demonstrating a need for greater integration into the local context with more in-depth knowledge of power structures and policy-making processes. Further, a need for further research and understanding on targeting and determining the demand for evaluation across the region to better inform the RFP process is a factor in contributing toward greater possibility of influencing policy. Finally, ILO country program's lack of resources and ability to absorb the extensive material generated by Taqueem, coupled with Taqueem's centralized management in Geneva were also a factor influencing success.

18. The ILO management team was challenged in managing a complex multi-stakeholder program across two ILO regions from Geneva with just 1 national staff in Cairo. Communication and coordination challenges existed among the multiple stakeholder groups. One area of miscommunication was indicative of overall programme ownership – that of management team and Taqueem Advisory Council partnership. While the Taqueem Advisory Council had a TORs drafted outlining its mandate, in practice they faced challenges with uncertainty about their role in the programme. The evaluation team noted a conflict over whether Taqueem is an ILO programme or an initiative that is much larger than the ILO, and the kind of participation and engagement envisioned.

19. While CoP members benefitting from the program have been very enthusiastic and appreciative of Taqueem, the programme has been unable to generate significant ownership over Taqueem within the MENA region. The evaluation team found this was due to a number of factors, including its Geneva-based management structure and Advisory Council discontinuation during the

latter half of program implementation, as well as make-up of the Advisory Council and the need for a more clearly representative body of the region representing more diverse backgrounds, evaluation interests and capacities, and expertise on gender.

20. The evaluation team identified the following lessons learned for the programme: (1) A complex project that covers two ILO regions and aims to influence policy would benefit from being based in one of those regions; (2) Clear and open communication among programme stakeholders is important; and (3) Policy influence requires more than producing high quality reports and holding policy forums.

21. The evaluation team identified the following good practices: (1) Pairing M&E technical experts with Track 2 COP members led to a very productive exchange, and built capacity of staff on their own organization's projects; and (2) The production of the M&E Guide served as an effective means to help sustain the program through capturing teaching and learning under the Taqeem programme, while serving as an effective resource for future M&E training.

Recommendations

22. Moving forward, the evaluation team recommends wide consultation among Taqeem stakeholders in undertaking the following recommendations. In achieving Taqeem's ambitious and broad agenda, a multi-stakeholder approach brings a clear added value.

- Formalize the role of the Taqeem Advisory Council, clarify its function, and further diversify its make-up.
- Base activities in the region as a means toward reaching policy objectives and ensuring greater efficiency for the programme.
- Continue moving toward a clearer research agenda for Taqeem with clarity on what questions need to be asked that better fulfills the evaluation "demand".
- Continue to move away from a methodologically-driven approach to evaluation through clear questions and an emphasis on value, merit and worth.
- Further develop programme strategy for evidence-based decision and policy making that reflects an understanding of country realities, power structures, and government interests, and capitalizes on ILO government partner relationships.
- Develop a more credible and standardized grants management process.
- Develop a grant management or operational handbook for the programme to orient CoP organizations, CSOs, government entities and others.
- Limit the geographical scope of the programme to build a greater critical mass of capacity at the country level.
- Consider a more purposeful and planned introduction to the WEAI tool in future phases of Taqeem.
- Consider a local research entity or local research partner at the country level as a sustainability measure for Taqeem's work.

Introduction

23. Taqueem is a regional initiative of the International Labor Organization (ILO) with the objective to improve labor market outcomes of young people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by strengthening results measurement and evidence-based policies and programmes. It builds on programming initiated by the Youth Employment Network (YEN), a joint organizational initiative involving the ILO, World Bank and the United Nations (UN).⁴

24. In 2010 the ILO introduced the initiative “Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment” to provide support for rigorous M&E and impact analysis of employment programs. Funded by Silatech, the World Bank, the Danish-led Africa Commission, and Jacobs Foundation, the undertaken studies implemented by experts of the YEN sought to shed light on what works and why in youth employment. Studies focused on how to improve livelihoods, entrepreneurship skills and labour market outcomes.⁵

25. In 2011, the “Taqueem Programme” was created as a spin-off of the Fund in the MENA region with initial support provided by Silatech in the amount of USD 250,000. An independent evaluation of Taqueem covering years 2010-2013 highlighted the success of the initiative and recommended a new and larger phase of Taqueem concentrating on capacity development, impact research and knowledge dissemination. Another cycle of funding from Silatech began in January 2014 and ended in April 2016 in the amount of USD 700,000.

26. In what may be considered a third phase of Taqueem, the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” project began in July 2015 and finished in July 2018. Funded by IFAD in the amount of USD 1.72 million, it aimed to be a “window” of additional funds to Taqueem focused specifically on gender and rural employment. At the time the ILO anticipated continued funds from Silatech as its primary donor to Taqueem, with supplemental funds from IFAD. Due to internal restructuring and its board members favoring direct programming over research-focused interventions, Silatech did not renew its funds in 2015. IFAD thus became the primary donor when Silatech funds depleted in 2016. Over the grant period, the project team leveraged funding to over double the original grant size, totaling \$1,694,575, above ILO’s original commitment of \$1,420,000. (Taqueem Project Completion Report, July 2018).

27. The “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation” project, like Taqueem itself, was based on the premise that there exists a dearth in research and evaluation demonstrating what works in the field of employment, as well as the need and demand for that evidence. The project aims to generate better evidence and build evaluation capacity among stakeholders, both policy-makers and program implementers, in the MENA region with a particular focus on gender and rural employment. Programme activities expanded into formalizing its network of interested academics and researchers into what was called the Taqueem Advisory Council. It also aimed to expand its work into the area of policy advocacy in the MENA region, using the results of studies generated and funded by Taqueem on what works in youth employment.

28. The Project Document outlines 2 objectives and related outputs, which aim to contribute toward its overall goal: improved project management and gender mainstreaming for organizations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E; and improved gender policy and investment for governments and international organizations.⁶ To achieve its overall goal and objectives, the project is organized around three

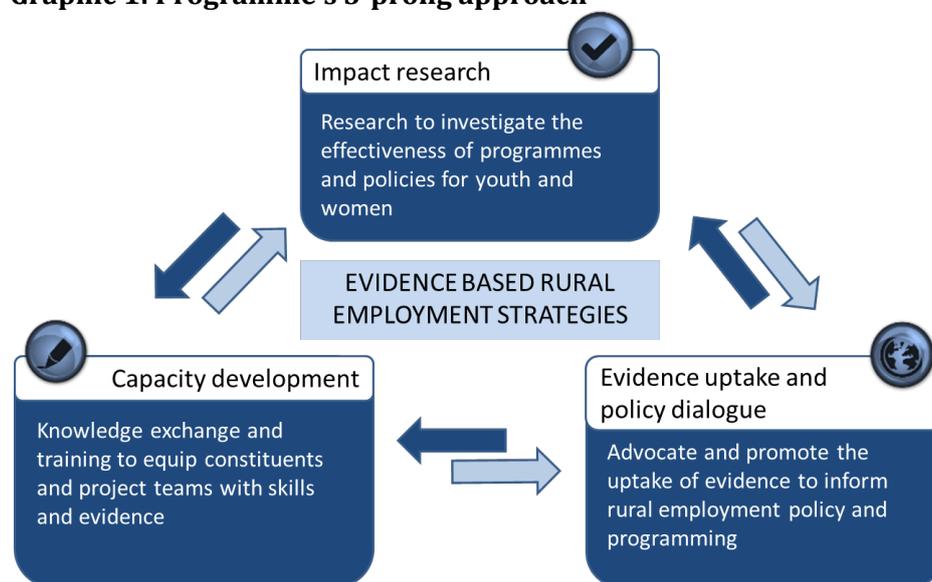
⁴ <https://www.unsystem.org/content/youth-employment-network-yen>

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_143025/lang-en/index.htm.

⁶ A summary table of the project logframe is found in Annex 1, based on the information presented in the Taqueem project document and the TORs. Schedule 1 of the legal agreement signed between IFAD and ILO makes strong reference to gender mainstreaming, which is to be promoted through integration of gender aspects in M&E systems and evaluations.

distinct yet interlinked components: (i) capacity development to equip practitioners and policy makers with evidence and skills on monitoring and evaluation; (ii) the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions to learn what works; and (iii) policy influence through the dissemination of research findings and the creation of partnerships with policy makers to design evidence-based policies and programmes.

Graphic 1: Programme’s 3-prong approach⁷



29. Activities implemented as part of the capacity building component included basic training courses in impact evaluation, and executive trainings on impact evaluation with a module devoted to the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), a tool jointly developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI);⁸ M&E technical assistance; and knowledge sharing workshops. IFAD had a particular interest in testing the application of the WEAI as part of impact evaluations implemented by the project.

30. Activities under the second component activities included a call for proposals for impact research seeking to improve the effectiveness of employment and enterprise interventions in the Middle East and North Africa, with a specific focus on gender and youth employment outcomes. Impact Evaluations (IE) are noted and prioritized, including experiments and quasi-experiments, as rigorous methods that produce credible evidence. Further, the RFP indicates a preference for mixed methods, noting the value that qualitative data collection and analysis provides in supporting and interpreting the quantitative data generated by the experimental designs.⁹ The few experimental studies that exist in the MENA region are noted as a rationale for prioritizing them. The formation of a Community of Practice (CoP) with technical assistance offered on project management and gender mainstreaming was also a focus in the latter half of the programme.

Schedule 1 further notes, “Similarly, the Project will also contribute to one of IFAD’s most important ‘principles of engagements’ that of promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. In this context, the Project will contribute towards increasing recognition of, and supporting, women’s multiple roles in agriculture and rural economies that is critical for food security and economic growth.” (page 8).

⁷ Project document, page 3.

⁸ A tool launched in 2012 by IFPRI, USAID’s Feed the Future programme, and OPHI, it is known as the first standard and comprehensive measure to capture women’s empowerment and inclusion in the agricultural sector. <http://www.ifpri.org/topic/weai-resource-center>

⁹ RFP, Taqem Programme, 2015.

31. Under the third component, activities included policy influence plans for impact evaluations for selected countries, the publishing of policy briefs, and implementation of high-level policy roundtable discussions and evidence symposiums.

32. The Project Document notes a large network of partners to deliver the project activities, including IFPRI, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) for technical and financial inputs; ILO regional and country offices for coordination and support; ILO tripartite constituents; and Taqueem Advisory Council members representing academic institutions both within the MENA region and elsewhere, who are to provide strategic and technical advice to the project.

33. Another area of activity planned was the online knowledge-sharing platform, which was launched in beta-form at www.ilotaqem.org in the latter half of the 3-year programme.¹⁰ The objective of the platform is to share evidence, resources and opportunities related to rural youth employment in the MENA region. At the time of the evaluation the platform had 356 members.

34. Given that Taqueem has become a brand in its own right in the MENA region, following years of implementation, the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation” project will be referred to as Taqueem or simply “the programme” in the body of the report. Only where reference is made to programming prior to 2015 will there be distinction made.

Purpose and method

35. The purpose of the final evaluation, as articulated in the evaluation TORs found in Annex 2, is to indicate to the ILO, IFAD and its partners the extent to which the project has achieved its aim and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

36. Given the important regard the ILO places on the program in advancing its youth employment agenda, particular emphasis will be placed on lessons learnt, success factors and good practices, which have a potential for replication in future programmes. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will also feed in the design of future intervention models and contribute to documenting management and delivery approaches. The 23 questions articulated for the evaluation, outlined in Annex 3, are organized around the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Data collection and analysis

37. The evaluation team collected primary data through semi-structured interviews and an online survey, and secondary data from a review of project documentation and other relevant sources. The evaluation team interviewed a total of 73 persons over a period of one month, from early July to early August. Follow-up interviews with selected interviews took place in September and October for further clarification on certain points. Interviews took place with stakeholders in Geneva, Cairo, and Amman, and via Skype with others based in Germany, Lebanon, Morocco, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and USA. A handful of exchanges took place in writing via email.

38. Given the different types of stakeholders and various functions or roles they play in the programme, as well as the many institutional partnerships involved in the programme, the evaluation team aimed to interview as many stakeholders in each of the categories as possible,

¹⁰ This site has been suspended since the end of the programme.

including CoP members, Council members, those providing technical assistance to CoPs, those who delivered training in a workshop or training environment, relevant government officials, donor and ILO officials, in addition to the project management team.

39. Table 1 below outlines the categories of stakeholders interviewed. There are several stakeholders in the programme who have worn multiple hats, e.g., a Council Member may also provide technical assistance to a CoP member.¹¹ For those stakeholders who did wear multiple hats, they are counted more than once, thus a total number higher than 73. A full list of stakeholders interviewed is found in Annex 4.

Table 1: Numbers interviewed representing stakeholder categories

Stakeholder category	Number
Council Member	9
Technical assistance provider	11
Trainer	7
ILO officials	25
Donor	6 ¹²
Government official	4
COP member	27
Other partners	3
TOTAL	91

40. An online survey was created as a follow-up to interviews with stakeholders (found in Annex 5). Developed in collaboration with a Taqueem project management team member, with inputs and additional questions added as deemed useful for project learning, the focus of the survey was primarily on the online platform, as for most interviews time was spent exploring other aspects of stakeholder participation in the programme. The survey essentially served as an extension to the semi-structured interviews, enabling the evaluation team to more systematically collect this data. Questions related to use, value and recommendations going forward, in addition to general questions about learnings gained from participating in Taqueem. The online link was shared with all stakeholders, with the exception of ILO HQ officials and IFAD officials, due to the learning aspect of the survey. Demographic data of the 14 respondents are found in Annex 6.

41. A total of 14 out of approximately 50 responded to the online survey and provided their responses. While generally not a low response rate, the evaluation team found from interaction with some stakeholders that the responses may not had been greater in number for the following reasons: discussion about the online platform and learnings in general took place during semi-structured interviews with some stakeholders, and thus the online survey may have been regarded as duplication; and some stakeholders may not have been very familiar with the online platform and found their response relevant.¹³ Yet the survey responses complemented the primary form of data collection used in the evaluation, that of semi-structured interviews with 73 key stakeholders representing all stakeholder groups, and, as described further below, were triangulated along with the data collected from interviews and document review.

42. As a third method, the evaluation team reviewed project documentation, as outlined in Annex 7. Documents reviewed include donor reports, published studies, legal agreements, internal ILO policy documents, documentation relating to the RFP process, Taqueem Advisory Council

¹¹ A distinction is made between a technical assistance provider and trainer – both involving experts providing technical assistance. Those experts who have an ongoing relationship with a partner organization in providing technical assistance are identified as technical assistance providers, while those who led workshops or lectured in trainings are identified as trainers.

¹² Of the 6 interviewed, 3 were from IFAD and 2 formerly from Silatech, the previous donor to Taqueem, and 1 from IDRC.

¹³ A comment made by several respondents to the evaluation team.

meeting minutes, training, policy influence plans, and financial documents. Data collected from interviews and the online survey were analyzed and triangulated to determine emerging trends. The project documentation was reviewed and interpreted along with the qualitative data collected and analyzed together. Findings were then articulated on the basis of this analysis.

43. The report findings are organized along the trends emerging from the data, and not strictly by each of the OECD-DAC criterion, as described in the evaluation team's Inception Report found in Annex 8. A summary response to each of the evaluation questions organized by the OECD-DAC criteria is found in Annex 9.

Limitations

44. The evaluation team identifies the following limitations for the evaluation:

- **Challenges experienced during the planning and preparation phase:** While the evaluation went according to schedule, the time invested in planning, coordination and communication was considerable for the evaluation team and the ILO in the early stages of the evaluation. A TORs that could have been drafted more clearly led to confusion on data collection and coordination. There were also unclear management roles and responsibilities to sort out among the evaluation manager, chief technical advisor (CTA) and other members of the project team who had since moved on to work on other projects. Fundamental issues included negotiation on scope of the interviews and stakeholders to participate, and the expansion of the one-person evaluation team to include a second evaluator. These issues were resolved eventually and cooperation was achieved.
- **Limited government participation in the evaluation:** Government stakeholders were difficult to access during the evaluation despite multiple attempts on the part of the ILO and evaluation team. Further, for those scheduled, the evaluation team experienced difficulty with officials not making themselves available just prior to meeting and requesting alternative times. The lack of government engagement in the evaluation relates to a finding, discussed below, and contributes toward a more limited understanding of how policy can best be influenced in the programme countries.
- **Limited budget for intended scope of evaluation:** The programme team has indicated the budget devoted to the final evaluation exercise is according to ILO policy, yet given the wide geographical coverage and the ambitious agenda of the programme, the evaluation team believes a larger budget is required to effectively carry out a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation. The team was able to collect nuanced data on programme activities in Egypt and Jordan with better understanding of the local context, while more limited data was collected in the other programme countries.
- **No final evaluation for previous phase of Taqueem:** While a final evaluation was available for the first phase (2010-2013), an evaluation of the second phase (2014-2016) was not implemented. A programme mid-term evaluation for the third and current phase was reportedly not required by the donor, and nor was it implemented.¹⁴

¹⁴ The evaluation team notes that ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) policy requires programmes over 30 months with a budget over USD 1 million to engage in annual reviews, a mid-term (self or internal) and a final independent evaluation. IFAD, however, required only a final independent evaluation, and the project team did not budget for other reviews and evaluations. Additionally, for the previous phases of Taqueem, ILO EVAL policy would have required a final independent evaluation, which was undertaken for the second phase but not the first. ("ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations", 3rd edition, page 20).

Findings

A. Relevance

Box 1: Relevance main findings

- *The programme's focus on the MENA region is of relevance given high rates of youth unemployment, rural unemployment and gender disparities. The programme's focus on Egypt and Jordan in particular is justified given their higher youth unemployment rates.*
- *The programme's focus on building capacity on M&E and supporting evaluations is relevant in that there are many ALMP interventions implemented across the MENA region -- and particularly many duplicate ALMP pilots and programmes in Egypt -- which have not been evaluated.*
- *The activities of Taqueem fall broadly under the ILO's mandate in furthering understanding about youth employment in the region through providing evaluation and capacity building services, yet the organizations it has supported directly and who have benefited the most do not reflect the social partners it traditionally works with. The programme was aligned well with ILO Egypt and Jordan country programmes.*
- *Other Taqueem partners and donors, including IFAD, IDRC, 3ie, and J-PAL, have a clear interest in Taqueem's work and view the ILO's close cooperation with government partners and the cultivation of a CoP in previous phases of Taqueem as their added value to the youth employment sector in the MENA region*

45. The rationale for Taqueem's historical focus on youth unemployment in the MENA region is sound, given the high rates of youth unemployment in the region as compared to other parts of the world. Further, as 40 percent of the region's population is rural and relies on agriculture as their main source of income, the project's focus on rural employment is also relevant. Female unemployment is of particular concern in the MENA region, as girls and young women are highly educated and do better in school than boys and young men, yet they are not acquiring jobs in the labor market. Additional discussion on the extent of the problem and the rationale of the programme's focus is found in Annex 10.

46. Other areas of relevance discussed below include the rationale for focusing on evaluation and impact studies, Taqueem's relevance as it relates to the ILO's mandate, and its relevance and level of interest for other programme partners, including donors. As a complex programme that has grown out of a broader initiative involving multiple institutions working in partnership, the focus on this area of relevance is of interest.

The programme's focus on evaluation of employment programming as relevant in the MENA region

47. In December 2015 the Taqueem programme completed a Youth Employment Inventory (YEI),¹⁵ which provided comparative information about the design, characteristics and achievements of 182 youth employment interventions aimed to improve the labor market outcomes of young people in Egypt. The interventions include skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment – either as a stand-alone or

¹⁵ Youth Employment Inventory (YEI 2013-2015). The YEI was originally initiated by the World Bank, but is currently a joint effort of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the ILO, the World Bank and the Youth Employment Network (YEN). https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_459550/lang--en/index.htm

combined intervention. Information about the geographic coverage, scale and targeting characteristics of each intervention is complemented by information about their design, costs, implementation and financing mechanisms.

48. The results of the YEI Egypt highlighted that 66 percent of the interventions focus on skills training, 36 percent on entrepreneurship training, 24 percent on employment services, and a small minority on subsidized employment.¹⁶ Despite the large number of past and current programs, there is very limited knowledge about how successful they are. The evaluation of ALMPs is either non-existent or very weak.¹⁷ The authors of the Youth Employment Inventory report argue that a process or performance evaluation was conducted on only 28 percent of programs, while an Impact Evaluation (IE) was conducted on just 2 percent of the programs, and only 30 percent provided information on costs.¹⁸

49. The lack of good evaluative information is not unique to Egypt. It is indeed a challenge for other countries in the MENA region, as detailed in Taqueem's YEI studies in Tunisia (2015) and Jordan (2017).¹⁹ In addition to the lack of knowledge and understanding about how programmes are performing and which approaches have been effective in which contexts, information is needed to design employment projects and programs, including the skills needed by employers and which sectors of the economy are growing.²⁰ Taqueem's focus on generating new knowledge and understanding about youth employment, gender and rural employment approaches and programming in the MENA region is particularly relevant given the urgency of the problem and the need for greater understanding about programmatic approaches underway.

Taqueem relevance to ILO's agenda and mandate

50. The evaluation team found that the Taqueem programme's objectives overall were well aligned with ILO's mandate.

- **Thematic areas of youth employment, rural employment and gender:** The Taqueem programme's historical focus on youth development aligns with the ILO's International Labour Conference declaration in June 2012 to take urgent action to tackle the crisis in youth employment.²¹ In 2016, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the first comprehensive UN system-wide effort to promote youth employment worldwide was also launched to facilitate increased impact and assist Member States in developing decent jobs for young people and delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Taqueem programme also aligns with this initiative.

The ILO Taqueem programme was part of the Youth Employment Programme Unit, falling within the Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch of the ILO's Employment Policy Department. There was a stronger interest and capacity to continue focusing on the area of youth employment, even after Silatech was no longer a donor. Yet addressing rural employment as part of its Decent Work program and the cross-cutting issue of gender is part of the ILO's mission.

¹⁶ https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_459550/lang--en/index.htm

¹⁷ Taqueem-produced document - Egyptian Policy Lab_wcms_388794

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_615574/lang--en/index.htm and

https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_459551/lang--en/index.htm

²⁰ Towards Evidence-Based Active Labor Market Programmes in Egypt https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_545383.pdf

²¹ The aim was to achieve this through a multi-pronged approach geared towards employment growth and the creation of decent jobs. The resolution, "The youth employment crisis: A call for action", contains a set of conclusions that constitute a blueprint for shaping national strategies for youth employment.

- ***ILO mandate and the choice of CoP members:*** The ILO’s mandate as the only tripartite UN agency is to bring together governments, employers and worker associations in all of its 187 member countries to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programs that promote decent work for all women and men. Taqueem’s overall objective to support evaluation capacity building, identify what works in the field of gender, youth and rural employment, and to ultimately influence policy based on the results of its work does fall broadly under the ILO mandate. Yet the greatest practical benefit went to Community of Practice Track 1 and 2 organizations that directly benefited from engaging with the project through receiving capacity building and technical assistance. These were a combination of governmental, non-governmental, UN, foundation and academic partners implementing gender and youth programming, as outlined in Annex 11. While there was effort to engage the ILO’s traditional tripartite partners in evidence forums as part of Component 3, to learn about the work carried out in the other programme components, there was much less interaction and engagement based on attendance records in forum reports, particularly among employer and trade associations. And, given the lesser outcomes achieved under Component 3 as compared to the other components (discussed below), the greater benefit went to non-traditional ILO partners.
- ***ILO evaluation mandate:*** Taqueem abides by EVAL evaluation policy and fulfills an evaluation objective within the ILO. As a programme aiming to promote learning about what works in the field of youth employment and gender, and to build evaluation capacity, Taqueem is designed to contribute toward ILO’s overall evaluation and learning objective. The ILO Evaluation Policy (2017) notes that “impact evaluations in the ILO are primarily for knowledge building on effective policy interventions and under the responsibility of technical departments.”
- ***Alignment with ILO country agendas and other programmes:*** Taqueem aligns well with the ILO Egypt and Jordan country programmes in particular – 2 of the 3 focus countries for the programme. The ILO Egypt office has 8 youth employment programmes, of which Taqueem is one. A long-standing partnership between Taqueem and ILO Egypt’s “Decent Jobs for Egypt’s Young People” programme (DJEP) has led to productive collaboration and enhanced alignment between Taqueem and Decent Work Team (DWT) in Cairo. The LAB project in ILO’s Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Unit also had the shared interest with Taqueem of supporting greater capacity and rigor in results-based management capacity of partners. The two programmes held joint workshops and collaborated on several activities, including Taqueem’s M&E Guide.

Taqueem relevance to IFAD mandate and interests

51. IFAD initially funded Taqueem as an ongoing initiative that has regional momentum with a promising “brand image”. IFAD appreciated Taqueem’s work with Silatech in strengthening youth-focused organizations and wanted to capitalize on the opportunity to experiment with the WEAI tool.²² Ninety-five percent of IFAD’s funds are disbursed to government for programming in rural development and agriculture. The \$1.72 million reserved for Taqueem was part of a small window of additional funds, just 5 percent of IFAD’s overall budget, used for more innovative research and programming. IFAD saw this investment in Taqueem as serving their interests to go beyond the outcome level and to evaluate the impact of their programming. IFAD also saw the need to build capacity in this area in the MENA region where M&E capacities are quite weak, and regarded CoP members as possible service providers to IFAD in the future.

²² The WEAI is a composite tool to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector. It measures the roles and extent of women’s engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, (3) control over use of income, (4) Leadership in the community, and (5) time use. It also measures women’s empowerment relative to men within their Households. See more detailed information here: <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agricultureindex>

Taqeem relevance to other partners

52. 3ie and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) served as funders of studies proposed to them by the Taqeeem management team following the 2015 call for proposals. Given the shortfall of funding from Silatech’s decision to not fund the third phase, the management team had to identify additional funds. Both 3ie and IDRC have funded evaluation and research studies for many years in the development sector with a well-developed process in place for soliciting proposals and granting of awards. 3ie is known for funding impact evaluations in particular and promoting their use among policy-makers.²³ Further, according to Taqeeem project staff, both agencies had a particular interest to build evidence on labour market interventions in MENA, which aligned with Taqeeem’s objectives.

53. J-PAL was represented on the Taqeeem Advisory Council and was contracted to lead on implementing the Senior Executive training course on RCTs, known as the “ILO Executive Evaluation Course on Youth Labour Market Programmes”, in October 2015.²⁴ At least 2 J-PAL affiliate were also involved in a Taqeeem-funded study as part of Track 1. The evaluation team notes J-PAL has been working for at least the past 3 years to open an office in Cairo and expand its work in the MENA region. J-PAL regional offices around the world lead policy outreach and support affiliated professors’ research projects in their respective regions. Their interest to expand is reportedly in part as a response to demand from MENA governments and regional actors for evidence to help inform policies and programs.²⁵

54. Taqeeem is relevant to J-PAL work in the MENA region as it falls under one of J-PAL’s eight thematic sectors, “education and labor markets”.²⁶ Taqeeem’s historical focus on experimental approaches and evidence-based policy-making aligns with J-PAL’s interests and own comparative advantage as an organization. Results of research work are summarized in lessons that can help inform policy decisions. From the view of J-PAL, Taqeeem complemented its work in the MENA region. Their interest in Taqeeem was to capitalize on ILO’s established relationships with governments, and to further advance the evidence-based agenda through developing capacities, and provision of research grants. While the extent of the collaboration tapered off during the course of programme implementation, J-PAL and Taqeeem missions, thematic, and regional focus were aligned.

B. Validity of project design

Box 2: Validity of project design main findings

- *The programme’s 3-prong approach is logical and coherent in its vision for creating new knowledge and effecting change through M&E and evaluation, yet the large geographical scope of the programme and the management team’s presence outside the region made the achievement of its overall development objective a challenge.*
- *While the Taqeeem Advisory Council had a TORs drafted outlining its mandate, in practice stakeholders faced challenges with uncertainty about the Council’s role in the programme and a certain conflict over whether Taqeeem is an ILO programme or an initiative that is much larger than the ILO.*

²³ IDRC’s grant window is found at <https://www.idrc.ca/en/funding> ; 3ie’s grant window is found at <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/>.

²⁴ J-PAL also lead the Executive Course training delivered in Sharjah in November 2014.

²⁵ J-PAL affiliated researchers/professors investigate many social issues related to poverty reduction. In over 80 countries, J-PAL affiliates have conducted over 850 randomized evaluations of programs or policies broadly focusing on poverty reduction.

²⁶ J-PAL eight thematic sectors www.povertyactionlab.org/sectors

- *Stakeholders playing multiple roles, and ILO programming benefiting from Taqueem's competitive process -- while internally in ILO may be viewed as productive and positive -- from an external perspective raises questions about transparency and conflict of interest in the context of a competitive RFP process.*

Coherence of the programme design

55. The Taqueem programme's 3-prong approach is logical and coherent. Its 3 interrelated components of capacity development, impact evaluation and research, and policy influence together contribute toward realizing its overall objective of improving labor market outcomes for youth in countries across the MENA region. The use of evaluation and the building of capacity among various stakeholders to use and learn from evaluation, combined with the use of findings from evaluations implemented that are relevant and timely for government counterparts all provide for a logical means to influence policy-making. And, the expectation that with well-formulated policies in place that are based on relevant and understandable evidence, the welfare of the ultimate beneficiaries who will benefit from those policies (youth, women and those working in rural areas) is sound.

56. Just as such an approach is generally relevant and logical, the challenge is how to operationalize it so that policy can effectively be influenced, which is one of the real challenges for the evaluation field overall. The evaluation team found several aspects of the design problematic as it relates to achievement of its overall development objective:

- ***A more refined and realistic development objective:*** The geographic scope of the design is overly ambitious. Improving labor market outcomes for youth in countries across North Africa and the Middle East is a broad objective that would need to be achieved by a multitude of interventions, in addition to the Taqueem programme. Further, realizing such a long-term goal in a region, which lacks critical experience in M&E and evidence-based research, particularly with regard to the critical knowledge gap in conducting RCTs and other experimental approaches, would exceed Taqueem's timeframe. While the programme focused more of its resources on 3 countries (Jordan, Egypt and Morocco) for its third component activities, the evaluation team maintains the scope is still broad considering the ambitious goal of influencing policy.
- ***Need for a multi-phase approach with a clear strategy and developed M&E design:*** Stakeholders who were involved from the first phase of Taqueem spoke to a logical progression in the programme's lifespan, from a focus on capacity building to implementing evaluations, and, in its current phase, to formalizing partnerships and the role of the Council, and influencing policy. Yet the programme design would have benefited from a multi-phase program with short, intermediate and long-term goals given the long timeframe needed for completing RCTs and the ambitious objective of influencing policy with the results of such studies. Similarly, the online Community of Practice could have served as a more vital means for facilitating engagement and learning across phases.

With a multi-phase designed programme an M&E approach could have been integrated from the start, with the plan and budget for mid-term and final evaluations, in accordance with ILO evaluation policy.²⁷ CoP members of previous phases could have continued to engage to ensure continuity of the programme, which did not happen. A more strategic vision for the overall

²⁷ The ILO EVAL Office has mapped out an evaluation policy which clearly lays out the evaluation requirements for multiphase projects (Ref: ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 3rd edition, 2017)

programme would then build upon each phase in a deliberate and coherent manner, with a final evaluation of all phases of Taqueem.

- **Far-reaching geographical scope of the MENA region implemented by a Geneva-based management team:** The far-reaching geographical scope of the project design, with a core management structure based outside the region in Geneva, provided a challenge to achieving the development objective. Minimal Taqueem management presence within each of the countries resulted in over-reliance on country program staff and lessened engagement with ILO government partners, directly challenging its overall objective to influence policy at the country level. In the words of one ILO official based in the region, “When they do come, it is wonderful, but then they leave.” There was a real challenge for officials in the region to sustain and collaborate on Taqueem objectives given resources available. The one national staff position for the programme based in Cairo assisted with greater visibility for the programme in Egypt, and thus there was greater engagement and inputs. Visits by management in Geneva to each of the programme countries, the placement of a national staff in Cairo, and the focus on just 3 countries (Egypt, Jordan and Morocco) for Component 3 activities, while certainly positive, did not respond to the greater need for engagement to make effective impact, particularly at the policy advocacy level.²⁸

The Taqueem Advisory Council’s role and function

57. The Taqueem Advisory Council was developed at the start of the current phase in 2015 with the intention to formalize a network at the institutional level that had begun in the early years of the Taqueem programme. Thus institutional agreements were signed with some although not all members of the Council, depending on internal realities and interests. The Taqueem Advisory Council included members from the following institutions: World Bank, Silatech, J-PAL, 3ie, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI), Centre de Recherche en Économie et Statistique (CREST), American University of Beirut (AUB), American University in Cairo (AUC), American University of Sharjah (AUS), and Swiss Academy for Development (SAD).

58. The mandate of the Council was to provide strategic direction and advice in 4 main areas:

- Ensuring that impact evaluation research produced by Taqueem Advisory Council members is of highest scientific quality and policy relevance;
- Ensuring evaluation training delivered under Taqueem is of highest quality;
- Shaping a forward-looking research agenda and priorities for the youth employment and development research community; and,
- Promoting and disseminating evaluation evidence on youth employment with the goal of influencing policy.²⁹

59. The evaluation team notes the following challenges faced by the Taqueem Advisory Council:

- **Ill-defined mandate and role:** Despite the drafting of the TORs for the Council and the outlining of its mandate, in practice there was a struggle in defining its appropriate role by the Taqueem management team and the Council itself. The evaluation team noted there existed a conflict as to whether Taqueem is an ILO programme or whether it goes beyond the ILO where ownership and buy-in is cultivated. And, if the programme goes beyond the ILO, then what structure should be in place to govern its work. The evaluation team found an unclear definition around this struggle.

²⁸ More discussion on the basing of the management team outside the region is found below in the next section.

²⁹ Taqueem Advisory Council Report 2015, page 1.

The Council ceased to function shortly after its first year of implementation, while several small working groups began taking on various tasks. The last Council meeting took place middle of 2016. The first year of the rotating co-chair position (the ILO maintained a permanent co-chair position) finished, and no one stepped forward to assume the role for the second year.³⁰ Most of its members believe the Council disbanded and ceased to function, while the ILO management team believes the Council remained intact, while meetings ceased, and certain individuals were engaged going forward on an as needed basis. The Council itself as part of the project structure and design was identified by the project management team as less relevant and helpful in the latter half of the programme, while the project management team worked to produce their required deliverables for IFAD.³¹

- **Taqeem Advisory Council make-up:** The project effectively identified and recruited a Council membership with expertise to carry out its mandate, as outlined above. Members represented a balance of MENA and non-MENA membership, with AUS, AUC, IFI, Silatech and IDRC all having Arab representatives on the Council. A majority of members were male with expertise in the area of economics and experimental research. The evaluation team notes that including greater diversity indigenous to the region among researchers, academics, government officials and/or practitioners may have provided greater opportunity for increased ownership of Taqeem in the region, as well as supporting academic and practitioner partnerships and facilitation with governments.³² Lastly, there is mention in the Council Meeting Minutes of the interest to recruit new members with expertise on gender to better reflect IFAD programmatic interests, yet the evaluation team did not find any evidence that this was done.
- **Multiple hats of Taqeem Advisory Council members:** Taqeem Advisory Council members who were mandated to provide guidance to the management team also stood to benefit from the research to be funded. Council members provided strategic direction and advice, but some also served as researchers as part of a team receiving a research grant from Taqeem, while some accessed work implementing training for CoP members. While the evaluation team did not find evidence of Council members influencing decisions for personal favor related to grant funding, it questioned the existence of safeguards in place to adequately prevent such conflict of interest occurring on a more informal and personal basis.

C. Management of the initiative

Box 3: Management of the initiative main findings

- *The management of the Taqeem programme required a complex set of functions related to partnership management and coordination among a wide range and types of individuals and institutions with varying interests and agendas; heavy investment of time in fund-raising; logistical and administrative tasks; and overseeing the writing and publication of reports.*
- *The programme team experienced communication and relationship management challenges among a number of stakeholder groups, including Council, CoP, donors, and other programmes/functions within ILO.*

³⁰ A survey of Council members in 2015 indicated a high level of satisfaction with the management and function of the Council. , there was not another survey taken later.

³¹ Email correspondence with Taqeem CTA, 14 August 2018.

³² American University Cairo (AUC), American University Beirut (AUB) and American University in Sharjah (AUS) are Western-affiliated universities. Taqeem did not consider other national universities like Cairo University or Ein Shams University in Egypt or others.

- *The project management team was successful in raising funds to match and even exceed the amount of IFAD's contribution to Taqueem.*
- *One RFP process was successfully carried out in 2015, enabling identification of organizations with capacity building needs in M&E and programmes that could be studied through an impact evaluation. Yet the evaluation team found issues adversely impacting the Taqueem brand, including issues on transparency, as well as coordination with other donors.*
- *The programme alignment and partnership with the Egypt and Jordan country and regional programmes was positive, yet integration of Taqueem within country programmes was not achieved to the extent where policy influence could effectively be achieved. The centralized management structure in Geneva contributed toward this challenge.*
- *A definition of both impact evaluation and employment terms is needed to better facilitate understanding within the programme and to promote greater efficiency.*

60. The management of the Taqueem programme required a complex set of functions related to partnership management and coordination among a wide range and types of individuals and institutions with varying interests and agendas; heavy investment of time in fund-raising to match the IFAD's USD 1.72 million contribution; supporting the logistical and administrative tasks associated with organization of events, development and coordination of training; supporting of M&E advising activities; and overseeing the writing and publication of reports. The workload of the management team was dependent on the success of partnerships and the level of ownership taken on by others in completing work under Taqueem. Further, the evaluation team highlights the strong leadership required as well as expertise on evaluation to effectively converse and dialogue with a range of stakeholders with varying levels of knowledge and interests in working toward the programme's overall goal and objectives.

61. The evaluation team identifies the following themes emerging related to management of the initiative: communication and relationship management; implications of the Geneva-based management structure for the programme; fund-raising success; internal coherence for the ILO; grants decision-making and selection; and M&E.

Communication and relationship management

62. The evaluation team noted multiple problematic aspects of the Taqueem management team's interactions with its partners and other stakeholders. These interactions, which strained partnerships, made for sub-optimal coordination for the programme.

- ***Donor and project team communication:*** IFAD was largely uninvolved during the first year of the programme and the proceedings of the 6th call for proposals in July 2015, which resulted in a number of miscommunications between IFAD and Taqueem team members: (1) expectations on reporting at a high standard; and (2) application and uptake of the WEAI and its thematic fit to Taqueem IE projects funded. Further, IFAD experienced a 6-month delay between the signing of the project document (18 February 2015) and the reception of the first tranche of funds by the ILO (20 August 2015), resulting in a more rushed implementation timeframe from the project team perspective.
- ***Other funders and project team communication:*** One of the donors providing funds to the impact studies complained of a lack of transparency in the process and unclear coordination. This is of significant concern, given funds from this donor were a large portion of funds raised by the ILO to leverage IFAD funds.

- **Other ILO entities and project team communication:** Good cooperation and value added of partnership with other programmes was noted overall, particularly with another ILO programme engaged on M&E, as well as a youth employment programme in Cairo where mutual benefit was achieved. There were also instances of insensitivity or lack of awareness about partner programme needs and interests as part of the partnership. This related to collaboration on documents and the use of logos on produced items.

Further, while there was communication and coordination with EVAL (yet with room for improvement, as noted by stakeholders), overall coordination with the Regional Evaluation Office (REO) in Lebanon was sub-optimal. There are circumstances of engagement noted by both sides, yet overall a challenging relationship at the operational level within the region existed due to perceived overlapping of functions between REO and Taqueem, and differences in perspectives as to how a programme focused on evaluation in the MENA region should coordinate and interact with the evaluation function in the regional office.

- **Taqueem Advisory Council and project team communication:** The communication between the Council and project team reflected an unclear understanding about ownership and roles, as noted above. There were some Council members who provided advice to the management team but were unclear how decisions were made. There was a desire for more transparency expressed by some Taqueem Advisory Council members to the evaluation team. Further, there was not a clear understanding by the majority of Council members interviewed on how or why the Council stopped meeting, with some dismayed by the lack of communication from the project team.
- **CoP and project team communication:** CoP members interviewed overall spoke favorably of their experience participating in Taqueem and of their communication with the ILO project team. A high level of involvement and technical support was mentioned and appreciated. Some CoP members and technical experts interviewed were aware of IFAD's interests and indicated both the ILO and IFAD should have better and more clearly presented the focus on gender and rural employment from the beginning. The evaluation team noted that some (not all) CoP members interviewed were unaware of the programme's gender and rural employment focus.

Implications of the Geneva-based management structure

63. ILO officials interviewed expressed different opinions as to whether there indeed is an ILO policy on the centralizing of management functions in Geneva when a programme crosses several regions, such as is considered by the ILO for the MENA region. While those ILO officials in Geneva overall spoke favorably of the centralized management structure, referring to such a policy and noting the programme's contributions to the Youth Employment unit's planning and programming, those within the regional and country offices largely saw it differently. They spoke of the need for a greater programme presence in the region and indeed within their own countries to best produce evidence of value and relevance, and ultimately to engage policy-makers and influence policy.

64. The evaluation team observed the centralized management structure of Taqueem, with one national staff in Egypt, as affecting the implementation of activities with regard to efficiency and effectiveness. Most of the Taqueem events, meetings, workshops, capacity building activities and policy influencing work were initiated, coordinated, and organized centrally, in partnership with various ILO and non-ILO entities in country. While events appeared to be implemented smoothly, distance and communication likely impacted the programme's team time and level of efficiency, as well as their ability to effectively engage at the country level. Greater collaboration was effectively achieved with the ILO Cairo office due to a national staff presence for the programme, which helped to facilitate a greater focus of activities in Egypt and a more significant presence for the programme.

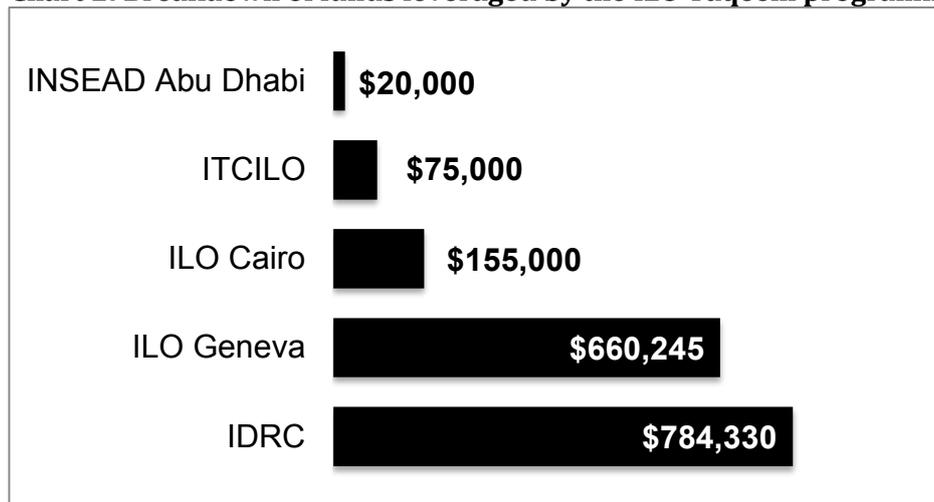
Yet in other countries, where no project presence was realized, there was less activity and greater reliance on these ILO and non-ILO entities.

65. There were varying opinions about the overall cost of the management team’s base in Geneva versus the region, and the significance this had for the programme. While the donor was particularly sensitive to the perceived cost, the Taqueem management team noted the human resource cost of the programme was moderate, and the cost was largely borne by the ILO itself.³³ While for some cities in the region the difference in staff cost may be overall only marginally less compared to Geneva, the cost of travel means the management team’s base in Geneva would likely be more. Other related costs, in addition to those described above is relationship building at the country and regional level – a task that is harder to accomplish from Geneva. A full cost benefit analysis is advised to identify the merit of a Geneva-based versus regional-based team.

Fundraising achievement

Over the grant period, the programme management team successfully leveraged IFAD funding to over double the original grant size. The leveraged total funds of USD 1,694,575 were above the ILO’s original commitment of contributing USD 1,420,000. The majority of funds came from ILO itself, which demonstrates a high level of commitment to the programme. Of the total raised, 47 percent were from non-ILO sources, the vast majority of which came from the IDRC.³⁴

Chart 2: Breakdown of funds leveraged by the ILO Taqueem programme



Process of grants management: decision-making and choice of grantees

66. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was a considerable undertaking at the start of the programme, involving the management of multiple partnerships, both with the Council and an external review panel of three experts, as well as observing a protocol for issuing the RFP, reviewing proposals, and deciding on those to be funded.

67. The call for proposals under the Taqueem Fund for Evaluation in Employment was launched on July 1 2015. The performance target for the call was 100 proposals, and the management team

³³ In the first year of implementation (1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016), the project spent 9.8% of the total IFAD funds on “Salaries and allowances”, including project staff in Geneva and Cairo. Throughout the first year, all three Geneva-based Taqueem staff members were co-financed by ILO (CTA: 50% ILO co-funding, 2 Technical Officers: 83% ILO co-funding each). This heavy co-funding also explains why the project only spent 24% of the allocated funds under “Salaries in allowances” in the first year (while 33% of the time passed). ILO staff in Geneva continued to be (partly) funded by the project until, including, March 2018. (Programme team comment on a previous draft report, October 2018).

³⁴ Project completion report, page 31.

received a total of 70 proposals from 23 countries in the region.³⁵ Twenty of the submissions proposed evaluations of interventions focused on women or rural employment. Eighteen project teams were shortlisted and invited to the ILO Executive Evaluation Course in Cairo in October 2015, where they learned about RCTs and were matched with Taqueem experts to develop full proposals.³⁶ Following the course, 14 organizations were admitted to the CoP, 7 of which were identified as Track 1 focused on impact research; and the remaining 7 were identified as Track 2 focused on M&E.³⁷ An outline of the RFP process is provided in Annex 12.

68. The evaluation team notes the ILO management team's flexibility in funding a range of organizations at varying levels of M&E capacity on a range of projects. While the initial intent and interest of many on the Council focused on implementing experimental approaches to IE, with the challenge of identifying projects suitable for a pre-determined methodological approach, the management team and some in the Council moved away from this priority and were open to engaging organizations with varying levels of capacity and varying types of projects.

69. The evaluation team offers the following observations on the management of this process:

- **Single call for a proposal during the phase and the challenge to adequately focus on IFAD's interests and agenda:** The programme issued a single round of call for proposals in 2015. On page 6 of the RFP the thematic concentration was clearly stated with the "aim to generate evidence on the following labor market interventions, with a specific focus on gender equality and/or youth employment outcomes."³⁸ Also, the RFP stated that "Given the focus of the 2015 call on gender-related labor market outcomes, applicants are highly encouraged to apply the WEAI in their impact evaluations, adapted to the according methodological design and research outcomes of interest." Although the programme's call for proposals was flexible with the WEAI tool applications to encourage applicant experimentation with the new tool as per IFAD requirements, the call for proposal implied an "either/or gender equality" for applicants, which did not oblige applicants to be gender-focused but rather to have the choice of "gender equality {and/or} youth employment outcomes". As a result, the proposals submitted had less of a gender focus.

Also as noted above, IFAD was delayed in engaging with the Taqueem management team on the RFP process. While there was discrepancy in stakeholder accounts of what occurred (both donor and management team), there did appear to be a challenge on the part of IFAD to initially identify what they could fund within its mandate. Of the 18 shortlisted proposals they chose 3-4 proposals that were within its mandate. IFAD reported that a lot of time and effort was invested to steer the programme towards a more gender/rural/agriculture focus.

- **Problematic processes adversely impacting the Taqueem brand:** The rationale for the decision to only issue one call during the 2.5-year phase, despite the previous calls issued by Taqueem on an annual basis, was reportedly due to a joint decision taken by the ILO and IFAD to use remaining funds to better focus on IFAD's interests and fulfill the ILO's requirements to the grant. In addition, the management team stipulated that they had fulfilled their targets with the 2015 call only. This decision, however, presented problems for the Taqueem "brand" with regard to maintaining a consistent and predictable service for potential grantees and the general public.

Secondly, partnerships and disbursement of funds occurred after the 2015 RFP process and were done outside any competitive process in order to meet IFAD grant requirements. This also

³⁵ Final progress report, page 7.

³⁶ See Output 1.1.2 as reported in the project completion report (2018)

³⁷ See Output 1.1. as reported in the project completion report (2018)

³⁸ RFP, page 6. Emphasis added by the evaluation team.

proved to be problematic and confusing with regard to the Taqeeem brand and its competitive RFP process. The Economic Research Forum (ERF) was offered a research grant (after soliciting IFAD's approval) for conducting the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS)³⁹ without passing through the competitive proposals process. While it may be argued that the ERF was a grant recipient distinct from the other COP members targeted for capacity building, how this looks externally for a fund that makes grants based on a competitive process should be taken into consideration.

Thirdly, ILO's participation in collaborating and accessing support from Taqeeem is problematic. In a competitive process, ILO's decision to use funds to support ILO programming, benefiting either directly or indirectly, raises ethical questions and does not bode well for the transparency of the Taqeeem brand. According to ILO evaluation policy, ILO programmes like Taqeeem carrying out IEs on other ILO programmes is acceptable for learning purposes given that a performance evaluation is still done in accordance with that policy. The evaluation team also notes that internally such collaboration is viewed as extremely positive, creating synergies and leveraging on other programme funds. Yet the evaluation team argues that while this is acceptable internally, externally it is problematic for reasons of transparency, as it is part of a competitive process.

On a related point, the evaluation team notes an instance where an ILO official supported an organization's application to Taqeeem. While grants were disbursed directly to the organization and not to the ILO official (or to the ILO itself), the ILO official's engagement during the application process and its subsequent implementation after successfully winning the award raises questions again about transparency and conflict of interest. Clear thinking on management and its implications, particularly as it relates to the complex pursuit of managing an RFP grants process is advised.

- ***Moving toward a more refined research agenda:*** The Taqeeem management team consulted with Council members and others to determine the best way to frame the RFP in 2015. Instead of presenting research and evaluation questions in the RFP, there was a broad call for 4 areas of study: training and skills development, enterprise development, employment services, and subsidized public or private employment. While the approach may be suited for a more exploratory exercise and an interest to cast the net wide to attract multiple agencies, it also reflected a rather open research agenda on the part of the Taqeeem programme after 5 years of issuing such calls, given the interest to generate learning on youth employment and rural/gender employment.

There was an attempt to better define a research agenda in 2016. One of the Council working groups focused on this task and produced a discussion paper based on a survey of Council members to determine all learning and findings compiled on youth employment in the MENA region to date.⁴⁰ Yet since there was not another RFP implemented after 2015, this work was not further developed.

- ***Criteria applied for grant selection:*** The initial shortlisting, which was done by the programme management team, used the criteria of (1) type of organization (only non-profit or governments allowed), (2) country (intervention needed to be in a MENA country), (3) focus on intervention (primary objective needed to be related to employment), and (4) primary

³⁹ The Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS) carried out by the Economic Research Forum (ERF) in cooperation with Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) since 1998, has become the mainstay of labor market and human resource development research in Egypt, being the first and most comprehensive source of publicly available micro data on the subject.

⁴⁰ Taqeeem produced document "Towards a Demand-Driven Research Agenda on Active Labor Market Programs in the Middle East and North Africa: Preliminary Finding for Discussion".

beneficiary (needed to be either youth or women). Three external reviewers reviewed the shortlisted applications, considering the following criteria: innovativeness of the project, policy relevance and scalability of intervention, capacity and investment in M&E/IE, potential for knowledge generation and replication, quality of collaborating project team, and use of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The evaluation team notes that ethics were not taken into consideration as to whether an experimental approach would be appropriate to implement in a given context.⁴¹ The literature on research methods and experimental designs notes the importance of ethical considerations in the design of experiments.⁴² The evaluation team notes this as problematic given the MENA region's lack of familiarity with experimental designs as well as religious and cultural considerations.

Lastly, as part of Taqueem's soliciting of proposals, the criteria used include "quality" and "innovativeness" or "innovative". The evaluation team identifies a need to provide definition and clarification to these words, particularly when used in a process of decision-making on resources and overall programme objectives.

- ***Lack of a clear mechanism for decision-making on the funding of proposals by other donors:*** The evaluation found no clear mechanism or framework applied by Taqueem in relaying the selected research proposals to be funded either from IFAD funds or from IDRC or 3ie. The evaluation team could not identify the particular function or role that Taqueem played in facilitating access to 3ie's Policy Window funds.⁴³ Taqueem acted as a facilitator/mediator between CoPs organizations and 3ie relaying the selected evaluations to be considered for funding through 3ie's Policy Window funds. Although 3ie was not available to participate in the evaluation, the Better Work Jordan's experience, as noted above, indicates a clear process was not in place. Further, IDRC's receipt of referrals for funding 2 of the Taqueem proposals proved challenging and lacking clarity.

Logistical and administrative challenges with implementation of studies

70. Taqueem faced a number of administrative hurdles to implement the studies, especially in preparing the legal documentation for transfer of foreign funds to CSOs in Egypt under the new law governing civil society organizations.⁴⁴ In some cases, the donor preferred to be excluded from negotiating with a third party to facilitate the heavy administrative documentation and approvals needed to transfer funds. For example, ITC/SFD faced a 1.5-year delay to undergo an organizational structural merge, and sign a new MoU with IDRC and the new M/SME Development Agency (MSMEDA).

71. Another example is the ILO's Better Work Jordan (BWJ) programme, which applied for funds and was referred by Taqueem to 3ie. The evaluation team was not able to interview a 3ie representative, but BWJ indicated the process was unclear and took significant time, thus leading to their use of their main donor partner funds for their study.⁴⁵

⁴¹ In Section F of the proposal forms, "ethical approval" is referenced, requiring applicants to identify whatever approvals may be required by relevant government agencies or any other organizations. While relevant and important for the evaluations to proceed, the evaluation team's reference to "ethics" relates to an assessment of the ethical aspects of the evaluation.

⁴² There are arguably no comparable resources on experimental designs to Shadish, Cook, and Campbell's book entitled *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (2002). It covers nearly everything from the logic and reasoning underlying counterfactual inference to implementation fidelity and beyond. It also speaks to ethical considerations in relation to participant recruitment and random assignment.

⁴³ 3ie Policy Window Grant Call - <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/policy-window/how-to-apply/>

⁴⁴ The Egyptian Law 70 of 2017 for Regulating the Work of Associations and Other Institutions Working in the Field of Civil Work.

⁴⁵ While identified as a member of the CoP (Track 1), BWJ attended the first executive training course in Cairo in 2015 but did not have much knowledge about Taqueem or interaction beyond the Cairo training.

72. The major and more pervasive challenge for the programme was this discontinuation of project activities by implementers, as was the case with UNRWA, SFD Egypt and MoL Tunisia. As impact evaluations rely on full project implementation, when there is a compromise to the project implementation, the evaluation is also compromised. The evaluation team notes the challenges with setting up experiments, the immense resources required, and the labor intensive need for coordination. While there were aspects of these studies that were beyond the control of the management team, the evaluation team puts forward the possibility that better coordination in the region among the programme and REO and greater in country presence might have helped in better facilitating the implementation of studies through fostering of relationships, in depth understanding of the local context and ability to mitigate and address hurdles to implementation of Taqueem activities.

Programme M&E

73. Taqueem had a system in place to assess short-term participant outcomes of trainings through the use of evaluation forms and pre and post assessments. These were knowledge-based and multiple choice tests aimed at discerning increased levels of understanding related to topics such as results measurement, data collection, and IE. The same approach was applied to some workshops but not all. Other feedback obtained on satisfaction levels was highly favorable, and suggestions provided by participants were seriously considered, such as more interactive approaches and a request for mixed methods.

74. The programme also reportedly used “tracking sheets” for monitoring both Track 1 and 2 members, although the evaluation team was not able to access these documents to determine the extent to which the programme monitored changes at the organizational level as a result of their long-term engagement with Taqueem. The impact briefs developed at the end of the programme were seen by the Taqueem management team as a form of monitoring as it documented and showcased CoP members’ M&E capacity development. The evaluation team notes that the programme met the requirements for M&E as outlined in its project document, and reportedly went beyond the standard used internally for ILO with the use of pre and post.⁴⁶ The ability of the programme to monitor new knowledge gained and change occurring at the organizational level, however, as a means toward tracking progress toward specified capacity building objectives was not as clear to the evaluation team.

Use of language

75. The use of language was unclear and presented a challenge for the programme. While the RFP provides clarity, the Taqueem management team realized that applicants submitting proposals to conduct an IE did not have a common understanding or unified definition of what is meant by “impact”. Indeed, there is ambiguity and debate within the field about what ‘impact’ is, how it should be defined, how to measure it and what kind of measurement is sufficient. The evaluation team also came across in its interviews with stakeholders confusion about evidence-based policy, the difference between research and evaluation, and evidence-based ALMPs, and even what is meant by job creation. The evaluation team acknowledges the programme’s significant efforts in building understanding through workshops and trainings.

D. Project effectiveness: progress made within each of the 3 components

Box 4: Project effectiveness main findings

⁴⁶ Only ex-posts are required within the ILO, according to the Taqueem project team.

- *Trainings and workshops were highly appreciated by CoP members, both for their quality and opportunity to network. There was evidence of learning achieved through pre- and post-tests administered at the time of the trainings.*
- *The majority of Track 2 CoP members demonstrated new learning and application of their learning in their collaboration with technical advisors who provided ongoing assistance. Further, the CoP organizations were able to effectively internalize new learning and apply it to other programming.*
- *The evaluation team suggests that Taqueem’s approach to building capacity of Track 2 CoP members, involving an in-house technical advisor over the long-term, yields a more significant investment as it is rooted in an understanding of both individual and organizational capacity and involves contextualized follow-up. Whereas the impact studies built some capacity yet it was uneven given the nature of the collaboration for Track 1.*
- *Multiple impact studies were produced by the end of Phase 3. The extent to which these studies respond to an “evidence gap” in the youth/gender/rural employment field is unknown.*
- *Taqueem disseminated high quality and well appreciated policy briefs, impact briefs, and other products as a means to disseminate learning and influence policy. The evaluation team found some initial progress but no evidence of policy influence and uptake having taken place during the scope of the programme.*
- *CoP capacity to influence policy on youth employment as a result of their success – a desired outcome for Taqueem – was not realized and should be considered a long-term objective due to local political and contextual realities.*
- *ILO country program’s lack of resources and ability to absorb the extensive material generated by Taqueem, coupled with Taqueem’s centralized management in Geneva and limited time in the MENA region, has led to limited success with policy influence efforts. Further, demand, supply and timeliness are all factors in whether uptake is possible.*

Effectiveness in promoting capacity development

76. The capacity development strategy of Taqueem involved a comprehensive set of trainings, workshops, technical assistance, both short-term and long-term, and the development of an M&E Guide. As described in the project document, the main goal of training courses was to create a critical mass of “evaluation expertise” in the region by reaching a sizable number of participants in basic and advanced trainings that would be repeated.

i. Trainings and workshops

77. The program implemented a total of 8 basic and advanced trainings and workshops over a 2.5-year period on a range of topics including: development of results based measurement systems; RCTs and other experimental methods; M&E in private sector development (in partnership with the ILO SME Unit); community of practice peer learning event; gender equality and rural employment; and plenaries on what works in achieving Decent Work for youth. The programme differentiated between trainings and workshops for CoP Track 1 and Track 2 CoP members. Those CoP members interested and able to collaborate on experimental approaches (Track 1) attended a senior level course (Executive course); while those with less developed M&E systems (Track 2) attended M&E and results based measurement courses. Courses were based on the initial needs assessment done as part of the RFP exercise, where applicant organizations detailed their M&E experience and expertise.

78. Some trainings were devoted solely to CoP members, while many trainings were implemented in cooperation with other ILO programmes and included trainees outside the core CoP membership. It was clear to the evaluation team that different people from the same CoP organization participated in trainings and workshops. It was also apparent that, given the programme's strategy to build capacity in the region, there were other people attending these workshops and trainings. While the trainings and workshops appeared to be appropriate and suited to CoP organization interests and needs, the evaluation team questions whether involving other organization staff on an ad hoc basis as a means to develop "a critical mass of evaluation expertise in the region" can be an effective strategy in the long-term. The evaluation team was not able to determine the average ratio of CoP trainees to non-CoP trainees in the workshops and trainings delivered.

79. CoP members interviewed consistently rated the Taqueem trainings and workshops as very high in quality. There was feedback on the overly academic delivery of trainings at the beginning, which was later adjusted. Pre- and post-tests delivered during workshops consistently point to an increased understanding and knowledge about the content delivered, and level of satisfaction was consistently high.

80. Beyond the pre- and post-tests implemented just before and after training, the briefings produced by the programme served as the primary means for demonstrating learning at the individual and organizational levels. The Track 2 learning experience was focused at the organizational level and application of new knowledge and skills, which the evaluation team found evidence of when conducting interviews. A clear learning strategy was in place. The evaluation team did not identify as clearly defined a strategy for applied learning among local organizations as part of the impact studies; instead, they played different roles from facilitating to be actively engaged with data collection, and the implementation of the study as a means toward generating new learning for the field was the primary objective.

ii. Gender-specific trainings

81. Learning specific to gender mainstreaming and project management was not as apparent to the evaluation team, beyond the pre- and post-test results. One of the technical advisors who also served on the Council and trained on gender for the programme noted CoP organizations understand the importance of disaggregating data by sex and how to do this. Yet a thorough and more sophisticated understanding about gender and its implications in programming has not been achieved. This was confirmed through the evaluation team's interviews with many of the CoPs, some of whom were not well aware of the gender focus of Taqueem or thought it was relevant to their projects (where a gender dimension could well be analyzed with greater capacity to do so), and some of whom talked about gender as it relates to data collection only.

82. The programme had a strong collaboration with ITCILO to train CoP members and other MENA stakeholders on the Participatory Gender Audit facilitation. The Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) is a guided self-assessment tool used by organizations to reflect and analyse their own gender capacity, challenges and good practices. Taqueem partnered with the ITCILO to deliver 3 PGA facilitation certification courses in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Each course lasted 2 months and entailed an online learning phase and a residential phase (at the ITCILO campus in Turin). Participants needed to pass an intermediate and final exam in order to receive the certificate.

83. Six MENA based youth and rural serving organizations were selected by Taqueem to receive PGA facilitator certification, including UNRWA, GIZ Jordan, Ministry of Planning and Internal Cooperation Jordan, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the National Commission for Lebanese Women, the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, Queen Rania Foundation and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research. Organizations selected for PGA training came from both

CoP organizations (UNRWA and Queen Rania Foundation) and non-CoP organizations. They were selected for facilitator certification because of their expertise in gender mainstreaming, detection of gender discrimination and accountability and monitoring systems for gender equality.

84. The evaluation team was not able to determine the extent to which this training was effective and relevant to those who participated, nor the degree to which the result of the training contributed to overall objectives of Taqueem with regard to gender. One CoP organization staff member participating in the evaluation who trained at ITCILO did not yet find opportunity to apply her new knowledge.

ii. Technical assistance to CoPs

85. The Taqueem team engaged technical specialists to work with Track 2 CoPs on the development of M&E systems and tools for specific projects within their organizations. Overall the evaluation team identifies these relationships as very productive and successful. Those Track 2 CoP members interviewed by the evaluation team were able to speak clearly about how the technical assistance benefited them in their work and how they applied their new knowledge and products developed. The assistance provided was contextualized to their needs and delivered in a variety of ways, through in-person advising and training, and continued video conferencing and phone calls over a period of many months.

86. Uptake of this was also evident in other initiatives within the organizations, providing evidence of applied learning and an embedding in processes and systems within their respective organizations. Those Track 2 CoP organizations interviewed were able to demonstrate internalized learning acquired under Taqueem, which the evaluation team identified as successfully sustained.

87. The evaluation team identifies the Track 2 capacity building efforts as particularly successful with clearly articulated value and capacity building articulated by the Track 2 CoP members, resulting from a combined approach of trainings, workshops, and an in-house technical advisor with clear learning objectives. The learning achieved by the Track 1 CoP members was evident in their consistent high regard for the trainings and workshops attended. Yet the experience of engaging on an impact study was uneven due to the varying roles assumed and the lesser capacity to reflect and articulate their learning from the experience during interviews with the evaluation team.

88. Lastly, the evaluation team observed that the Track 2 capacity building experience overall presented an opportunity for mutual learning and engagement between local organizations and technical advisors that the more hierarchical Track 1 experience of implementing impact studies entailed. The higher level of expertise of the researchers coupled with the organization's programming led to a very different kind of learning process specific to engaging on the narrowly defined impact study. The evaluation team observed more in depth and mutually engaging partnerships among Track 2 organizations and their technical advisors that resulted in change at both the individual staff and organizational level.

iii. Development of a CoP and a mass of critical evaluation capacity under Taqueem

89. Stakeholders pointed to the rich networking opportunity provided by the Taqueem trainings and workshops. Yet many CoP participants expressed an interest for more workshops in order to better nurture relationships and build a stronger and more effective learning community among the participating organizations. The training workshops, while effective in promoting learning, offered little opportunity to build relationships among the participants. One CoP member noted that the opportunity to build personal relationships at workshops was limited as they were always working. Further, while the same organizations participating over time, there were different staff

members attending -- a common challenge for programmes -- which also was not conducive for building and sustaining a community of practice based on relationships. A final point is the engagement of CoP members under previous phases to promote continuity within the CoP and the Taqueem programme, which did not happen.

90. CoP members noted the workshops included both lecture and more interactive approaches to learning such as a case study for small group discussions. The workshops in the latter half of the programme provided opportunity for CoPs to present to each other about their work. Yet given time was limited, there was the desire expressed to have more time spent for CoPs to share their learning with each other. The workshops themselves were insufficient in number and design to effectively build and nurture a community of practice that can sustain itself with members connecting and sharing beyond the workshops themselves.

91. The evaluation team notes the idea behind the online platform is, in addition to serving as a repository for information, to support the development of the CoP. As the platform was launched in beta form, the evaluation team found little evidence that the platform supported development of the CoP and enabled an ongoing sense of community. Instead, the majority used the platform for accessing information and networking with colleagues. Just 2 respondents out of the 14 responding to the survey noted receipt of newsletter and accessing job opportunities.

iv. M&E practitioner guide produced

92. Taqueem produced an M&E practitioner guide called “Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth”, which provided a comprehensive guidance to evaluating, monitoring and learning in labor market programmes targeting young people. A significant majority of those stakeholders interviewed expressed appreciation for this resource, regarding it as simple, user-friendly and easily customizable to individual projects. It is also practical in its approach, as each module can be used as a standalone unit.

93. The M&E Guide has been highly appreciated by DWT/CO-Cairo in particular working together with ILO partners and constituents on youth employment interventions. For example, the guide has been distributed among all government and non-government members of the Egypt Youth Employment Promotion Forum.⁴⁷ Further, the evaluation team notes the M&E Guide supports sustained work on youth employment programmes, while also serving as a strong and effective resource for future training on M&E.

Effectiveness in the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions

94. The programme implemented a total of 11 studies before the end of its phase, 6 of which used experimental and quasi-experimental approaches, and 5 of which were research studies, as outlined in Annex 15. The programme’s greatest level of activity was in Egypt.

95. The studies were considered to be of very high quality and greatly appreciated by all stakeholders interviewed, including IFAD. The reports were well drafted and produced. Some charts and graphs were incorporated, but the reports largely consisted of narrative to convey their results.

i. Progress toward filling the “evidence gap” on youth employment in the MENA region

⁴⁷ A platform that regularly brings together key youth employment stakeholders in Egypt to discuss pressing policy priorities. It is led by the ILO, GIZ and the Egypt National Competitiveness Council.

96. The programme made progress in producing new research for consideration by governments, practitioners and others interested in youth/gender/rural employment in the MENA region. According to the project management’s final donor report to IFAD, the programme completed the following 4 impact studies.⁴⁸ An outline of their primary findings is found in Annex 16.

- “The impact of skills training on the financial behaviour, employability and educational choices of rural young people: Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Morocco”
- “Empowering Young Women through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from a Field Intervention in Rural Egypt”
- “Constraints and good practice in women’s entrepreneurship in MENA, Case study: New evidence on gender attitudes towards women in business”
- “Assessing the impact on employability and quality of employment of non-formal apprenticeship in agriculture-related trades in Egypt”

97. The extent to which these studies contribute toward new knowledge and fill what may be identified as a “gap” is unknown to the evaluation team. A meta-analysis of all studies completed to date would need to be undertaken, and a determination of what may well be regarded as a gap. Yet perceptions on what constitutes evidence, what constitutes the gap, and whose knowledge and comprehension is taken into consideration raises interesting question on how the dynamics of supply and demand play out with regard to knowledge creation and evidence.

98. A working group of the Taqueem Advisory Council began such an assessment in 2016, well after the RFP was issued in 2015, and produced a paper entitled “Towards a Demand-Driven Research Agenda on Active Labor Market Programs in the Middle East and North Africa”. The rationale was based on the understanding that knowledge uptake of studies produced was hindered by their perceived low relevance. Their preliminary findings, based on assessment of previous studies and interviews in the MENA region, was targeting as a clear priority for those surveyed. Practitioners face difficulties in knowing which services are most appropriate for what audience and how to identify and target those that are most likely to benefit from a particular service.

99. Other issues identified were cross-cutting, including influencing young people’s preferences (reflecting the persistent challenge to attract youth for formal private sector employment as opposed to public employment and informal self-employment), displacement and migration (a reflection of the current conflicts in the region), institutional arrangements (e.g., partnerships and performance-based contracts), and gender (reflecting the difficult labor market situation for women). Entrepreneurship and skills development were also identified as a priority.⁴⁹ The Taqueem programme did not issue another RFP after 2015, and, with the discontinuation of the Advisory Council and working groups, the research was not continued. Yet such a positive step helps frame and inform research to be carried out in the future, enabling clearer rationale and formulation of research objectives.

100. The evaluation team engaged multiple stakeholders on their own learning from the programme’s impact studies and how they regarded the studies’ relevance and significance. While responses were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the reports, there was little expression on the significance of the reports’ findings as filling gaps in existing (or their)

⁴⁸ Taqueem project final report, page 18.

⁴⁹ “Towards a Demand-Driven Research Agenda on Active Labor Market Programs in the Middle East and North Africa: Preliminary findings for discussion” page 2.

knowledge. The evaluation team concluded that the volume of reading produced by the programme had yet to “sink in” for many.

101. The evaluation team notes that that what counts as “credible and rigorous evidence” has long been debated in the research and evaluation fields. The evaluation theorist and recently retired US American academic, Thomas Schwandt, warns of a methodologically-driven approach to evaluation whereby it would behoove us as evaluators to ensure we are asking the right questions (the research agenda) and are truly examining the value, merit and worth of the evaluand.

102. The programme is to be commended in its moving away from an interest in true experiments. The methods employed for the third phase of the programme involved several RCTs but there were also quasi-experimental designs and some that were not experimental in nature. Yet an approach that is not methodologically-driven or pre-determined leads to greater success in findings answers to the right questions, in determining which design may be most appropriate for a given intervention, and, in Schwandt’s view, to truly focusing on value, merit and worth.

ii. Taqueem’s experience with the adoption and experimentation with the WEAI

103. The Taqueem management team was originally concerned about the thematic fit of the WEAI tool for the following reasons: it was developed mainly for low income agricultural settings, it takes 2 hours to apply, and it was piloted in Philippines and Bangladesh not in the MENA region. They believed it was suitable to be incorporated in huge countrywide surveys rather than small-scale research projects.

104. IFPRI input was just one partner among many who participated in the tool’s revision. Comments were provided, which the Taqueem team considered in their revision. It is worth noting that the IFPRI emphasized that they did not endorse the WEAI developed by Taqueem. The evaluation team acknowledges the Taqueem management team’s claim that endorsement by IFPRI was not required as it is an open source tool, yet the tool as it was originally known and understood by IFAD to be applied was not the same version that was applied within the Taqueem programme.

105. IFPRI reportedly considered the modified version to be gender-oriented instead of a women empowerment in agricultural sector measurement index. The evaluation team was not able to determine whether IFAD was receptive to the modifications to the tool, and nor was the evaluation team aware of any debate as to the differences of the tool as it evolved compared to the original. The evaluation team does, however, acknowledge the application of such a tool in the MENA region to be a challenge and an achievement.

106. The IE conducted by the Population Council and the Institute for Labour Studies (IZA) of its “Neqdar Nesharek” project was the most gender-oriented research work and provided opportunity for the WEAI application.⁵⁰ It was implemented by the Population Council to evaluate the impact of the “Neqdar Nesharek” project for young women’s economic participation and leadership in rural Upper Egypt. The IFPRI version of WEAI was not applied because it proved to be difficult to integrate the 2-hour household survey tool into an impact evaluation that surveyed individuals rather than households and included already various other question areas. Instead of the WEAI the impact evaluation included other (much shorter) indices relating to women’s socio-economic empowerment.

107. In September 2017, Taqueem attempted to pilot the WEAI index in Djibouti in collaboration with the World Bank and IFPRI to respond to IFAD’s priorities on gender/rural/agricultural. Later, IFAD preferred not to go forward with the project as it regarded the World Bank as a competitor

⁵⁰ Population Council – Neqdar Nesharek, <http://www.popcouncil.org/research/neqdar-nesharek>

with its own financing mechanisms, which the evaluation team regards as unfortunate. Other winning research proposals were less suitable for WEAI experimentation.

108. In Tunisia, Taqueem partnered with the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, University of Passau and 3ie to conduct an IE of a national-wide job search assistance and placement programme (FORSATI) by the Tunisian Government, but the study did not go ahead in the end for political reasons. Taqueem had another attempt to implement the WEAI index in a piece of research (not an evaluation) with the University of Tunis and Business School of Sfax to measure women empowerment. The index was modified to include rural/urban women, youth empowerment as well as other elements to fit the Tunisian country context (a country in transition). The youth empowerment part included social life, access to education, decision-making, and access to the labor market. University of Passau led the WEAI index design modification, partnered with University of Tunis, and IFAD endorsed the modification process. The learnings from the process are published in a report under Taqueem, including reflection on adaptation of the WEAI and of Western versus Middle Eastern ideas about empowerment and what it might look like in different contexts.

Effectiveness in promoting evidence-based policy development

109. The programme generated a significant number of publications, outlined in Annex 14. Like the other publications produced by the Taqueem programme, the policy briefs were appreciated for their high quality. Along with these publications 9 policy forums and roundtable workshops were held. Policy strategy papers were also developed for 3 countries – Morocco, Jordan and Egypt -- with the ultimate goal of improving labour market outcomes for young women and men in rural and urban areas through the production of evidence based policies and programmes. These strategy papers map out a 4-step process for influencing policy, called the Policy Influence Plan (PIP):

- Step 1: Understand – Analyze context and develop stakeholder and evidence mapping
- Step 2: Publicize – Develop communication and advocacy products
- Step 3: Engage – Dissemination and advocacy
- Step 4: Sustainability⁵¹

110. Taqueem produced enough evidence-based policy briefs (a total of 11) to start the policy influencing process. Taqueem also leveraged ILO's comparative advantage of close relationships with government, employer and worker organizations in the region to facilitate dissemination of findings and recommendations from impact research. Policy forums and roundtables were well attended with the participation of government officials.

111. In addition to the outputs noted above that were achieved, the Taqueem programme made several significant contributions to ILO initiatives, demonstrating relevance within the region and integration within ILO programming during the latter half of its implementation.

- **Egypt:** The ILO Decent Work Team for North Africa, the ILO Egypt Country Office and the ILO Taqueem programme worked together to provide support to the Egyptian government on designing and implementing evidence-based active labor market policies for women and young people. Three government agencies act as ILO's main counterparts in achieving this goal: the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MoMM), the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation (MIIC) and the Ministry of Planning (MoP). At the request of the government, the ILO designed the "*Egyptian Youth Employment*" Programme, known as EYE. An MoU was signed between the ILO and the MIIC to create one million jobs for young people. The Taqueem

⁵¹ See Annex 17 for a graphic of the 4 steps, as developed by the programme.

programme was a key contributor to the EYE policy initiative, which recognizes a “lack of evidence-based research on what works for women and youth employment”.⁵²

- **North Africa:** In September 2017, the ILO, in partnership with the Taqueem programme, gathered government, worker and employer authorities responsible for youth and women’s employment to a high-level policy forum at ILO headquarters in Geneva, called the “Youth and Employment in North Africa” (YENA) conference. Participants in the conference included high-level delegates from North Africa, including five Ministers and deputy-ministers from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia; ten heads of workers’ and employers’ organizations; and 27 development partners. The conference approved a ‘Roadmap for youth employment in North Africa’ for the next five years and registered the commitments of the ILO’s tripartite stakeholders and of key development partners to do more, and better on this central front for the development and stability of the region.⁵³

112. Taqueem has contributed to the overall ILO portfolio on youth employment, assisting the country programme in negotiating the EYE initiative with the Egyptian Government, and supporting the generation of attention and increased interest on the part of the Government. The evaluation team also identifies the approval of the ‘Roadmap for youth employment in North Africa’ for the next five years and its registered commitments of the ILO’s tripartite stakeholders as certainly positive, showing demonstrated relevance and contribution from the Taqueem programme, yet it does not imply policy influence. Although it may serve as a beginning to policy influence, enactment of the roadmap requires alignment with the national youth development strategies at the country level -- an endeavor that may well be realized beyond the Taqueem programme lifetime.

113. While Taqueem has achieved concrete outputs under Component 3 through its publications and policy forums organized, and its contributions toward several ILO initiatives, the evaluation team found no evidence of actual policy influence resulting from the publications and forums themselves. The evaluation team notes the long-term outlook on policy influence but also identifies strategies based on the team’s observations and discussions with stakeholders during the course of implementing the evaluation. Those relate to a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of supply and demand, nurturing of partnerships, and the importance of timeliness within a given political context.

- ***The evaluation team notes the demand for evaluation and the evidence it may offer for decision-making in the MENA region is still low and Government engagement and action on the results of research and evaluation is slow.*** The evaluation team notes that the majority of policy makers and implementers in the region lack understanding of the importance of evaluation as a tool for programme design and improvement. As a result, monitoring and evaluation frameworks are often underdeveloped or missing, and only a small minority of programmes conducts any type of evaluation. In Jordan, for example, a sound strategy exists on employment and migration, which has been taken up by the Ministry of Labour, yet there is no interest to engage on a mid-term evaluation to identify progress and what could be done better. As noted above, there are more than 250 ALMP programmes in Egypt, with little evaluation of their outcomes and what can be learned from them – a need identified by the programme, which has been used as a justification for its implementation.

Yet despite the growing emphasis on the evidence base on “what works” in youth employment, evidence-based decision and policy-making in Egypt is lacking.⁵⁴ Yet there has been some movement within the Egyptian Government. The Ministry of Planning is leading the

⁵² Project completion report, page 24.

⁵³ Project completion report, page 25.

⁵⁴ Towards Evidence-Based Active Labor Market Programmes in Egypt, page 42.

government's efforts in setting up a nation-wide Monitoring and Evaluation system and is still in the early stages. The current monitoring system within ministries is basically a financial audit system with no KPI for measuring performance progress towards the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which gives a sense of how basic approaches are and the value for data and evidence.⁵⁵

- ***Policy advice that is timely, relevant and contextualized is paramount.*** In Jordan, an important study was published by someone with good connections within the Government. “A Challenging Labour Market becomes more Challenging” gives clear outline of the complexity of the problems facing the market with well conceptualized recommendations provided, yet very little has been done on its uptake within the Jordanian Government. The ILO office in Amman notes how the Government is in crisis mode and focused only on an immediate response, thus a real time M&E function housed within the ILO Jordan office reporting directly to the head of office would be effective in responding to data needs.
- ***Policy advice based on an in-depth understanding of local power dynamics, brokering of relationships and how policy is made is important.*** While the ILO country and regional offices have relationships and insight into local government context and decision-making, resources are limited to undertake advocacy over the long-term on a particular initiative or evidence-base.

114. Also, one challenge to Taqueem's approach has been that public organizations/government institutions, which were the most relevant ILO partner, were not well represented among the group of organizations who applied for the call for proposals. Taqueem invited public organizations/government representatives for events or conferences but they have not benefited from technical assistance to strengthen their own M&E capacities. The majority of the grant funds went to non-governmental entities with a few to government and UN agencies.

115. Taqueem effectiveness in promoting evidence-based policy development was measured by the indicator of “successful replication or scaling up of projects of organizations involved in the CoP”. The logic here was that by improving the ability of implementing organizations to measure results of their youth and women's employment programming, their policy influence and impact could be expanded. Yet the evaluation team found that by most CoPs' accounts, influencing policy, even with their improved M&E systems in place, would take much more time than a 3-year programme with the inputs that Taqueem has provided. The political realities on the ground and the challenges civil society groups face to engage government provide for a certain complexity that makes it challenging for a short programme of capacity building spanning across multiple countries to have significant impact.

E. Sustainability

Box 5: Sustainability main findings

- *Track 2 CoP members' new learning and capacity achieved during the program has already been sustained as the result of that learning has been embedded within their respective organizations.*
- *The programme did not achieved substantial ownership over Taqueem in the MENA region, aside from the enthusiasm from CoP members who have directly benefited from its capacity building interventions.*

⁵⁵ Egypt's 2030 Vision

<http://www.cabinet.gov.eg/English/GovernmentStrategy/Pages/Egypt%E2%80%99sVision2030.aspx>

Capacity development

116. The evaluation team identifies the greatest outcomes achieved in the capacity development component of the programme. There are indications that learning achieved from workshops and technical advice, particularly for Track 2 CoPs, have been applied within their respective organizational contexts with definite outputs achieved. This learning should be sustained as the results of it are already embedded within their respective organizations, and their own beneficiaries should receive some benefit from better-organized and more effective programmes.

117. While the concrete learning achieved will be sustained by the CoP organizations, the development of a more critical mass of capacity within the region will be difficult to develop further without continuation of the Taqueem programme and a more deliberate effort to build local capacity in all aspects of programme implementation, including the evaluations and studies themselves.

Ownership over Taqueem

118. Those who have benefited the most – the CoP members who have received capacity building assistance – are very enthusiastic about Taqueem and interested in continued participation and growth of the programme.

119. Yet the evaluation team found that ownership of the programme was not effectively acquired within the MENA region due to a combined discontinuation of the Taqueem Advisory Council and lack of significant membership and participation of those who are the “audience” or comprise the “demand” for evaluation. As a result there was a low ‘sense of ownership’ of the Taqueem programme within the MENA region. Further, the evaluation team did not find a definitive sustainability plan in place specifically focused on ownership.

120. Still the evaluation team sensed a continued name or brand recognition for Taqueem in the region, in spite of staging just one call for proposals in 2015, and among a majority of stakeholders, particularly those who aim to benefit from Taqueem resources, a strong interest in its continuation.

121. In response to the survey question, “A Taqueem objective is to promote ownership over the various aspects of its program. Who or what entity would best lead this endeavor in the future and why?” responses were overwhelmingly favoring the ILO based on its good work and leadership leading the effort; another international organization; or even previous CoP members well advanced in M&E and IE; or a research and evaluation institution in the region. The question was interpreted in different ways by respondents, reflecting varying ideas about the Taqueem initiative itself, its brand, and what “ownership” means or should mean. The words of one respondent with a history of 4-7 years with Taqueem indicates the initiative has or should have a life of its own, implying collective leadership and buy-in, beyond one single agency:

“Taqueem works with organizations ... and does not at any stage impose opinions or work practices, it builds on what exists, fine tunes it and ensure ownership. It then acts as a focal point or referral entity for the members of the community of practice. It is well aware of the Youth Programming trends in the MENA region, its successes and challenges, so I honestly do not see another entity being able to replace it.”

Online platform and network sustainability

122. The online platform has contributed toward some continuity for CoP members beyond the workshops, yet it has largely served as a repository of information members will access, more than as a means to communicate with each other. It will need to continue to be managed, along with the possible further development of the platform’s capacity to engage CoP members and serve as a

continued means to engage members from different phases – a vital link to creating a more critical mass of evaluation and M&E capacity development in the region.

Conclusion

123. Taqueem has employed a 3-prong approach focused on capacity building, implementation of impact research and evaluations, and policy influence as a means toward achieving its 2 development objectives: improving project management and gender mainstreaming for organizations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E; and improved gender policy and investment for governments and international organizations. Taqueem effectively engaged 17 organizations across the MENA region, which were governmental, non-governmental, UN, foundation and academic entities, in providing capacity development support. The programme effectively achieved increased M&E capacity, particularly among Track 2 CoP members. Applied learning was achieved, as well as benefit at the organizational level. Trainings and workshops were highly appreciated by CoP members, both for their quality and opportunity to network, as well as the technical assistance provided for Track 2 CoP members.

124. The programme successfully carried out a select number of experimental evaluations, quasi-experimental evaluations, non-experimental evaluations and research studies across the region. The programme also struggled with administrative and logistical challenges and time delays. Taqueem produced high quality policy briefs, Impact briefs, and other products as a means to disseminate learning based on its studies and as a means to influence policy. These took place at different events, including workshops and high-level policy roundtables.

125. Taqueem made notable initial steps concerning policy influence through its contributions to the development of the EYE programme in Egypt and its collaboration on the YENA forum in Geneva, however, the evaluation team found very little evidence of policy uptake having taken place. A combined approach of publications and policy forums has not been sufficient, demonstrating a need for greater integration into the local context with more in-depth knowledge of power structures and policy-making processes. Further, a need for further research and understanding on targeting and determining the demand for evaluation across the region to better inform the RFP process is a factor in contributing toward greater possibility of influencing policy. Finally, ILO country program's lack of resources and ability to absorb the extensive material generated by Taqueem, coupled with Taqueem's centralized management in Geneva were also a factor influencing success.

126. The ILO management team was challenged in managing a complex multi-stakeholder program across two ILO regions from Geneva with just 1 national staff in Cairo. Communication and coordination challenges existed among the multiple stakeholder groups. One area of miscommunication was indicative of overall programme ownership – that of management team and Taqueem Advisory Council partnership. While the Taqueem Advisory Council had a TORs drafted outlining its mandate, in practice they faced challenges with uncertainty about their role in the programme. The evaluation team noted a certain conflict over whether Taqueem is an ILO programme or an initiative that is much larger than the ILO, and the kind of participation and engagement envisioned.

127. While CoP members benefitting from the program have been very enthusiastic and appreciative of Taqueem, the programme has been unable to generate significant ownership over Taqueem within the MENA region. The evaluation team found this was due to a number of factors, including its Geneva-based management structure and Advisory Council discontinuation during the latter half of program implementation, as well as make-up of the Advisory Council and the need for

a more clearly representative body of the region representing more diverse backgrounds, evaluation interests and capacities, and expertise on gender.

Lessons Learned

1. ***A complex project that covers two ILO regions and aims to influence policy would benefit from being based in one of those regions.*** Base the project within the region of its focus in order to better contextualize the research, align with the ILO's policy agenda, and improve chances for effective policy influence. Such an approach would also support greater levels of efficiency for the project.
2. ***Clear and open communication among programme stakeholders is important.*** There was a trend of poor communication and coordination in the programme, including clarity around donor expectations, communicating programme goal and objectives clearly, communication between management and Advisory Council, and communication between programme management and REO. Clear communication is essential to increased levels of efficiency, developing buy-in, and ultimately to achieving the programme goal and objectives.
3. ***Policy influence requires more than producing high quality reports and holding policy forums.*** A sound strategy needs to be in place that takes into consideration local power and decision-making structures, the relevance and timeliness of a given topic area for influence, and a stronger communications approach. In addition, the questions that are pertinent to policy-makers should be the driving force for research and evaluation studies, with an appropriate methodology applied to answer the question.

Good Practice

1. ***Pairing M&E technical experts with Track 2 COP members led to a very productive exchange, and built capacity of staff on their own organization's projects.*** The technical assistance was tailored and contextualized within the organizations and fully based on its needs. This enabled easier application of new knowledge and skills achieved, increased the chances for application of new skills and knowledge to other aspects of programming, and resulted in effective building of staff capacity.
2. ***The production of the M&E Guide served as an effective means to help sustain the program through capturing teaching and learning under the Taqueem programme, while serving as an effective resource for future M&E training.*** The Guide was very well received as a highly useful and practical resource by youth employment practitioners. Particularly effective was its contribution on cutting edge topics such as chapter 2 on youth employment indicators and chapter 7 on evidence uptake in policy formulation.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the evaluation team recommends wide consultation among Taqueem stakeholders in undertaking the following recommendations. In achieving Taqueem's ambitious and broad agenda, a multi-stakeholder approach brings a clear added value.

- 1) ***Formalize the role of the Taqueem Advisory Council, clarify its function, and further diversify its make-up.*** The Taqueem Advisory Council has served as an advisory group offering guidance to Taqueem. The evaluation team recommends that its role be formalized with a clearer mandate to function as a steering committee with clear structure, rules and policies, including

safeguarding policies on potential conflict of interest. The evaluation team proposes the following roles for the Taqueem Steering Committee:

- Set and norms, strategic vision and direction and formulate high-level goals and policies, including decision-making policies;
- Oversee Taqueem management and organizational performance to ensure that the Taqueem Initiative is working in the best interests of the public, and more specifically the stakeholders who are served by the initiative;
- Direct and oversee the management to ensure that the Taqueem Initiative is achieving the desired outcomes and to ensure that it is acting prudently and ethically.

The evaluation team recommends a monitoring function with a solid reporting line to the Taqueem management team. Greater representation from the region is advised, to include those influential with governments in the MENA region, those who have other types of backgrounds (non-economics) with greater diversity in evaluation expertise, and those with expertise in gender. Consider including senior ILO EVAL and country program officials on the Council to facilitate greater integration.

- 2) ***Base activities in the region as a means toward reaching policy objectives and ensuring greater efficiency for the programme.*** Decentralize the management structure and base the project within the region of its focus in order to better contextualize the research, gain more presence and relevance in regional/country context, and improve chances for effective policy influence. Such an approach would also enable greater levels of efficiency for the project.
- 3) ***Continue moving toward a clearer research agenda for Taqueem with clarity on what questions need to be asked that better fulfills the evaluation “demand”.*** Build on the discussion paper developed by the Advisory Council working group in 2016 to review new knowledge and understanding gained by previous research and evaluation – “Towards a Demand-Driven Research Agenda on Active Labor Market Programs in the Middle East and North Africa: Preliminary Findings for Discussion”. Build upon Taqueem’s initial successes in the policy arena, notably the EYE programme in Egypt and the YENA conference.
- 4) ***Continue to move away from a methodologically-driven approach to evaluation through clear questions and an emphasis on value, merit and worth.*** It is recommended to continue moving away from a focus on fully experimental methods as the preferred methodology or approach for conducting IE or for assessing effectiveness of a particular intervention. Develop a strong rationale for what new knowledge creation needs to be fostered, focus on the questions to be asked and the valuing of interventions (value, merit and worth) instead of leading with methodology. The importance is to identify the appropriate method to effectively answer the evaluation question(s) posed.
- 5) ***Further develop programme strategy for evidence-based decision and policy making that reflects an understanding of country realities, power structures, and government interests, and capitalizes on ILO government partner relationships.*** Further contextualizing the studies within the scope of each of the ILO country office agendas and involving ILO colleagues in the discussion about criteria and choice would help to effectively contextualize the studies and ensure greater chance of their use by ILO officials based within the country whose relationships with government are the strongest. Timeliness and a greater presence and connection at the country level to support advocacy initiatives would ensure greater success with policy development. Annex 18 outlines a policy influencing process in Egypt, as described by one of the Egyptian Government participants in the evaluation. While the PIP includes elements of these points, benefit may be had in reviewing the full outline.

- 6) ***Develop a more credible and standardized grants management process.*** As discussed above, ILO projects benefiting from an ILO administered fund presents problems for transparency and ethics. One option would be to not involve ILO programming at all in Taqueem. Another option would be to establish a full external review system for all phases of the screening and selection process.

To develop greater validity for the external review process of assessing full proposals, consider the following: two different assessors (not connected to each other) should evaluate the same proposal. Each assessor should assign a grade as percentage for each selection criteria; selection criteria can be weighted as per donor priorities, thematic focus and also to mitigate assessor bias. The project team can then compare the two scores to detect variance between the two assessors; if more than 10-15 percent variance occurs, the same proposal can be assessed by a third assessor for quality control, validation, and to mitigate assessors' bias. Pay the external assessors; one would question the quality of assessment and produced work when done on a pro bono basis.

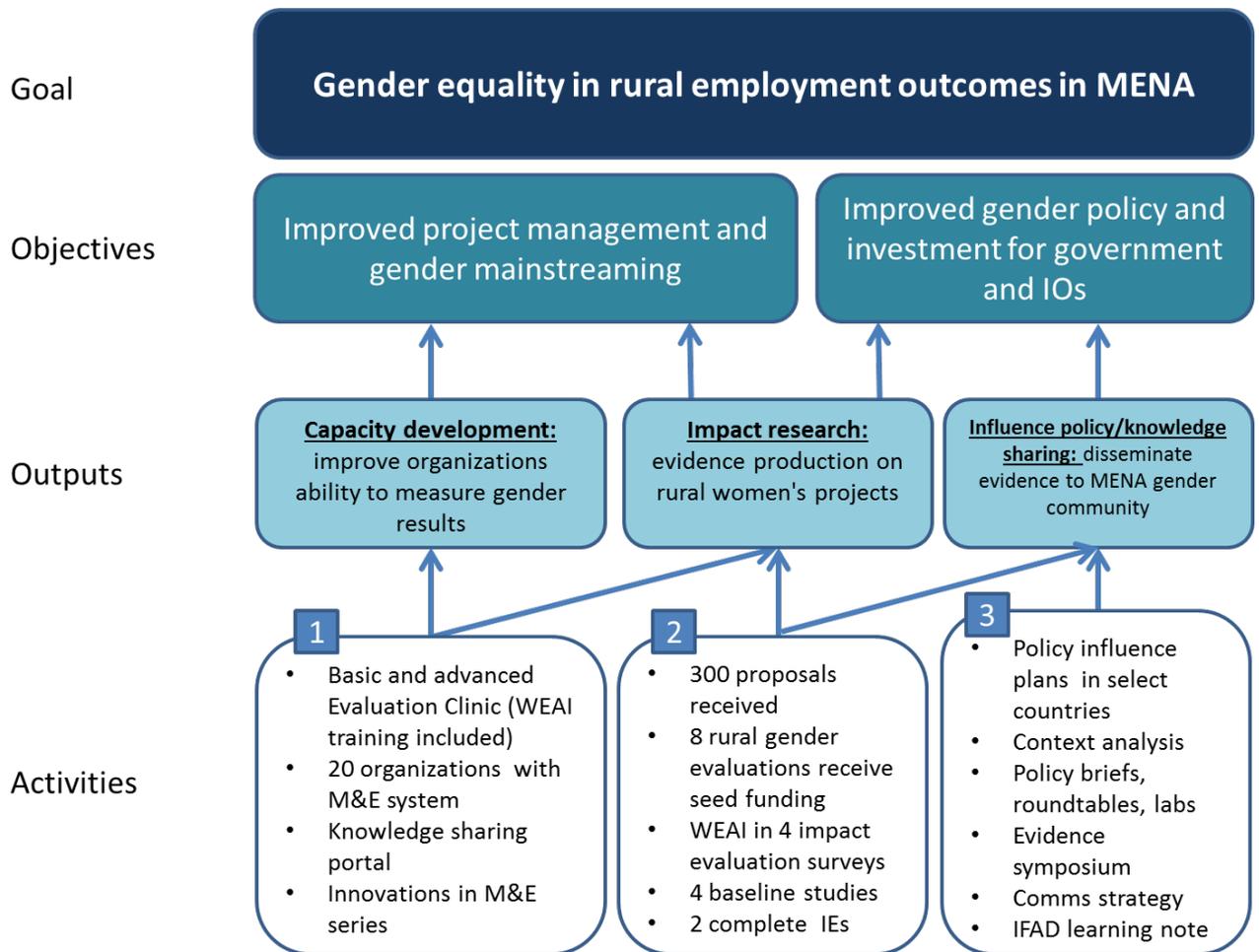
- 7) ***Develop a grant management or operational handbook for the programme to orient CoP organizations, CSOs, government entities and others.*** Map out the process of issuing RFPs and decision-making on grants to ensure the process is widely known and transparent. Along with the process for issuing RFPs and selection of grants, include definition of terms for programme stakeholders to clarify what is meant by 'Impact', 'Impact Evaluation', 'Performance Evaluation', what is meant by 'Job Creation', 'Innovation'/'Innovative', 'Quality' and the difference between 'Research' and 'Evaluation'. The Operational Manual is needed to orient and raise awareness of applicants to the different steps from proposal development to administrative policies & procedure, specific distribution of proposed budget items (indirect costs: direct costs), reporting systems for project progress, involvement in RCT studies, and others. Specifically, the operation manual could orient applicants to the necessary prerequisites to render RCTs feasible or appropriate (like the treatment and control group sample size), how to contextualize RCTs to the MENA region, apply RCTs in humanitarian & host-country settings, and the related contextual/social limitations like unethical concerns of randomization that need to be taken into consideration, the difficulty of isolating control groups to prevent contamination, and others. Prior knowledge and awareness to process and definition of terminologies would support applicants in designing more successful proposals and projects, would increase the applicants' chances in developing winning proposals, and will reduce time consumed in assessing and modifying proposals (i.e., will increase Taqueem efficiency measures).
- 8) ***Limit the geographical scope of the programme to build a greater critical mass of capacity at the country level.*** To mitigate the thinning of Taqueem resources in future phases, consider focusing and narrowing in scope to target fewer countries in the MENA region rather than the whole MENA region for both the grants management aspect of the programme as well as policy influence. Further promote the building of capacity through engaging young evaluators within those countries or in the diaspora to help build a stronger capacity and greater ownership at the country level. Lastly, give better definition to "critical mass" and programme objectives and interventions to achieve this, which should be shared understanding across stakeholder groups.
- 9) ***Consider a more purposeful and planned introduction to the WEAI tool in future phases of Taqueem through adopting the following strategies:***
- Raise awareness of the CoP members to the WEAI tool five domains and applications through conducting a series of workshops/sessions prior to the call for proposals; the awareness raising session would introduce the WAEI index, and aim to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It measures the roles and extent of women's engagement in the

agriculture sector in 5 domains: decisions about agricultural production, access to and decision making power over productive resources, control over use of income, leadership in the community, and time use.

- Capitalize on the CoP platform to start blogs and discussions with the main aim to attract attention and promote the tool.
- Conduct WEAI tool standalone training program rather than incorporating it as a module within a whole program; consider inviting IFPRI to deliver the training or serve as resource experts.
- Encourage CoP adoption of the tool not only through offering flexible or modified versions of the tool, but also through an incentive mechanism (perhaps a monetary or in-kind incentive).

10) ***Consider a local research entity or local research partner at the country level as a sustainability measure for Taqueem's work.*** Identification and capacity support of a local research partner to engage would assist Taqueem on a number of fronts, including building of greater ownership within the region, bridging the academic and practitioner gap, contextualizing the relevance of research results and development of an advocacy agenda, and serving as part of a sustainability strategy to sustain the evidence-based research and policy influencing work beyond Taqueem's lifetime.

Annex 1: Summary table of project logframe⁵⁶



⁵⁶ "Project Document IFAD final", page 14.

Annex 2: Evaluation TORs

Final Independent Evaluation of Project “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa”

Overview of the Project	
Project Title	Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa
TC code	GLO/14/24/IFA
ILO Administrative Unit	Youth Employment Programme (YEP)
Technical Backstopping Unit	Employment and Labour Market Policies (EMPLAB)
Collaborating ILO Units	ILO Regional Office for Arab States (Beirut), ILO Decent Work programme for North Africa (Cairo), ILO Skills and Employability Branch, ILO Small and Medium Enterprises Unit, ILO Country Employment Policy Unit, and ILO Gender Equality and Diversity Branch.
Donor	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Budget of the Project	US\$ 1.72 million
Timeframe	36 months
P&B Outcome	Outcome 1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects
CP Outcome	GLO104 (Knowledge and tools to promote decent work for youth); GLO927 (Area of critical importance “Jobs and skills for youth”)
Type of Evaluation	Independent Evaluation
Expected Starting and End Date of Evaluation	7 June – 31 August

1. BACKGROUND ON PROJECT AND CONTEXT

“Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” is a capacity development and learning initiative implemented by ILO and funded by IFAD. After three years of implementation, the project is scheduled to be completed in July 2018. It aims to understand “what works” in the promotion of gender mainstreaming through rigorous impact research with the ultimate goal of reaching gender equality in rural employment outcomes across the region.

The gender gap in economic opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, is the highest in the world. Forty per cent of the region’s population is rural and relies on agriculture as their main source of income. Women make up the majority of the agriculture workforce, being overrepresented among unpaid family workers and in the informal sector.

Rural development practitioners are often held back by a lack of data and evaluations of impact. Weak institutional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity is one of the reasons for the lack of evidence. Part of the solution to improve the evidence base is to promote innovation and learning through experimentation and evaluation in ways that pay attention to results, process and context, and thus facilitate a scaling-up and replication of successful experiences.

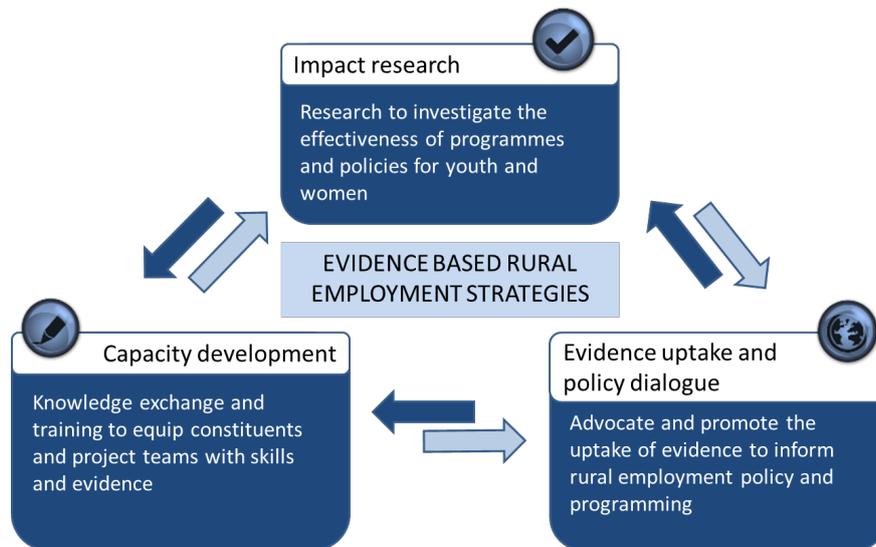
Recognizing the significant demand from its stakeholders, the ILO introduced in 2009 the “Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment” to provide support for rigorous M&E and impact analysis of employment programs. The undertaken studies seek to shed light on what works, why, and how to improve livelihoods, entrepreneurship skills and labour market outcomes. In 2011, the “Taqeem Programme” was created as a regional spin off of the Fund in the MENA region with initial support provided by Silatech. An external evaluation of Taqeem highlighted the success of the initiative and recommended a new and larger phase of Taqeem concentrating on capacity development, impact research and knowledge dissemination.

The IFAD-ILO partnership is a specialized gender window within the Taqeem Initiative - building on its achievements, utilizing its infrastructure, and adopting its tested approach to improving results measurement and evaluation practices in the region, with a focus on programmes that have gender-related aspects in rural areas. The partnership was able to benefit from significant funding and technical support from Silatech in the initial years of the project. The initiative builds also on Taqeem’s “Community of Practice” (phase 1), a knowledge sharing initiative consisting of fifteen organizations implementing innovative results based measurement strategies in the MENA region. The distinctiveness of the project and its value added to Taqeem lies on (i) its ability to explore gender issues for a better understanding about what works to promote employment and empowerment in the MENA region, and (ii) the opportunity it opens to increase evidence on employment and gender impacts in rural areas.

Project strategy and theory of change

The project’s goal is to achieve gender equality in rural employment outcomes in the MENA region through more and better evidence on what works. In the long run, better evidence will lead to better policies which will in turn improve gender equality. The strategy to achieve this mission relies on ILO’s Results Based Advocacy approach that combines three interlinked components: (i) capacity development to equip practitioners and policy makers with evidence and skills on monitoring and evaluation; (ii) the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions to learn what works; and (iii) policy influence through the dissemination of research findings and the creation of partnerships with policy makers to design evidence-based policies and programmes.

Figure: Taqeem strategic approach



The above-mentioned goal is to be achieved through two main objectives:

1. Improved project management and gender mainstreaming for organisations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E
2. Improved employment policies and investments for governments through impact research.

Three main outputs will lead to the realization of the objectives (and mirror the projects three components):

1. Capacity development on results measurement
2. Impact research
3. Policy influence

While each of these three outputs lead to the realization of both objectives, capacity development and impact research are directly linked to the achievement of Objective 1, and policy influence has a direct link with Objective 2.

The **capacity development** component of the project has the clear of aim establishing a critical mass of gender sensitive evaluation expertise in the region. This will be created through three types of activities: trainings, technical assistance and gender assessments within organizations. The trainings were planned to target policy makers and practitioners (basic course) as well as researchers and academics (advanced course). The technical assistance activities were developed through a Community of Practice of rural gender-focused and youth serving implementing organizations. Organizations and projects applying to become members went through a competitive selection procedure based on clearly defined criteria. Winners were eligible to receive a technical assistance package, which will include expert coaching and small cash grants focusing on gender mainstreaming in M&E through the entire project cycle. Capacity building includes a strong component on measuring women empowerment through the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). In practice, results measurement experts are assigned to each of the members of the CoP and work jointly to develop improved results measurement systems. The technical assistance package will thus lead to the roll out of improved, gender sensitive M&E systems. All products developed with the experts are freely shared between members. Last but not least, interested organizations will go through an ILO Participatory Gender Assessment which determines the level of gender mainstreaming in the organization and makes recommendations on how to improve it.

The **impact research** output will follows a competitive process. An annual call for proposals on impact evaluations will be launched requesting researchers and project teams to submit proposals to evaluate rural gender and employment interventions and become members of the CoP. The

selected evaluations can rely on a wide range of methods (both experimental and quasi-experimental) and focus on a defined list of thematic areas related to empowerment and employment outcomes for women in rural areas. Impact research projects will also include empowerment measures including WEAI. Co-funding for the evaluations was pledged by International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, the International Development Research Centre and the ILO Country Office in Egypt.

Policy influence will focus not only on governments, workers and employers, but also on donors and investors. Based on policy influence plans tailored to the MENA region, findings and recommendations for evaluations will be used to influence and create evidence-based policies to promote gender equality in rural employment outcomes. Under this output, several types of activities were planned: development of policy influence national plans and country specific context analyses, the publication of impact and policy briefs and the organization of knowledge sharing and dissemination events.

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is a measurement tool to assess the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in five main domains in the agriculture sector. The WEAI was planned to feature strongly in the project across the three main components (capacity development, impact research and policy influence).

The delivery of the project relies on a large network of partners:

- ILO constituents: Governments, Employers and Workers organizations
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- International American University in Cairo, Egypt
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)
- J-PAL: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
- Humboldt University, Germany
- ENSAE Institute, France
- World Bank, Social Protection and Labour Branch
- ILO regional and country offices
- International Training Centre of the ILO

Many of these partners are members of the Taqem Evaluation Council. The Council provides strategic and technical advice to the project though it is not responsible for directing or supervising it. The Council members are not eligible to be CoP members but they are eligible to receive evaluation grants.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region. Activities concentrate especially on young people (18-35 years) where unemployment rates are highest and political and economic risk more pervasive. The direct beneficiaries include policy makers and social partners, rural women and men participating in impact studies, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, young women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers, practitioners and policy makers trained in basic and advanced evaluation techniques.

Institutional and Management Set-Up

ILO headquarters in Geneva implements the project and is responsible for the overall technical and financial coordination. The project team sits in the Youth Employment Programme (YEP) of the Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch (EMPLAB) and links to technical input from the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch and the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Branch. The project follows an “umbrella” management design where activities are implemented through two ILO field offices in Beirut and Cairo with overall technical responsibility from Geneva. Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS), in Beirut, covers the countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the UAE and Yemen. The ILO Decent Work Team and Country Office for North Africa, in Cairo, covers the countries of Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan South Sudan, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Foreseen external implementing partners were labour and gender ministries, research institutions, project teams serving women and youth, as well as employers and workers organizations.

The project management team was planned to be the following:

- Programme Manager
- Senior Employment Specialist (at 10%)
- Technical Officer
- 2 National Project Officers (Cairo and Beirut)
- Administrative Assistant (at 15%)

The Head of the Youth Employment Programme is providing general oversight and technical support.

Brief summary of project activities and progress to date

Summary of project activities:



Output 1.1: Capacity building

A. Training

- **One basic course on M&E delivered per year**
- **One advanced course on impact evaluation delivered per year**
- **Module on measuring rural women empowerment and WEAI included in the basic course and in the advanced course**

B. Technical assistance

- **Technical assistance provided to at least 20 (*revised target: 17*) implementing organizations and projects for improved results measurement practices**

C. Participatory Gender Assessments in implementing organizations

- **Five organizations receive the ILO “Gender Seal” through a Participatory Gender Assessment**

Output 1.2: Impact research (with seed funding)

- **100 proposals received per year through an annual call for proposals**
- **Eight (*revised target: 6*) rural employment and gender impact studies selected for receiving seed funding WEAI used in four impact evaluation surveys (*revised target: 0*)**
- **Four (*revised target: 2*) baseline studies completed per year**
- **Two impact evaluations developed per year.**

Output 2.1: Policy influence

- Rural gender policy influence plans developed and implemented in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
- Evidence base on gender and youth policies mapped in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
- Context and stakeholders analysis carried out in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
- Three Impact and Policy Briefs developed and disseminated per year covering “what works” in rural female employment
- High level policy roundtables organized in 3 countries
- National policy labs organized in 3 countries
- Yearly Evidence Symposium organized to present regional and global results of gender focused impact evaluations
- Web and social media products developed and communications strategy implemented

Progress to date

In the first three months of the project, the team conducted the desk research and consultations with key project stakeholders in order to better understand the evidence base for gender impacts in labour market interventions and to select target countries. Recommendations on the strategic focus of the project were guided and confirmed by the Taqueem Advisory Council and resulted in the launch of the call for proposals for the Taqueem Fund for Evaluation in Employment 2015 and the selection of the three policy influence countries: Morocco, Egypt and Jordan.

The “Fund for Evaluation in Employment” call for proposals was launched on 1 July 2015 requesting researchers and project teams to submit proposals to evaluate rural employment interventions and become members of the CoP. In total 70 proposals were received from 23 countries. Eventually, fourteen organizations were selected and joined the CoP. The fourteen organizations are separated into two tracks:

- Track 1 – Impact research: seven organizations
- Track 2 – Results measurement: seven organizations

In the first year of the project, the implementation of the WEAI surveys in the research projects has been delayed and was postponed to the second year of the project. Given these challenges, it was decided that WEAI studies needed to be designed and implemented as standalone research projects, instead of trying to build it into existing designs. As a result, two WEAI research projects (in Tunisia and Djibouti) concentrating on rural youth have been conceptualized during the second year of the project, together with IFPRI, the University of Passau and the World Bank.

Linked to the change on the implementation of WEAI, the project design had another major change: the cancellation of the annual call for proposals in year two and three. The reason the call for proposals was cancelled was to allow for the allocation of increased grant funds to the WEAI.

A key project donor, Silatech, has not renewed their partnership with the ILO in 2016. This decision has had major implications for the project team. In order to ensure a continued adequate management of the project, funds originally committed to financing the national officer position in Beirut had to be reallocated to the project team in Geneva and the National Officer position at the ILO Regional Office in Beirut was cancelled.

In 2017 the Taqueem knowledge sharing platform was launched in beta-form. www.ilotaqem.org The objective of the platform is to share evidence, resources and opportunities related to rural youth employment in the MENA region. The platform currently has 356 members.

An [Impact Reports Series](#) and an [Impact Briefs Series](#) was created to disseminate publications and findings from impact research supported under the Taqueem initiative. So far the Impact report series contains 10 publications and the Impact Brief series contains 16 issues and 2 country briefs.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CLIENTS OF THE EVALUATION

Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to indicate to the ILO, IFAD and its partners the extent to which the project has achieved its aim and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

Given the importance of the project in moving forward the ILO youth employment agenda and the long-standing ILO-IFAD collaboration, particular emphasis will be placed on lessons learnt, success factors and good practices which have a potential for replication in future programmes. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will also feed in the design of future intervention models and contribute to documenting management and delivery approaches.

Scope

The evaluation will cover the entire duration of the project since its inception and its full geographic coverage at regional and country level.

Clients

The main clients of this evaluation will be IFAD and in particular the Near East and North Africa unit, the project team, the ILO Employment Policy Department, the Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch, the Youth Employment Programme Unit, the ILO Cairo Office, the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and tripartite constituents.

Secondary clients are the ILO's Governing Body and other units within the ILO that indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by evaluations.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation utilises the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria as defined below:

- Relevance and strategic fit – the extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiaries' needs and the donor's priorities for the covered countries; Strategic fit refers to the extent to which the approach is in line with the national development frameworks, UNDAF, DWCP, SPF and P&B.
- Validity of design – the extent to which the project design, logic, strategy and elements are/ remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs;
- Effectiveness - the extent to which the project immediate objectives were achieved and more concretely whether the stated outputs have been produced satisfactorily;

- Efficiency – a measure of how economically material, human and financial resources were converted to results;
- Effectiveness of management arrangements - the extent to which management capacities and arrangement put in place support the achievement of results;
- Impact orientation – the strategic orientation of the project towards making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes;
- Sustainability – the extent to which the project has produced durable interventions that can be maintained, or even scaled up and replicated.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation will examine the project on the basis of the questions listed below and against the standard evaluation criteria mentioned above. The evaluators will start from the proposed set of questions and develop a more detailed analytical structure of questions and sub-questions. Gender equality concerns will always be taken into account.

1. Relevance and strategic fit

- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?
- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?
- Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?
- How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?
- Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?

2. Validity of design

- In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?
- How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?

3. Effectiveness

- Has the project achieved its objectives?
- How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?
- Were there any important unintended results?

4. Efficiency of resource use

- Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?
- Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?
- Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficiently use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?

5. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?

- How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?
- How effectively the project reacted to unexpected changes in funding?
- How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?

6. Impact and sustainability of results

- What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?
- What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?
- What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, to be defined and approved as part of the evaluation methodology to be submitted by the selected team of consultants.

Envisaged steps include the following:

1. Desk Review: Review of project materials, publications, data, etc.
2. Inception meeting with the project team in ILO HQ.

The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project. Among others, the following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report.

3. Initial interviews through conference call with key informants including IFAD, ILO Decent Work programme for North Africa (Cairo), ILO Coordinator for Jordan (based in Amman).
4. Submission of an inception report with the final methodology.
5. Any additional data collection prior to the evaluation mission, as considered appropriate by the evaluator. The administration of an online survey may be useful for collecting data from stakeholders not consulted through interviews.
6. Missions to Egypt and Jordan with individual interviews and/or group Interviews with the key stakeholders (members of the CoP, among others).
7. Debriefing with the ILO and IFAD after submission of the draft final report.
8. Submission of the final report after integrating feedback of relevant stakeholders.

6. CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELIVERABLES

The contractor will be responsible for:

- The design, planning and implementation of the evaluation and the write-up of the evaluation report, using an approach agreed with ILO, and for delivering in accordance with the ILO's specifications and timeline;
- Consulting and liaising, as required, with ILO and any partners to ensure satisfactory delivery of all deliverables;
- Making themselves available, if required, to take part in briefings and discussions, online or, if judged necessary, at the ILO Geneva Office or other venue, on dates to be agreed, in line with the work outlined in these ToRs.

The contractor should provide the following deliverables:

Deliverable 1: Inception report with methodology

The inception report should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The inception report should also include an evaluation matrix, proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables.

Guidance is available at the following link:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165972.pdf

Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report

To be submitted to the evaluation manager in the format prescribed by the ILO

http://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165967.pdf

Deliverable 3: Presentation of draft report

A presentation should be prepared for the ILO and the IFAD on the draft report, to be used during the debriefing (via videoconference)

Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report with executive summary

To be submitted to the evaluation manager. The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation unit. The report should be professionally edited.

The vendor will be responsible for scheduling all meetings with stakeholders.

7. ILO RESPONSIBILITIES

The ILO evaluation manager will have the following responsibilities:

- Review the evaluation questions with the evaluation team and liaise with concerned stakeholders as necessary.
- Monitor the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate and in such a way as to minimize bias in the evaluation findings;
- Review the evaluation report and provide initial comments;
- Circulate the draft evaluation report to all concerned stakeholders;
- Collect comments on the draft from all stakeholders and forward to the evaluator;
- Liaise with project staff whenever their engagement is needed to fulfil the requirements above.

The project team will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide all necessary information, documents and contact lists available.
- Facilitate the scheduling of meetings with key stakeholders when necessary.

8. COMPLETION CRITERIA

Acceptance will be acknowledged only if the deliverable(s) concerned are judged to be in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract, to reflect agreements reached and plans submitted during the contract process, and incorporate or reflect consideration of amendments proposed by ILO

Completion and acceptance of the final report will be based on the criteria set out by the ILO Evaluation Unit which are outlined in a note accessible at the following link:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165968.pdf

Gender equality issues shall be explicitly addressed throughout the evaluation activities of the consultant and all outputs including final reports or events need to be gender mainstreamed as well as included in the evaluation summary.

Deliverables will be regarded as delivered when they have been received electronically by the Evaluation Manager and confirmed acceptance of them.

9. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This evaluation will comply with UN norms and standards for evaluation and ensure that ethical safeguards concerning the independence of the evaluation will be followed. Please refer to the UNEG code of conduct: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

All draft and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with Word for Windows. All data and information received from the ILO for the purpose of this assignment will be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentation can only be made with the agreement of ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

10. SCHEDULE OF DELIVERABLES

Phase/Task	Dates	Team ⁵⁷ Lead
Desk Review	18 June – 6 July	5 days
Inception Report finalized and interviews in GVA (and possibly Rome)	9-13 July	5 days ⁵⁸
Field mission to Jordan and Egypt	15-26 July	10 days ⁵⁹
Draft report	30 July – 10 August	6 days
Comments from key stakeholders and ILO on draft report	10-22 August	0
Report finalized	22-27 August	4 days
TOTAL WORK DAYS		30 days

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE & TRAVEL

Contract duration: From June 7 – August 31

- The total contract days are 30.

⁵⁷ A national consultant will join the team to assist with interviews in Jordan and Egypt (12 days of work). A separate contract will be established with the national consultant.

⁵⁸ 5 days instead of 6 to account for a Monday-Friday workweek.

⁵⁹ Two days are added to the fieldwork (from 8 to 10) to provide for 1 day for the team to prepare together at the beginning, and 1 day at the end for analysis. Days are formulated based on 4 days of interviews with stakeholders in each location.

- The consultant will be paid \$700/day for 30 days for total contract of \$21,000
- 50% fees after submission and approval of inception report
- 50% final fees after approval of final evaluation report by the ILO.

Travel costs: covered by the ILO. Standard UN system DSA and travel for field missions;

- Field missions are planned for Geneva, Amman and Cairo.
- Flights and DSA for missions will be paid for by the ILO and 100% DSA rate before mission to Geneva and country missions
- Once dates for mission are finalized, the contract will be amended to include number of days of DSA. Flight tickets will be purchased directly by Carlson.

Annex 3: Evaluation questions

1. Relevance and strategic fit

- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?
- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?
- Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?
- How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?
- Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?

2. Validity of design

- In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?
- How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?

3. Effectiveness

- Has the project achieved its objectives?
- How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?
- Were there any important unintended results?

4. Efficiency of resource use

- Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?
- Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?
- Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficient use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?

5. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?
- How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?
- How effectively the project reacted to unexpected changes in funding?
- How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?

6. Impact and sustainability of results

- What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?

- What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?
- What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?

Annex 4: Persons interviewed

No.	Name	Position	Organization	Date of interview	Location		
1	Christine Hofmann	Skills and Employability Specialist	ILO	6 July	Skype		
2	Drew Gardiner	Project Manager	ILO	9 July	Geneva		
3	Valter Nebuloni	Head, Youth Employment Unit	ILO				
4	Jean-Francois Klein	Evaluation focal point, Employment Dept	ILO				
5	Mini Thakur	Senior Evaluation Officer, EVAL Office	ILO				
6	Peter Wichmand	Senior Evaluation Officer, EVAL Office	ILO				
7	Guy Thijs	Director, EVAL Office	ILO				
8	Parth Kanithkar	Focal point at PARDEV, Donor Relations	ILO				
9	Raky Kane	Senior Officer, PARDEV, Donor Relations	ILO				
10	Felix Weidenkaff	Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth/former staff of Tageem	ILO	10 July	Geneva		
11	Matt Ripley	Independent Consultant/Former ILO CTA of LAB project	ILO			Skype	
12	Sukti Dasgupta	Chief, EMPLAB Branch	ILO			Geneva	
13	Mia Madsen	Knowledge Management Officer	IFAD			Skype	
14	Gabriele Marchese	Consultant, NEN Division	IFAD			Skype	
15	Daniela Martinez	Supply Chain Officer	ILO			Geneva	
16	Abdelkarim Sma	Regional Economist, NEN Division; and Officer in Charge, Egypt	IFAD			12 July	Cairo
17	Jonas Bausch	M&E Officer	ILO				
18	Tamer Taha	Founder of Yomken and PhD student at UN University Cairo	Yomken/UN University				
19	Shadway Alaa	M&E Specialist	Yomken				
20	Peter Rademaker	Head of Resource Mobilization, PARDEV	ILO	13 July	Skype		
21	Sally Mansour	Former M&E Specialist	RISE Egypt	14 July	Cairo		
22	Anis Ben Younes	Head of EVALMENA Net, Tunisia, Independent evaluator	EvalMENA Net/Tunisia				
23	Eric Oechslin	Officer in Charge	ILO	15 July	Cairo		
24	Yasmine Fahim	Director of Research Programs	Economic Research Forum				
25	Eman El-Hadary	Senior Research Officer					
26	Luca Fedi	Employment Specialist	ILO	16 July	Cairo		

27	Zeinab Khadr	Director of CDC	Cairo Demographic Centre (CDC)	17 July	Cairo
28	Peter van Roojl	Former Head of ILO Cairo	ILO		Cairo
29	Kevin Hempel	Independent Consultant	Member of Taqueem Advisory Council		Skype
30	Ibrahim Melouk	Project Manager	Alexandria Business Association		Skype
31	Nour Shammout	J-PAL Policy Manager – Council Member	J-PAL		Skype
32	Tobias Lichtenfeld	Senior Economist – Council Member	The World Bank Group		Skype
33	Jonas Bausch	M&E Officer	ILO		Cairo
34	Susana Puerto	Sr. Youth Employment Specialist Coordinate the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth – Council Member	ILO	Skype	
35	Jessica Heckert	Research Fellow IPFRI	International Food Policy Research Institute (IPFRI)	Skype	
36	Ashraf Bakr	Independent Consultant	-	Skype	
37	Rania Roushdy	Independent Consultant	American University Cairo/ Population Council	18 July	Cairo
38	Amal Mowafy	Chief Technical Adviser, Decent Work for Youth Project	ILO		
39	Perihan Tawfik	Decent Work for Youth Project	ILO		
40	Heba Rashed	Decent Work for Youth Project	ILO		
41	Tareq Abu Qaoud	Project Manager, Better Work Jordan	ILO		
42	Samira Manzur	M&E Specialist, Better Work Jordan	ILO	19 July	Amman
43	Rana Elmeligy	Former M&E Officer, Taqueem Project in Cairo	Former ILO		Skype
44	Adam Osman	Assistant Professor	University of Illinois – Champagne/Urbana		Skype
45	Paul Dyer	Independent Consultant/Former Silatech – Council Member			Skype
46	Marc Probst	Executive Director – Council Memeber	Swiss Academy for Development		20 July
47	Michael Grimm	Professor	University of IL, Champagne/Urbana	Skype	
48	Nathalie Bavitch	Regional Evaluation Officer	ILO Beirut	Skype	
49	Nader Kabbani	Head of Research/Former Silatech – Council Member	Brookings Institute Doha	Skype	

50	Mona Mowafy	Executive Director	RISE Egypt		Skype
51	Patrick Daru	Coordinator for Jordan	ILO Amman	21 July	Amman
52	Samia Akroush	Project Manager	Project Director Rural Economic Growth and Employment Project (REGEP) Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO)	22 July	Amman
53	Rania Fazia	Evaluation and Capacity Building Consultant	IDRC		Skype
54	Rana Ansari	M&E Specialist	Ministry of Labor		Amman
55	Jumana Shahzadeh	M&E Specialist	Queen Rania Foundation	23 July	Amman
56	Hassan Zaid El Keilani	Impact Evaluation Specialist			
57	Ghaleb Hijazi	Vice President	Business Development Center		
58	Boddor I. Al Taq	Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer			
59	Hiba M. S. Al Tawil	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer			
60	Suzan Abdel Rasoul	Assistant Director General for Community and Human Development Central Sector	Social Fund for Development (SFD), Government of Egypt	25 July	Cairo
61	Rania Sadek	ITC/SFD Project Coordinator			Cairo
62	David Cordobes	Manager, Youth and Trade Program	International Trade Center		Skype
63	Tariq Haq	Employment Specialist	ILO Beirut		Skype
64	Micheline Goedhuys	Senior Researcher	UN-MERIT	26 July	Skype
65	Nuha Hammoud	Acting Field Program Support Officer	UNWRA	27 July	Skype
66	Umar Yassine	Employment Services Center Coordinator			
67	Samer Kherfi	Professor – Council Member	American University of Sharjah		Skype
68	Linda Sabbarini	Independent Consultant	ILO Gender Seal (Gender Auditing) Trainer	27 July	Skype
69	Ibtissem Jouini	M&E Specialist	Former EFE-Tunisie		Skype
70	Sietse Buijze	Chief of Technical Cooperation Unit	ILO		Questions via email
71	Nihal El Mergharbel	Former Vice Minister	Ministry of Planning, Egypt	2 August	Skype
72	Joanna Abi Abdallah	Business Support and Development Manager	Berytech		Questions via email
73	Nathan Fiala	Professor and Department Head Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics – Council Member	University of Connecticut		Skype

Annex 5: Online survey

A. General questions about you:

1. How many years have you engaged with the Taqueem project?
 - a. Up to 1 year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 4-7 years
 - d. 8-9 years

2. What kind of organization do you represent? (check one that applies)
 - a. Government
 - b. Worker's or employer's organization
 - c. International Organization
 - d. Non-governmental organization (NGO)
 - e. Academic/Research
 - f. Private sector
 - g. Other, please specify:

3. In what capacity have you participated in the Taqueem project? (check all that apply)
 - a. Member of online platform/community
 - b. Participated in M&E training(s)
 - c. Participated in policy fora, evidence symposia or roundtable discussion
 - d. Received an impact research grant
 - e. Received an M&E grant
 - f. Trained or advised COP members
 - g. (Co-)authored one or several Taqueem publications
 - h. Other, please specify:

4. Your location/base?
 - a. Egypt
 - b. Lebanon
 - c. Jordan
 - d. Morocco
 - e. Tunisia
 - f. Europe
 - g. Asia
 - h. Africa
 - i. Americas
 - j. Other

B. Questions about what you learned & Taqueem in the future:

5. What are the top 3 benefits you have gained from Taqueem?

6. A Taqueem objective is to promote ownership over the various aspects of its program. Who or what entity would best lead this endeavor in the future and why?

7. What services or aspects of Taqueem should be maintained in the future?

C. Questions specific to the online platform (www.ilotaqem.org):

8. Are you a member of the Taqueem online platform? Y/N

If you answered yes to question 8, please answer questions 8-14. If you answered no to question 6, please proceed to question 15.

9. Have you used this platform to access knowledge and resources? Y/N

10. Have you used this platform to network and connect with other colleagues? Y/N

11. Have you used this platform to access evaluators and experts? Y/N

12. Have you used this program to access work opportunities? Y/N

13. What is the main value of this network for you?

14. When you joined this network, what were your main reasons?

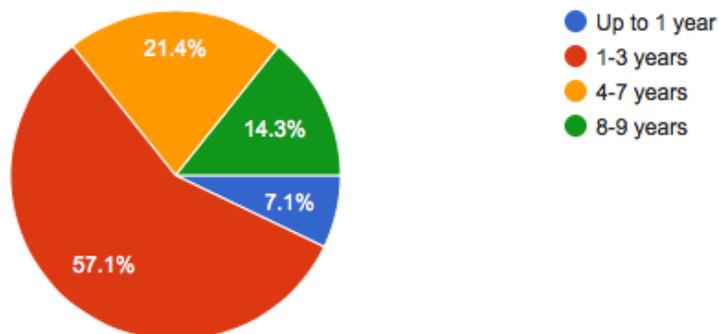
D. Questions about the future of the online platform:

15. How best to improve upon this network and increase its scope in the future?

Annex 6: Online survey demographics

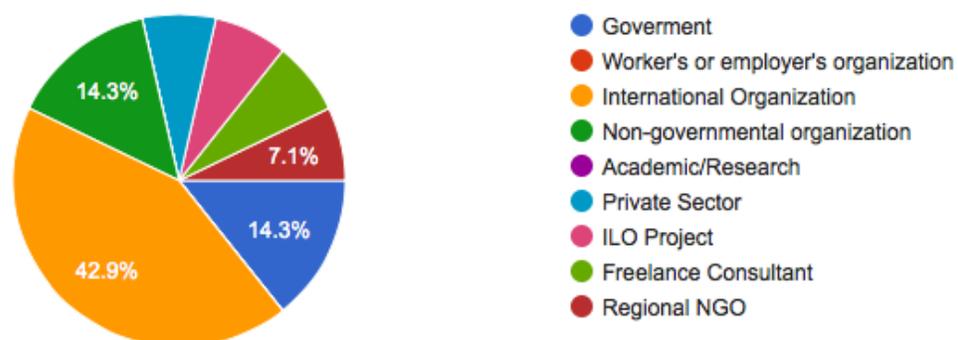
How many years have you engaged with the Taqueem project?

14 responses



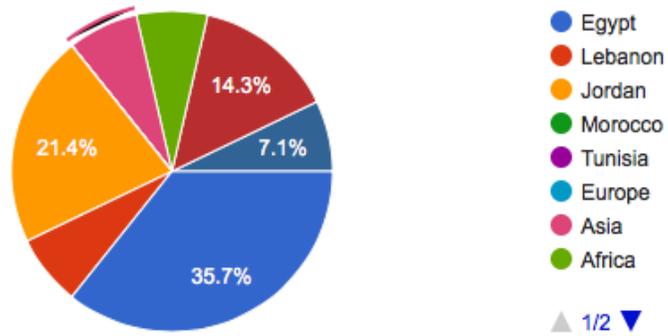
What kind of organization do you represent? (check one that applies)

14 responses



Your location/base?

14 responses



Annex 7: Project documentation reviewed

- Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) documents 2015-2018
- Legal agreement between ILO and IFAD
- Project document IFAD
- Publication list
- List of COP members
- Technical progress reports 2016, 2017 and 2018
- IFAD project update and budget winding down period 2018
- Documentation on trainings (agenda, bios, course materials, assessment, case studies and list of participants; participatory gender audit training programme and ITC course)
- Call for proposals documentation (selection process and shortlist, final decision, review guidelines and summaries, press release)
- Taqueem Council Meetings (Council survey, working modalities, report 2015, background note 2015, contacts, meeting minutes – January 29, 2015, May 28, 2015, and December 3, 2015)
- Finances – First, second and third certified financial statements
- Taqueem Impact Report Series papers 1, 4, 6-14
- Taqueem Policy Influence Plan and Conceptual Framework Guidelines
- Policy labs and trainings/forums
- Taqueem CoP and consultant contact details
- Taqueem final evaluation 2013
- Taqueem groupsite analytics generated by project team
- WEAI concept, enumeration manual, main module, and related research in Tunisia and Djibouti

Annex 8: Inception Report

Inception Report Final Evaluation of the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” Project

**Submitted by Amy Jersild and Hanan Kwanina
Friday, 6 July 2018**

This document details the proposed methodology for the final evaluation of ILO’s project “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa”. Key activities undertaken to date informing the development of the proposed methodology include one briefing with the Program Manager based in Geneva, and a briefing with the Evaluation Program Manager. In addition, the following documents were reviewed: the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, the Project Document, including the logical framework, and several TPRs.

Background of the project and draft Theory of Change

In 2009 the ILO introduced the “Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment” to provide support for rigorous M&E and impact analysis of employment programs. The undertaken studies seek to shed light on what works, why, and how to improve livelihoods, entrepreneurship skills and labour market outcomes. In 2011, the “Taqeem Programme” was created as a regional spin-off of the Fund in the MENA region with initial support provided by Silatech. An external evaluation of Taqeem highlighted the success of the initiative and recommended a new and larger phase of Taqeem concentrating on capacity development, impact research and knowledge dissemination.

Funded by IFAD in the amount of USD 1.7 million, the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa” project began in July 2015 and is scheduled to finish in July 2018. Building on the success of the “Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment” and “Taqeem” projects, the “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation” project is based on the premise that there exists a dearth in research and evaluation demonstrating what works in the field of gender and rural development, as well as the need and demand for that evidence. The project aims to generate better evidence and build evaluation capacity among stakeholders, both policy-makers and program implementers, in the MENA region. The project’s overall goal is to achieve gender equality in rural employment outcomes in the MENA region through more and better evidence on what works.

The Project Document outlines 2 objectives that contributes to its overall goal:

- Improved project management and gender mainstreaming for organizations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E
- Improved employment policies and investments for governments through impact research.

To achieve its overall goal and objectives, the project is organized around three distinct yet interlinked components: (i) capacity development to equip practitioners and policy makers with evidence and skills on monitoring and evaluation; (ii) the production of impact research focused on innovative rural employment interventions to learn what works; and (iii) policy influence through

the dissemination of research findings and the creation of partnerships with policy makers to design evidence-based policies and programmes.

The overall intended impact of achieving gender equality in rural employment are thus indicative of greater capacity of partner organizations to better manage and mainstream gender into their programming, as well as for policy makers to base improvements in policy on credible evidence. These outcomes, if achieved, are similarly contingent upon the existence of a real demand for evidence in what works within the sector, both from within the governmental and non-governmental sectors. They are also contingent upon the ability of the project and its partners to effectively generate evidence within the field, and the ability of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to effectively apply what they have learned about gender and M&E within their respective organizations.

A draft logic model is found in Annex 1, and a summary of project outputs achieved between July 2015 and July 2018 is found in Annex 2.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

According to the TORs, the purpose of the final evaluation is to indicate to the ILO, IFAD and its partners the extent to which the project has achieved its aim and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes. Given the importance of the project in moving forward the ILO youth employment agenda and the long-standing ILO-IFAD collaboration, particular emphasis will be placed on lessons learnt, success factors and good practices, which have a potential for replication in future programmes. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will also feed in the design of future intervention models and contribute to documenting management and delivery approaches. The evaluation will cover the entire duration of the project since its inception and its full geographic coverage at regional and country level.

The main clients of this evaluation will be IFAD and in particular the Near East and North Africa unit, the project team, the ILO Employment Policy Department, the Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch, the Youth Employment Programme Unit, the ILO Cairo Office, the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and tripartite constituents. Secondary clients are the ILO's Governing Body and other units within the ILO that indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by evaluations.

Methods

A. Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions outlined in the TORs are extensive, 21 in total.

1. Relevance and strategic fit

- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?
- Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?
- Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?
- How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?

- Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?

2. Validity of design

- In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?
- How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?

3. Effectiveness

- Has the project achieved its objectives?
- How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?
- Were there any important unintended results?

4. Efficiency of resource use

- Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?
- Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?
- Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficiently use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?

5. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?
- How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?
- How effectively the project reacted to unexpected changes in funding?
- How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?

6. Impact and sustainability of results

- What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?
- What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?
- What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?

B. Summary description and rationale

The final evaluation will take as encompassing approach as possible given the scope of the project. The methodologies that will be used will include both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods described below:

1. *Assessment of contextual factors and realities:* Contextual information will be taken into account related to ILO programming objectives, donor priorities and interests, Egyptian and Jordanian

Government priorities, and partner agency programming in order to check assumptions and the fit of the initiative's inputs and expected results. Data will be collected from ILO staff, government officials, the donor, Community of Practice partner organizations, and others familiar with evaluation, gender and rural development in Egypt and Jordan as appropriate, and supplemented by desk review.

2. *Assessment of conceptual analysis and frameworks:* Information will be gathered to further understand and describe the conceptual basis for the initiative. Data collected from stakeholders will reinforce or challenge the concepts based on actual experience. Data will be collected from ILO staff, government officials, other participating agencies, and supplemented by a desk review.
3. *Assessment of increased levels of gender awareness and M&E capacity as a result of the project among COP organizations:* The evaluation team will adapt USAID's M&E capacity development assessment tool to enable analysis of progress made in the capacity development component of the project. Along with assessment of monitoring data available by the project, a line of inquiry reflecting the principles of the USAID tool will be adopted in interviews with stakeholders. Further, several gender tools will be reviewed and adapted, including the ILO's "A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators" and MEASURE's "Guidelines for Integrating Gender into an M&E Framework and System Assessment".
4. *Assessment of initiative-wide performance:* A broader assessment will be undertaken, to assess project outcomes under each of the three project components and their prospects for sustained implementation. Data will be collected from ILO staff, government officials, and NGO partners, and supplemented by a desk review.

C. Data collection and analysis

The following methods will be used to collect data:

- *Semi-structured interviews with key informants:* The evaluation team will interview ILO officials in Geneva, donors, COP organizations, and others involved in the project.
- *Focus group discussions:* Where feasible, the evaluation team may conduct focus group discussions with a group of similar stakeholders, such as M&E officers, researchers, practitioners and development partner experts who received capacity building training in M&E practices, as well as those who participated in the executive course on evaluation, including state actors, policy makers and managers of partner organizations.
- *Survey:* The evaluation team will survey the Taqem Advisory Council to gather data in a more efficient manner.

As data collected to evaluate the project will be sourced from a variety of resources using a number of methods, including stakeholder interviews, survey, focus group discussions, and desk review of relevant documents, the evaluators will triangulate where possible to determine effective analysis. The team will assess overall trends and themes emerging and will assess these findings in relation to the areas of evaluation criteria detailed in the Evaluation Matrix, found in Annex 4:

- Relevance
- Validity of project design

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency of resource use
- Impact
- Sustainability

A draft data collection plan is found in Annex 3, the evaluation matrix outlining the sourcing of data for each evaluation question can be found in Annex 4, and a questionnaire guide further mapping each evaluation question to stakeholder group is found in Annex 5.

D. Limitations

The evaluation team notes the following limitation:

- ***Interviewing of ultimate beneficiaries:*** Given limited time in the field and capacity, the evaluation team will not be able to sample more broadly at a higher outcome level the stakeholders of COP agencies who are identified in the Project Document as the ultimate beneficiaries. Women and men within rural communities who may be considered as stakeholders to the COP agencies will not be interviewed. Instead, the evaluation team will identify outcome levels at the COP agencies themselves, identifying changes within their organizations while assessing how these challenges may or may not contribute toward greater levels of achievement at the overall project outcome level.

Presentation

An evaluation report will be drafted, detailing findings, conclusions and recommendations. The report will be circulated to selected stakeholders for comments, and then finalized. The findings section will be presented either by each of the programme strategy areas, or through discussion of three to four key messages of the evaluation findings. A summary table annexed will provide an outline of the findings according to the OECD-DAC criteria. A preliminary outline for the report is as follows:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction
- III. Methodology including limitations
- IV. Findings
 - a. Theme 1
 - b. Theme 2
 - c. Theme 3
 - d. Theme 4
- V. Conclusions
 - a. Lessons Learned
 - b. Good Practice
- VI. Recommendations
- VII. Annexes (to include the evaluation matrix filled out with summary of findings along the DAC criteria, summary table of achievements by each outcome area, table on lessons learned, table on good practices, the evaluation schedule and itinerary, stakeholders interviewed, and the approved Inception Report)

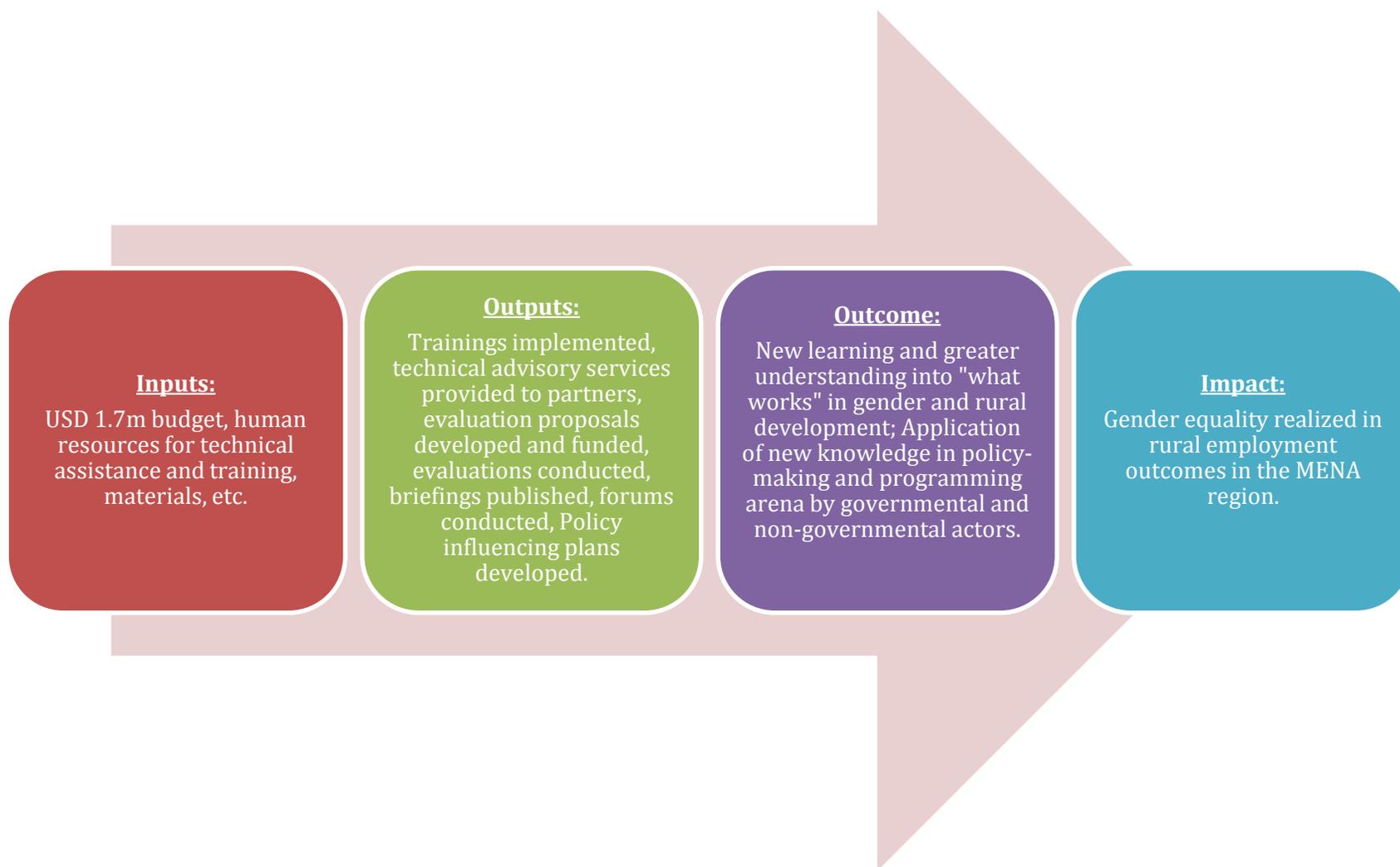
In addition to the final report, an Executive Summary and a Powerpoint presentation detailing the main outcomes of the evaluation will be prepared and submitted. The Executive Summary will follow the template provided by the ILO.

Evaluation Timeline

The evaluation will be implemented along the following timeline:

- Finalize inception report and field visit schedule: Week of 2 July
- Data collection/field visits: 9 – 23 July
- Analysis and drafting of report: 24 July – 12 August
- Draft report due: 12 August
- Consultation on draft report findings: Date TBC
- Comments of stakeholders collected by the ILO Evaluation Manager and sent to the evaluation team: 22 August
- Final report due: 31 August

Annex 1: Draft logic model



Annex 2: Brief summary of project outputs achieved⁶⁰

Component 1: Capacity building

- Training - One basic course on M&E delivered per year - One advanced course on impact evaluation delivered per year - Module on measuring rural women empowerment and WEAI included in the basic course and in the advanced course
- Technical assistance - Technical assistance provided to at least 20 (*revised target: 17*) implementing organizations and projects for improved results measurement practices
- Participatory Gender Assessments in implementing organizations - Five organizations receive the ILO “Gender Seal” through a Participatory Gender Assessment

Component 2: Impact research (with seed funding)

- 100 proposals received per year through an annual call for proposals - Eight (*revised target: 6*) rural employment and gender impact studies selected for receiving seed funding
- WEAI used in four impact evaluation surveys (*revised target: 0*)
- Four (*revised target: 2*) baseline studies completed per year
- Two impact evaluations developed per year.

Component 3: Policy influence

- Rural gender policy influence plans developed and implemented in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
 - Evidence base on gender and youth policies mapped in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
 - Context and stakeholders analysis carried out in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt
 - Three Impact and Policy Briefs developed and disseminated per year covering “what works” in rural female employment
21. - High level policy roundtables organized in 3 countries
 22. - National policy labs organized in 3 countries
 - Yearly Evidence Symposium organized to present regional and global results of gender

⁶⁰ As outlined in the TORs.

Annex 3: Draft data collection plan

Interviews will be conducted in Geneva, Cairo and Amman with stakeholders. A survey will also be administered either online or via email to members of the Taqueem Advisory Council. Interviews are currently scheduled for Geneva (below), while the schedules for Cairo (12-18 July) and Amman (19-23 July) are currently in progress.

Location	Dates	Interviewee	Title/Organization	Role in project/rationale for interview	Confirmation - Office/room number
Geneva: 9-11 July					
9 July					
ILO	9 – 11am	Drew Gardiner	Project Manager, IFAD project Technical Officer, IFAD project	Project team	
ILO	11- 12:30am	Valter Nebuloni	Head, Youth Employment Unit (YEP)	ILO responsible official	
ILO	1:30 pm	Jean-Francois Klein	Evaluation focal point, Employment Dept	Focal point for EVAL activities in department	
ILO	3 pm	Mini Thakur	Evaluation Specialist	Focal point at EVAL	Confirmed – 7-122 (ext 7807)
ILO	4 pm	Parth Kanitkar	Donor Relations	Focal point at PARDEV	Confirmed – Office I-43
10 July					
ILO	9am	Felix Weidenkaff	Global Initiative	Former Taqueem project staff	Confirmed – 9 th floor 9-37
ILO	11am	Matt Ripley (by skype), Daniela Martinez	Enterprise/SME unit	Close intra-departmental collaboration	Via skype at 11:00 (where to sit?)
ILO	12:00	Daniela Martinez	Enterprise/SME unit	Close intra-departmental collaboration	Confirmed - 12:00 noon in Office 10-46
ILO	2pm	Sukti Dasgupta	Chief, EMPLAB branch	Chief of branch where project is hosted	Afternoon meeting - tbc
ITC Geneva	2pm: TBC	CORDOBES David	International Trade Centre, Geneva	CoP member	Skype call scheduled 8am DC time Weds, 25 July.
By skype					
ILO: by skype	Back on 1 August	Christine Hofmann hofmann@ilo.org	Specialist, SKILLS branch	Close inter-branch collaboration	Call confirmed for 8h00 DC time, Friday, 6 July
By skype	10 July, Tuesday	Adbelkarim Sma a.sma@ifad.org	Regional Economist, NEN division, IFAD (and OIC Country Manager for Egypt)	Donor: responsible official	Thursday morning in Cairo

By skype		Mia Madsen m.madsen@ifad.org	KM Officer, NEN division, IFAD	Donor: day-to-day focal point	
By skype		Gabriele Marchese g.marchese@ifad.org	Consultant, NEN division, IFAD	Donor: responsible for research and knowledge activities	
By Skype		Rute Mendes	ITCILO: Youth employment	Evaluation manager	

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

Eval Domain	Questions	Key indicators	Data collection techniques	Stakeholders involved	Location
Relevance and strategic fit	Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?	The extent to which project activities met the needs of direct beneficiaries.	Desk review; semi-structured interviews; FGDs	Policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects (COP members) and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners	Egypt, Jordan
	Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?	The extent to which the activities were relevant for the project's ultimate beneficiaries.	Semi-structured interviews with development agencies/NGOs; FGD with rural women and men;	Development agency staff working in rural development and gender (COP members)	Egypt, Jordan
	Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?	The extent to which stakeholders – development agencies, policy-makers -- demonstrate ownership over the project (<i>need clarification on which stakeholders</i>)	Desk review, semi-structured interviews	Development agencies/COP agencies	Egypt and Jordan, Geneva
	How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?	The extent to which the project supported and aligned with national development plans and priorities of ILO constituents	Desk review, semi-structured interviews	Government partners, tripartite partners (?), ILO staff	Egypt and Jordan, Geneva
	Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?	The extent to which criteria used for the selection of countries was relevant and demand based	Desk review, semi-structured interviews	ILO staff, government partners, COP partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan

Validity of design	In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?	The degree to which the intervention logic was coherent and realistic. The extent to which the indicators articulated are appropriate and useful.	Desk review, semi-structured interviews	ILO staff	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?	The degree to which the assumptions to the program logic held true; the degree to which the project attempted to address identified risks.	Desk review, semi-structured interviews	ILO staff, COP members, other implementing partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
Effectiveness	Has the project achieved its objectives?	The extent to which the project has improved project management and gender mainstreaming for organisations implementing development projects in rural areas of the MENA region through rigorous M&E; and the extent to which improved employment policies and investments for governments have been achieved through impact research.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO, all delivery partners and all “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	The degree to which the project’s outcomes of each component have been achieved; and major factors impacting their achievement or non-achievement.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO, all delivery partners and all “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?	Comparative analysis of results achieved in each of the 3 countries and analysis of factors impacting that success and other contextual realities.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO, all delivery partners and all “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan, and Morocco

	Were there any important unintended results?	Of those results achieved by the project as a result of its inputs, identification of those that were unintended.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO, all delivery partners and all “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
Efficiency of resource use	Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?	The extent to which activities implemented by both the project and its partners represented good value for money.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO and delivery partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	Given the distribution of project’s human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?	The extent to which resource allocation was efficiently distributed across each of the 3 components; the extent to which the resource allocation reflects the degree of progress made within each component.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO and delivery partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	Has the project’s budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficient use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?	The extent to which there is any indication of financial processes presenting an obstacle to efficiency.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO (project and financial staff) and delivery partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
Effectiveness of management arrangements	Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?	The degree to which technical support provided to project partners by the ILO was adequate.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, delivery partners, and Council members	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?	The degree to which communication among the project team, donor and delivery partners was experienced and observed as effective.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, donor, delivery partners, and Council members	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	How effectively did the project staff reacted to unexpected changes in funding?	The degree to which ILO project staff were resilient and creative in their response to unexpected changes in funding; the degree to which such reaction was observed as effective.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, donor, delivery partners, and Council members	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan

	How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?	The extent to which an effective M&E system was developed and used.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, donor, delivery partners	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
Impact and sustainability of results	What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?	The degree to which the project made a contribution to the achievement of gender equality in rural employment in Jordan and Egypt through building capacity,	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO, donor, all delivery partners and all “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?	The extent to which prospects for sustained outcomes is viable.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, donor, delivery partners, and “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan
	What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?	Identification of inputs that may be required to support sustained outcomes/results.	Semi-structured interviews, desk review	ILO staff, donor, delivery partners, and “recipient” partners as outlined in the project document.	Geneva, Egypt and Jordan

Annex 5: Questionnaire Guide

Questions	Stakeholder Group						
	ILO	IFAD	COP manager	COP M&E staff	Taqeem Advisory Council members	Govt partners	Other partners within the project's network that provide technical assistance who may or may not be on the Taqeem Advisory Council ⁶¹
1. Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?			X	X	X	X	X
2. Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?	X		X	X	X	X	X
3. Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?	X		X	X	X	X	X
4. How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?	X		X		X	X	X
5. Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?	X	X	X		X	X	X
6. In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?	X	X	X		X		X
7. How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?	X	X	X		X		

⁶¹ These partners include: ILO constituents (Governments, Employers and Workers organizations); International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); International American University in Cairo, Egypt; International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie); J-PAL: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab; Humboldt University, Germany; ENSAE Institute, France; World Bank, Social Protection and Labour Branch; ILO regional and country offices; and International Training Centre of the ILO.

8. Has the project achieved its objectives?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9. How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10. Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11. Were there any important unintended results?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12. Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?	X	X					
13. Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?	X	X	X				
14. Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficient use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?	X	X					
15. Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?	X	X	X				
16. How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?	X	X	X		X	X	
17. How effectively did the project staff react to unexpected changes in funding?	X	X	X		X	X	
18. How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?	X	X	X				
19. What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
20. What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?	X		X	X	X	X	X
21. What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Annex 9: Summary response to evaluation questions

Eval Domain	Questions	Summary response
Relevance and strategic fit	Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (policy makers and social partners, staff from development projects and programmes targeted at women, and workers in rural areas, as well as researchers and practitioners)?	The project activities were well appreciated by COP members in terms of quality of training and expertise. Track 2 COP members received well-targeted interventions and capacity building working in close cooperation with M&E experts, while Track 1 COP members had varied experiences given the challenges to execute their experimental studies and different roles played. Taqueem began a process of thinking about demand-driven evaluation after completing the 2015 RFP, but did not take it forward given there was not a second RFP held during the programme. Further research would enable better ascertaining the extent of the demand for evaluation among policy-makers. While 4 impact studies were completed by the end of the programme, whether their uptake will happen remains to be seen. Further, the evaluation team was unable to determine whether the studies findings fills a gap in the evidence base.
	Were the project activities relevant to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries (inactive, unemployed and under-employed rural women and men in the MENA region)?	The project supported the evaluation of programs that focused on employment related issues, as well as provision of technical assistance to organizations that focus on youth employment. The direct benefit to ultimate beneficiaries is as yet unclear, and the direct benefit to rural women and men is even less clear given the program's combined focus on both rural and urban. An assumption of the programme that Track 1 and 2 organizations with greater capacity will influence change at the policy level held true; the evaluation team did not find any evidence of this capacity and argues this is a long-term goal. Further, the ability of the programme to use the studies to advocate for change was limited due to time and lack of a more nuanced and country-specific approach interlinked with ILO country strategy.
	Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?	There is little evidence of stakeholder ownership over the project, despite enthusiastic levels of support and interest on the part of COP members and a desire for Taqueem to continue. While certain individuals on the Taqueem Advisory Council were active and giving of their time and expertise during the first one-half of project implementation, this level of support could not be sustained. The dissipation of the Taqueem Advisory Council half-way through project implementation is an indicator of the lack of ownership for the project.
	How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?	The project engaged with Ministries of Labor/Manpower in countries to a limited extent, but did not involve trade unions or employer associations. With regard to national development plans, the project's interest in use of evidence for policy development is relevant and welcome in all ILO country programs.

	Were the criteria for the selection of countries relevant and demand based?	The selection of countries was practical in the sense that they were chosen based on a perceived interest and feasibility to engage, as well as area of need, i.e., high rates of youth unemployment.
Validity of design	In the light of the results achieved, was the intervention logic, coherent and realistic? How appropriate and useful are the indicators?	The intervention logic was overly ambitious and too wide in scope given the results achieved. The ultimate intention to engage and influence policy in each of the countries was difficult. The centralized project design affected the Taqueem integration and internal coherence at the country level in Egypt and regionally as well. The indicators specifically in the policy component were unachievable and overly ambitious, and some of the targets were also very high, such as the 300 targeted proposals as a result of the RFP process. The evaluation team acknowledges a revision of performance targets, based on IFAD and ILO discussions, during the course of project implementation.
	How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based? How far did the project control them?	Taqueem assumptions were underestimated and posed risks that resulted in various interventions requiring significant time and resources. Assumptions that were not controlled well by the project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Technical Assumptions</u> related to understanding and defining what is meant by terms such as “Impact Evaluation”, “Job Creation”, and “RCTs implementation measures”. CoP members did not fully understand those definitions, which led to a number of low-quality proposals. • <u>Contextual Assumptions</u>: Taqueem underestimated the time and level of effort needed for administrative approvals or authorizations to start IEs or to deliver funds from foreign agencies.
Effectiveness	Has the project achieved its objectives?	The project has achieved greater levels of capacity among its COP members. Track 2 COP members benefited to a higher degree with more targeted technical assistance as compared with Track 1 COP members, given the greater level of success on M&E interventions. Given the project’s lack of a coherent gender strategy, little progress was made to improve project management and gender mainstreaming in COP members’ programming, and given the strong youth employment focus, rural and gender concerns were not as well represented among the COPs and their activities under Taqueem. While outputs were produced by the project in the form of high quality reports and evidence symposiums, there was little evidence of their use for influencing policy within a country-level strategy based on timely and relevant evidence needs.
	How effective has the project been in each of its three components? What are the results observed so far? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	The programme has achieved the most under its capacity building component. Clear applied learning occurred among COPs, particularly among those receiving technical support on development of their M&E systems. Some impact research undertaken was successful but most were not due to multiple reasons. The least gains were made under the evidence uptake and policy dialogue component. Lack of a clear research agenda linked to government interests and needs was not effectively articulated. Instead the

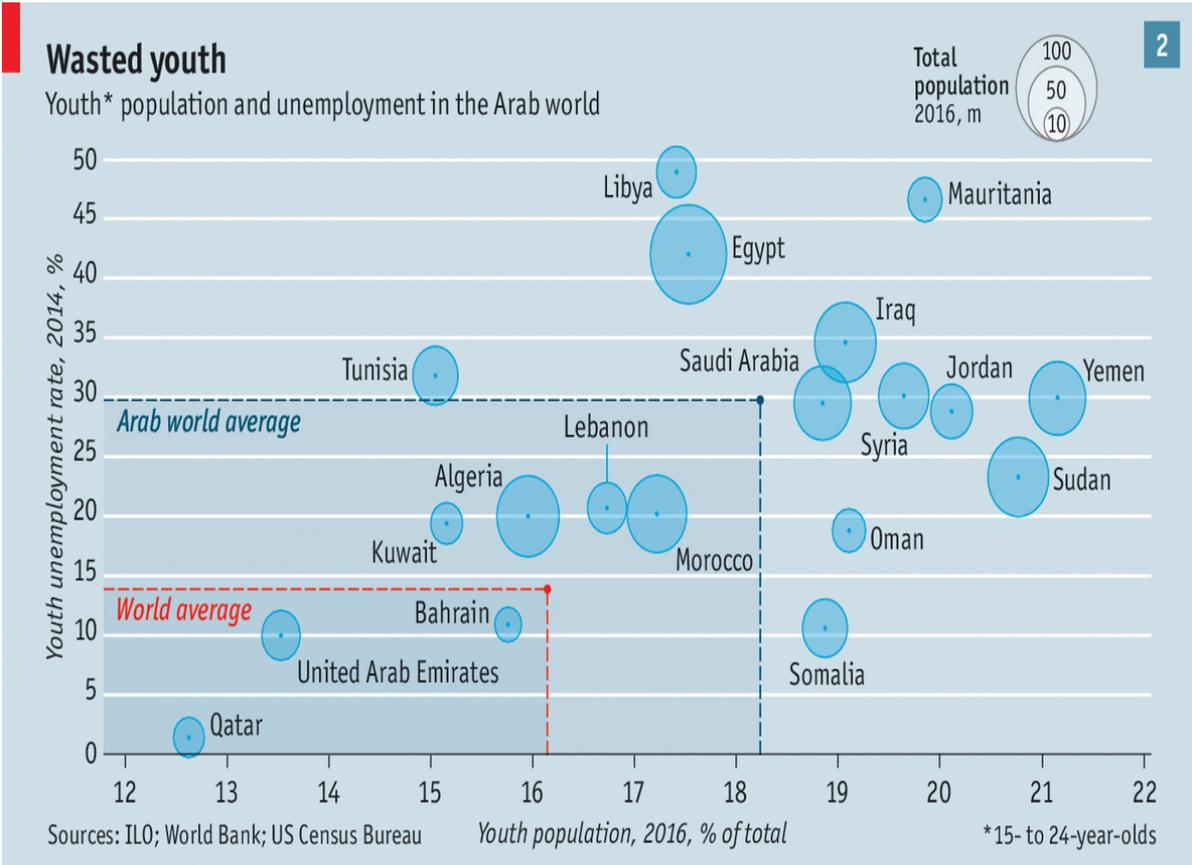
		programme relied upon publishing of reports and workshops or round-table discussions as a means to influence policy, which was not sufficient.
	Considering the three selected countries, was the project relatively more successful in any of them? Are there lessons to be learned? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?	The programme in Egypt had a greater level of success in part due to in-country presence and more investment of resources and activities, as compared to Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The Taqueem Advisory Council's mandate was exercised through deciding on the three countries for policy influence focus (Jordan, Morocco and Egypt), shaping the research agenda and setting priorities for the youth employment and development research community in the MENA region.
	Were there any important unintended results?	The evaluation team did not find any unintended results.
Efficiency of resource use	Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?	The quality of workshops and trainings delivered under the project were well regarded, as were the written reports produced. Yet the cost effectiveness with regard to overall intended impact has been little given that the activities were not well contextualized within ILO country programs to help affect and influence policy change. Further, the centralization of Taqueem activities reduced its efficiency due to slightly higher living costs plus travel as compared to cities within the region.
	Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, were such resources efficiently allocated?	The evaluation team did not find sufficient financial data according to component outputs/outcomes to answer this question thoroughly.
	Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficient use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources?	The evaluation team did not find any data that would indicate there were obstacles to efficient use, allocation and re-allocation of financial resources for the programme.
Effectiveness of management arrangements	Did the project receive adequate support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?	The evaluation team identified great enthusiasm for Taqueem, its goal and objectives, and overall mandate among COP members and Council members. Support from Council members waned and the Council itself fell apart after the first year of implementation. This was due to a number of factors, including unclear mandate of the Council, at times unclear decision-making taken by the ILO management team from the perspective of some Council members, and lack of open communication. The Taqueem project had an uneasy coordination with the REO, and a lack of presence in Amman contributed to challenges in implementation. The presence of a national project staff in Cairo helped with implementation of activities in Egypt. As for ILO HQ units, the grants management function was delegated to the project without oversight from BUDFIN.
	How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?	Communication was a challenge for the project. Communication with the donor was problematic on both sides, communication between the project team and other donors

		contributing funds for RCTs was problematic, and communication between Council members and the ILO management team could have been improved.
	How effectively did the project staff react to unexpected changes in funding?	Communication between project staff and IFAD was at times challenged, but the project team were resourceful in identifying funds to match IFAD's contribution as agreed.
	How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?	The project's internal M&E system consisted of detailed evaluator of all trainings and a majority of workshops and conferences; a tracking log for outcomes of CoP members and grantees; routine financial and technical report; and a final independent evaluation. A general understanding exists about the capacity built among COP members and the output of their work, which is published in the Impact Briefs, but there was not a more systematic process in place to monitor beyond the Briefs.
Impact and sustainability of results	What contribution did the project make towards achieving its ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes?	A significant number of COPs did not have understanding of the programme's gender focus, and only one study implemented in Tunisia successfully applied the WEAI tool. Capacity and understanding about the importance of disaggregating data by sex was achieved by COPs, yet a more solid understanding about the nuances of gender in programming was not achieved by the programme. The evaluation team was unable to determine the extent to which the ICTILO gender audit trainings were successful; one CoP member staff who had participated in the training had not any opportunity to apply her learning at the time of the evaluation.
	What is the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained after the end of the project? Are they likely to produce longer-term effects?	The COPs that had worked with a technical advisor on developing their internal M&E systems showed evidence that their learning and various tools and processes developed were applied in other aspects of their work and were going to continue. Overall Taqueem did not have a clear sustainability strategy (or exit strategy) in place. It did not do well at building sound partnerships at the country level with research institutions to sustain the moment of IE and raising M&E capacities; nor did it plan on how best to maintain or manage the COP through the online knowledge transfer platform.
	What action might be needed to enhance the sustainability of the project?	The programme would benefit from greater engagement with governments, a clearer understanding of a research agenda and what are the questions to ask to help guide decision-making on disbursement of funds, a more integrated strategy with ILO country programs, and greater understanding of government priorities and interests for information needs. Finally, a more limited scope in numbers of countries in which to engage instead of the MENA region would help in mitigating the thinning of Taqueem resources.

Annex 10: The programme’s focus on gender, rural and youth employment in the MENA region

128. The rationale for Taqueem’s historical focus on youth unemployment in the MENA region is sound, given the high rates of youth unemployment in the region as compared to other parts of the world. Rates of youth unemployment as compared to total unemployment rates in the MENA region have also been high, at 27 percent and 10 percent respectively in 2010, on the eve of the Arab uprisings. Since then these figures have risen further, to nearly 12 percent and 30 percent.⁶² Graphic 2, below, provides a sense of how the Arab world average of youth unemployment compares to the global average, and a rationale for the programme’s focus on those countries that have more significant unemployment problems, including Egypt and Jordan. The third country of focus, Morocco, falls within the Arab world average, yet higher than the world average.

Graphic 2: Youth population and unemployment in the Arab world⁶³



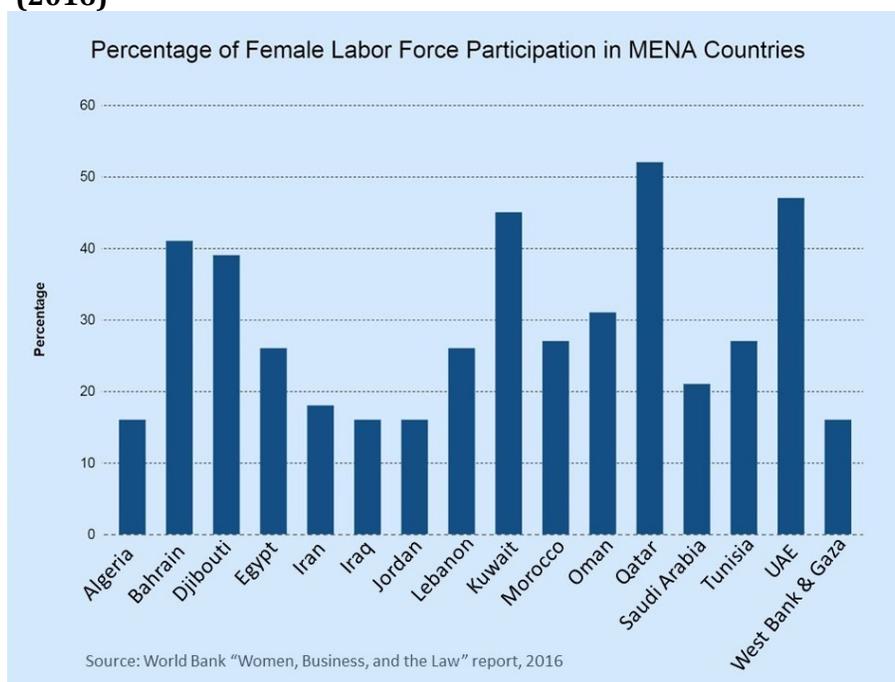
Economist.com

⁶² <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2016/08/09/youth-unemployment-in-the-arab-world>
⁶³ <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2016/08/09/youth-unemployment-in-the-arab-world>

129. Further compounding unemployment rates, the region’s population doubled in the three decades after 1980, to 357 million in 2010. It is expected to add another 110 million people by 2025—an average annual growth rate of 1.8 percent, compared with 1 percent globally. In 2010 the proportion of Arabs aged 15 to 24 peaked at 20 percent of the total population. But the absolute number of young will keep growing, from 46 million in 2010 to a projected 58 million in 2025. Youth unemployment in the region will likely remain a problem for decades to come.⁶⁴

130. Female unemployment is of particular concern in the MENA region, as girls and young women are highly educated and do better in school than boys and young men, yet they are not acquiring jobs in the labor market. Chart 1 below shows a gender comparison across MENA countries. Jordan, a focus country for Taqueem, ranks among the lowest, while Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are among the average, giving relevance to the programme’s focus under IFAD.

Chart 2: Percentage of Female Labor Force Participation in MENA Countries (2016)⁶⁵



131. Further, as 40 percent of the region’s population is rural and relies on agriculture as their main source of income, the project’s focus on rural employment is also relevant. Women make up the majority of the agriculture workforce, being overrepresented among unpaid family workers and in the informal sector.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/despite-high-education-levels-arab-women-still-don-t-have-jobs>

⁶⁶ Project document, pages 6-7.

Annex 11: List of CoP members under the IFAD-funded Taqueem programme

The Taqueem project completion report submitted to IFAD in August 2018 identifies a total of 17 organizations from five MENA countries that were chosen to be part of the COP and awarded grants.

The following identifies the 17 reported, yet the evaluation found there are several that did not carry out any studies or engage in enhancing results measurement systems, as discussed in the evaluation findings. They did participate in some trainings, however, and could be considered as part of the COP. These include Better Work Jordan, and Queen Rania Foundation.

Track 1 – Impact Research: Organizations carrying out impact research studies on employment programmes. These include:

- Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (Tunisia)
- ILO Better Work (Jordan)
- Industrial Training Council (Egypt)
- Population Council & Institute of Labour Economics (Egypt)
- Cairo Demographic Center (Egypt)
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Lebanon)
- United Nations University (the Netherlands, intervention in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia)
- Economic Research Forum (Egypt).

Track 2 – Results Measurement: Nine organizations employing enhanced results measurement strategies to improve day-to-day monitoring and project results. This includes short and medium term data collection and sharing, surveys, focus groups, satisfaction surveys and key informant interviews. These include:

- Alexandria Business Association (Egypt)
- RISE (Egypt)
- Business Development Center (Jordan)
- Ministry of Labour (Jordan)
- Berytech (Lebanon)
- International Trade Centre (Morocco)
- Education for Employment (Tunisia)
- Decent Jobs for Egypt’s Young People Project (Egypt)
- Queen Rania Foundation (Jordan).

Annex 12: Process for decision-making on grantees by the Taqueem programme (2015)⁶⁷

1. Interested teams submitted application forms (expressions of interest), which gave basic details about the implementing organization and their M&E approaches
2. The Taqueem project team carried out a shortlisting of applicants using 2 sets of criteria:
 - The first set was to determine eligibility and included an assessment of: type of organization (only non-profit or governments allowed), country (intervention needed to be in a MENA country), focus on intervention (primary objective needed to be related to employment) and primary beneficiary (needed to be either youth or women).
 - The second set was a scoring of between 1 and 5 to determine the technical quality of the application. Five criteria were used: innovativeness, policy relevance, M&E capacity, quality of project team.
3. The shortlisting of applicants also involved a recommendation to place each of the shortlisted applicants into either track 1 on impact research or track 2 on results measurement. Eighteen applicants were recommended for track 1 and 7 for track 2. All 25 shortlisted applicants were invited to participate in the Egypt executive training to further develop their research ideas.
4. For the shortlisted track 1 applicants, 15 of the 18 were invited to submit full proposals (after discussions in the Egypt training on developing their experimental approaches; 3 of the proposals decided they were not ready to go forward). A template for proposal submission was provided which included all relevant information to describe the impact evaluation study: the main researchers (including a requirement for developing country researchers), interventions and evaluation design (including their of change, evaluation questions, and external and internal validity), timeline, budget, and what was called “ethical approvals” or agreement with relevant authorities.
5. Following participation in the Egypt training, all 7 track 2 applicants were accepted and offered technical assistance and participation in the CoP.
6. The 15 proposals were then submitted to 3 external reviewers from the University of Connecticut, World Bank and African School of Economics (the ILO did not act as external reviewer, as described in the report). Each of the reviewers was assigned 5 proposals to review. Each proposal was 15 pages in length, plus annex, which represented a heavy load for each reviewer.
7. Taqueem provided guidelines on scoring the proposals to the external reviewers. The reviewer was required to provide detailed comments to each of the proposals, up to two pages of comments. The reviewer the recommended each of the proposals for funding: accept, revise and resubmit or reject.
8. Nine of the proposals received either accept or a revise and resubmit.
9. The nine proposals were then shared with 3ie, IDRC and IFAD.
10. One of the proposals (ICARDA) was rejected by IFAD. One other proposal (UNICEF) decided not to go forward.

⁶⁷ Process outlined by the project management team, as per comments on draft report, September 2018

Annex 13: Online survey response to Question 5

Question 5: “What are the top 3 benefits you have received from Taqueem?”

1	Capacity Development MRM and RC Data collection tools
2	1/ Establishment of a system for M&E 2/ Improved data analysis and decision making 3/ Ability to put a system that allows us to develop an impact report
3	Methodologies and tools for better impact evaluations, knowledge on what works, a high-quality impact evaluation of a skills component of an ILO project
4	Grant money to do impact evaluation research, more network with professionals in the field, and policy dissemination outlets.
5	Advising others; Sharing knowledge; Strengthening strategy of Taqueem
6	1. Implementation of new approached in M&E 2. Networking and knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences. 3. In-depth technical support through the experts appointed to work with us.
7	Gender participatory approach Towards Gender Transformative Actions Participatory Gender Audit for Facilitators
8	Methodologies, experience of international experts and networking with persons working in the field from the Arab countries.
9	Networking with organizations at the field level. Staying up-to-date with best M&E practices through the events hosted by Taqueem. Staying connected regarding the best practices in youth programming in the MENA region
10	1. Access to expertise and experts on youth employment 2. Sharing knowledge with others 3. Promotion of knowledge sharing
11	1. Building the capacity of the M&E staff 2. Gaining experience in building the queries of data management systems 3. Building various data collection tools for different training topics
12	Professionalism, updates on the impact evaluations and techniques and the knowledge on partners working in the region.
13	M& E knowledge in terms of detailed project PMF in a very user friendly way
14	Network of practitioners, experience in M&E, understanding of M&E needs in region

Annex 14: Summary table on Taqueem research/evaluation implemented 2015-2018

Table 3: Impact studies planned and implemented by the program, 2015-2018

Implementing agency/CoP member	Location	Focus of study/project	Type of evaluation	Partners	Funder	Implemented?	Status	Gender/Rural focused?
University of Passau and UNU	Tunisia	Women's empowerment in Tunisia following training	Research study - non-experimental; Application of WEAI tool	Univ of Passau, UNU-MERIT (Netherlands), U Tunis (Tunisia)	Taqueem/3ie	After the planned IE was canceled by the Government, a research study was implemented	Complete	Yes - WEAI
Cairo Demographic Center	Egypt	A non-formal apprenticeship program in agriculture-related trades. IPEC program co-implemented by ILO, WFP and UNICEF 2010 to 2014.	Experimental	Staff of the Social Research Centre of the American University in Cairo; and ILO	Taqueem/ILO	Yes, as part of a previous phase.	Complete	Yes
Population Council & Institute of Labour Economics	Egypt	NEQDAR project - can young women in Rural Upper-Egypt be empowered? (skills training)	Research study, non-experimental	Institute for Future of Labor (Germany) - grant recipient	Taqueem/ILO	Yes	Complete	Yes
Industrial Training Council	Egypt	Impact of job fairs on youth employment and the job matching in Egypt	Experimental	AUC, CREST, J-PAL	Taqueem/ILO	No	Incomplete	No

United Nations Relief and Works Agency	Lebanon	Measuring the impact of employment services centers	Experimental	AUS - grantee	Taqeem/IDRC	IE canceled and a qualitative research study implemented instead.	Completed	No
United Nations University/PhD student ⁶⁸	Netherlands; intervention in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia	Research on the effect of coworking spaces on job creation and entrepreneurship	Non-experimental; use of Social Network Analysis	Istebdaa' LLC	Taqeem/ILO	Yes	Completed	No
Economic Research Forum ⁶⁹	Egypt	Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS 2018)	HH survey	U of Minnesota, CAPMAS	Taqeem/ILO	Yes	Ongoing	Yes

⁶⁸ A PhD student at the UNU who has a local consulting company was the grant recipient and implemented the study. UNU received the funds on his behalf.

⁶⁹ Funding provided outside the RFP process.

Annex 15: Taqueem reports published 2015-2018⁷⁰

Impact Report Series

- Egypt Labour Market Panel Survey 2018 (forthcoming) – ERF
- Assessing the impact on employability and quality of employment of non-formal apprenticeship in agriculture-related trades in Egypt: A pilot study (forthcoming – CDC, ILO
- Economic and social dimensions of women’s rural employment in MENA – ILO
- Women’s and Youth Empowerment in Rural Tunisia: An assessment using the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) – University of Tunis, UNU-MERIT Maastricht, U of Passau, International School of Business of Sfax
- Constraints and good practice in women’s entrepreneurship in MENA: New evidence on gender attitudes towards women in business – ILO
- Promoting youth employment and empowerment of young women in Jordan: An assessment of active labour market policies – ILO, SAD
- Empowering young women through business and vocational training: Evidence from a field intervention in rural Egypt – Institute for Labour Economics, Population Council
- Co-working, innovation and employment: Baseline evidence from social network analysis in MENA – UNU-MERIT Maastricht

Impact Brief Series

- Issue 16. Realizing Innovation through Social Entrepreneurship – Egypt
- Issue 15. Establishing Day Care Centres in the Private Sector – Jordan
- Issue 14. Maharat Training for Employment – Jordan
- Issue 13. Fostering employment through business support to young entrepreneurs in Lebanon
- Issue 12. Trade Accelerator for Young Entrepreneurs in Morocco
- Issue 11. Tomouh: A New Loan Product for Micro and Small-Sized Enterprises – Egypt
- Issue 10. Empowering Young Women through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from Rural Upper Egypt
- Issue 9. Promoting women’s empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa: A rapid evidence assessment of labour market interventions
- Infographic: Promoting youth employment and empowerment in Jordan (English / Arabic)

Country Briefs

- Morocco: Young Women’s Employment and Empowerment in the Rural Economy
- Jordan: Young Women’s Employment and Empowerment in the Rural Economy

⁷⁰ From the project completion report, August 2018.

Annex 16: Main findings of impact studies produced for Phase 3

No.	Title of study	Main findings
1	“The impact of skills training on the financial behaviour, employability and educational choices of rural young people: Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Morocco” ⁷¹	Strong positive effects on participants’ propensity to establish a savings accounts and maintaining it more than two years after the end of the intervention. The results imply that through effective targeting towards youth at the end of their educational careers, programme managers and policy makers could increase the effectiveness of programmes. ⁷²
2	“Empowering Young Women through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from a Field Intervention in Rural Egypt” ⁷³	This paper presents results from an impact evaluation of a large-scale training intervention in rural Upper Egypt, where marginalized women in treated villages were offered intensive vocational, business and life skills training. In comparison to women in the control villages, the intervention increased the likelihood of treated women engaging in income-generating activities, driven by an increase in self-employment. They also became more likely to have business aspirations for the future. However, social aspects of empowerment (namely, intra-household decision-making capacity and attitudes toward gender equality) were not affected. The findings of the study suggest that, while the economic situation of women in conservative societies could be enhanced by training interventions, this does not necessarily translate into better social conditions for women. ⁷⁴
3	“Constraints and good practice in women’s entrepreneurship in MENA, Case study: New evidence on gender attitudes towards women in business” ⁷⁵	The evaluation finds that the <i>El Mashroua</i> programme had a significant impact on some of its viewers’ gender-related attitudes towards self-employment. In particular, the programme managed to reduce discriminatory beliefs held by men against women entrepreneurs. However, watching the show itself did not have any significant impact on respondents’ aspirations towards entrepreneurship or the likelihood that respondents would take any steps towards creating a business. These findings are new evidence about how mass media can be used to tackle social norms and gender-specific barriers to women entrepreneurship. ⁷⁶
4	“Assessing the impact on employability and quality of employment of non-formal apprenticeship in	Overall, the apprenticeship component of the (programme evaluated) succeeded in effecting positive changes among its beneficiaries, even though effect sizes are small in most cases. These include marginal improvements in employment status and the quality of employment, as well as shifts in the mindsets of beneficiaries. However, improvement results were not strong,

⁷¹ http://erf.org.eg/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Lbr_ERF23AC_JonasBausch.pdf

⁷² Page 1.

⁷³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_575930.pdf

⁷⁴ Page 1.

⁷⁵ https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_622769/lang--en/index.htm

⁷⁶ Page 2.

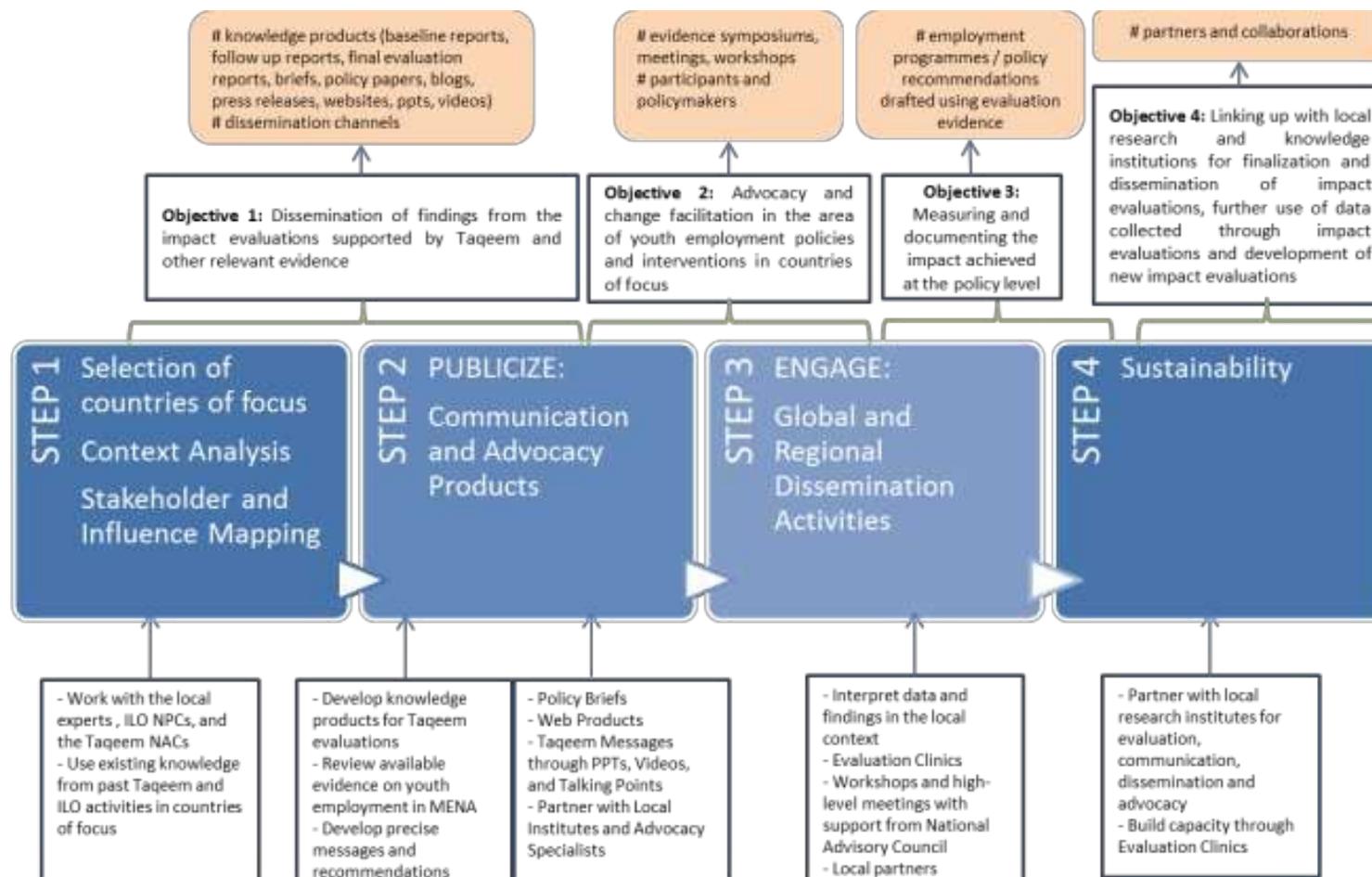
	agriculture-related trades in Egypt” ⁷⁷	particularly when viewed in the context of a cost- benefit analysis. Importantly, these gains came despite major setbacks in project implementation, the communication of project goals among stakeholders, and the ability of the project’s approach to deliver skill improvements in a low-skill work environment. Important lessons learned in regard to project implementation and future efforts to ensure that projects focused on improving and upgrading non- formal apprenticeships secure better results. ⁷⁸
--	--	---

⁷⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_645558.pdf

⁷⁸ Page 40.

Annex 17: Policy Influence Plan⁷⁹

Graphic 3: Taqueem Policy Influence Plan



⁷⁹ Project Completion Report, page 23.

Annex 18: An approach to influencing policy in Egypt

11) Consider the following for Egypt as an example, as described by one of the Egyptian government interviewees in the evaluation. Some of the following is already part of the PIP approach, but there may be benefit to reviewing all points described.

- *Effective targeting of awareness-raising interventions at the senior level within ministries:* Awareness raising should target the 15 Vice Ministries (VM) within ministries. The VMs have academic backgrounds and are considered as a ‘think tank’ for the Egyptian Government. Awareness raising interventions need to be very focused and concise to avoid stretching VM’s time and availability. Interventions can include short training workshops, orientation sessions, study tours, and 1-2 days conferences/events. All print material need to be presented more concisely or visualized with infographics for communicating evidence-based information.
- *Target relevant government institutions, ministries, and semi-governmental institutions.* For example, the following ministries and affiliated entities are relevant decision-making entities in Egypt: Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation (MoIIC), Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MoMM), Ministry of Planning (MoP) and its affiliated Institute of National Planning, the Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC), Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) the newly established Sustainable Development Unit, and Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) new Technical Unit⁸⁰ to strengthen capacities to integrate and coordinate social policies within MoSS and across other ministries and to formulate and analyze relevant information.
- *Proactively engage government institutions and ministries to conduct policy needs assessment* or identify policy priorities high in the government agenda, encourage them to apply for future IE proposals to address those needs, improve quality of policy making through uptake of in-house developed IE research results. In addition, establishing an “*evidence-based decision and policy making culture*” within government institutions would support them to push the envelope of IE before Donor communities, who are seeking impact of their investments and could fund IE studies. Another dimension to be considered in future Taqueem phases is to adopt a Regional Advocacy Campaign to encourage Donor communities to invest in IE studies to measure effectiveness of different ALMP in the MENA region.
- *Attract policy makers by supporting “Regulatory Impact Analysis or Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)” studies to be placed before a new government regulation is introduced to influence policy-making processes.* The role of an RIA is to provide a detailed and systematic appraisal of the potential impacts of a new regulation in order to assess whether the regulation is likely to achieve the desired objectives. The need for RIA arises from the fact that regulation commonly has numerous impacts and that these are often difficult to foresee without detailed study and consultation with affected parties. Economic approaches to the issue of regulation also emphasize the high risk that regulatory costs may exceed benefits.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Social Solidarity’s (MoSS) new technical Unit for integrating and coordinating Social Policies across the Egyptian Government’s ministries.

<http://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/operations/projects/sustainable-development/strengthening-institutional-and-human-resources-capacities-of-th.html>

From this perspective, the central purpose of RIA is to ensure that regulation will be welfare-enhancing from the societal viewpoint - that is, that benefits will exceed costs. RIA is generally conducted in a comparative context, with different means of achieving the objective sought being analyzed and the results compared.

This approach (and related interventions) would serve many purposes; not just to raise awareness to importance of M&E/IE and building in-house capacities in M&E and IE (especially raising capacities of the middle-management tiers to reduce overt resistance to change), but also the research results will meet current policy needs thus enhancing research uptake. This approach will ensure formulating actionable/feasible policy recommendations and will build credibility and accountability measures before donor communities to attract more donor investments in the MENA region. Also, this approach would broaden Taqueem's scope of implementation rather than a limited number of IE studies and would increase its effectiveness in the 4th phase.

- *Outreach to MENA-based researchers of non-academic backgrounds to enhance uptake of research results and influence policies.* It's more multi-disciplinary to have people who are working to do more research that is applied, more related to policies rather than academia. Applied research work is an added value over theoretical with no or little policy implications. More focused is needed on policy and practical grants rather than academic research work that cannot be translated into policy influencing.