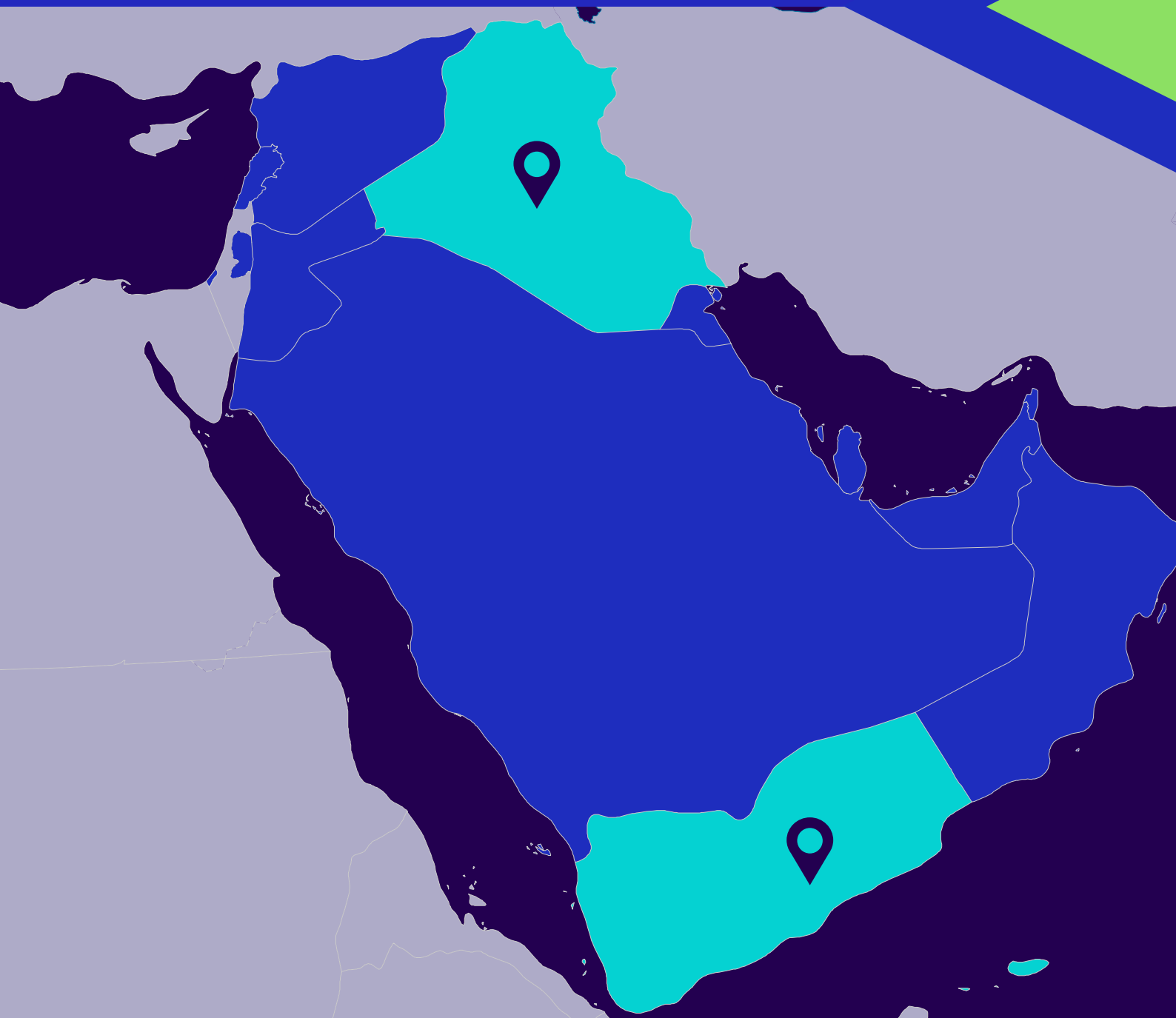
International Labour Organization | Evaluation Office

▶ Decent Work Country Programme (2023)

# Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23)

August 2023



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# CONTENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **AAP** | Accountability to Affected Populations |
| **ACTEMP** | Bureau for Employers' Activities |
| **ACTRAV** | Bureau for Workers' Activities |
| **AP/CRISIS** | Priority Action Programme on Decent Work in Crises and Post-Crisis Situations |
| **CEACR** | Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations |
| **COVID-19** | Coronavirus disease |
| **CFS** | Child Friendly Spaces |
| **CRUCSY** | Countering the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Yemen project |
| **CS** | Corporate Services Cluster |
| **DFA** | De Facto Authorities (Yemen) |
| **DWCP** | Decent Work Country Programme |
| **DWCT** | Decent Work Country Team |
| **DWT** | Decent Work Technical Support Team |
| **ECR** | Employment of Children Regulations |
| **EIIP** | Employment Intensive Investment Programme |
| **ERRY** | Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen |
| **EVAL** | ILO Evaluation Office |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| **FGD** | Focus group discussion |
| **FYCCI** | Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Yemen) |
| **GFIW** | General Federation of Iraqi Workers |
| **GFITU** | General Federation of Iraqi Trade Unions |
| **GFYTU** | General Federation of Yemeni Trade Unions |
| **HDP** | Humanitarian-Development-Peace |
| **HLE** | high-level evaluation |
| **IDP** | internally displaced person |
| **IDS** | Institute of Development Studies |
| **IFI** | Iraqi Federation of Industry |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organization |
| **INTSERV** | Internal Services and Administration Department |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **IRG** | Internationally Recognized Government |
| **IRIS** | Integrated Resource Information System |
| **ITUC** | International Trade Union Confederation |
| **KII** | Key informant interview |
| **KRI** | Kurdistan Region of Iraq |

| | |
|---|---|
| **LHSP** | Lebanon Host Communities Support |
| **M&E** | monitoring and evaluation |
| **MOLSA** | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Iraq) |
| **MOP** | Ministry of Planning (Iraq) |
| **MOSAL** | Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (Yemen) |
| **MOTVET** | Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training (Yemen) |
| **NGO** | non-governmental organization |
| **P&B** | Programme and Budget |
| **PARTNERSHIPS** | Partnering for Development |
| **PWG** | Priority Working Group |
| **PROGRAM** | Strategic Programming and Management Department |
| **PROSPECTS** | Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities |
| **RBSA** | Regular Budget Supplementary Account |
| **RPL** | Recognition of prior learning |
| **SCMCHA** | Supreme Council for Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| **SDGs** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SIYB** | Start and Improve Your Business |
| **SMEs** | small and medium-sized enterprises |
| **TVET** | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNCT** | United Nations Country Team |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNDSS** | United Nations Department of Safety and Security |
| **UNEG** | United Nation Evaluations Group |
| **UNHCR** | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **UNSDCF** | United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework |
| **WFP** | World Food Programme |
| **XBTC18** | Extrabudgetary Technical Cooperation |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL), with the assistance of an independent team of evaluators. This team was composed of researchers from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, who had no prior association with the ILO's work in Arab States, as well as independent consultants. The team consisted of Dr Philip Proudfoot (team leader, IDS fellow); Lewis Sida (independent senior consultant); Tina Nelis (IDS research officer); Sofya Shabab and Iraq specialist, IDS Fellow); and Abeer Al-Absi (Yemen national consultant).

A synthesis review of selected relevant evaluation reports was prepared by Hiroyoshi Hiratsuk, an international evaluation consultant, as part of the preparations for the evaluation. Craig Russon and Ricardo Furman were the task managers for the evaluation. Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided inputs, technical guidance and oversight, to ensure the independence and quality of the evaluation.

EVAL would like to express gratitude to the ILO departments at ILO headquarters and the Regional Office for Arab States, as well as their staff in the covered countries, who took the time to contribute to the evaluation. Special thanks are due to the constituents and partners who dedicated their valuable time to sharing documentation and participating in the interviews and surveys that were conducted.

# 01

## Executive Summary

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this evaluation is to inform strategic decision-making at an ILO governance level and contribute to future policies and programmes in crisis and post-conflict recovery settings, particularly in the Arab States. The evaluation examines the four key pillars of decent work – promoting jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue – while also situating the ILO within ongoing shifts towards a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. The evaluation also considers practical and organizational challenges faced by the ILO in humanitarian crisis contexts.

## OVERALL FINDINGS

The evaluation examined the ILO's work in broad terms in the Arab States and conducted a detailed analysis of the recovery efforts in Iraq and Yemen throughout the period 2019–23. It explores the accomplishments, difficulties and potential avenues for promoting the Decent Work Agenda in contexts marked by fragile socio-political conditions and prolonged crises. In post-conflict Arab States, the ILO's model of intervention is relevant to contexts moving from large-scale humanitarian emergencies into periods of sustainable development. While the evaluation found numerous examples of effective programming, those achievements came up against unwieldy operational procedures, resource constraints and institutional bottlenecks. Those factors have further implications for ensuring impact and sustainability.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Relevance

**KEY FINDING 1**

The ILO's model of intervention in the Arab States is relevant to post-conflict recovery contexts. The Decent Work Agenda was appreciated by tripartite constituents as being pertinent for periods of transition between larger-scale crises and longer-term sustainable development.

**KEY FINDING 2**

At the downstream level, the ILO's employment-driven response to conflict-induced displacement and economic collapse is relevant to humanitarian needs. The combination of livelihood opportunities and skills training, for refugees/internally displaced persons and host communities alike, is relevant to short-term needs and to tackling underlying conflict drivers in the Arab States.

**KEY FINDING 3**

The ILO's programmes in the Arab States are relevant to key international and local development frameworks, including (a) the Decent Work Agenda; (b) the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) ILO Programmes and Budgets (P&Bs); (d) the ILO Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205); and (e) country-specific policy frameworks and plans. Most projects make this alignment explicit in associated documents.

While there are significant differences in programming across country contexts, the ILO's model of intervention is broadly relevant to conflict drivers in the Arab States. For example, in Iraq, which has moved into a period of stability, the ILO aligned its programmes closely with government priorities and policy development. In Yemen, the programmes were aligned with downstream employment generation, given predominant humanitarian needs. Recent re-engagement in the Syrian Arab Republic, through occupational safety and health and child labour programmes, demonstrates the ILO's ability to align its normative mandate with context-specific "entry points" in challenging political contexts.

## Coherence and design

**KEY FINDING 4**

Post-conflict recovery work in the Arab States coheres with the ILO's peacebuilding objectives, where peace outcomes and impacts are implicitly advanced by the Decent Work Agenda and social justice.

**KEY FINDING 5**

ILO programme design in the Arab States often lacks a coherent shared results framework for collecting data on cohesion indicators or indeed any other peacebuilding outcome. Various projects, however, have likely contributed to peace as they tackle key conflict drivers, from limited contact across social groups to few job opportunities and grievances related to inequality. Addressing such gaps will allow the ILO to situate itself in a better place within emergent HDP Nexus strategies.

**KEY FINDING 6**

At the design level, independent project evaluations reviewed note frequent gaps related to key outcomes concerning the strength of initial capacity assessments. This problem has been most pronounced in Yemen, where tripartite constituents questioned whether project design was coherent with the country capacity needs.

**KEY FINDING 7**

The ILO Arab States programme design shows limited coherence with accountability frameworks. At the upstream level, there is strong interpersonal "relational accountability" with partners, but little systematic monitoring or tracking of issues faced during implementation. At the downstream level, the ILO would benefit from adopting "Accountability to Affected Populations" (AAP).

The ILO's intervention model in post-conflict recovery settings is generally coherent, but design often lacks explicit integration of peacebuilding. While the ILO is not a peacebuilding organization, recent P&Bs encouraged a greater ILO focus on resilience and social cohesion towards social justice in recovery contexts. This is being directly addressed at the regional office level (Regional Office for Arab States). AAP can also be part of this effort, where creating forums allowing beneficiaries to provide feedback on projects and help shape future interventions will ensure more valid project design.

## Effectiveness

**KEY FINDING 8**

The ILO has effectively engaged in post-conflict recovery contexts by tackling unemployment, social protection and the erosion of labour standards. Even in challenging contexts, there are examples of successful policy engagement, capacity-building programmes and employment generation. Notable achievements include Iraq's ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), which was followed by the passing of a new social protection law, a sweeping reform of the social security system, and expansion of coverage and benefits to all Iraqi workers, including informal workers and the self-employed.

**KEY FINDING 9**

While the ILO has in some cases effectively leveraged its normative mandate to engage other United Nations (UN) agencies in the Decent Work Agenda in some Arab States, more can be done. A plethora of agencies are enacting cash-for-work programming. By not always asserting itself in relevant humanitarian forums, the ILO is missing opportunities to complement and enhance those programmes in upholding principles and values of decent work.

**KEY FINDING 10**

At the project level, the ILO has made acceptable progress in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues as they relate to gender and non-discrimination, but has made limited progress on environmental sustainability, which is often incorporated more as an ad hoc adaptation. Broader challenges relating to gender, non-discrimination and the environment in the Arab States are significant – with, for example, the lowest rates of female labour participation in the world. The ILO does not have the resources needed to alter such trajectories. At the implementation level, there were many project-specific beneficiary complaints that could be addressed through stronger monitoring.

**KEY FINDING 11**

Tripartism and social dialogue face challenges in post-conflict settings – namely, politicized splintering and the collapse of legal institutions. Effective tripartism is a fundamental assumption within the ILO intervention model itself, yet addressing splintering is rarely considered a priority for recovery efforts. Instead, discord and disagreement are sometimes sidestepped for the sake of project implementation.

The ILO has made achievements in addressing conflict drivers and recovery needs in the Arab States. Many of these are at the level of policy uptake, with notable examples on social protection reform in Iraq and Lebanon, the Labour Law in Jordan, and occupational safety and health and child labour reform in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, effectiveness in conflict areas is hindered by operational and logistical barriers. Nevertheless, there is good evidence that issues relating to gender and non-discrimination are being considered and acted upon, despite broader challenges. While environmental progress is limited, solar panel maintenance and repair training are core components of the ILO's work in Yemen. Other than internal procedures, the biggest challenge for the ILO model to ensure effectiveness is political fragmentation among tripartite constituents.

## Efficiency

**KEY FINDING 12**

The ILO's operational procedures, security protocols, bureaucratic mechanisms and contracting rules hamper project efficiency, impact and sustainability, particularly in high-risk settings where external expert deployment is restricted. As a result, most projects examined for the high-level evaluation (HLE) experienced delays and higher costs, often due to internal institutional blockages and capacity bottlenecks at the regional level, and on the basis of ILO corporate procedures. These challenges may adversely affect relationships with tripartite constituents, routine monitoring and evaluation, and staff morale.

**KEY FINDING 13**

While some projects in the Arab States demonstrated strategic use of resources, such as harnessing cost-sharing and making savings due to online shifts during the pandemic, there were instances where joint partnerships did not lead to planned efficiency savings. Greater and closer coordination with other agencies will further improve efficiency.

**KEY FINDING 14**

When countries emerge from conflict, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States requires resources and institutional efficiency to swiftly increase the presence of international staff with relevant skills and experience. In Yemen, the current team relies on national colleagues without diplomatic immunities, operating in a challenging and fractured political environment. The limited relationship with de facto authorities in Sana'a hampers permissions, approvals and efficient resource allocation for implementation and monitoring purposes.

Every project considered within the scope of this HLE experienced delays which were made significantly worse by inefficient operational procedures, bureaucratic slowdowns and capacity bottlenecks. These efficiency issues, in essence, dragged down other achievements. On the positive side, the ILO's tripartite constituents, specifically the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Iraq, felt that the close partnership approach helped ensure efficient and effective resource allocation. However, they also maintained that the slowness of ILO implementation meant that, for more short- or medium-term projects, they were more likely to request the help of other agencies. In Yemen, tripartite members considered that the ILO was not efficient in bringing its programming into line with specific contexts. For example, there was frustration from the de facto authorities in Sana'a, who felt that the ILO was not dealing with them as a partner, whereas in Aden, ministerial representatives felt that the ILO was neglecting them when the time was ripe for further systematic upstream engagement.

## Emerging impact

**KEY FINDING 15**

The long-term impact of the ILO's model of intervention for post-conflict recovery is difficult to measure. Moving into development is complex and non-linear, where external factors can scupper gains. While some downstream projects have immediate impact, other projects unfold over an extended period, making it challenging to attribute any outcome solely to ILO interventions.

**KEY FINDING 16**

There are strong examples of short- and medium-term impact, particularly in policy adoption, legal reform, curriculum development and tripartite capacity-building. However, at this level, operational and contextual challenges have limited the collection of impact data or research, while in more conflict-prone settings, such as Yemen, there are several project-level examples where longer-term impact pathways were missed in project design and implementation.

**KEY FINDING 17**

At the regional and global levels, an emerging body of reports and strategy documents positions the ILO as an agency with an HDP Nexus mandate. As yet, at the project level, there remains a lack of systematic understanding of, or reporting on, impacts of the Nexus.

The evaluation team found that ILO programmes of work in the Arab States adhered to core principles, but there was limited analysis on broader recovery impacts. The ILO model of intervention was, by its nature, long-term in scope, and its operations were difficult to assess at the macro impact level. As a result, independent evaluations during 2019–23 also tended to highlight short- and medium-term outcomes. As already mentioned, in Iraq there was significant progress on policy adoption, but the evaluation team could not yet find evidence of impact at the beneficiary level, whereas in Yemen there was some short-term but weak long-term impact documentation.

## Sustainability

**KEY FINDING 18**

At the strategic level, the ILO intervenes in post-conflict settings by establishing institutional foundations for decent work, prioritizing system-building, capacity-strengthening and employment generation. This approach offers inherent sustainability advantages, as it focuses less on immediate humanitarian needs and more on long-term solutions. It counters short-termism within the humanitarian system, which has left many countries reliant on "life support". Additionally, the ILO's normative function aligns its programmes with legal reform. However, the bulk of the ILO's work examined for the HLE suffers from "projectization", with distinct (and quite short) timelines. This is not unique to the Arab States, but to the ILO as a whole. While there are some attempts at "joining up" different projects, more could be done to ensure longer-term sustainability and synergies, which is, in theory, the purpose of a Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).

**KEY FINDING 19**

One of the main means for the ILO's model to be sustainable is the tripartite constituent approach. However, in post-conflict situations in the Arab States, there is often a deprioritization of certain partners for the sake of smoothing implementation and avoiding areas of discord. While understandable contextually, it also potentially hinders sustainability.

**KEY FINDING 20**

Learning in order to improve sustainability is also missed, due to operational and resource limitations that hinder regular monitoring. More regular outcome-based monitoring and follow-ups can help ensure that programmes remain relevant and responsive, and that sustainability issues can be addressed moving forward.

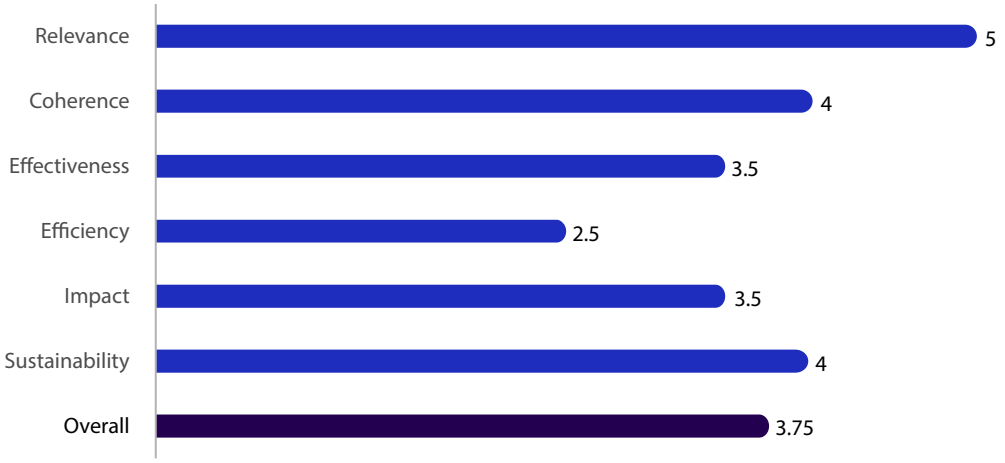
The ILO model of intervention has a number of features that make it sustainable. Indeed, despite multiple contextual challenges at the level of governance in the Arab States, there have been impressive achievements in policy formulation. However, many of these countries are also locked in protracted crises, where intermittent emergencies can risk undoing that progress. The ILO does not have the resources needed to mitigate against all of these risks or address every crisis driver. However, working to ensure greater coherence across various ILO interventions, working in partnership with other agencies, and improving monitoring will create more opportunities to ensure sustainability.

## CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- The Arab States are one of the most conflict-prone regions on Earth. In Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, direct fighting has become intermittent or reached a stalemate. Yet they remain caught in a spiral of protracted crises. Neighbouring countries – Lebanon and Jordan – face associated impacts on stability.
- At the same time, the UN increasingly acknowledges that the humanitarian system is stretched to its limit, with funding running dry, and few coherent strategies on how to break the cycle and shift to durable solutions.
- Lessons from Iraq underscore the vital role the ILO can play in assisting with this transition, moving from short-term needs into longer-term development. Despite various challenges, good progress has been made on social protection reform, labour rights advocacy and adoption of ILO Conventions, as well as policy dialogue. Lessons from Yemen underscore the need for greater efficiency, agility in relation to operational constraints, and readiness to change programming in line with fluid conflict dynamics.
- While the decent work pillars tackle key conflict drivers, more strategic thought is needed on how to deal with splintering and discord among tripartite constituents and their role in the HDP Nexus. Effective social dialogue between representatives of governments, employers and workers is a key process in achieving the Decent Work Agenda.
- Recovery contexts are rarely safe and stable. If the ILO wishes to be a key player in these contexts, it needs to learn lessons from countries such as Iraq, reform operational procedures and address bureaucratic bottlenecks, to ensure a more agile and streamlined response. Moreover, contexts such as in Yemen have significantly higher costs and ILO allocations, and resource mobilization needs to reflect this.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

**FIGURE 1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE ILO'S POST-CONFLICT AND RECOVERY WORK IN THE ARAB STATES REGION**




## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

**Provided the ILO wants to engage effectively and efficiently in post-conflict settings, it should reform operational, logistical and security procedures, in line with other UN agency standards.** While the ILO intervention model is relevant to post-conflict recovery contexts, for it to be more effective and efficient, the Office needs to urgently address institutional bottlenecks and contextually inappropriate rules. Addressing these barriers will improve use of resources, monitoring and oversight.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Director-General<br>▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/ Corporate Services Cluster (CS): Internal Services and Administration Department (INTSERV) and Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM) |  | Short-term | Low |

## Recommendation 2

**The ILO must ensure swifter engagement jointly with other UN agencies at the onset of a crisis.**

This is not to launch programmes during the high points of violence or war, but so that the ILO can be included in subsequent coordinated humanitarian and HDP Nexus response mechanisms. Given the relevance of the ILO's model for conflict recovery, greater participation in UN coordination forums will allow the ILO to position itself better as a key agency that can provide information on decent work standards.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/External and Corporate Relations (ECR): Partnering for Development (PARTNERSHIPS)<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Long-term | Low |

## Recommendation 3

**Provided the ILO wants to engage in post-conflict country settings, it should match that commitment with a robust presence of international staff possessing relevant skills and experience.**

The ILO should conduct a systematic review of its operations and policies in conflict contexts, intervening earlier in the recovery process with the appropriate staff presence, as shortcuts are risk-prone.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Director-General<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM and Human Resources Development<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Medium-term | High |

## Recommendation 4

**To position the ILO further within the HDP Nexus, the ILO should develop distinct theories of change for post-conflict recovery contexts.**

The ILO Regional Office for Arab States has made progress in reviewing programmes and commissioning research that explores the peacebuilding outcomes of its projects. This work should continue, while ensuring there is coherent internal and external understanding of what the ILO hopes to achieve beyond specific projects. Producing context-specific theories of change can help explain what the ILO hopes to contribute towards peace and recovery efforts.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Medium-term | Low |

## Recommendation 5

**The ILO should develop a coherent strategy on how to work with tripartite constituents in fragmented political contexts.**

A primary obstacle to the ILO model of intervention in early conflict recovery periods and conflict prevention is fragmentation and the collapse of various governance institutions. The ILO should work towards adapted strategies for ensuring effective tripartism in situations of post-conflict political fragmentation.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States in consultation with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) |  | Medium-term | Low |

## Recommendation 6

**The ILO should review project design and monitoring processes in post-conflict settings.**

While carrying out routine monitoring is challenging in fragile recovery contexts, multiple project evaluations reviewed for this HLE noted gaps in data and missing indicators. To intervene in these contexts, the ILO should conduct a review to identify these issues and develop a plan to ensure they are not replicated going forward.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/ECR: PARTNERSHIPS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Long-term | Low |

## Recommendation 7

**The ILO should design and implement an accountability strategy in line with AAP.**

Improved accountability policies and monitoring will enhance lesson learning across programmes, helping the ILO to learn and adapt to post-conflict contexts. Indeed, various issues that emerged during project implementation could be tackled through feedback workshops with programme beneficiaries that can facilitate bottom-up learning.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/ECR: PARTERSHIPS<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States<br>▶ EVAL |  | Long-term | Medium |

## OFFICE RESPONSE

On **Recommendation 1**, the Office agrees with this recommendation, which is closely related to relevant sections of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25[1]. The Priority Action Programme on Decent Work in Crises and Post-Crisis Situations (AP/CRISIS) will coordinate follow-up action across the Office through its enabling functions, focusing on improvements identified in the report and in internal reviews previously undertaken[2]. In relation to the Arab States Region, key steps taken include the creation of positions of an international regional human resources coordinator and an international security officer. The roll-out of the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Iraq is improving administrative performance. The current modest scale of operations and limited extrabudgetary funding in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen make it challenging to reap economies of scale. Efforts are underway to ramp up programme development and resource mobilization, create a 12-month position of ILO Coordinator in Damascus, and secure the detachment of a senior adviser to the ILO programme in Yemen.

On **Recommendation 2**, the Office agrees, noting that implementation will have resource implications to be considered, and this approach is in line with ILO engagement in the HDP Nexus and the recently adopted UN Guidance Note on a New Generation of Joint Programmes. See Recommendation 3.

On **Recommendation 3**, such engagement in crisis contexts requires an experienced international staff member at the P4 or P5 level, able to work in difficult circumstances with UN partners to determine entry points for ILO programmatic engagement across the HDP Nexus. A dedicated staff deployment mechanism, including a global roster to allow such assignments, could be considered. The experience in the Arab States of out-posting Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) specialists for such assignments could be replicated.

On **Recommendation 4**, the Office agrees. In fact, such specific theories of change or possible intervention models do exist but could be revisited and grouped together in a better manner, also as a platform for engagement with UN partners and donors. AP/CRISIS is currently developing further guidance focusing on different policy areas, as a contribution to enhancing capacity to effectively address the HPD Nexus. The July 2023 report ILO Arab State *Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities* (ILO, 2023a) provides a good basis, and the experience from programmes such as the Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS) will also be harnessed.

On **Recommendation 5**, the Office agrees and seeks to engage constituents actively. Specific approaches will be needed for ministries, trade unions and employer organizations. The issue is possibly less one of fragmentation of constituents, and more the increased capacity development support needed to allow ILO constituents to play their roles in post conflict settings.

On **Recommendation 6**, the Office agrees. Though the AP/CRISIS work has already developed a set of design, monitoring and evaluation tools to work across the Humanitarian- Development-Peace Nexus, this can be expanded with a menu of relevant indicators for field offices to draw on.

On **Recommendation 7**, the Office agrees. This point was also made in the recent Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network assessment of the ILO. A first step will be to develop adequate guidelines modelled, for instance, on those prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The introduction outlines the background to this high-level evaluation (HLE), its purpose, scope, evaluation questions and overall approach.

1 See Preview of the Programme and Budget Proposals for 2024–25, paras 211 and 212.
2 This includes the internal rapid assessment "Project Implementation at the Frontline", December 2021.

# 02

## Introduction

# INTRODUCTION

**The introduction outlines the background to this high-level evaluation (HLE), its purpose, scope, evaluation questions and overall approach.**

## BACKGROUND TO THIS HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION

In November 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Governing Body approved the Evaluation Office's (EVAL's) 2023 rolling work plan, which included an HLE of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in the Arab States region[3].

Following a review of resource allocation and priorities in the region, as well as a consultation with the Regional Office for Arab States, EVAL decided that the focus of this evaluation would be the ILO's programme of work in crisis situations over the last two biennia (2019–23). Within the Arab States, the HLE looks at Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, with closer case studies and primary data collection in Iraq and Yemen[4].

Maintaining the pillars of decent work in crisis situations poses distinctive challenges as well as unique opportunities for the ILO to contribute towards recovery and sustainable peace. Given this focus, the evaluation included country case studies of Iraq and Yemen. Each country represents a particular stage of recovery, with ILO work in Iraq more advanced than work in Yemen, where the latter is just beginning to move into a post-conflict period5. This arrangement offers an opportunity for the ILO to learn from Iraq as it begins to move forward in Yemen. The HLE, as such, generates a series of crosscutting lessons that can help:

- **improve** country programme planning and implementation;
- **improve** organizational effectiveness;
- **demonstrate** accountability for results;
- **strengthen** synergies among the ILO's technical advice and technical cooperation activities;
- **generate** lessons for future programmes and projects;
- **identify** approaches to better support priorities and outcomes of the national tripartite constituents of these countries within the context of the pandemic and beyond.

To enhance this report's relevance, the evaluation team took an inclusive and participatory approach to recommendations, seeking feedback through key informant interviews (KIIs) and discussions with various relevant regional partners and ILO staff. The findings ought to contribute towards actionable planning and implementation; enhanced accountability; effectiveness; and a more targeted identification of key priorities and desired outcomes for the ILO's tripartite constituents (government, employers and workers' representatives).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of an HLE is to inform strategic decision-making at an ILO governance level. It also helps meet accountability objectives while providing opportunities for organizational learning. This HLE, then, is intended to contribute towards future policies and programmes in both the Arab States in particular, and in crisis and post-conflict recovery settings more broadly.

3 Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
4 A decision was taken to exclude the Occupied Palestinian Territories from the HLE, given the particularities of the crisis lowering the possibility for comparative analysis.
5 This is following positive peace discussions and a series of intermittent ceasefires. Nevertheless, there remains a strong possibility for a return to hostilities; thus, the use of the term "post-conflict" is very tentative.

In a bid to enhance those objectives, the evaluation team consistently triangulated and cross-checked observations in an iterative process, while also co-creating recommendations in partnership with key ILO staff and national partners. This purpose was also supported by a synthesis review of evaluation reports of decent work activities in the Arab States, conducted by EVAL as part of this HLE. This allowed the evaluation team to work more intensively on the Iraq and Yemen case study component[6].

## SCOPE

This HLE's scope falls on the ILO's post-conflict recovery work in Arab States over the last two biennia (2019–23)[7]. Focusing specifically on Iraq and Yemen, the evaluation explores the achievements, challenges and opportunities in advancing the Decent Work Agenda in contexts characterized by fragile socio-political circumstances and protracted crises[8]. According to the ILO:

> **["Decent work"] involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men[9].**

Within this definition, the evaluation team looked at the four key pillars of decent work: promoting jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue. Understood as such, decent work remains one of the most effective means of escaping poverty.[10]. As such, the HLE aims to pinpoint how that agenda sought to meet immediate needs at the citizen level, while also aiding post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding by strategically promoting social justice and fundamental standards in the world of work. As outlined below, there are many unique practical and organizational challenges for the ILO operating in humanitarian crisis contexts. The evaluation team also paid particular attention to these obstacles.

## CLIENT

The principal client for the evaluation is the ILO's Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of his Senior Management Team, the Regional Office for Arab States, the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT), ILO national coordinators, project staff based in Iraq and Yemen, and the tripartite constituents in the Arab States.

6 EVAL, 'A Synthesis Review of the ILO's Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Interventions between 2019 and 2023.' (Geneva: ILO, 2023).
7 While the original title of the evaluation refers to "post-conflict settings", ILO interviewees expressed doubt as to the sustainability and durability of peace in Iraq and Yemen. In Yemen, in particular, a ceasefire and peace process are only in their early stages (as of mid-2023). Thus, to reflect that uncertainty, the evaluation team proposed "(post-)conflict" be used to describe these two countries and "post-conflict" to be used thematically.
8 The term "protracted crises", defined further below, refers in this report to a compounding series of prolonged emergencies.
9 ILO, 'Decent Work', 2023, www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm
10 Stuart Bell and Kirsten Newitt, 'A Study for the Decent Work and Labour Standards Forum', 2010, 15–19.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Following the United Nation Evaluations Group's (UNEG's) Good Practice guide evaluations – as reiterated by ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation – the evaluation looks at the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the ILO's decent work programmes in the Arab States.

The following evaluation questions were based on consultations between EVAL, the Regional Office for Arab States (Beirut), and ILO staff based in Iraq and Yemen. When collecting data and conducting analysis, we structured our answers to these questions in a manner that considered stakeholder satisfaction, unintended results and lessons learned.

| ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED |
|---|---|
| **Relevance** *(Are the programmes doing the right things?)* | 1. Are the ILO's programmes effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Decent Work Agenda in Iraq and Yemen?<br>2. Are the interventions that support the ILO's postconflict and/or recovery work throughout the region, and in Iraq and Yemen, relevant to constituents' needs?<br>3. Is the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work in the Arab States relevant to broader national, regional and international development frameworks?<br>4. To what extent have the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery interventions been designed or repurposed to adapt to contextual volatility in fragile postconflict settings? |
| **Coherence** *(How well does the intervention fit and what is the validity of design?)* | 1. To what extent is the work in Iraq and Yemen coherent with the ILO's broader peacebuilding strategies?<br>2. How well are the Extrabudgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) projects aligned with the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work?[11]<br>3. To what extent can the programmes of work for Iraq and Yemen be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion?<br>4. To what extent are ILO programmes accountable to the tripartite constituencies and at-risk populations? |
| **Effectiveness** *(Is the country programming achieving its objectives?)* | 1. To what extent have the programmes of work for Iraq and Yemen made progress in achieving results on cross-cutting issues of gender equality and non-discrimination, notably in, for example, policy dialogues, policy partnerships and partners frameworks? Were there any unexpected results?<br>2. To what extent have the Iraq Country Coordination Office, the Yemen National Coordinator, the Regional Office for Arab States, DWTs and concerned headquarters departments fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes at the country level?<br>3. How did the programmes of work for Iraq and Yemen respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic? What were the key factors of success?<br>4. In Yemen, how have the ILO programmes of work navigated a challenging political and security environment? |
| **Efficiency** *(How well are resources being used?)* | 1. How cost-efficient was the ILO's implementation in the Arab States in general and Iraq and Yemen in particular? |

11 Other than one project in the Syrian Arab Republic, all programmes considered under the terms of this HLE are XBTC.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Likelihood of impact** *(What difference does the programming make?)* | 1. | To what extent have the Arab States' programmes of work adhered to the core principles of the ILO (normative and social dialogue), and has doing so yielded the desired results? |
| **Sustainability** *(Will the benefits last?)* | 1. | Have the programmes of work for Iraq and Yemen developed a sustainability strategy? |
| | 2. | What positive and negative recommendations and lessons could be offered to improve the sustainability of ILO programming in Arab States? |

## APPROACH

The approach taken responds to the broad central purpose of the evaluation – assessing how decent work has contributed to post-conflict recovery in Iraq, Yemen, and the Arab States in general – as well as answering more granular sub-questions and criteria. This combination is relevant for the strategic focus of an HLE, which in this case is not an evaluation of one specific project, but an assessment of the ILO's overall approach in Arab States' postconflict settings. As such, this document will, ideally, assist with learning at a regional level, while providing a broader assessment of the ILO's contribution to crisis recovery.

The overarching evaluative approach borrows from various sources of best practice. This includes guidance set out in High-Level Evaluation (HLE) Protocol 2 for DWCP evaluations [12], as well as UNEG guides and best practices for evaluations[13].

The investigative framework is theory-based, and data analysis harnessed a mixed-methods grounded approach. "Theory-based" evaluations seek to understand, at a strategic level, how and why a programme works or does not work, and to identify the mechanisms by which it produces intended (or unintended) outcomes. Grounded theory, explained further below, is a methodology that seeks to locate emerging themes *within* raw data rather than impose a pre-existing assumption or hypothesis.

Finally, as indicated by the evaluation questions, the evaluation team also sought to incorporate the ILO's cross-cutting themes, including advancing international labour standards and social dialogue, environmental sustainability, gender equality/non-discrimination and the impact of COVID-19.

12 ILO, 'High-Level Evaluation (HLE) Protocol 2' (ILO Evaluation Unit, 2012), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_215859.pdf

13 UNEG, 'Norms and Standards for Evaluation' (United Nations Evaluations Group, 2012), https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

# 03

## Methodology

# METHODOLOGY

**The evaluation's methodology is described below, including the evaluative framework and approach to data collection. Further information can be located in the Annexes.**

## OVERVIEW

The HLE adopted a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methods are appropriate, given the intricate and nuanced nature of post-conflict recovery programmes. Quantitative data identifies broader trends and patterns at the regional and national levels, whereas qualitative data helps suggest tentative and more nuanced explanations, often at a more granular level. Both forms of data were essential to meet the HLE's objectives. The evaluation team also integrated intersectional analysis where appropriate. The team adopted gender- and age-responsive methodologies in the collection, analysis and reporting phases. For example, where possible, female focus groups were led by female researchers and, when necessary, gender segregation was maintained.

As mentioned in the previous section, the methodological framework is *theory-based*, and it harnesses *grounded theory* as a key analytic approach.

The team reconstructed a theory of change, which was designed by combining interviews and the document review carried out during the inception phase. Particularly important was the ILO's synthesis review of evaluations in the Arab States, looking at post-conflict recovery work, entitled *The ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-2023): A synthesis review on lessons learned, what works and why*[14]. We also consulted other position papers and ILO research outputs on peacebuilding through the world of work. The framework was then validated by the EVAL team.

Grounded theory is a sociological method easily developed and adapted for evaluation research[15]. It is an orientation to data analysis that encourages researchers to avoid bias by viewing data through a specific hypothesis and by instead coding observations using a series of tags, which are progressively refined and grouped as the coding process continues. From this refinement and grouping, overarching themes and observations begin to emerge. To enhance that process, we used MAXQDA – a qualitative data package that allows for rapid and cost-effective data coding. A grounded approach is useful for strategic evaluations because it allows new areas to materialize that might not necessarily directly fit the proscribed evaluation questions, but nonetheless emerge as relevant and important for ILO staff and their tripartite constituents[16].

14 EVAL, 'A Synthesis Review of the ILO's Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Interventions between 2019 and 2023.' https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_886918/lang--en/index.htm

15 Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (Sage, 2007); Mary Whiteside, Jane Mills, and Janya McCalman, 'Using Secondary Data for Grounded Theory Analysis', *Australian Social Work* 65, no. 4 (2012): 504–16.

16 A good example here is "access and security constraints" which, while not captured by a specific evaluation question, these challenges in post-conflict settings were frequently mentioned by participants and interviewees.

## DOCUMENT REVIEW

The evaluation team conducted a review of documents provided by EVAL and the Regional Office for Arab States (Beirut). Document data sources include:

- academic and research papers;
- annual UN Country Team (UNCT) reports;
- Common Country Assessments;
- reports of the Committee of Experts;
- Decent Work Agenda documents;
- government plans, including the Economic Vision;
- P&B;
- ILO stat;
- previous project evaluations (independent and internal);
- major donors' frameworks;
- security protocols and assessments;
- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

These documents were harnessed during the initial inception phase and also integrated into the coding process, allowing for rapid cross-checking and triangulation across various data sources.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

During the inception and data-collection phase, the evaluation team conducted semi-structured KIIs with individuals and small groups with first-hand knowledge of the ILO's programme of work in Iraq, Yemen, and the Arab States more broadly. Participants were ensured that no quotations would be directly attributed, and that strict anonymity would be maintained. Any recordings of interviews were viewed only by the evaluation team and were deleted when the report was finalized. Informed consent was taken during the interviews.

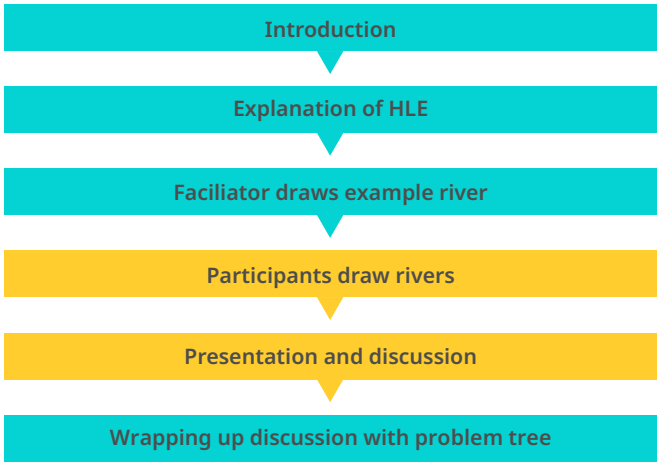
Conversations were structured around an interview guide (Annex 1), but discussion and some deviations were encouraged, given the broader strategic focus of this HLE. As interviews progressed, opportunities were taken to triangulate and validate emerging findings where appropriate. Probing was encouraged when new or unexpected areas were mentioned. KIIs were carried out with the following:

- ILO staff (at headquarters, with regional, DWT and country-based specialists; country office programme management teams; ILO project management teams; and consultants with recent experience working with ILO);
- ILO tripartite constituents in Iraq and Yemen;
- ILO implementing partners;
- UN and other national and international organizations in the target countries with which the ILO collaborated in Iraq and Yemen;
- Donor representatives.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND FIELD VISITS

The evaluation team also ran facilitated focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries of ILO training programmes in Iraq and Yemen. Details of FGDs' composition are provided in Annex 8.

**FIGURE 2. WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES IN YEMEN**




In Iraq, due to time constraints, the FGDs took the form of focused questions and facilitated discussion. This information was complemented by field visits. Visits were selected to align with current projects being implemented in line with the DWCP In Iraq; focus groups with beneficiaries took place in Erbil, taking the form of semi-structured discussions that covered all aspects of evaluation criteria, as well as initial discussions concerning predominant needs. Divergences from questions were encouraged where they moved into relevant information not covered by the FGD guide (Annex 1). Facilitators ensured, as far as possible, that all participants took equal part in the discussions. Where disagreements emerged in the group, the facilitator actively probed to discover the reasons for different experiences.

In Yemen, however, where access and security challenges emerged, participatory focus group activities were added to one workshop. The evaluation team felt it was necessary to do this, as beneficiaries were transported from outlying areas to join the workshops in hotels. As such, the evaluation team was unable to physically visit any businesses established from the ILO apprenticeship project, the Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY). As outlined in section 4 below (Limitations), such arrangements also have a positive feedback bias, where participants may feel pressure to offer only praise for their programmes. Given this limit, the evaluation team added participatory research methods to enrich data collection over a three-hour workshop. These methods functioned both as icebreakers, while also allowing for richer data collection in more constrained environments. The evaluation team harnessed two workshop tools: "rivers of life" and a "participatory problem tree". The river of life is a workshop activity that uses the metaphor of a river to generate life history discussions. It is a deceptively simple but effective activity. Participants are asked to draw their lives (or a period of their lives) as a river. They can harness features – such as flora and fauna, or river speed and width – to illustrate challenges and opportunities. The objective is to generate a discussion of what participants' needs were before they participated and how their lives changed after participating in the apprenticeship schemes.

The evaluation team set the time frame from the last ten years to the present and did not make any instruction to represent the apprenticeship programme on the river. This exercise was followed by a collective identification of a major challenge, established through collective discussion around the rivers exercise, which was then added to a problem tree – "livelihood collapse". This led to a further facilitated discussion around how appropriate, effective and impactful the apprenticeship schemes were on addressing the "root causes" and "effects" of that problem.

An FGD activity was not permitted in Sana'a due to contextual security constraints and a lack of permissions forthcoming from relevant authorities.

## ONLINE SURVEYS

Findings were also validated via an online survey. The questions are listed in Annex 5. Due to a low response rate, the survey is not to be considered representative. Instead, it provided an additional anonymous forum for comment, and also served to triangulate key assumptions from findings. Relevant comments have been included within the report.

# 04

## Limitations

# LIMITATIONS

This section identifies the various limitations for this HLE's methodology, and it outlines some of the evaluation team's attempts to mitigate those limitations.

## QUALITATIVE DATA BIASES

Qualitative forms of data have a number of inherent limitations. First, KIIs and FGDs rely on the perspectives and experiences of individuals, which can introduce subjectivity and bias into data. Second, due to the limited sample size, as well as potential bias, qualitative findings are not generalizable to all contexts and populations. The specific experiences and views of the interviewees do not always reflect the broader reality or diversity of perspectives. Third, certain individuals may also feel pressure to provide responses that they believe are socially desirable or align with expectations; others may provide responses that they may hope advance certain personal agendas or orientations. Finally, beneficiaries might be hesitant to share negative or critical views, leading to a predisposition towards positive responses, as mentioned above.

The team addressed these limitations through a number of research strategies. First, qualitative data was consistently framed by the evaluation team as interpretative; it was expressing particular views or explanations, not complete truths. Second, the evaluation team made sure to remind participants of the independent nature of the evaluation and explain its objectives and confidential nature; no ILO staff member was present in partner interviews. Finally, the evaluation team sought to triangulate and verify observations during the data coding process, cross-checking with a central document library and, where appropriate, consulting with other individuals.

## ACCESS AND SECURITY LIMITATIONS AND DATA GAPS

Because this HLE focuses on two post-conflict settings, it was of little surprise that access and security challenges led to a number of methodological limitations. These limitations are not unique to the ILO, nor to the Arab States in particular: routine humanitarian data collection is a persistent obstacle in protracted crises settings. These challenges impact quantitative and qualitative data collection equally. For example, movement is often more challenging in crisis contexts, where security concerns can lead to internally and externally imposed operational constraints.

In Iraq, it was not possible for the evaluation team to travel to areas deemed "very high risk". This reduced data collection to Baghdad, Erbil and Duhok; whereas in Yemen, a visa was only secured for entry into Aden, under the control of the "Internationally Recognized Government" (IRG), and not the North. This failure to secure permission is explained fully in Efficiency (8.4), as it contains important lessons for future expansion in Yemen. Instead, beneficiaries were brought to those respective cities for FGDs and participatory exercises, with the international consultant only able to participate in the Aden FGD. To account for these limitations, the team harnessed other ongoing research and project evaluations, and conducted remote interviews where necessary.

It is also important to note that, while the scope of the HLE included all post-conflict Arab States, primary data collection only took place in Iraq and Yemen. For Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, the evaluation team relied heavily on independent evaluations and literature review.

## UNEVEN COMPARABILITY

While the HLE focuses on Iraq and Yemen, they are not directly comparable contexts. First, the DWCP in Iraq is significantly more developed, whereas Yemen does not have a full DWCP. Second, Iraq has entered into a period of relative stability, whereas Yemen remains divided. It has had some recent positive moves towards peace, but it is nonetheless in a less stable context. Finally, due to the aforementioned access and security constraints, an international member of the evaluation team was unable to conduct data collection in Sana'a. Permissions for an FGD in Sana'a could also not be completed in time.

To address these limitations, the HLE took a more explorative and scoping approach in Yemen, examining what had been achieved but focusing more on what tripartite constituents and ILO staff envisioned as the future role of the ILO in Yemen, feeding lessons from Iraq into that process.

# 05

## The ILO and Post-conflict Recovery

# THE ILO AND THE POSTCONFLICT RECOVERY

**This section surveys the ILO's objectives in post-conflict settings. It draws on multiple sources, including interviews, ILO research papers, field manuals and normative instruments. It outlines the core analytic framework against which post-conflict recovery work in the Arab States was considered.**

## OVERVIEW

**Through its normative rights-based development approach, the ILO maintains it has a clear role to play in post-conflict settings**[17]. A range of conventions, declarations and recommendations are relevant to post-conflict and/or crisis settings; for example, a non-exhaustive list might include:

- ILO Constitution, 1919[18];
- fundamental principles and rights at work;
- Recommendation No. 205;
- ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019;
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182);
- Social Security (Armed Forces) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 68);
- Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71)[19].

Alongside these ILO specific instruments, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 16) also maintains specific objectives pertaining to employment and decent work, and the building of peaceful and inclusive societies. There is, then, a strong legal case for the ILO's role and contribution to post-conflict recovery work.

**Indeed, the ILO's role in post-conflict settings is not new but embedded in the Organization's history.** The ILO's founders recognized an interconnection between "work and livelihoods in the search for social justice, stability, and sustainable peace". In fact, the agency's "raison d'être... when it was established in 1919 was to prevent a return to conflict and unrest following the First World War". The objectives are even reflected in the opening line of the ILO Constitution, which reads "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice".[20] A senior worker's representative in Yemen even directly quoted this line when asked by the evaluation team of his opinion on the ILO's peacebuilding function.

Since 1919, the ILO has, for its part, reaffirmed commitments to post-conflict recovery work multiple times, in the Philadelphia (1944) and Centenary (2019) declarations, as well as codifying those commitments in a new international labour standard, Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).

17 See for example Date-Bah 2003 Jobs after War: A Critical Challenge in the Peace and Reconstruction Puzzle. ILO and Women and Other Gender Concerns in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Job Promotion Efforts". In Jobs After War: A Critical Challenge in the Peace and Reconstruction Puzzle. Geneva: ILO, 111–148; and Roberts 2008 "Post-conflict Statebuilding and State Legitimacy: From Negative to Positive Peace?" Development and Change 39 (4): 537–555

18 ILO Constitution, 1919. Available at Key document - ILO Constitution

19 Recommendation No. 71 was superseded by Recommendation No. 205, which considers internal forms of armed and non-armed conflict, whereas Recommendation No. 71 was concerned with inter-State conflict in the wake of the Second World War.

20 ILO Constitution, 1919. Key document - ILO Constitution

**Recommendation No. 205 is a key legal instrument structuring the ILO's post-conflict recovery mandate in the Arab States (and elsewhere).** Effectively, the Recommendation places the agency at the "crossroads of humanitarian assistance, development, peacebuilding and resilience"[21]. Indeed, this is now the only legal instrument that offers specific guidelines on labour issues in protracted crises situations, including pandemics, armed conflict, natural disaster, environmental degradation and forced displacement. In other words, this Recommendation gives force to the ILO's strategic position within emerging attempts to cohere humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts (the HDP Nexus, explored below).

**The ILO has produced a substantial body of thematic, technical and explorative documents that detail how and why the Organization ought to be working in post-conflict settings.** This vast array of policies, manuals, handbooks and position papers all describe practical pathways for relevant, effective, sustainable and impactful work in countries recovering from periods of fragility[22]. This literature maintains that the ILO's post-conflict recovery must be built on its decent work principles – that is, upholding basic labour standards and Conventions, facilitating social dialogue and (re-)building social protection systems to support workers in hard times.

These outputs are underscored by two operational assumptions: first, that decent work contributes to sustainable peace; and second, that intervening in the early post-conflict phase prevents negative practices and encourages a "healthier recovery". For example, in "Peace and Conflict Analysis", an ILO guidance document for programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, this is described as follows:

> **Access to decent work makes an essential contribution to peace and stability. It removes one of the biggest obstacles to personal, family and community progress, and removes one of the heaviest grievances contributing to conflict and unrest. On the other hand, peace and stability are themselves jobs multipliers. They create the circumstances in which the economy and society can flourish, jobs can be created, workers and employers can organize, and decency of work can be steadily improved, which in turn reinforces peace in a virtuous circle[23].**

**ILO staff at global, regional and national levels interviewed for this evaluation largely agree that the agency ought to increase its footprint in post-conflict settings, and many highlighted the inherent peacebuilding outcomes of the Decent Work Agenda.** On a practical level, some expressed concerns over operational procedures in crisis settings, given that the agency evolved more for a development rather than a humanitarian context. As outlined below, this is more

21 ILO 2022 Dealing with Crises Arising from Conflicts and Disasters – ILO Training Manual for Workers' Organizations.
22 See, for example, Azeng and Yogo, 2013 Youth Unemployment and Political Instability in Selected Developing Countries. Tunis, Tunisia: African Development Bank; ILO, 2016 Introduction to the ILO's Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience; 2021 Employment and decent work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus; Jütersonke and Kobayashi 2015 Employment and Decent Work in Fragile Settings: A Compass to Orient the World of Work. Geneva: Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.
23 ILO 2021 'Peace and Conflict Analysis: Guidance for ILO's Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts'.

pronounced in Yemen, where the war has administratively split the country in two, making for a distinctly challenging environment. Likewise, tripartite constituents maintained that the ILO had a well-defined job for advancing recovery efforts, with many underscoring both the Organization's normative mandate as well as its partnership approach. Indeed, interviewees saw the ILO as a potential key player within the broader ongoing drives to cohere humanitarian, development and peacebuilding objectives into a "nexus" ("HDP Nexus", explored further below).

## THE ILO AND THE HDP NEXUS

**The ILO has a clear role to play in the HDP Nexus.** The HDP Nexus calls for increased coherence between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors and objectives[24]. It recognizes that traditional humanitarian assistance – that is, providing short-term emergency relief and essential services – is a necessary but not sufficient means to address the root causes of today's crises[25].

The Nexus calls for new ways of working that will overcome the traditional divide between development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding sectors, doing so in a way that produces a coordinated collective response that can reinforce and rebuild national governance systems, thereby aiding relief and recovery efforts simultaneously. This necessitates "breaking with silos", whereby humanitarians have traditionally provided "politically independent" short-term emergency relief, while development actors have worked toward longer-term goals, often in partnership with governments.

The goals of the Nexus are not entirely new. Calls for better aid and development cooperation can be traced back to the 1990s and the "linking relief, rehabilitation and development" approach. Perhaps what is more recent is the addition of "peace", entailing coordination with peace actors to assist in the transformation of contemporary protracted crises into sustainable peace[26]. By engaging its tripartite constituents, the ILO can contribute to this mission by building peaceful societies where workers obtain decent jobs, redress labour disputes peacefully, and access comprehensive social protection systems.

**The ILO's mandate, its normative function and tripartite structure cohere well with the objectives of the HDP Nexus.** As mentioned earlier, Recommendation No. 205 re-emphasizes the ILO's role in promoting peace and resilience. It positions decent work as a vital component for advancing the Nexus, though its emphasis on inclusive economic growth, enhancing social protection systems, boosting social dialogue processes, and embedding support for basic labour standards *during,* rather than after, the recovery process[27]. Seeking to further operationalize Recommendation No. 205, the ILO launched the flagship "Jobs for Peace and Resilience" programme, which builds a strategic approach to decent work and post-conflict recovery and aims to contribute towards more peaceful and resilient societies through employment, decent work, and social dialogue. As such, the programme harnesses "employment-intensive investments, technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training, employment services and private sector and local economic development approaches in a coherent and context-specific manner"[28].

24 ILO, 'Employment and Decent Work in the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus' (Geneva, Switzerland: ILO: International Labour Organization, 2021),; Sebastian Weishaupt, 'The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Towards Differentiated Configurations' (UNRISD Working Paper, 2020).

25 Paul Howe, 'The Triple Nexus: A Potential Approach to Supporting the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?', World Development 124 (2019): 104629; Daniel Maxwell et al., 'Fit for Purpose? Rethinking Food Security Responses in Protracted Humanitarian Crises', Food Policy 35, no. 2 (2010): 91–97; Lewis Sida et al., 'Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the Yemen Crisis', 2022, Ahmad Tauqeer, 'Livelihoods in Protracted Crises: Using Savings and Small Business Grants to Build Resilience in Conflict-Affected Communities in Iraq', 2018.

26 Global Policy, 2023.

27 ILO, 'Employment and Decent Work in the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus' 2021a. Available at Employment and decent work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (ilo.org)

28 ILO, 'Introduction to the ILO's Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience', Document, 29 March 2016, ILO's Flagship Programmes: Introduction to the ILO's programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience

Tripartite members interviewed for this evaluation recognized the ILO's potential contribution within the Nexus, with one government official in Yemen saying, "ILO is the perfect agency for advancing the HDP Nexus", and "ILO should know best how to walk this line between development and humanitarianism". These sentiments were equally echoed by government partners in Iraq, including by a Member of Parliament and senior civil servants. These sentiments were not universal, but that was because not all interviewees were familiar with either the Nexus or Recommendation No. 205. However, when its principles were explained, all agreed this was an area of intervention well suited to the ILO. Scepticism was reserved only for the fact that the ILO's presence was felt to be weaker than other agencies during the crisis (a point returned to below).

Interviewed ILO staff and tripartite constituents felt that the Decent Work Agenda cohered with Nexus objects across three core areas:

A. **First, many highlighted the necessity of mainstreaming labour standards during the recovery period rather than side-lining them due to an "emergency situation".** Across the humanitarian and development sectors, "resilience" and "livelihoods" have become buzzwords for various agencies operating in crisis settings. "Income generation schemes" and "cash-for-work" programmes also represent a substantial subsection of humanitarian activity[29]. Yet it is also well known that, in crisis settings and fragile post-conflict periods, the world of work faces distinct challenges, from gaps in the labour market to the erosion of labour rights and the proliferation of child labour[30]. Allowing these processes to go unchecked risks embedding negative attitudes towards labour standards and missing opportunities to enhance labour market monitoring infrastructure during recovery. In turn, these gaps risk jeopardizing an emerging peace and breaching international labour law.[31]

B. **Second, another example of relevant Nexus intervention is rebuilding and enhancing social protection systems, a core component of the Decent Work Agenda.** The ILO's role was recognized as assisting in a transition from large humanitarian social assistance schemes to nationally led social insurance systems. Indeed, moving from a system based on "need" to a system based on "rights" is a fundamental pillar for moving from crisis to stability.

C. **Third, it is critical that ILO fundamental principles and rights at work and social dialogue principles are respected, even in crisis settings.** Cited examples include the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Right to Organize and to Bargain Collectively Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the Worst forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); and indeed, all fundamental principles and rights at work. These rights are particularly challenging to uphold during conflicts. Such situations can lead to the direct suspension of those rights by warring parties, or indirectly due to the collapse of institutional or juridical mechanisms. However, "social dialogue can be a powerful mechanism in the search for creative solutions to prevent societal conflict from turning into violence or mitigating some of the effects of impending or actual disasters – if activated at the right moment and by leaders who are accepted by all parts of society as fair and well-intended representatives of their constituents."[32]

29 Claire Mcloughlin, 'Sustainable Livelihoods for Refugees in Protracted Crises', *K4D (IDS)*, 2017.
30 Alqaoud Haitham, 'How Yemen's Civil War Drives Child Labour and Abuse', Fair Play, 2023, George Naufal, Michael Malcolm, and Vidya Diwakar, 'Armed Conflict and Child Labor: Evidence from Iraq', *Middle East Development Journal* 11, no. 2 (2019): 236–50; Mugaahed Abdu Kaid Saleh and K Rajappa Manjunath, 'Small and Medium Enterprises in Yemen: Navigating through Additional Obstacles during Covid-19', vol. 2050, 2020, 1–12; Ebrahim Yahya Saleh Sheikh, Salim Alshageri, and Mohammed Abdullah Hamood Hamid Hamood, 'Factors Influencing Children Armed Recruitment in Yemen', Cogent Social Sciences 8, no. 1 (2022): 2108137.
31 Several interviewees expressed these concerns during the inception interview phase.
32 LO interview 16.

## DECENT WORK AND PEACE

Across the ILO's work in post-conflict settings, there is an implicit hypothesized relationship between decent work and peace. In a multitude of project reports, documents and position papers, authors draw a connection between fair wages, safe working conditions, the ability to organize and bargain collectively, with access to social protection systems, and the establishment and maintenance of peaceful societies[33].

In data collection interviews – in both Iraq and Yemen – worker representatives and businesses also saw a link between decent work and peacebuilding. They highlighted that, if the market could not offer opportunities greater than those afforded by militias, then instability and conflict would continue. Confirming this, during workshop activities in Aden, "young men joining militias" was identified as a primary effect of "livelihood collapse". Or, as one participant put it, "people will join militias if they have nothing; it is feeding the war".

Thus, a key hypothesis for the ILO's post-conflict recovery work is that decent work programmes contribute towards peaceful societies. Underlying this cause and effect are three peacebuilding assumptions worth expanding on further:

A. **First, decent work is assumed to generate peace by reducing economic inequality and social exclusion via employment generation, alongside social dialogue** (collective bargaining for improved pay and conditions). When people are able to secure decent work, they are more likely to have economic security and a sense of inclusion, which can reduce tensions and promote cohesion over other social cleavages (such as race or religious groups). In the Arab States, then, decent work can, for example, reduce grievances that feed recruitment into violent sectarian political organizations, or indeed can lead to the "the worst form of child labour" – child soldiers[34]. Thus, if workers are able to secure decent pay and conditions, they are less likely to join non-State armed actors essential for the maintenance of conflict[35].

B. **Second, on a psychosocial level, decent work can contribute to peace by providing people with a feeling of purpose and meaning in their lives.** Non-exploitative forms of work can be a source of dignity and self-respect, and when people are able to earn a living through work, they are more likely to feel a sense of pride and belonging in their communities[36]. This is particularly important among displaced persons or people affected by conflict, where normal life and socio-cultural forms of respect through work are often highly impacted by war.

C. **Finally, decent work, alongside social dialogue and social protection systems, is assumed to lower tension and promote resilience in hard times.** Social dialogue between worker representatives, employers and governments promotes stability by reducing the likelihood of labour disputes, which can be disruptive to social and economic life. Trade union revitalization in post-conflict settings can allow workers to negotiate fair wages and working conditions, through collective bargaining, helping to prevent unrest and promote greater harmony (Conventions Nos 87 and 98). Meanwhile, the social protection component of decent work ensures that people are able to get the support they need to cope with difficult times, such as medical care, sickness benefits, unemployment and pensions (Convention No. 102; and Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 No. 157).

33 Rashid Amjad, 'Jobs for Iraq: An Employment and Decent Work Strategy' (University Library of Munich, Germany, 2005); ILO, 'Sustaining Peace through Decent Work and Employment', 2021; Oliver C Jütersonke and Kazushige Kobayashi, 'Employment and Decent Work in Fragile Settings' (The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Centre on ..., 2015).

34 ILO, 'The Worst Forms of Child Labour (IPEC)', 2023, The worst forms of child labour (IPEC) (ilo.org)

35 Philip Proudfoot, *Rebel Populism: Revolution and Loss among Syrian Migrant Workers in Beirut* (Manchester University Press, 2022).

36 Farha Ghannam, *Live and Die like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt* (Stanford University Press, 2013).

**Nevertheless, the relationship between decent work and peace is complex, with many different context-specific factors intersecting to shape outcomes.** Indeed, in a report commissioned by the ILO, authors levy criticism at the assumed links between employment and peace. On the basis of a systematic review of over 32 well-documented programmes, they find little systematic evidence to support the idea of a mutual impact. Their primary concern is the use of peacebuilding rhetoric in programme design, followed up with limited monitoring and evaluation. Without this follow-up, it is difficult to identify the specific ways in which either upstream or downstream employment programmes may have contributed towards peace. While the authors do identify certain ad hoc successful programmes, this is often due to emerging contextual opportunities, rather than evidence for a universal link between generating employment and generating peace[37].

In the absence of empirical data, this HLE tentatively explores the validity of those links on the basis of ILO work in two fragile post-conflict settings where there are a multiple context-specific challenges. In Yemen in particular, for example, there is at best a delicate intermittent peace punctuated by continued armed conflict. However, decent work can, in the right conditions, contribute significantly to the establishment and maintenance of peaceful societies, and efforts to promote decent work should be seen as an important part of broader efforts to promote peace and social justice[38].

37 See also Tilman Brück et al., 'Can Jobs Programs Build Peace?', The World Bank Research Observer 36, no. 2 (22 July 2021): 234–59.
38 Ibid.

# 06

## Decent work challenges in the Arab States

# DECENT WORK CHALLENGES IN THE ARAB STATES

This section provides a brief overview of the contextual challenges for decent work in the Arab States, focusing on protracted crises, before offering a more detailed exploration of the context and challenges of Iraq and Yemen[39]. It draws on ILO documents and reports, KIIs, and observations of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

## PROTRACTED CRISES IN THE ARAB STATES

**While each nation has its own particular challenges, the common thread connecting decent work challenges in Iraq and Yemen to other Arab States is the various intersecting impacts of conflict and protracted crises.** A crisis becomes "protracted" when it involves a multifaceted and prolonged situation characterized by violent conflict, political instability, social unrest and flaring humanitarian emergencies. Such circumstances are reflective of a broader global humanitarian trend, with "76.5 per cent of all those living in extreme poverty globally, while hosting only 23 per cent of the world's population". These crisis situations are maintained through the interlinking of various factors, including armed conflict, food insecurity, resource scarcity, terrorism, disaster and forced displacement. According to ILO strategy documents, escaping from these negative spirals demands multidimensional thinking and evidence-based strategies that can embrace inclusion and innovation (ILO, 2016a; ILO, 2021a; ILO, 2021c)[40].

For the ILO, it is important to underscore that these crisis cycles are also fed by mutually enforcing economic factors. This is because, on the one hand, protracted crises have direct negative impacts on labour markets, halting development processes and increasing poverty and unemployment. On the other hand, a lack of decent work and high levels of unemployment can themselves be generators for conflict, vulnerability and State fragility[41]. Clear examples that are relevant to the Arab States are instances where wages offered by militias are higher than those offered by employers, or where parties to the conflict rely on child labour. A lack of social dialogue in the workplace can also trigger both grievances – which when left unaddressed can feed into discriminatory attitudes – as well as social unrest. Yet despite this, employment is still all too often considered a secondary priority in peacebuilding contexts by traditional humanitarian actors[42]. As outlined in the previous section, then, the ILO has a clear role to play in addressing the economic and labour aspects of protracted crises.

**Protracted crises are also particularly prevalent in the Arab States, where they have some common intersecting drivers.** These include unequal global economic integration, warfare and invasion, sectarianism and authoritarian socio-political formations, geopolitical tensions, high levels of unemployment and limited enjoyment of basic rights, as well as "pro-market reforms introduced since the 1990s [that] have failed to deliver employment and social services to meet the growing aspirations of Arab citizens".

39 It is not possible to describe in detail every programme under consideration, and the following analysis draws heavily on a synthesis review of relevant evaluation reports (ILO, 2023) prepared by ILO EVAL on the ILO's work in Arab States provided to the evaluation team as background to the case studies in Iraq and Yemen.

40 ILO 2021, 'Sustaining Peace through Decent Work and Employment'; ILO, 'Introduction to the ILO's Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience'; ILO 2021, 'Peace and Conflict Analysis: Guidance for ILO's Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts'.

41 Therese F Azeng and Thierry U Yogo, *Youth Unemployment and Political Instability in Selected Developing Countries* (African Development Bank Tunis, Tunisia, 2013); ILO, 'Youth Unemployment in the Arab World Is a Major Cause for Rebellion', 5 April 2011, Youth unemployment in the Arab world is a major cause for rebellion (ilo.org)

42 ILO, 'Peace and Conflict Analysis: Guidance for ILO's Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts'.

Some of the most significant protracted crises in the Arab States region include the ongoing civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic, the conflict in Yemen, violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and persistent instability in Iraq. Each of these crises has devastating effects on countries and populations involved, resulting in humanitarian emergencies, loss of life, displacement and the collapse of livelihood opportunities. These issues have led to social unrest, protests and political upheaval, as citizens demand better governance and economic opportunities.

**Negative trends in the region are now being magnified by climate change impacts – both droughts and floods – as well as fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.** The consequences of these structural forces are manifest in persistent and flaring conflict between ethnic and/or religious groups, the rise of non-State armed actors, as well as the displacement of millions of people as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Within the ILO's mandate, specific regionwide challenges to be addressed include:

- weakened or politically co-opted social dialogue mechanisms;
- very high informality, even among "host" populations[43];
- poor adherence to labour standards, where even if norms are agreed upon, monitoring those norms remains a persistent challenge (as noted in the ILO's recent work on occupational safety and health (OSH) in the Syrian Arab Republic);
- the suppression of union rights[44];
- malfunctioning or inadequate State-level social protection systems (such as the collapse of the social insurance system in Lebanon).

**It is important to acknowledge, however, that given the Arab State's preponderance of crisis, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States has, in essence, operated within a "nexus space" for over a decade.** With the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the Regional Office began to work on various employment-intensive programmes that have sought to simultaneously assist externally displaced persons and the host population through a Decent Work Agenda.

**However, as outlined in the following sections, the evaluation team found that developing such programmes *inside* crisis countries means adapting to more challenging operational constraints.** In contexts such as in Iraq and Yemen, many of these challenges are external to the ILO itself, where flaring conflict hinders routine project implementation and monitoring, while political fragmentation hinders effective tripartite engagement. These restrictions demand pragmatic adjustments and flexible time frames. The extent of these challenges meant that some ILO staff felt that the efforts might have been better directed towards high-level engagement, rather than the Organization attempting to function on a downstream level, when other humanitarian agencies are better placed. Others, however, felt that, with enough resources, it would be possible for the ILO to effectively engage at both levels, and that it was a good strategy to maintain a double-pronged approach. Nevertheless, access and security complications, from armoured vehicles to restrictive security risk classification and limited engagement with political forces, all seem to significantly constrain implementation of projects and follow-up processes. As explored further below, addressing these issues is essential, not only for accountability objectives, but also for learning, project development and sustainability of programming.

Moreover, in Yemen (in particular) there are distinct civil (or proxy) war challenges that must be negotiated. The ILO's official government partner is the IRG, nominally based in Aden, with its ministers based in Riyadh[45]. Yet the vast majority of the Yemeni population (over 70 per cent) lives in territory in the North, governed by the "De Facto Authorities" (DFA), known colloquially as the

43 Roberta Gatti et al., 2014 *Striving for Better Jobs: The Challenge of Informality in the Middle East and North Africa* (World Bank Publications, 2014).
44 Eva Bellin, 'The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Politics,* 2004, 139–57.
45 Helen Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis: Road to War* (Verso Books, 2019).

"Houthi movement" or Ansar Allah. Described further below, the two country contexts selected for this HLE underscore that conflicts and emergencies are, of course, often highly complicated, intersecting and regionalized. Thus, while the ILO has a role to play, expanding that role will likely require significant adjustment, systemwide change, and serious investment in new staff and logistical support, as well as a push for greater political engagement in the whole of Yemen.

## DECENT WORK CHALLENGES IN THE ARAB STATES AND POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY

**Fundamental principles and rights at work: Common across post-conflict Arab States is a disjunction between de jure and de facto adoption of basic labour rights and standards.** In the historic period immediately following national independence, many emergent anti-colonial political formations – especially in low-oil, high-population nations – built a "populist authoritarian" political structure, wherein they saw an ideologically driven adoption of progressive labour rights. At the same time, unions were bound to the State as essentially another arm of government[46]. These periods left a legacy of relatively disempowered worker representative organizations unable to push governments and businesses to make good on legal reform.

They have also created a situation where successor unions from that period remain hostile to certain fundamental Conventions, such as Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Only Iraq (2018), Kuwait (1961), the Syrian Arab Republic (1960) and Yemen (1976) have ratified Convention No. 87. Meanwhile, Iraq (1962), Jordan (1968), Kuwait (2007), Lebanon (1977), the Syrian Arab Republic (1957) and Yemen (1969) have ratified Convention No. 98.

Adoption of forced labour Conventions is stronger, with all Arab States having adopted the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); likewise with child labour Conventions Minimum Age 1973 (No138) and Worst Form of Child Labour 1999 (No182). Equal Renumeration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) has not been adopted in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, whereas only Qatar has not adopted the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

Finally, occupational safety and health Conventions are also poorly adopted in the Arab States, with only Bahrain and the Syrian Arab Republic maintaining the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and just Iraq having adopted the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

Regardless of the legal status of these fundamental rights, in situations of humanitarian need and livelihood collapse, workers can find themselves in increasingly exploitative relationships with little recourse to representation. For example, as we shall see, in Yemen, trade union representatives felt unable to carry out their duty to workers due to a perceived lack of rule of law.

**Social dialogue: Conflict and crises have posed persistent challenges to regular and effective engagement with tripartite mechanisms.** Only five Arab countries – Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen – have ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). However, even where formal mechanisms do not exist, the ILO has sought to involve tripartite representative bodies and government ministries in its programming. However, there remain persistent obstacles to effective engagement, including limited space for independent trade unions and free association, as well as fragmented labour movements, government-dominated consultative bodies, the preponderance of informal

46 Hanna Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1999); Melani Cammett and Marsha Pripstein Posusney, 'Labor Standards and Labor Market Flexibility in the Middle East: Free Trade and Freer Unions?', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45, no. 2 (1 June 2010): 250–79, Raymond Hinnebusch, 'Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading'to Revolution?', *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2012): 95–113.

employment, and limited employment-generating economic growth. In States such as Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic, with splintered administrations, tripartite engagement must also navigate difficult political arrangements.

Social dialogue challenges are, to some degree, also impacted by the persistence of non-democratic political structures. Despite waves of optimism produced during the Arab Spring, with popular demands for democratic rights, every nation in the Arab States region maintains various nondemocratic political systems[47]. These systems are not homogenous, varying from the flawed confessional democratic republicanism in Lebanon to theocratic monarchism in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, some States, such as Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic, have witnessed recent periods of democratic backsliding. Tripartism is not necessarily predicated on democracy, but a lack of free and fair elections, rule of law, and protections for freedom of expression represents contextual restraint for effective social dialogue.

**Workers' and employers' organizations: The trade union movement in the Arab States is a mixed picture with some signs of positive developments, yet multiple challenges remain.** Common challenges include the above-mentioned political control over unions, with workers' organizations perceived to act in the interest of the State rather than members. This naturally limits social dialogue processes. Moreover, in some nations, trade unions that benefited from previous restrictive laws can themselves become hostile to free association, insofar as they see new independent unions as a threat to their influential positions. In States such as Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, this has limited collective bargaining, lowering the power of workers' organizations to influence employers. Finally, another challenge for workers' organizations is the high degree of informality and migrant worker restrictions. Informal workers make up an estimated 62 per cent of the labour force, and they have not effectively included women or youth in their activities[48]. Across all the Arab States, with the exclusion of Oman and Bahrain, migrant workers are excluded from trade union law. Migrant workers make up a majority of the labour force in the Gulf States, and a substantial number of migrants (including domestic workers) are present in Lebanon and Jordan. Their exclusion from workers' organizations significantly harms union leveraging power and deprives a significant proportion of workers of their fundamental rights. Employers' organizations are likewise a mixed picture across the Arab States. Like other institutions, employers' representatives in post-conflict settings have faced a number of related challenges, including fracturing, a lack of activity and lost capacity.

**Child and forced labour: Despite complete Arab States adoption of Conventions Nos 138 and 182 on child labour, and Conventions Nos 29 and 105 on forced labour, both remain endemic across the region.** An estimated 13.4 million, or about 15 per cent, of all children in the region are child labourers; however, this number is likely to be significantly higher, given difficulties obtaining statistics in Yemen and the preponderance of child labour in the hard-to-measure informal sector. Indeed, Yemeni Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) officials stated that they had no real ability to comment on the prevalence of child labour in the country, given that no large-scale statistical survey had been carried out since 2014[49]. Children in the Arab States work in the urban informal sector, seasonal agriculture, street work, domestic labour and street begging. There is also evidence that the number of child labourers is increasing due to persistent conflict and crisis[50]. In Yemen, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, CEACR observes much concern for the recruitment of children into armed actors, either as direct combatants or in supporting roles.

47 The Economist, 'The World's Most, and Least, Democratic Countries in 2022', The Economist, 2022.
48 ILO and ESCWA, 2021, 15 Towards a Productive and Inclusive Path: Job Creation in the Arab Region (ilo.org)
49 ILOSTAT, 'Yemen Labour Force Survey (YEM)' (Arab States, 2014).
50 Ali Noureddine, 'Child Labor in the Arab Region Increasing', *The MENA Chronicle | Fanack* (blog), 2023,

Forced labour, in particular debt bondage, is also highly prevalent in the Arab States. The region reports the highest global prevalence at 5.3 cases per 1,000, whereas Europe, the second highest, reports 4.4 per 1,000[51]. With the collapse of the rule of law and eroding of State institutions, possibilities for people trafficking and forced labour increases. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to forced labour. Some of these abuses are effectively facilitated by State-level institutions, such as the Kafala system (where residency rights are tied to employers). This system is predominant in the Gulf States, but also deployed for domestic workers in Lebanon[52].

**Social protection: Many members of the Arab States maintain dysfunctional social protection systems; this is particularly pronounced in post-conflict contexts.** In multiple Arab States, current State-level social systems are often unable to support the needs of workers in retirement and ill health. These systems are often insurance-based, with limited coverage, and no support for informally employed workers. As mentioned above, informally employed workers have long made up a significant percentage of the Arab States' workforce, even in States not subject to conflict[53]. Yet in protracted crisis settings, a reforming system-building and life-cycle approach to social protection is often side-lined by the humanitarian imperative to directly distribute resources in the form of cash or food. However, without a State-level restoration of basic social protection, it is difficult to envision an "exit point" from current crises.

**Gender equality and non-discrimination: There are practically no rights that protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sectional characteristics; the Arab States also have the world's lowest female labour force participation rate.** Only Qatar has not ratified the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). There are limited legal protections across the Arab States against discrimination on the basis of (dis)ability, ethnicity, political opinion, race, religion or sexual orientation. In crisis contexts, most notably the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, CEACR observations also note that women and women-headed households are particularly impacted by conflicts, and that proactive steps and measures are needed. There are widespread instances of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity (including tribal identity), religion (sectarianism), race and citizenship, as well as the widespread criminalization of homosexuality. CEARC has consistently requested clarifications on a variety of national laws that fail to comprehensively outlaw discrimination[54].

In addition, and of particular concern, is the fact that the Arab States hold the lowest rate of female economic participation globally. This is despite increasing levels of education among women. In fact, the paradox of the region is that more educated women are less likely to work. Numerous obstacles exist that hinder women from entering and remaining in the labour force, including patriarchal norms, stereotypes, limited access to childcare, lack of opportunities, workplace harassment, inadequate transportation, low wages, and legal restrictions on labour rights.

51 ILO, IOM, and Walk Free, 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Forced Labour and Forced Marriage' (Geneva, Switzerland, 2022), wcms_854733.pdf (ilo.org)

52 Amnesty International, 'COVID-19 Makes Gulf Countries' Abuse of Migrant Workers Impossible to Ignore', Amnesty International, 30 April 2020,

53 Ali Noureddine, 'Child Labor in the Arab Region Increasing', *The MENA Chronicle | Fanack* (blog), 2023,

ILO, IOM, and Walk Free, 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Forced Labour and Forced Marriage' (Geneva, Switzerland, 2022), wcms_854733.pdf (ilo.org)

54 For example, CEACR, 'Direct Request (CEACR) - Adopted 2020, Published 109th ILC Session (2021)', 2021,

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4062294,103201:NO

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4325355,103523:NO

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4325355,103523:NO

**Unemployment: Male employment rates in the Arab States are higher than the global average; however, despite the rise in educational attainment among women and youth, unemployment rates remain disproportionately higher for these groups.** Nevertheless, the imperative of promoting decent job creation occupies a central position on the agendas of national governments, regional bodies and international organizations, especially in light of recent economic and geopolitical transformations in the region. Excluding the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, where a significant proportion of migrant workers are employed, the region faced an unemployment rate of 12 per cent in 2022. This highlights a critical situation, where socio-economic development is continually hindered by political instability, ongoing conflicts and security risks. Even among those in the workforce, vulnerable employment accounted for 15.4 per cent of the total employment in the region in 2018, where it has likely increased further following COVID-19 pressures and continued conflict.

**Technical and vocational systems: Regional conflict and displacement have had a profound impact on the labour market and its ability to provide workers with relevant skills.** Conflict and crisis in the Arab States have direct and indirect impacts on the education system. In a direct sense, conflict can lead to the direct destruction of training centres or, slightly less directly, the looting of resources from those centres (as was reported to the evaluation team by Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) representatives in Yemen). Indirectly, conflict and crisis can increase pressures associated with "brain drain", as skilled professionals and experts flee the country. As countries such as Yemen and Iraq continue on their paths to recovery, there is a risk that existing TVET institutions will be misaligned to emerging labour market gaps. Yet conflict has also limited the ability of government ministries to monitor emerging gaps and adjust trainings accordingly.

## THE ILO IN POST-CONFLICT ARAB STATES

As detailed in the ILO's synthesis review, prepared as an input to this HLE[55], outside of Iraq and Yemen, the ILO's recovery activity in the Arab States has largely centred on responding to the Syrian refugee crisis.

In Jordan and Lebanon, the decent work programme focused on employment-intensive infrastructure, improving capacity and knowledge of the labour market, and bettering the employment conditions of refugees. In Jordan, this also included advocating for formalization of refugee access to labour markets, and in Lebanon, on eradicating the worst forms of child labour. In the Syrian Arab Republic, where ILO re-engagement has come in the wake of multiple years of civil war, programming has worked with national government and social partners to improve occupational safety and health, and the reduction of child labour. Child labour was identified in the Syrian Arab Republic as a cause multiple parties could agree to and served as an entry point for advancing broader health and safety reform and inspection, because inspection is required to ensure that child labour principles are being upheld.

Over the period considered, most programmes adjusted to meet the challenge of COVID-19 with flexible programme adjustments, though there are some instances of no reporting on adjustments made (Lebanon). In Jordan, new questions were added to surveys to account for COVID-19 impacts, and in the Syrian Arab Republic, COVID-19 guidelines were added to the occupational safety and health programme.

These programmes of work, according to the synthesis review, show a strong coherence with the SDGs, in particular SDG 8. Of the projects studied, "seven (7) out of nine (9) reports found evidence for the design coherence and validity criterion by identifying SDGs. Out of seven (7) reports, six (6) included Goal 8, while two (2) other projects included other SDG goals."

55 ILO 2023. The ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-2023): A synthesis review on lessons learned, what works and why. EVAL https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_886918/lang--en/index.htm

In terms of the effectiveness of these programmes, the synthesis review underscores that the unifying factor informing success was the strength of the local partnerships and stakeholders. Lebanon was the exception, where the synthesis review notes that the projects fell short, potentially due to the political conditions in Lebanon, meaning high degrees of political fragmentation and the economic crisis. It concludes that generic models must be better adapted to the Lebanese context. Programmes were also largely cost-effective, with no notable overspending, and flexibility in readapting funding to meet the challenges of COVID-19. The programmes were also more or less sustainable, with certain assets remaining in place beyond the duration of work (such as online training platforms in Jordan). Lebanon struggled again with its sustainability strategy. An important lesson is that there are likely certain other national contexts, such as in Lebanon, that require more specific tailoring of approaches, given contextual operational challenges.

In Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic, the ILO programme of work has sought to impact peace and resilience through social cohesion activities, building ministry capacity and enhancing employment opportunities. This takes the form of enhancing evidenced-based decision-making on labour market issues at the national level, while also generating community and host population cohesion at the local level. It is worth underscoring that social cohesion is a difficult indicator to measure. The true impact of ILO programming would require a longer-duration approach, monitoring specific moments of conflict and resolution, and determining through quantitative and qualitative instruments the extent to which participation in ILO activities contributed towards particular outcomes.

## IRAQ

This section provides a short overview of the current context in Iraq and a brief summary of the ILO's activities that will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

### Context

**For decades, Iraq has remained locked in a protracted crisis, punctuated by moments of intermittent conflict**[56]. As of March 2023, there were 1.17 million IDPs and 2.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. A plethora of factors have contributed to this continued threat of instability and violence – including the presence of non-State armed actors, decapacitated infrastructure and State institutions – and to climate change impacts, such as sandstorms and unparalleled heat waves, which are particularly harmful in rural agriculture-dependent areas.

Despite it being two decades since the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, much of today's crises circle back to its destabilizing effects. A range of scholars and analysts have argued that the continued crisis fed the growth of Al-Qaeda, before later nurturing the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria[57]. Thus, while Iraq is classified as an upper-middle-income country, the longstanding ramifications of conflict and war have had significant negative economic impacts, feeding back into instability and conflict, and thus creating conditions favourable to non-State armed actors. Indeed, the 2014 ISIS insurgency further exacerbated Iraq's protracted crisis, as the group gained control over large swaths of territory, committed atrocities against civilians, and targeted minority groups. This resulted in significant human suffering, including mass (internal and external) displacement, loss of life and further destruction of infrastructure. As a result, Iraq now maintains the sixth largest global population of IDPs. The crisis has also had regional and global implications, with neighbouring countries – such as Türkiye, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Islamic Republic of Iran –being directly affected.

56 Dawn Chatty and Nisrine Mansour, 'Unlocking Protracted Displacement: An Iraqi Case Study', *Refugee Survey Quarterly 30*, no. 4 (2011): 50–83; Anthony H Cordesman and Sam Khazai, *Iraq in Crisis* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Tauqeer, 'Livelihoods in Protracted Crises: Using Savings and Small Business Grants to Build Resilience in Conflict-Affected Communities in Iraq'.

57 ISIS; see Cockburn, 2015 The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution. Verso Books.

**Iraq has widely adopted the ILO fundamental Conventions.** These include Conventions Nos 87, 98, 29, 105, 100, 111, 138, 182 and 187. However, adherence to the Conventions is mixed. For example, CEACR in a 2021 observation noted the lack of adoption of draft bills on religious discrimination at work as well as a draft bill on support for Yazidi female survivors from the ISIS period. The observation goes on to note the necessity of tackling stereotypical attitudes that act as a barrier to female labour participation. Another important example is Convention No. 187, where a repeated observation in 2023 "...urges the Government to take measures as a matter of urgency to ensure the full and immediate demobilization of all children and to put a stop to the forced recruitment of children under 18 years of age into armed forces and armed groups".

**The Iraqi labour force is marked by high levels of informality, with 69.8 per cent for men in the labour force informally employed and 45.4 per cent of women[58].** The informal sector is characterized by low productivity, lack of social protection[59] and limited access to formal employment benefits. The informal sector's prevalence poses challenges in terms of decent work, income security and labour market regulation.

**There are also low overall levels of female participation. (Only around 10.5 per cent of the labour force are women.)** Notably, more educated Iraqi women are less likely to work, and less educated women are more likely to work (particularly in rural areas). For men, unemployment levels fall with increased education until university level; for women, the reverse is true. The Iraqi labour force survey found that unemployment is lowest among women who are unable to read or write. As this would typically be a sign of extreme poverty, it is not necessarily surprising given that, in low-income families, women must work to secure the necessities of life, whereas in high-income families, women do not work in the labour market and thus they can uphold certain gendered notions of prestige[60].

Addressing protracted crises and post-conflict recovery in Iraq is challenging, with various political, economic and security issues needing to be attended to simultaneously. Some of the key solutions to the crisis include political reconciliation, economic reform and the rebuilding of infrastructure and institutions. However, achieving lasting peace and stability in Iraq will also require continued support from regional and international donors and actors, and – crucially – political will from national political stakeholders.

## The ILO in Iraq

**In Iraq, the ILO is working with its tripartite constituents (government, and workers' and employers' organizations) with a full DWCP – 2019–23.** That programme narrows in on three priority areas identified in partnership with the Government of Iraq:

- supporting private sector development and job creation;
- strengthening social protection and addressing child labour;
- strengthening labour governance and social dialogue.

To permit cross-context analysis, these three areas of activity are also described in the evaluation's reconstructed theory of change as:

- rights at work;
- economic recovery;
- social protection;
- social dialogue.

58 ILOSTAT, 'Iraq Labour Force Survey (IRQ)' (Arab States, 2021).
59 However, this could now improve thanks to the passing of a new social protection law under the technical assistance of the ILO Iraq Office.
60 Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1988).

It is worth noting that ILO Yemen does not currently maintain any social protection programming. Iraq (along with other countries in the Arab States) can serve as a lesson-learning experience for future social protection initiatives in Yemen, particularly where they must navigate State fragmentation and multiple competing authorities.

**Notable projects in Iraq include work on employment policy generation, business development and support services, and building local capacity.** The Iraq DWCP works to ensure that post-conflict recovery will lead to decent work and enterprises, and that Iraqi workers will be equipped with skills relevant to the labour market. Their aim is to identify high-potential sectors, and also to create better upstream knowledge of the labour market through enhanced ministerial information systems.

The ILO is also working on strengthening social dialogue in Iraq, including holding workshops and capacity-building. Policy reform is supported by work seeking to improve occupational safety and health inspections and identifying non-compliance with international labour standards.

Finally, as with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, the DWCP is also working on child labour concerns, through building capacity in labour inspection as well as policy development. Social protection programmes have led to draft retirement and social security laws, with an aim to begin extending existing social security systems to private sector employees.

## YEMEN

This section provides a short overview of the current context in Yemen and a brief summary of the ILO's activities that will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

### Context

**The protracted crisis in Yemen is a complex and ongoing conflict that has been raging for several years.** The situation, while with longer historical determinants, can nonetheless be traced to the catalysing impact of the 2011 Arab Spring protests, which ultimately destabilized the country, leading to the ousting of long-time President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the subsequent transition to a new Government. This transition was marred by political infighting when the Government was seen by opposition figures as failing to address the country's economic and social challenges that generated popular grievances in the first place.

In 2015, clashes between the Government of Yemen and the Houthi movement (Ansar Allah) intensified with the entrance of Saudi Arabia into that conflict, supported by the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Saudi Arabian fighter jets carried out bombing raids across the country in a bid to shore up the Government of Yemen against the Houthi advance. However, these airstrikes further devastated essential Yemeni infrastructure, from roads to hospitals and food production systems. The poorest country in the Arab States was plunged further into crisis.

In 2022, there were positive moves towards peace with a six-month ceasefire rolled out across the country. In 2023, these developments had advanced towards direct talks between the parties to the conflict. Nevertheless, at the socio-economic level, there remain many under addressed drivers contributing to economic instability, exclusion, and violence. These drivers include tension between various communities; caste-like discrimination against the *Mohamasheen* (Yemenis culturally conceptualized as being "black" or having African ancestry); and underlying structural weaknesses in Yemen's rent-driven political economy[61]. However, it is important to note that a truce does not necessarily mean that there will be no localized conflicts or that peace is guaranteed. Indeed, the prospect of a peace agreement also raises the possibility that disgruntled members within the main conflict actors could express their disagreement through violent channels.

61 Zaid Ali Basha, 'The Agrarian Question in Yemen: The National Imperative of Reclaiming and Revalorizing Indigenous Agroecological Food Production', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 27 January 2022, 1–52, Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis: Road to War.*

**Yemen joined the ILO as a member in 1965 and has ratified 30 Conventions.** Eight of these are fundamental (Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 29, 100, 105, 111, 137 and 182). However, due to the splintering of political authority, only the IRG reports to the CEACR, very infrequently in light of the conflict. CEACR notes a great deal of concern around child labour, especially child soldiers, as well as low levels of education enrolment. It is worth underscoring that the IRG represents only around 30 per cent of the total Yemeni population and has multiple fractures and splinters within its ranks. The true status of Convention implementation is thus incredibly difficult to establish using standard mechanisms.

**On the structural level, Yemen has suffered from economic challenges and the accumulation of debt since South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) merged with the Northern Yemen Arab Republic in 1990.** After the merger, a civil war broke out in 1994, which saw capital flight and the curtailing of foreign direct investment. Under President Saleh, a patronage network was funded by oil rent, which might have otherwise been harnessed to rebuild and reconstruct the country. In the runup to the 2011 uprising, then, Yemen faced severe economic difficulties. As with the Syrian Arab Republic, in fact, Yemen was fast becoming an oil-dependent economy with declining oil exports and concomitant rising food prices; limited employment opportunities; rising food insecurity; rapidly decreasing natural resources, in particular water; and an extensive patronage system[62].

**Over a decade since the Arab Spring, Yemen remains caught within a protracted crisis spiral, where it is still described as one of, if not the world's "largest" or "worst", humanitarian crises, and the situation shows little sign of improvement.** There are 4.5 million IDPs in Yemen facing the consequences of war and socio-economic deterioration[63] . In 2023, the UN estimated that 21.6 million people were in need, which represents slightly under three quarters of the population.

**Yemen's fragmented political context has generated significant obstacles for UN humanitarian agencies, in project implementation, data collection, and routine monitoring and evaluation.** A restrictive approach to the security environment also inhibits day-to-day development and humanitarian operations[64]. Indeed, one major challenge wrought by the conflict is an inability to produce accurate data in situations of insecurity and access constraint. Due to war, the last major labour force survey was carried out by the ILO in 2014.

These divisions have strongly impacted the capacity of national institutions, including those that form the ILO's constituents. This hinders their ability to engage deeply with programme design and implementation. Indeed, a particular problem in Yemen is that most ministerial capacity is in the North, and civil servants are not receiving their regular salaries. All UN agencies, not just the ILO, have to deal with these splinters. However, as detailed in the findings section of this evaluation, the ILO's unique tripartite approach makes these obstacles particularly significant.

**Since then, the labour market has seen rising informality and unemployment, as well as a deterioration of human capital, due to the collapse of education and training systems.** Some 600,000 people have lost their jobs, and US$90 billion in economic output has been wiped out of the economy (ILO, 2016b)[65] . Even before the war, in 2014, when the last labour survey was conducted by the ILO , a staggering 81 per cent of the Yemeni labour force was informally employed. That number is likely now even higher. Likewise, Yemen has long struggled with persistent high levels of child labour (1.3 million in 2012). With the wartime collapse of education systems, it is very likely the number of child labourers has drastically increased year-on-year, alongside child marriage and recruitment into armed groups[66].

62 Helen Lackner, 'How Yemen's Dream of Unity Turned Sour', Jacobin, 2020.
63 UNHCR, 'Yemen Crisis Explained' https://www.unrefugees.org/news/yemen-crisis-explained/
64 Sida et al., 'Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the Yemen Crisis'.
65 ILO 'About the ILO in Yemen', Document, 29 November 2016
66 UNICEF, 'The Number of Children Facing Education Disruption in Yemen Could Rise to 6 Million, UNICEF Warns', 2021, https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/number-children-facing-education-disruption-yemen-could-rise-6-million-unicef-warns

Magnifying these challenges, public sector employees lost their salaries, conflict frontlines shut down road-based trade routes, and the Saudi blockade hindered the flow of commercial goods into this highly import-dependent country.

**In sum, efforts to address the protracted crisis in Yemen have been challenging, with various political, economic and security issues needing to be addressed simultaneously.** Some of the key solutions to the crisis include political reconciliation, economic reform, and the transformation of aid transfers to livelihood generation and infrastructure reconstruction. However, achieving lasting peace and stability in Yemen will also require continued support from regional and international actors, and political will from the warring parties to formally end the war.

## The ILO in Yemen

**The ILO has a rather limited presence in Yemen and no DWCP, and instead harnesses the UNSDCF and a 2023–25 strategy framework as its core guiding documents.**

The ILO has had a relatively small footprint where it is unable to successfully engage the tripartite constituents, given that they do not have a de facto (even if de jure) representation for the whole of Yemen.

In response, the Organization has focused more on "downstream" activities, with an underlying logic that maintaining some activities and playing a positive role in generating decent work during a crisis will enable the agency to build credibility and respect, to advocate for its more upstream normative agenda when there is a peace settlement.

As such, activities are concentrated in two areas:

- supporting employment and employability;
- strengthening labour government and social dialogue.

**The ILO has thus focused more on community-level activities, contributing on large multi-agency projects.** One such project, Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY), is now in its third phase. The project brings together the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP), where it "supports the creation of sustainable livelihoods opportunities through enhancing food security, employment, community assets restoration, social basic services, agricultural value chains, gender equality and women's economic empowerment, as well as access to renewable energy" [67].

With this agenda, the ILO has provided, for example, agricultural value chain enhancement, craft apprenticeship training, occupational safety and health material, curriculum development and solar energy engineering training. These activities also sought to target specifically vulnerable groups, including women, from the very start. During phase one (2016–19) of ERRY, 44.6 per cent of beneficiaries were women.

67 UNDP, 'ERRYJP III | United Nations Development Programme', UNDP, 2023, UNDP, 'ERRYJP III | United Nations Development Programme', UNDP, 2023 https://www.undp.org/yemen/erry-jp

**The ILO has also worked with the Government to produce the 2022–24 Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which aims to help recovery by building capacity in the private sector and ensuring that Yemeni workers have the skills needed by the labour market.** The ILO has also worked with their partners in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) on supporting child soldiers and preventing child labour, as well as strengthening the capacity of the Yemeni Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Finally, ILO has also attempted to work with the Government to draft a new labour code, which will incorporate rights against gender discrimination.

**In sum, ILO activity in Yemen has been highly constrained by the emergency situation and fragmentation of the country, which inhibited the agency's ability to work effectively with its tripartite constituents.** Fragmented governments, the destruction of infrastructure and weakening of State institutions all place limitations on advancing the ILO's normative agenda. In such a situation, the Organization has adapted by focusing much more on the community level, in essence placing its more normative functions on hold until there is a logical way forward to advance those other aspects of the ILO's mandate.

# 07

# Assessing the ILO's Model of Intervention

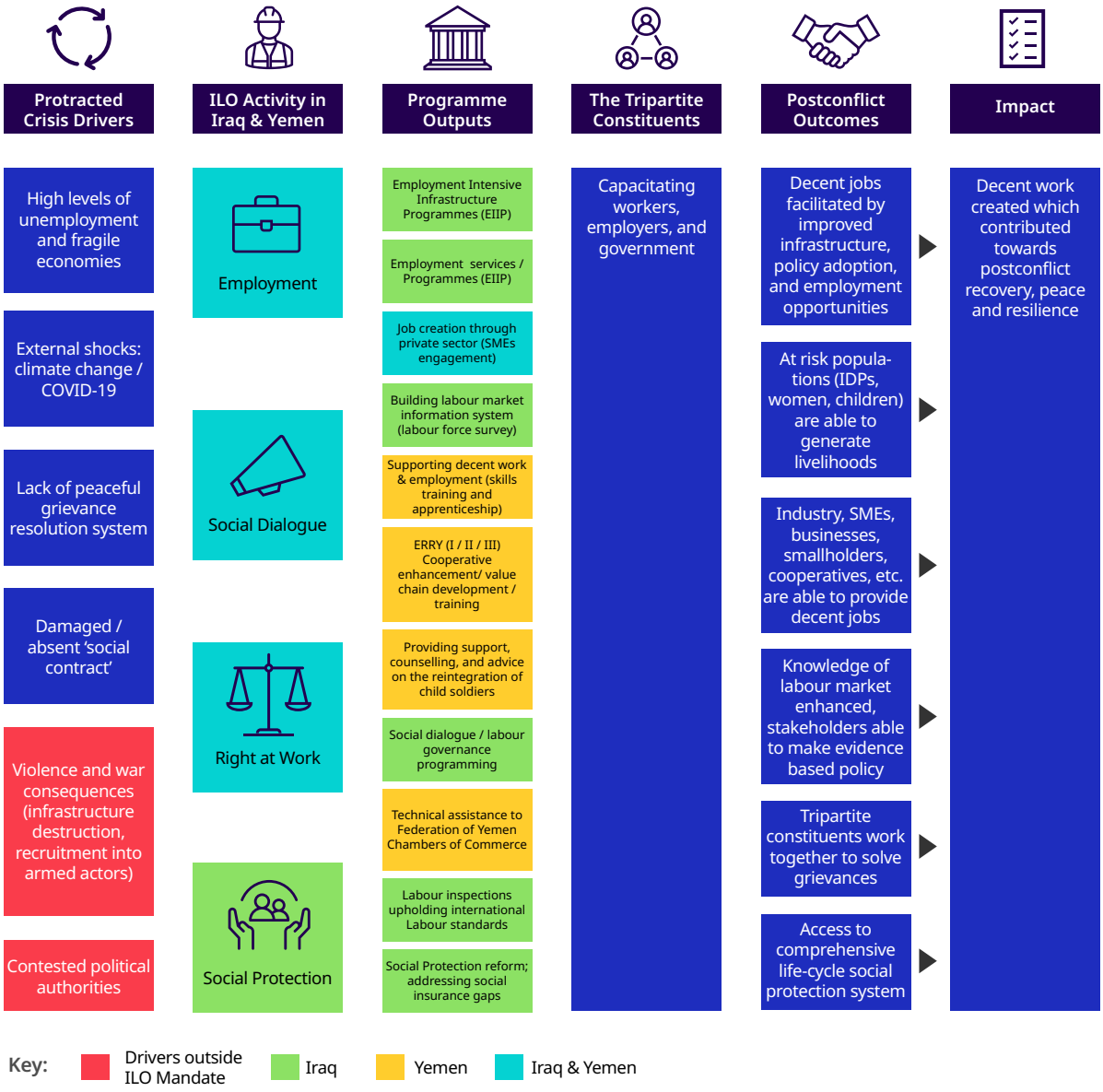
# ASSESSING THE ILO'S MODEL OF INTERVENTION

**This section provides a brief assessment of the ILO's overarching model of intervention in the Arab States region. While this model is likely also relevant to other ILO post-conflict crisis recovery operations, from Afghanistan to Myanmar, the purpose of this HLE is to evaluate its operation in the Arab States context.**

On the basis of KIIs at the regional and headquarters level, and a review of relevant literature and project reports, the evaluation team developed a reconstructed theory of change. That model expresses the pathways of change through which the ILO has sought to advance the Decent Work Agenda and contribute towards recovery, peace and resilience. This section evaluates that model and assesses the overarching extent to which it was contributing towards recovery efforts in post-conflict settings. Section 8 looks at findings as they pertain to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact for that model in action.

## RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE

### FIGURE 3. RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE



## A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR PROTRACTED CRISES

**The ILO's model of intervention in the Arab States is an effective means of addressing the root causes of the region's protracted crises and ensuring more durable recovery; the challenges that exist for this model are not at the level of its assumptions or design, but its efficient implementation.** As mentioned earlier, the ILO Regional Office for Arab States has been implicitly and explicitly advancing a "nexus" model of intervention before the nexus even entered into contemporary policy debates. In large part, this is due to a context of structural economic weaknesses with a frayed social contract – a context roundly exposed by the 2011 Arab Spring[68]. This was then compounded by the Syrian crisis, which to date has produced 6.8 million refugees – the largest instance of displacement since the Second World War. Such a significant flow of people into already fragile contexts, against the backdrop of a prolonged conflict that showed scant signs of swift resolution, necessitated a model of intervention that addresses both immediate short-term needs and long-term sustainable development. Driven by the principles of decent work as well as other development frameworks (see relevance 8), the ILO strategy in the Arab States is built on its core mandate to promote employment, facilitate social dialogue, strengthen social protection, and uphold international labour standards.

The evaluation team found that the ILO model in the Arab States provides a strong example of an alternative approach to protracted crises that addresses both causes and consequences. Crucially, the model goes beyond siloed humanitarian or development strategies. Indeed, despite a desire to "protect neutral humanitarian space", it is now increasingly acknowledged that in many post-conflicts Arab States, humanitarian agencies are de facto acting as a kind of "shadow State". What this means is that, rather than providing for life-saving short-term assistance, the nature of protracted crises has necessitated agencies essentially acting to substitute services, from healthcare to social protection, that would otherwise be within the purvey of national governments[69]. This is a problem because the humanitarian system did not evolve to perform these roles, and it is poorly equipped to do so. As one interviewee stated to the author of a recent report on Yemen, "It's like having firemen running a stock exchange" [70].

By contrast, the evaluation team found the ILO's model of intervention to be more appropriate, clear and consistent in addressing some of the most important drivers of protracted crisis. In a KII with a senior member of ILO staff working on expanding operations in Yemen, it was noted that preliminary meetings with humanitarian agencies were very promising, given recent drives to pilot a different approach to the UN's response in that country. At a logical level, the evaluation team finds the ILO model of intervention to neatly fit the context of post-conflict recovery.

The challenges are not, then, that the model is "wrong" – as we shall see in the sections that follow, the challenges are operational, logistical and on the level of resources.

68 ILO, 'Rethinking Economic Growth: Towards Productive and Inclusive Arab Societies', 2012.
69 See, for example Sandra Aviles, 'ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian- Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities' (ILO Arab States, Forthcoming); Tara Gingerich and Marc Cohen, 'Turning the Humanitarian System on Its Head: Saving Lives and Livelihoods by Strengthening Local Capacity and Shifting Leadership to Local Actors' (Oxfam America, 2015); Sida et al., 'Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the Yemen Crisis'; Sarah Vuylsteke, 'Revisiting the Sana'a Center's Humanitarian Aid Reports: Then and Now', Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies, 15 June 2023.
70 Vuylsteke, 'Revisiting the Sana'a Center's Humanitarian Aid Reports'.

As illustrated by the HLE's reconstructed theory of change, the ILO model of intervention is ultimately "development-focused and employment-driven", and it is a strategy that aims to address "vulnerable citizenry as well as forcibly displaced persons in order to restore, rebuild and preserve social and economic stability and realize the rights of both to decent work and social justice" (ILO, 2023a)[71]. A non-exhaustive example of conflict drivers and ILO programmes that addresses those drivers includes:

- high levels of unemployment and low-quality work exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change impacts:
  - **addressed by** employment programming, OHS capacity-building, labour law reform, skills and vocational training, and capacitating workers' representatives;
- tensions and limited scope for peaceful conflict resolution:
  - **addressed by** social dialogue approaches; increasing contact through refugee–host employment programmes; reducing social cohesion through improved livelihoods; and improving coordination between government ministries, trade unions and employer representatives;
- a damaged or fragmented social contract:
  - **addressed by** technical advice to government ministries, rights-based social protection reform and tackling child labour.

There is also evident synergy between many of these causes of conflict and programmatic responses.

**The ILO model of intervention can help support "recovery periods" when crises are moving away from "full-scale" humanitarian emergencies and beginning to transition towards development.** The ILO is not a humanitarian agency, and it would make little sense for the Organization to begin operating in acute periods of emergency. However, several factors make the ILO the "partner of preference" for transitioning away from meeting basic needs to building systems and national institutions . Key examples of those factors include:

- **The ILO's strong normative mandate:** In a forthcoming report on operationalizing the nexus in the Arab States, a senior UN nexus specialist notes: "They [Regional Office for Arab States] work differently from the rest of the UN in that they work on legal and governance issues as well as decent work and social protection – all of these are key elements that we actually need to trigger the shift [from humanitarian to development]" [72]. This approach is evident in various projects reviewed for this HLE, with many combining downstream and upstream activity – for example, regularizing work permits in Jordan, or informing a rights-based approach to social protection in Lebanon and Iraq. As that aforementioned HDP Nexus paper also notes: "Whether it be in providing integrated solutions to address protracted forced displacement situations, or in transitioning social assistance to nationally led social protection systems, the ILO in the region has enabled a comprehensive and coherent set of responses to the region's widespread challenges regarding resilient labour markets and access to decent work for the most vulnerable" [73].
- **Tripartism:** The ILO's approach of working with employers' and workers' representatives as well as governments is an effective means to sustainably graduate from addressing basic needs to (re-)building national institutions in the Arab States. Indeed, the ILO is not a "service delivery agency", as it does not seek to substitute governance institutions, but to help those institutions recover and rebuild following periods of crisis. This works because the ILO model

71 Aviles, 'ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian- Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges & Opportunities', 05.
72 *ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities.* Sandra Aviles, consultant. 2023a.
73 Ibid

involves each of the tripartite members, who (ideally) ought to have distinct roles and equal voices within a social dialogue process. On the adoption of new laws, for example, governments legislate new laws, workers' representatives advocate for those laws to become reality, and employers' representatives ensure that their members enable them. However, while tripartism is a strength, it is also, notably, one of the most challenging aspects of the ILO's work in post-conflict settings (a point returned to below).

- **Technical advice:** The ILO has a strong regional reputation as a skilled technical agency. This reputation has been effectively used as an entry point to build relationships with government partners as a form of "technical diplomacy"[74] . This is an effective model of intervention in Arab States, where suspicion and sometimes even hostility towards other UN agencies can derail programming. By being honest and frank about what support it can offer, the ILO in the Arab States has built, according to one KII conducted with a senior official at the regional level, a "strong brand". This approach is evident in the ILO's re-engagement in the Syrian Arab Republic, where it was able to build a presence on the basis of its respected capacity in OHS and child labour issues.

**It is important to underscore that the ILO model faces some contextual barriers and obstacles to effective implementation.** As detailed in depth in the findings below, many of these issues are related to resources, staff time and an organization that has not necessarily evolved to operate in high-risk areas. Further problems are related to slow-moving internal bureaucratic obstacles around procurement, permissions, and security assessments.

In addition to operational and bureaucratic hurdles, there are broader issues hindering the ILO model of intervention in post-conflict Arab States. These include:

- **Coordination with humanitarian agencies:** In KIIs at the regional level, several interviewees felt the ILO should be acting in closer partnership with humanitarian agencies, where their programming was clearly touching on areas covered by the ILO's core mandate. While there are a number of key joint partnerships, it remains the case that humanitarian agencies are conducting their own livelihood programming, which often involves a "cash-for-work" type of component. As these interventions are firmly within the "world of work", the ILO has a clear rationale to deepen partnership with those agencies. Doing so would provide added value by exploring how those programmes could mainstream good decent work practices as they pertain to international labour law. It was felt this would strengthen harmonization across livelihood programming, increase "reach", and align with the ILO's mandate and capacity, as well as assist in ensuring that good decent work practices are encouraged during and not after the recovery process. A similar point was made in terms of vocational training, where the ILO also could assist in labour market matching and curriculum design.
- **Projectization:** Donor engagement with ILO projects tends to be on a project-by-project basis and, in reviewing documents for the HLE, it was noticeably difficult to find overarching countrywide strategy documents. In a sense, the DWCP documents do provide this level of oversight to some degree, but the specific interconnections between projects still seem underdeveloped in reporting and position papers. While these interconnections might be clear to ILO staff, it would also benefit tripartite constituents if the coherence between programmes was made clearer.
- **Rule of law:** The relative condition of a country's legal system impacts the ability of the ILO to advance its normative approach and labour law functions. In countries recovering from conflict, in particular civil war, it is not uncommon to find severely weakened legal institutions. Physical infrastructure – such as police stations and courtrooms – might be physically destroyed, and/or employees – such as police officers and judges – might have stopped working. In some cases, legal systems might function, but are perceived to have been coopted. As detailed below, in KIIs with tripartite constituents in Yemen, these barriers were seen to be a primary obstacle to restarting much of their activity, where legal reform and rights-based approaches make little sense when there are no mechanisms for enforcement.

74 *ILO Arab States' Strategic Engagement in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities.* Sandra Aviles, consultant. 2023

- **Contested institutions:** As detailed in the reconstructed theory of change, one of the distinctive features of the ILO's approach to post-conflict recovery is its commitment to capacitating tripartite institutions so that they can achieve decent work objectives. This partnership approach is what makes the ILO unique. When operational, the tripartism is a cohesive strategy that can advance progressive social change. However, as detailed below, it is also the most challenging aspect to implement in (post-)conflict settings. This is because in such settings, political authority is typically contested, workers' representative organizations might collapse or splinter, and businesses and capital flee the country. In KIIs across all ILO staff levels, concerns were raised around difficulties in selecting organizations that were truly representative of their constituents. As will be seen, this problem is magnified in civil war contexts such as in Yemen, where the "De Facto Authorities" are not recognized as legitimate by United Nations Security Council (UNSC), yet they maintain control over more than 70 per cent of the country. If the ILO wishes to expand in Yemen, it will necessitate a pragmatic, careful and ultimately realistic approach to political engagement

# 08

# Assessing the ILO's Post-conflict Recovery Work in Arab States

# ASSESSING THE ILO'S POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY WORK IN ARAB STATES

This section draws on primary data collection in Iraq and Yemen, including focus groups, KIIs and survey data. In addition, it is supplemented by research conducted by EVAL through the synthesis review in Arab States (ILO, 2023b), as well as existing evaluations of specific ILO programmes, and by KIIs at a regional level.

As described in the introduction, this HLE is not an evaluation of any singular Arab States project. Instead, it is an assessment of how (and to what extent) those projects and activities by the Office together advance the ILO's Decent Work Agenda in post-conflict recovery settings.[75] While the findings below draw out particular lessons from individual projects, this is to exemplify some of the contributions (and challenges) raised by the ILO's model of intervention set out in the previous section. Moreover, while the empirical focus is on the Arab States, and in particular Iraq and Yemen, the HLE's observations and lessons learned below are also likely relevant to other post-conflict settlings.

## RELEVANCE

The first subsection explores the extent to which the ILO's post-conflict programmes are connected to needs in the Arab States – from the perspective of tripartite constituents and beneficiaries – as well as how those programmes interconnect with broader humanitarian and development agendas. Following the HLE evaluation questions, it does so by examining how the ILO (a) advanced the Decent Work Agenda in specific contexts and addressed needs; (b) intervened in a manner relevant to broader national, regional and international development frameworks; and (c) adapted to the contextual volatility in postconflict settings.

**While there are significant differences in programming across country contexts, The ILO's model of intervention is broadly relevant to conflict drivers in the Arab States. For example, in Iraq, which has moved into a period of stability, the ILO aligned its programmes closely with government priorities and policy development. In Yemen, the programmes were aligned to downstream employment generation, given predominant humanitarian needs. Recent re-engagement in the Syrian Arab Republic, through occupational safety and health and child labour programmes, demonstrates the ILO's ability to align its normative mandate to context-specific "entry points" in challenging political contexts.**

75 Providing a granular assessment of particular projects would be an exercise in repetition, as there is a substantial catalogue of independent evaluations hosted the ILO i-EVAL archive.

## Arab States

**Where the ILO has dealt with the effects of conflict in Arab States (excluding Iraq and Yemen), it has largely focused on responding to the presence of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.** Between 2019 and 2023, many Regional Office for Arab States programmes that had close connections to conflict clustered around assisting Lebanese and Jordanian host communities, tripartite constituents and Syrian refugees. Addressing the challenges of refugee flows is relevant to Recommendation No. 205, which explicitly does not limit its scope to "armed conflicts", but also includes "non-armed conflicts". In other words, conflict is interpreted by Recommendation No. 205 (as well as various ILO peacebuilding manuals and reports) to cover any situation of conflict that can rapidly destabilize socio-economic life, including the destabilizing impact of sudden refugee influx.

As an example, the ILO's programmes in Lebanon and Jordan, considered within the HLE's scope, maintained an operational rationale that was relevant to immediate refugee and host population needs. These needs were met through an employment-focused livelihood approach that also contributed towards mitigating rising intercommunal tensions (non-armed conflict) through a three-pronged approach: enhancing stretched infrastructure, providing livelihood opportunities, and increasing social contact between refugees and host populations through shared employment. Examples of this programming include:

- **Lebanon:** The Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP) in Lebanon sought to create wage labour opportunities for the Lebanese host community and Syrian refugees via infrastructure projects. This intervention is relevant to the peacebuilding component of the HDP Nexus insofar as, by providing opportunities to vulnerable Lebanese community members and Syrian refugees, communal tensions will (in theory) be lowered and, on the other hand, by preserving and improving infrastructural assets, the Lebanese State will be better able to cope with increased population demands on essential services. These programmes are also relevant to the ILO's broader mandate of establishing decent working conditions (as, in this case, a contributor to mitigating social tensions).
- **Jordan:** The ILO has also run an EIIP programme where a similar logic prevails, alongside more specific programmes assisting with the formalization of labour market access for Syrian refugees, in line with the Jordan Compact.

In both cases, programme design is relevant to needs, and it reflected shared understandings of underlying conflict drivers in Lebanon and Jordan. While there are some challenges with broader impact due to short-term employment opportunities (see section 8.5, "Impact"), these programmes were nonetheless designed in such a way that they were relevant to each context.

Within the ILO's model of intervention, "downstream" livelihood programmes have additional strategic advantages. Not only to they seek to ensure that basic needs are met, they also help alleviate some of the structural economic factors that inform refugee–host social tension. Second, they act as an "entry point" for the ILO's continued upstream engagement.

**Combining livelihood opportunities with infrastructure projects is particularly relevant to drivers of host community tensions in Lebanon and Jordan.** On this point, there is slightly stronger relevance for Lebanon, where the majority of Syrians are not encamped, but live across urban settings, and in a country where the State fails to provide many essential services. Due to the ongoing crisis, what services still exist have faced magnified pressure due also to increased population demand[76]. Nevertheless, with the economic situation in Jordan worsening, and with reports of child labour increasing, the ILO's programmes are clearly also contextually relevant[77]. Moreover, both programmes promote a peacebuilding component within a Decent Work Agenda insofar as they address causes of social tension and promote cohesion. However, as identified further in section 8.5 (Impact), the measurement of these impacts remains relatively scattered on a programme-by-programme basis, and greater combined efforts and standardization would enhance monitoring and evaluation.

76 COAR, 'Conflict Analysis Lebanon National Level', COAR (blog), 14 January 2022.
77 Hanna Davis, 'Life in a Landfill: The Dangers Faced by Jordan's Working Kids', 2021.

**The ILO has sought to navigate a politically fractured environment in the Syrian Arab Republic by reengaging with entry points that are relevant to the political context, but not necessarily the needs.** In the Syrian Arab Republic, which can be tentatively classified as a post-conflict context, the ILO ran three programmes in 2019–23. These programmes focused on child labour and occupational safety and health. Funded as a Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) project and joint project with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), this work reflected two objectives simultaneously. First, child labour and occupational safety and health are fundamental components within the ILO's normative mandate and mission to advance rights at work; second, they acted as a platform for tentative ILO re-engagement in the Syrian Arab Republic. At the same time, experiences of beginning work in the Syrian Arab Republic reflected many challenges raised by nexus programming and the difficulties in reconciling humanitarian and development operating principles.

Occupational safety and health capacity-building in the Syrian Arab Republic picks up on a direct request to the ILO for assistance issued by the Syrian Government (prior to the crisis) and is relevant to the ILO's normative rights-based agenda. The Syrian Arab Republic was the second Arab country to ratify the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). In light of this fact, the ILO carried out an occupational safety and health capacity assessment in 2009, which identified a number of gaps and weaknesses that needed to be addressed in order to enhance effectiveness of labour inspection and occupational safety and health, to ensure conformity with the relevant ratified Conventions. A reform plan was developed, and a new labour law passed in 2010. Re-engagement is thus relevant to government needs and the ILO's broader "entry point" strategies.

In 2019, the ILO also initiated the "Reducing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Syria" project. The primary focus of the project was to address hazardous work, which falls under the category of Worst Forms of Child Labour according to the ILO Convention No. 182 (ratified by the Syrian Arab Republic). With unofficial estimates placing the child labour market in the Syrian Arab Republic at 5 million, there is relevant and clear rationale for engagement[78].

The intervention aimed to complement and enhance the existing interventions carried out by various actors and stakeholders on the ground. The project considered the priorities outlined in the draft National Action Plan endorsed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (2021–27) to eliminate child labour. CEACR also notes with particular concern the proliferation of child labour, including the worst forms of child labour. It was in this sense reflective of constituent needs and relevant to advancing the Decent Work Agenda. It also aligns with the objectives of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, particularly in terms of protection. It also aimed to contribute to the goals of the Early Recovery and Livelihoods Sector as well as the Education Sector. When necessary, the project collaborated with public institutions that provided services to affected communities, including schools, education directorates, and social service and labour directorates.

While the project is relevant, then, to various key agendas and normative ILO instruments, these projects were not necessarily driven *purely* by a direct prioritization of needs, but also by strategic considerations on how best to work, in line with the ILO's mandate, in a politically complicated environment. Yet as an entry point for scaling up the ILO's post-conflict recovery efforts, there is clear relevance not only to countrywide needs but also to previous engagement with the Syrian Government before the crisis. Emphasizing this connectivity to begin work in a highly fractious environment makes sense, but overall assessment is limited, as the evaluation team would also need to examine how this point of engagement then moves into next steps and scales up into other decent work pillars.

78 ILO, 'Adopting a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Fighting Child Labour and Addressing Multiple Vulnerabilities in Two Governorates of Syria', Project https://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_818402/lang--en/index.htm

Interestingly, the project evaluation claims these are "neutral area[s] of intervention", but what this seems to mean is not that the programme avoided working with belligerents to conflict, but that these "areas were strategic because stakeholders could all agree that helping children is a worthy cause, and the occupational safety and health aspect was tied in with that regarding inspection, enforcement and building the capacity of inspectors to monitor and investigate child labour"[79]. Indeed, the project engaged with the government as a member of its tripartite constituents: the Syrian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the General Federation of Trade Unions and Damascus Chamber of Industry. This included workshops and field visits for Syrian government ministers. Lessons learned from this project, and how to engage governments in contentious political situations, will likely be highly relevant to future nexus programming, which will necessarily always involve trade-offs between humanitarian neutrality and pragmatic engagement.

**The ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region are relevant to international development frameworks**, including the DWCPs, the P&B, the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDGs 8 and 4, and ILO Conventions. In the majority of project documents, there is a clear attempt to connect activities to their relevant frameworks and the broader Decent Work Agenda. The ILO's activities are also aligned with its normative agenda, with each area of activity reflecting various fundamental rights and Conventions.

## Iraq

**From the perspective of the Government of Iraq, the ILO's post-conflict recovery work in Iraq reflected their needs; the Decent Work Agenda was understood as a crucial foundation for realizing peace and stability.** In KIIs, Iraqi tripartite constituents – in particular the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) – compared the ILO favourably to more strictly humanitarian agencies. They made three key points in this regard:

- ILO work in Iraq is relevant to the current context and the necessity of transitioning away from short-term humanitarian programming and moving towards development.
- ILO in Iraq interacts with MOLSA as partners, keeping it informed about projects through various stages, engaging with it openly and fairly, which helps ensure continued relevance.
- The ILO has high levels of technical expertise that match MOLSA's current needs.

79 Chantelle McCabe, 'Enhanced Capacity of Government and Social Partners to Reduce Child Labour and Improve Occupational Safety and Health in Syria - Cluster Evaluation with RBSA Components' (Beirut: ILO, 2021), https://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/#bkajpxp

**FIGURE 4. NATIONAL CENTRE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAINING CENTRE, BAGHDAD**

Evidencing these points, MOLSA highlighted needs relevant to the ILO mandate, such as high levels of unemployment, informality in the labour market, skills gaps, the relative underdevelopment of the private sector, and occupational safety and health. In addition, independent evaluations consulted by the evaluation team also consistently remarks on the strong relevance of the DWCP for Iraq. For example, the 2023 evaluation of the programme "Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities" notes that the programme was highly relevant to the constituents' needs and the country context. According to the DWCP for Iraq – Recovery and Reform – child labour affects around 7 per cent of children aged 5–17 years old in Iraq. For hazardous child labour, boys are around four times more likely to be affected than girls, and children in rural areas nearly four times more likely to be in hazardous child labour than children in urban areas[80].

It is also noteworthy that, as with the ILO's post-conflict work in the Syrian Arab Republic, child labour was perceived as a strong entry point that aligns with the ILO's core mandate and sits well within the HDP Nexus, as "several interviewees noted that child labour was one of the few topics where it was possible to get federal and Kurdish government officials around the table together" (ibid).

Similar sentiments were expressed to the HLE evaluation team in regard to occupational safety and health capacity-building, which was perceived to both reflect the strong technical capacity of the ILO and represent a relatively neutral entry point for the Organization as it begins post-conflict recovery work. Indeed, occupational safety and health capacity-building was the first major programme launched under the Iraq DWCP. The recently completed National Centre on Occupational Safety and Health (NCOSH) training centre, visited by the evaluation team, was of a high standard and greatly appreciated by the MOLSA.

80 McCabe 2023. Enhanced Capacity of Government and Social Partners to Reduce Child Labour and Improve Occupational Safety and Health in Syria - Cluster Evaluation with RBSA Components". Beirut: ILO www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/#bkajpxp

Three issues were raised to the evaluation team that might limit ILO relevance to their needs:

- The Ministry of Planning, while likewise very complimentary of the ILO's partnership approach, occasionally felt that it was not consulted closely enough, and that in terms of ministerial hierarchy it ought to be the initial entry point for projects. Greater engagement with other ministries in Iraq, relevant to advancing the DWCP, would likely help advance the ILO's model of intervention across the vectors of governance.
- One other key area contention raised by MOLSA was the perceived slowness of the ILO, which was understood as limiting relevance somewhat, given that changes to programmes were difficult to realize if context-specific issues emerged (see section Iraq). Moreover, in KIIs, it was expressed that MOLSA would like to work much more with the ILO on various technical capacity issues but felt the lead times to projects were too long with the ILO, so they instead went to other agencies.
- There is a perception among government representatives that Jordan gets "more programmes" than Iraq. There was also a perception that the Regional Office is biased towards certain countries. The evaluation team could not find evidence to validate this perception, but it indicates that more strategic communication with partners is needed to address these perceptions so that they do not feed a downgrading of the ILO's relationship with constituents in the Government of Iraq.

**The relevance of Iraq's DWCP to workers' and employers' organizations is less clear.** While the Decent Work Country Team (DWCT) has built a strong and impressive partnership with the Government of Iraq, the consistent and substantial engagement of workers' representatives and employers' organizations is somewhat less evident. For example, members of employers' organizations interviewed for this HLE, while complimentary of the ILO's technical capacity and workshops, commented that they did not feel like equal partners to the Government, and this impacted their ability to ensure relevance. The Government, by contrast, had no such complaints.

The situation with workers' organizations is even more challenging. The Iraqi trade union movement suffers from a high degree of discord and disagreement between multiple factions, and as yet there are no programmes or efforts directly seeking to resolve these tensions. While the ILO has run some activities, such as two capacity-building collective bargaining workshops in Basra and Erbil, underlying tensions within the Iraqi trade union movement continue to destabilize the relevance of social dialogue principles for workers' representatives.

The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), at the regional level, is managing the situation as best it can remotely, but further activities are needed at the country level to begin ameliorating this intense fracturing. In KIIs, what was felt to be particularly needed in Iraq was an individual with a strong labour organizing background and strong knowledge of the Iraqi trade union movement. If this is not feasible, then a series of workshops and interventions aimed at resolving the ongoing discord should be held. Resolving this fractious situation is not only relevant to the application of Iraq's adopted ILO Conventions (Convention No. 87 in particular), but also a necessary step in building relevant social dialogue across the tripartite. Indeed, social dialogue is one of the most important features of the ILO, which distinguishes it from other specialized UN agencies; it ought to thus be a central component within any DWCP.

At present, these blockages and concerns are side-lined and negotiated for pragmatic reasons. While this makes sense in a difficult operating environment, it is, according to interviewed ILO staff and social partners, ultimately weakening one piece of the puzzle needed to ensure positive change and recovery in Iraq. Indeed, workers' representatives expressed concern that – without a unified, strong and pluralist trade union movement – various State-level reforms, such as those concerning social protection, would not transform from paper into reality. Moreover, in accordance with Recommendation No. 205, social dialogue is a key component for achieving peace, recovery and resilience. A fractured trade union movement harms the realization of this Recommendation and limits post-conflict recovery.

This was validated in a survey comment from a member of a workers' representative organization:

> **[The ILO] should strengthen the capabilities of the labour union movement and involve it in the activities and events implemented by the organization in Iraq with the rest of the social partners, especially with regard to the labour market, decent work, social protection and others.**

It is worth underscoring here that joint observations from several Iraqi trade unions and federations, submitted on 28 August 2019 to CEACR, clearly note that Iraq Law No. 52 (1987) – which prevents union pluralism – is still enforced, despite contravening Convention No. 87. Moreover, there are concerns clearly expressed to CEACR that MOLSA deals only with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW). This situation was reflected in evaluation team focus groups with GFIW and the General Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (GFITU), where the latter stated its open opposition to Convention No. 87, and multiple unions that they believed were "weakening their ability to represent workers", whereas the former maintained that they were consistently marginalized, threatened with legal action and unable to partake in social dialogue. Survey findings also note this problem and stress the necessity of rectifying it.

The need to focus more on workers' activities was also confirmed in interviews at a regional and country level. Moreover, in an FGD with agricultural workers in KRI, their own lack of union support was flagged as a significant issue. They had been trained in rights at work, and this was felt to be somewhat relevant to their needs, but they claimed they were too scared as individuals to go to employers and demand their rights, and that there was no union activity that would support them. They also said pursuing a legal remedy would be detrimental and expensive.

A similar point was made in Erbil by an ILO peacebuilding partner, who maintained that workers' grievance and complaint mechanisms were weak, and that the ILO needed to work more on trade union law reform to ensure the implementation of labour policies and law. Moreover, they also perceived an imbalance between KRI and the Government of Iraq, where they maintained that, even where these areas of activity were underdeveloped in the whole of Iraq, KRI was particularly neglected.

Workers' rights and representation are a core component of the Decent Work Agenda, and within overarching theories of change, they are an essential mechanism through which the normative agenda can be implemented in reality. Leaving this area relatively unaddressed impacts not only the relevance of ILO programming to needs, but also programme effectiveness and impact.

**DWCP programmes in Iraq are aligned with various local and international development frameworks, The National Development Plan for Iraq, SDGs 8 & 16, and UNSDCF.** The ILO launched the Iraq DWCP for the period 2019–23, demonstrating a shared commitment with the Government of Iraq to promote decent work. The priorities of the DWCP are based on Iraq's national priorities outlined in the National Development Plan for 2018–22, Iraq Vision 2030, the Reconstruction Framework for 2018–27, and the Private Sector Development Plan 2014–30.

## Yemen

**Tripartite constituents considered the Decent Work Agenda and the ILO's mandate, as a whole, highly relevant for Yemen.** While the ILO's operation in Yemen is small, there was a clear desire for the agency to increase its footprint, especially considering that many reported a perceived failure towards the humanitarian response in putting the country back developmental path. Interviewees with positive experiences of the ILO prior to the current crisis reflected on past collaborations and were hopeful for more substantial re-engagement. One government official remarked, "The ILO used to be a big partner for us before the war, but now, when we need them the most, it feels they are not here."

ILO staff at the regional level understand the strategy to be about maintaining a relevant downstream presence, so that when scale-up is possible, there is an entry point for stronger engagement at an upstream level. As with Iraq, government officials also compared the ILO's tripartite structure favourably (in theory) to humanitarian agencies, which do not always work closely with governments due to overarching principles such as neutrality and independence. Interviewed workers' representatives, however, felt somewhat neglected, where they had effectively ceased operating in the country due to the fracturing of political authorities and the resultant loss of their ability to organize. One representative said, "ILO programmes are not felt during a time of war". Their offices have been raided and their rights violated. ILO staff at the regional level contend that engagement with unions in the current crisis is very difficult, given a high degree of splintering and lack of clarity over which organization is de facto representative of workers. While the General Federation of Yemeni Trade Unions (GFYTU) is de jure recognized by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and thus the body the ILO works with legally, it is also splintered. In the context of a civil war, it also remains unclear what the future will hold after peace for workers' representatives. This position is understandable, but has, however, clearly limited work around social dialogue, which will need to be addressed going forward.

It is worth highlighting that, following the appointment of a new Special Representative, efforts are ongoing to shift the ILO's strategy in Yemen, so that it is more relevant to the current conflict context and the growing call for further recovery efforts.

**The ILO has taken more of a "downstream" approach in Yemen; this work was understood by government partners as broadly relevant to humanitarian needs, but less relevant to building ministerial capacity.** Between 2019 and 2023, ILO projects have supported livelihood activities among vulnerable populations (women and youth) and protected children from recruitment and use in armed conflict. In KIIs, interviewed government partners maintained that protecting youth from recruitment was a major priority. However, they also noted that the impact and effectiveness of the programme is difficult to judge in the absence of any statistical data (a point returned to below). CEACR notes this lack of data; interviewed government staff clearly expressed a need for programming that might assist them in producing more statistical information on both child labour and the labour market.

**The contextual relevance of child recruitment also reflects the 2022 Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, which reports that all sides in the conflict have recruited children**[81]; and the UNICEF press release from December 2022 that 3,995 children (mostly but not exclusively boys) have been verified as being recruited since 2015 (noting that the actual number is likely significantly higher)[82]. CEACR has also expressed consistent concerns, since the worsening of the conflict, on the current implementation of Convention No. 182.

81 https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/344/71/PDF/N2234471.pdf?OpenElement
82 https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/more-11000-children-killed-or-injured-yemen

However, it was not clear to what extent workers' representatives or employers' organizations were involved in the child labour programme. The internal project evaluation notes that consultancy meetings were held with trade unions and chambers of commerce, but there appears to have been no further substantial engagement. This raises issues around the degree to which the programme was relevant to social dialogue decent work objectives, and the extent to which such programmes can be effectively deployed as a springboard for re-engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

Interviewed government officials from TVET (in both Sana'a and Aden) were much more critical of the current relevancy of ILO programming. In Aden, workers reported having participated in a training and exchange in Jordan, which they felt was not particularly relevant to Yemen, as Jordan is a substantially more stable and secure country. They suggested it would have been more appropriate to learn from Iraq or another country that had recovered from a comparable civil war. TVET is part of the National Programme Steering Committee, which is the Joint Programme oversight and advisory authority, representing the highest body for strategic guidance, and fiduciary and management oversight. They also expressed to the evaluation team that they had limited substantial oversight or involvement in the ERRY programme, other than being requested to sign off on programme documents. If so, this is evidently a missed opportunity to help build their capacity and thus enhance recovery efforts for an eventual scaling back of the humanitarian operation. These sentiments were also expressed by TVET staff in Sana'a.

**ILO programmes in Yemen show strong alignment to international development frameworks, decent work principals and ILO P&Bs.** Programme documents reviewed for the evaluation clearly indicate attempts to align objects with larger strategies, including UNSDCF 2022–24, SDGs 8 and 16, as well as Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 205. The ILO's work on technical education and curriculum development is linked with SDG 4, while business development trainings and informal apprenticeship programmes support SDGs 1 and 8. It is important to flag the strong incorporation of gender in programme design (if not programme practice), which is linked to SDG 5.

## DESIGN, COHERENCE AND VALIDITY

This subsection turns to the questions of "design, coherence and validity" – that is, the extent to which the ILO's interventions in (post-)conflict Arab States show internal and external synergies. Internally, it explores the interactions and overlaps between programmes, and externally it pinpoints how the ILO interacts with other agencies to encourage complementarity, harmonization and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort. Specifically, the subsection looks at (a) broader programming and technical assistance alignment with peacebuilding strategies; (b) whether the Yemeni programmes of work can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion; and (c) the extent to which programmes of work are accountable to tripartite constituents and/or affect populations in crisis settings.

**The ILO's intervention model in post-conflict recovery settings is generally coherent, but design often lacks explicit integration of peacebuilding. While the ILO is not a peacebuilding organization, recent P&Bs have encouraged a greater focus on resilience and social cohesion towards social justice in recovery contexts. This is being directly addressed at the regional office level (Regional Office for Arab States). Accountability can also be part of this effort, where creating forums for beneficiaries to provide feedback on projects and help shape future interventions will ensure more valid project design.**

## Arab States

**ILO programme design in post-conflict Arab States rarely highlights "peace" or "peacebuilding" as an explicit strategic objective, outcome or output – rather it is an assumed consequence of "recovery" and "decent work".** While at the regional level the ILO is attempting to build more of an explicit focus on social cohesion and peace, in KIIs conducted for this evaluation, ILO staff and tripartite constituents conceptualized peacebuilding as an implied result that comes from advancing a DWCP. This approach is coherent with peacebuilding objectives outlined in relevant P&Bs, which focus on decent work as a path to recovery, social justice and social cohesion.

In this sense, a lack of an explicit focus on peace reflects the ILO mandate, model of intervention and aforementioned opinions that the agency is strategically placed for advancing the HDP Nexus in transition contexts. Indeed, ILO staff at regional and headquarters levels maintained that, when the key pillars of a DWCP aligned coherently, they could help generate the transformation from "humanitarian crisis response" (addressing needs) to "development programming" (building systems).

Thus, a lack of an explicit focus on "peacebuilding" in programme design certainly does not mean such considerations are wholly absent, given that they are embedded within the mandate of the ILO itself. One example is a joint publication by the ILO and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office – "Sustaining Peace through Employment and Decent Work". In this document, three drivers for conflict are identified:

- a lack of contact and interactions across different social groups;
- a lack of opportunity, particularly for youth and women;
- the existence of grievances over inequality, access to fundamental rights at work and exclusion.

ILO programmes in the Arab States clearly seek to address these drivers, even if the explicit linkages to peacebuilding are not always highlighted in project documents, theories of change, monitoring or overarching DWCPs. In Jordan, for example, the DWCP 2018–23 maintained two objectives that are directly relevant to those identified drivers:

- **Priority 1:** Employment creation contributes to economic and social stability.
- **Priority 3:** This supports the immediate creation of decent jobs for Syrian refugees and Jordanians to ease current conditions.

Arab States' downstream work has an intrinsic peacebuilding component, which is expressed through programme design in the form of outputs such as financial literacy training, skills and craft apprenticeships, business start-up programming and providing working days. Often, these interventions have sought to target vulnerable communities or areas in which there is intercommunal tensions, with (implicit) outcome being peace and social cohesion. A case in point is the ILO's EIIP interventions, which are designed to incorporate host and refugee populations, thereby encouraging contact, and lowering animosity as an outcome. Upstream work also has implicit peacebuilding assumptions, insofar as conflict-related tensions might, for example, be addressed by social protection reform, which would tackle inequality and exclusion, where such factors have been identified as feeding conflict. Another example of these impacts is through the tripartite approach, where generating positive social dialogue between trade unions, employers and governments can enable the peaceful resolution of work-related grievances.

However, given this lack of coherent focus, the evaluation team found inconsistency at the level of monitoring, tracking, and producing coherent and comparable peace or social cohesion data across interventions. This data would help empirically demonstrate the links between decent work and peace.

Through day-to-day work and strong knowledge of country contexts, ILO staff interviewed for the HLE all understood that one of the most pressing recovery needs was livelihoods opportunities. While this is likely to be the case, addressing the evidential gap with coherent cross-regional shared understandings, indicators and publications would strengthen programme design and validity. With further programme design adjustments, the ILO could well take the lead in producing evidence that conclusively demonstrates the link between decent work and peace. Survey comments from ILO staff (at all levels) validate and integrate peacebuilding components within ILO work. With further programme design adjustments, the ILO could well take the lead in producing evidence that conclusively demonstrates the link between decent work and peace.

**More direct examples of peacebuilding integration in the Regional Office for Arab States tend to fall under the rubric of "social cohesion".** Social cohesion, in a UNDP definition adopted by ILO, is "the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively towards a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals". As such, social cohesion is not synonymous with "peace", but is a contributing factor. This focus makes institutional sense, given that the Regional Office for Arab States has, as mentioned earlier, gradually evolved into a nexus space through conflict leading to refugee flows. One of the primary concerns that emerges during refugee crises are the impacts they can have on social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the evaluation team found that more work needs to be done to capitalize on the social cohesion contributions of ILO programming:

- As an example, the final independent evaluation of the project "Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan" notes that only a summer camp and a series of extracurricular activities involved both Syrian and Jordanian children. All other activities carried out were segregated by nationality and thus, "these sessions were the only type of activity that has helped build social cohesion".

Across ILO programmes, there are examples of social cohesion outcomes as well as ad hoc data collection. For example, the mid-term evaluation of EIIP in Lebanon and Jordan highlights that a commissioned study found the programme "made a significant positive contribution to social cohesion and peace". However, there is little cross-regional coherence or standardization of practice in terms of collection social cohesion data.

**Country contexts and donor priorities, rather than an overarching regional strategy on peace, appear to play a significant role in shaping ILO programmes.** Jordan and Iraq are moving more towards "development" frameworks and funding, while Yemen, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic remain humanitarian. Differences in government capacity and political orientation also shape the design of programmes and limit the possibilities (or perhaps even the desirability) for a one-size-fits-all regional approach to peacebuilding. In KIIs, numerous ILO regional level staff maintained that there was a necessity of maintaining careful diplomatic relationships between various competing interests and agendas in country, and that caution was needed when seeking to directly transfer one programme into another context.

**While ILO monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is well developed, results frameworks lack specific indicators on social cohesion.** The ILO-commissioned research paper, "How ILO Programmes Contribute to Social Cohesion between Refugees/ IDPs and Host Communities in the Arab States Region (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen)"83, reviewed for this HLE, identifies four gaps in programme related M&E and social cohesion:

- **Absence of social cohesion within theory of change:** There are no project documents to guide implementation and describe how implementation of activities was expected to lead to a hierarchy of results as they pertain to social cohesion.
- **Absence of social cohesion indicators:** Programme log frames often lack a specific reference to social cohesion indicators.
- **Lack of standardization and consistency:** There are high levels of variance in relation to social cohesion across programmes and phases. Different data collection tools and the number and types of assessments and assessment implementers also diverge.
- **Limited quantitative data:** Most data is drawn from FGD and KII social discussions, and this data can help explain how and why social cohesion might have been achieved, but it does not express the broader impact.

While routine monitoring is difficult in fragile and conflict-prone scenarios, this limitation of data and follow-up is further indicative of an empirical gap in evidence surrounding the actual contribution decent work makes to building and sustaining peace. These findings were confirmed during the evaluation team's review of project document and past evaluation and was validated by several KIIs. It should be noted, however, that the fact the ILO Regional Office commissioned the above-mentioned report shows they are willing to begin addressing some of these downstream output gaps.

**The ILO DWCP in the Arab States shows comprehensive internal transparency and accountability; however, the operationalization of any specific programme-level accountability mechanisms is unclear. T**he ILO's commitment to accountability and transparency is evident in the substantial number of resources available online, including the i-eval library of past evaluations. However, the evaluation team was unable to find specific details on programme-related accountability mechanisms, with either tripartite constituents or with beneficiaries – for example, mechanisms for systematic feedback around emerging problems with implementation and complaint procedures.

83 See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_854504.pdf

The ILO has not adopted AAP. Yet as a signatory to the Grand Bargain, the ILO committed to deeper engagement with communities affected by crisis and the mainstreaming of AAP. A similar point was made in a recent management response to a MOPAN assessment of the ILO, which notes that:

> **The ILO also acknowledges the need for further improvements in accountability to end beneficiaries and intends to take follow-up action through a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, this matter will be addressed though the development and implementation of an Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, foreseen in the Programme and Budget for 2022–23. The results framework incorporates a specific indicator to measure the percentage of ILO business processes and technical areas that have developed tools to apply this framework. In addition, the Office will assess, replicate and mainstream the existing good practices regarding accountability to beneficiaries from several of the ILO's flagship programmes. The ILO will also draw on examples from across the UN, such as FAO's Guide to Accountability to Beneficiaries. Based on this, ILO specific materials will be developed and rolled-out across the organization including through staff development and training[84].**

It is important to note the benefits of adopting AAP, which calls for accountability that goes beyond monodirectional accountability. For example, through community working groups where beneficiaries are brought together to collectively discuss what worked and what didn't work and to then take to takes those lessons onboard in an iterative process. This will, in theory, enhance ownership over interventions and also improve knowledge for project implementation going forward.

## Iraq

**The ILO's DWCP Iraq is largely coherent, but it has not taken peacebuilding as an explicit focus within programme design.** As detailed above, this is also not unexpected, given that the ILO is not a peacebuilding organization; rather, peace is a hypothesized impact that comes from building the pillars of decent work. Nevertheless, greater coherence could be achieved by being more explicit about these interlinkages:

84 See https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/ilo2020/ILO%20Mgmt%20Response%20and%20Letters%20to%20DK%20and%20SWE%20-%2024Nov21.pdf

- In Iraq's 2019–23 DWCP document, "peace" was mentioned only once in relation to priority 1: job creation and private sector development, where it notes "... job pressures are not simply of economic consequence: future peace and cohesion also rely on re-establishing a social contract whereby Iraqis can sustain themselves through gainful employment" (p. 6).
- Cohesion is mentioned in the above line, and also once more in relation to transforming TVET as a "a key driver for Iraq's economic growth, increased employment and improved social cohesion" (p. 7).

This absence also reflects on the one hand, ongoing operational shifts in all UN agency engagements with Iraq to more development-focused interventions. On the other hand, it reflects ILO P&Bs, which situate "peace" and "social cohesion" within the goals of decent work and social justice.

**Within DWCP plans and reporting, the evaluation team found evident coherence between ILO interventions, particularly between PROSPECTS work, EIIP, capacity-building with MOLSA, as well as sustainable and resilience enterprise.** However, there is a lack of reports or dashboards making these links clear and cohesive. This was validated during data collection, where KIIs with tripartite constituents often shifted into very project-focused comments, with few remarks made in relation to the ILO's broader strategy, other than assisting Iraq to move towards "development". However, given that the overarching mission of the ILO is social justice (achieved through the Decent Work Agenda), a stronger and more explicit focus on peace, social cohesion and reconciliation would enhance the ILO model of intervention in Iraq and further showcase the technical competencies of the ILO in this regard.

At the same time, challenges monitoring peace are not unique circumstance for the ILO. A great deal of research has now underscored that "peace" is often the most challenging aspect of interventions, both to capture in programme reporting and to incorporate within the Nexus. While all tripartite constituents interviewed for this HLE agreed that ILO was contributing towards peace and social cohesion, it was difficult to land upon the specifics. As with the Arab States in general, this does not mean that peacebuilding is absent; rather, a lack of explicit integration of Recommendation No. 205 in project design represents something of a missed opportunity for the ILO to more conclusively demonstrate its unique and much-needed contribution within the HDP Nexus.

External coherence is evident in close partnerships with other agencies and organizations, including the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and GIZ. ILO work in Iraq has also complemented and built on the priorities of the Government of Iraq, as was confirmed in interviews with both Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and Ministry of Planning (MOP). These partnerships further reflect ILO programme design support for transitioning towards greater development assistance through intuitional-level support. The synthesis review also found that the business development support services design showed coherence with Jobs for Peace and Resilience objectives, where it clearly met the needs of the local community beneficiaries through skills enhancement for employment, entrepreneurship, education for self-employment support, and bridges between labour supply and demand gaps for the vulnerable target groups.

Nevertheless, peace and social cohesion are not mentioned as a specific outcome in any of the projects or activities reviewed for this evaluation. This is confirmed in the aforementioned ILO research paper on social cohesion, which notes that there was "no available evidence" in relation to how ILO PROSPECTS programmes have had an impact on social cohesion. The evaluation team understands that, at the time of writing, there are various actions planned to respond to these gaps.

In interviews at the country level, ILO staff also clearly understood their work as contributing towards the maintenance of peace and social cohesion. This was particularly the case around social protection, where strengthening and reforming the national social insurance system to incorporate vulnerable and informal workers was conceptualized as strengthening the Iraqi social contract. The social contract, meaning the mutual rights and obligations citizens have towards each other and the State, is the foundation on which different segments of society work to achieve development.

**However, recovery is not a linear process, and there appears to be a design gap on thinking around "shock-proof" programming.** As lessons from Lebanon demonstrate, humanitarian need can appear at any time, given both the threat of violence and underlying structural issues (outlined in earlier sections). Both factors can threaten recovery. It is therefore imperative that as country-level responses begin to move towards development, contingencies are put in place so programming can adjust to emergent shocks.

**Work in Iraq is being monitored, yet the context poses a challenge; a lack of explicit coherent data gathering on peace and cohesion remains an issue.** A fragile setting like Iraq suffers from limited or unreliable data systems, making it difficult to gather evidence for indicators. A lack of reliable data hampers evidence-based policymaking and monitoring progress towards decent work objectives. Nevertheless, independent evaluations reviewed by the evaluation team found that, in general, the project in Iraq maintains thorough monitoring frameworks with detailed indicators, baseline, target, disaggregation, data source and regular reporting. The indicators were appropriate and useful in assessing the project's progress. The indicators were SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). The indicators were comprised of an appropriate mixture of outcome and output indicators, as well as quantitative and qualitative indicators.

However, there are clear challenges in capturing the contributions ILO programmes make to social cohesion. The reason for this absence likely begins at the project design phase, where peacebuilding outcomes are not made explicit, but are considered one of the cross-cutting themes. Indeed, in FGDs with beneficiaries, individuals spoke often of improved relationships with each other and their managers. It would be an asset to the ILO to capture this data more comprehensively. As of 2022, a tracer study on social cohesion was planned for Iraq but does not appear to have yet been carried out.

**The DWCT has built strong personal relationships of accountability between some members of the tripartite.** One of the most notable things about the ILO's work in Iraq is the high degree of personal respect and appreciation expressed towards individual members of the country team. Frequently in interviews, when discussions turned to raising issues or problems with the DWCT, individuals would point to their phones and say that if they had any point to make, then they would just call or WhatsApp their focal point. This personal way of working reflects the culture of Iraq, and it has clearly enabled access and improved implementation.

While this has strong benefits for ensuring adaptability and buy-in, an overreliance on the personal can potentially cause issues with institutional learning and staff turnover. It should be noted that, when this was raised with ILO staff, all insisted that handovers could be quite smooth, and they did not see this as an individual obstacle. Logging issues more systematically, however, would likely improve lesson learning and could be considered good practice.

External accountability mainstreaming is less well developed – both relational and formal accountability – at the downstream level. This requires greater attention. In a focus group with EIIP training beneficiaries in KRI, many complained that during their work there was nobody to complain to or system in place for reporting grievances. A different agency is responsible for the actual project (forming part of a joint programme). Participants claimed everything depended on the work supervisor and whether or not they were receptive to their needs as workers. They

also highlighted the precarity of their work, and that the supervisor could fire them without any oversight. These observations are more troubling, given that one of the functions of EIIP is to act as a "lived example" of decent work in practice. Thus, while the ILO is not directly responsible for this particular programme, it serves as evidence of where further follow-up and input from the ILO would be of strategic benefit, ensuring that other agency partners do their utmost to ensure that the principles and practices of decent work are maintained.

Where ILO is responsible for an EIIP project, the following system of accountability is in place:

- awareness sessions for the workers on decent work and labour rights at work;
- electing workers' representative for each EIIP site to represent the workers in their requests;
- regular spot check visits by trade union members to the sites to meet workers directly (the team include a female and male to ensure all have the chance to talk freely);
- hotline number written on the project sign and visible to all workers to speak privately if they want.

This is evidently a robust process, and it would be of benefit to try and ensure it is being followed across all projects, including those led by other UN partners.

## Yemen

**Programme design in Yemen has a more explicit focus on social cohesion and peace.** This can largely be explained through the nature of the crisis in Yemen, where the conflict remains simmering, though currently (as of mid-2023) less active than in previous years.

The two ILO programmes in Yemen that were operational during the scope of this evaluation operate at the downstream level. At a design level, both show broad coherence with ILO peacebuilding strategies. They also indicated established complementarity with other humanitarian and development agencies operating in Yemen – especially UNDP, FAO and WFP – that were part of the joint ERRY programme.

The overall objective of ERRY II was to enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities through support to livelihood stabilization and recovery, local governance and improved access to sustainable energy. The programme's implementing partners contributed towards this by ensuring communities could better manage local risks and shocks with increased economic self-reliance and enhanced social cohesion, and that institutions were responsive, accountable, and effective in delivering services, and that this would contribute towards building the social contract and meeting identified community needs.

Outcome 1 of ERRY II explicitly mentions social cohesion: "Communities are better able to manage local risks and shocks for increased economic self-reliance and enhanced social cohesion." Enhanced social cohesion is achieved, implicitly, by outputs 1.1 and 1.2, which both relate to economic activity and livelihoods, whereas 1.3 promises to establish "Informal networks [that] promote social cohesion through community dialogue and delivery of services". While the ILO is not directly responsible for outcome 1.3, community dialogue was reported in mid-term evaluations, as was a reduction in conflict.

**The ILO has engaged in a limited way on upstream activities, and programme design does not include enough capacity-building for tripartite constituents.** There was a strong perception among key ILO staff working on Yemen, as well as interviewed tripartite stakeholders, that programme design needed to begin progressing beyond downstream activities to incorporate greater interactions with the Government and other social partners. As mentioned above under 8.1. Relevance, MOSAL in Aden highlighted, in particular, a desire for greater capacity-building in

statistical data collection and analysis. While they pinpointed the necessity of undertaking a labour survey in order to better understand the market, there were also more directly conflict-related needs expressed, including assistance in gathering data on child soldiers. MOSAL in Aden, however, acknowledged that such an intervention would be politically challenging in Yemen, due to divisions in the country; however, they suggested carrying out two separate processes in the North and South, then combining the data to establish an overall picture. According to an interviewed official, this discussion is currently ongoing with the ILO Regional Office.

TVET, while it valued ILO workshops and activities, felt that coordination and cooperation was lacking and that it needed much more systematic engagement in order to have an "exit strategy" for when the conflict ended. The ILO also engaged with TVET in formulating the 2021 TVET Strategic Framework, considered an achievement by ILO, but was not mentioned to the evaluation team. However, there have also been some attempts by the ILO to address the issue of "exit", including a coordination agreement with Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training (MOTVET) that facilitates effective and close collaboration with TVET institutions at different levels in the implementation process, in which the Ministry plays a vital role.

TVET's most pressing concern was that it had very little capacity to run education and training if or when UN agencies began to scale back. It reported that all its training centres had been raided and vital equipped sold on the market. Alongside these fixed assets, it also had no means to monitor labour markets or track emerging gaps in skills, among other challenges. It is worth underscoring, however, that working on these more intensive projects would be a challenge in the current context of Yemen.

**Operational, logistic and security issues in Yemen pose a serious hurdle to routine project monitoring as well as to independent M&E.** This HLE is the first independent evaluation team that has attempted to travel to Yemen to work with the ILO since the onset of the crisis in that country. The process of doing so revealed a substantial array of hurdles that raise serious questions as to whether the ILO is operationally ready to build its intervention model in Yemen (described further under section 8 "Efficiency").

Independent, in-person evaluations are an essential component of accountability, and if ILO is unable to facilitate the movement and entrance of evaluators in-country, then serious questions need to be asked as to whether, as it stands, the ILO is operationally ready to expand in Yemen. Previous independent evaluations have been carried out remotely with in-country partners. While these reports are insightful, it is considered best practice to have an external third-country national carry out the research in partnership with national colleagues. This helps ensure neutrality and independence in politically challenging environments.

These findings are validated by previous independent evaluations, which also raised issues with the relative strength of M&E in Yemen. The final evaluation of ERRY II notes that, "according to the technical specialists and Regional M&E and Knowledge Management Officer at the regional level, they were not aware of any monitoring and evaluation framework". ILO technical specialists stated to those evaluators that they had not seen the log frame, nor did they believe that any monitoring and data collection had been conducted. In response, ILO Yemen specified that project indicators were monitored and reported on in progress reports, and that specialists should have had access to it. Moreover, in response to this HLE, the Regional Office for Arab States clarified that it had carried out eight missions to Yemen in 2022 and that there were weekly field monitoring missions in the North.

A number of beneficiaries in the Aden workshop also reported that they had received follow-ups via phone calls, but claimed they were not visited in person. Rightly, the independent evaluators of ERRY II note that, at minimum, there is a "need for closer collaboration between field staff and regional technical specialists and the Regional M&E and KM officer, as well as the collection of

quantitative data, to determine progress". In addition to these observations, given the high degree of complexity and fluidity in Yemen, these oversights also mean crucial missed opportunities for learning.

**The operation in Yemen has largely (but not entirely) focused on downstream work, given the previous intensity of the conflict.** This likely made a lot of operational sense as is coherent with overarching "stay and deliver" UN approaches. However, should the ILO look to expand its operations in Yemen, these issues will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In a KII with senior ILO staff members newly working in Yemen, there was evident recognition of these problems, which the staff members themselves had likewise identified, and intended to rectify going forward.

**As with Iraq, there is strong interpersonal relational accountability between *some* tripartite constituents, but very limited evidence of accountability to affected populations.** Tripartite constituents reported a good working relationship with the ILO in comparison with their relationships with other agencies. As with Iraq, these relationships are interpersonal. Constituents felt they could contact relevant individuals, make suggestions and see changes in programmes. The evaluation team found limited evidence of downstream accountability in Yemen. Beneficiaries had many complaints about their training (explored below), but they reported few mechanisms to adjust or suggest changes in the programme.

## EFFECTIVENESS

This section explores the extent to which the ILO's post-conflict programmes are effective and thus the extent to which interventions have met post-conflict recovery goals. It responds to the following evaluation questions: (a) the extent to which programmes of work have made progress in achieving results on crosscutting issues; (b) the extent to which the various teams across the ILO have coordinated, to ensure integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes at the country level;[85] and (c) the impact and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, given that Yemen represents a more "typical" humanitarian context, the evaluation team also explored the extent to which ILO programmes in Yemen navigate challenging political and security environments.

85 International labour law is one of the ILO's cross-cutting issues; however, for the sake of avoiding repetition where possible, it has been considered under this evaluation question.

**The ILO has made achievements in addressing conflict drivers and (post-)conflict recovery needs in the Arab States. Many of these achievements are at the level of policy uptake, with notable examples on social protection reform in Iraq and Lebanon, labour law in Jordan, and occupational safety and health and child labour reform in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, effectiveness in high-conflict areas is hindered by operational and logistical barriers. Nevertheless, at a project level, there is good evidence that issues relating to gender and non-discrimination are being considered and enacted upon, despite broader contextual challenges. Other than internal procedures, the biggest challenge for the ILO model to ensure effectiveness is political fragmentation across tripartite constituents.**

## Arab States

**Interventions by the Regional Office for Arab States in (post-)conflict settings have generated achievements in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues; however, in some cases, delays and difficulty adjusting to contextual volatility impact broader effectiveness.** Independent evaluation frequently notes a strong mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in ILO interventions focused on child labour; strengthening State-led social protection and insurance systems; improving refugee access to labour markets; and assisting in the development of vocational training assessment, planning and curriculum development methodologies.

- **Child labour:** By design, such programmes target a category of vulnerable populations (children at risk), yet ILO interventions in the Arab States have also often mainstreamed intersectional programming. Conflict can worsen the prevalence of child labour, and addressing it effectively is a clear contribution that the ILO Decent Work Agenda can make to peacebuilding and nexus programming. For example, in Jordan, the project "Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour" had activities that addressed the needs of both girls and people living with disabilities. When it found women living in or close to farms, the implementing partner provided self-defence classes. The project also developed and implemented awareness sessions on gender-based violence for women, men, boys and girls. This ultimately led some women to come forward and report abuse. The project's final evaluation also notes that, despite not integrating disability into the design as an outcome, this adjustment was made in response to needs and was viewed as highly effective. However, the project also suffered from delays in recruitment and in gaining curriculum approval from the Jordanian authorities.
- **Social protection:** The ILO has made strong progress in advancing social protection reform in a manner that addresses issues such as non-discrimination. Reforming social protection systems often also requires close social dialogue approaches to ensure uptake and acceptance. Social protection systems, if they are not resilient, often struggle or collapse during periods of crisis and unrest. As described earlier, the predominant mode of State-led social protection in the Arab World is with contributory forms of social insurance open only to formally employed

national citizens. Expanding and enhancing social protection systems can tackle conflict drivers by strengthening the social contract and reducing vulnerability. In and of themselves, rights-based social protection systems advance cross-cutting objectives like non-discrimination, specifically where they include provisions for people living with disabilities. In Lebanon, the final evaluation of the joint programme, "Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national social protection system for Lebanon", also notes that in policy development there was substantial progress on cross-cutting issues, in particular for people living with disabilities who were extensively involved in consultations, many flagging that this was the first time they were invited to take part in such discussions.

- **Employment:** The ILO's employment-generating interventions have likewise effectively mainstreamed cross-cutting issues. In Jordan, phase two of EIIP met its objective of 10 per cent women's participation and people living with disabilities, whereas in Lebanon there was no target for people living with disabilities, and the target for women's participation was missed narrowly (due to contextual factors). A worker survey carried out in Jordan noted that 70 per cent of women reported that, prior to EIIP, they had never worked, and they highly appreciated the fact they were paid the same wage as men. However, the independent evaluation of EIIP notes that efficiency was weakened due to "short-planned phases combined with delays imposed by regulatory and administrative processes", as well as "sub-optimal" project selection due to the project management committee and also delays in selecting appropriate projects.

It is important to underscore that means of the ILO's cross-cutting focus areas face profound obstacles in the Arab States. As already noted, the region has the lowest rate of female employment in the world. This is due to a wide array of socio-economic factors that place addressing it comprehensively well beyond the scope of the ILO. At the same time, the ILO's mandate as it relates to increasing decent work opportunities at least directly tackles some of the structural barriers to women's empowerment, where research and scholarship often highlight the central importance of economic inclusion rather than a singular top-down advocacy and awareness approach.

**The mainstreaming of other cross-cutting issues, such as tripartism and social dialogue, is a mixed picture; it depends heavily on context.** Only five Arab countries – Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen – have ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). Nevertheless, across project documents and independent project evaluations reviewed for this evaluation, there are evident attempts at tripartite engagement. However, the extent to which it is effective and more than just a "box-ticking" exercise in project design and implementation depends heavily on the context. While there are more specific observations on Iraq and Yemen below, a broader determining factor (as mentioned in section 6.1) is the nature of the crisis itself. Namely, in civil war contexts, when political representatives are often heavily delegitimized or decapacitated, it can be difficult for the ILO to engage effectively.

A rather blunt example would be that during the Islamic State occupation of Northern Iraq, there would be little point in the ILO seeking to engage with ISIS representatives. By contrast, gradual reengagement with the Syrian Government on child labour and occupational safety and health is understood as pragmatic re-engagement, given that the country has entered into an uneasy stalemate. The same issues emerge on workers' representative organizations and trade unions, which are also often heavily tied to the State. At the regional level, a senior ILO staff member noted that such situations, and political histories, can make social dialogue between the tripartite members challenging, where ideas of open debate and political accountability are not necessarily developed. It was felt by some interviewees that this point did not invalidate the ILO's model of intervention or imply that it was necessarily ineffective. Rather, it underscores the necessity of careful strategy and careful diplomacy. However, one of the unique features of the ILO's recovery

efforts is its comprehensive partnership approach as expressed through the tripartite. Ensuring greater involvement of all representatives would improve effectiveness.

**Environmental sustainability is a consistent gap in projects.** As was also found in the synthesis review, the evaluation team found that environmental sustainability was a consistent gap mentioned in various independent project evaluations, despite a wide variety of ILO research publications and strategic frameworks advocating for its inclusion. Occasionally during the implementation phase, there is evidence of some work that can be seen to be contributing towards projects with an environmental component, but this is more often than not on an ad hoc basis. Often, this comes down to project selection or government preferences for infrastructural projects and a lack of donor funding for environmental projects.

**The ILO has made substantial progress of policy dialogue and legal reform across the Arab States.** One of the strongest examples of effectiveness in the ILO's interventions across (post-) conflict contexts is at the level of government engagement. Notable examples include:

- **Jordan:** Institution of Law Number 10 (2023) amending the Labour Law, and thereby introducing sexual harassment with major penalties, non-discrimination, and protection for women, persons with disabilities and night workers.
- **Jordan:** Technical assistance and guidance in the drafting of the Agriculture Workers By-Law (Regulation No. 19) to the Labour Code, adopted in 2021. This also showcased the strength of convening of the tripartite into various workshops to discuss the application of existing labour law articles to the situation of workers in the sector.
- **Lebanon:** The ILO's technical assistance and support to national institutions led to the launch of a new social grants programme, as part of a foundation for a social protection floor in the country. On 26 April 2023, Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs – in partnership with UNICEF and ILO, and funding from the European Union – launched the country's National Disability Allowance.
- **Syrian Arab Republic:** There is ongoing engagement on redrafting the labour law to align it with Conventions ratified by the Syrian Arab Republic, and ongoing circulation of a new draft policy to combat the worst forms of child labour. In the context of the Syrian Arab Republic, this level of engagement from the Government is a very positive sign.

While these results show effective engagement with government partners and other constituents, it is also worth underscoring that legal reform and policy adoption also have positive implications for sustainability, setting in place a framework on which future interventions can build.

**Regarding COVID-19 adaptation, the pandemic caused delays but little other impact on intervention effectiveness.** Where there were impacts, it was largely due to programme delays generated due to nationwide lockdowns and broader instabilities. However, these impacts were compounded where projects already had existing delays due to the aforementioned internal and external bureaucratic hurdles, driven by contracting, procurement, recruitment and permission processes.

Nevertheless, independent evaluations in Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic note many examples of emerging good practices and flexible adjustments by regional and country teams. There are no instances of entire projects failing due to the pandemic, indicating good readiness to deal with a challenging emergency in existing protracted crisis settings.

Two noteworthy examples include:

- **Jordan:** In phase two of the project "Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan", the independent evaluation notes the team made "swift and relevant responses" to the disruptions made by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the project's life cycle. This included converting some theoretical trainings towards remote online learning, lowering the training group number to abide by government regulations,

contracting additional partners to meet project targets, and supporting the national vaccination campaign to have fully vaccinated trainees. An additional example of project nimbleness is that the team utilized tourist buses that were dormant due to the pandemic. A project cost extension also saw targets for formalization. The cost extension also increased the number of targeted beneficiaries reached through the project, bringing up the total number of direct beneficiaries to 29,600 – 25,000 of which were beneficiaries who were supported to obtain work permits.

- **Lebanon:** The project "Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon" also rapidly adjusted to meet the challenges of COVID-19. ILO contributions to the National Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training worked to ensure its alignment with the pandemic context. Alongside UNICEF, the ILO also produced a report that provided much-needed information on COVID-19's impact on labour markets and business, while also identifying training opportunities that were relevant to the crisis.

Despite these achievements, at the time of writing there were no overall cross-regional learning reports or publications or lessons learned that might feed into future pandemic preparedness. However, at a global level, the ILO has published an HLE on COVID-19 preparedness[86]. Preparing such documents or plans at a regional level would ensure that experiences garnered during the pandemic do not erode with time.

## Iraq

**In Iraq, there has been some progress addressing issues related to gender inequality and non-discrimination; however, there is limited evidence of disability mainstreaming or environmental sustainability.** As was also found in the ILO synthesis review, and in data collection by the evaluation team, the Iraq DWCP has made progress mainstreaming gender-related issues. There is disaggregation of results and indicators by gender in the majority of programmes, and a number of decent work activities that have an explicit focus on the strategic needs of women.

Barriers to labour force participation range from patriarchal cultural formations to lack of childcare facilities and incidences of sexual harassment. The majority of programmes reviewed for this HLE included evidence of progress made on gender issues, for example:

- In FGDs with beneficiaries of EIIP in KRI, they emphasized strongly how happy they were that trainers were supportive of childcare needs. This is a positive finding, showing that one of the most commonly cited barriers to female labour force participation (childcare responsibilities) was integrated into programming.
- Labour governance: The ILO's work on enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions delivered trainings to 92 participants; women represented 38 per cent of all participants.
- The use of the ILO's GET Ahead programme, in Basra and Dohuk, explicitly targets 500 women and aims to enhance their access to employment and small-scale business development.

However, it should be noted that the final independent evaluation of the programme "Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees and Vulnerable Host Communities" in Iraq raised several concerns around gender. In particular, it was felt that the project design did not adequately consider gender equality concerns. This is a problem, because boys and girls tend to face differential risks when it comes to the worst forms of child labour. Effectiveness was hampered, as the programme did not adjust, despite a situation analysis showing a disproportionate impact on boys (10.2 per cent versus 4.3 per cent). It notes that there was not really any gender analysis, nor any explicit strategy to address gender equality in the project outcomes, outputs or activities. Nevertheless, the M&E framework was disaggregated, which addressed some of these concerns.

86 See https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationreports/Strategyandpolicyevaluations/WCMS_854253/lang--en/index.htm

Both the synthesis review and the above-mentioned evaluation find that all ILO programmes in Iraq struggle to integrate disability concerns, and this appears to be a more substantial gap. In the aforementioned programme on child labour, this was an issue that began at the design phase, where no specific mention of people living with disabilities is made in the project document. The evaluation notes:

> **Regarding inclusion of people with disabilities, the project design was completely disability blind, with no mention of people with disabilities in the situation analysis. Nor was there any explicit strategy to address disability inclusion in the project outcomes, outputs, activities, or indicators.**

In response, the project team stated that it sought to include children with disabilities and their families, supporting these groups with referrals, and profiling a child with disabilities in first person perspectives on the world of work on ILO's "Voices" website, entitled "I had to stop school and go to work because of COVID-19" (ibid). However, effectiveness would be enhanced by ensuring crosscutting issues are maintained throughout all stages of project implementation and adoption.

**Tripartism in Iraq is perceived as being skewed towards the Government.** The trade union movement in Iraq is heavily splintered between different political factions. Yet regardless of this splintering, workers' representatives interviewed for the HLE maintained that the DWCT was more heavily engaged with the Government, and they did not feel themselves equal participants within ILO programmes. The same sentiment was expressed by the Iraqi Federation of Industry (IFI). In a meeting with IFI attended by around 15 individuals, only 2 of those present were aware of the ILO's work in the country, and both complained that the Government was the favoured partner, as opposed to themselves or the trade unions. Splintering is likely hindering effectiveness. This sentiment was also validated by several responses to the survey from tripartite constituents.

**Environmental sustainability is underdeveloped in the ILO DWCP.** As also validated in the ILO synthesis review, environmental sustainability mainstreaming is less pronounced in Iraq. A business development support services project includes green business as one of its training areas, where, as quoted by "the entrepreneur and trainer level were adapted to small enterprises in Iraq… The updated materials include topics related to environment and green business". However, this does not necessarily impact the overall objectives of post-conflict recovery but is an issue that could be reinforced going forward.

**ILO in Iraq has made substantial progress on policy dialogue, ranging from the adoption of new Conventions, feeding into national employment strategies, to reforming social protection law.** While outside the time scope of this HLE, it is important to acknowledge that Iraq is one of the only Arab States to have ratified all eight fundamental ILO Conventions; the final Convention – No. 87 – was ratified in 2018 and entered into force in June 2019. Iraq has also ratified three of the four priority governance Conventions: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); and Convention No. 144 (Tripartite Consultation). Convention No. 187 was ratified by the Government of Iraq in December 2015. A new labour law, No. 37 of 2015 ("Labour Law 2015"), entered into force in February of 2016. This represents, then, a solid base from which the ILO can effectively engage relevant partners in productive social dialogue.

Perhaps the most significant ILO achievement for post-conflict recovery in Iraq was the adoption on 17 May 2023 of a new Social Security Law for private sector workers. Replacing Law No. 39, this new instrument will bring social security to private sector workers and bring Iraq much closer in line with Convention No. 102. Indeed, the law is universal, expanding the existing social protection system to cover all Iraqi workers. This makes Iraq the only Arab State to have reformed its social insurance system to include informally employed workers and the self-employed. It also expands the range of entitlements to include maternity and unemployment benefits for the first time. The law will also provide health insurance obtained from public, cooperative and private providers. As such, this achievement represents a clear example of the ILO's highly strategic place within the HDP Nexus, given that its adoption involved both technical expertise as well as patient social dialogue across the tripartite constituents.

In KIIs with regional ILO staff, the peacebuilding implications of this law were also highlighted, where generating a universal rights-based set of entitlements can lower total levels of inequality, manage grievances and reduce the space of non-State actors in filling "welfare gaps". While this represents an "upstream" achievement, the ILO is now preparing to begin ensuring that the project is implemented in reality. Priority is now being given to MOSAL to enhance its capacity to administer the law. However, some concerns were expressed by both ILO staff and by workers' representatives that trade unions needed to play an active role in pushing for the implementation of these new rights for workers.

ILO staff at the regional level and the Iraq office also felt that a strategic area for the ILO to further leverage effective policy into action is through greater coordination with other UN agencies. Across the UN response in Yemen, agencies are providing various forms of "cash-for-work" activities. Given the various Conventions to which the Government of Iraq is a signatory, it would make strategic sense to have greater ILO oversight both to look for opportunities to further embed decent work practices and, moreover, ensure that other agencies' activities are upholding global labour norms.

**Despite various contextual constraints, ILO Iraq has made a number of significant achievements.** These include:

- EIIP has run across multiple major public construction projects, creating 52,003 worker days for 490 job seekers, including 75 refugees, 53 IDPs and 85 women.
- Institutionalizing the Child Labour Monitoring System allowed 5,113 children (3,750 in Ninewa and 1,363 in Duhok) to access mental health and psychosocial support. A total of 1,950 children were withdrawn from child labour in IDP-affected areas.

**COVID-19 had a significant impact on the Iraq DWCP, given that it was initiated just at the point the global pandemic was rolling out across the world.** The ILO Country Coordination Office was founded just as the pandemic was beginning to spread out across the world. As with Arab States in general, the evaluation team found that the primary issue raised by the pandemic was delays. The impact of COVID-19 on slowly starts to projects was also explicitly flagged by MOSAL and MOP – not out of frustration, but as a contextual factor that had inhibited their effective engagement with the ILO DWCT.

Indeed, pandemic-related delays were particularly pronounced in Iraq, given that the Country Office had only just opened. However, in literature reviews and interviews, the evaluation team also found good examples of flexible programme adjustments that maintained effectiveness despite the pandemic.

One key example comes from child labour interventions, where the pandemic led to delayed directorate approvals for activity implementation in schools, and the Ninewa governorate and security authority approvals were lengthy, delaying the rapid needs assessment, which in turn impacted the screening and identification of child labour cases. To mitigate these issues, a no-cost project extension was applied.

## Yemen

**In Yemen, all programmes include gender mainstreaming to some degree; however, there were evident gaps in answering women's needs in some programmes.** As noted in the ILO synthesis review, projects in Yemen have all integrated some degree of gender mainstreaming and project reporting contained indicators disaggregated by gender. For example, within the HLE's time frame, the ILO's contributions to the ERRY noted that it had trained 618 master craft workers (31 per cent women) in learner-centred pedagogy, competency-based training and assessment, and occupational safety and health.

However, in FGDs with beneficiaries, several things emerged that inhibited effectiveness at addressing cross-cutting issues. While this is comprised of opinions expressed in a single focus group, it is important to note that several female participants complained that their choice of course participation was limited by gender. At this, the ILO notes that enrolment is not officially limited by gender. Potentially, this could also be due to local perceptions and socio-cultural pressures. Nevertheless, these gender-related issues were also mentioned in a 2019 independent evaluation of an earlier phase of the project, so it appears that the situation may not have been fully remedied. Specific examples include:

- One woman who had taken a course on sewing said that she wished she could have taken a course on mobile phone maintenance (which she said is offered to men). She made the convincing argument that there is also a gap in the market for women with these skills, as they may not want men accessing their mobile phones and seeing their private pictures or messages.
- A participant also said that, because they felt funnelled into "gender appropriate" courses, this meant they were unable to compete in the local market as, in many cases, there were already plenty of women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) providing cooking and needlework services. This raised further questions on the strength of the market assessment, with one beneficiary asking, "Why didn't they assess what businesses we needed before the training?"[87]
- Another participant, who had a background in design, ended up taking a course in hairdressing simply because that was the one available in Lahj (but there was a photography course in Taiz). This led to a perception of unfairness in offerings based on geographic location.

In addition to these issues relating to gender, several participants claimed the tools they were provided on completing the course were not in line with market needs. A participant who was trained in photography said that if she used the camera that was provided, "nobody would let me take photographs at a wedding ever again". This participant now works for a business rather than running her own business, which she desires, given that the store has the correct equipment. Another woman trained in sewing said she felt humiliated having to ask a more established tailor all the time to use her button-pressing tool, but it was not provided and is essential for adding sequins to Yemeni clothes.

Participants were very guarded about how much the training has now contributed towards their livelihoods, but at best it was around 50 per cent. In the context of Yemen, this was felt by participants to be pretty good. This was also confirmed in the group's "Rivers of Life" exercise, which generally showed that, while trainings were enjoyable and provided a relief from the crisis, they made a smaller (but not absent) impact on participants' lives – in particular, this was the case for women.

87 It should be noted that the ILO did not carry out, with implementing partners, a rapid market assessment.

**FIGURE 5. FEMALE RIVER OF LIFE WITH ENLARGED CENTRAL POINT WITH TWO OBLONGS REPRESENTS THE TRAINING WITH A COLLAPSE IN CIRCUMSTANCES AFTERWARDS.**

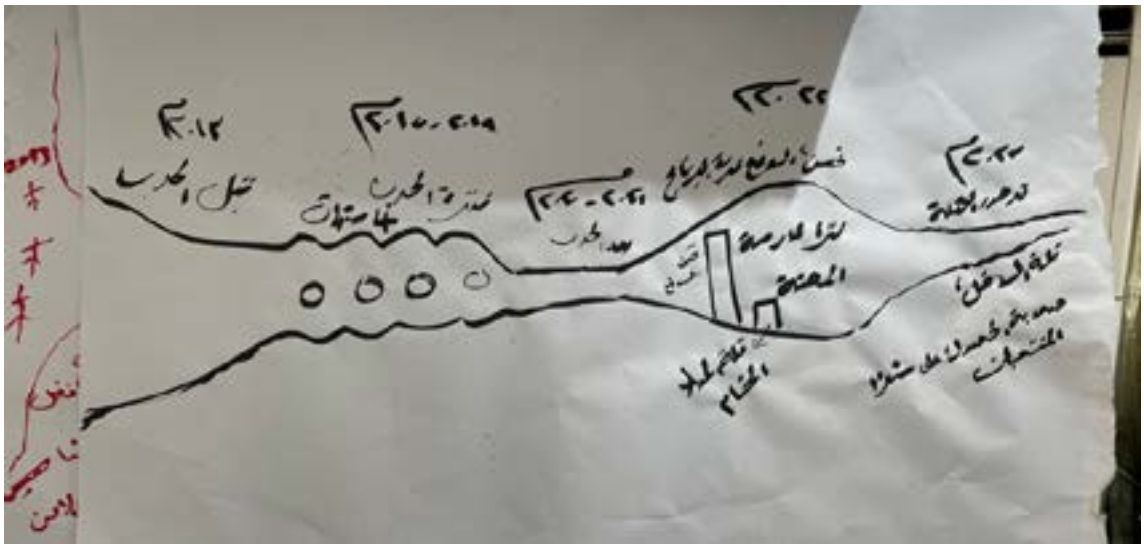
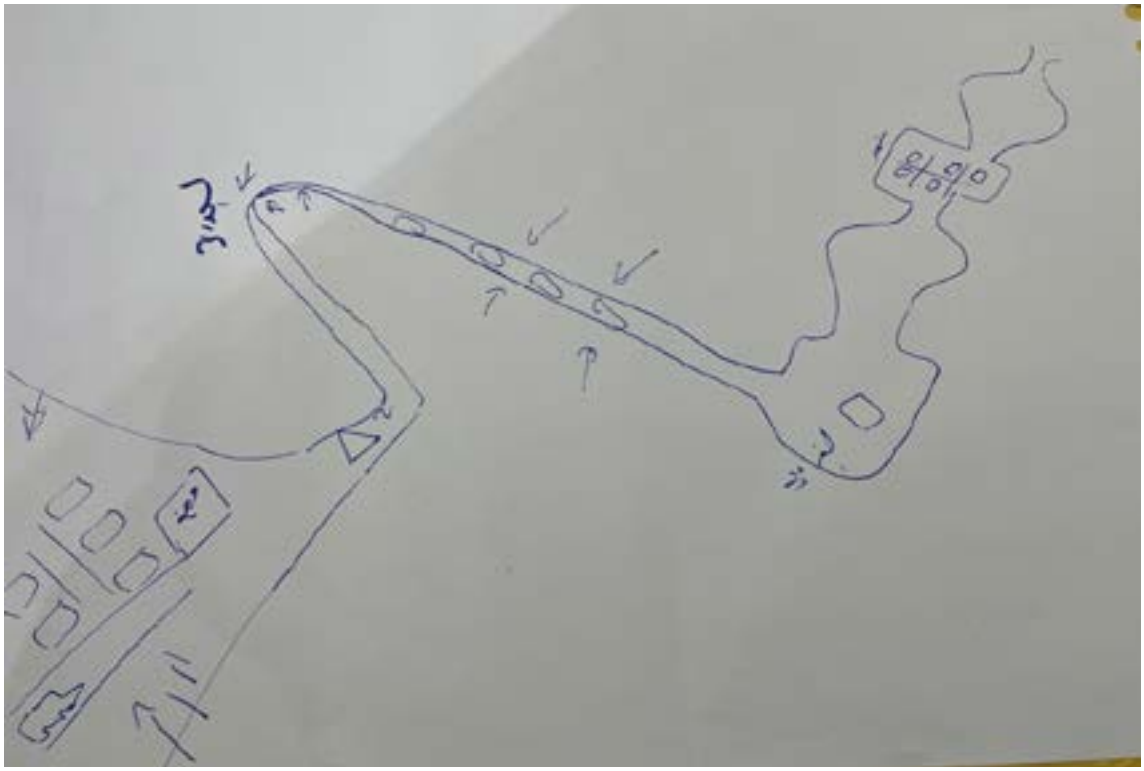


**FIGURE 6. A MALE PARTICIPANT'S RIVER OF LIFE: TOP RIGHT SHOWS TRAINING FOLLOWED BY INITIAL REDUCTION IN THE RIVER FOLLOWED BY AN OPENING, AND THEN A FURTHER RESTRICTION IN OPPORTUNITIES.**



The ILO has successfully implemented a number of projects in Yemen, despite various challenges. Achievements reported by figures from ERRY (March 2019–22) include:

- 1,822 apprentices (41 per cent female) trained on life skills, financial literacy and theoretical training in selected occupations followed by on-the-job training at businesses;
- 330 individuals trained to improve their employability skills in solar energy microenterprises;
- 955 master crafts persons trained on learning methodologies and occupational safety and health under the apprenticeship scheme;
- 10 competency-based training curricula developed in high market demand sectors with potential for job creation;
- 1,500 toolkits distributed to the graduate apprentices to facilitate and enhance their employability;
- occupational safety and health material and equipment delivered to up to 950 service providers based on organizational need;
- 68 individuals trained as trainers on the ILO's "I own a small business" methodology;
- up to 3,500 individuals benefited from cash-for-work activities through trainings by ILO trainers on ILO business training packages (My First Business and I own a small business).

**Environmental sustainability is a strong feature in the ERRY programme.** In Yemen, there is an impressive focus on environmental sustainability through solar panel maintenance, and this focus is likely highly effective, given the widespread uptake of solar panels in Yemen. This programme benefited 105,000 individuals in Hajjah, Hodeidah and Taizz through the development of solar solutions and assets to communities and production facilities. In KIIs with beneficiaries in Aden, there was widespread agreement in the group that solar panels were essential, and all individuals had them in their homes. It is the primary means of generating power in much of rural Yemen.

**During the time scope of the HLE, tripartism and social dialogue had largely, but not entirely, stalled in Yemen due to fragmented political authority; there are signs this could change, and it must if the ILO wishes to advance its model of intervention in Yemen.** Challenges include the fact that the Government is split in two, and its staff has been unpaid since 2018. Workers' organizations split into dozens of factions. The head of the General Federation of Yemeni Trade Unions (GFYTU) is in Egypt and hence not available for dialogue. Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FYCCI) lost many of its members and financial capacity. Survey responses from staff in Yemen rank tripartite fracturing as the number one challenge to the operation in Yemen.

As a case in point, in 2023, the ILO attempted to revitalize social dialogue when it devised an initiative to organize a meeting between the Government and trade unions, yet the former refused – in an official letter – to meet with the General Federation of Yemeni Trade Unions and engage with them in dialogue, given that they were based and operated in Houthi-controlled areas, but also because the Government recognized trade union federations in the South to represent trade unions in Yemen at a time when these federations weren't recognized by the International Trade Union Confederation and hence were deemed not representative by the ILO.

As evidenced in the findings above and below, the ILO in Yemen has largely but not exclusively focused, in 2019–23, on downstream project activities with relatively low levels of engagement with the tripartite constituents. Without a more significant upstream component, it is difficult to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the ILO's model of intervention in Yemen, given that the normative components are an essential part of the ILO's mandate.

In part, downstream focus can be explained by the context and the fragmentation of political authority. The problem, however, seems to be particularly strong in the North, where the ILO has essentially little to no relationships with the DFA. While the United Nations Security Council does not recognize Ansar Allah as a legitimate government (commonly known as the Houthis), this has not prevented humanitarian agencies from developing a working relationship with the authorities.

Even in territory controlled by the IRG, there is a clear sense that tripartite constituents, including the Government, feel somewhat abandoned by the ILO. This is not irreparable. In many KIIs, participants reflected fondly on their engagement with the ILO before the war; however, as one member of an employers' representative put it, "Let us just say, for now, they are more talk than action." Nevertheless, those same representatives flagged their appreciation for the ILO's assistance in rebuilding their database systems. Since January 2022, the ILO has provided technical assistance to develop a costed strategic plan for 2022–23, which includes a redefinition of the Federation value proposition detailing advocacy priority initiatives and a new service offer, coupled with a financial and human resources plan to implement the strategy. The process entailed several consultations with Governorate Chambers, members of the sectoral committees and the Board members.

It is worth flagging here that humanitarian agencies, unlike the ILO, do not have a normative agenda, and neutrality is a more important value. Yet even for those agencies that maintain humanitarian ethics, in reality, they reach varying degrees of compromise. As detailed in the recent Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation, this compromise position has not always led to the most effective working relationship. It is confusing, and creates a lot of space for misunderstanding, overpromising and underdelivering; it is not necessarily something that the ILO ought to replicate Instead, in KIIs at a regional and a senior country level, there was a sense in which a frank, open and realistic engagement needed to begin. It was also stated that there were opportunities for the ILO to take lessons on how to do that, from other comparable country contexts in which engagement had begun in splintered civil war recovery periods. Crucially, by remaining in-country and keeping a (small) presence, the ILO still has a base on which to begin building a larger presence. As the country looks to be moving towards peace, and as humanitarian agencies struggle to assist in transition, a senior ILO staff member in Yemen insists that now is indeed the right time.

However, in that same KII, it was underscored that this must begin by increasing the presence of international staff, who have diplomatic protections, and are able to act as neutral arbitrators between the IRG and DFA. There is also scope to learn from other agencies, such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or UNICEF, which maintain much larger operations.

In KIIs at the regional and senior country level, the evaluation team found evidence of strategic thinking on how best to achieve this scale-up, whether starting at the local level or working with other agencies that have projects that fall within core ILO agendas, such as WFP and UNDP programmes on social protection.

**There was limited policy dialogue in Yemen during 2019–23.** Yemen has ratified 30 ILO Conventions, including 8 fundamental Conventions. Due to the crisis, engagement on a policy level in Yemen is extremely limited despite a relatively strong adoption of fundamental legal instruments.

The ILO has worked with the IRG and the private sector to develop the 2022–24 Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), aiming at providing market-relevant programmes that will increase the employability of trainees and their access to decent jobs. TVET appreciated this work and compared it approvingly to other more strictly humanitarian agencies, which often sidestep the Government entirely. However, they were highly critical of implementing partners carrying out trainings independently of the Ministry and not seeking

approval to do so. They were also concerned about the use of equipment distributions at the end of training workshops. They worried it was creating an expectation of a "gift" after having completed a workshop, which the vocational trainings from the Ministry would not be able to provide should it be responsible for implementing its own programmes.

MOSAL also benefited from engagement on child labour via the CRUCSY programme and found the workshops fruitful and effective. Nevertheless, it was critical that more engagement was not forthcoming and, as mentioned earlier, felt neglected by the ILO, which it once saw as a core partner. The catalogue of needs is significant, including and exceeding policy development, and ranging from technical support in surveys and data management to strengthening occupational safety and health inspections.

While it is important to note the challenging contextual situation in Yemen, including the splintering of authorities and the high-level concentration of funding in donor agencies, there was a sense from government representatives that there was still no exit strategy for the humanitarian agencies. With investments and careful strategy, they felt that the ILO could be a key agency for assisting Yemen's transition into a development phase.

## EFFICIENCY

This section assesses the degree to which the ILO's model of intervention in (post-)conflict States makes efficient use of its resources. It explores how well the ILO is using its resources to advance the Decent Work Agenda and facilitate recovery efforts. Its answer responds to the evaluation question "How cost-efficient was the ILO's implementation in the Arab States in general and Iraq and Yemen in particular?" Given the predominance of operational concerns observed by the evaluation team, this section also incorporates reflections on those barriers.

**ILO programmes in post-conflict Arab States are largely cost-efficient, with few projects failing to meet their targets and many finding cost-saving mechanisms and means to repurpose funding from COVID-19; challenges remain concerning adapting contextual volatility and eradicating delays. The single unifying critique of ILO programmes made by partners in Iraq and Yemen, and consistently pinpointed in independent evaluations, is delays. These delays are not entirely due to the pandemic but are often related to slow permission processes from authorities, staffing issues and slow-moving bureaucratic procedures. Some of these issues can be improved though cultivating better relationships with political authorities, improving project lead-in times, and providing better resources for staffing in postconflict settings.**

## Arab States

**Overall, ILO recovery interventions in the Arab States are found to be efficient in terms of costs and reaching targeted outputs; however, delays in implementation are a consistent issue flagged in nearly every independent evaluation.** In evaluations and projects documents reviewed by the evaluation team, nearly all ILO projects meet their targets, and few overspend, while during the COVID-19 pandemic, projects received a mixture of uncosted and costed extensions.

As also described above, many programmes appear to suffer from delays. A non-exhaustive list of the typical reasons cited for project delays that impact efficiency include:

- delays in approval from political authorities;
- COVID-19 lockdowns;
- slow-moving ILO bureaucracy;
- issues with recruitment and staff turnover;
- insufficient staffing;
- procurement hurdles.

The ILO's initial programme used for re-engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic, "Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria", provides a good example of typical efficiency challenges that can arise in recovery contexts. Payments to partners were delayed due to bureaucratic processes generated by having to carry out finances through the Regional Office for Arab States rather than inside the Syrian Arab Republic, due to the lack of an ILO system in country. Outputs were also delayed due to the pandemic, as well as difficulty obtaining permissions from the Government in a timely manner. The RBSA project on child labour ended up having three no-cost extensions due to these slowdowns. An independent evaluation of the project notes that having only one staff member responsible for manging all three aspects of the project caused problems, with insufficient staff on the ground. It was noted that this would have been improved by having at least one international staff member present working with the national project coordinator and administrative assistant.

However, there were also instructive examples of a more strategic use of resources, including one of the three projects harnessing cost-sharing with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with some savings made due to online shifts during the pandemic. Another factor beyond the control of the project, but that nonetheless had positive efficiency impacts, was the devaluation of the Syrian pound. These savings were then used to implement more project activities and ultimately exceed targets, and to spend on occupational safety and health equipment for automation of Syrian labour inspection work. However, there are also examples of projects in the Arab States, where joint partnerships did not lead to planned efficiency savings, including EIIP in Lebanon with UNDP. While the project hit all its targets, there was envisioned a sharing of functions around procurement and rapid selection of projects using the aforementioned Lebanon Host Communities Support (LHSP) local knowledge, but this did not materialize, due to a disconnect between the ILO and UNDP systems and lead times.

The ILO's programme "Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II" likewise managed to achieve most of its intended outcomes and outputs, despite the pandemic. A total of 3,503 beneficiaries had their skills recognized through the Recognition off prior learning (RPL) methodology and 831 beneficiaries were placed in jobs. With regard to skills development, a total of 876 received vocational training, out of which 430 female beneficiaries received training tailored for women. In addition, the project facilitated the issuance of more than 25,000 work permits for Syrian refugees working in Jordan. Nevertheless, the project faced significant delays due to the COVID19 crisis, which was made worse by a slow start, where the

implementing partner was only involved 5 months into a 12-month project. To meet the demands, the project reached out to other partners without a competitive bidding process, which the independent evaluation notes likely impacted efficiency due to lowering the quality of partners that would otherwise emerge in a more competitive process.

**Joint work with other agencies in the Arab States is often relevant and sound, but there appear to be challenges in realizing efficient complementarity in practice.** For example, since 2013 in Lebanon, the UNDP has operated the "Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme", developed under its broader framework, the "Lebanon Stabilization and Recovery Programme". At a municipal level, the UNDP operates community committees that help assess needs, tension drivers and infrastructural weaknesses, specifically in areas with a high concentration of Syrian refugees. EIIP partnership with the LHSP is relevant on a broad strategic level, insofar as the UNDP has a large presence across the country and mechanisms in place for identifying relevant projects. There is also evident complementarity between the ILO's model of intervention and the LHSP, where the latter is likewise a development-focused response to refugee displacement with a strong peacebuilding component. It was envisioned that the ILO would bring to this partnership EIIP technical expertise and thus supervise the more challenging infrastructural programmes with the UNDP/LHSP using its experience at a community level to help identify projects. However, in reality, "suboptimal" collaboration meant that these benefits were not realized.

**Survey findings also note objections to the use of third-party contracting in high-risk areas.** As detailed further above and below, this approach is the functional workaround to ILO operational restrictions on individual consultants for particular work packages. One respondent to the survey notes that this should be adjusted by:

> **...placing security officers and put security of staff and consultants at the centre of interventions. Limiting the contractual agreement for consultants in riskier areas and resorting to third party contracting (and therefore higher overhead charges) is both inefficient and unethical.**

It is noteworthy that the respondent flags this approach as ethical, whereas the current modality is also perceived as preventing a "two-tier" system of staff, as is sometimes found with other UN agencies, where certain colleagues are kept on rolling "service contracts". There is evidently some disagreement as to what the best approach is, with both having advantages and challenges.

**In many Arab States, the ILO has been active in contributing towards a number of cash-for-work coordination forums; this is a solid area of work to build on further.** In Jordan and Lebanon, for example, the ILO led the development of draft standard operating procedures that apply to all cash-for-work humanitarian interventions. These are efficient means through which the ILO can ensure its normative mandate is being upheld across multiple programmes.

**There is evidence of efficient adaptation to difficult circumstances.** Independent evaluations of the EIIP in Jordan and Lebanon note some examples of adaptability to distinct changing circumstances that helped maintain relevance. Lebanon is the most instructive case in point, where the EIIP remained relevant to needs by efficiently adapting to the ongoing fiscal collapse. This crisis was triggered when the "peg" holding the Lebanese pound value steady to the US dollar collapsed,

meaning a wage that was once equivalent to US$20 per day dropped rapidly to the equivalent of US$4 per day. The eventual dollarization of EIIP wages addressed these issues. These programmes have contributed to 95,800 workdays for native Lebanese and Syrian refugees, equivalent to 2,400 short-term jobs. Despite the difficult context in Lebanon, employment service providers also achieved a 37.3 per cent increase in successful matches between job seekers and employers in North Lebanon.

## Iraq

**Efficiency finding for ILO Interventions in Iraq were similar to those in other Arab States: project goals were largely met despite significant delays.** As mentioned earlier, the primary issue impacting efficiency for the ILO's model of intervention in Iraq is delays. Many of the DWCP delays were explained in relation to pandemic restrictions; however, others were due to perceived capacity issues at the Regional Office for Arab States level, restrictive security protocols and bureaucratic slowdowns. Notably, these delays are not directly due to "conflict" (as is the case in Yemen below).

At the operational level, project staff and senior ILO Chief Technical Advisors in Iraq are evidently frustrated by the fact that the Regional Office for Arab States is "already operating at 100 per cent". However, it should be noted that at the time of the evaluation, the Regional Office had begun the rolling out of its management software – IRIS – which it hoped would address some of these issues. This is not new software, but an old ILO system which had still not reached the new Iraq country office. Without that system, one ILO project officer noted, "I submit a request and then I don't know where it is, or what's happening with it." These delays and inability to update tripartite constituents or implementers is harming the morale of staff, who feel they are under a great deal of pressure.

**Technical assistance is highly appreciated by tripartite constituents but the pace of roll-out is a concern.** One of the strongest aspects of project design in Iraq is the provision of technical assistance to various partners. As mentioned under section 8.1 relevance, this was highly appreciated by Iraqi partners, in particular MOLSA, whose only critical comments were on efficiency. This appreciation was also validated in survey responses.

In short, they want more support where possible, but they find that roll-out is too slow, with one minister commenting "of all the agencies, ILO is the slowest". Tripartite constituents also said they had learned to "blame Beirut" for many of the particular issues around project implementation.

**There are strong examples of flagship joint programmes with other UN agencies.** Many of these partnerships are ongoing within the evaluation timeline and thus difficult to evaluate their overall efficiency. However, promising examples of coordination include the following:

- ILO-Iraq is currently carrying out a flagship joint programme on social protection along with UNICEF and the WFP.
- The ILO is working closely with UN-Habitat and International Trade Center in designing a new project on enhancing employment opportunities in the housing sector.
- The ILO is also actively engaged with the UNCT, chairing and co-chairing Priority Working Groups (PWG).

**The ILO struggles to meet this demand due to problems bringing in external specialists to deliver technical assistance.** Issues around contracting, insurance and security are contributing towards project delays and are partially related to slow bureaucracy but are also the ILO's insurance policies.

These policies mean that it is not possible to bring individually contracted experts into "high-risk" security zones (a problem replicated in Yemen). Instead, if consultants are to be brought into the country, it needs to be through a contracted company, which causes more slowdowns in the associated procurement processes. The current "workarounds" are to (a) conduct training outside the country, (b) have another UN agency bring in the consultants, (c) conduct the training online, and (d) hire via a contracting company. None of these workarounds are perceived of as efficient by country staff.

Indeed, as was pointed out to the evaluation team, the only reason the independent team was able to travel to Iraq is because this HLE was subcontracted through a separate employer, the Institute of Development Studies, which took responsibility for its insurance. If it was an entirely independent team of consultants, then the mission would not have been possible because service contracts, under the ILO, are not eligible for insurance.

These insurance and operational rules will not be solved by streamlining bureaucracy through new systems like IRIS; at best, all this will do is streamline refusals to bring in external experts to areas deemed high-risk. Should the ILO wish to be serious about operating in recovery contexts, then these rules and regulations must be revisited and brought in line, as far as possible, with the practices of other UN agencies, which do not seem to face the same operational challenges.

**Project delays are such a persistent feature across projects that, if they continue to be unaddressed, they could impact reputational risks and partnerships going forward.** Some illustrative examples of delays in the Iraq programme of work include the following:

- A peacebuilding organization working on rights awareness and advocacy in KRI stated that the ILO needed to address these delays by "listening more to people on the ground", and while they found reporting mechanisms and responses to be efficient, there remained persistent issues in payment delays, with many receiving payments only after the projects had ended.
- There was a one-year delay opening an ILO office in Basra due to security risks.
- The programme on child labour in Iraq was cost-efficient, but several KIIs in the project's independent evaluation note that the ILO's payment rates are not as competitive as those of other UN agencies. This has a knock-on effect with staff retention at an ILO and partner level. This contributes to further delays, as new staff members or partners must be recruited, who then need to be brought up to speed on existing project work. As a result, there was a gap of 15 months without an administrative assistant.

**There is a perception that current security and insurance arrangements are simply not appropriate for situations like Iraq.** This is not the fault of any particular security officer, or the ILO, who are doing their best possible work within an arrangement that falls under the discretion of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The ILO Country Office did everything it could to facilitate the evaluation inside these confines, including ensuring that an armoured vehicle and security office was provided for the entirety of the mission.

While security falls within the scope of UNDSS and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in general, there was hope that the ILO could join with other agencies in pushing for a change in these restrictions. This was reported to have not only delayed work (particularly expansion into Basra), but also harmed routine monitoring and evaluation. By contrast, KRI has a much less restrictive security environment, and these imbalances in project quality and presence also risk impacting perceived effectiveness by tripartite constituents.

**While COVID-19 was one factor that led to these delays, it was also a factor that informed some improved efficiency with money saved through online activities switched to additional outputs.** Only an employment policy formulation project was left with significant underspend due to the pandemic, as well as particular sets of experiences, namely the passing away of the project manager and an overestimation on the assumed capacities of the national security officer.

## Yemen

**Efficiency findings in Yemen likewise found that most project targets were met despite delays; however, additional conflict-related threats posed further challenges.** In humanitarian-conflict settings, operation and management costs tend to be higher, yet there were still issues with efficiency in the ILO's Yemen operations that pinpointed the need for greater strategic focus and a review of downstream operations in more unstable (post-)conflict situations. Many of these problems also come down to the fact that the ILO country team is simply too small to ensure an efficient use of resources.

Examples include:

- The project on protecting children and youth from recruitment and use in armed conflict suffered from both delays and potential misallocation of resources. The programme's ambitious aim around two objectives "preventing" and "reintegration" was not realistic for the time frame, an observation made by both the project's independent evaluation and validated by a KII at the government level. A total of 47 per cent of resources was allocated to partners and 40 per cent to subcontractors. This is within the scope of typical allocations in conflict settings but, at a more granular level, it was felt reintegration activities were too significantly deprioritized, in particular those relating to mental health and psychosocial support. The apprenticeship component also ended up supporting only 100–200 individuals, yet this aspect (livelihood intervention) was the only activity that clearly addressed both prevention and integration.
- Difficulties getting visas for external consultants often results in being required to fly government partners or other beneficiaries out of Yemen to Amman. This increases costs, where better investment could be directed towards improving and facilitating permissions.
- In a focus group with beneficiaries of the ERRY programme in Aden, participants brought the tools they had been awarded for completing their training with master craftsman. It was notable that many were still in their original packing. When the evaluation team inquired why, they were informed these tools were not of use to them and did not meet market expectations. The evaluation team was told that, in some cases, beneficiaries had sold their tools (representing, in a sense, an indirect cash transfer). This is not an efficient use of resources, and better monitoring and evaluation, including gathering feedback from participants, ought to lead to improvements.

The evaluation team was unable to locate any evidence of funding repurposing in light of COVID-19. This was likewise noted in the ILO synthesis review.

**Even for the current scale of ILO operations in Yemen, the ILO shows poor adjustment to the security and operational constraints in Yemen.** At present, the ILO's in-country team is composed mostly of Yemeni nationals, who are not subject to the same security protocols as international staff. For example, outside of working hours, they are not required to use armoured vehicles or armed escorts. As other agencies operating in Yemen demonstrate, security challenges can be overcome with enough investment. Indeed, as noted in a survey comment from an ILO staff member based in Yemen, the response needs:

> **...flexibility and agility in the admin and finance system, access to IRIS and delegate small financial and procumbent process to take place at country level, strengthen ILO presence at country level, including the basic requirements to operate, such as armoured vehicles.**

Another significant and challenging operational constraint is the issuing of visas and permissions, and thus the ILO's relationship with the authorities. A failure to address these constraints has resulted in:

- Weakened technical capacity-building: The ILO has struggled to secure visas and permission for independent technical specialists. This can have several consequences. For example, in an independent evaluation of an earlier phase of ERRY, the ILO was unable to obtain visas for their technical specialists to conduct training for master trainers in Yemen. Instead, it flew all 16 trainers to Amman. This substantially increased travel costs and reduced funds that could have gone to beneficiaries, where a gender-specific need was identified, namely that women needed more support for transport to and from training centres.
- Ineffective routine monitoring and evaluation: Because the ILO team struggles to regularly visit projects and meet beneficiaries, this is likely contributing towards the aforementioned challenges in downstream work.

Other than TVET, the evaluation team found (as mentioned above) that the ILO appears to have little to no relationship with the DFA in North Yemen. In particular, there is very little engagement with the Supreme Council for Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA). This seems to be partially a result of the tripartite model, where "the Government" is a key partner. Indeed, the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator guidance is one of limited engagement. However, there was a strong perception among the DFA that this had amounted to *zero* engagement. Indeed, other than TVET, the ILO Country Team did not add any suggested government representative to the Sana'a data collection phase. All connections to the DFA were instead secured and suggested by the evaluation team. Scaling-up operations will necessitate dealing more with the political reality of working in Yemen. This was also reflected in survey responses, where one constituent comment noted that it was necessary to "improve relations with the DFA".

**There is a current lack of familiarity with logistical barriers in Yemen, hindering efficiency.** While planning the HLE mission, the evaluation team had to produce a table of traffic lights outlining all the necessary steps required to get the consultant in country. That this was unfamiliar territory for the ILO is not surprising, given the size of the operation and low levels of engagement since the war began. However, it is necessary to list these constraints for future lesson learning.

First, in Aden, due to a combination of security constraints and internal bureaucratic obstacles, the team was unable to visit beneficiaries from the ERRY programme in their home villages. Travelling outside of Aden requires, as per UNDSS stipulations, an armed escort as well as an armoured vehicle. In Aden, the ILO does not currently have an armoured vehicle for use, so the evaluation team had to hire a private vehicle, at significant expense, and was still unable to leave the city. Instead, it was proposed that beneficiaries be brought to a hotel for the focus group. This meant the evaluation team was unable to collect observed data on the quality of work or businesses that had resulted from the trainings. While adjustments to methodology were made, other agencies were capable of moving independent evaluators into the field.

Also, the evaluation team was not able to secure a visa for the North of the country. While permission was granted by the SCMCHA, facilitated by the evaluation team's own national consultant, the secondary step of gaining permission from the Migration Ministry was not acquired in time. The Ministry refused to accept the letter from the national consultant without an ILO representative present. However, the ILO does not have a focal point inside the Migration Ministry, and instead relies on the assistance of the UNDP. After this was not issued in time, the evaluation team repeatedly requested to be alerted when permission was granted, and to be supplied with the case number at the Ministry to carry out a follow-up. At the time of writing, no further information has been provided by the ILO country team.

Beyond the evaluation, being unable to secure visas for technical experts to enter a territory that represents just 30 per cent of the country is a significant operational weakness that harms effectiveness and must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**As mentioned earlier, the ILO is, in essence, a development agency operating mostly downstream activities with a strong humanitarian component.** It should therefore, as far as possible, make efforts to address these gaps by adopting best practices from other agencies.

This will require pragmatic adjustments and a willingness to engage more with the political reality of Yemen. Building a better working relationship within the DFA, where it can see the added value of working with the ILO, would likely substantially improve operational constraints.

- In a meeting with SCMCHA, a staff member responsible for engagement with UN agencies told the evaluation team he ranked ILO as the worst UN agency. The reason was that they had no information or engagement from ILO whatsoever. He ranked another agency as second worst, but this was not due to a lack of communication but strong political disagreements, followed by two more, where their funding had been cut short.

It is important to emphasize that a new international senior member of ILO staff working on Yemen, with solid experience in comparable contexts, is well aware of these problems and is seeking to repair and rectify them. It seems that requesting permission for the HLE team to enter the country is what triggered awareness from the SCMCHA that the ILO is even operational in Yemen.

## IMPACT

This section explores the impact of the ILO's model of intervention in (post-)conflict Arab States. It identifies the extent to which its presence in these contexts has made a difference to recovery efforts. The section responds to the evaluation question concerning the extent to which programmes of work have adhered to core principles of the ILO, and doing so has yielded desired results.

**The evaluation team found that ILO programmes of work in the Arab States have adhered to core principles, but there is limited analysis on broader recovery impacts. The ILO model of intervention is, by its nature, long-term in scope, and its operations are difficult to assess at a macro impact level. As a result, independent evaluations during 2019–23 have also tended to highlight short- and medium-term outcomes. As mentioned earlier, in Iraq there has been significant progress on policy adoption, but the evaluation team could not find evidence of impact at the beneficiary level, whereas in Yemen there is some short-term but weak long-term impact documentation.**

## Arab States

**The evaluation team found that interventions have adhered to the ILO's core principle and mandate, and there is limited explicit reporting or knowledge on the broader "recovery" impacts of postconflict programmes in the Arab States.** While there is reporting on impact at a project level, mostly on short-term impacts with some occasional deeper observations, there appear to be limited evidence, reports or documentation on longer-term impacts of ILO programming in the Arab States.

This reflects the fact, first, that "recovery" is not a linear process, with positive gains being scuppered by a large variety of external factors, from global economic crises to flaring violence. Second, the time frame for the HLE is 2019–23, so inevitably there are limited longitudinal studies.

Other notable challenges for measuring the impact of the ILO model of intervention in in post-conflict recovery include:

- **Complex and indirect effects:** The ILO's model of intervention aims to address particularly multifaceted issues, such as unemployment, working conditions, social protection and labour rights. While in some cases the impact of ILO programming is direct (such as employment generation), it may also unfold over an extended period (enhanced social cohesion through social contact at work). It can be challenging to attribute *specific* outcomes solely to the ILO's interventions amid various factors influencing labour markets and social conditions.
- **Longer-term focus:** Assessing the impact of ILO responses to crises requires considering immediate impact alongside longer-term effects. While certain immediate impacts can be measured relatively quickly (such as number of beneficiaries trained or policies adopted), evaluating the long-term impact of such interventions as they pertain to labour markets, employment patterns, labour rights and the like requires a more extended time frame and long-term research.
- **Data availability:** Measuring impact also necessitates access to reliable and comprehensive data. However, data related to labour, employment and rights at work, among others, is sometimes challenging to collect. It is also costly, especially in crisis situations like Yemen (see below), where data systems are disrupted and politicized. Obtaining accurate data on employment rates, working conditions and other labour-related indicators is a more significant hurdle in less stable contexts (Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen), and more feasible in countries moving into development phases (Iraq).

These factors, alongside the aforementioned general capacity and operational issues, have made it particularly challenging for the evaluation team to effectively evaluate the broader strategic impact of the ILO's (post-)conflict recovery work. Nevertheless, given that a significant array of Regional Office for Arab States projects (2019–23) focus on recovery and thus maintain a clear HDP Nexus orientation, it would be beneficial for the ILO to attempt to track longer-term impacts in the future.

**Difficulties monitoring longer-term impacts reflect the ILO's model of intervention itself, where a "development-focused" response to crisis drivers is necessarily more challenging to measure.** By contrast, it is more straightforward to measure orthodox humanitarian interventions, such as the impact of food distributions on averting intensified food insecurity. It is harder, by contrast, to rapidly measure the extent to which TVET reform led to better matching between skills and labour market needs.

Multiple independent evaluations on Regional Office for Arab States projects likewise note this problem. For example, an independent evaluation of a project on improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon notes:

> **It was for the evaluation to measure the eventual positive changes in the lives of the ultimate project beneficiaries, since the ILO projects do not have any indicators or monitoring/information systems that would allow for such verification (p. 58).**

**At a project level, a wide variety of successful short- and medium-term impacts are consistently reported, including instances of capacity-building outputs, policies adopted (but not the effect of those policies) or individuals trained.** Nevertheless, there is a consistent gap in knowledge generation around how those projects will, (or perhaps *did*) lead to the advancement of the ILO's broader normative agenda and conflict recovery objectives.

- **Downstream:** Independent evaluations report multiple short-term impacts around employment-intensive development responses to crisis – for example, in relation to employment-generate programmes, such as EIIP in Jordan and Lebanon, where there is good evidence of short-term positive impacts on household income. According to a workers' survey, the majority of their income was spent on subsistence costs. There are also noted indirect impacts through economic linkages to sectors providing tools and equipment. An associated study found indirect employment was around 18 per cent of total employment generated by EIIP. This only tells us, however, that the project had an impact while it was operational and not necessarily its afterlife.
- **Upstream:** At an upstream level, while policy adoption is often flagged as an impact, there is a data gap on the extent to which this policy then went on to produce an impact on the ground.

Nevertheless, even if this data was collected, it will need to be carefully disaggregated to account for other contextual factors that can have a negative influence over the ILO's model. Returning again here to EIIP as an example, one of its intended impacts is to have a positive effect on social cohesion by supporting Syrian and Lebanese workers simultaneously, while addressing some of the drivers of conflict as they relate to infrastructure pressures. However, such interventions are simply not at the scale needed to have a broader impact on rising hostilities in Lebanon. Since the beginning of 2023, Lebanese political actors have adopted a more hostile position towards Syrian refugees, and contemporary anti-Syrian rhetoric is at an all-time high. Meanwhile, at a local level, programmes like EIIP might contribute towards positive social relationships that can act to counter the rhetoric, although lessoning it entirely across the country is beyond the scope of any one project.

Rectifying these data gaps will require additional resources, but in so doing, the ILO would be able to better showcase the ways in which its model of intervention can set countries on the path to social justice.

## Iraq

**While longer-term impact is difficult to judge, the Iraq DWCP has made some progress on advancing the ILO's normative agendas.** ILO interventions in Iraq have largely met their targets and strongly reflect ILO's normative mandate. Indeed, the primary area of long-term impact identified by the evaluation team is at the policy level, where good progress has been made on legislative change. For example:

- **Child labour:** ILO technical inputs have contributed towards embedding international labour law in Iraq at a juridical level. This is at both Iraq's national law level and policy frameworks, as well as in KRI. Going forward, this sets the foundation for effective government responses that will protect vulnerable children. In KIIs with MOLSA, this technical support in juridical reform was highly appreciated, and confidence was expressed that it will lead to positive change.
- **OHS:** There was optimism that ILO support on OHS would lead to significant impact going forward. When the evaluation team visited the training centre, it was in the final stages of completion, but was clearly built to a high quality. In KIIs, relevant government partners were very happy with the project and felt that, in time, it would help improve labour inspections across the country.
- **Social protection:** ILO support has brought Iraqi social protection systems up to Convention standards and provides a solid basis on which to have significant impact. As mentioned earlier, whether this law has on-the-ground impact remains to be seen, and improving tripartite ownership and awareness of the reform will be essential to drive impact.

**The relatively early stage of the ILO's interventions in Iraq, and the context, raise a number of obstacles for ensuring broader impact; at the same time, there are also project-specific problems that ought to be addressed going forward.** Given that many of these reforms remain at an early stage, it was not necessarily surprising to discover that the broader impact was questioned by participants at a more downstream level. For example, in a focus group with labour inspectors in KRI, many short-term limitations on impact were highlighted:

- **Threats and a lack of rule of law:** Inspectors told the evaluation team they were vulnerable to threats, especially when visiting sites alone, and some have received pressure from those at a higher level. One participant said that their badges were insufficient to protect them. While they have the right to ask the police or authorities to accompany them, they felt this should be made official and be consistently implemented. They felt that the trainings they received, while beneficial, reflected a "perfect situation" which was not consistent with the political reality of Iraq.
- **Low capacity:** Reflecting on a perceived lack of capacity in the inspectorate, and feeling overworked, one participant said, "If we don't have rights at work, how can we implement the rights of others?" There are currently only 12 inspectors for the whole of KRI, and participants maintained that the problems were massive and way beyond the possible influence of just 12 staff members. They did not receive overtime payments or assistance with transportation costs. In a focus group with agricultural labourers in KII, the lack of labour inspectors needed to prevent bad practices was also explicitly highlighted.

Other issues with impact include:

- **Inconsistent tripartite engagement:** It is worth noting that a similar issue was identified in child labour projects in KRI with employers' organizations that were only involved in one meeting and did not appear to enjoy substantial engagement with the project. This was also identified in the project's independent evaluation. However, as detailed in earlier sections of the report, one of the crucial features of ILO interventions is tripartism, which establishes, in theory, a cohesive means of ensuring impact across all sections of the economy.
- **Bank commissions and loans:** The evaluation team found that business development programmes supported under PROSPECTS had more significant issues around impact. Out of 13 focus group participants, only 5 said they would take loans again, suggesting the project struggled to change business practices or improve SMEs. While they felt the implementing partner gave them good support, the issue was more with the banks. They charged high commission rates and delayed payments, so some beneficiaries felt that it was more detrimental than beneficial. The payment for one beneficiary was received a year after he had attended the training and, at that point, he no longer wanted the loan; however, all the

stipulations meant that it was too difficult for him **not** to accept the loan, so he ended up taking it anyway. Another beneficiary was required to start repayments the first month after receiving the loan so there was no buffer time for her to invest it in her business. However, this varied according to bank and beneficiary; other women who was in the second round of grantees was given a six-month period before repayments started, but there was a lack of consistency across loan terms. The most alarming finding was that, when beneficiaries looked at the terms of their loans, some discovered they could be imprisoned for missing payments.

- **A lack of follow-ups:** Both the child labour and PROSPECTS projects seem to have lacked follow-ups. For child labour, some interviewees who met the independent evaluator felt that, as soon as project activities stopped, children would ultimately end up returning to work. For PROSPECTS, the issue was that the ILO trainings were felt by FGD participants to be of really high quality; however, as soon those trainings ended, their only contact was with the banks, and they maintained that more support was needed, as they took those loans and tried to use them to enhance their businesses.

Overall, while impact is difficult to judge, the Iraq DWCT has made good progress at the upstream level, but at the downstream level there are evident issues around impact that need to be revisited and addressed.

## Yemen

**The impact of the ILO model of intervention is predominantly at the downstream level, where a mixture of contextual and operational factors makes it difficult to credibly assess.** The two major projects in Yemen – ERRY and CRUCSY – are both at a downstream level. Given countrywide fragmentation, normative engagement and social dialogue with government partners, while still an element, has been scaled back in comparison to pre-crisis interventions. As has already been described above, many interviewees across the tripartite feel that now is the time to re-engage more substantially in Yemen. Doing so will ensure a better connection between downstream and upstream programming, which ideally in the ILO model of intervention ought to be operating together to ensure more possibilities for greater impact.

**In a range of data inputs examined by the HLE, there was some evidence of short-term impact:**

- **CRUCSY:** An ILO internal evaluation maintains that participants benefited from psychosocial support, where the project created an outlet for children and allowed them to gain critical respite from the effects of war. That report gives the story of a child who, by the description, appears to be suffering from conflict-induced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A story is presented that a parent asked the implementing partners to come and speak to the child and involve him in the activities as he was "threatening to harm someone". The evaluation notes that the child's behaviour substantially improved as a result of his participation in the project. However, this evidence is presented on the basis of testimony from the implementing partner, and if the child did indeed have PTSD, then it is unlikely that short-term engagement with the project would have alleviated it entirely (more on this below).
- **ERRY:** All participants in FGDs in Aden reported having enjoyed their engagement with craft training, in particular where it provided secondary positive impacts on their lives, where "it gave us a taste of what life used to be like". Indeed, as confirmed by participatory research exercises, the project was generally represented as an "opening up" in their Rivers of Life, where there were new opportunities for learning and socializing which had been taken away by the war.

The evaluation team found limited evidence for longer-term impact:

- **CRUCSY:** The programme was transitory in nature and did not build any institutional capacity in cases of referrals or coordination mechanisms with humanitarian agencies with overlapping mandates, most notably UNICEF. The total beneficiary number was also small, and implementing partners confirmed that the projects were no longer active. Given the aforementioned complexity of trauma experienced by children during war, it is difficult to judge whether such a short-term programme made any real difference. These concerns were expressed by MOSAL partners in Aden, who said they also had no idea what the long-term effects were on child recruitment. They stated that recruitment was a more complicated problem with multiple economic factors that needed to be more comprehensively addressed from below rather than largely ameliorating the symptoms. In particular, they lacked not only a case referral system, but also mechanisms for enforcing non-recruitment among children.
- **ERRY:** In FGDs with beneficiaries in Aden, participants suggested around 50 per cent of their incomes came from skills they learned during the training. This is a relatively strong example of overall impact, given the difficult situation in Yemen. However, several also felt that there was no market assessment prior to the training and that skills offered did not necessarily reflect needs. Others felt that impact could be stronger with additional follow-ups and addons, like trainings on how to expand and grow their businesses. One participant said that, to make his mobile phone repair business a success, he needed to open a shop; beekeepers said they wanted to learn how to better market their products.

What these findings illustrate is that the ILO model necessitates greater attention at both levels in order to better generate impact. While this was not possible during the height of the Yemen crisis, future projects ought to begin operating, as far as possible, with closer coordination across the tripartite.

## SUSTAINABILITY

This section explores the extent to which the ILO's model of intervention in (post-)conflict Arab States is sustainable. It identifies the extent of the Organization's presence in these contexts. It explores the extent to which efforts in the Arab States are able to promote recovery that is able to endure despite many contextual challenges. It responds to two specific evaluation questions on (a) the extent to which interventions have a sustainability strategy, and (b) what lessons can be offered to improve the sustainability by looking across contexts.

**The ILO model of intervention has a number of inherent features that make it sustainable. Indeed, despite multiple contextual challenges at a governance level, in the Arab States, there have been impressive achievements in policy formulation. However, many of these countries are also locked into protracted crises, where intermittent emergencies can risk undoing that progress. The ILO does not have the resources needed to mitigate against all of these risks or address every crisis driver. However, working to ensure greater coherence across various ILO interventions, working in partnership with other agencies and improving monitoring will create more opportunities to ensure sustainability.**

### Arab States

**As with impact, sustainability is difficult to measure and achieve in (post-)conflict recovery contexts.** This does not necessarily mean there are issues with sustainable strategy design per se; rather, it reflects the fact the Arab States are subject to multiple possible destabilizing forces that are beyond the mandate or resources of the ILO, including the threat of war, intercommunal violence and largescale fiscal collapse.

**At a strategic level, however, the ILO model of interventions in the Arab States has an implicit sustainability strategy.** By virtue of the fact that the ILO intervenes in post-conflict settings by establishing institutional foundations for decent work, prioritizing system-building, capacity-strengthening and employment generation, it has a strong likelihood of producing sustainable change. In recovery contexts, the ILO's approach focuses on an employment-driven response to immediate needs and on long-term solutions. This fact was widely appreciated by tripartite constituents, who value the Organization's ways of working, and that a focus on systems counters what is perceived as short-termism within the humanitarian system. As mentioned earlier, short-termism has left many countries reliant on humanitarian "life support", with little sign of an "exit strategy". Additionally, the ILO's normative function aligns its programmes with legal reform, further embedding change in juridical structures.

- Notable examples of system-building include social protection reform, which has long proven to be one of the most intractable challenges in the Arab States. For instance, in Lebanon, policy dialogue around social protection has involved multiple partners ensuring buy-in across various interest groups. Prior to the onset of the fiscal crisis, Lebanon's major social protection institution was the contributory social insurance system (NSSF). While other agencies have sought to provide for immediate needs in Lebanon via poverty targeting platforms, the ILO, in partnership with UNICEF, has sought to assist in the reform and challenge of NSSF. In a protracted crisis, finding means to shift from delivery to systems is the essence of the HDP Nexus and sustainable recovery.

**However, at the project level, due to shifting donor priorities, the bulk of the ILO's work examined for the HLE suffers from "projectization",** with distinct (and quite short) timelines. There is limited evidence of "joining up" different projects to ensure longer-term sustainability and synergies. Across project evaluations and reports examined for the HLE, there are consistent recommendations for long time frames. However, this is an issue at the donor level.

- Sustainability issues are highlighted by independent evaluations of various EIIP projects, which note that, while the programme provided employment opportunities during its time duration, the labour market context in Jordan and Lebanon makes it difficult to say whether the skills and experience gained will lead to sustainable forms of employment for beneficiaries going forward.

**One of the ways in which the ILO's model "embeds reform" is through the tripartite constituency approach.** However, as mentioned earlier, in post-conflict situations in the Arab States, there is often a de-prioritization of certain partners for the sake of smoothing implementation and avoiding areas of discord. While understandable contextually, this also potentially hinders sustainability.

- For example, for the project "Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan", the independent evaluation notes that employer representatives were absent from the project, and that one of the major issues was engaging farm owners. This could have been avoided had higher-level agricultural representatives been involved.

The evaluator also notes that the informal camp leader – the Shawish – is often responsible for recruiting child labourers, and farm owners could also be better engaged. While not a member of the tripartite, gaining a better understanding of the various elements and aspects of the child labourer economy is an important lesson for future interventions.

## Iraq

**Limited institutional capacity across the tripartite can pose obstacles to effective project handover and continuity.** A lack of institutional capacity to continue running programmes when a project cycle ends was a persistent cause for concern among tripartite constituents in Iraq. Nevertheless, these issues are being dealt with in various ongoing projects. Notable examples include:

- The development of a National Labour Inspection Policy and National occupational safety and health policy through a consultative process. This will be a critical step in ensuring the sustainability of the planned reforms for labour inspection and the establishment of an OSH culture. By involving key stakeholders in the policymaking process, these reforms are more likely to endure beyond the project's completion. Moreover, the project's success in producing knowledge is contingent on the implementation of checklists, tools and a case management system. Digitalization of these resources will further support sustainability, as they empower trained inspectors to continue applying the knowledge and tools provided by the project.

However, inspectors in Erbil (as mentioned earlier) raised concerns that without legal protections or enforcement mechanisms, OHS culture would likely not be mainstreamed in Iraq. There continue to be concerns around rule of law, which is a predicate for effective application of labour standards. These interventions are long-term, and it is difficult for the evaluation team to judge the extent to which they will be sustainable, but there was an evident strategy to connect high-level policy and legal reform with technical capacity.

While reforming social protection law in Iraq represents a huge achievement, government partners are concerned that more capacity-building at a ministerial level will be essential to ensure that the implications of the law can become reality. As mentioned earlier, splintering within the Iraqi trade union movement will also have negative impacts on sustainability, where one of a union's key functions is to ensure that their members gain access to legal entitlements, thereby ensuring that top-level reforms become on-the-ground realities.

**Downstream programmes have limited sustainability due to both limited time frames and overarching labour market issues:**

- **EIIP:** Project participants who were part of the EIIP project on the Erbil Citadel felt that training and work pointed them towards areas they could develop further, and they reported a sense of confidence in suggesting new ideas to their managers. However, both tour guides and labourers pointed out that their work was not necessarily secure going forward, being highly dependent on seasons and labour markets.
- **Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB):** The evaluators of this project have found that, while partner organizations possess the technical and management capacity to sustain the SIYB programme, the continuity of the programme depends significantly on the availability of funds and human resources. This is particularly the case since it is linked to the implementation of relevant projects funded by donors and the presence of SIYB trainers within the organizations, many of whom are employed on a project basis. Private firms that charge fees for training have demonstrated greater sustainability. After project interventions end, organizations struggle to continue SIYB implementation due to resource limitations.

However, these issues are being addressed in the current phase of the project by seeking to institutionalize ILO tools in partnership with State organizations.

## Yemen

**In Yemen, sustainability strategies have been severely limited by the crisis context as well as donor timelines.** All three projects considered within the scope of the HLE highlighted that the conflict was the primary barrier to ensuring project sustainability. The collapse of the economy was, for example, a primary driver for recruitment into armed actors. For example, the CRUSCY internal evaluation finds "there is no indication of continuation of the Children friendly spaces (CFS) infrastructure, and the mechanism of youth clubs created. Child protection committee and local authorities were expected to carry these initiatives forward but without resources, commitments, and planning, this is unlikely to happen" (p. 32). It also notes that the SCMCHA rejected CFS activities, yet "children continued to come to CFS and demand the administration to open the space" (p. 33). While appreciating that Yemen is a difficult operating environment, what this incident underscores is that the political realities on the ground might dictate, as far as possible, a change in tactic when engaging with the DFA.

**The ILO has also worked with the Government to produce the 2022–24 Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).** This aims to help recovery by building capacity in the private sector and ensuring Yemeni workers have the skills needed by the labour market. However, in KIIs with TVET, interviewees, while happy with the assistance, felt that its effective implementation would not be possible, given that most of their training centres had been looted or destroyed.

**ERRY had a positive impact on beneficiary lives despite the context.** While there were specific implementation challenges to ERRY (noted above), it remains the case that, overall, participation in the training had some positive and lasting changes on the livelihoods of beneficiaries. Some of the frustrations that were noted related not necessarily to the trainings but more to participants' desires to expand and build on their new skills. For example, one participant felt he had gone as far as he could repairing phones on the basis of word-of-mouth and needed to establish a shop. He did not know how to go about doing that and hoped some trainings might help him with that endeavour. Adding in more long-term business planning to craft apprenticeship programmes would, as such, help enhance sustainability.

# 09

## Conclusions

# CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- The Arab States are one of the most conflict-prone regions on Earth. In Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, direct fighting has become intermittent or reached a stalemate. Yet they remain caught in protracted crisis spirals. Neighbouring countries – Lebanon and Jordan – face associated impacts on stability. At the same time, the humanitarian system appears stretched to its limit, with funding running dry, and few coherent strategies on how to break the cycle and shift into development.
- The ILO's Model of Intervention is highly relevant for (post-)conflict recovery contexts. Its focus on decent work and social justice likely contributes towards addressing some of the underlying drivers of conflict. Greater work showcasing this contribution would help further position the ILO as a leading agency for the HDP Nexus.
- Partners highly appreciate that the ILO works *with them* and not *through them*. The Organization has a strong reputation in the region, particularly among government ministers. Even where it is frayed, in Yemen, due to perceived disengagement during the crisis, it is not irreparable. Moreover, even where the evaluation team heard about disagreements, they were critical and accepted disagreements, rarely total hostility.
- Time and time again, the technical expertise of the ILO was highlighted and reflected on positively in comparison to other agencies.
- Development-driven employment generation matches the needs of affected populations, where dignified livelihoods are typically listed as one of the biggest needs for refugees and displaced persons.
- Lessons from Iraq underscore the vital role that the ILO can play in assisting on this transition, moving from short-term needs into longer-term development. Despite various challenges, good progress has been made on social protection reform, labour rights advocacy and Convention adoption, as well as policy dialogue. Lessons from Yemen underscore and highlight the need for greater efficiency, nimbleness around operational constraints, and readiness to change programming in line with fluid conflict dynamics.
- While the Decent Work Pillars tackle key conflict drivers, more strategic thought is needed on how to deal with splintering among tripartite constituents. Effective social dialogue between governments, employers and workers' representatives is a key process towards achieving the Decent Work Agenda.
- The ILO should be more confident in its mandate. Where other UN humanitarian agencies are providing cash-for-work programming, it is the ILO's job to ensure that work aligns with globally accepted labour standards.
- However, as a "development" agency, the ILO has not institutionally evolved to work in high-risk areas. It faces more bureaucratic barriers and obstacles than UN humanitarian agencies. Recovery contexts are not quite humanitarian emergencies, and they are not quite development contexts. Recovery contexts are not safe and stable. Should the ILO wish to be a key player in these contexts, then it needs to learn lessons from countries such as Iraq, reform operational procedures, and address bureaucratic bottlenecks to ensure a nimbler and streamlined response.

# 10

# Recommendations

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 1

**Provided the ILO wants to engage effectively and efficiently in postconflict settings, it should reform operational, logistical and security procedures, in line with other UN agency standards.** While the ILO intervention model is relevant to post-conflict recovery contexts, for it to be more effective and efficient, the Office needs to urgently address institutional bottlenecks and contextually inappropriate rules. Addressing these barriers will improve use of resources, monitoring and oversight.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Director-General<br>▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/ Corporate Services Cluster (CS): Internal Services and Administration Department (INTSERV) and Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM) |  | Short-term | Low |

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**The ILO must ensure swifter engagement jointly with other UN agencies at the onset of a crisis.**

This is not to launch programmes during the high points of violence or war, but so that the ILO can be included in subsequent coordinated humanitarian and HDP Nexus response mechanisms. Given the relevance of the ILO's model for conflict recovery, greater participation in UN coordination forums will allow the ILO to position itself better as a key agency that can provide information on decent work standards.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/External and Corporate Relations (ECR): Partnering for Development (PARTNERSHIPS)<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Long-term | Low |

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**Provided the ILO wants to engage in post-conflict country settings, it should match that commitment with a robust presence of international staff possessing relevant skills and experience.**

The ILO should conduct a systematic review of its operations and policies in conflict contexts, intervening earlier in the recovery process with the appropriate staff presence, as shortcuts are risk-prone.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Director-General<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM and Human Resources Development<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Medium-term | High |

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**To position the ILO further within the HDP Nexus, the ILO should develop distinct theories of change for post-conflict recovery contexts.**

The ILO Regional Office for Arab States has made progress in reviewing programmes and commissioning research that explores the peacebuilding outcomes of its projects. This work should continue, while ensuring there is coherent internal and external understanding of what the ILO hopes to achieve beyond specific projects. Producing context-specific theories of change can help explain what the ILO hopes to contribute towards peace and recovery efforts.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Medium-term | Low |

## RECOMMENDATION 5

**The ILO should develop a coherent strategy on how to work with tripartite constituents in fragmented political contexts.**

A primary obstacle to the ILO model of intervention in early conflict recovery periods and conflict prevention is fragmentation and the collapse of various governance institutions. The ILO should work towards adapted strategies for ensuring effective tripartism in situations of post-conflict political fragmentation.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ AP/CRISIS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States in consultation with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) |  | Medium-term | Low |

## RECOMMENDATION 6

**The ILO should review project design and monitoring processes in post-conflict settings.**

While carrying out routine monitoring is challenging in fragile recovery contexts, multiple project evaluations reviewed for this HLE noted gaps in data and missing indicators. To intervene in these contexts, the ILO should conduct a review to identify these issues and develop a plan to ensure they are not replicated going forward.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/ECR: PARTNERSHIPS<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States |  | Long-term | Low |

## RECOMMENDATION 7

**The ILO should design and implement an accountability strategy in line with AAP.**

Improved accountability policies and monitoring will enhance lesson learning across programmes, helping the ILO to learn and adapt to post-conflict contexts. Indeed, various issues that emerged during project implementation could be tackled through feedback workshops with programme beneficiaries that can facilitate bottom-up learning.

| Responsible units | Priority | Time implication | Resource implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ Assistant Director-General/ECR: PARTERSHIPS<br>▶ Assistant Director-General/CS: PROGRAM<br>▶ Regional Office for Arab States<br>▶ EVAL |  | Long-term | Medium |

# Annexes

# ANNEX 1. INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

Topic guides will need to be contextualised for individual stakeholders.

- **Build your own topic guide:** You should select questions from here and contextualise them to the key informant.
  - These questions are not to be read off one-by-one but serve as a framework to ensure discussions cover all necessary areas.
  - These questions will also be adapted to FGD settings.
- **Consent:** Please give respondents the introduction and ensure that you have gained explicit consent (outlined below).

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Evaluation question/sub-questions** | |
| **Interviewee name** | |
| **Position and organisation** | |
| **Interviewer name** | |
| **Date of interview** | |

### Introduction

- Introduce the HLE Arab States evaluation and IDS.
- Introduce the scope and timeframe of the evaluation: 2019-2023.
- Introduce the broad purpose of the evaluation: To look at whether ILO's programmes are effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Decent Work Agenda in the subregion.
- Introduce the particular focus of the interview or FGD, referencing the topics to be discussed.
- Interviews should take no longer than 45 minutes, FGDs no longer than one hour.

### Consent

- Ensure participants understand the independent and confidential nature of the evaluation. Interviewers / facilitators should make it clear that all data is confidential and non-attributable unless explicitly requested otherwise.
- Give respondents the opportunity to ask any questions or clarifications about the interview.
- Ask respondents whether they agree to be interviewed on the basis of the above.

The following is a list of all the evaluation questions where key informant / FGD perspectives might be relevant. Please choose from this list in advance of the activity. KIIs should be semi-structured and allow for respondents to take the conversation in an unexpected and unplanned direction, if needed and relevant. With this in mind, the evaluator/interviewer should consider a maximum of 6-8 question areas for any one interview. Please try not to be overly prescriptive, instead aiming for a free-flowing conversation where participants feel at ease and want to speak openly.

## ILO Staff

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED |
|---|---|
| **Relevance** | ▶ Can you tell me a little about the current priority needs in Iraq / Yemen?<br>▶ How have these needs changed since 2019 to the present?<br>▶ How did your work adapt to the COVID-19 / crises situations?<br>▶ How do you see the ILO's programmes addressing those needs?<br>▶ How do you see the interlinkages between the ILO's programmes and broader development frameworks<br>▶ Can you tell me about how you adapt programmes to fragile and changing post-conflict settings?<br>▶ Prompt for examples. |
| **Validity** | ▶ Are strategies informed by routine consultation with affected population?<br>▶ Are you able to carry-out routine M&E?<br>▶ If yes, what did you learn?<br>▶ If no, what are the challenges and how have you adapted?<br>▶ Do you feel that consultations, evaluations, or analysis is considered in programme design?<br>▶ How well are the Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) projects aligned to the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work?<br>▶ Do you feel ILO maintains accountability to tripartite constituents in Iraq and/or Yemen? |
| **Effectiveness** | ▶ In your view, how does ILO support help the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work achieve their expected results?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work made progress in achieving results on crosscutting issues, such as:<br>▶ Labour standards?<br>▶ Social dialogue and tripartism?<br>▶ Gender equality and non-discrimination?<br>▶ Environmental sustainability, notably in policy dialogues, policy partnerships, partners frameworks, etc.?<br>▶ How have contextual limitations impacted effectiveness (political environment, sanctions, conflict, instability, etc.)?<br>▶ How are you seeking to foster dialogue at a country-level<br>▶ How have you adapted programmes to COVID-19?<br>▶ Alternatively: Ask generally about experiences of working during COVID-19 and prompt general reflection on pre/intra/post pandemic activities |
| **Efficiency** | ▶ What demand is there for technical advice and how have DWTs met those demands?<br>▶ In your opinion, how cost efficient is the ILO's work in Iraq and Yemen? |
| **Impact** | ▶ To what extent do you think that the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work contributed kept to core principles of the ILO? (normative, social dialogue, supporting decent work)<br>▶ Do you think the ILO in Iraq and Yemen is having an impact on social dialogue? Are you able to perform the normative functions of the agency? If not, why not?<br>▶ Do you have any impact success stories or examples of notable impact challenges to share? |
| **Sustainability** | ▶ How likely is it that the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work will lead to results that will be sustained or integrated over time?<br>▶ Do you have any recommendations or lessons that you think could be offered to improve the sustainability of ILO programming in Arab States?<br>▶ Or post-conflict settings in general? |

## For Tripartite Constituents

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED |
|---|---|
| **Relevance** | ▶ Can you tell me a little about the current priority needs in Iraq / Yemen?<br>▶ How have these needs changed since 2019 to the present?<br>▶ How did your work adapt to the COVID-19 / crises situations?<br>▶ How do you see the ILO's programmes addressing those needs? |
| **Validity** | ▶ What is your opinion of the Technical Cooperation and assistance offered by the ILO?<br>▶ Do you feel the ILO reflects your needs? Are you able to shape its direction and regularly feedback into the agencies activates? |
| **Effectiveness** | ▶ In your view, how does ILO support help the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work achieve their expected results?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work made progress in achieving results on crosscutting issues, such as:<br>▶ Labour standards?<br>▶ Social dialogue and tripartism?<br>▶ Gender equality and non-discrimination?<br>▶ Environmental sustainability, notably in policy dialogues, policy partnerships, partners frameworks, etc.?<br>▶ How have contextual limitations impacted effectiveness (political environment, sanctions, conflict, instability, etc.)?<br>▶ How are you seeking to foster dialogue at a country-level<br>▶ How have you adapted programmes to COVID-19?<br>▶ Alternatively: Ask generally about experiences of working during COVID-19 and prompt general reflection on pre/intra/post pandemic activities |
| **Efficiency** | ▶ What demand is there for technical advice and how have DWTs met those demands?<br>▶ In your opinion, how cost efficient is the ILO's work in Iraq and Yemen? |
| **Impact** | ▶ To what extent do you think that the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work contributed kept to core principles of the ILO? (normative, social dialogue, supporting decent work)<br>▶ Do you think the ILO in Iraq and Yemen is having an impact on social dialogue? Are you able to perform the normative functions of the agency? If not, why not?<br>▶ Do you have any impact success stories or examples of notable impact challenges to share? |
| **Sustainability** | ▶ How likely is it that the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work will lead to results that will be sustained or integrated over time?<br>▶ Do you have any recommendations or lessons that you think could be offered to improve the sustainability of ILO programming in Arab States?<br>▶ Or post-conflict settings in general? |

# ANNEX 2. FIELD VISIT GUIDE

The purpose of field visits is to both triangulate existing information but also generate possible new explanations or lines of inquiry. In-line with traditions of participant-observation, it is important to avoid over-prescriptive attitudes towards observation, which risks reducing it to a box-ticking audit rather than a source for unexpected or alternative explanations. Broadly, during visits the evaluation team will:

- Assign observation tasks among themselves.
- Collect data in a logbook or field journal.
- Discuss observations after the visit to help draw conclusions.
- Depending on the sites viewed, prior to mission begin by determining what needs to be observed. This might include.
  - **Programme activities:** Observe the programme activities. This could include meetings, trainings, workshops, or other types of interventions. Ensure activities are being implemented as planned and are in line with the programme objectives.
  - **Participants:** Observe the participants taking part in the programme. This includes the target population as well as any stakeholders who are involved in the programme. Look for evidence that the participants are engaged and actively participating in the activities.
  - **Outputs and outcomes:** Observe the outputs and outcomes of the programme. This includes services delivered and whether participants report positive or negative changes in their lives. Make sure to engage with people the site and treat it like an informal focus group. Look for evidence that the programme is having a positive impact.
  - **Implementation challenges:** Observe any challenges that the programme is facing during implementation. This could include logistical challenges, resource constraints, or other issues that are hindering success. Ask questions and note the challenges and provide recommendations for addressing them.
  - **Collect feedback:** if opportunity to speak to participants does not emerge while touring the site, make a concerted effort to engage with participants before leaving.

Limitations of these approaches include:

- Individual evaluation team might observe different events and reach different conclusions.
- The presence of the evaluation team might impact the provision service.

To mitigate these limitations:

- The evaluation team should aim to build initial rapport with service providers and humanitarian workers through informal conversations and clear explanations as to the purpose of the visit.
- The evaluation team will make clear the purpose of the visit, the independence of the team, and its purpose to avoid raising expectations while also encouraging open and honest sharing of feedback.
- The evaluation team must ensure that any conversations are careful and sensitive given the nature of the environment.
- Visits ought to be of a sufficient duration that individuals present get used to the evaluation teams.
- A team approach will help cover gaps in complex settings while also avoiding individual bias.

# ANNEX 3. SITE SELECTION

## YEMEN

| GOVERNORATE | DISTRICT | TYPE | ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Yemen (DFA)88** | | | |
| Hajjah | Abs | 6x Apprenticeship | FGD with beneficiaries and SME visit |
| Hajjah (Bani Qais) | Bani Qais | 6x Apprenticeship | FGD with beneficiaries and SME visit |
| **Yemen (IRG)** | | | |
| Lahaj | Tuban | 12x Apprenticeship | FGD with beneficiaries and SME visit |

## IRAQ

| GOVERNORATE | DISTRICT | TYPE | ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Iraq (Federal Iraq)** | | | |
| Baghdad | - | National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (NCOHS) | Site Visit / FGDs |
| - | - | - | - |
| **Iraq (Federal Iraq)** | | | |
| Duhok | - | Child Friendly Learning Spaces | Site Visit / FGDs |

88 Permission was not given in time from the DFA for this FGD

# ANNEX 4. STAKEHOLDER SELECTION (IRAQ AND YEMEN)

The evaluation approach included a strong emphasis on seeking the views of direct beneficiaries of ILO projects as well as representatives from the tripartite constituents of the ILO in Iraq and Yemen. Given the comparative nature of the HLE it is important to replicate similar office holders in both countries with overlapping briefs as far as possible. Sampling has been conducted in partnership with M&E officers at the ILO regional and country level, ensuring selection is relevant and makes efficient use of evaluation team time. Where possible and scheduling permitted, the evaluation team will allow for snowballing interviews should one responded suggest a possible useful contact. Interview schedules will maximise tripartite engagement while in-country, supplementing with online interviews for ILO/UN/donors.

Overview of stakeholders.

| CLASSIFICATION | BREAKDOWN |
|---|---|
| Internal stakeholders – ILO leadership | Country Directors<br>Regional Directors |
| Internal stakeholders – CTAs | Social Protection<br>Labour Governance<br>PROSPECT/EIIP<br>SME and PSD<br>Child Labour<br>Financial Inclusion |
| External stakeholders – Affected Populations<br>As the rights-holders who are the ultimate recipients of ILO assistance, beneficiaries (workers, trainees, former child soldiers, etc,) have a stake in determining whether the ILO's assistance is relevant, appropriate, and effective. | Communities and beneficiaries (women, men) supported through ILO activities.<br>IDPs in Iraq and Yemen |
| External stakeholders – United Nations<br>Can be conducted online | Where relevant: UN Resident Coordinator, UN Habitat, UNHCR, ILO, UN OCHA UNDP<br>Cluster working groups |
| External stakeholders – Government (national and local level) | Workers Organisation<br>Employer Organisation<br>MoLSA / MOSASL<br>MoLSA KRG |
| Implementing Partners | Main implementing partners for each country |

# ANNEX 5. SURVEY QUESTIONS

## ILO STAFF

1. What is your location?
   - ☐ Geneva
   - ☐ Lebanon (Regional Office for Arab States)
   - ☐ Yemen
   - ☐ Iraq
   - ☐ Other (please specify)
2. Gender
   - ☐ Answer Choices
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male
3. How many years have you worked with the ILO?
   - ☐ 0-1 year
   - ☐ 2-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ Over 10 years
   - ☐ Not applicable
4. ILO programmes are effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Decent Work Agenda in (Post-)Conflict Arab States.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
5. ILO's (post-)conflict recovery work is relevant to constituent needs.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. ILO's (post-)conflict and recovery interventions have been designed and/or repurposed to match the contextual volatility in fragile (post-) conflict settings.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. What suggestions do you have to improve ILO's ability to operate in fragile (post-)conflict settings?
8. Q10. The Decent Work Agenda in (post-)conflict settings is contributing towards peace.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. ILO's work in (post-)conflict settings can be reliably monitored and evaluated in a credible manner.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. **In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO support has been the most effective from 2019 to the present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizatons
    - ☐ Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing access to decent jobs
    - ☐ Improving social protection
    - ☐ Improving Occupation Safety and Health
    - ☐ Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
    - ☐ Strengthening Social Dialogue
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

11. **Please provide any examples of the more effective work you have been involved in.**

12. **In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO support has been the least effective from 2019 to the present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
    - ☐ Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing access to decent jobs
    - ☐ Improving social protection
    - ☐ Improving Occupation Safety and Health
    - ☐ Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
    - ☐ Strengthening Social Dialogue
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

13. **Please provide any examples of less effective work you have been involved in.**

14. **In which of the following ways do you think ILO has been the most successful in building the capacity of its tripartite constituents? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Increased awareness of international labour standards
    - ☐ Increased government capacity to enforce national labour laws
    - ☐ Improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents
    - ☐ Employers' Organisations better able to defend their members' interests
    - ☐ Workers' Organisations better able to defend workers' rights
    - ☐ Greater capacity to integrate gender and non-discrimination (the special needs of women, girls) in institutional strategies and plans
    - ☐ Greater capacity to integrate environmental concerns in institutional strategies and plans
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

15. **What suggestions do you have for how to improve ILO's effectiveness in building the capacity of its tripartite constituents?**

16. **Which of the following factors were most significant to the success of ILO interventions in (post-)conflict settings from 2019-present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Strong buy-in from country counterparts
    - ☐ Effective country office management
    - ☐ Effective ILO project management
    - ☐ Effective contributions of ILO specialists
    - ☐ Intervention's strategy well-designed
    - ☐ Adequate time for implementation
    - ☐ Adequate resources for implementation
    - ☐ Good use of research and other data to guide interventions
    - ☐ Effective local implementing partners
    - ☐ Effective participation from ILO tripartite constituents
    - ☐ A decrease in violence and security risks
    - ☐ Political stability
    - ☐ Economic stability
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

17. **Which of the following factors were the most significant constraints affecting the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2019 to the present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Inadequate buy-in from national counterparts
    - ☐ Frequent turn-over among counterpart personnel
    - ☐ Frequent turn-over among ILO personnel
    - ☐ Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO
    - ☐ Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO implementing partners
    - ☐ Weak capacity of tripartite constituents
    - ☐ Inadequate access to ILO technical expertise
    - ☐ Inadequate financial resources for implementation
    - ☐ Inadequate time for implementation
    - ☐ Poor design of interventions
    - ☐ COVID-19 impacts
    - ☐ Violence and security risks
    - ☐ Political instability
    - ☐ Economic instability
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

18. **In (post-)conflict recovery work, the ILO is able to adhere to its core principles and normative framework.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree

19. **The ILO's response to COVID-19 in the country(ies) where you work was effective.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree

20. **What suggestions do you have to improve the efficient use of ILO's human and other resources in (post-) conflict settings?**

21. **The ILO's work in (post-)conflict settings is sustainable.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree

22. **What positive and negative recommendations and lessons could be offered to improve the sustainability of ILO programming in Arab States?**

23. **Do you have any further comments on a topic not covered in the previous questions?**

## SURVEY QUESTIONS - ILO PARTNERS & CONSTITUENTS

1. Q1. Country
   - ☐ Lebanon
   - ☐ Jordan
   - ☐ Iraq
   - ☐ Syria
   - ☐ Yemen
   - ☐ Other (please specify)
2. Gender
   - ☐ Answer Choices
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male
3. Position
   - ☐ Government Official
   - ☐ Employers Organization
   - ☐ Workers' Organization
   - ☐ Other (please specify)
4. Years collaborating with ILO
   - ☐ 0-1 year
   - ☐ 2-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ Over 10 years
   - ☐ Not applicable
5. Advancing Decent Work is a really important agenda for my institution.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. ILO's assistance reflects the needs of my institution.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. How would you rate overall results of ILO interventions in the period 2019-present?
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
8. The ILO can help my country recover from conflict.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. The ILO is equipped to navigate security constraints in post-conflict and crises settings.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Agree
   - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly Disagree
10. Do you have any specific ideas on how the ILO can better help your institution?
11. In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO has helped you the most? (Choose up to three)
    - ☐ Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizatons

- ☐ Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
- ☐ Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
- ☐ Increasing access to decent jobs
- ☐ Improving social protection
- ☐ Improving Occupation Safety and Health
- ☐ Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
- ☐ Strengthening Social Dialogue
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

12. **Please give any examples of successful work with the ILO.**

13. **In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO support struggled to achieve results from 2019 to the present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
    - ☐ Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
    - ☐ Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
    - ☐ Increasing access to decent jobs
    - ☐ Improving social protection
    - ☐ Improving Occupation Safety and Health
    - ☐ Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
    - ☐ Strengthening Social Dialogue
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

14. **Please elaborate on why you felt these areas were less successful.**

15. **In which of the following ways do you think ILO has been the most successful in building the capacity of its tripartite constituents? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Increased awareness of international labour standards
    - ☐ Increased government capacity to enforce national labour laws
    - ☐ Improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents
    - ☐ Employers' Organisations better able to defend their members' interests
    - ☐ Workers' Organisations better able to defend workers' rights
    - ☐ Greater capacity to integrate gender and non-discrimination (the special needs of women, girls) in institutional strategies and plans
    - ☐ Greater capacity to integrate environmental concerns in institutional strategies and plans
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

16. **What suggestions do you have for how to improve ILO's work in building your institution's capacity?**

17. **Which of the following factors were most significant to the success of ILO interventions in (post-)conflict settings from 2019-present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Answer Choices
    - ☐ Strong buy-in from country counterparts
    - ☐ Effective country office management
    - ☐ Effective ILO project management
    - ☐ Effective contributions of ILO specialists
    - ☐ Intervention's strategy well-designed
    - ☐ Adequate time for implementation
    - ☐ Adequate resources for implementation

- ☐ Good use of research and other data to guide interventions
- ☐ Effective local implementing partners
- ☐ Effective participation from ILO tripartite constituents
- ☐ A decrease in violence and security risks
- ☐ Political stability
- ☐ Economic stability
- ☐ Other (please specify)

18. **Which of the following factors were the most significant constraints affecting the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2019 to the present? (Choose up to three)**
    - ☐ Inadequate buy-in from national counterparts
    - ☐ Frequent turn-over among counterpart personnel
    - ☐ Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO
    - ☐ Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO implementing partners
    - ☐ Weak capacity of tripartite constituents
    - ☐ Inadequate access to ILO technical expertise
    - ☐ Inadequate financial resources for implementation
    - ☐ Inadequate time for implementation
    - ☐ Poor design of interventions
    - ☐ Frequent turn-over among ILO personnel
    - ☐ COVID-19 impacts
    - ☐ Violence and security risks
    - ☐ Political instability
    - ☐ Economic instability
    - ☐ Other (please specify)

19. **I think the ILO has a role to play in helping my institution recover from the effects of conflict.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree

20. **The ILO's response to COVID-19 was helpful.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree

21. **How can ILO improve its presence or effect in your country?**

22. **The results of ILO's work with my institution will continue into the future.**
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Agree
    - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree

23. **Do you have any comments on how ILO could make their work with your institution more long lasting?**

24. **Do you have any further comments on a topic not covered in the previous questions?**

# ANNEX 6. HLE SECURITY PLAN

## FOR ALL LOCATIONS

### Pre-departure preparations

- Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and security analysis of the area where you will be working.
- Obtain necessary permits and visas.
- Ensure HEAT training up to date.
  - All team members have completed HEAT training.

### In-country preparations

- Avoid traveling alone, especially in remote or unfamiliar areas.
- Make arrangements for secure transportation (either ILO or private company)
- Establish communication protocols, including emergency contacts and check-in procedures.

### Personal security measures

- Avoid drawing attention to yourself by dressing modestly and respectfully.
- Do not discuss sensitive or controversial topics in public.
- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid areas known to be dangerous or volatile.
- Keep a low profile and avoid taking photographs or recording video without permission.

### Emergency procedures

- Develop a contingency plan and share it with all members of your team.
- Have a well-stocked first aid kit and be trained in basic first aid.
- Be aware of the location of the nearest medical facilities and emergency services.
- Have a reliable means of communication in case of an emergency.

### Specific security points

Both Iraq and Yemen raise specific security planning points, addressed below:

## IRAQ

In Iraq, the evaluation team will follow standard UN and ILO security protocols.

- In Baghdad, the team will travel in an armoured vehicle (the ILO has two AVs).
- In KRI the team will use regular vehicles. There will be no travel to areas deemed very high risk.
- The evaluation team will stay in hotels cleared by UNDSS.
- The evaluation team will receive a security briefing in both locations.

## YEMEN

Yemen poses more security challenges as the conflict is still intermittent.

- In Aden and Sanaa, the evaluation team will travel in armoured vehicles (UN or private hire)
- The evaluation team will receive a UNDSS security briefing.
- In Aden if movement is impossible then beneficiaries will be brought to the city from the closet location
- Likewise in Sanaa is movement is impossible then beneficiaries will be brought to the city from the closet location.
  - Note: restrictions on movement are the result of UN security protocols and the evaluation team's contractual status. If the danger is due to conflict, then beneficiary movement will likewise stop.
- The ILO will also OCHA to deconflict areas should movement be possible.
- In both locations, the evaluation team will ideally stay in UN accommodation (UNCAF (Sanaa) & the UN Enclave (Aden)). In Aden if the Enclave is full the evaluation team will stay in the cleared hotel (Coral hotel)
- Travel between Aden and Sanaa will be via UNHAS flights.

# ANNEX 7. ETHICS

The Evaluation will conform to 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical guidelines. The evaluation team will ensure safeguarding of ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes ensuring the informed consent of interviewees, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair selection of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to participants or their communities.

# ANNEX 8. INTERVIEW & FGD LOG

| NAME | ORG | POSITION/PROJECT | DATE | TYPE | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Inception Phase Interviews** | | | | | |
| Ali Dehaq | ILO | Senior Programme Office | 13/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Sana'a) |
| Hiba Al-Rifai | ILO | Regional M&E Officer | 16/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut |
| Vitalii El-Dani | ILO | Programme Officer for Yemen (at Regional Programming Services) | 17/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut) |
| Dawit Fasil Mengesha | ILO | Planning, Monitoring & Reporting Officer | 22/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Baghdad) |
| Oktavianto Pasaribu | ILO | Chief, Regional Programming Services | 22/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut) |
| Peter Rademaker | ILO | Deputy Regional Director | 23/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut |
| Maha Kattaa | ILO | Senior Resilience/Crisis Response Specialist & ILO Iraq Country Coordinator | 28/03/2023 | Interview | Online (Baghdad) |
| **Data Collection Phase Interviews** | | | | | |
| Simon Hills | ILO | Technical Specialist FPRW | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Chris Donnges | ILO | Senior Economist DEVINVEST | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Yousra Hamed | ILO | Financial Inclusion Expert | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Nieves Thomet | ILO | Employment for Peace Specialist, ILO Geneva | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Massimiliano La Marca | ILO | Senior Economist | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Federico Negro | ILO | Specialist, Capacity Building and Knowledge Development | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Mohui Jiang | ILO | Director of the Strategic Programming and Management Department | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Mito Tsukamoto | ILO | Head of the Development and Investment | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Geneva) |
| Peter Rademaker | ILO | Deputy Regional Director | 24/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Beirut) |
| Mustapha Said | ILO | Sr Spec, Workers Activities | 08/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Beirut) |
| Kishore Kumar Sing | ILO | Sr Spec, Skills | 08/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Beirut) |
| Mohammed Karaki | ILO | Regional Security Officer | 08/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Beirut) |
| Badra Alawa | ILO | Enterprise Dev Specialist | 09/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Beirut) |
| Racha El Assy | ILO | CTA, LG Project | 15/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Amjad Rabi | ILO | CTA, SP Project | 15/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Mohammed Abdulameer | ILO | CTA, SME and PSD project | 15/05/2023 | Interview | Online (Basra) |
| Raed Gabbar | Government of Iraq - MoLSA | Director-General Department of Labour and Vocational Training | 16/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |

| NAME | ORG | POSITION/PROJECT | DATE | TYPE | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ms Kholoud | Government of Iraq - MoLSA | Director-General Social Security | 16/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Ahmed Khalaf | Government of Iraq - MoLSA | Director of Social Security Entity | 16/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Abu Ahmed Mohamed | Government of Iraq - MoP | | 16/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| GFIW | Workers Rep | General Secretary and committee members | 17/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Baghdad) |
| IFTU | Workers Rep | General Secretary and committee members | 17/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Baghdad) |
| IFI | Business Rep | General Secretary and committee members | 17/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Frank Gilbert | Thiqa | Implementing Partner | 17/05/2023 | Interview | Online (Dohuk) |
| Mr Marwan | ILO | Project Assistant on CL project | 17/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Erbli) |
| Mr Husham | Government of Iraq | Member of Parliament | 17/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| - | Beneficiaries | Beneficiaries of Prospect SIYB, FE and Bank loans | 18/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Dohuk) |
| - | Implementing Partners | SERO, Implementing Partner for LG Project | 18/05/2023 | FGD | Online (Dohuk) |
| - | Beneficiaries | Child Friendly Learning Space | 19/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Dohuk) |
| Fadia Jradi | ILO | Financial Inclusion Specialist | 19/05/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut) |
| Bashar Elsamarneh | ILO | EIIP | 19/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Erbli) |
| - | Beneficiaries | EIIP Project (Citadel) | 19/05/2023 | FGD | In Person (Erbli) |
| Mr Masherq | Government of Iraq | National OSH Center Office, next to MoLSA compound | 20/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Mr Nasir | Implement Partners | Media Centre (local NGO) | 20/05/2023 | Interview | In Person (Baghdad) |
| Sandra Aviles | Consultant HDP Nexus | | 09/05/2023 | Interview | Online |
| Vitali el-Dani | ILO | Project Officer | 09/05/2023 | Interview | Online (Beirut) |
| Mr Khaldoun Shaif | Workers Representative | YCLY | 14/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Abubakr Baobaid | Employer Representative | FCCY | 14/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Mawal Alshabi | IRG | TVET | 14/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Hussein Alban | IRG | TVET | 15/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Mr Mohammed Al-Shaeri | IRG | MOSAL | 15/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Mona Salem | IRG | MOSAL | 15/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Aden) |
| Mohammad Abdo Saeed | Employer Representative | FCCY | 17/04/2023 | Interview | Online |
| Dr Ahmed Almekhlafi | IRG | MOSAL | 17/04/2023 | Interview | Online |
| FGD with ERRY Beneficiaries | - | - | 18/04/2023 | FGD | In Person (Aden) |
| Deputy director + Ibtihal Fouad | Project Partners | PWP | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |

| NAME | ORG | POSITION/PROJECT | DATE | TYPE | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dr Dawlat Al-Jawfi | Implementing Partner | Ghadaq | 20/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Ali Al Hadi | Employee Representative | Sana'a Chamber of Commerce | 22/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Dr Sharaf Alkebsi | | | 22/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Mohammed Qahwan | DFA | TVET | 24/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Dr Diaa Alrumaimah | DFA | TVET | 24/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Saleh AL Razhi | NGOs | SFD | 25/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Taha Almahbashi | Employee Representative | FCCY | 25/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Mansoor Albashiri | Employee Representatives | FCCY | 25/04/2023 | Interview | In Person (Sana'a) |
| Tine Staermose | Special Representative (Yemen) | ILO | 13/04/2023 | Interview | Online (Sana'a) |
| SCMCHA | Meeting with various SCMCHA representatives | DFA | 18/07/2023 | FGD | In Person (Sana'a |

# ANNEX 9. HLE TIMELINE

| Timing<br>Activity | W1<br>Apr | W2<br>April | W3<br>April | W4<br>April | W1<br>May | W2<br>May | W3<br>May | W4<br>May | W1<br>June | W2<br>June | W3<br>June | W4<br>June | W1<br>July | W2<br>July | W3<br>July | W4<br>July | W1<br>Aug | W2<br>Aug | W3<br>Aug | W4<br>Aug |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inception Data collection | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inception Writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inception Submission | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inception redraft | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final Inception submission | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interviews Beirut/Geneva | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fieldwork Iraq | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fieldwork Yemen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interviews/desk research | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Survey launched | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysis workshop | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing draft | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft submitted | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Revisions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final draft | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# ANNEX 10. TERMS OF REFERENCE

## Independent Evaluation of the ILO'S post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-2023)1.

### INTRODUCTION

In November 2022, the ILO's Governing Body approved EVAL's rolling work plan for 2023 which included an independent evaluation of a cluster of ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) in the Arab States region.

Following a review of resource allocation and priorities in the region and consultation with the Regional Office it was agreed that the focus of the evaluation would be the ILO's programme of work in crisis situations over the last two biennia (2019-2023). In particular, the evaluation will focus on Iraq and Yemen.

The evaluation will use established evaluation protocols1 to assess whether the ILO's programmes are effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Decent Work Agenda in the subregion and extract lessons that would:

- improve country programme planning and implementation;
- improve organizational effectiveness;
- demonstrate accountability for results;
- strengthen synergies among the ILO's technical advice and technical cooperation activities;
- generate lessons for future programmes and projects; and
- identify approaches to better support priorities and outcomes of the national tripartite constituents of these countries within the context of the pandemic and beyond.

The purpose of this document is to provide background and context, identify the purpose scope and clients, set out the approach, formulate draft questions based on criteria, suggest a methodology and discuss management issues for the purpose of further consultation and finalisation of the Terms of Reference.

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

According to OCHA[1], the bulk of the world's deadliest conflicts, over the past decade, have been in the Arab States, such as those taking place in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Syria has also been the deadliest conflict in the world since 1989. The refugee crisis caused by the war in Syria, compounded conflicts in other countries, such as Iraq.

The Iraqi conflict began with the 2003 invasion of Iraq by a coalition of countries that toppled the government of Saddam Hussein. An insurgency emerged that was opposed to the occupying forces and the post-invasion Iraqi government. The main phase of the conflict ended following the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the country in 2017.

In Yemen, there is an on-going conflict between the internationally recognized government, which is backed by a Saudi-led military coalition, and Houthi rebels supported by Iran. With 80 per cent of the population, or 24.1 million people, in need of humanitarian aid and protection, it is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.

## DECENT WORK IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

Previous high-level evaluations (HLE) of the Arab States largely focused on the refugee crisis provoked by conflict in the region. In this HLE, the focus will shift to the ILO's response to post-conflict and recovery work.

Since its founding, the ILO has addressed the challenges of war and conflict through its advocacy in the promotion of social justice through the world of work. This type of work is extremely complex in nature.

In a world of simultaneous crises, conflicts interact with the conditions created by additional stress such as pandemics and climate change, that give rise to fragility, and to disasters of greater intensity and increased frequency. This, in turn, can precipitate more conflict.

A crisis resulting from conflict can be an entry point for the ILO to proactively engage with a country, at an early stage and to plant the seeds of sustainable approaches. From the perspective of the world of work, the issue is to understand the impact of fragility on labour markets and governance.

With this understanding it is possible to analyze the root causes of fragility and to determine how the ILO´s interventions can help labour market actors prevent and mitigate the effects of adverse shocks on employment and decent work, foster recovery efforts and grasp opportunities for reducing fragility.

### Employment and labour market impacts of the COVID-19 crisis

The economies and labour markets of the Arab States have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The region saw economic growth of -6.5 per cent in 2020, recovering only to a modest 2.5 per cent in 2021.

Due to massive contractions in demand, as well as supply disruptions, the region suffered severe employment and working-hour losses, with an ensuing rise in unemployment and an increase in the number of women and men leaving the labour force.

Due to the resulting decreases in labour income, working poverty increased in 2020, reversing progress that had been made during the past few decades. The adverse trend has stark implications for achieving the ILO's strategic outcomes or the SDGs.

The recovery has begun but it remains uneven and tenuous. Those countries that have been in conflict for several years, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria, for example, have been left with limited to no resources to address the health, economic or labour market repercussions of the crisis.

Furthermore, as the COVID-19 crisis eases in most countries and borders reopen, pre-existing crises have continued and new crises have arisen, compounding the already fragile circumstances of many countries or areas.

Overall, pre-existing challenges, including weak public institutions and limited fiscal space, were amplified by the pandemic, setting back economic and growth prospects in the Arab States region, except for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

## Vulnerabilities of certain population groups are further exposed

The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with rising costs of living, environmental crises and structural transformations, linked to technological change, have widened inequalities and exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities among migrants, young people, women, refugees, and workers in the informal economy.

- Migrants are among the first to be laid off and often suffer from non-payment and underpayment of wages and other entitlements. In addition, they are sometimes excluded from the social protection schemes.
- Likewise, refugee populations have faced great hardships in earning a livelihood owing to the pandemic and increased risks to their OSH conditions, resulting in significant mental health and psychosocial consequences.
- In the Arab States, young workers suffered disproportional employment losses of 5.5 per cent, in 2020, while adult employment remained constant. The difference in employment growth between young and adult workers persisted in 2021.
- Finally, in the Arab States, female employment was hit harder than male employment in nearly all countries, amplifying the pre-existing gender gaps that are particularly prevalent in this region. Gender-based violence and harassment remains a serious problem, too.

Countries across the region introduced a series of national policy responses to bolster their economies, support the viability of enterprises while retaining workers and protecting individuals and families through the crisis and recovery periods.

The scope and impact of such measures were not felt equally across the region, reflecting weaknesses of labour market and social protection institutions. Such structural challenges hampered the delivery and effectiveness of policy responses, while magnifying existing gaps.

The COVID-19 crisis has increased awareness of the importance of social protection systems and enterprise support, the necessity of extending labour protections, including sound and resilient OSH systems, to all categories of workers and economic units, and the centrality of building strong labour market institutions.

## Transition to formality

The vulnerabilities of informal workers and enterprises were accentuated during the pandemic. In the Arab States, where 57 per cent of the labour force works in the informal economy, workers often experienced increased levels of poverty and vulnerability.

In addition, workers faced serious occupational health and safety risks. With their lack of access to social protection and healthcare, many had no choice but to risk their health continuing to work in unsafe conditions.

Likewise, during the pandemic, people with disabilities were generally less able to ensure physical distancing, faced barriers in accessing relevant information, and in many cases, experienced a worsening of their pre-existing social isolation and greater exposure to violence and harassment.

Climate change has caused weather-related hazards and natural disasters of greater intensity and increased frequency, affecting particularly workers and enterprises in the informal economy. An integrated approach to formalization is key to recovery as inclusive economies and resilient societies.

## Supporting enterprises, workers and incomes through tough times

Countries throughout the region introduced a series of national policy responses in the attempt to bolster their economies; support the viability of enterprises while retaining workers; and protect citizens through the crisis and recovery periods.

National fiscal policy responses to the pandemic aimed to help sustain household consumption, especially for the most vulnerable families, and to boost domestic demand and economic activity, which are critical for supporting jobs and enterprises. Yet the weaknesses of institutions in the region have hampered the delivery and the effectiveness of policy responses and magnified existing gaps.

For example, the pandemic revealed challenges related to national social protection schemes. In the Arab States, eleven countries announced a total of 46 social protection measures, as part of the COVID-19 pandemic policy response (as of February 2022). More than one quarter of these measures were focused on income and jobs protection and about one fifth provided support for housing and basic services.

## THE ILO'S RESPONSE

A key assumption that underpins the ILO's response is that social unrest and conflict emanate from not adequately addressing the challenges described above. The ILO response to such challenges has been the promotion of peaceful stable and resilient societies through employment-intensive investment and public employment programmes, linked with skills development, enterprise promotion and employment services.

Job creation in remittance-dependent countries has been an important focus in this context. Such programmes have significantly contributed to the creation of decent jobs for groups in vulnerable situations, including poor women and men, young people, refugees and internally displaced people. Employment-intensive investment used the ILO's labour-based approach to infrastructure development.

ILO-supported initiatives in support of conflict and disaster settings bring together the Decent Work Agenda with post-conflict and humanitarian responses at country level, with efforts underpinned by international labour standards, especially Recommendation No. 205. Achievements include:

- Employment-intensive infrastructure programmes in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq have created immediate employment opportunities through infrastructure projects and contributed to improved livelihoods and accelerated recovery efforts.;
- Employment services and online job matching platforms have been established in Iraq for forcibly displaced populations.
- In Jordan and Lebanon, job opportunities have been created for both Syrian refugees and host communities, including through the formalization of the work of refugees; the creation of employment services; measures to prevent unacceptable working conditions in the informal urban economy and prevent child labour in agriculture; and the creation of jobs paired with improvements of economically critical infrastructure. As a result, 1.2 million workdays were created, benefiting 21,500 men and women, including Syrian refugees.

In addition to requests for support in situations of conflict and disaster, ILO offices report increasing requests for support from constituents striving to rise to the challenges linked to climate change. To increase the effectiveness of engagement in this area, the ILO has built partnerships and joint planning with UN counterparts and other relevant stakeholders.

# COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

## Iraq

The DWCP in Iraq focuses on three areas of priority: ensuring that private sector development supports the creation of new jobs; extending and strengthening social protection and addressing child labour; and improving social dialogue to promote rights at work.

In March 2020, the ILO opened its first Iraq country coordination office, in the capital Baghdad, in response to a request by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). The coordination office oversees the implementation of Iraq's DWCP and supports other UN agencies in development-focused work across Iraq.

The ILO's newly established presence in Iraq ensures the implementation of the Programme in a coordinated manner on the ground, placing the ILO as a key partner of the government and bringing the ILO closer to its social partners.

### JOB CREATION AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

The Iraq DWCP works to ensure that reconstruction and recovery efforts create opportunities for decent work and develop enterprises and market-relevant skills. Relevant projects are working to increase the job creation potential of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in high-potential sectors and enhance their operating environment and create better functioning labour market information systems that will enable evidence-based policymaking on employment.

### SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CHILD LABOUR

The ILO's support to Iraq includes working to reduce vulnerabilities through extending and strengthening social protection to fill coverage and adequacy gaps, to ensure adequate protection to all those in need in a coordinated and cost-effective manner. Support in this area also includes developing an effective framework to ensure fewer vulnerable Iraqi children are exposed to child labour.

In this regard, a draft retirement and social security law was revised with the support of the ILO. This is the first step in extending social security schemes to workers in the private sector, as part of efforts towards a comprehensive social protection reform. The ILO is also supporting Iraq in mainstreaming child labour concerns in laws and regulations and in implementing programmes by the government and by humanitarian and development partners to address child labour.

### LABOUR GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Through the DWCP, the ILO is supporting Iraq in strengthening labour market governance to promote the realization of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work through improving the contribution of the social partners to tripartite institutions, based on the principles of social dialogue and freedom of association.

ILO support to Iraq also includes improving the effectiveness of labour inspection and OSH services in preventing and detecting non-compliances with national and international labour standards. In this regard, a national policy on labour inspection and on Occupational Safety and Health was developed with social partners.

## Yemen

Yemen is in the midst of a protracted political, humanitarian, and developmental crisis driven by conflict and an economic collapse exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the economy has been facing extraordinary fiscal challenges.

Yemen has lost US$90 billion in economic output and more than 600,000 people have lost their jobs. The conflict has exerted direct and indirect effects on child labour and contributed to interrupted labour market development as well as a deterioration in skills and human capital.

Additional elements the need to be considered while assessing the fragility and labour market include unpaid salaries for more than 1.4 million of civil servants, the sanctions on commercial flights and commercial shipments, the closed roads between main cities and governorates.

There is no DWCP in Yemen, the UNSDCF is the country's guiding document in Yemen. The ILO work with the social parties in Yemen over the last years was very limited, given the political sensitivity and the fragmentation of constituents between factions associated with the conflict. Since 2015, when the war started in Yemen, the tripartite coordination among social constituents is almost absent.

### JOB CREATION AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

During the period covered under this HLE, ILO interventions in Yemen focused on the community-level, through providing skills development services for most vulnerable individuals and recent support to enhance the visibility and research capacity of the Federation of Yemeni Chambers of Commerce.

### SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CHILD LABOUR

Child labour in Yemen, exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a prevalent issue that still needs to be addressed. ILO has increasingly focused on combatting child labour through technical assistance to the Government on the dangers of child labour and on the importance of OSH.

In addition to projects initiated to protect youth from recruitment and use in armed services. ILO's work on child labour has focused on reintegrating and empowering youth at risk of violence through different initiatives such as awareness-building, skills development, and counselling services.

### LABOUR GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In Yemen, the ILO worked closely with constituents and partners to strengthen labour governance and the incorporation of international labour standards in Yemen, including drafting a new Labour Code, which incorporates gender and non-discrimination statutes, which has been sent to the Parliament for ratification.

## SCOPING

This section contains the preliminary analysis of the ILO's ODA data from the Arab States region for 2019-2022.

### Strategic Work

The table found below shows the Number of P&B outcomes x country x year. This gives an indication of the amount of strategic work that is going on in each country. The results suggests that much of the ILO's work in Iraq is strategic and that work in Yemen is just beginning

#### NUMBER OF P&B OUTCOMES X COUNTRY X YEAR

| COUNT OF OUTCOME | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Row Labels** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **GRAND TOTAL** |
| **Arab States - regional** | 2 | | 2 | | **4** |
| **Iraq** | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | **14** |
| **Yemen** | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | **5** |
| **Grand Total** | **8** | **6** | **6** | **3** | **23** |

In support of the P&B outcomes, the Arab States has implemented a Decent Work Country Programmes: Iraq (2019-23). In Yemen, the UNSDCF is the guiding document.

### Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs)

The results suggest that, because Iraq has a DWCP in place, that it has the organizational infrastructure to address a large number of CPOs.

#### COUNTRY PROGRAMME OUTCOME X COUNTRY X YEAR

| COUNT OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME OUTCOME | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Row Labels** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **GRAND TOTAL** |
| **Arab States - regional** | **2** | | **2** | | **4** |
| RAB102 | 1 | | 1 | | **2** |
| RAB126 | | | 1 | | **1** |
| RAB129 | 1 | | | | **1** |
| RAB901 | | | | | |
| **Iraq** | **4** | **5** | **3** | **2** | **14** |
| IRQ126 | 1 | | 2 | | **3** |
| IRQ127 | 3 | 4 | | 2 | **9** |
| IRQ179 | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ180 | | | 1 | | **1** |
| IRQ901 | | | | | |
| **Yemen** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **5** |
| YEM103 | | | | | |
| YEM155 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | **3** |
| YEM156 | | | | | |
| YEM157 | 1 | | 1 | | **2** |
| **Grand Total** | **8** | **6** | **6** | **3** | **23** |

## Projects

As shown in the table found below, the strategic work being implemented in Iraq and Yemen is being supported by commensurate levels of development cooperation.

### NUMBER OF PROJECTS X COUNTRY X YEAR

| COUNT OF PROJECT SYMBOL | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Row Labels** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **GRAND TOTAL** |
| **Arab States - regional** | **2** | | **2** | | **4** |
| GLO/19/06/CHE | 1 | | | | **1** |
| RAB/15/03/CHE | | | | | |
| RAB/19/01/FOR | 1 | | | | **1** |
| RAB/20/01/CHE | | | 1 | | **1** |
| RAB/21/01/CEF | | | 1 | | **1** |
| **Iraq** | **2** | **5** | **3** | **2** | **12** |
| IRQ/19/02/MUL | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ/19/03/DEU | 1 | | | | **1** |
| IRQ/19/50/NLD | 1 | | | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/02/UNE | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/03/EUR | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/04/IOM | | | 1 | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/05/UNW | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/06/EUR | | | 1 | | **1** |
| IRQ/20/119/UND | | 1 | | | **1** |
| IRQ/21/01/IOM | | | 1 | | **1** |
| IRQ/21/05/UND | | | | 1 | **1** |
| IRQ/22/01/HAB | | | | 1 | **1** |
| **Yemen** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **4** |
| YEM/19/01/EUR | 1 | | | | **1** |
| YEM/19/01/UND | | 1 | | | **1** |
| YEM/21/01/RBS | | | 1 | | **1** |
| YEM/21/01/UND | | | | 1 | **1** |
| **Grand Total** | **5** | **6** | **6** | **3** | **20** |

## Budgets

Iraq and Yemen, two countries with small numbers of projects, have relatively high budgets because they have funding for post-conflict and/or recovery.

### BUDGET X COUNTRY X YEAR

| SUM OF TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Row Labels | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | GRAND TOTAL |
| Arab States - regional | $11,455,803 | | $829,788 | | **$16,337,315** |
| Iraq | $36,817,904 | $6,682,614 | $3,729,306 | $616,267 | **$54,676,249** |
| Yemen | $2,410,630 | $3,823,781 | $601,480 | $1,944,827 | **$12,554,636** |
| Grand Total | **$50,684,337** | **$10,506,395** | **$5,160,574** | **$2,561,094** | **$83,568,200** |

## Expenditure for P&B outcomes[5]

The table found below shows spending on P&B outcomes. The outcomes on which Iraq and Yemen have been spent the most are O3 Employment, O4 Sustainable Enterprises, and O7 Worker Protection.

### EXPENDITURE FOR OUTCOMES X COUNTRY

# PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CLIENTS

The present evaluation has a dual-purpose: accountability and organizational learning. The evaluation will seek to determine how well the ILO achieved the outcomes planned with respect of post-conflict and recovery. The evaluation will also attempt to contribute to organizational learning by identifying lessons that have been learned and emerging good practices. This information can inform future ILO strategies.

Scope sets boundaries around the object of evaluation. It determines what is included in the study, and what is excluded. Scope is usually defined in terms of time, geography and sometimes programmatic phase. This evaluation will need to be carefully scoped. One the one hand, the evaluation will try to address a very broad question: the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work, in the Arab States from 2019 to the present. In doing so it will focus on ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in two countries: Iraq and Yemen to illustrate ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in more detail.

The way that the Evaluation Office hopes to accomplish this task is by conducting a comprehensive synthesis review of all the ILO's project and non-project on post-conflict and recovery work, throughout the region, during the specified time period. This will enable us to answer evaluation questions about the broader topic. This report will set the scene for an evaluation team hired to collect and analyze data on the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in Iraq and in Yemen. This will enable us to answer evaluation questions focused on the country-based interventions.

The principal client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of his Senior Management Team, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Regional Office for the Arab States, DWT/CO–Beirut, the country offices in Iraq and Yemen and the tripartite constituents in the Arab States.

## CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

ILO DWCP evaluations usually focus on the OECD DAC criteria including the relevance of the programme to beneficiary needs, the coherence of the programme design, the programme's efficiency and effectiveness, the impact of the results and the potential for sustainability. For each criterion, two or three specific evaluation questions are suggested. The questions seek to address priority issues and concerns of the national constituents and other stakeholders.

### TABLE 8. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

| ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED |
|---|---|
| **Relevance** | ▶ Overall relevance based on synthesis review and additional interviews of ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work in region?<br>▶ What is the status of the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work in the Arab States, in general, and in the Iraq and Yemen, in particular?<br>▶ Are the interventions that support ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work throughout the region, and in the Iraq and Yemen, relevant to constituent needs?<br>▶ Is the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work in the Arab States, relevant to national, regional and international development frameworks (including to the UNCFs and the SDGs?) Is it relevant to the ILO's Programme and Budget Outcomes?<br>▶ To what extent have the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery interventions been designed or repurposed based on results from COVID-19 diagnostics, UN socio-economic assessments and guidance, ILO decent work national diagnostics, CCA, or similar comprehensive tools? |
| **Coherence & Validity of Design** | ▶ To what extent is the ILO's post-conflict and/or recovery work in the Arab States coherent with that of the Regional United Nations Development Group (R/UNDG) for the Arab States?<br>▶ To what extent is the work in Iraq and Yemen coherent with that of the flagship programme, Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR)?<br>▶ How well are the XBTC projects aligned to the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work?<br>▶ To what extent can the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion?<br>▶ Where principles of Results-Based Management applied to help the programmes of work to focus on performance and the achievement of results? |
| **Effectiveness** | ▶ How did ILO support help the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work to achieve their expected results?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work made progress in achieving results on crosscutting issues of standards; social dialogue and tripartism; gender equality and non-discrimination; and environmental sustainability, notably in policy dialogues, policy partnerships, partners frameworks, etc.? Were there any unexpected results?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq country coordination office, the Yemen National Coordinator, the Regional Office for the Arab States, Decent Work Teams, and concerned HQ Departments fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes at the country level?<br>▶ Have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work fostered ILO constituents' active involvement through social dialogue in articulating, implementing, and sustaining coherent response strategies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the world of work?<br>▶ What were the key factors of success?<br>▶ In Yemen, how did sanctions on commercial shipments, fuel, airports, the roads closed between main cities and governorates and the unpaid salaries for more than 1.4 million of civil servants, affect the private sector, SMEs, and business continuity? |
| **Efficiency** | ▶ How well have the DWT specialists met the demand for technical advice?<br>▶ How cost efficient was the ILO's implementation in Iraq and Yemen?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work leveraged partnerships (with constituents, national institutions, IFIs and UN/development agencies)?<br>▶ To what extent have the Iraq and Yemen programmes of work leveraged new or repurposed existing financial resources to mitigate COVID-19 effects in a balanced manner? Does the leveraging of resources take into account the sustainability of results? |

## EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation will use mix of evaluation approaches and ensure triangulation of information. It will, in part, use a goal-based approach to examine the Country Programme Outcome achievements. It will, in part, use a case study approach to examine the countries under review. It will, in part, use a mixed methods approach (e.g., document analysis, interviews, direct observation and surveys) to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. It will, in part, use a participatory approach in that, to the extent possible, the evaluation will involve ILO key stakeholders such as beneficiaries, ILO Tripartite Constituents, ILO staff and strategic partners. The mix of methods will help to ensure the validity of the findings.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

As explained in the section on Purpose, Scope and Clients, the ILO Evaluation Office will undertake a synthesis review of the ILO's work in the area of post-conflict and recovery in the region. Themes that may be examined include labour reform, migration, etc. This document will be an input to the evaluation.

Data collection for the evaluation will be carried out in a milieu of some uncertainty. There may be residual pandemic issues, however, security issues are far more likely. It is important to note that international consultants are not allowed to enter locations indicated as Phase 5 by UNDSS in Iraq and Yemen, so access may be an issue. Depending on the ease of international travel, national consultants may be hired. However, the same applies for national consultants if they are based outside the Phase 5 locations.

The ILO field infrastructure will provide the required logistical support. For face-to-face data collection, they will help to organize appointments. In case of virtual data collection, they will provide stakeholder Skype or telephone contact information to the evaluation team. In addition, they will also need to alert stakeholders that they will be contacted by the evaluators and encourage their cooperation.

Part of the standard methodology for collecting data for HLEs is web-based surveys. This year, the web-based survey will be an important tool. The Country Offices will be called upon to provide the evaluation team with current email addresses for relevant ILO staff and constituents. For face-to-face and virtual data collection, translation and interpretation will be provided as necessary.

The evaluation will still follow the ILO's evaluation policy that adheres to international standards and best practices, articulated in the updated OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). More specifically, the evaluation team will conduct the evaluation in accordance with *EVAL Protocol No 2: High-level Evaluation Protocol for DWCP Evaluation.*

## CROSSCUTTING POLICY DRIVERS

The evaluations will address the ILO's crosscutting policy drivers – international labour standards and social dialogue, environmental sustainability, gender equality/non-discrimination, disability—as well as new issues such as COVID 19. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women, and other social/cultural categories, as relevant by country, in the consultation, analysis and field work. Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that are disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.

## EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The deliverables from the evaluation will include:

- Inception report: This document constitutes the operational plan of the evaluation and should be aligned with the ToR. The purpose of the inception report is to ensure that a common understanding and agreement on the ToR is reached.
- Country case studies: These studies will explore the issues or themes relevant to the ILO's programme of work in the region.
- Draft report: the evaluation team should submit a complete and readable draft report to the evaluation manager. The draft report should reflect the evaluative reasoning and critical thinking that were used to draw values-based conclusions following the evidence. The evaluation manager is responsible for checking the quality of the draft report in terms of adequacy and readability. The evaluation manager circulates the report among stakeholders.
- Final report: the evaluation manager compiles the comments received and forwards them in a single communication to the evaluator. The evaluator incorporates them as appropriate and submits the final report to the evaluation manager.

The evaluation team will consolidate information from the desk review and country case studies into draft report that will answer the questions set out in the previous section. The length of the report will not exceed 80 pages (excluding annexes).

The report should include specific and detailed recommendations solidly based on the evaluator's analysis and, if appropriate, addressed specifically to the organization/institution responsible for implementing it. The report should also include a specific section on lessons learned and good practices that could be replicated or should be avoided in the future.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of the ILO.

## RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

A Senior Evaluation Officer (SEO) from ILO HQ will be the task manager and will be expected to actively participate in the evaluation process. The SEO's responsibilities include managing the contract with the evaluation consultant(s), consulting on methodological issues and facilitating access to primary and secondary data. Secondary data would include CPO data, and project evaluation data.

In the region, logistics support will be provided by the Regional Programming Services Team, the Country Office and the Regional Evaluation Officer. The ILO Director of Evaluation will provide oversight and guidance and input from other EVAL team members may be sought throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation will be conducted with the support of individual consultants, a team or a company with extensive experience in the evaluation of development or social interventions, preferably including practical experience in assessing comprehensive policy/programme frameworks or national plans.

The capacity of the individual, team or company to mobilize required expertise and support to undertake the evaluation will be an important consideration in the selection process. The responsibilities and profile of the "evaluation team" can be found in Table 6. Stakeholders will be consulted on the consultant selection.

**TABLE 6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROFILE OF EVALUATION CONSULTANT.**

| EVALUATION TEAM | |
|---|---|
| **Responsibility** | **Profile** |
| 1. Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and drafting and presenting a final report.<br>2. Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation.<br>3. Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.<br>4. Ensuring the evaluation is conducted per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements. | 1. Adequate Contextual Knowledge of the UN, the ILO and Iraq and Yemen.<br>2. Adequate Technical Specialization: Demonstrated knowledge and expertise of labour and industrial relations topics.<br>3. At least 10 years' experience in evaluation policies, strategies, country programmes and organizational effectiveness.<br>4. Experience conducting country programme evaluations for UN organizations<br>5. Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and an understanding of issues related to validity and reliability.<br>6. Fluency in spoken and written English, and an understanding of ILO cross-cutting issues. |

It is estimated that the scope of effort required by the evaluation will be approximately 60-70 days. The successful evaluation consultant or team will be remunerated on an output based total fee. The ILO Code of Conduct for independent evaluators applies to all evaluation consultants. T h e principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service to which all UN staff is bound. UN staff is also subject to any UN member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services. The selected team shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct with their contract.

Interested parties are requested to submit a proposal in English including: a cover letter that explains how the candidate(s) meet(s) the desired profile, a technical section and a financial section, CV(s), fee structure and availability. Proposals should be sent to the ILO Evaluation Office (eval@ilo.org) indicating the title of the evaluation.

Proposals will be judged based on the following criteria: contextual knowledge, technical specialization, prior experience, clarity and soundness of proposed methodology, language and understanding of the ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers and financial competitiveness.

| PHASES | TASKS | RESPONSIBLE | DATES | OUTPUTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PhaseOne: Preparatory** | ToRs drafted and circulated to stakeholders | ILO Senior Evaluation Officer | December | ToRs |
| | Evaluation team hired | | January February/ March | Contract Inception report |
| | Desk review and scoping mission | | | |
| **Phase Two: Data collection** | Data collection and analysis for country case studies | Evaluation team with support from EVAL | April | Data |
| **Phase Three: Report Writing** | Write country case studies | Evaluation team | May | Country case studies |
| | Desk Review and country case studies consolidated into draft report | Evaluation team | May/June | Draft |
| | Zero draft circulated among stakeholders | EVAL | May/June | Stakeholder comments |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | First draft circulated for comments | EVAL | June | Stakeholder comments |
| | Final draft shared with wider circle of stakeholders | EVAL | June | Stakeholder comments |
| | Final report | Evaluation team | July | Final version |

## Annex 1: Country Case studies

The purpose of case studies is to conduct in-depth analysis of the issues or themes relevant to the ILO's programme of work in Arab States countries. The case studies seek to determine what happened because of ILO's interventions and determine if these interventions had any observable immediate impacts, and to the extent possible determine the links between the observed impacts and the ILO interventions.

The case studies will consist of a combination of methods:

- Remote interviews, field studies and participant focus groups,
- Desk reviews to synthesize and aggregate information such as past evaluations, technical studies, and reviews from the selected countries and programmes at different times. This will allow greater triangulation while minimizing cost and time spent on new, possibly repetitive studies.
- Direct observation (where possible)

A completed case study report will have detailed descriptions of what happened and the context in which it occurred. The report will feature a factual recounting as well as an analysis of events. Examples of past case studies can be provided by EVAL.