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Combating Human Trafficking in Egypt – Independent Midterm evaluation

QUICK FACTS

ILO DC/SYMBOL: EGY/20/06/USA

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Mid-term

Evaluation nature: Internal

Project countries: Egypt

P&B Outcome(s): Outcome 5: Decent work in the rural economy, and Outcome 4: Promoting sustainable enterprises

SDG(s): 3, 8, 16

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 01 November 2024

ILO Administrative Office: DWT/CO-Cairo

ILO Technical Office(s):

Project duration: June 2021 – June 2025

Donor and budget: USD 1,500,000.00

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Evaluation budget: 9,000 USD

Key Words: [Human Trafficking, Domestic Workers, Gender Equality](#)

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The “Combating Human Trafficking in Egypt” is a three-year (15 June 2021 – 15 June 2024) project funded by the United States Department of State office with a total budget of USD 1,500,000.00. The project governmental counterpart is the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM&TIP). The start of the project activities was delayed till July 2022 till it received security approval. The project collaborated in activities with international Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women and other two ILO project ACCEL Africa and Better Work.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the capacity of the Egyptian Government to combat human trafficking by strengthening the national identification and referral mechanism (NRM) and providing assistance and reintegration services for identified victims. The project’s logical model and results matrix has been updated several times to respond to the NCCPIM&TIP requested changes throughout the project lifetime. The stated goal is to: Improve the capacity of the Egyptian Government to combat human trafficking while the two outcomes are: 1) An effective victim identification system and a national referral mechanism are in place and operational, 2) Improved comprehensive assistance and reintegration services for identified victims using a victim-centred, trauma-informed, and survivor-informed approach.

The project is managed by a project team in Cairo, Egypt, which comprises a project manager and an admin and finance assistant. The project management team is responsible for the administrative, operational, and technical supervision and implementation of the project interventions.

Geographically, the project implementation is notably focused on Greater Cairo and Alexandria. Though this was reconsidered during implementation as some of the target groups are based in other governorates.

Present situation of the project

The project activities target multiple groups including governmental staff especially from the Ministry of Labour (MoL), and Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). National Councils including the National Council for Women (NCW), the National Council for Childhood a

	motherhood (NCCM), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), trade unions, employers' groups, religious leader, and media professionals.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	The mid-term evaluation focused on the project's implementation as of July 2022 till end of November 2023 reviewing and assessing all the results and key outputs that have been produced in this period. The primary users of the evaluation are ILO Cairo Office, ILO HQ and the J/TIP Office - USDOS.
Methodology of evaluation	The evaluation reviewed the project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability and introduced actionable recommendations for the remaining period of the project towards improving delivery and sustainability of outcomes. The mid-term evaluation adopted a participatory approach using qualitative methods. The evaluation started by reviewing of the project's technical reports and wider relevant documentation; then held 20 interviews with the project team/ILO, ILO projects, BETTER WORK factories, the governmental counterparts: NCCPIM&TIP, trade unions, Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) which mobilized employers for the training, religious leaders, media professionals, the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood (NCCM), National Council for Women (NCW), NGOs Federation President, Ministry of Social Solidarity staff, Labour inspectors and labour attaches - Ministry of Labour, UN agencies active in combating human trafficking: IOM, UNODC and UN Women.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS	Relevance Findings showed that the project has clear relevance and alignment to national interests and objectives to combat the different forms of trafficking in persons as stated in the Egyptian Law No. 64 of the year 2010, and the national strategy to combat human trafficking in its third round (2022-206). Strategically the project partners with a key governmental body, NCCPIM&TIP which is mandated by coordinating efforts, polices and plans to combat human trafficking and promote public awareness on TIP). The project was designed based on four gaps: a) the absence of an effective victim identification system and referral mechanism, b) the domestic workers (DW) are excluded from Egypt's labour law, c) lack of assistance services provided to victims of TIP, in particular lack of
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specialized shelters, d) the lack of socio-economic reintegration services for victims of TIP. Mostly, the last three of these gaps were of more relevance than the first one. These gaps in particular aim to enhance services and their accessibility; thus, the project was successful in selecting the victim-approach and the trauma centered approach. Adopting this approach allowed the participants in the trainings and the awareness raising sessions to highlight challenges in referring victims to services which included lack of trust in the governmental procedures, fear of social stigma and lack of confidence in securing the privacy of victims.

The changes in priority of gaps, delays faced by the project team to acquire the necessary security clearance, in addition to the deep involvement of the NCCPIM&TIP in the activity's implementation, has affected the pathways of change planned by the project theory of change and led to significant delays in the project's delivery. The implementation of the project activities revealed several challenges to the pathways of change and assumptions of the theory of change. The first is the national focus on provision of direct social and economic services to potential victims as a mean to reduce cases of TIP. This led to interrupting or changing the paths seeking to operationalize the NRM to enhance the referring procedures. This changes in priorities along with the clear focus of the counterpart on delivering training and awareness raising to various groups require revisiting the developed theory of change.

Coherence

The review of the theory of change should be considered based in the capacity and the mandate of the national counterpart. Despite the fact that the committee already conduct studies with other counterparts in Egypt, the project faced several challenges with the to conduct the planned studies as the main activities of the project which should have informed other planned activities as trainings and capacity building. The main reason behind these challenges is the lack of corporation from the committee side to approve issuing these studies. The capacity of the committee itself is still evolving as it was only established in 2016 which expand and stretch its staff responsibilities between coordination efforts of national institutions and those of international organizations to combat TIP along organizing awareness raising campaigns. This affects negatively the

scheduling of events and acquiring necessarily security clearance. The capacity and the mandate of the committee pose restrictions on implementing activities of the project.

Effectiveness

The project has two outcomes and eight outputs; five under outcome 1 and three under outcome two. Under Outcome (1): the project exceeded its targets in relation to three of the five outputs and is in progress in relation to two outputs. Some of the activities planned to achieve Outcome (2) are still to start. This outcome focuses on enhancing services of shelters, economic re-integration through capacitating staff of TVET centres along with capacitating social workers, health workers and NGO staff when dealing with TIP victims. The findings indicate the effectiveness of the activities. Results show that the participants either in trainings or awareness raising sessions shared knowledge acquired in the sessions or planning actions which should further raise the awareness of different forms of human trafficking. These continuous efforts will gain the subject increased momentum in the society and potentially assist in defining new solutions. The project increased its effectiveness through including multiple target groups from outside Cairo and Alexandria in the trainings as many other governorates are of potential target by traffickers. The project has also introduced governmental staff to international best practices in protecting victims of TIP through an international visit to the Netherlands. The lessons learned from the visit will contribute to the development plan of a new TIP shelter in Egypt.

In conclusion, effectiveness of the project activities was a result of adopting activities which combine introducing knowledge, provision of technical assistance to governmental counterpart, capacity building of multiple groups and introducing international best practices.

Efficiency

The project activities were delayed for two main reasons; first is the extended time to acquire security clearances to conduct planned studies which were later changed or replaced) and the second issue was the frequent rescheduling of activities to align with the availability of NCCPIM&TIP staff, as their involvement is required in

all aspects of activities implementation. Nevertheless, the project was successful in compensating this delay by collaborating in activities with other UN agencies or ILO projects beside brainstorming with the national counterpart on developing new activities which should achieve the project's objectives. However, implementing these activities would require a new timeline to implement them using the remaining budget. Despite the continuous delays and changes in activities, it is realized that the project is dedicating sufficient resources to monitor its progress.

The project is playing a crucial role in mobilizing joint human and technical resources of ILO projects and other UN agencies contributing to the envisioned ONE UN VISION. The three organizations are open to extend the collaboration in order to maximize the impact of their work.

Impact and Sustainability

The project seeded actions towards sustainability especially through developing several manuals which could be used in future trainings, updating the labour inspector's procedural manual to include trafficking law no. 64, 2010. In addition, the project contributed to building a pool of advanced labour inspectors who can train and guide their peers. Despite that these actions of sustainability is woven in the project activities, a clear systematic plan of sustainability or an exit strategy is not in place to sustain the results. The project emphasized the added value and role of the ILO and the project donor in supporting activities of combating human trafficking. The project offers new areas of work for the ILO regarding TIP in capacitating new target groups and in eliminating discrimination in a critical labour occupation which is domestic work. This impact on enhancing the situation of domestic work will expand if further activities of the project address the stigma around this occupation.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations & Conclusions

1. It is highly recommended that the ILO and the NCCPIM&TIP re-assess the realistic aspect of the project theory of change to enhance its complementarity and assumptions to achieve

change in strengthen the capacity to combat human trafficking.

2. For future projects, it is highly recommended for the ILO that to multiply the governmental counterparts beside the NCCPIM&TIP. The selected partners could include national research centers which are mandated by collecting data, developing studies and other types of knowledge as the National Center for Social and Criminology Research.
3. It is highly recommended that ILO and NCCPIM&TIP include field visits to the shelters so the NGOs, rural women leaders, media professional and religious leaders along other groups could learn of their services. This will assist in seeding trust in the governmental entities before referring the victims to them emphasizing that shelters usually keep the identities of the people that refer TIP victim cases and the victims themselves anonymous for security reasons.
4. It is highly recommended that the project allocate resources to host increasing number from targeted groups from governorates other than Cairo and Alexandria which are the scope of the project. This geographical expansion will allow hosting rural women leaders, labour inspectors, religious leaders and other. This recommendation targets the ILO and the donor.
5. It is recommended that the project along with NCCPIM&TIP organize a follow up training for the rural women leaders. This follow up will be a suitable opportunity to discuss psychological support for victims of TIP; a subject that was highly requested for further elaboration by the respondents to the follow survey.
6. It is recommended to allocate time during the capacity building sessions to include practical examples for discussion with the participants
7. It is highly recommended that the planned awareness campaign includes messages to challenge the stigma around domestic work. The message should emphasize how domestic work is a main source of income for many families and the workers should be offered decent work conditions.

	8. It is recommended to the project's donor to approve a no cost extension to continue its activities and emphasize the established relationship with NCCPIM&TIP. 9. It is recommended that the project advocates for establishing a joint committee between active UN agencies in the field of human trafficking. The committee may include international organizations working in the same field. to discuss allocation of resources, navigate discussions with NCCPIM&TIP and align activities to ensure non-duplication. The committee can play an important role in advocating for enhancing data collection and accessibility. 10. It is recommended that the project design an exit strategy highlighting different steps to sustain the project results.
Main lessons learned and good practices	Lessons Learnt 1. Addressing economic root causes which jeopardize youth and women safety exposing them to risks of falling victims of human trafficking is key to combating human trafficking. 2. Reaching to institutions and organizations in governorates other than Cairo and Alexandria provide higher potential to reach TIP victims or postprandial victims with enhanced services. 3. Close coordination with national counterparts and involving diverse counterparts with varying mandates can streamline project implementation and align with the broad scope of the project's activities. Good Practices 1. Building a pool of advanced trained governmental staff who mentor their colleagues on identifying and reporting cases of human trafficking. The project adopted this method with labour inspectors in the Ministry of Labour. 2. Strengthening the capacity of governmental staff extends to assisting in developing visual formats of national documents. The project developed a mind map of the National Referral System (NRM) for human trafficking.