



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Promotion of productive employment and decent work for young people in Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Region, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.

Final Evaluation: March 2015 June 2015

Mode of Evaluation: Final, Independent

Administrative Office: RO-Lima

Technical Office:

Evaluation Manager: Craig Russon

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Project End: December 2014/ April 2015

Project Code: (RAF/11/05/SPA) encompassed
of the following projects: RAF/11/51/SPA,
RAF/11/52/SPA, MAU/11/01/SPA,
ALG/12/50/SPA

Donor & Project Budget: Spain (US\$
3,994,905.63)

Keywords: Youth employment, employment
creation

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure. The program aims to improve youth employment in the Maghreb region. It contributes to the promotion of decent work and productive employment. This is achieved by reinforcing the capacities of institutions and social partners, and through the analysis and the implementation of employment policies that take into account the specificities of young people. The target population is young graduates and young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Special attention is

given to girls. Countries are Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

The overall strategy of the program is based on interventions at the regional level (transnational) for the sharing of international knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, national components are designed to reflect the peculiarities of the youth employment challenge in each country and complementarity with international needs of youth employment programs. These national components focus on the development of innovative programs and strengthening between the public and private sectors.

Present Situation of the Project. The program finalized in April. Three program components (Morocco, Tunisia and regional) are the responsibility of the subregional Office in Cairo. The other two components are monitored by the ILO sub-regional office of Algiers (Algeria) and the Regional Office of Dakar (Mauritania). They worked in direct contact with the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and the National Coordinators.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the assessment is to inform about the relevance, adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the program, its process and its management, as well as sustainability and impact of the ILO's support to Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and Algeria. Also two cross-cutting areas: coverage and gender. The clients are ILO, national governments and donor (AECID).

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation applied a mixed methodology to guarantee an estimate based on evidence, paying

particular attention to cross-validate data. The methodological tools include:

- A review of existing literature;
- Structured and semi-structured individual interviews with strategic stakeholders in the country (92 stakeholders consulted);
- Structured and semi-structured discussions with control groups;
- A survey of ILO staff and stakeholders in the countries (47 surveyed stakeholders); and
- Direct observation.

The evaluation applied deductive reasoning leading to conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and adequacy

Conclusion 1-The program (including the regional program and in each of the four national components) had a strong relevance with regard to economic, social and political needs of the countries in the area of youth employment. Similarly, it was aligned with the development strategy prioritized by the Spanish government, as a donor country. A high level of harmonization with other donor countries and UN agencies was observed.

Conclusion 2-The four national components were adapted to the specific needs of each country, focusing on the necessary targets or on more realistic applicable goals given the contextual circumstances. This adaptation was valued as very positive since it allowed a flexibility of the program in response to local realities.

Conclusion 3- Regarding each country component and based on the nature of the program, the work was undertaken with the most strategic institutions and social partners. The tripartite mandate of the ILO was very well received in all countries. An external strategic project or institution created by the program that could have contributed to anchor the objectives at regional level, was missed.

Quality of the design

Conclusion 4-The flexibility in adapting the projects to the characteristics of each country distanced the program from its regional objectives. Moreover, no activity was planned within the projects to reinforce youth employment regionally. Some occasional technical collaborations occurred bilaterally and were not always within the scope of the program. After the implementation of the projects, all offices reported having ideas and proposals that could be shared at a regional level.

Conclusion 5.1. The objectives at the regional level were established on the basis of a very broad strategy that does not tackle them completely, either in the perspective of time, or budget. These goals were not adapted to the existing level of institutional cooperation in the region, which is below the required necessary level to implement the project. Whereas the expected goals require a work of adaptation in order to be applicable, their validity with regard to the ILO work in the region is unquestionable.

Conclusion 5.2. In each country, the fact of adapting the program objectives allowed a correct vertical coherence between activities, immediate objectives or outputs and objectives. The difficulty in performing 100% of the work illustrates the extent to which the objectives were oversized, taking into account the complexity context in which the work was performed. The way indicators are formulated must be reconsidered in order to have a more comprehensive system to assess the progress of projects and achievement of results.

Quality of the processes

Conclusion 6-The participation of stakeholders was made possible in particular through the Steering Committees organized based on the logic of tripartism. These Committees have functioned within the national components. A Committee was also set up for the regional component, but did not become operational. The Committees were very much appreciated by the social partners (workers' and employers' representatives).

Conclusion 7-The presence of other stakeholders representing the civil society (professional associations and NGOs) was more pronounced in the components that had a closer proximity to the beneficiary population (Mauritania and Algeria). Morocco and Tunisia were focused on the formulation of the National Development Strategy and on capacity building, and therefore worked more systematically in the context of tripartism. Process management was done in a participatory and inclusive manner, which promoted the ownership of results.

Conclusion 8-ILO experts were solicited, both by headquarters and the offices in Cairo and Dakar, but the division of responsibilities to link the regional cooperation network has not been clearly defined. Despite efforts made to create an online platform of experts at the regional level, a collaborative structure has not become permanent. As for the country components, the majority of activities took place within the institutions of the Central State, except for the case of Algeria, where the project was implemented in three *wilayas*. Tools to expand the

work to other regions of the country were developed, but implementation remains a challenge.

Conclusion 9-The program did not include a clear gender strategy in its design and planning. The inclusion of women in work teams, the selection of some beneficiary groups or the inclusion of gender experts occur only as a result of managerial decisions during the implementation of the program. The program lacks a strategic collaboration with international or national institutions or civil society associations working with gender perspective, which would have enriched the program objectives and processes and improved results.

Effectiveness

Conclusion 10.1 - Region: The evaluation cannot conclude that the program was effective.

10.2 Morocco: The abandonment of one of the objectives due to a lack of resources and time, allowing the work to focus on the objective of the SNE, performed according to processes with a high level of quality. In order to conclude high effectiveness, the NES need to be approved by the government and the Action Plan needs to be developed to enable the execution of the strategy, knowing that this task is not 100% the competence of the ILO.

10.3 Tunisia: Focusing activities on strengthening national capacities for employment policy development and on accountability of results could be considered a success, given that this incorporates a logical approach to measuring impact of future employment policies in Tunisia.

10.4 Mauritania: The project reached a satisfactory level of efficiency regarding the targets of reinforcement of capacities and development of innovative projects towards better employability. The efficiency was lower in terms of the reform of the NSE, which was transferred to another project.

10.5 Algeria: The project was effective in achieving the intended objectives. The program implemented local processes that encouraged the development of SMEs in the three *wilayas*. The considerable delay in program implementation deprived the possibility to consolidate the majority of the results.

Conclusion 11- The project contributed to broaden the visibility of the ILO in the four countries. In Morocco and in Tunisia, where the coordination of the regional, Moroccan and Tunisian components was installed, the ILO reinforced its presence at the institutional level due to the work done in the NSEs and institutional capacity building processes. In Mauritania, the project helped to consolidate a permanent structure of the ILO through a technical team that will continue with the implementation of other projects. In Algeria, where the regional office is located, the project fostered the

ILO's visibility in different provinces, and engaged stakeholders that were not normally included in ILO's actions. Similarly, the Spanish cooperation in the field of employment was much appreciated.

Conclusion 12- The work done under the program strengthened, among other areas, three important aspects of the ILO and its characteristics as a United Nations agency: contribution to all DWCP countries through a work based on these strategic lines, strengthening of the tripartite mandate, and broadcasting of programs, such as SIYB.

Efficiency

Conclusion 13- National projects were very effective in terms of their technical teams. Despite a reduction in the number of teams, they were technically very well prepared and with a great managerial capacity. Because of the volume of work, a coordinator focused solely on the regional area should have been required. Economic efficiency was affected by the budget reduction of 20%. Great ability to adjust immediate objectives or activities to new priorities based on availability of funds can be highlighted, as well as in the search for additional funds.

Conclusion 14- Regarding the timeframe, two main conclusions can be highlighted. On one hand, efficiency was very low due to the decentralization process and the reformulation of the program, which took two years until the program was ready for implementation. On the other hand, once the technicians were recruited, a very effective implementation of highly complex projects and in a shorter time frame needs to be underlined.

Orientation towards impact and sustainability

Conclusion 15-The sustainability of results was undertaken through three different methods: 1) The training of national technicians in the Ministries to continue performing their responsibilities; 2) The incorporation of goals achieved into new projects; and 3) a system of tools and trainers which can continue to multiply learning processes. However, all these processes still require supervision. The commitment of the tripartite components throughout the life of the program contributed to the ownership of the activities implemented and the understanding that the outstanding objectives were part of a national goal.

Conclusion 16- In connection with the earlier conclusion, the ILO's role was considered essential to continue the work on the goals already achieved, to ensure a consolidation of the targets and to continue the enhancement of dialogue at the regional level. Similarly, the role of Spain was reinforced as a reference country and donor in the work on youth employment projects throughout the Maghreb region.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendation 1-Regarding the high relevance of the program, it is recommended to continue the work in the field of youth employment at the national level, without sacrificing processes aimed to strengthen this area at the regional through the exchange of technical learning and strategic information between the various countries of the Maghreb region.

Recommendation 2-In the same way that national components were adapted, the strategy of the regional component should be adapted to the contextual reality in order to be operationalized with better defined goals, specific technical team and a budget adapted to the necessary costs to undertake these initiatives. Similarly, a permanent institution should be appointed to implement this component, which would be responsible for administrative and management functions for the interim periods between the scheduled special meetings.

Quality of the design

Same recommendation 2

Recommendation 3- Adjusting expected goals at the time when the program is formulated can be concluded as necessary. The goals are interconnected and difficult to cover if they are not tailored to the complexity of the country where projects will be implemented. Finding indicators that measure the progress both quantitatively and qualitatively, and that bring the possibility of calculating progress and not only the achievement of the final result is also necessary.

Quality of the processes

Recommendation 4- Keeping the Advisory Committees and/or Steering Committees that strengthen tripartism and national ownership of the results is recommended. Broadening the participation of civil society representatives and NGOs would also be interesting to bring the ILO's works to final beneficiaries through these networks.

Recommendation 5- A proper distribution of tasks among the ILO offices concerned and a clear definition of their responsibilities are required to implement programs with a regional scope. The fact that the program has engaged countries that are attached to different subregional offices within the ILO organizational chart could be a constraint for proper performance. This aspect should be taken into consideration and be evaluated before decision-making.

Recommendation 6- The programs and projects taking place in countries where the gender gap is very marked should be linked to organizations that can provide a permanent support to include the gender perspective into the program, taking into account gender cross-cutting areas in all stages of the project

life. This responsibility could also be given to a gender expert present at all stages of the project.

Recommendation 7- Maintain projects that include the dual dimension of providing technical support for institutional development and directly assisting projects in the area of employment in the country. Accept the flexibility of projects in order to address the complex scenario of the region in order to maintain the effectiveness of the project and the presence of the ILO as a specialized agency in the area of youth employment.

Recommendation 8- Consider the presence of the ILO in each country as a technical office in the field of employment. This remains a key aspect at the regional level in future initiatives in order to build a pool of data to be shared and to coordinate regional and national stakeholders in building a knowledge-sharing dimension in the region.

Efficiency

Recommendation 9- Capitalize the technical teams engaged to implement the four projects due to their expertise and their capacity to exercise the inter-institutional dialogue.

Recommendation 10- The Office should focus efforts at the early stage of the implementation of projects to avoid initial delays that can impact on the entire life of the project.

Impact and sustainability

Recommendation 11-

The ILO should maintain oversight of the results obtained in all countries, either through a second phase of the project or through additional projects that can be initiated immediately. This support can also be taken by means of bilateral agreements between the Spanish Ministries and national departments. It is important to avoid the closure of the project permanently despite the fact that a large part of the project managers have already been transferred.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. The role of the ILO in the region is perceived very positively in the area of youth employment, where it exercises a strong leadership vis-à-vis other UN agencies. This role is reinforced by the ILO's permanent presence in each of the countries from the region through the technical offices and teams that provide support to the responsible national institutions.

2. The ILO needs to address the challenge of incorporating the gender perspective in all actions, being of strategic-political nature and/or related to technical projects. This dimension must be integrated into all phases of project implementation.