



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## *Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the challenge together (DJEP) - Final evaluation*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Egypt</i>
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	<i>24 June 2020</i>
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>Country Office, Cairo</i>
<b>Technical Office:</b>	<i>Country Office, Cairo</i>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<i>Ricardo Furman</i>
<b>Evaluation Consultant:</b>	<i>Lotta Nycander</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	<i>EGY/11/02/CAN</i>
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<i>Global Affairs Canada</i>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Micro, small and medium scale enterprises; entrepreneurship, handicraft; Marketing; youth employment; National Action Plan, Job Search Clubs, Job Fair, gender-disaggregated data, Persons with Disabilities, capacity building, training, Master Trainer, employability</i>

### Background & Context

#### **Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure**

The purpose of this Project is to tackle the core problem of increasing lack of decent work opportunities for young people (aged 15-29) especially for young women and other vulnerable groups in this age cohort. The Project's Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) states that the Project should reach the following objectives (outcomes):

The ultimate outcome is increased decent employment opportunities for young men and women, especially groups that find it particularly hard to get access to such opportunities (such as women headed households, people with disabilities, poor people in rural areas and unemployed graduates).

Three intermediate outcomes were planned to enable the DJEP project to reach this ultimate outcome, as follows:

1. Improved performance of the Government of Egypt, the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) and other stakeholders implementing the National Action Plan for Youth Employment and the designing and implementation of youth employment related programmes and policies including addressing women's employment challenges;
2. Improved performance of regional and local stakeholders and partners (public, private and civil) in delivering relevant services linked to youth employment in the three selected Governorates including addressing women's employment challenges; and
3. Improved performance of the labour market in the three selected Governorates.

The project strategy has been to work on macro, mezzo and micro levels with the supply and demand sides of the job market. It has combined advocacy-oriented activities and policy work with

capacity building at the national level and implementation of youth employment initiatives.

In applying an integrated multi-dimensional approach, the Project has contributed to the development of youth employment initiatives, together with national and local development partners, civil society and the private sector. Engaging with policy-makers at all levels has aimed at strengthening evidence-based youth employment policies and programmes. The approach has been that immediate action is necessary to support the policy arena by implementing demonstration initiatives ‘on the ground’.

The Project has been implemented at central level, Cairo, and in the governorates of Minya, Port Said, and Red Sea in phase I - from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016. Luxor governorate was added in phase II, from 1 April 2016 to 31 May 2020.

A Chief Technical Advisor (and a successor on this post during the last year) managed the Project based in Cairo. The ILO DJEP team included several posts: National Project Coordinator; National Program Assistant, Skills and Employment Officer, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist and a Training Officer. Focal Points, Drivers, Project Assistants were appointed at the governorate level. ILO Headquarters provided technical support while the ILO Country Office mainly provided administrative support.

**Present Situation of the Project:** DJEP closed on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation is presented in the following objectives:

- Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objective and expected results;
- Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the project and the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable.
- Establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy;

- Provide recommendations to project stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the project outcomes;
- Identify lessons learned and good and assess to what extent the project addressed the mid-term evaluation recommendations.

The scope of the evaluation is geographically, the central level (Cairo) and the Governorates of Minya, Port Said, Red Sea and Luxor and both phases of the Project were subjected to this independent evaluation. The clients are the ILO and its constituents (the Government of Egypt, and the Employers and Workers organisations), the key stakeholders and partners to the Project, including the donor agency.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The methodology involved a mix of various data collection approaches and methods to collect primary data (particularly during field visits through interviews and focus groups) and, on secondary data, through a desk review of key documents in which a range of sources were used, including the core project steering document and the progress reporting documents. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were held with project staff in Cairo and in each of the project governorates; key informants and stakeholders; donor agency, project beneficiaries (young women and men), Non-Governmental organisations, employers, Job Search Club facilitators and Get Ahead Trainers. Additional (virtual) interviews were also made.

A total of 44 informants were interviewed in Cairo, Minya and Red Sea. The evaluator carried out 12 Focus Group Discussions with participants from youth groups, and employers. A questionnaire survey was applied to young women and men who benefited from the project. Gender dimensions and gender-disaggregated data, were considered throughout the data collection and analysis process.

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

Overall, it was found that - after being in operation for almost a decade – DJEP has been successful in

producing the majority of the outputs and outcomes and in benefitting the young women and men involved. For young people (the intended and ultimate beneficiaries) the Project was relevant and timely as it was launched when the Egyptian economy was in distress as a consequence of the political instability after the Arab spring uprising from 2011, as well as the 2008 economic crisis – both of which had serious negative ramifications on job opportunities and the labour market in the country.

One of the main triggers of the uprising was increasing poverty and the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Egypt. As the project implementation evolved over the years, DJEP built partnerships to help improve employability of the young people, exploring emerging occupations and conducting women-specific interventions. Much of its focus and efforts have been placed on developing entrepreneurial skills and business mind-sets of young people. At community level, the Project activities have been very much valued - demonstrated by the persons willing to register and start up small enterprises/businesses. On February 25, 2020, the Project organised a Closing ceremony for the Project's stakeholders. It was attended by four Ministers, the Canadian Ambassador and many others which is an indication that the Project has been relevant and gained appreciation in the eyes of the government and its development partners in terms of placing focus on youth and employment issues.

Below, the specific conclusions are presented against each of the evaluation criteria:

The evaluation's assessment is that the DJEP project has been relevant in meeting some of the needs of young people. One of the indications is the fact that, through a nation-wide competition, the most appropriate governorates were selected to participate, the ones that could show that they were in most need of economic activities to support young people and could meet the conditions required by the Project. These were Minya, Port-Said and the Red Sea Governorates, while Luxor Governorate became part of the operational area

later. The Project has placed much effort on developing entrepreneurial skills and business mind sets of young people operating in the informal economy. It is clear that at community level, the activities have been perceived as very relevant and valued by both young women and men, who were willing to register and start up small enterprises/businesses. The Project has built on ILO's experience on entrepreneurship development, including relevant ILO training packages – some of which have been embraced by institutions and organisations in the country as this evaluation has shown.

A contributing factor to the achievement of the DJEP is the extraordinary well-functioning working relationship between the project management and the donor representative at the Embassy of Canada. This relationship consisted of frequent contacts, a constant sharing of events, and issues (positive and negative) affecting the implementation throughout the project duration, and involving the Embassy staff, including the Ambassador, in all major events and field visits. By so doing, the achievements as well as the problems and challenges were well known by the donor, and problems that occurred along the way could be solved jointly.

For the most part, the project design has been valid. The original Logical Framework Analysis was revised, as was the Project Monitoring Framework in 2015. This led to a more valid, relevant and slimmed down version that is reflected in an improved results-based framework with (mostly) achievable and tangible outputs, demonstrating logical links to the overall outcomes. The revision has detailed indicators of achievement which is good, but they should have been quantified to enable progress to better documented.

The DJEP project has overall been effective. It has been able to achieve its stated immediate outcomes and has contributed to the ultimate outcome of increased decent employment opportunities for young women and men, including vulnerable young people who are differently abled. This has been achieved through developing strategies and

undertaking activities specifically directed to young women and men, in partnership with the government and other stakeholders, at a time when the country experienced political instability, after the Arab spring revolution which started in 2011. The Project was effective through its numerous activities in raising awareness and imparting knowledge, improving capacity and developing various skills for all categories of beneficiaries/programme participants during almost a decade. It has also been able to contribute to the matching of employers with potential employees through the annual Job Fairs and JSCs, and supported young people in starting and developing micro enterprises. All in all, it resulted in students completing entrepreneurship education; job placements made; new small businesses started (building on enhanced business skills); and jobs acquired for persons who are differently abled.

Among the Project's results is the following: 1,100 senior government senior staff and officials have participated in the various events, benefiting from capacity building and shadowing field work; 142,000 students have completed entrepreneurship education at various educational institutions; 5,100 new small businesses were started, building on enhanced business skills and action planning; 11,000 job placements were made; and 300 persons with disabilities got secured decent jobs. It is estimated that 40 per cent of the beneficiaries are women.

It can be concluded that the level of efficiency in the use of the financial and human resources available is overall satisfactory. The Project has made effort and been able to keep down training costs through conducting training activities in spaces and venues close to the participants and working with partnerships to create synergies. The period 2012-2018 were the highest in terms of expenditures as most of the activities of training, exchange visits and capacity building took place during this time.

The DJEP project has clearly had a positive impact on the situation of many young people, both women and men, the ultimate beneficiaries. With

new perspectives, capacity, skills and learning, they have been given opportunities and acquired jobs, thus have better prospects for a place in the labour market and chances of incomes and decent jobs in the future. Impact is also likely to have occurred in terms of knowledge and skills of many others who have participated in the project activities, from both the public and private sector and civil society (but to a lesser degree, representatives of the Employers and Workers organisations). More than 15 institutions (government, NGOs and private sector such as banks) have so far implemented training programs developed in partnership with the project.

Regarding sustainability, the Project has approached this issue along with the importance of ownership vis-à-vis its key stakeholders early on, and with consistence - which is praiseworthy. It has, together with the ILO office, managed to solicit and attract new funding from the private sector to ensure that support to young people for the purpose of jobs and opportunities could be continued, albeit in other shapes and forms. A concern here is that the COVID 19 pandemic is posing a threat and is likely to have an adverse effect on sustainability of the DJEP results, although it is very difficult to know exactly how the situation will evolve in Egypt.

It is finally concluded that DJEP has been gender responsive as it has integrated gender equality into the project strategy. It has been mindful of practical and strategic gender needs and included gender issues in awareness raising and capacity development activities. DJEP has also supported women-specific activities and, generally, its M&E system has included gender-disaggregated data. The Project has also been mindful of non-discrimination of vulnerable groups, including and benefitting persons who are differently abled.

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** (ILO Country Office; ILO Regional Office)

Job security is one of the areas in Egypt that is likely to be threatened by the COVID 19 pandemic and the Project's (ultimate) young beneficiaries

could be among its first “casualty”. Thus, ILO should help build resilience and be prepared to urgently design new support initiatives and solicit for new funds to ensure that the momentum and good results created through DJEP are not lost. The focus should be on entrepreneurship development with support to young people’s micro, small and medium enterprises. (*High priority, Level of resources: Medium, Time line: High*)

**Recommendation 2:** (ILO Country Office and Government of Egypt)

The ILO should mobilise resources in cooperation with the Government of Egypt and other relevant agencies to continue to support entrepreneurship activities in the Red Sea Governorate and/or in other parts of the country, particularly focusing on market linkages for producers. It should capitalise on the success that was recognised in working with different stakeholders and partners especially the Ministry of Manpower at the governorate level. This could help the situation and build resilience of the same category of beneficiaries that participated in the DJEP project – young women and men and those who differently abled/persons with disabilities. (*High priority, Level of resources: Medium, Time line: High*)

**Recommendation 3:** (National Council for Women)

The DJEP trained a pool of Trainers and Master Trainers in all covered governorates, and handed them the GET Ahead training toolkit/materials. The National Council for Women should announce the availability of expertise and certified GET Ahead Training, so that there is a chance that this pool of expertise is used during the Pandemic times, also by other entities including NGOs, enabling the training to be cascaded in the country, nationwide. (*High priority, Level of resources: Low, Time line: High*)

**Recommendation 4:** (ILO and MSMEDA)

The SIYB training has been handed over to the MSMEDA. ILO and MSMEDA should make concerted efforts to ensure that future training and capacity development includes persons who are

differently abled in accordance with the national strategies and initiatives that call for such inclusion. (*High priority, Level of resources: Low, Time line: High*)

**Recommendation 5:** (ILO country office)

The consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic is not known to date, but it is a concern expressed in this evaluation report and one which very likely will jeopardize jobs and incomes benefits accrued by the beneficiaries of this Project. The ILO could explore the possibility/interest in the Government to, jointly, develop ideas for technical discussions/support initiatives in 2020 that could help young people’s inclusion in some form of social protection scheme in the country - perhaps even linked to an employment component. This could mitigate some of negative consequences the pandemic is likely to have including the young workers and entrepreneurs that took part in this Project’s activities. (*Medium priority, level of resources: Low, Time line: Medium*)

**Recommendation 6** (ILO Country Office and DJEP Project key Partners)

The ILO should continue to work with the Government of Egypt and social partners to advocate for the Parliament to endorse the proposed National Action Plan on Youth Employment. (*Medium priority, Level of resources: low, Time line: Medium*)

**Recommendation 7** (ILO Country Office) – Medium priority

The ILO Country Office should continue to share the excellent DJEP promotional materials in different ways including digitally, through websites and social media, to inspire others working on youth employment and entrepreneurship development (to Partners, but also within the ILO itself and to other UN agencies). (*Level of resources: Low, Time line: High*)