



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
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## *Independent Final Evaluation of the project “Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia”*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Ethiopia.*

**Final Evaluation:** *14<sup>th</sup> April 2019*

**Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*

**Administrative Office:** *ILO CO for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan*

**Technical Office:** *MIGRANT*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Ricardo Furman*

**Evaluation Consultant(s):** *José María Álvarez (team leader) & Filmon Hailu*

**Project Code:** *ETH/15/01/EEC*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** *EU- Euros 5,000,000*

**Keywords:** *Migration, Reintegration*

### Background & Context

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

In November 2013, the Government of KSA decided to enforce the compulsory return of irregular migrants as part of the “Saudization” of the KSA labour market. Between November 2013 and March 2014, more than 163,018 Ethiopian migrants were forcibly deported. The repatriation was an unexpected phenomenon requiring a prompt response.

In order to address the above challenges, the ILO in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and other relevant stakeholders implemented a four years project titled “*Support to the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia*”. The project is part of a broader programme on improving labour migration management in

Ethiopia and it was implemented in 21 Woredas of three migrant prone regions in Ethiopia namely Oromia, Amhara and Tigray National Regional States.

The specific objective of the project has been formulated as “improved reintegration assistance to Ethiopian migrants through a holistic and coherent economic and social empowerment approach, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups”.

This objective should be achieved through three results:

Result 1.1: Returnees and local vulnerable community members have been provided with needs-appropriate social support

Result 1.2: Training programmes that meet local economic opportunities and individuals’ interest have been designed and delivered

Result 1.3: Returnees and local vulnerable community members have been provided with long-term socio-economic (re)integration support.

The project has been managed by a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in the project Office in Addis Ababa reporting to the director of the ILO CO for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. It was technically backstopped by MIGRANT, ILO HQ, Geneva. Other relevant units in the ILO such as Social Finance and Enterprise also provided support on technical matters. The CTA was supported by three National Project Coordinators and Admin and Finance Assistance based in the project Office in Addis Ababa.

#### **Present Situation of the Project**

At the time of the evaluation, the implementation of the project had been completed. The duration of the project has been 50 months between January 2015 and February 2019.

## Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation is a means to respond to the information needs of the technicians and managers of the different parties involved: donor, implementing agency, governments and other stakeholders and to obtain an independent perspective regarding the way that the program's actions have evolved and the impacts that they have had. This general purpose has been developed for the case at hand into more specific points described by Terms of Reference.

- a. Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objective and expected results, identifying unexpected positive and negative results.
- b. Assess the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable
- c. Establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN, SDGs, EU and national development frameworks
- d. Provide recommendations to project stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the project outcomes

The evaluation has focused on the project, its achievements and its contribution to the overall national efforts to improve migration governance. It has assessed all the results and key outputs produced since the start of the project. The geographical scope has covered the three named regions where the project has carried out its direct interventions. As a final evaluation the focus has turned towards compiling results and drawing lessons as well as identifying possible links with other projects and /or future interventions.

## Methodology of evaluation

Considering the time constraints and resources it was decided to apply a judicious combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. In line with this, the following tools has been applied: document reviews, semi-structured face to face individual interviews, phone and Skype individual interviews, group discussions, direct observation and mini-surveys. These were considered tools easy to apply, allowing the information to be obtained and analysed in relatively short periods of time.

The main instrument used in establishing the frame of the information needs has been the Evaluation Matrix, a double-entry table where every one of the criteria/categories was disaggregated into key questions and indicators, along with the tools to be used for the collection process.

The logical framework (LF) approach have been taken on as the primary working approach. The project logframe available has served as the main reference to conduct the analysis of achievements (effectiveness).

As for the sequence of phases, the evaluation has also followed the path anticipated in the ToRs document: (i) initial briefing; (ii) desk review; (iii) field visits including a debriefing session with national stakeholders; (iv) preparation of draft report for circulation and discussion among stakeholders; (vii) consolidation of comments and (viii) elaboration of the final version of the evaluation report.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

### 1. Relevance and strategic fit

There is a general consensus about the high relevance and strategic fit of the project. It primarily represented a vital response to a very specific crisis and, additionally, a coherent initiative to fill the existing gap in the national mechanisms to deal with the labour reintegration of returned migrants. No explicit strategy nor policy was in place before the project and in this sense, it has been a key initiative to bring the reintegration issue in the national policy agenda.

It has been found that the needs assessment conducted in 2014 provided an in-depth analysis of the causes and costs of migration as well as the needs of returnees.

Although the project is the first one to deal with reintegration issues, it gives continuity to previous ILO's experiences with Domestic Migrant Workers and represented a step forward in the development of ILO's Labour Migration & Mobility Strategy for Africa. It clearly linked to ILO's policy outcomes and contributed to the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP). Likewise, it also contributes to a number of objectives within the country's Growth and Transformation Plan 2011-15 of the Ethiopian Government and has provided valuable inputs for the Migration and Mobility Strategy of European Union in the Region.

### 2. Validity of the design

The design revolves around the so called four pillars (psycho-social, economic, policies and awareness) and it is generally viewed as a very holistic manner to deal with labour reintegration issues. The only few points of disagreement emerge around the thoroughness of the assessment made of the regulations and the capacities in place and grassroots level, particularly with regard to the micro-finance component and the involvement of cooperatives. It has been established that the project conducted an assessment of the business service and training market, but the local institutions still argue that in some cases the project expected them to provide services that they were not in a position to offer.

There is an inconsistency at the design level between the four pillars and the logframe (LF) structure. The policy and the awareness pillars are missing in the LF. However, the project addressed the need of policy awareness by implementing

outputs and achieving outcomes in these areas including some unplanned and very relevant results.

The sustainability strategy has been based on embedding the project activities into existing programs and policies which is technically in line with the mainstream ideas for sustainability, but these might require some further development. It would have been desirable a bit more of precision about the different components: skills training, income generation, awareness, etc. Using a sustainability matrix and outlining an explicit Theory of Change could be also ways to move in this direction.

Gender has been considered in the analysis of needs and the settings of targets (50 % of project beneficiaries should be women). Some issues remain, however, on how the project could have gone further in analyzing the impact of its activities from a gender perspective.

### **3. Effectiveness of the management arrangements**

The project has been implemented through a broad partnership which has brought together a wide range of capacities from both public and private institutions. While this represents a strength from various points of view it also acts as a challenge at the time of assembling the different pieces of the implementation machinery.

The collaboration between the project and the different partners has been always formalized via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a practice that helps to set out the commitments and responsibilities of the different parties. Despite this, various stakeholders highlighted that at regional and woreda level the project activities began without the local partners being provided with enough guidance and /or training. This situation is not necessarily explained by the absence of preparatory activities from the project but also the consequence of the high staff turnover.

The governance structure (Steering and Technical Committees) has worked relatively well, specially at regional level. It has been reported that the Regional Steering Committees have been instrumental in building a very constructive dynamic around the project. At federal level project's governance and technical bodies have met less than contractually planned. The project, however has shown its ability to link with Round Tables and Task Forces deriving from national processes in progress.

Gaps in communication that affected the adequate dissemination of the project's products and services have been reported. The involvement of ILO constituents has been also found a bit unbalanced. Unions and Employers reported that they followed up the project and some of their members participated in training events, however, their involvement

in the implementation has been very limited. A collaboration for job placement in the tourist industry was explored with the Ethiopian Employers Confederation but this option was never materialized. Their involvement in the policy processes has not reached the desired level either. It is understood that they have not developed clear institutional guidelines yet to enhance their role in this kind of processes.

Finally, it must be said that the risk of overlapping with IOM, another UN organization with mandate on migration issues, has been well managed in this particular case and did not evolve into any specific conflict of jurisdiction. The two organizations with the Governmental ARRA participate in different fora where reintegration issues are discussed.

### **4. Efficiency**

Overall, efficiency is assessed as positive. The project's activities have been implemented through the programs of existing institutions, being this an approach that optimizes the use of resources and enables the capacity building. The project has been able to implement an extensive list of activities with a relatively small structure.

Another positive aspect is that the project has been keen to obtain synergies and complementarities with different institutions. Technical and financial resources have been available on time, although the limited understanding of ILO administrative procedures by some of the stakeholders at regional and woreda level has caused some delays.

It has been established as well that ILO technical units at HQ and RO have made contributions to develop the different products and ensure the use of ILO expertise.

ILO mechanisms have been in place to monitor the inputs and control the expenses. The implementation of the program of activities as well as the budget has been satisfactory in both cases. The project was able to overcome some initial delays in the implementation deriving from the reliance of external political actors and the difficulties in coordinating the dynamics between the different regions. The project has been extended from the original time plan of 36 months to 50 months.

### **5. Effectiveness**

The project has been able to deliver an extensive list of products and services to the returnees' community. According to the figures calculated by the project team, 2,962 returnees have received psycho-social support, 13,753 returnees received entrepreneurship training, 12,280 returnees were trained in vocational skills, 8,142 returnees and local vulnerable population have been provided with loans to start their own business or got employment as salaried workers. 1,051 women returnees were trained in housekeeping and supplied with laundry machines and working spaces in Universities enabling them to provide

laundry services to students. Moreover, around 400 Civil Servants at Federal and Regional level have been trained to provide the services.

The achievement of targets has been generally high, between 80% regarding to the number of returnees who had access to credit services and 153% concerning those who received technical and vocational training.

Trainings have been assessed positively by the trainees (final beneficiaries as well as future trainers) but there are some questions lingering about its real effectiveness to get returnees into business or work. Some issues have emerged about the thoroughness of the screening process and the matching of the training offer with their interests.

The loan component has been very controversial as well. Beneficiaries systematically complained about the interest rate and the limited amount of loan that they could access. The issue is complex and goes into a broader discussion about how to integrate vulnerable groups into the labour/business market. The evaluation has found that the project has struggled to communicate with returnees and match the project activities with their expectations.

Concerning the institutional and regulatory framework the project has been able to deliver various assessments and mapping exercises that have helped to increase the knowledge and the institutional base around reintegration issues. The culmination of this series has been the approval of the Reintegration Directive in October 2018. An awareness campaign has also been conducted including various TV and Radio programs, documentaries, essays competition and workshops with religious leaders.

## **6. Impact orientation and sustainability**

At Federal level the main impact is probably related to the subsequent effects of the Reintegration Directive. The Directive stated the duties and responsibilities of the technical committee established to manage the support provided up to the woreda level and set out the principles and rules of the process and roles. As a result of this, the Ethiopian Government seems to be better equipped to deal with reintegration issues.

In terms of awareness the general perception is that the project has managed to break some of the negative stereotypes that the Ethiopian society had about the returnees.

The project has been a relatively successful kick-off experience, but the challenge ahead is to mainstream the dynamic into the national policies. No specific factor has been identified as a critical barrier for the continuation of the process. The political will to take it forward is probably the main factor. Donors and CSO seem to be willing to join forces in this line and the GoE recognizes that it needs to take some action.

## **Recommendations**

### **To the Government of Ethiopia.**

- I. Develop a roadmap for the effective implementation of the Reintegration Directive.
- II. Use the lessons learned from this project with regard to the psychological and attitudinal conditions of the returnees to develop new ways of engaging and communicating with this community at the time of return.
- III. Explore possible areas and spaces within the reintegration policies and structures to incorporate the know-how and capabilities of the Civil Society Organizations.
- IV. Improve the collection and production of labour migration statistics for evidence-based policy making.

### **To ILO**

- V. Study alternatives within the ongoing programs, either those with focus on labour migration or the Decent Work Country Program, to support the elaboration of the roadmap and follow up to the implementation of the Reintegration Directive.
- VI. Fine-tune the final results reporting of the project by disaggregating the final values of logframe indicators and include other results that have not been anticipated in the Logframe, particularly at the policy level.
- VII. Compile and systematize lessons learned from the project and explore ways to disseminate them within the organization and across the region.
- VIII. Reinforce the mechanisms of coordination with other organizations active in the sector, such as ARRA and IOM. In particular, consider the possibility of developing a communication strategy around reintegration issues in partnership with these organizations.

### **To ILO and the National Constituents**

- IX. Jointly explore ideas to enhance the role of the national constituents, mainly Unions and Employers Associations, in the design and implementation of reintegration policies.
- X. To study and operationalize agreements for job placement in new sectors beyond horticulture and child care.

### **To the EU and the community of donors**

- XI. Consider future intervention with focus on reintegration issues. Some might require further support from the international community to be consolidated.