

Quick Facts

Improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS)

August 2023

Description and purpose of the evaluation

The midterm cluster evaluation of the ILO component of the Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (ILO/PROSPECTS) aimed to 1) assess progress towards the achievement of the project's development objectives, 2) assess performance based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and ILO's cross cutting policy issues, 3) provide strategic and operational recommendations, and 4) highlight lessons and good practices to improve performance, delivery, and sustainability of results. The evaluation covered the period between July 2019 to December 2022 and all ILO/PROSPECTS evaluation contexts: Global, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Uganda. The evaluation examined the project's relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Furthermore, it examined consideration of the ILO's cross-cutting issues – social dialogue, awareness and compliance with the International Labour Standards, gender equality, disability inclusion, and the fair transition to an environmentally sustainable economy – in the project's design and implementation.

Methodology

The evaluation followed ILO's guidance for clustered evaluation and used a mixed-methods approach to triangulate the findings and increase validity and reliability. The following sources and analysis approaches were used:

- Comprehensive document review, including project design documents, progress reports, tracer studies, fact sheets and other relevant documents,
- Analysis of overall- and country-level target achievement based on the project's M&E data,
- Analysis of survey responses from 140 respondents – ILO staff and constituents, as well as PROSPECTS partners and implementers – 45% of which were women,
- Interviews with over 100 key informants – including ILO staff, constituents, PROSPECTS partners, implementing partners, and consultants – coupled with facilitation of 37 focus group discussions involving more than 190 participants from both internally displaced and host community groups,
- Two illustrative case studies on 1) perspectives on the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Dohuk, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and 2) the Recognition of Prior Learning in Kenya,
- Validation workshop and feedback on the draft evaluation report.

Text box PROSPECTS

ILO/PROSPECTS is a five-year initiative aiming to alleviate the long-term challenges and needs of forcibly displaced persons and host communities in eight countries across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Greater Horn of Africa.

PROSPECTS activities take place in four thematic pillars:

- 1. Education and learning:** Increased number of forcibly displaced and host community people with quality education and training.
- 2. Employment and livelihoods:** Increased number of forcibly displaced and host community members with enhanced livelihoods and/or employment in safe/decent work.
- 3. Protection and inclusion:** Increased government protection, (social) protection, and inclusion for forcibly displaced and host communities.
- 4. Partnership and New Ways of Working:** Transformation in the way partners and other global/regional stakeholders respond to forced displacement crisis.

Key findings

1. ILO ensured that the project is generally aligned with the priorities of constituents through consultative design and implementation. However, objectives related to finding durable solutions for forcibly displaced persons may not fully coincide with governmental priorities in restrictive policy environments.
2. The project is aligned with ILO's strategic frameworks, including the Programme and Budget Outcomes, Decent Work Country Programme strategies, and Country Programme Outcomes, and it mirrors the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees.
3. Despite operating in challenging contexts, ILO/PROSPECTS has delivered impressive results, particularly in supporting institutions, supporting beneficiaries seeking employment, creating job opportunities, and developing studies, curricula, and information systems. However, success levels vary across activities and countries, with political and social changes and national regulations and policies being the most significant impediments to project effectiveness.
4. While the project is generally seen as well-resourced and managed, about a third of ILO staff voiced the need for additional human resources and time. Furthermore, concerns were raised about the project's wide thematic focus, which could result in smaller interventions and limit impacts. The need to further leverage synergies between ILO and PROSPECTS partners and to refine learning and knowledge dissemination was also noted.
5. ILO/PROSPECTS' mixed approach of technical, financial, and infrastructure support holds substantial potential for impact. However, disparities in reaching beneficiaries were equally noted, especially women transitioning into work and persons with disabilities. Further, some beneficiaries reported unfulfilled expectations regarding employment opportunities and ongoing support.
6. PROSPECTS has influenced the ILO considerably and helped establish ILO in a relatively new area. However, perspectives vary regarding the partnership's added benefit to beneficiaries and the extent of change in the inner workings of partner organisations.

7. While there is technical capacity and motivation to sustain project results, financial constraints among pose a threat to sustainability.

Key lessons learned and good practice

Lessons learned:

1. Partnering, engaging in effective communication, and staying agile in the project implementation can facilitate addressing challenges that result from overlapping mandates of different institutions.
2. Limited access to finance can limit the effectiveness or sustainability of start-up and entrepreneurship programmes.

Good practice:

1. Providing childcare services can encourage women with childcare responsibilities to enrol, participate in, and complete support services and programmes.

Key recommendations

Main recommendations:

1. Create additional and more comprehensive pathways for the target groups.
2. Enhance entrepreneurship support and access to finance.
3. Expand efforts on developing value chains and market linkages.
4. Continue strengthening engagement with government partners and other tripartite partners.
5. Identify key barriers in the regulatory environment – and seek to respond to them jointly.
6. Enhance communication with beneficiaries to better manage expectations.
7. Render sharing of lessons learned, good practices, and failures more systematic and effective.

Emerging recommendation:

- Reflect on what PROSPECTS means for ILO as an organisation – strategically and operationally.

Quotes

“As a refugee this was the only opportunity to start up my own business.”

“I added the ILO trainings into my CV, and it was useful to get a job. The employer asked me about this experience during the job interview.”

“It would have been great if we were given the opportunity to be given in-kind support with the basic tools needed to repair the machines; I could start my own business as I succeeded with flying colours in the theory and the trainings, my teachers and bosses said that I was perfect.”

“Before the training, we were managing our businesses the traditional way. We didn’t have business plan; we didn’t have a bank account or any proper source of funding. But now, we have acquired assets, we are organised as a cooperative, and we are thinking of selling our products not just in other parts of Ethiopia, but to the neighbouring countries.”

“I could not afford school fees and I decided to enrol for the training in mechanics. The course really helped me but I have a challenge of lack of [start up] capital to be able to stand on my own.”