



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Ethiopia Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Ethiopia</i>
Final Evaluation:	<i>November-December 2020</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>ILO Country Office for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan</i>
Technical Office:	<i>ILO DWT Cairo and MIGRANT</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>Ricardo Furman</i>
Evaluation Consultant(s):	<i>Chris Morris & Meaza Nega</i>
Project Code:	<i>ETH/16/01/ITA</i>
Donor(s) & Budget:	<i>European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Trust Fund through the Italian Embassy in Ethiopia: 1,516,837 EURO</i>
Keywords:	<i>Migration, Youth Employment</i>

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project aimed to address the problems of the high rate of youth unemployment for graduates of universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and as a result the high rates of irregular migration out of Ethiopia each year through building the body of evidence on migration and employment services in Ethiopia and demonstrating a pilot project of an integrated Public Employment

Services (PES) Centre. The project was part of the larger “Stemming Irregular Migration in Northern & Central Ethiopia” (SINCE) programme funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Trust Fund (EUTF). The project ran from August 2016 until December 2020.

The overall objective of the project was to: “Contribute to reduction of irregular migration through creating decent livelihood and employment opportunities for the youth.” The project had two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Increased evidence on migration, employment and decent livelihood opportunities in selected woredas that will inform SINCE project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Outcome 2: Enhance smooth school to work transition for University and TVET women and men graduates.

The project was managed by a Chief Technical Advisor with support from a National Project Coordinator, a Finance and Administration Assistant and a Driver.

Present Situation of the Project

The project began in August 2016 and was initially planned to be completed in December 2019 but due to initial delays was granted a no-cost extension, followed by another short extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project piloted two employment services centres, registering 3,534 job seekers (1,664 women and 1,870 men), and 487 job seekers (345 women and

90 men) were placed in decent jobs. 4,434 labour market experts and counsellors (1,295 women and 3,129 men) were trained on the “Surfing the Labour Market”. Additionally, the project produced a number of knowledge products including a socio-economic assessment and a rapid survey of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the job market in Ethiopia, as well as supporting the inclusion of ILO priorities in the National Plan of Action on Job Creation.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and expected results, identify unexpected positive and unexpected results of the project, assess the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable, establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN and the national development frameworks, identify lessons learned and potential good practices, and provide recommendations to project stakeholders.

The intended clients of the evaluation are ILO constituents at both the national and regional level, including Ministries and Bureaus responsible for employment in Ethiopia, representatives of employers and workers, and educational institutions. Additional clients include Italian Embassy, the EUTF, ILO’s Country Office, regional office, and technical backstopping offices.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation used a mixed methods methodology relying mainly on qualitative approaches, combining a desk review of secondary data with key informant interviews and focus-group discussions. The evaluation was led by an external international evaluator and supported by a National Consultant based in Addis Ababa and a data collector in Bahir Dar. Data collection took place over approximately two and a half weeks. Stakeholders interviewed included ILO project and technical backstopping staff, representatives of the Italian Embassy and

the EUTF, government representatives of the federal and regional line ministries, employers’ federations, and workers organizations in both Addis Ababa and Bar Dahir. Interviewees also included staff and users of the employment centres and representatives of universities and training colleges. A virtual stakeholder de-brief was held at the end of the data collection period.

Limitations of the evaluation included remote management by the team leader due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the limited opportunity to conduct remote interviews, the security situation in Ethiopia distributing the data collection process, and difficulties in arranging some interviews. All limitations were mitigated by careful coordination between the evaluation team and ILO to ensure the findings remain valid.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and strategic fit

The project is relevant to the goals of the Ethiopian Government as demonstrated by its alignment with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPII) and more recently the National Plan of Action on Jobs and the work supporting the Job Creation Commission (JCC). The project also aligned with the needs of the youth in strengthening the ability to find paid employment though improved soft skills, better information, and being linked to potential employers. The project was relevant to the Employers Federation and Workers Organizations but greater involvement in design and implementation of the project could have strengthened the relevance further; indeed, the initial design of the overall SINCE project should have been more inclusive which would have strengthened relevance and overall ownership to the project. As the example of the YES Centre is scaled up elsewhere in Ethiopia, greater attention also needs to be made to ensuring the services are relevant to employers as the YES Centre and ESC are currently used by a limited number of employers.

Validity of Design

The project's design is logical but could have benefited from a fully developed theory of change as certain achievements of the project, most notably the advocacy and support work done at the central level to include the example and lessons learned of the pilot into policy are missing from the PRODOC. Holding a theory of change workshop with key stakeholders during the project design would have also addressed the problem of an initial lack of consultation.

Project Effectiveness

The project has achieved its outcomes and outputs, and in most cases exceeded the indicator targets set out in the logical framework. Although during the initial stage of the project, the job registration and matching was quite low, there has been a significant uptick in the second half of the project, with the caveat that numbers slowed down following the nationwide COVID-19 restrictions implemented in March. This is partly due to the project being able to accommodate the setting up of a second centre based on feedback from stakeholders and recommendations of learning exercises to include a broader geographical range. As this is a pilot project, the targets are quite low which has caused some dissatisfaction among stakeholders, and it is important the centres continue to expand the numbers of individuals they register and train, and increase the vacancies which are registered and matched by continued outreach to users and employers alike.

Key enablers of the project include the broad range of stakeholders who have participated in the project, the flexibility in budget and approach, and using existing government locations to set up the centres, which have all supported the project at the Bahir Dar level. Additionally, ILO has received strong support from its technical backstopping experts which has supported a number of lesson learning exercises. ILO's ability to leverage its connections at the central level has been a strong driver in the successes in ensuring

the example and lessons of the pilot project are included in developing government policies which being developed by the JCC. Issues which have constrained the project initially included the lack of consultation during the initial design and the geographical reach of the YES Centre prior to the ESC being opened. Areas were constraints still exist include the lack of resources for the centres' staff to conduct outreach to employers and as a knock-on effect the limited number of employers using the centre. None of the constraints should be insurmountable in the future so long as the centres continue to be effectively managed by the Technical Working Group (TWG) and operational resources are made available, but lessons learned from this project should be capitalized and used to influence the scale up of these projects in future.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

ILO has managed its resources well, both through the effective management of the project team's time and also through effectively leveraging considerable technical expertise resources from ILO globally. The project had a number of steering and advisory committees involving the tripartite constituents and other key stakeholders. This has been effectively, particularly in Bahir Dar at promoting cooperation between stakeholders which will be important for the long-term sustainability of the project. The project does appear to have changed cooperation among stakeholders in Bahir Dar with a number of evaluation participants indicating they collaborated with other institutions and offices in a manner which had not been done before. A concern for the project is that some stakeholders shared they did not believe everyone was clear on their responsibilities moving forward. The interviews demonstrated this was often linked to one office or institution believing another stakeholder was not clear on their role or was not fulfilling their responsibilities. This suggests the concerns are linked to continued coordination more so than the implementation of the project. This concern was not universal with other stakeholders indicating responsibilities were

clear. The delay in recruitment of the ILO team also impacted the overall efficiency of the project by causing delays at the start of the project, and this may well have contributed to the initial failure to engage MoLSA effectively which was addressed once the ILO team was recruited.

Efficiency of Resource Use

The project has utilized the grant in accordance with the planned budgets, with the caveat there have been two no-cost extensions. There has been flexibility in the design which allowed both for the implementation of Outcome 2 to be moved to the provincial level and for an additional centre to be opened to address concerns about the geographical reach of the project. ILO chose to implement the centres on a limited budget to demonstrate what was possible within existing resources. However the lack of transport and phone resources for employer outreach for the centre is a particular concern, and it would be useful for future projects to identify what costs are essential for running the Centre, and if possible in future interventions try different resource levels to identify the most effective approach. This will allow government departments to budget effectively in future.

Orientation to Impact and Sustainability

The project has had a significant impact in changing the mindset of key stakeholders towards PES work in Ethiopia and on the importance of merit based recruitment. The first is demonstrated by the inclusion of the ideas behind the pilot in the National Plan of Action on Jobs and by future plans of donors to fund similar interventions, and the second by responses from employers and the Employers Federation indicating how some companies have changed their recruitment practices. Any assessment of the project needs to acknowledge this was a pilot project which does limit raw beneficiary numbers. That said, despite the project over-achieving on its intended targets, a broad range of stakeholders, including those who are critical for ensuring the long-term success of the centres believed the project's impact had not been as high as expected. This was particularly related to the number of

individuals supported by the centre but also some believe the initial cooperation had fallen back towards the end of the project. This is a concern for the long-term sustainability of both the centres in Bahir Dar and attempts to scale up the project further. ILO should identify ways to try to continue to engage with the stakeholders and provide some level of technical support in the next year to ensure enthusiasm for the project is maintained. At a national level the plans being developed by the JCC and international donors bode well for sustainability and the incorporation of lessons learned and successes into scale up activities. However, challenges exist in ensuring the responsibilities of key stakeholders are clarified.

Follow-up of the ILO mid-term internal evaluation and internal assessments recommendations

The project has conducted learning exercises including a mid-term evaluation and an assessment of the YES Centre. The evaluation found many of the recommendations of these learning exercises have been addressed in the second half of the project, although a small number such as working on monitoring the impact of career counselling had not been followed up on. Although it is not mandatory ILO policy to complete management responses to internal evaluation it is advisable for such responses including an action plan for addressing the recommendation to be done as good practice to such exercises laying out an action plan for response. Despite this absence, the leveraging of ILO technical responses to support learning and assessment helped the project respond to initial challenges and ensure stakeholder feedback was gathered and considered.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. Ensure participation of all stakeholders during project design.

Addressed to: ILO

Priority: High

Timeframe: During project design
Resource Implications: Meeting Costs

2. Develop a theory of change for future projects which demonstrates the pathways of change of achieving the project's objectives.

Addressed to: ILO

Priority: High

Timeframe: During project design

Resource Implications: Meeting Costs

3. Identify ways to ensure the employers and workers are more involved in project implementation in future activities.

Addressed to: ILO, EEF and their local branches, and CETU

Priority: High

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resource Implications: Needs to be included in project budgets

4. Engage employers early in future PES interventions.

Addressed to: ILO and other implementers (government ministries, EEF, NGOs or UN agencies implementing similar projects etc)

Priority: High

Timeframe: At the start of projects

Resource Implications: Communication Costs

5. Increase outreach on awareness of services for the centres in future projects.

Addressed to: ILO and Project Partners

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: During the inception stage and throughout project implementation

Resource Implications: Staff time and awareness material costs.

6. Conduct a gender responsive situational and power analysis if possible during the design of the project, and if not during the inception phase of the project.

Addressed to: ILO

Priority: High

Timeframe: During project design

Resource Implications: Consultancy or staff costs

7. Conduct more detailed post-service monitoring of users of the YES centre and ESC and recipients of the "Surfing the Labour Market" training to understand the longer term impacts of the career guidance.

Addressed to: ILO and project partners (both in the continuation of the YES and ESC and to be included in the development of future project.)

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resource Implications: Staff Costs

8. Review the Communication Strategy of Employment Services regularly to roles and responsibilities continue to be clearly understood and implemented by the respective departments and institutions.

Addressed to: TWG

Priority: High

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resource Implications: Meeting Costs

9. In future projects, ensure training plans are included in the design of the project which allow for regular on the job training with key staff from implementing partners (such as staff of an employment centre) to ensure capacity building gains are retained

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resource Implications: Staff time and training costs

10. Ensure the lines of responsibility among government ministries for implementing PES centres are clarified when funding new projects.

Addressed to: Donors, Implementers, Government Ministries

Priority: High

Timeframe: As projects are developed

Resource Implications: None