



# Evaluation Summary



International  
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## *Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE): “Working Together in Qalyoubia and Menoufia”*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	Egypt
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	July-September 2020
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	Independent
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	DWT/CO-Cairo
<b>Technical Office:</b>	DWT/CO-Cairo
<b>Evaluation Manage:</b>	Inviolata Chinyangarara
<b>Evaluation Consultants:</b>	Sten Toft Petersen (International Consultant), Eman Shady (National Consultant)
<b>Project Code:</b>	EGY/16/02/NOR
<b>Donor &amp; Budget:</b>	Norway, US \$ 1.194.600
<b>Keywords:</b>	Promotion of employment, Decent Work, Gender, Skills development, Entry into working life, Entrepreneurship, Egypt

### Background & Context

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

Youth aged 18-29 makes up 19 million people in Egypt, one-quarter of the country’s population. In the past two decades, employment growth in Egypt has failed to keep up with the growth of the working age population. In the year when the project started, 90 per cent of people unemployed were under the age of 30, and unemployment reached an unprecedented high of one third of the active youth population. The project is a continuation that builds on the International Labour

Organisations (ILO)’s experiences in supporting the Government of Egypt (GoE), to take forward the actions stipulated in the Egypt Sustainable Development Strategy “Vision 2030”, which was adopted in 2014. The project strategy and approach was consistent and pertinent to the short- and long-term development needs of Egypt, beneficiaries’ requirements, and policies of partners and the donor. The project was aligned with the ILO P&B, Decent Work Agenda, SDGs and other relevant development policy frameworks.

The project was generally seen to be relevant by the involved stakeholders, as it was designed and customized to the Egyptian context. The project focused on policy development and implementation in a context, where policies and strategies had been developed during previous projects, so it was relevant to concentrate on contributing to the implementation of these policies and strategies. The donor requested that the project should be built on the results of already implemented projects. In 2013, the Danish-funded project, “Decent Jobs for Egypt’s Young People Tackling the Challenge in Qalyoubia and Menoufia”, was launched in these two governorates, Qalyoubia and Menoufia. The project succeeded in establishing solid relationships with the local authorities.

The overall developmental objective was to contribute to increased productive employment, business creation and decent work opportunities for young men and women in Qalyoubia and Menoufia, particularly targeting vulnerable youth who face labour market challenges and are at the risk of labour market exclusion.

The project aimed at achieving:

Outcome 1: National institutions are strengthened for SME development

Outcome 2: Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) is promoted in Qalyoubia and Menoufia

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

The evaluation covered the period between December 2016 and July 2020. The project ended by September 2020.

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

The evaluation covered the project's entire lifespan, including all outputs and results, including unexpected results.

The evaluation integrated gender equality as a crosscutting concern throughout its deliverables and processes, with special attention paid to women workers. Furthermore, the evaluation paid attention to issues related to the encouragement of social dialogue, tripartite processes and international labour standards. Moreover, the evaluators reviewed data and information that were disaggregated by sex and gender, as much as it was available, and assessed the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes on improving the lives of men and women.

The evaluation paid specific attention to how relevant the project was to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks, at the national and global levels.

The project aimed to increase the employability of vulnerable groups. The evaluation considered the extent to which people living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups' employability benefitted from the intervention.

The geographical coverage of the evaluation's field visits included the two governorates, Menoufia and Qalyoubia, where the project activities were implemented.

The final evaluation included a consideration of whether the means of action contributed toward achieving relevant Decent Work Agenda outcomes. It also examined the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, and any external factors, that might have affected the achievement of the immediate objectives and the delivery of the project's outputs.

The evaluation assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the sustainability of the project's achievements, as much as possible.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The evaluation used a mixed method that combined both qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches. The evaluation fieldwork was generally qualitative and participatory in nature. Qualitative information was obtained through field visits, one-on-one interviews (face-to-face, Skype or Zoom) and focus group discussions (FGDs), as appropriate.

Due to the COVID-19 regime it was not possible for the international consultant to conduct a field visit to Egypt. It was therefore agreed that Skype/Zoom would be used in all cases, where possible. If the informant was not an English speaker, the ILO made a translator available for simultaneous translation during the major interviews. Likewise, the national consultant participated in the interviews, via Zoom and Skype. She also conducted a field visit to the two governorates, where she conducted face-to-face interviews and FGDs.

### *Data Collection*

FGDs were conducted with the end beneficiaries (young men and women), by the national consultant, in Arabic.

Virtual interviews were arranged with English-speaking informants with the participation of both team members. Some major Arabic speaking informants were interviewed by the TL with translation and other interviews were conducted by the national consultant in Arabic.

The gender dimension and non-discrimination, e.g. people with disabilities, was considered a cross-cutting concern throughout the evaluation's methodology, deliverables and final report. The evaluation included the voices of key stakeholders; thus, ensuring gender balance in their participation throughout the project.

### *Key Evaluation Questions and Selection of Informants*

The evaluation team worked in close cooperation with the project's staff and the ILO Cairo Office, to identify informants among the intervention's stakeholders, in line with the proposed methodology, and to ensure that the evaluation contributed to a more in-depth understanding of the factors (in design and operations) that contributed to, or impeded, the achievement of results, the evaluation team obtained information from 81 informants (30 male and 51 female) representing the following groups of informants:

A stakeholders' preliminary findings workshop was organised, soon after the data collection on the 26th of

August 2020, to validate any findings and to complete any data gaps, with the main stakeholders, ILO staff and representatives of the development partners. Thirty-seven stakeholders participated in the four-hour long discussion, which was conducted in a constructive and forward-looking manner.

### *Limitations*

The national consultant visited the governorates, where the project had been implemented, and consulted with all of the project stakeholders, including the local project management, employers and youth (beneficiaries), where possible. However, the entire data collection was greatly impacted by the limitations put in place in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and its regimes. As entrepreneurs refused to gather in one place, to conduct FGDs, it became necessary to conduct direct individual interviews; all within the limited time allocated for data collection: In addition, the national consultant was unable to visit remote locations.

The trade unions were not involved with the current project and were not interviewed. Likewise they were not invited to the validation workshop, conducted as part of the evaluation. This lack of involvement from the workers' side in the project and – consequently – in the evaluation is seen as a limitation of the evaluation.

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

The objectives of the project were very consistent with the beneficiaries' needs, as the project was intended to support the implementation of the Government of Egypt's (GoE) strategies for SME development and to overcome the challenges of youth employment. The evaluation finds that the design was very optimistic, not least for having a short timeframe (12 months) in mind. The project had three non-cost extensions.

### *Project Effectiveness*

Generally, the project met its quantitative targets and, thereby, managed to reach out to the expended number of ultimate beneficiaries. In many ways the project reached quantitative achievements beyond the expected.

The project contributed to the consolidation and institutional development of the SME unit, within the FEI, with high quality technical input, guidance and coaching. The SME unit has become an integrated part of the FEI's institutional framework, which guarantees its sustainability beyond the lifetime of the project. The

ILO contribution functioned both as seed and bridging funding to other (EU) donor funding. This was very much thanks to the high level of flexibility shown by both the ILO and the Government of Norway as a back-donor.

One of the key elements that were foreseen in the current project was a program targeted on training 3000 young men and women (2500 for job placement and 500 for entrepreneurship). However, the initiative faced a significant set-back when foreseen co-financing did not materialize. The original target of 2500 was therefore reduced to 1000.

The service providers were challenged by young peoples' lack of interest in entering into manual jobs. The manufacturing industry does not have an attractive image in society and among youth in particular. Even though the jobs offered within this project were permanent formal jobs with all the benefits this entailed, they were not seen as attractive by many young people.

SCORE's introduction into 30 in the engineering and chemical industries was a significant and highly appreciated intervention. Almost all of the factories reported increased productivity and lower staff turnover. The success of the program can partly be contributed to the fact that it was customized to an Egyptian context.

One major obstacle for young people wanting to open their own business is access to financing. In order to find ways to overcome this challenge, the project engaged training of microfinance institutions, in Qalyoubia and Menoufia. The project provided entrepreneurship training for 593 (43% women) youth.

The project team shifted the strategy on Training for Employment, because it was difficult to reach the target. The focus was shifted to Job Search Clubs and thereby the opportunity to gain female participants increased significantly.

### *Project Efficiency*

In general, the financial resources were spent in accordance with the budget, with some reallocations being agreed with the donor, in connection to applications for non-cost extensions.

The Training for Employment intervention was confronted with serious challenges, technical support was provided to the service providers, but the targets

turned out to be too optimistic, the project management decided therefore to change strategy.

The evaluation finds that the project would have benefitted from the constituents' stronger involvement in the implementation of the project as a whole.

#### *Impact Orientation and Sustainability*

The workers and employers in the factories, which benefitted from the SCORE project, have clearly felt a positive change in their working lives. Workers reports to have more interesting and giving jobs which is also documented by a decrease in absenteeism and staff turnover in the involved factories. For the employers, in most cases, the initiative has given the companies a boost, and has increased productivity, lowered material waste, raised quality, lowered absenteeism and staff turnover and lessened conflicts in the workplace.

#### *Crosscutting Issues*

The potential of the tripartite structures was not used in full, in the management of the current project noting the reported non-conducive environment for an effective tripartism in Egypt during the time of the implementation of the project.

The project was foreseen to have a strong gender profile reaching out to young unemployed women especially in rural areas among others through the Training for Employment initiative, this however did not fully materialize (24% women were employed), whereas Job Search Clubs proved to be more attractive for women (80% of participants).

#### *Conclusion*

The project was able to complete almost all outputs and activities that were under the control of the ILO for delivery, whereas some outputs were not completed because of the delays caused by lack of implementing capacity among service providers, political environment and many changes among the responsible government officials. It can be concluded that a significant outcome of the project, has been its contribution to the recognition of youth employment and SME development as an important part of the public and political agenda in Egypt.

As concerns effectiveness and efficiency, it is concluded that the Outcomes were achieved, to the greatest extent possible, within the given circumstances.

### Recommendations

*Recommendation 1:* It is recommended that the ILO consults with the tripartite constituents prior to and during design of projects in the field of youth employment and increased employability of vulnerable groups, this should be followed by maximum involvement of the constituents both at the national, governorate and the local level during implementation to secure ownership and sustainability of the intervention and improved perspectives for the development of an inclusive labour market.

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO	High	Short-term	None

*Recommendation 2:* It is recommended that future project that are targeted on increasing employability, develop and conduct a needs assessment of the local employers, to enable a targeted skills upgrade that includes both soft and vocational skills.

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO	High	Long-term	High

*Recommendation 3:* There is a high demand for further training and coaching on SCORE. It is recommend that the ILO and the constituents investigate the possibility of a significant scaling of all of the elements of the SCORE program, and include in the scaling a mechanism that secures follow-up and coaching, beyond what is foreseen in the standard SCORE program.

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO and constituents	High	Mid- and Long Term	High

*Recommendation 4:* It is recommended that the GoE and other stakeholders investigate the possibilities for providing financial and expert support to factories, which want to initiate SCORE program and/or continue and further develop processes already in place.

<b>Addressed to</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Resources</b>
GoE	Medium	Mid-term	Medium

*Recommendation 5:* It is recommended that FEI establish networks/clubs for factories, which have already benefitted from SCORE, and also for factories, which are interested in introducing the program.

<b>Addressed to</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Resources</b>
FEI	High	Short-term	Low

*Recommendation 6:* It is recommended that the GoE take the initiative to establish employment councils at all administrative levels, to ensure local engagement and to maximise the available local resources – both private and public – to meet the challenges of youth employment. Challenges which can be expected to be even bigger post COVID-19.

<b>Addressed to</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Resources</b>
GoE and social partners at all levels	High	Long-term	Low