< Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE): Providing a Reason to Stay >

Countries: Egypt

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Administrative Office: ILO Cairo

Technical Office: ILO Cairo

Evaluation manager: Pacome DESSERO

Evaluation consultant(s):   Dr. Maha El-Said (team leader) , Dr. Ahmed Seliem.

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Key Words: employment, entrepreneurship, decent work

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	The project Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE): Providing a Reason to project's goal **is the improved economic security of young women and men in the Nile Delta**, particularly targeting vulnerable groups who are at risk of irregular migration. It tackles the root causes of migration by providing a reason for youth to stay in their communities. The project is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and implemented by the International Labour Organisation (lead agency), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Development Organization (UNDP) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA) a non-UN partner, co-funding with an amount of 1,420,193 USD. The project focuses on multi-dimensional interventions for youth employment integrating supply and demand sides that enhance capacities and stimulate partnerships at the local level for employment creation. In addition, the programme tackles social and environmental threats through an economic angle by aiming to promote social entrepreneurship, and to raise local communities' awareness on social and environmental threats while identifying and proposing sustainable solutions.
Present situation of the project	The project started on 20 April 2019, though it was originally conceptualized as a 36-months project (From 21 December 2017 to 20 December 2020), due to several unforeseen challenges it has been extended to end on 30 June 2023 and further extended to end in October 2023
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	The evaluation's purpose is to provide an objective assessment of the accomplishment of project results in terms of coherence and relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Specific purposes are. Assess the relevance and coherence of the project regarding objectives vis-à-vis national and UN relevant policies frameworks and participants' needs; Assess effectiveness by determining the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objective and expected results regarding the different target groups; Identifying the project's supporting factors and constraints, including implementation modalities chosen, and partnership arrangements; Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the project. Assess the implementation efficiency in terms of financial, human, etc. resources and interagency management arrangements; Assess

	the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable; Provide recommendations to key national stakeholders, UN implementers, and the funder on how to build on the achievements of the project in a sustained manner and how the project work could be replicated; Document lessons learned and good practices in order to maximize the experience gained. The primary clients of this evaluation are the project national stakeholders, Qalyoubia and Menoufia Governors' Offices, and the NGO, implementing partners. Moreover, the UN implementing agencies ILO, UNDP and UNIDO and the donor. It will consider project's implementation from start to the actual timing of the evaluation, (from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2023). The geographical analysis of the assessment should cover Cairo, Qalyoubia and Menoufia and the national level.
Methodology of evaluation	The evaluation was conducted by a team of two evaluators and was based on common evaluation standards, ethical standards, and adherence to gender equality and human rights-based approaches. It was guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System; the ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation and Checklists. The evaluation used a participatory mixed-method approach in order to provide information not only on the performance or merit of the project but also on how and why the program achieved such a result. The evaluation methodology included: • Inception report writing that include desk review and preliminary meeting with ILO staff and donor • Field visits and interview with stakeholders: the evaluators held a total of 42 interviews and focus group discussions with implementing agencies, governmental partners, service providers and beneficiaries. • Validation Workshop at the end of the fieldwork Report writing. Crosscutting themes such as gender equality, just transition to environmental sustainability, international labour standards and social dialogue were also assessed.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS	**Relevance and Coherence.** The evaluation team believes that the project is both relevant and coherent to both national policy and UN policies and is in alignment with the SDGs.

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Project Design

The project is conceptually valid, but its implementation was challenging due to the lack of an explicit theory of change. The evaluation team believes that a theory of change would have helped address the complexity of the project by integrating implementing agencies, validating assumptions, and mitigating risks.

Effectiveness. It is the evaluation team's opinion that the combination of interventions has been effective increasing appetite for self-employment especially in green business, expanded the reach to vulnerable groups and created a pool of empowered youth to become successful social entrepreneurs and change agents.

Nonetheless, there are several issues that have been observed in the implementation of the project. Firstly, it has been noted that most of the activities provided to beneficiaries, especially youth, and women, have been focused primarily on the ideation phase of small or micro-enterprises. Accordingly, many of these youth have lost the opportunities to scale up their ideas to real business ventures. This has been mainly due to a lack of knowledge about the opportunities provided by other partners and subcontractors of the project.

Efficiency. Overall, the project has faced a range of internal and external challenges related to financial management, staff turnover (both internally and at government partner institutions), delays in government approvals and security clearances, besides the COVID-19 situation which impacted its efficiency negatively.

The evaluation assessed that gender equality and non-discrimination principles are part of the project`s design to a limited extent, but disability INCLUSION WAS not considered at all. On the other hand, Green Economy was promoted and encouraged. As for Tripartite Issues. Governmental partners and civil society organizations were involved in the implementation of the project.

Impact and sustainability. The use of the Human security approach with its comprehensive, community-based approach has proved to be more sustainable.

Several models and practices have been adopted by project partners and interviewees indicated that they will replicate and upscale. On the Institutional Level the close partnership with the different governmental institutions has led to a sense of ownership, better practice and outreach. The different models and methodologies that the project utilized are now adopted by different governmental institutions such as the modernization of the Grice village cluster methodology adopted by MESMEDA, and the employment offices modernisation adopted and replicated by MoL training department.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Use the extension time to phaseout rather than introduce new activities to achieve your numbers. The many delays, especially the security clearance required has led to abrupt endings of some initiatives, like for example the continuation of El Kora's work with the youth initiatives. The recommendation is to use the extension, not to start new activities, even if they were planned, but rather bring closure to already running activities. *ILO , constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 2. Complete the training cycle by connecting youth who have produced business ideas to MESMEDA and other BSD providers. Make use of the extension period to establish the linkages between the different interventions and the different involved stakeholders to realize the numerous lost opportunities. The lack of integration among efforts provided by different stakeholders has resulted in lost opportunities for success stories and role models from local youth in both governorates. These success stories could have replaced the image built over decades of youth illegally migrating and then experiencing economic transformation at the family level. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 3: Engage with PSC and service providers to identify opportunities of collaboration and integration that can be perused during the extension. Having all stakeholders on the same table would help in identifying missing linkages as it was noticed that many of the lost opportunities were due to lack of knowledge of partners and interventions. Accordingly, this could consolidate the project's work. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

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Recommendation 4: Develop a knowledge sharing mechanism, such as a shared drive where all activity reports and knowledge production products are shared and made available for all implementing partners. Similar to the previous recommendation, sharing information about different activities would support identifying gaps and areas of possible collaboration.   For instance, the lack of awareness about MSMEDA's role in the project has resulted in a significant loss of opportunities. This underscores the importance of enhancing awareness about MSMEDA and its offerings, which could help to unlock the full potential of these young entrepreneurs and drive social and economic growth in both governorates. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 5: reactivate the biweekly pct meetings to discuss phasing out. The midterm evaluation has highlighted the importance of these coordination meetings. With such a short time left for the project it would be very beneficial to reactivate these meetings to discuss phasing out. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 6: The project TEAM SHOULD actively use the joint results framework, work plan and budget and monitor and discuss the coordination, sequencing, and implementation of planned development activities for maximum synergy, coherence and effectiveness. The joint results framework has revealed several interlinkages that were not realized and also showed linked activities that were presented as separate interventions. Therefore, using the results framework to identify different synergies would benefit the consolidation of results. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 7: A unified reporting format should be developed and required from all service providers focusing on analysis OF RESULTS that is segregated by sex and age. Project reports are the main source of information and documentation of the project. The variants in the level of analysis and details does not serve the project well and does not reflect the project's work sufficiently. Therefore, a unified reporting format would encourage service providers to provide in depth analysis. *ILO, constituents and partners, Priority high, short timeframe; Low resources*

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Recommendation 8: it is recommended that serious follow-up efforts be exerted for the employment offices and provision of technical support in creating SOPs and performance management systems. Training is important but without providing enough follow-up support in implementation of the newly acquired skills would be a waste of investment. Therefore, it is recommended to further support the employment offices by developing SOPs and performance management systems to enable these employees to better serve youth looking for jobs. *ILO, Priority medium, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 9: Support the upscaling of employment office certification through the MoI training department. CONSIDER A localized Employer Certificate that can be established in the MoL training unit in anticipation of mandating certification for employment service staff.

MoM representatives have expressed their intention to upscale the training through its training department. However, the Employment Officer Certificate program which is provided by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) is expensive. Therefore, it is recommended to explore a local version of the certification program similar to the idea of international TOFEL and local TOFEL. *ILO, Priority medium, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 10: It is recommended to establish an M&E unit at ILO Cairo office instead of appointing M&E SPECIALISTS FOR EACH PROJECT. ILO has a very strong evaluation function and considers evaluation a very important component in all its projects, yet ILO Cairo office does not have an evaluation unit which in the case of the current project lead to inadequate M&E. Therefore, it is recommended to establish an M&E unit at ILO Cairo instead of appointing project evaluation specialist*. ILO, Priority medium, short timeframe; Low resources*

Recommendation 11: ILO could reconsider the project-based appointment and adopt a program-based appointment, considering the EYE model as a country program. ILO has several EYE projects, considering the EYE model as a program and appointing program staff would limit staff turnover and would consolidate all the projects. *ILO, Priority medium, short timeframe; Low resources*

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	Recommendation 12: UNHS should reconsider its funding structure and use a pass-through structure rather than the parallel structure. The parallel funding structure has enforced the parallel implementation of the project. Therefore, it is recommended to use a pass-through structure where the lead agency can enforce integration. *UNHS, Priority high, short timeframe; resources, medium*
	Recommendation 13: UNHS should consider asking for a theory of change rather than a log frame. Since development does not happen in a leaner manner as presented in log frames, it is recommended to ask for a theory of change which focuses on results rather than interventions and considers risks, assumptions, and preconditions. *UNHS, Priority high, short timeframe; resources, medium*
	Recommendation 14: Project management and implementation structures should be designed in a manner that takes the various operational differences among the agencies in consideration and operational roles and responsibilities in implementing is clarified in the design. In order to enhance integration, the various operational differences among implementing agencies should BE CONSIDERED and operational roles and responsibilities in implementing clarified in the design. *ILO and partners, Priority medium, short timeframe; Low resources*
Main lessons learned and good practices	**Lessons Learned.** 1. The modernization of the Grace Village Pottery cluster demonstrated how locally available opportunities encourage both males and females to peruse carriers locally, and how exposure is key in creating motivation for change. 2.The cooperation with universities and the use of university venues increased the credibility of the training and increased the project's outreach. 3. Continuous follow-up and monitoring of activity lead to enhanced results such as conducting an online session based on participants survey that increased participation. Also, the questioning of the low rate of female participation in Menoufia that lead to altering their outreach strategy. 4. Empowering and involving local youth is a good practice as they have deep insight around the needs of their communities and relevant strategies for addressing them.

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5. Using untraditional means of awareness raising such as involvement of returned illegal immigrants or artistic methods like the interactive drama are effective tools.

Good Practice.1. The evaluation assessed that the project was successful in investing a considerable amount of effort in conducting research and carrying out mapping and diagnostic studies before implementing activities.

1. Match making activities where potential business owners are matched with business service providers.
2. Youth-led initiatives have proved to be more effective and innovative.

3. Providing flexible time slots for training,

4. The connection with youth centers for outreach.

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