



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Independent final evaluation of “The way forward after the revolution: decent work for women in Egypt and Tunisia” project (Phase II) – Final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	Egypt & Tunisia
Final Evaluation:	Nov-Dec 2021
Evaluation Mode:	Independent
Administrative Office:	CO-Cairo
Technical Office:	Gender/ /Employment/Entrepreneurship/Workers’ and employers’ activities
Evaluation Manager:	Mandigona Matema
Evaluation Consultant(s):	Lotta Nycander (team leader) & Hanan El Guindy
Project Code:	RAF/17/05/FIN
Donor(s) & Budget:	Finland (USD 2,470,415)
Keywords:	Decent work, gender equality, vulnerability, non-discrimination, disability, women in business, women’s entrepreneurship development, micro small and medium size enterprises, women leadership, Participatory Gender Audit, advocacy, COVID-19, virtual and online training; ILO conventions, Gender-responsive laws, Labour Inspection.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Project was designed to respond to key issues/problems related to the barriers that women face in participating in the labour market - both as employees and as active representatives in employers and workers organisations, i.e. issues related to the lack of gender equality in the world of work.

There are 3 *outcomes*: **1)** Enabling environment for gender equality in the workplace; **2)** Enabling environment for women’s entrepreneurship development; and **3)** Improved women leadership in employers’ and workers’ organizations. The key activities to produce the Project’s outputs and outcomes are policy advocacy/policy development, capacity and skills development including in the area of entrepreneurship. Implementation of the activities are taking place in Egypt and Tunisia, adapted to the different circumstances and needs in the respective countries.

The Project has The Project currently has 8 staff members, with a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) based at ILO Cairo, reporting to the ILO Director.

Present Situation of the Project

The Project came to an end 31 December 2022. A new Project to follow is being prepared for new funding from Finland.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

Purpose: To provide an independent assessment of the progress achieved during the project’s entire

life. *Scope*: Entire duration of Phase II in Egypt and Tunisia, all outcomes and objectives. *Clients*: Three Governments (Egypt, Tunisia and Finland), Employers and Workers organisations; and the ILO: Decent Work Team (DWT) for North Africa, ILO DWT, Pretoria, and ILO Headquarters, Geneva (PARDEV) and technical units such as ACT/EMP ACTRAV and GEDI

Methodology

The evaluation team used mixed-methods approach (documentation review, key informant interviews both face-to-face in Egypt and virtual and focus group discussions (FGD), e-mails and a Stakeholder workshop with 18 participants). Qualitative and quantitative data was obtained through several means from many different sources. The DWW Project provided interpretation services as three languages were involved (English, Arabic and French).

COVID-19 pandemic posed limitations to the evaluation in the sense that the international consultant (team leader) could not travel neither to Egypt nor Tunisia due to ILO's strict restrictions on travel and mobility of consultants (however, the national consultant was able to conduct a field trip to Aswan and a visit to Giza to meet women entrepreneurs/beneficiaries and Trainers conduct FGDs and interviews). The above-mentioned limitation have not affected the validity of this report, as the evaluation applied a robust strategy to mitigate challenges and safeguard quality through triangulation, use of interpreters and conducting field visits.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Findings

Overall, the evaluation found the DWW Project to be **relevant**. A good indication is the fact that the project management has played an active role in attracting support for the launch of 3 new gender-specific projects since its 2nd phase took off in 2018 - complementing the Project. It is aligned with Egyptian and Tunisian national policies and objectives and also international goals such as the 2030 SDGs, particularly goals 1, 5 and 8, and donor strategies for MENA countries. It is also in line with ILO's Programme & Budget (2020-21) in particular outcome 4. "Promoting sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work"; and outcome 6: "Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work (gender)".

The evaluation found that although Project activities conducted in Egypt were replicated in Tunisia on several occasions - there was not enough strategic exchanges and learning between the two countries.

The **Project design is logically put together**, i.e. and internal relationships between the elements are sound: Activities are designed to reach outputs; outputs designed to reach outcomes; – and outcomes designed to contribute to the larger development (long-term) objective of gender equality in the world of work.

The Project has been **quite effective** as it has raised awareness and built capacity about gender equality in the workplace, and developing knowledge and skills among its partners and beneficiaries. It has maintained good collaboration with the constituents and partners. It has worked closely with DWT Specialists in the ILO Cairo office and jointly with other like-minded ILO/UN projects.

Several of the key stakeholders expressed in interviews that the **COVID-19 pandemic** has caused delays in implementation of planned activities. The restrictions in movement and changes in the market, negatively impacted informal economy actors, including Project beneficiaries. The Project was, however, able to apply innovative approaches and adapt to the challenging circumstances.

Regarding **efficiency**, the Project has been able to leverage the resources quite wisely. The Project practiced cost-sharing for the purpose of synergy and economies of scale which played a role in keeping down the costs of project delivery. Training of NCW focal points to provide advice to PWD was done online, which also led to some savings. The evaluation has found, however, that *more resources and efforts should have been spent/devoted to the issue of disability* i.e. regarding "targeting" and inclusion of women with disabilities in the programme's varied activities.

The evaluation has assessed that the Project built up trust with the key constituents and partners already in the 1st phase, which certainly contributed to **impact** seen in the 2nd phase, at policy and decision-making levels and institutional level among the direct beneficiaries. Key stakeholders have increased their knowledge/learning and have taken action for gender equality in the workplace, e.g. through special units promoting gender equality. The Project's impact is seen in units within existing institutions that promote gender equality and human resources in both Tunisia

and Egypt. Technical assistance and guidance rendered by the DWW Project and the DWT have supported necessary legal processes resulting in decrees that remove restrictions on women's right to work - and new laws have been passed, which in the long-term, should improve the working conditions for women, and men.

Examples of impact: The labour inspector training and the workers unions' activities in both countries have raised awareness and knowledge about what gender equality really means in concrete terms in the workplace. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia, has been able to attract EU-funding for a social security (*Al Amen*) programme with a budget of 8 million Euro - which is seen as influenced by the ILO project. The Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) conducted within this ministry served as an 'eye opener' and is possibly a prerequisite for more gender-responsive budget allocations in the future. Impact has also been identified among the Trainers on various topics (Egypt) who have increased their knowledge and experience. Also, the new learning that women have acquired regarding finances has most likely empowered many, such as book-keeping and accounting and will help them develop their income-generating enterprises.

Regarding **sustainability**, it is clear through the interviews/triangulation, that efforts have been made in both countries to better equip institutions and individuals to become more independent from ILO support and enabling them to solicit for funding from other sources.

Conclusions

It is concluded that the Project has made good contributions to the overall objective of improving women's participation in the labour market in both Egypt and Tunisia, and maintained good collaboration with the constituents and partners. Effectiveness, in the sense of achieving the set goals (outcomes) has been found in several areas, such as at policy level and programmes at macro level, and contributions to an enabling environment for gender equality in the workplace within government ministries and public institutions in both countries. Most of the cross-cutting issues were well integrated. More could have been done in two specific areas: a) Strategy to materialize the ambition of integrating women with disabilities in the Project's varied activities; b) More exchanges and learning between the two countries.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The DWW team has worked on a proposal for a new gender-oriented regional project. As it is proposed to be implemented in more than one country in the region, ILO should ensure that exchanges and learning between countries will be part of the new Project, through field visits e.g. for stakeholders to learn about women entrepreneurship – should the COVID-19 pandemic situation allow.

Recommendation is directed to: ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: High

Level of resources: Medium

2. Within the framework of the new regional ILO Project being developed (following DWW project), **Government ministries** should undertake Participatory Gender Audits – as was done within the Ministry of Social Affairs in Tunisia, with ILO support. The new Project should have a provision for technical assistance for this activity, as well as for rolling out gender responsive development plans and designing M&E systems to facilitate follow up of these plans.

Recommendation is directed to: Tripartite constituents (government ministries specifically).

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Low-medium

3. The **National Council for Women** should equip more women operating income-generating activities in Egypt with tools, knowledge, and marketing skills using the trained Trainers and ILO training guides in cooperation with ILO - as there is a strong and expressed interest among women (former trainees) to learn more, expand their activities and MSMEs. These areas for further support were suggested by women in Aswan and Giza: Learning about the environment; Training on e-marketing, handicrafts and insurance; How to set up a legal entity; How to make graphics and use photoshop; and how to understand and calculate return on investment.

Recommendation is directed to: National Council for Women and ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Medium

4. **ILO should**, through the new Project, provide technical support to women's micro- and small enterprises in semi-urban and rural areas in Tunisia. If this is not feasible through ILO's current partner CNFCE - which currently does not work at lower/micro level - ILO should identify other organisations that could play an intermediary role and who have experience in working on gender issues and/or women economic empowerment.

Recommendation is directed to: ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Medium

5. Regarding issues that were left out in the DWW project, i.e. supporting women entrepreneurs (medium level) in terms of value-chain initiatives for specific cluster development, **ILO should** explore whether there now exists interest to work on these issues among the stakeholders in the region, which could be a way to encourage producers in different sectors to expand their enterprises and eventually "enter" the formal economy.

Recommendation is directed to: ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Low-medium

6. The Project's activities have helped create positive impact for the women beneficiaries in the informal economy in terms of learning about entrepreneurship and generating more interest to develop their enterprises. However, without access to funds/loans for marketing, production and growth - which the ILO cannot provide - **ILO and its tripartite constituents** should continue to explore possibilities and build alliances with commercial and other banks/financial institutions that could be willing to lend money to women entrepreneurs who cannot provide the banks with collateral.

Recommendation is directed to: ILO Country Office, Project Management and tripartite constituents.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Low

7. In the new project, the **tripartite constituents, partners and ILO should** continue to embrace inclusion and non-discrimination. Notes should be taken of experiences and lessons learned about how to address disability and how people with disabilities can overcome barriers to jobs and opportunities - for instance from the former joint project (ILO-UNDP-ICT) in Egypt that addressed disability in 13 governorates. This Project used participatory and inclusive community-based approaches in partnership with disabled people's organisations, workers' unions and employers' organisations. Continued work in this area should also relate to the C. 159, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), ratified by both Egypt and Tunisia.

Recommendation is directed to: Tripartite constituents, partners and ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Low

8. The absence of a tripartite constellation and representation of the constituents and social partners in the DWW project in Egypt, in the form of a Project Steering or Advisory Committee, is a situation that could possibly have been resolved by forming some kind of technical and/or thematic work/discussion platform where mid-level representatives of the tripartite stakeholders could come together for the Project on a regular basis - perhaps through a social media platform. **ILO should**, in the new project, explore any such possibility as this is very important to encourage the stakeholders' and partners' ownership - and to help guide the Project's direction.

Recommendation is directed to: ILO Country Office, Project Management.

Timeframe: 5 months

Priority: Medium

Level of resources: Low