



# Evaluation Summary



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## *'Enhancing Job Resilience and Protecting Decent Work Conditions in Rural Communities Affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Northern Lebanon' - Final Independent Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Lebanon</i>
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	<i>June 2017</i>
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)</i>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<i>Nathalie Bavitch</i>
<b>Evaluation Consultant(s):</b>	<i>Wael Zakkar</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	LEB/14/02/ITA LBN/12/02/RBS      LBN/16/01/RBS
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	RBSA ( <i>USD 1,412,054</i> ) Italian Development Cooperation ( <i>USD 437,158.47</i> )
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Lebanon, Syrian refugee crisis, resilience, capacity building, job matching, skills development, Value chain development</i>

### Background & Context

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

In response to the Syrian crisis, and within the framework of the United Nations intervention, ILO launched the project of Enabling Job Resilience and protecting Decent Work Conditions in Rural communities affected by

Syrian crisis in Northern Lebanon with a focus on employment and livelihood issues. The project was framed under ACI 'Decent Work in the rural economy' and since 2016, falls under Outcome 5 on Decent Work in Rural Economies. It applied an area-based approach, targeting one of the most challenged regions in the North where there are high numbers of refugees in rural areas. The strategic orientations and targets of the project were defined as:

1-Addressing sources of vulnerability in the rural economy by promoting jobs and employability, particularly among youth, and targeting skills demanded by the market on the basis of available employment opportunities in the national and local markets, utilising improved matching approaches between labour supply and demand.

2-Supporting the upscaling of value chains in agriculture as an approach of local economic development and livelihood resilience.

3-Increasing/enhancing capacities of ILO constituents' (local organisations, employers and trade unions) to identify and benefit from socio-economic interventions as part of the LED process

### Relevance & Design

The ILO project of Enhancing Job Resilience and Protecting Decent Work Conditions in Rural Communities Affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Northern Lebanon came as part of the wider UN efforts in response to the impact of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon, and was well aligned with these in terms of its orientation with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) co-developed by the UN and the Government of Lebanon. Based on the project, ILO became a key member of the Livelihoods Sector Working Group headed by UNDP and MOSA, of the LCRP mechanism.

Although ILO is an organization with a development mandate, it has gained experience in working with humanitarian actors to promote Decent Work for inclusive economic recovery both in fragile settings and emergency contexts. In this regards, the project was designed and implemented in line with three main broad areas of Decent Work defined by ILO as a focus for a context of emergency and fragility. Furthermore, the project design also seems to have built among others on ILO experience in implementing PRODERE in Latin America, which promote and triggered local economic development (LED) initiatives by local populations with the objective of creating jobs, small enterprises or cooperatives

The planning and formulation/design of the project did not follow the classical planning and formulation approach of ILO in the programming cycle . No participatory appraisal of the project design took place. As ILO was keen to position itself within the UN mechanism of response to the Syrian crisis in a framework of unpredictable uncertainty, the project, was designed rapidly through coordination between DEVINVEST department in ILO Geneva and ILO ROAS. Furthermore, no log frame encompassing targeted indicators was included in the project document at the beginning, and has been left to an inception

phase and the technicians later hired to implement the project.

Regarding the relevance of the project indicators and means of verification, a logframe was prepared by the project team after the latter came on board during the inception phase. The logframe was comprehensive in terms of a structure encompassing the definition of verifiable indicators. However, no specific baselines were fixed for these indicators, some indicators related to Immediate Objective I were too ambitious given the short timeframe and project horizon, other indicators did not take the legal and institutional situation and its complexities in Lebanon into consideration, and finally, other indicators related to the same Immediate Objective were too abstract in nature.

In terms of gender coherence and addressing women's rights priorities and its design, the evaluation noted that the gender aspect was not tackled significantly in the different dimensions of the project or the triple axes of project interventions in the original project document. However, during the inception phase, this deficit was somewhat rectified in the preparation of the Logframe, which integrated a gender dimension into the different outputs and follow up indicators. Furthermore, during project implementation, specific tailor-made interventions were added and implemented to address gender inequalities that had been identified.

### Effectiveness

With regard to project effectiveness under Immediate Objective I, Officers from 16 ESCs benefitted from capacity building and exceeded the target at the outset of the project. Furthermore, the project provided technical orientation in terms of harmonizing existing practices with ILO standards. In terms of interlinkages, training sessions and workshops offered the opportunity for different NGOs and their employment officers to get to know one another, paving the way for potential future cooperation. However, interlinking of systems was not possible, as the government and Ministry of Labour do not

recognize private sector and civil society employment services. Such recognition would require the government first to validate ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies . Activities implemented under that immediate objectives included the development of an IPEP guidebook for practitioners in Lebanon. Training and experience sharing was also offered on Public Employment Programmes for NGO staff from both national and international stakeholders and on occupational Health and Safety standards for at least 10 CfW implementing partners and thus targets were achieved. However, the second fixed indicator of five CfW implementing partners advertising CfW job opportunities through employment service providers could not be reached or even verified given the fact CfW is not welcomed by the Lebanese state. Main activities under that immediate objective also included implementation of training for young people to support their integration in the agricultural sector, focussing on potatoes and leafy green vegetables, implementation of a workshop with employers under LED dialogue activities promoting internships for VT students, vocational training on food production and processing for excesses of potatoes and leafy green vegetables benefitting local women and a Training for Trainers/Practitioners on Adapted Curricula for Short Term Vocational Training on Potato and Leafy Green Vegetables. The curricula have been adopted by MoA to be used in training at the national level as a whole.

As with regards to effectiveness under Immediate Objective 2 institutional assessment and a stakeholder analysis were carried out in areas covered by the project. Local Economic Development (LED) dialogues were held based on the institutional mapping process. The core LED dialogue was on local economic development (LED) and the selection of sub-sectors for the Market Work for the Poor (M4P) approach according to specific four criteria. As a result participants approved potato and leafy green vegetable sub-sectors. On the basis of this decision the project conducted a value chain research analysis in collaboration with the International

Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) and five selected local organisations. LED interventions in host communities were designed and some demonstrative interventions were implemented. Cross-cutting interventions were defined to strengthen supporting organizations implementing these value chain development interventions, to facilitate them in providing targeted services and to improve outreach to beneficiaries as per the M4P approach. After the identification phase, interventions were implemented; 140 farmers, four cooperatives, local NGOS and MoA LARI were targeted for training. There were also improvements made to infrastructure and services, and the creation of demo plots of new potato and leafy green vegetable varieties. Furthermore, there was policy support that resulted in the extension of the EU derogation of an import ban on potatoes from Akkar and Lebanon. Finally, there was more training on Global Gap certification and child labour in agriculture, both with the intention of facilitating export growth.

As with regards to effectiveness under Immediate Objective 3 the project worked intensively on establishing networks among local stakeholders, farmers, traders, exporters and cooperatives and had their capacity built through a number of trainings implemented ( value chain analysis, prioritising LED interventions, Academy on Rural Development, child labour and export procedures). A capacity needs assessment of cooperatives was carried out, in which each was evaluated according to a questionnaire tackling the dimensions of organizational management, human resources management, financial management, and legal aspects. This was the basis of capacity building and counselling activities on cooperative management and self-sustainability for members of three cooperatives. Four topics were covered, namely bookkeeping, management of cooperatives, marketing strategies, and approaches to donor relations

In terms of cross cutting issues, the project added value in terms of gender mainstreaming. Around 28% project beneficiaries of training, capacity building and knowledge transfer were female (183

out of 653). Gender was a key monitoring dimension in the implementation of the project. Gender participation was taken into consideration as part of the monitoring of all project activities. Through vocational training targeting youth and women, the project intended to enhance the economic participation of local women despite the local social constraints making women's employment invisible to an important extent.

In terms of tripartism and social dialogue, the project intensively involved CCIAT, as an employer union, in the implementation of several project activities. The project also invited the Union of FENASOL and Palestinian Trade Union, to participate in different training sessions and workshops. However, the level of cooperation with trade unions could not be considered to be advanced, as on one hand there was no involvement of the powerful National Federation of Trade Unions, and on the other hand there was no concrete approach towards advancing the rights of agricultural workers, who are deprived of exercising a number of rights.

### **Efficiency & Management arrangements**

In terms of management structure, the project did not have a steering committee at the central level involving ILO and national line ministries, tripartite bodies and main counterparts. It had a local steering committee for the value chain development component. The project team was made up of only three staff: an International CTA, a project coordinator and an administrative and financial assistant, supported by a driver. Hence it was limited in terms of human resources relative to its agenda and ambition. This evaluation believes that Component I should have had an additional dedicated specialist assigned, to facilitate increased effectiveness and better focus. Two major constraints should be reported that caused some delays in terms of implementation. Firstly, the security situation in Tripoli and the North had a significant negative impact on project implementation during certain phases, and particularly in 2014 when violent clashes took place in Tripoli. Secondly, some slow responses by partners caused delays.

### **Impact and Sustainability**

The output-oriented approach of training employment service providers adopted by the project was beneficial for NGOs beneficiaries and brought about added value for NGOs staff in terms of capacity building, but only limited evidence has been presented so far that it brought about change in actual employment tendencies. The project caused certain improvement in terms of livelihoods and income generation at its termination for farmers participants in the value chain development in the sub-sector of leafy greens but not in the sub-sector of Potatoes. Despite the project's impact in creating the appropriate conditions for value chain development success, no export activity had yet taken place at the end of the project in the sub-sector of potatoes given project short timeframe. The project successfully implemented the value chain development in agriculture module to a large extent and, in a short time, succeeded in putting the conditions in place which would influence the success of this module, including capacity, services, coordination mechanisms, standards, information and integration of the core function of triggering local economic development through the value chain in agriculture. The project also raised the importance of value chain in agriculture with different stakeholders (including international organizations and UN agencies), who then included value chain development as part of new projects. After the project, ILO is well positioned within the UN mechanism of support for the Syrian crisis in Lebanon. As a pilot experience, the project created a good impression of ILO among the UN family as well as national and local stakeholders. It led to UN agencies such as FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF partnering with ILO in the implementation of new projects. Furthermore, the project triggered a culture of discipline in agricultural practices locally. In contrast to the individual practices that used to be common in the past, through value chain development the project coached participants in the adoption of new standards and approaches in agriculture in line with the European Code for



Export Compliance and the Global Gap certification requirements.

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

1-ILO should continue the action undertaken developing the value chain in agriculture (axes II and III) through a new, specific and focused project of 2 to 3 years.

2-ILO project team and local partners should build in the continuation of the project on the lessons learned, particularly in terms of seed selection that fit both the EU and Lebanese markets. Furthermore, it will be important to consider models that could spread the risk for the farmers, such as adoption of contract farming models with guaranteed processing outlets for crop production.

3-It will be necessary for ILO to suggest to MoL to implement a review of the whole system of employment services in Lebanon to creating complementarity between the NEO and private sector employment services. Institutional development of NEO is also required for it to play the pivotal role within the new system.

4- It will be necessary for ILO to provide advocacy and coaching support to MoL to ratify ILO Convention 181 on private employment Agencies.

5- ILO should designate the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli (CCIAT) as the key stakeholder to coordinate a future phase of project implementation, based on the lessons learned of this project and the capacity of the CCIAT.

6-ILO should consider another project, in cooperation with FAO or IFAD, improving the role of cooperatives as a key player in LED, fostering resilience and employment. This project should include downstream and upstream (institutional development of cooperatives directorate in MoA) dimensions.

7-ILO, in cooperation with UNDP and FAO, should consider the idea of creating a Platform/One Stop Shop for farmers in the North

through a joint project. This would facilitate ensuring the availability of inputs, services, employment, services, skills, orientation, jobs matching and demand in the agricultural sector. North LEDA might be the best counterpart to ensure the management of this platform/One Stop Shop.

8-ILO should launch a project enhancing the rights of workers in agriculture. The project could be implemented in cooperation with the Trade Union and Union of Workers in Agriculture, and the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture. It should include advocacy for the provision of different rights and social protection to farmers as well as integrating farmers' representatives within the structure of the National Federation of Trade Unions. Other considerations would be institutional development and the empowerment of the existing union of agricultural workers to become much more effective in defending the rights of agricultural workers.

9- It would be important for ILO specialists and staff working in crisis situations or contexts affected by crisis to receive specific training to properly deal with this. Furthermore, it would be important that more and sustained backstopping be provided to them.