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Final Internal Evaluation of the ILO Partnership with the Regional Development and Protection Programme for Jordan (RDPP II). Research Partnership for Improved livelihoods of Jordanian and Syrian Youth

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Jordan

Evaluation date: 18 March 2023

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: RO/DWT-Beirut

Technical Office: RO/DWT-Beirut

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DC Symbol: JOR/21/04/MUL (108497)

Donor(s) & budget: The Regional Development & Protection Programme (RDPP), US\$ 792,361.87

Key Words: Decent work; employment; youth employment; formal employment; women employment; disability inclusion; green jobs, digital economy

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Current evaluation exercise is a Final Internal Evaluation of the Project “ILO-RDPP Research Partnership for Improved Livelihoods of Jordanian & Syrian Youth”. The ILO-RDPP research partnership aims to support the Government of Jordan and national constituents in responding to the youth employment challenge and supporting dialogue around policies and strategies for improving the livelihoods of young Syrians and Jordanians through evidence-based research and analysis.

Expected Project's outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Relevant national stakeholders engage in meaningful dialogue around youth employment & livelihoods for enhanced policy formulation
- Outcome 2: National stakeholders & policy makers benefit from evidence-based research on trends in youth employment & livelihoods

Management set-up of the Project: Under the overall guidance of the ILO Senior Employment Policy Specialist, project implementation was initially led by an Economic Analyst and Research Officer and supported by a National Administrative and Finance Officer based in Jordan. Later the Project was taken over by the Labour Economist based in the ILO DWT/ Beirut, with the support of a National Admin and Finance Officer based in Amman. Programme and M&E backstopping has been provided by the Regional Programming Unit within ROAS, with further technical support provided by relevant staff and DWT specialists in the regional office.

The project is funded by the Regional Development & Protection Programme (RDPP). The budget of the project is US\$ 792,361.87. The project started on 1st January 2022 and ended on 31st December 2022.

Present situation of the project

The project has come to its end. The research areas targeted by the Project focused on challenges on the macroeconomic level which impact the creation of employment in Jordan (Research paper II),

	<p>challenges in creating jobs for youth in emerging green and digital fields including non-standard forms of employment and platform economy (Research paper I and V), challenges in creation of decent jobs in the sectors oriented for export of high-value products (Research paper III) and challenges in school to work transition of young men and women (Research paper IV). The project presented the evaluation findings on 13 December 2022 but could not publish the research reports by the end of the Project. It was agreed with the Donor that research papers would be publish in 2nd quarter 2023.</p>
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	<p>The main purpose of this final internal evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the progress to date for accountability and learning purposes, through an analysis of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effects and orientation to impact of the project. The exercise is conducted in line with the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines: ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation and the UN Norms and Standards for Evaluation. The evaluation scope covered the whole project period from the start on 1 January 2022 until the end of the Project, 31 December 2022. Geographical scope of this evaluation covered country level with the majority of interviews held in Amman, the capital of Jordan.</p> <p>The evaluation integrated gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology, analysis and deliverables. Gender concerns were addressed in accordance with the ILO Guidance note 4, “Integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of projects”. The findings of the evaluations and its recommendations will be used by the ILO and its stakeholders to enhance organizational learning</p>
Methodology of evaluation	<p>The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach, with the main focus being on the qualitative techniques, including quantitative data obtained through the review of the project documents and research products produced by the Project. The primary data was collected directly from the stakeholders through individual and group interviews conducted with the stakeholders via virtual and in-person mode. Project reports and documents as well as key policy papers and country strategic plans were analysed as secondary data sources.</p>

The evaluation applied the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact potential.

Major limitations encountered: The data collection process conducted in a distant mode was challenged by the fact that the possibility to hold interviews online resulted in several postponements which increased the duration of the data collection phase. Some stakeholders were not available for the interviews during the designated period for the data collection phase which delayed the writing phase of the evaluation report.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Main Findings:

Relevance, coherence and strategic fit: Strategic relevance of the project has been rated as high by all key stakeholders and constituents who confirmed great importance of the project to the overall importance of creating decent work opportunities for young men and women among Jordanian nationals and Syrian refugees. The project is well-aligned with countries' national priorities, strategies and plans where new Economic Modernization Vision takes critical importance for government stakeholders. The international development actors including the UN organizations rate the project relevant for improving livelihood of young refugees in line with the Jordan Global Compact.

Validity of Design: The Project design is based on comprehensive analysis of needs of various groups of young men and women in Jordan in the labour market, including gender analysis. However the design of the Project doesn't support the ambitious change as the impact level result measured by the indicator # of legal or administrative provisions implemented which increase ability of Jordanian and refugee youth to gain employment or economic activity. The outcome level results and major outputs don't address the ILO cross cutting issues through gender-sensitive, disability inclusive and environmentally sustainable activities and indicators yet they include some human-centered activities and indicators

related to the vulnerable groups of youth including Syrian refugees.

Effectiveness: The Project delivered all the planned outputs at 100% delivery rate against the targets set at the output level. The evaluation of the planned outcomes was challenged as the indicators chosen at the outcome level are not realistic given the short time of the project duration. The project produced five research papers versus three research papers initially planned in close consultations with wide range of stakeholders including the tripartite constituents. Challenges of young men and women were addressed in the conducted research yet not clearly articulated in the recommendations developed based on research findings from gender equality perspective. This evaluation didn't find the efforts of the project to integrate the needs of young men and women with disabilities in the course of the implementation.

Efficiency of resource use: The project demonstrated high efficiency in strategic use of resources through adoption of the methodologies and tools to deliver research interventions in a cost-effective manner. Time resources were short to support the transparent and multi-stakeholder approach of the Project to complete the research interventions by publishing and disseminating final products. The project has not budgeted the financial resources to ensure the support of the admin and finance officer to manage the contractual procedures in an efficient manner. During the first eight months the ILO allocated internal human resources to support the financial and administrative operations of the Project based on availability of the administrative staff

Impact Orientation and Sustainability: The project sustainability has high prospects. Once the research papers are published and disseminated they would be used by national tripartite stakeholders and international development actors. The regular meetings of the PAC and its contribution to the research process have resulted in the establishment of informal working group on youth employment which could serve as a platform for future cooperation on youth employment and livelihoods in Jordan on tripartite basis. The Project has impacted the policy dialogue at a small scale due to shortage of time to publish and disseminate the research papers to wider

audiences including to the decision-makers of economy, trade and employment policies in Jordan.

Conclusions:

The project sustainability has high prospects. Once the research papers are published and disseminated they will be used by the development actors. The regular meetings of the PAC and its contribution to the research process have resulted in the establishment of informal working group on youth employment on a tripartite basis which could serve as a platform for future cooperation on youth employment and livelihoods in Jordan. The Project has impacted the policy dialogue at a small scale due to shortage of time to publish and disseminate the research papers to wider audiences including the decision-makers of economy, trade and employment policies in Jordan.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions

Main recommendations and follow up:

- 1. To the DWT/Beirut.** To produce the publications and ensure their wide direct dissemination to the national stakeholders – tripartite constituents (government, trade unions and employers' organizations), academia, international aid actors, including the donors, youth and women's organizations; and e-placement at the ILO regional and national web-site pages; at the ILO Youth employment global portal and at the Working group on livelihoods chaired by the UNHCR
- 2. To the DWT/Beirut.** To conduct consultations with the tripartite constituents and the potential donors on the development of future interventions aimed at applying the research outputs at youth employment policies and programmes to promote decent work and creation of green jobs for Syrian refugees, vulnerable Jordanians (women in vulnerable situation, youth in NEET), persons with disabilities (men and women)
- 3. To the DWT/Beirut.** To conduct high level event on youth employment and / or high level consultations with the presence of

decision-making bodies of Jordan: the Council of Ministers, the Parliament of Jordan, the Office of His Majesty King Abdullah II and Crown Prince Foundation with the purpose to present the research results and discuss the modalities of the technical assistance from the ILO on formulation of youth employment policies

4. To the RDPP. To consider more flexible funding modalities with the possibilities of no-cost extension and the implementation period not less than 24 months for similar development exercises

5. To the GFJTU. To continue active participation in public dialogue on youth employment policies in Jordan utilizing research findings to develop and support youth employment policies in line with the ILO Recommendation No. 204 on Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy

6. To the TVSDC. To build on the findings of the research on Skills for Successful Transitions Towards a Green, Digitally Enabled Economy in Jordan and establish the cooperation with the national and international partners including the tripartite constituents and TVET service providers to develop occupational standards and accrediting the TVET programs in the sectors related to green and digital economy

7. To the international development actors including the ILO, GIZ, UNICEF, IBRD, UNHCR and members of the Livelihood Working group. To discuss the research findings and recommendations, outline the areas of applicability to the development priorities of their mandates in Jordan and develop coherent Youth Employment Action Plan avoiding overlapping of similar programmes and interventions and maximizing impact of undertaken interventions measured by unified indicators related to the quantity and quality of generated jobs for Syrian refugees, migrant workers and persons with disabilities disaggregated by sex/age, region and type of employment

8. To the government, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Labour (or other government body with similar functions), sectoral ministries and the DoS. To discuss the research findings and implacability of recommendations to develop the inclusive youth employment strategy based on the strengthened Labour Market Information System including the regularly collected data on school-to-work transition through the Labour Force Survey (LFS), disaggregated by age and sex.

Main lessons learned and good practices

Lessons learnt:

Lesson learnt 1. The project experience in Jordan shows that in some countries the research products could be easily applied into programming by the international development actors, yet governments may require technical assistance to convert research findings into policy results.

Lesson learnt 2. While in Jordan young women and persons with disabilities (men and women) face many barriers to enter the labour market, investing in platform economy through promotion of job platforms and enhancing skills of workers may result in increased economic participation of women and persons with disabilities.

Lesson learnt 3. The ILO projects with research activities require the duration of at least 18 months to allow completing the proper contracting procedures, the research exercise followed by the validation exercises with the stakeholders, the ILO quality assurance procedures, the publishing, wide dissemination and presentation of the research findings.

Lesson learnt 4. The absence of the Stakeholder Power Analysis and the Needs Assessment analysis of the various stakeholders groups at the conceptualization phase of the Project may result in low presence of powerful influential stakeholders, the decision-makers, reducing the project prospects to achieve impact level results.

Emerging good practices:

Best practice 1. The transparent and consultative approach undertaken by the project to conduct the research interventions stimulated public dialogue and promoted better cooperation of the engaged stakeholders