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Evaluation of Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programmes in Lebanon (Phase III & IV) & Jordan (Phase V) – Independent evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Jordan and Lebanon

Evaluation date: 17 January 2023

Evaluation type: Clustered

Evaluation timing:¹ Final

Administrative Office: ILO Regional Office for Arab States

Technical Office: DEVINVEST

Evaluation Manager: Hideyuki Tsuruoka

Evaluation consultant(s): Kirit Vaidya supported by Ahmed Al-Tamemi (Jordan) and Jalal Aoun (Lebanon)

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Key Words: Rural livelihoods; rural access; labour-based technology; contractors; capacity development; employment creation

¹ Mid-term for Lebanon Phase IV. Final for Lebanon Phase III and Jordan Phase V.

² Donor amounts contributed in Euro converted to USD at the conversion rates in project documents.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

<p>Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure</p>	<p>Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programmes (EIIPs) in Jordan and Lebanon are responses to the humanitarian crisis facing Syrians who have sought refuge from conflict in their homeland, and the economic and social pressures they have caused in the two host countries. The EIIPs aim to combine the twin objectives of providing decent work for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host community members and the improvement or maintenance of infrastructure or environmental assets. Two associated objectives of the programmes are: (a) to address employability of participants beyond programme employment, and (b) capacity development and policy influencing for sustaining the EIIP approach.</p>
<p>Present situation of the project</p>	<p>The EIIPs in the two countries have been implemented in phases. The phases being evaluated are: (a) Phase V in Jordan (JP-V), November 2019 to August 2022; (b) Phase III in Lebanon (LP-III), December 2018 to May 2022, and (c) Phase IV (LP-IV), January 2020 to June 2023.</p>
<p>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</p>	<p>This independent cluster evaluation of JP-V (Final evaluation), LP-III (Final evaluation) and LP-IV (Mid-term evaluation) encompasses examination of: (a) implications for relevance of changes in programmes' contexts; (b) results in the form of outcomes and outputs achieved; (c) use of resources in achievement of projected performance, and (d) assessment of the programmes' impacts and sustainability of their outputs and outcomes. The cluster evaluation approach offers opportunities for mutual learning. The primary clients of the evaluation are constituents in Lebanon and Jordan, BMZ / KfW as donor, partner UN agencies, the EIIP teams implementing the programmes in the two countries and ILO ROAS and DEVINVEST.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>The methodology adopted is qualitative comparative appraisal supported by quantitative measures and indicators. Multiple sources of evidence used in the evaluation included: (a) a desk review of more than 60 documents; (b) information on the operation and performance of the two EIIPs from programme records, and (c) engagement with over 100 persons through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).</p>
<p>MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS</p>	<p><i>Summary of findings by evaluation criteria</i></p> <p><i>Relevance and strategic fit</i></p> <p>Lebanon and Jordan are nations with among the highest number of refugees per head of population. Both refugees and vulnerable members of the host populations face hardships because of the distressed labour market conditions. The EIIPs in the two countries have relevance and strategic fit with the crisis response plans of the governments of Jordan and Lebanon in these circumstances.</p> <p>A complementary feature of ILO's EIIP approach is for the employment generated to be decent which is in line with the UN Strategic Development</p>

Goal 8. The programmes align with BMZ / KfW global mission to support forcibly displaced people through cash for work (CFW).

Coherence and validity of design

Overall the programme designs of the phases are sound with respect to employment generation but with differences between Jordan and Lebanon in the types of works. These differences are a consequence of very high labour intensities stipulated in Jordan (95 per cent for municipal works and 69 per cent for highway maintenance) and municipalities being required to meet the non-labour costs compared with the minimum labour intensity requirement of 35 per cent for LP-III and LP-IV in Lebanon.

Another difference of note is most works being undertaken by direct labour in Jordan while the core model in Lebanon is works through contractors. In Lebanon the original design was adapted to include a road maintenance component and to respond to the COVID-19 and economic crises to increase employment generation.

Efficiency of resource use

JP-V and LP-III have made efficient use of resources to: (a) meet or exceed employment targets (number of worker days and jobs generated), and (b) meet or exceed works targets. LP-III was extended without additional costs for the donor but JP-V needed a cost extension. LP-IV is expected to meet its employment generation and infrastructure works budgets. JP-V has been very light on asset creation in comparison with LP-III and LP-IV because of the differences in labour intensity stipulations which have been referred to under validity of design.

Both programmes had to cope with COVID-19 disruptions, which partly explain the extensions of time needed, and the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods of the most vulnerable. But its effects compounded by the shocks of the Lebanese economic crisis and the Beirut Port explosion were more severe for LP-III and LP-IV. The EIIP wage rate in Lebanon fell from the equivalent of about USD 20.00 per day in 2019 to USD 4.00 per day by September 2020. The responses were: (a) dollarisation of the wage rate and setting it at USD 7.00 per day, and (b) expansion and extension of activities in collaboration with UNDP and NGOs to substantially increase the number of participants.

Project progress and effectiveness

This criterion is concerned with how and to what extent the achievement of outcomes contribute to the development objective. The programme level development objective (impact) common to LP-III, LP-IV and JP-V is to strengthen resilience of host and displaced Syrian communities by improving livelihoods for both communities through job creation and improved infrastructure and services. A related aspect is more harmonious

relations and reduced tensions between the host and displaced communities.

The evidence shows that livelihoods of participants' households are improved while they are employed on EIIP projects but for most this improvement does not persist after EIIP employment. There is evidence of improvement in trust and relations between displaced and host community participants and the wider community.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The structures of the programme teams are appropriate for their management and operations to meet the twin objectives of employment generation and infrastructure works and for increasing the participation of women. A distinctive feature of LP-III and LP-IV is the approach to social and environmental safeguards. The Social Safeguards Officers (SSOs) combine environmental and social safeguards (ESS) compliance with site supervision.

Impact orientation

Impact orientation is concerned with the likely contribution of the phases to the overall impact of the intervention. The short-term impact on household livelihoods from employment is positive. The majority view from the surveys of workers in the two countries and from other stakeholders was that the programme has decreased tensions between members of the host and displaced communities participating in the programme with wider positive effects.

Sustainability

In Lebanon there is a project handover process which includes an undertaking by the municipality to maintain the asset. While this is a sound model, the economic crisis makes it difficult for municipalities to fulfil such commitments. Aspects of sustainability which have remained challenges for both programmes are: (a) transition from EIIP participation to longer term improved livelihoods, and (b) impact of policy influencing and capacity development on sustaining the employment intensive approach. Nevertheless, EIIP has contributed to the adoption of the employment intensive approach and decent work principles by other agencies in both countries and government ministries in Lebanon.

An exit strategy in the conventional sense of national governments and institutions being committed to and implementing the EIIP model is unrealistic at present. External contributions, at the very least for supporting displaced Syrians, would be required for some time. A move towards an externally supported public employment programme model could be the start of developing an exit strategy.

Conclusions

The programmes have performed well on the two core EIIP objectives of: (a) short-term decent employment creation, and (b) infrastructure investment and maintenance in Lebanon and municipal community infrastructure and services improvement in Jordan. Achieving sustainability of the employment intensive approach built on strengthened institutional and technical capacities and policy influencing has been challenging in both countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (Jordan and Lebanon, high level strategic): ILO ROAS and the two EIIP programmes to collaborate with the donor and other international agencies and the respective governments to develop a more coherent public employment programme based approach.

Recommendation 2 (Jordan and Lebanon, strategic): ILO ROAS and the two EIIP programmes to review the rationale for the difference between the two programme on the target labour intensities | collaboration with the donor.

Recommendation 3 (Jordan and Lebanon, strategic): The EIIP programmes in collaboration with the donor and respective governments to review the scope of works and partners, potentially for widening the scope of works and partners for future phases and beyond.

Recommendation 4 (Jordan, operational): Prepare project completion reports similar to those for EIIP Lebanon.

Recommendation 5 (Jordan and Lebanon, operational): Include labour intensity data in project completion reports. For Jordan, the calculation of labour intensity should include non-labour costs incurred by municipalities.

Recommendation 6 (Lebanon, operational): Conduct a review of the process of recruitment of participants by contractors in Lebanon to refine it further. Contractors to be asked to submit a recruitment plan.

Main lessons learned and good practices

The lessons learned are: (a) the demonstration of the wide scope of works that EIIP encompasses for future phases; (b) need for persistence and innovative solutions exemplified by EIIP Jordan, to support governments in developing policies and regulations to accommodate access of internationally displaced persons to employment, and (c) crisis situations, such as in Lebanon, require flexibility and innovation to adapt to operate effectively and increase support for the vulnerable.

Examples of good practice are: (a) the increased targets for women's participation in both the countries and meeting them, in Jordan raised to 30 per cent and in Lebanon to 15 per cent; (b) the EIIP Lebanon practice of preparing project completion reports, and (c) engagement of technically qualified Social Safeguards Officers (SSOs) in Lebanon who combine environmental and social safeguards (ESS) compliance with site supervision.