



Evaluation Summary



International
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Phase II: Job Creation for Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Host Communities through Green Works in Agriculture and Forestry

Quick facts

Country: Jordan

Final evaluation date: February 2019

Evaluation mode: Final Independent Project Evaluation

Administrative office: ROAS

Technical office: EMP/INVEST

Evaluation manager: Nathalie Bavitch

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Project code: JOR/17/09/NOR

Donor(s) and budget: Norway, USD 2,422,041

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increasing vegetation cover, improving environmental protection and building the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and local contractors.

In late 2017, the ILO, again collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, set out to boost the results of this initiative by launching its second phase (JOR/17/09/NOR). Phase two built on the successes of phase one and has extended the reach of the project by adding the three governorates of Madaba, Zarqa and Ma'an to the original five governorates it targeted. The developmental goal of the project is to Promote better living conditions for Syrian refugees and Jordanians through increased decent work in the agricultural sector and an improved environment.

Evaluation background and methodology

Evaluation Background

This is the final evaluation and assesses the project against its objectives, captures lessons learnt, comments on the project's impact to date, and provides recommendations that could inform future programming. The evaluation assesses the project against the DAC Criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The primary users of this evaluation include ILO ROAS, ILO constituents in Jordan, government entities, and the donors; however, useful findings may be shared with other stakeholders where appropriate.

Background and context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

As part of its broader strategy in Jordan, the ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture launched an initiative in November 2016 focusing on supporting Syrian refugees and Jordanians access "green work" in the agriculture sector using employment-intensive methods in Ajloun, Jerash, Al Balqa, Karak and Tafila. This initiative exceeded its initial targets and succeeded in creating work for over one thousand Syrian and Jordanian men and women, developing infrastructure to support agriculture,

To meet the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation uses predominantly qualitative methods and is guided by an analytical framework. The evaluation includes a review of project documentation and information from other relevant sources. An in-country visit took place between the 7th and 21st of January, during which stakeholders were interviewed, sites at all eight of the governorates were visited and focus group discussions with workers took place. Findings from the fieldwork were validated during a debrief presentation with the directorates and ILO country staff.

Main Findings & Conclusion

Main findings

Relevance and strategic fit

Phase 2 of the Job creation for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities through green working in agriculture and forestry is largely a continuation and expansion of phase 1. The development goal of the project is in line with the donor and the ILO's goals more broadly. Beyond the explicit objectives, working on this project provides the benefit of the ILO becoming more recognised and trusted by stakeholders in this sector, which will allow it to be more effective in driving greater change at higher levels in the future.

Validity of design

However, other than this implicit potential, the project does not clearly illustrate how it will sustainably achieve its development goal of improved living conditions for the targeted population. The relevance of the project would have benefited from a more rigorous design process that included more preparatory work on understanding the sector and its constraints, mapping out a theory of change and critically interrogating its assumptions, greater integration of the project's components, and more consideration for the sustainability of results.

Effectiveness and efficiency

The project was largely effective in reaching its targets and immediate objectives of creating short-term

employment. However, the targets of workdays and workers do not take into consideration the qualitative aspects of the work created, nor do the output figures consider the sustainability of the results. When unpacking the worker targets, we find that due to the delay and the implementation period being reduced to three months, the project's effectiveness was impacted on in terms of the depth of experience each worker received, and the delays in payment has led to potential negative effects, such as increased financial stress on workers and farmers. While it is important for bureaucratic processes to be followed to ensure that money is appropriately spent, the delay in payments directly detracts from the project's achievements and contradicts the objective of creating decent (and paid for) work. The fact that the project is facilitated by the ILO, places a local reputational risk on the organisation. It is of the utmost importance that measures be taken to rectify the payment issue and that compromises on reporting that streamline the process and put the workers first are found to ensure this is avoided in the future.

The project has proven effective in achieving its tree planting targets in spite of significant challenges, including time delays, transportation costs, and worker management difficulties. However, merely reaching the planting targets is not sufficient to achieve the project's objectives of improving the environment. The planting of trees has the potential of achieving impact in the future; however, the survival rate of the trees is a concern, as are the local communities' perceptions of the forests. The project does not include sufficient consideration for what happens to the trees after the project ends, nor does it fundamentally change the system surrounding forestry. Thus, the tree planting provides a potential once-off increase in the forested area of Jordan, but does not ensure its sustainability.

The initial production targets are seedlings have been met but this does not imply that the distribution targets to farmers will be achieved due to the claimed potential reduction in survival rates across the nurseries. The net increase in distribution over the year would need to be assessed to determine whether

this project has met its objective of distributing these produced trees. In spite of the potential threats to the survival of the plants, the large increase in production will likely result in more trees being distributed to farmers. However, this is only a once-off increase and will likely not result in a sustained change in the production of seedlings, as the nurseries remain resource constrained.

The targets for water cistern construction are virtually met, and out of all the components of the project the outputs are most likely to remain and be used in the future. While the project should not necessarily cover the entire cost of the construction, the structure of the payments does limit the effectiveness of the project in reaching more needy farmers. This component, although most likely to result in lasting change, is also the component that has the least control in terms of creating short-term employment for the targeted groups, in particular women. The provision of more of this infrastructure will likely not increase as a result of the project, as the directorates remain resource constrained and a sustainable model for providing needy farmers with cisterns is yet to be developed.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The ability of the project to continue in spite of the delays and still achieve significant amounts of work in a short period of time is testament to the management and implementation ability of the project team; however, the disparate design of the project and its limited consideration for impact and sustainability constrains this achievement. With more consideration and effort placed in the design phase, the project could have achieved further reaching impact and more sustainable change

Impact

Once the workers are paid, the project will have delivered relief to the workers by providing them with an income through decent work. This will allow the workers to temporarily meet their needs, but unless the workers are able to find other work as a result of this project, this will be short lived. Although workers' expectations and hopes have been raised, the

workers' 25-day experiences on the project are unlikely to dramatically improve their employability in the future. In spite of this, creating short-term employment for the targeted group had other benefits, such as improved confidence and self-worth. The project has resulted in noteworthy shifts in the workers' perceptions, motivations, social lives and feelings of value. Furthermore, the project has contributed to a change in mindsets among women and men about the work women are able to do. It has also provided women with an entry point into the world of work. The project has allowed for women to develop important social links with other women, which provides them with a support network. The evaluation also confirmed a previous study on social integration between Syrians and Jordanians; workers reported that by having Syrians and Jordanians working together it has encouraged dialogue and integration.

Sustainability

When examining the output targets, we find that their sustainability is threatened due to constraints in government resources and a limited consideration in the project's design for what happens after the project is completed. Thus, while the project has been effective at reaching its headline targets, the longevity of these outputs and their impact needs to be prioritised over the project's cost-effectiveness in reaching them.

One of the potential avenues for sustainability in short-term employment generation is through the government adopting the employment intensive approaches. Although benefits of the approach are recognised by the Government, it is unlikely that this specific project will result in fundamental changes at this level due to perceptions of budget restrictions and efficiency held by the implementing partner.

Conclusion

1. The objectives of the project are relevant to all parties; however, although the design is logically

linked to short-term gains, it does not consider the sustainable achievement of these objectives.

2. The project was successful at achieving its explicit targets in a short period of time; however, without more focus on a sustainability strategy, these achievements will be short lived.
3. Delays in implementation outside of the control of the project limited the depth of impact on workers.
4. The ability of the project to continue in spite of the delays and still achieve significant amounts of work in a short period of time is testament to the management and implementation ability of the project team.
5. The delays in payment of workers has had potentially negative impacts and compromises in bureaucratic processes should be made in future to avoid such delays.

2. Set ambitious gender equity targets

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the following recommendations are proposed:

Lessons learned and good practices

Lessons learnt

1. Working with ministries as the implementing partners in Jordan requires a significant amount of time in project implementation to be dedicated to approval processes
2. Applying objective criteria to the selection of workers improves project effectiveness at reaching the targeted populations
3. Setting a gender target will likely lead to the achievement of the target and thus should be set higher.

Emerging Good Practices

1. Use criteria for selecting workers on employment-intensive investment projects

Recommendations

Responsible
Stakeholder

Priority

Resources

1.	<p>Place more emphasis on the design process</p> <p>1.1 More emphasis should be placed on the preparatory elements of a design phase, such as diagnostics and baseline studies.</p> <p>1.2 Construct a project specific theory of change and unpack the assumptions underlying the project's success.</p> <p>1.3 Include a focus on sustainability in the design of the project.</p> <p>1.4 Include a participatory process into the design phase of the project.</p>	ILO team responsible for the design of projects.	Medium	Additional time and effort placed at the beginning of the project cycle.
2.	<p>Find compromises in bureaucratic processes that place the needs of the beneficiary first.</p> <p>To avoid a long delay in payment to beneficiaries in dire need, compromises should be made, or processes should be prioritised.</p>	Country and regional office of the ILO, as well as the ILO Head quarter's Administration team	High	Significant resources, but rather a change in administrative processes
3.	<p>Explore other payment structures.</p> <p>3.1 Research other payment or delivery structures when targeting poor farmers, as they are unable to cover and carry the entire cost of an improvement, such as a water cistern, till completion.</p> <p>3.2 Payment of technical committee members and others involved in the project process needs to be clarified to manage expectations. This should be linked to performance and participation in the project.</p>	Country office of the ILO, as well as implementing partner (Ministry of Agriculture)	Medium	time and effort in exploring the viability of various delivery mechanisms
4.	<p>Enhance contribution to gender equality</p> <p>The project contributed to changes in perceptions of women in the workplace both of the women themselves and the men they worked with. There is still unrealised potential and we recommend that projects include more ambitious targets for the inclusion of women.</p>	Country office of the ILO, as well as implementing partners	Low	Limited resources
5.	<p>Mainstream selection criteria and scoring for the recruitment of workers</p> <p>The recruitment processes though imposed and managed by the ILO for this project, could be incorporated into the implementing partner's practices.</p>	Country office of the ILO, as well as implementing partners	Low	Could potentially require significant resources to establish a programme focused on government recruitment processes.