



Independent thematic evaluation of the ILO's work in post-conflict, fragile and disaster-affected countries: Past, present and future

(October 2015)

What should the ILO be doing to help fragile states? Finding decent work remains a core problem for people affected by crisis in countries like Haiti, still recovering from the 2010 earthquake, or in other countries affected by conflict such as Lebanon, Afghanistan or the Central African Republic. This ILO evaluation examined what the ILO should be doing now for fragile states going forward, and in cooperation with other UN organizations. Decent work and stable jobs bring those in crisis hope through income, freedom, security, dignity and self-esteem. It gives people a stake in rebuilding their communities. Countries covered by the evaluation are: Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Haiti, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Lebanon and Nepal.

Some key findings

- **The ILO has worked extensively in all of the 11 countries.** A majority of the stakeholders generally recognize and appreciate the ILO's work, most of which appears to be in line with its mandate.
- **Support to livelihoods has been carried out in only a few countries.** Most common across all the countries were upstream interventions involving training, technical advice and other capacity-building activities, and downstream interventions involving training.
- **The ILO's interventions have generally produced the expected and desired outcomes and impacts.** However, in some cases, a number of factors - mostly related to the aftermath of crises - have dampened expected results.
- **The ILO could play an important role in the array of the humanitarian response.** In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, ILO can support livelihoods by helping to produce decent and paid employment; supporting stronger tripartite constituents; supporting the empowerment of local communities; and contribute to drafting a rebuilding strategy with other UN agencies on topics related to employment and decent work. Over the longer term, the ILO can support the transition to the recovery and development phase.
- **The ILO has often worked closely with other UN agencies in managing humanitarian crises.** Although the ILO has worked as part of the UN coordination programme 'Delivering as One', it has often played a secondary role in the humanitarian field. This has led to reduced emphasis on employment and social dialogue in reconstruction; insufficient involvement of the social partners; and exclusion of the ILO from the overall rebuilding process.

For effective humanitarian response, ILO provides support through decent work interventions.



Some recommendations

- **ILO should continue to actively develop and support social dialogue** to ensure the appropriate identification of labour market needs, the harmonious development and implementation of policies and the strengthening of institutions in the area of employment. In this context, it is essential to continue establishing and developing permanent social dialogue mechanisms, and training and supporting social partners' representatives.
- **The ILO should reconsider the label of 'fragile states'.** A number of stakeholders in some countries rejected it on the grounds that it represents a political stigma. A more appropriate term is 'transitional state'.
- **Support the sustainability of ILO interventions** by adopting progressive approaches that include: risk assessment and response measures; different country contexts; and sustainability plans from the design stage.
- **Consider enforcing a field security and risk management policy** in order to reduce risk-adverse behaviour of ILO staff and increase the chances of sourcing staff with the required skills.
- **Focus more on gender equality**, paying particular attention to mainstreaming it in all project phases and activities, and ensuring that women and girls are properly targeted. Sex-

Progressive approaches help sustain ILO interventions.



disaggregated data collection at project level should be ensured, and women should be better represented in ILO and local project staff.

- **The ILO should be able to rely more often on a specific budget** or fund for actions in fragile states, such as the RBSA in order to design and implement projects that reflect priorities within the overall crisis response strategy.

VOICES FROM CONSTITUENTS

- "The ILO has contributed to "creat[ing] awareness among the different social partners on the need of an approach always favouring tripartism, as well as on the importance of social dialogue."
- "The ILO introduced tripartism here in Haiti."
- "The ILO often supports institutional strengthening and technical assistance in the Central African Republic."

VOICES FROM ILO STAFF

- "[ILO's local governance work] is not just about rebuilding but about how it is done. The whole engagement process from the planning, the prioritisation, to maximising the use of local resources and skills [is important]."
- "After 2005, the ILO approach has been aiming to get Liberia back on its feet, supporting the recovery efforts, improving livelihood and setting up the institutional structures around the workers, employers and Government."

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