

▶ **The EIIP Approach, Experiences and Lessons Learned: Contributions to the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus (HDPN) in Iraq**



1. Background

► EIIP defined

At the forefront of ILO actions in delivering humanitarian and development assistance in post-crisis scenarios is the **Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)**. EIIP supports countries with immediate to medium- and long-term interventions through reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed infrastructure and improvement of the environment and community assets, while addressing conflict drivers related to the lack of livelihoods and access to infrastructure. Ultimately, the response stimulates the economy and generates local multiplier effects and contributes to inclusive governance, sustainability, resiliency-building, and social cohesion.

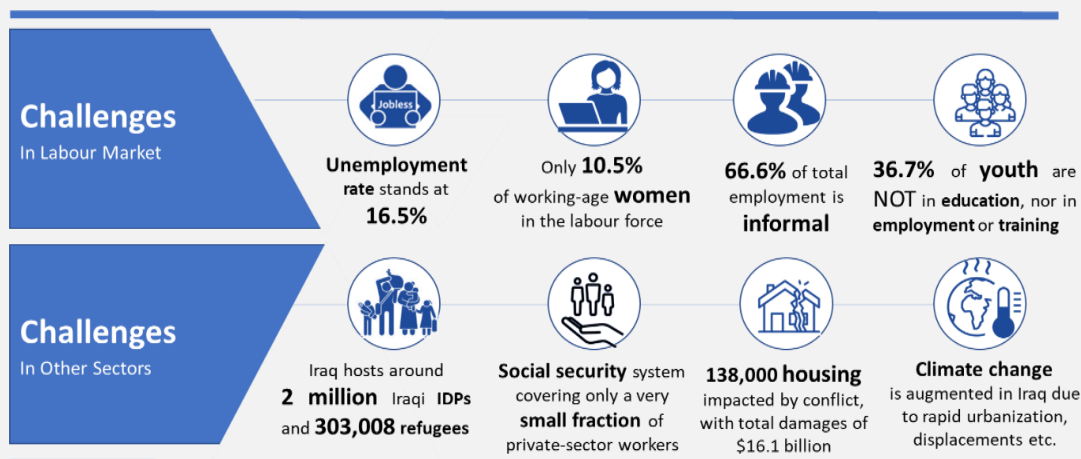
► HDPN defined

The international community, confronted with the increasing number of displaced persons generated by conflicts, maintains that peace building and development assistance are distinct components that entail short- and long-term actions. These have become embodied in a new approach known as **'the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus' (HDPN)** that refers to the "interlinkages between humanitarian, development, and peace actions, with the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence, and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict¹."

► Country Context

Iraq has been affected by conflict, insecurity, and instability for decades. It is currently confronting a difficult fiscal environment because of years of political and social turmoil. This has all been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which have led to significant challenges and limited availability of decent employment opportunities in the country, which, together with other factors, results in a relatively low labour force participation rate (particularly for women), high unemployment and underemployment, and high levels of informality in the labour market.

► Key Challenges in Numbers²



¹ *Employment and decent work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, ILO, 2021*

² *Labour Force Survey, 2021 and World Bank Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates for 2018*

With the aim of overcoming some of these challenges, a range of **humanitarian and development actors** (including UN agencies, NGOs and INGOs) have been providing support to the Government of Iraq over the years. This includes the implementation of numerous cash-for-work programmes that vary significantly in their design, objectives, targeting, type of work undertaken, among other.

2. The ILO EIIP Model offered in Iraq

In 2020, under the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), the ILO began implementation of the **employment intensive investment (EII) approach** in Iraq, as a key approach in meeting both humanitarian and development needs by working simultaneously across **four dimensions**:



Through the application of EIIP in Iraq, socio-economic participation of vulnerable groups amongst Iraqis internally displaced persons (IDPs), Syrian refugees and host communities is being enhanced by **direct implementation** of initiatives that deliver immediate peace dividends by creating **quality jobs**, providing opportunities for **skills acquisition**, and accordingly contributing to irrigation rehabilitation, solid waste management, afforestation, and cultural heritage conservation.

Another core pillar of the EIIP approach is to leverage **productive partnerships** with actors at national, local, and international levels to capitalize on the **collaborative advantage** of each partner whilst also **streamlining ILO's well-rounded experience and technical expertise** in improving working conditions, realizing fundamental labour rights, and stimulating employment generation in the local market through partner programmes.

Under the EIIP approach, there is a focus on strengthening and **empowering institutions** to create an enabling environment for socio-economic recovery and development through policies that promote decent work. Here, the ILO is acting as a technical facilitator providing guidance for: **public sector, private sector, and humanitarian and development partners** to effectively plan, lead, and implement EIIP interventions to provide sustainable infrastructure and productive employment opportunities.



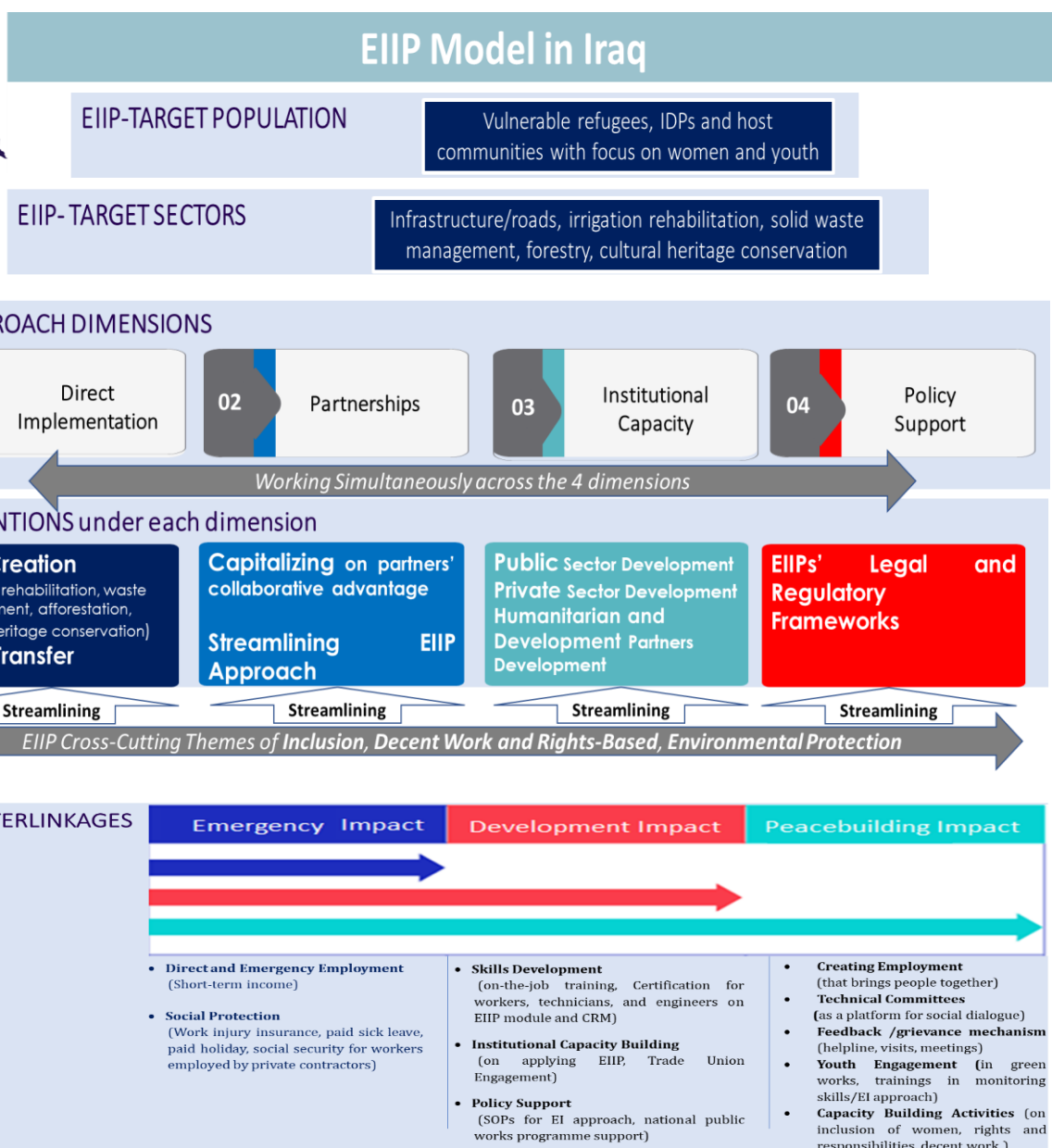
Success Story: A joint programme integrates ILO's EIIP into UNDP's existing cash-for-work (CFW) programmes

A collaboration between the ILO and UNDP Iraq was established to create decent job opportunities for communities affected by conflict and displacement, through rehabilitating 6 infrastructural interventions in the Governorate of Ninewa. This provided excellent learning experience for both implementing partners on how to develop and execute livelihood programmes with longer term employment models and transitioning from emergency to development contexts. ILO and UNDP had capitalized on the comparative advantage of each agency, where ILO contributed its technical expertise in EIIP, starting from technical support during bill of quantity development, amending contract documents to integrate issues of productivity, cost effectiveness and decent work, in addition to training sessions and on-site coaching in the application of EIIP. Through this partnership, knowledge about EIIP management and implementation among UNDP staff was strengthened, and there are opportunities to streamline this through UNDP's upcoming projects.



Upstream work at the **policy level** incorporates supporting the process of putting in place legal and regulatory frameworks that are needed to ensure the activation and implementation of EIIP, such as **developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for EIIP approaches** as simplified guidelines for EIIP implementation, based on key principles and good practices; and **supporting the Government of Iraq** to design and implement its national public works programme, in coordination with external actors involved in relevant sectors therein.

Concurrently, all **cross-cutting issues** of gender equality, social inclusion, conflict sensitivity, workers' rights, social protection, social dialogue, and environmental protection are streamlined at all levels of the EIIP approach.



3. EIIP Contribution to HDPN: Practical Experience from Iraq

How the ILO EIIP approach supports the HDPN?

Through the application of EIIP in Iraq, the operationalization of the HDPN is being supported by addressing simultaneously both humanitarian and development needs, while contributing to the attainment of peace and resilience. Most EIIP activities cover several components of the triple Nexus albeit to varying degrees. **Humanitarian** activities start with the emergency employment that provides immediate income to workers, while in parallel contributing to public infrastructure and services that support longer-term social, environmental, and economic development, including secondary employment effects. The contribution to **transition and development**, is characterized by its support to longer-term employment outcomes in the form of transfer of technical and vocational skills to workers, institutional capacity building, private sector development, policy and sustainability support, and local economic development. Together with the humanitarian and development outcomes, EIIP actions also contribute to **peacebuilding**. EIIP interventions bring people of different backgrounds together, establish contact and encourage people to engage in social dialogue. Tension and mistrust between social groups gradually ease and pave the way for mutual trust, cooperation, friendships, and thus contribute to **social cohesion**.

► EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

EIIP supports the direct creation of decent jobs and livelihood opportunities in the form of **immediate income opportunities** targeting vulnerable youth and women among refugee, IDP and host community populations. Work is mostly carried out on public or community infrastructure and green works, addressing the immediate economic, social, and environmental needs of those affected. In addition to the basic income security granted for the vulnerable workers employed, EIIP participants are also provided with **personal and car accident insurance, paid sick leaves and paid holidays** during participation, and access to **social security** for private sector workers.

“I came to Kurdistan seven years ago, and my financial situation is not good, I need this income to support my family”. A Syrian refugee worker and a mother-of-three.



Emergency Employment

EIIP in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq under the PROSPECT Programme



The ILO launched its **first EIIP in Iraq**, supporting Syrian refugees, IDPs and host communities to access decent work. Supported by the Government of the Netherlands, activities kicked off in the **Dohuk Governorate** to repair and clean 50 KM of **water irrigation channels**, in collaboration with the Directorate of Irrigation. The work generated over **100 jobs** for vulnerable workers, **30% of whom were women**. The ILO approach ensured that workers were employed under **decent working conditions**, including OSH measures. The ILO trained engineers from the local authorities to supervise the work on the ground, on safety and decent work principles. [Link](#)

▶ TRANSITION AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

EIIP's contribution to transition and development, is characterized by its support to longer-term employment outcomes in the form of **transfer of technical skills** to workers either on-the-job or through vocational training, **institutional reform, and capacity building** of public and private sectors to plan, lead, and manage similar EIIP interventions while applying decent work conditions, **policy, and sustainability support** to build a foundation for longer-term change, until reaching **local economic development** by restoring destroyed infrastructure and improving the natural environment and community assets.



Skills Development

Skills training and certification for workers and technicians on Employment Intensive Approaches in cultural heritage development



The ILO and the **Erbil Polytechnic University (EPU)** partnered to develop local skills in Employment Intensive methods for technicians and workers in cultural heritage development. This is being implemented by ILO and **UNESCO** in coordination with the **General Board of Tourism and the General Directorate of Antiquities** in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Recently, a trainer's guide was developed by ILO to inform selected instructors on how to plan, arrange, conduct, and certify such skills development trainings. The training will focus on stone paving, clay bricks building, as well as skills related to tour guides.

The ILO will build the capacities of trainers from EPU to implement and monitor the training programmes, and thus train afterwards skilled workers and technicians working in historical site conservations. An accredited certificate will be granted to all trainees who pass the competency assessments at the end of the training module composed of a total of 35 hours. [link](#)

Training is provided under the EIIP for the implementation, monitoring and supervision process of infrastructural interventions particularly to **Iraqi authorities'** engineers,



Institutional Capacity Building

supervisors, and group leaders, **private** contractors' technicians and skilled workers, to improve their capacity to function effectively and implement upcoming infrastructure works. In addition, **Trade Unions** are engaged by ILO to lead the application of decent work principles during EIIP interventions and support the unionization of workers.



Policy and Sustainability

To guide the procedures of labour-based projects in Iraq and aid the ongoing shift from emergency cash-based activities towards more employment-intensive approaches, ILO introduced a standard operating procedure (**SOPs**) for EIIP approach, and commissioned several **research papers** to investigate, explore, and inform public works interventions in Iraq, to **support the Government of Iraq** in its efforts to adopt a National Public Works Programme. [The recent paper](#) on adopting public works programme in Iraq was discussed during a roundtable discussion held in Baghdad that brought together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences on the relevance of and potential for establishing a public employment programme.



Local Economic Development

Besides creating quality jobs for refugees, IDPs, and host communities, EIIP interventions improve **infrastructure and services**, such as through maintaining the water irrigation systems in the Duhok governorate, which improved access to irrigation water which enhanced the productivity of farms, crop yield, and thus strengthened the agricultural sector capacity in that region.

▶ PEACE IMPACT

EIIP contributes to peacebuilding by addressing the drivers of conflict related to the lack of livelihoods and access to infrastructure. The prospects of immediate income from **jobs created** encourage working-aged adults across social groups to communicate and interact. The **contact** helps ease the tension between groups of different backgrounds. The social groups' participation in EIIP activities helps break the communication barrier to address the grievances expressed during the **dialogue**. Ultimately, this enhances the sense of belonging and builds **social cohesion**.

Under the Dutch-funded PROSPECTS partnership, the ILO is engaging with multiple stakeholders, including youth in mainstreaming EIIP methodology and practices. This multidisciplinary approach fosters collaboration, dialogue and social cohesion, while enhancing a sense of responsibility among the various groups involved.

"He is from Syria, and I am from aq. But we all work together like rothers".

Waleed Abdulkhaliq, a local farmer om Duhok who was involved in the IP for cleaning irrigation channels.



Social Dialogue

Duhok Governorate Technical Committee

Technical committees are established in most EIIP interventions at the governorate level, and are comprised of representatives of the local directorates, trade union representatives, and some worker representatives, including youth, women, FDPs, and people with disabilities. The Duhok committee was set to track the progress of EIIP projects in Duhok, discuss the challenges and opportunities, share recommendations and experiences, and provide a learning platform for youth, women, and people with disabilities to engage in the process.



Youth Engagement

ILO and UNICEF joint initiative to support young engineers to play a key role in promoting Green Works in Iraq

Under this collaboration, young women and men aged 18 – 24 who have completed a UNICEF-supported life skills and entrepreneurship training programme, are being referred to ILO's EIIP Green Works interventions in Dohuk for further training and capacity building to strengthen their employability. The youth, many of whom come from engineering backgrounds, were given **theoretical** and **on-the-job training** in project management, OSH, decent work principles, and specialised technical training in water irrigation, waste management and forest restoration. [Link 1](#), [Link 2](#)

Social Cohesion

During the implementation of EIIP works, a variety of channels are utilized to bring people from different backgrounds together through **jobs** creation, on-the-job trainings and vocational **skills transfer, local communities' engagement** by continuous **meetings** with farmers as final beneficiaries of the executed works to enhance their sense of responsibility towards sustaining the outputs of the work in the future. [Link](#)

In addition to this, a variety of **monitoring** mechanisms are set up to ensure diminishing grievances, such as the Trade Union's **helpline** activation, periodic **site visits and meetings**, etc.

► CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

EIIP streamlines a group of cross cutting themes reflecting ILO's core values and principles.

Inclusion is a key element promoted by EIIP in Iraq, through effectively mainstreaming **gender equality** and **non-discrimination** to pave the way to more equal, peaceful, and resilient societies and ensure *nobody is left behind*. This is based on the utilization of certain measures towards those individuals and groups made particularly vulnerable by the crises, such as through a *minimum quota* for participation for women, refugees, IDPs and people with disabilities, *equal remuneration* for work of equal value, engagement in *technical committees*, and *restricting* the employment of women in *hazardous occupations* under EIIP, as well as many other measures.

Decent work and rights-based approach are the second essential building blocks to be integrated throughout EIIP approaches to govern the employment and implementation processes and comply with labour legislation. This is offered by *empowering Trade Unions* to lead the monitoring process of working conditions on EIIP sites, ensuring a *safe working environment*, *amending workers' employment contracts* with fair terms and conditions, and *assisting partners* to promote and adopt the fundamental rights and principles from their sides.

Environmental protection and climate change adaptation is another value incorporated by EIIP through involving *Green Works* which create jobs that conserve or rehabilitate the environment, applying *Environmental and Social Safeguards* that offset procedures to avoid adverse impacts that may arise in EIIP implementation, along with setting *monitoring measures* to ensure compliance with these safeguards and contribute to the sustainability and overall viability of EIIP.



4. Opportunities to work across the HDPN

To-date, a series of lessons learned have emerged from the experience of implementing EIIP in Iraq:

▶ **EIIP Approach and Alignment with HDPN:** The EIIP approach is closely aligned and supportive of HDPN, presented by **bringing in HDPN's three pillars all together**, working across all dimensions concurrently (implementation, partnerships, policy etc.), and putting ILO's mandate at the heart of HDPN. Through the application of EIIP in Iraq, the operationalization of the HDPN is being supported by addressing simultaneously both humanitarian and development needs, while contributing to the attainment of peace and resilience.

▶ **Partnerships:** EIIP implementation is premised on productive partnerships with actors at national, local, and international levels and strengthening complementarity with partners, who successfully implement a large portfolio of projects in Iraq to tackle the humanitarian crisis, is highly acknowledged, considered essential and expected to facilitate the transition away from CFW modalities into EI approaches, as a means of supporting the creation of more sustainable and productive employment. However, this requires better **coordination** between the different partners, and demands good **planning, joint analysis, and more engagement of private sector**.

▶ **Skills Development** is the key towards enhancing long-term employability, especially with impactful upskilling and certification packages as these investments enhance youth capacities to step into new and better jobs across a wider range of areas. However, skills development should always be informed by comprehensive **assessments of the current and future needs of the labour market**.

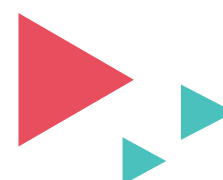
▶ **Participation** of affected populations in planning and identifying needs and solutions is highly needed throughout EIIP interventions. This is an area that might need more **analysis and consultations** with implementing partners in the future.

▶ **Contribution to Social Cohesion** requires various mechanisms and interventions throughout EIIP interventions to bring together different groups and enhance interaction. These include populations' engagement through employment opportunities, committees, vocational trainings, etc. However, social cohesion should be applied holistically by being **mainstreamed** in programmes' strategy, design, operations, and monitoring.

▶ **Decent Work Principles, ESS, and EIIP SOPs** are key tools for success, when properly incorporated. They should be **periodically adjusted** based on feedback provided. Additionally, involving contractors and Trade Unions in monitoring EIIP compliance with working conditions and ESS was an additional added value that must be **replicated and sustained**.

▶ **Climate change adaptation** necessitates the integration of the EIIP model in any climate change response to generate jobs that conserve the environment and to support the ecosystem to withstand and adapt to climate change.

▶ **Well-designed monitoring and evaluation system** is critical for any programme and should aim to capture **employment, social, environmental, and social cohesion outcomes**. **Digitalizing** such systems could provide an additional holistic view of the programme's performance, activities, and beneficiaries in real-time and enable decision makers to access timely, quality, and accurate information.



5. Future Overall Direction of EIIP in Iraq

The **Government of Iraq** will be leading the design and implementation of a **National Public Works Programme**, that mainstreams the **EIIP approach**, as a key investment opportunity to achieve sustainable and long-term impacts on employment, economic growth, and poverty reduction. This will be in coordination with many key stakeholders involved in relevant sectors therein.

Besides identifying *sustainable sources of financing*, this would require initiating *evidence generation, assessments, and analyses* to inform programme design parameters and implementation modalities. Along with drafting and adopting *key policies, SOPs, implementation manuals, and contingency plans*. Additionally, these processes will need to go hand in hand with *core capacity-strengthening* activities both at national and sub-national levels to strengthen the ability of the government to effectively implement the programme, potentially with support from donors, and development and humanitarian actors with expertise in these elements.

Consequently, the **ILO** will continue **expanding and sharing its experience** to help the government, stakeholders, and communities **apply and extend the use of the EIIP approach** and contribute to the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus components.

For more information:

www.ilo.org/iraq and www.ilo.org/eiip

