



RESEARCH, NETWORK
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Research, Network and Support Facility (RNSF)

“Support to enhance livelihoods per people dependent on informal economy
and improve social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable persons”

Volume 4.3: Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Case studies of 15 EC-funded projects

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AUTHORS

The report was prepared by the Research Network and Support Facility Team including Team Leader Paolo Carlini, International Experts Martina Lubyova and Jacques Charmes, and Research Assistant Vittorio Giorgetti under coordination of Project Manager Serena Bove and overall guidance of Daniele Fanciullacci, Chief Executive, A.R.S. Progetti, S.P.A. Cooperation and guidance from Pierre Ghilain of the European Commission (DEVCO) and other EC and project staff is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks for valuable comments and support are due to Mei Zegers who participated in the preparation of the preceding Volumes 4.1 and 4.2.

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ANNEX 1 List of the analysed projects

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF International	Action Against Hunger International
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
AVSF	Agronomes et Veterinaires Sans Frontiers
BA	Business Associations
BSCI	Business Social Compliance Initiative
CAAD	Cooperative Ar Arvidjin Delgerekh (Mongolia)
Cap4Dev	Capacity for Development
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
CIAT	Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical
CIG	Common Interest Groups
CISDOCS	Computer Information Systems Documents (ILO)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEW	Digital Early Warning
DFID	Department for International Development
EBRD	European Bank for Research and Development
ECDD	Engagement Communautaire et Developpement Durable (Comoros)
EESE	Sustainable Enterprises
E-FACE	Ethiopians Fighting Against Child Exploitative Labor
EMLED	Empowering Municipalities through Local Economic Development
EU	European Union
EVAL Partners	Evaluation Partners
FAMOS	Service Quality Check for Supporting Female and Male Operated Small Enterprises
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRC	Finnish Red Cross
GGLP	Grass-root Groups of Livestock Producers
GP	Good practices
GSP	Group of Solidary Producers
HBW	Home Based Workers
IE	Informal Economy
IESF	Informal Economy Support Facility
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INA	Initial Needs Assessment
ISAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technologies
ITP	International Training Programme
IZA	Institute for the Study of Labor
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
LED	Local Economic Development
KTA	Knowledge Transfer Africa
LEDC	Local Economic Development Committee
LEDP	Local economic development plans

LIFT	Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund
LL	LL
MEC	Mongol Ecology Center
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Lebanon)
MDC	Municipal Economic Development Committee
MFO	Microfinance Opportunities
MGMA	Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association
MLB	Medium Level Bodies (Mongolia)
MRCS	Mongolian Red Cross Society
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PA	Parents' Association
PARSEC	Programme d'Appui a Renforcement des capacites du Systeme d'Etat Civil du Niger
PO	Producer Organisations
PPP	Public-private partnerships
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RNSF	Research Network Support Facility
SC	Social Care
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SMART	SMEs for Environmental Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency (Myanmar)
SWE	Small Water Enterprises
TAMKIN	Municipal Capacity Building and Service Delivery Program
Tot	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical vocational education and training
TVET-R	Technical vocational education and training reform
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNU-WIDER	United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VC	Value Chain
WBDB	World Bank "Doing Business" Index
WBGES	World Bank Business Environment Snapshots
WED	Women's entrepreneurship development
WELTHUNGERH	German private organisation for development and humanitarian aid
ILFE	
WFP	World Food Programme
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organising
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The presented report by the Research Network and Support Facility (RNSF) Team represents a third volume (Volume 4.3) summarizing the findings of research focused on identification of good practices and lessons learned from various projects relevant to the support of people whose livelihoods depend on informal economy. The Volume provides analysis and summary of best practices, lessons learned and conclusions from 15 EC-funded projects that were identified by DEVCO as relevant in the informal economy-related context. These projects, although not primarily or explicitly focused on the informal economy *per se*, provide valuable insights and linkages to the informal economy phenomena and the topics identified in the RNSF Research Matrix.

Thus throughout this report, the informal economy is treated as a cross-cutting issue that is addressed in the framework of projects that were primarily focused on a wide range of other topics. Therefore, the findings presented in this Volume provide interesting results on how the informal economy “transpires” through a wide range of EC project frameworks. The results document that the informal economy and issues of informality are present in vast majority of EC-funded developmental projects. The findings and conclusions can serve as leads towards acknowledging the importance of the informal economy and addressing the issues of informality in a more systematic way across the wider spectrum of EC-funded projects.

A general conclusion is that practically every development project, notably the EC-funded projects analysed in this report faces the issues of informality in its implementation and thus is related to the informal economy context in implicit or explicit way. Therefore, it is timely that the EC pays increased attention to the IE agenda and eventually could consider including the IE among the usual set of cross-cutting issues that are taken into consideration in project design and evaluation.

Summary of good practices and tools

The analysis of 15 EC-funded projects led to the identification of several good practices and tools that were relevant for the IE context. In tables below we provide a summary of the good practices and tools, respectively. As both the practices and tools were already described in the previous section with case studies (Section 3), we indicate in the table the project and sub-section in which more details can be found.

List of good practices relevant for the IE context

Good Practice	Project/Sub-section
Regional Service Networks	3.1.1 Kyrgyzstan
Groups of Solidary Purchasers	3.1.1 Kyrgyzstan
Time banks	3.1.1 Kyrgyzstan
Initial Needs Assessment	3.1.1 Kyrgyzstan, 3.3.3 Moldova
Survey of Beneficiaries	3.2.4 Tajikistan, 3.4.1 Mongolia

Standardisation/Certification/Branding	3.1.1 Kyrgyzstan, 3.2.4 Tajikistan
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List of developed tools relevant for the IE context

Tool	Project/Sub-section
Accelerated Learning Programmes	3.3.1 Lebanon
School in a Box	3.3.1 Lebanon
Guidebook of Economically Viable Activities for Returned Migrants	3.3.3 Moldova
Code of Conduct of Garment Producers	3.4.2 Myanmar

Summary of Lessons learned

The qualitative analysis of the 15 EC-funded projects resulted in identification of six general lessons learned that were repeatedly quoted in the project narratives and evaluations and considered as generally relevant for the informal economy by the RNSF Team. In what follows we summarize these main lessons along with more detailed illustrative examples from the relevant projects.

1. The need to secure cooperation and enforcement from local and national authorities

One of the key lessons learned that came up repeatedly in several projects was the crucial role of the various authorities in providing support and enforcement to the project activities and results. Numerous projects were effectively focused on the beneficiary groups and target populations (to whom they provided effective support) found out that the results of their actions were annulled or not sustained after the project closure due to the fact that the project activities were not supported by the competent authorities.¹ This conclusion came out repeatedly in the project narrative and final evaluations reports. The following five cases illustrate the specific contexts that led to similar conclusions.

Guiding and Integrating a Sustainable Economic Revitalization of Local Communities Dependent on the long-term Stewardship of Lake Hovsgol National Park (Mongolia) (3.1.2)

Although the project achieved a number of positive outcomes in particular at the local level, the achievement of one of its main goals – facilitation of enabling environment – has been complicated by the complex and diversified relationships with the national authorities. There has been a high turnover at the main counterpart Ministry during the project implementation period, which complicated the relationships and national ownership of the project. In the course of the project implementation it turned out that enforcement from the national authorities was inevitable for reaching some of the projects' goals (e.g. implementation of controls and bans in illegal tourist camps and

¹ In project 3.1.2 it was Ministry of Environment and Green Development, in 3.1.4 Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health, in 3.2.4 Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, in 3.3.2 Governors of the soums (districts), in 3.3.3 Local Public Authorities and mayors.

irregular activities in the neighbourhood of the lake). The deterrence of these irregular activities from the side of the authorities was weak and the project staff did not have the capacity/authority to enforce. Similarly, an insufficient coordination between the project and the national authorities led to the acceptance of important documents (Zoning of the Park) came as a surprise to the project team. In this sense, the project team found itself in a position in between the informal activities run by the illegal camp owners and the formal activities performed by the authorities, whereas it has been to an extent detached from both these stakeholders. Therefore, the potential role of providing a bridge between the two stakeholders has not been fulfilled. Potentially the people dependent or engaged in the illegal camps and other illegal activities in the park should have played a major role in the project.

Programme d'Appui au Renforcement des capacités du Système d'État Civil du Niger (PARSEC) (3.1.4)

Among the lessons learned, the evaluation report identified the wrong level of governance of the programme: to be effective and operational it should be located at ministerial level and coordinated with the Ministries of Justice and Health because it was observed that declaratory judgments were not transcribed into acts of civil status, judges did not supervise and control some parts of the acts, health workers did not sign the notebook of declaration.

As for the recommendations, it is essential to conceive and implement a system that would economically secure and retain clerical employees and health workers in civil registration centres; to this aim it is necessary that remuneration and allowances be paid entirely and on time, that remuneration per act be increased and that volunteer clerical employees benefit of a kind of status entitling allowances similar to village chiefs'.

It is recommendable to coordinate action with Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health and Education in order that all major actors in the field of civil status registration contribute to and aim at the universalization of civil status, as a key protection right for the poor and destitute.

Handicraft and business through regional integration and fair trade market (Tajikistan) (3.2.4)

One of the project components was focused on the field of regulation and legislation, notably the aim was to introduce a new Act that would give the handicraft sector a new grounding. Production of handicrafts was defined in the legislation as a “folk art”, but it was not recognised as income generating activity. Given that the sector provides income opportunities to a large circle of producers, including in the informal economy, the project aimed at creating the legal basis for handicraft production that would allow for further development of the sector. Inevitably, adoption of such a law would have also certain regularizing effects on the producers in the sector.

However, the activity came to a stalemate. Legislative proposals developed by the civil society organisations were not upheld by the executive and legislative bodies. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade was not willing to propose a new piece of legislation due to the lack of information and data about the sector. This lack of information was partly due to the informal status of the producers. Therefore, the project revised its strategy and introduced a survey of handicraft producers.

Building the Productive, Organizational and Commercial Capacities of the Agricultural Sector in Arkhangai Aimag (Mongolia) (3.3.2)

A lesson learned was related the lack of cooperation and participation from the local and national authorities. In particular, as regards animal disease (brucellosis) control, the Federation of Arkhangai Herders worked consistently on awareness raising for the targeted population but didn't succeed in bringing the results of the project at a national level due to a lack of will from national authorities. The lack of participation of local and national authorities before and at the beginning of the project made some activities more difficult to implement and lessons have been learnt for the next project.

The local government shall be more involved at the beginning and before the project. Many Soum Governors didn't want to be involved in the project because they were lacking information at the beginning of the project. This may have an impact for the diffusion of the activities at the end of the project. Consequently, local authorities shall be involved before the project for activities like brucellosis in order to be more supportive during the project.

Support the use of remittances for new businesses and jobs creation (Moldova) (3.3.3)

An important aspect of reaching out to all the regions including rural areas was the establishment of partnership agreements with Local Public Authorities. The representatives of Local Public Authorities are acquainted with the Project, value it and encourage the implementation of similar projects in future. They mentioned that business start-ups contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in the community by providing the necessary services, employing some inhabitants and accumulating money to the local budget. Services provided at the local level are diverse and help work the land but also improve people's health condition by increasing the consumption of rabbit meat, quail eggs etc. However, the lesson learned was that the level of intervention with the Local Public Authorities was still too high. The project cooperated mainly with Rayonal Council and less with the mayors from the first level (localities). There were examples when mayors were interested in identifying the participants of the training session, after being supported in starting a business, but a part of them were indifferent and not interested in local business development.

2. The need to establish suitable operational framework and outreach to the beneficiaries in IE and other vulnerable target groups

Several projects run by competent institutions in the field of action resulted in frustration and negative evaluations due to the fact that they were not able to establish a proper operational framework for working with and reaching to the intended beneficiaries. This could be for various reasons. For example, the EBRD as an excellent and competent banking institution was not able to work with the small and micro-enterprises due to its stringent rules that proved to be insurmountable barriers for the vulnerable informal firms. The bank lacked consultants, channels and expertise to reach out to the intended project beneficiaries and to involve them in the action. Similarly, other projects struggled with the outreach problem due to the lack of specialist networks able to work with the target group (the case of poor and vulnerable young people in Myanmar), or due to the fact that the beneficiaries could not be located (Syrian refugees in Lebanon in the case of UNHCR project, or Moldovan emigrants abroad in the case of the project run by Caritas Ceska Republika). The examples below show that it is extremely important to use the proper operational frameworks to reach out the beneficiaries. For example, in the case of vulnerable young people in Myanmar it was found that young people who are extremely poor, under-educated and un-skilled are also extremely vulnerable can in some cases experience greater vulnerability due to lack of support from community support organisations that are specialised in working with other target groups. They also experience stigma and discrimination from their communities who perceive them as worthless and unskilled with nothing to offer. Therefore, it is important to work closely with families of the beneficiaries from the start of a programme in order to build their understanding and acceptance of the programme and gain their support for young people's participation. At the same time, community sensitisation at the start of a programme should be done directly by project staff and others (e.g. local authorities and community leaders) should not be relied upon to share accurate information. Below we provide more details illustrating the situation in several analysed projects.

Support to SME development in Mongolia (3.1.3)

The project did not sufficiently reached out to small and micro-enterprises, neither to the companies in rural areas i.e. to the people whose livelihood are most likely to be affected by their dependence on the informal economy. This is an illustration of the issues discussed also in the Volume 3 (Global Policy Review), in particular the fact that IFI's and other international banks lack the proper operational framework to access and work with the people and firms in the informal economy.

The project ended up covering medium enterprises rather than small and micro-enterprises. The minimum loan amount disbursable under the EBRD rules was prohibitively high for smaller enterprises. The roster of business consultants did not include enough experts that were in touch with the IE enterprises. The covered

companies were concentrated in more developed regions and in urban area, contrary to the project intentions. As a consequence, we can argue that more education/training is needed to provide professionals with skills in this field. At the same time, advocacy is needed in order to change rules in the bank system to make them more accommodating towards the specific situation of the target groups in the informal economy.

As formulated in the project Evaluation report: “The overall project management on the part of the EBRD could have been better: although the EBRD is an expert institution in access to finance, in Mongolia it lacked experience in implementing a (non-access to finance) policy-making technical assistance project. The project was re-orientated towards the areas that EBRD Mongolia was technically comfortable with, rather than what the original project was seeking to achieve.” This is a clear example for supply-driven intervention rather than a desirable demand-driven approach.

Y CARE International ‘Empowering civil society to promote the enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Myanmar’ (3.2.5)

The most significant lesson has been how difficult it is to attract and retain extremely vulnerable and marginalised young people to development programmes, even those with tangible benefits such as livelihoods training and associated support (starter kits/sub-grants). Although some programmes were flexibly tailored for the participants in the course of the project (for example, the training programs were shortened in order to enable the participants to realise the resulting benefits earlier), the dropout rate was high. Another problem was that unlike the other vulnerable groups (such as disabled youth and LGBTI), the extremely poor young people did not have at their disposal the groups of experts specialised to provide targeted psychological and other support.

Support to Medium and Long Term Needs of Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (3.3.1)

There were particular challenges to reach many persons who resided in informal settlements in locations far away from schools. Information on how to register for schools needed to be improved. Therefore, the UNHCR recruited Refugee Outreach Volunteers who have been integral in strengthening communication with refugee populations. UNHCR has also incorporated a participatory approach to better accountability and to adapt outreach activities based on feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Originally little or no tracking of exam results and dropout rates existed. UNHCR implemented a child tracking system which allows for checking the progress of each individual child benefitting from the UNHCR education programmes.

Support the use of remittances for new businesses and jobs creation (Moldova) (3.3.3)

The main focus of the project was on support to legal enterprises. Although the project does not explicitly mention informal economy, the implicit focus is obvious, as many of

returning migrants and remittances recipients must have been in the IE either in the host country or in Moldova.

One of the good practices that were particularly relevant for the informal economy concept was the organisation of outreach through media that are accessible also to the individual and companies in the informal economy, notably dozens of radio and TV broadcasts. At the same time, the evaluation team pointed out that there was poor dissemination of the project at the national level as the activities targeted local communities. The project was little advertised on the internet and there was no dedicated website created for the project. Most importantly, the informality of migrants businesses and irregularity of their conditions caused serious problems in terms of reaching out to the target groups abroad.

Comprehensive socio-economic development in rural Mongolia (3.4.1)

According to the evaluation of the Action, its main contribution to the field of social care was that it had successfully demonstrated an effective model for community based social care services by volunteers by delivering tailor-made services to the target groups, something that cannot be offered by the Government.

However, the implementing agencies (Red Cross and its partners) lacked the experience required for the identification of economically viable business opportunities, market surveys, etc. Therefore, the overall impression of the evaluators was that the implementing agencies were much more effective in delivering social care services and support (Component 1) than in income generating activities and entrepreneurial support (Component 2). It would have been desirable to cooperate with institutions that have experience with income generating activities, e.g. in microfinance, start-ups, entrepreneurship training, identification of economically viable opportunities, etc.

3. The need to take into consideration social interaction, hierarchies and power relations in the targeted communities

The project evaluation and narrative reports very often reported serious problems due to the clashes with the existing habits, hierarchies and power structures in the beneficiary communities. For example, the women from ethnic minorities in secondary job markets in Israel could not be effectively helped because of the lack of support from men, employers, and other members of their own communities. The lack of understanding by project stakeholders brought the activities a stalemate. The collective activities supported in the framework of a project in Comoros were disrupted by the individualistic and selfish behaviour of some beneficiaries that annulled the collective efforts developed by the project. The power relationships between “old” and “new” business associations established in the handicraft sector in Tajikistan disrupted some of the project activities aimed at supporting the handicraft producers and connecting them to international markets. Participation of extremely vulnerable

young people in Myanmar in the project activities was weak due to the lack of cooperation and support from their parents. Finally, better awareness of specific gender-related issues would have made a nutrition-based programme in Myanmar more effective, as many involved women felt that some form of male involvement would have made it easier for them to implement the activities. An understanding of the local economic context was also found to be particularly important for future Income Generating Activities programmes.

Her Right to Decent Work: Arab and Ethiopian women in secondary schemes of employment in Israel (3.2.1)

One of the weaknesses of the project was related to the inadequate involvement of the private sector. The project was focused only on the victims' perspectives, neglecting the other side of the problem, namely employers' exploitative approach and economic stakeholders' negligence. Too narrow focus on the IE workers (victims), dealing only with their perspectives and overlooking the other side of the market, notably the local communities, employers, men, and private sector complicated the sustainability and impact of the project activities.

Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as Tools for Peace in Myanmar (3.2.2)

Promotion of full respect for and application of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in Myanmar as a means to ensure practices of forced labour no longer continue. This rights-based foundation is the basis for addressing the developments made in the national peace process, as well as economic reforms introduced by the government in line with the priorities laid out in the Action Plan. By addressing fundamental rights, it was envisaged that the country's reconciliation and development would be more in line with a fundamental respect of rights, and thus more inclusive of the needs of all the country's constituents.

In the end, the design proved to be overambitious, characterised by a theory of change that may have been clear to those responsible for the initial design but has not proven sufficiently solid to ensure its understanding by all stakeholders. This means, first of all, that stakeholders will interpret the project in their own way, placing emphasis on one or another of the specific objectives according to their own interests, rather than taking a more global approach. Under such circumstances, no good practice could be extracted from the project.

Engagement Communautaire et Développement Durable (Community Engagement and Sustainable Development, ECDD) 2008-2013 (Comoros) (3.2.3)

In the absence of social cohesion and leadership, and of decentralised governance, the project objectives turned out to be difficult to achieve. Building of trust could not be achieved: community hen houses or vegetable gardens had to stop because individualism was taking precedence over collective behaviour: all collective income generating works were abandoned, except for water management.

This development confirmed that social action must be carefully prepared and based on a thorough and practical knowledge of power relations that exist within communities: these power relations cannot be ignored, it is vain to think that a project action can go against them, even if it advisable to ensure that the action will not be used to reinforce them.

Technicians or agricultural extension workers are not trained for social experimentation. Actions that involve communities and leaders must be prepared and accompanied by social scientists, especially where work is mobilised without cash.

Handicraft and business through regional integration and fair trade market (3.2.4)

One of the serious issues of the project was the lacking capacity of the national partners – the business associations. Therefore, some of the project activities were aimed at training of the business associations' staff. This effort resulted in increasing the number of motivated and enthusiastic staff members, notably young people. However, this resulted in certain tensions and antagonisms between the new initiative young staff members and the old staff members (insiders) who held important positions in the BA's. The example illustrates the need for awareness and when possible also prior analysis of the existing relationships, hierarchies and governance structures in the implementing organisations in order to reveal the potential antagonisms/competitive relationships that could hamper the project implementation. The recommendation is particularly important in the countries that are characteristic by hierarchical social structures and relationships (patriarchal societies, societies with strong respect for old-age and tenure, etc.).

Y CARE International 'Empowering civil society to promote the enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Myanmar' (3.2.5)

The most significant lesson has been how difficult it is to attract and retain extremely vulnerable and marginalised young people to development programmes. Project evaluators came to the conclusion that the problem was partially related to the weak support and cooperation from the parents of the young people – project beneficiaries.

Innovative and 'nutrition-sensitive' Food Security intervention for Improved Nutrition (3.4.3)

Ensuring a better understanding of local cultural, socio-economic and environmental context was among the main recommendations of the project evaluation. Although understanding of the local contexts was accomplished to an adequate degree, the evaluation argued that it should be improved for the future, as many involved women felt that some form of male involvement would have made it easier for them to implement the activities. This highlighted the need for more robust gender analysis in the design phase of the programme: a greater inclusion of male participants would have promoted their understanding of the programme. An understanding of the local economic context was found to be particularly important for future Income Generating Activities (IGA) programmes. The potential wider impact of the introduction of IGAs at

the wider level of village economy was unknown due to the absence of previous feasibility studies and market surveys. The evaluators considered these studies and surveys essential for informing the design of future IGA initiatives and their implementation with the aim to maximise their benefits.

4. The need to identify the right level of governance and the involvement of right stakeholders to overcome informality

Identification of the right level of governance and the involvement of right stakeholders is key in ensuring sustainable and effective approaches. Several projects have been openly confronting the lack of registration (e.g. civil registration or registration in the framework of the project) and the resulting lack of information about project target groups, their rights and entitlements. For example, a project aimed at civil registration support in Niger was struggling to convince the beneficiaries that they should register themselves with the authorities in order to be able to claim various civil rights and social benefits. In a project run by UNHCR for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the tracking of Syrian students, recording their performance and getting their parents to participate in Parents Associations was complicated due to the irregular status of the Syrian refugees and the lack of information about their whereabouts. Similarly, in the social protection project run by the Red Cross in rural Mongolia, one of the most appreciated services was the referral service that assisted the nomad and rural populations to get civil registration and thus also the access to social rights and benefits. A general conclusion is that awareness raising is a very important activity to promote in order to convince people living and working in the informal economy that the access to civil rights and social benefits should go through registration and tracking. We provide further details about these findings below.

Programme d'Appui au Renforcement des capacités du Système d'État Civil du Niger (PARSEC) (3.1.4)

Informality is roughly defined by, and limited to the non-registration of the enterprise or the activity operated by the person. But in many developing countries, especially those with dominant rural areas, people themselves are not registered because of the lack of an efficient civil status registration. When a boy or a girl is born without civil status, he (or she) will be unable to claim his (her) rights because the person cannot provide the proof of his (her) name, age, residence, nationality, etc. Again, when he (or she) marries without civil status registration, no proof of marital status can be brought and finally when he (or she) dies without civil status, his (her) heirs will not be able to claim for the ownership of the land or the house. The rule of law, with its rights, freedoms and obligations, can apply if and only if citizens have a legal “existence”.

UNICEF has been involved in several projects designed for improving birth registration in Central and West Africa where coverage rates reach only 40% in average, whereas

immunisation rates have reached 70% thanks to a better coverage of health services. It is observed that a growing number of countries in these regions are using immunisation and maternal and child health check-ups to register births as a more cost-effective way. Another innovation that is tested is the use of mobile phone text messaging to transmit information about new-born children to civil registration offices. However, such technical solutions cannot replace an efficient civil registration system itself. This is why projects such as the Support Program for enhancing the Civil Registration System in Niger 2012-2015 are important.

Project name: Support to Medium and Long Term Needs of Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (3.3.1)

The project faced serious difficulties that were linked to the informality of circumstances under which the sizeable Syrian refugee community resided in Lebanon. Activity focused on community involvement (actively involving parents in education) aimed to introduce Parents Associations (PA's) or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's). The activity faced difficulties due to the informal character of Syrian residencies in Lebanon. The Lebanese school system does have the Parent Associations. The members are elected annually or bi-annually and they participate in the management of the budget and other affairs. However, the Syrian parents could not be effectively involved in PA's mainly due to the difficulties with registering their place of residence, as their stay in the Lebanese communities was often informal. Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) was against the establishment of associations which included Syrian parents due to the complications with the Lebanese residencies and the legal status of Syrian parents. The problem was quite serious mainly for the second shift school activities where the students were exclusively Syrians. UNHCR did manage to implement some PA's in Tripoli through their implementing partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). However, during the evaluated period of implementation the project did not manage to find a solution to introducing formal PA's with Syrian participation into the formal education system in Lebanon.

Comprehensive socio-economic development in rural Mongolia (3.4.1)

According to the evaluation of the Action, its main contribution to the field of social care was that it had successfully demonstrated an effective model for community based social care services by volunteers by delivering tailor-made services to the target groups, something that cannot be offered by the Government.

The most highly appreciated initiative towards target group was referral services aimed at helping elders, disabled, migrants and extreme vulnerable people to obtain civil registration documents, receive health service, and involve in pension and welfare allowance. It opened gate for enjoying rights to benefit from social welfare services. SCC visitors' social engagement is strengthened, and gained more positive attitude towards family and society as a result of psychosocial support.

5. The need to support association building and use economies of scale

One of the main problems of the informal economy workers and enterprises is the fragmentation, isolation, and small scale of their operations and production that pose limitations to their lending abilities, ability to buy equipment, increase the quality of production, get access to the formal markets, etc. The most obvious solution to this problem is the association building among the IE producers that enables them to join forces and to use the economies of scale. Support to building cooperatives and other associations is often included in the projects as a way to overcoming the obstacles and limitations of the informal activities. The importance of associations was underlined also in the projects focused on poor and vulnerable women in Kyrgyzstan, rural sedentary populations in Mongolia, and handicraft producer in Tajikistan.

Women in Action and Solidarity against Poverty in Kyrgyz Republic (3.1.1)

The project provided support to establishment of the so-called **Regional Service Networks** in the two pilot districts that (among other components) included also: (a) **groups of solidary producers**, and (b) **time banks**. Network members included groups of solidary producers, time banks, and help centres for women. These elements were established in the pilot regions and they established a mutual cooperation across a wide range of services and aid that they were able to provide. Groups of solidary producers (GSP) were inspired by the Italian experience of groups of solidary purchase, based on the principles of mutual trust, transparency, decent work, and respect for the environment. The main goal of the time banks was easing the heavy burden of domestic work by rural women. Typical services traded in the time banks included organisation of weddings and celebrations, processing of fruits and harvests.

Handicraft and business through regional integration and fair trade market (3.2.4)

Another serious issue was the lacking capacity of the national partners – the business associations. Therefore, some of the project activities were aimed at training of the business associations' staff. This effort resulted in increasing the number of motivated and enthusiastic staff members, notably young people. However, this resulted in certain tensions and antagonisms between the new initiative young staff members and the old staff members (insiders) who held important positions in the BA's.

Building the Productive, Organizational and Commercial Capacities of the Agricultural Sector in Arkhangai Aimag (3.3.2)

An important lesson learned was related to the establishment of meat value chain. The intention of the project was to identify and support the direct value chain from the meat producers to retailers. Several surveys and workshops were organized on this topic. While herders were still interested by the meat value chain, they explained their concern regarding the availability of their animals. Most of them were not sure they would be able to provide enough animals in a regular way. It seems that they would be able to

match the meat industry requirements, only if they could sell their meat at a higher price – which was not the case yet. Because the project partners never succeeded in finding a real partner to support the meat value chain, no further workshops have been organized in the framework of this project. The problem was related to the economies of scale and the limitations of production due to the small volumes. Although the first steps were successfully made towards overcoming these limitations by setting up associations/groups and boosting the cooperation among the herders, the extent was of sufficient to enable access to regular meat industry value chain. However, the project provided valuable leads for bottom-up approach to organisation of fragmented producers. For example, the individual herders were organised into groups that included siblings, neighbours, or individuals working already together for other activities (small animal husbandry, felt factory, etc.).

Collective natural resources management approaches, including pastureland management, need to be implemented at a larger scale to ensure real impact and coherence (e.g. a single grassroot group of livestock producers can implement sustainable pasture management practices, but these could easily be jeopardized by a neighbouring group of families which would not have adopted the same approach, and would then compete for the same pastureland).

6. The need to avoid over-ambitiousness in project design (inspired by the complexity of the IE issues) and to scale down the project activities and to focus on the necessary dimensions that could lead to achievement of the concrete project goals

Informal economy is a complex and multifaceted issue. The projects dealing with informality often aim to address a wide range of issues that could help to tackle the problem from several sides. Although it is very important to get the proper expertise and to mobilize the proper partners, the analysed projects were often found as overambitious. Therefore, one of the common lessons learned was to scale down the project activities and to focus on the necessary dimensions that could lead to achievement of the project goals. For example, the project focused on Arab and Ethiopian women in Israel was found to focus on too many communities and ethnic situations, the projects aimed at supporting vulnerable rural populations in Mongolia were found out to have too wide geographical coverage and too ambitious goals in terms of complexity of support (focus on “passive” social protection and “active” income generating activities component).

Her Right to Decent Work: Arab and Ethiopian women in secondary schemes of employment in Israel (3.2.1)

A major drawback of the project was be related to its over-ambitiousness. The scope was too broad and too many issues were at stake (i.e. three different communities with different habits, social rules and concept of woman; the double role of women as private

workers and as a part of society; the balance between the public and private approach towards the targeted workers, etc.). In particular, it was clear that working rights violation was just one of the problems that women faced within the targeted communities. Sometimes these violations were accompanied by local communities' discrimination, prejudice and lack of collaboration. It was advisable to narrow the scope of the action, perhaps focusing just on one single community and involving also other actors (especially men and employers in the engaged communities).

Building the Productive, Organizational and Commercial Capacities of the Agricultural Sector in Arkhangai Aimag (3.3.2)

Generally after 40 months working on the project, the AVSF learned important thing to be taken into account for its next projects: the area of implementation shall be smaller as it is too difficult for the field team to travel in Mongolia due to weather or natural conditions.

INTRODUCTION

The presented report by the Research Network and Support Facility (RNSF) Team represents a third volume (Volume 4.3) summarizing the findings of research focused on identification of good practices and lessons learned from various projects relevant to the support of people whose livelihoods depend on informal economy.

Volume 4.1 summarized 17 good practices and 10 lessons learnt from 33 projects selected under the 2009 EC call for Proposals *“Investing in People. Promoting social cohesion, employment and decent work. Support for social inclusion and social protection of workers in the informal economy and of vulnerable groups at community level”*.

Volume 4.2 analysed a total of 202 documents including 171 mid-term, final and impact evaluations of projects focused on the informal economy that were funded and implemented by a number of development agencies including the ILO, World Bank, USAID, DFID, WFP, UNIDO, and FAO. The volume provided overview of good practices, lessons learned and conclusions classified according to the main topics and sub-topics of the RNSF Research Matrix.

The presented Volume 4.3 provides analysis and summary of best practices, lessons learned and conclusions from 15 EC-funded projects that were identified by DEVCO as relevant in the informal economy-related context. These projects, although not primarily or explicitly focused on the informal economy *per se*, provide valuable insights and linkages to the informal economy phenomena and the topics identified in the RNSF Research Matrix. Volume 4.3, while building on the preceding two volumes, provides qualitatively different type information. Notably, it treats the informal economy as a cross-cutting issue addressed in the framework of projects that were primarily focused on a wide range of other topics. Therefore, the findings presented in this Volume provide interesting results on how the informal economy “transpires” through a wide range of EC project frameworks. The results and conclusions can serve as a lead towards acknowledging the importance of the informal economy and addressing the issues of informality in a more systematic way across the wider spectrum of EC-funded projects.

In the first section we provide a brief summary of research methodology developed by the RNSF team in the course of previous work. The methodology allows classifying various projects and activities according to a set of pre-selected criteria. The projects are tagged by these criteria in order to enable readers to easily find the topics of their interest. Adhering to this classification allows for a more consistent comparison of good practices and lessons learned across all the three Volumes, thus linking the experiences from the three groups of projects: EC-funded projects focused on supporting people whose livelihoods depend on IE (Volume 4.1), projects funded by other donors focused on IE issues (Volume 4.2), and EC-

funded projects focused on a wide range of other issues and topics with IE relevance (Volume 4.3).

In the second section we provide descriptive statistics of the analysed projects along with stylized facts that link the projects' goals and activities to the IE context. We present project case studies according to a pre-defined uniform template that allows comparison across cases. Classification of project objectives according to the RNSF Research Matrix criteria allows for comparability between the presented Volume 4.3 and the preceding Volumes 4.1 and 4.2.

The third section contains detailed case studies focused on the identification of good practices, tools, and lessons learned from the 15 EC-funded projects. The fourth section contains conclusions and recommendations.

1. Methodology and definitions

In this section we briefly review the research methodology used by the RNSF team to identify lessons learned and good practices related to the informal economy. We also provide an overview of the main criteria and priorities of the Research Matrix that was developed by the RNSF team and approved by DEVCO. The Research Matrix serves as analytical tool that helps to link project goals and activities according to the identified priorities (research questions). This should facilitate easier orientation of readers among the various findings and to allow the users to cut straight to the fields of their interest.

Throughout the RNSF project, the term “people dependent on the informal economy”² is used broadly in line with the ILO definition that refers to all economic activities of workers and economic units that are - in law or in practice - not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. The law is not applied or not enforced or the law discourages compliance, because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

The 15 EC-funded projects analysed in this Volume cannot be understood as a representative sample of the whole universe of projects funded by the EC that are fully or in part relevant to the IE context. Such a daunting task would not be plausible to accomplish not only due to the large number of such projects, but also due to the broad coverage and complexity of the informal economy phenomena. Therefore, the present volume represents a compendium of qualitative case studies based on a sample of EC-funded projects, which illustrate the links between informal economy and other development topics, as well as the relevance of informal economy considerations within a broad range of social and developmental contexts. For this purpose, a set of 38 potentially relevant projects was identified by DEVCO. After preliminary screening and correspondence with the project implementing partners and EU Delegations in the project countries, the RNSF team was able to undertake qualitative analysis of 15 EC-funded projects for which narrative and/or evaluation reports were provided.

Good practices and lessons learned described in Volumes 4.1 and 4.2 were identified according to the following criteria developed by the RNSF Team:

Criteria used in Volume 4.1 and 4.2 for identifying lesson learned:

The lesson learned must be a description of what was learned from past experience(s) that can be used to inform new planning of strategies and actions. That is, it must be a lesson that can be used to improve information / knowledge for better decision-making and thus contribute to improved program or project performance, outcome, or impact.

The lesson learned can be positive or negative. It can be negative in terms of identifying (an) element(s) that should not be repeated in future planning. It can also include identification of

² That is the people who are the subject of the RNSF

specific issues which need to be taken into account when engaging in planning. These can include contextual issues such as economic, policy, socio-cultural, and/or on equity.

Criteria used in Volumes 4.1 and 4.2 for identifying good practices:

Criteria	DESCRIPTION
1. Effective and successful	A “good practice” has proven its strategic relevance as the most effective way in achieving a specific objective; it has been successfully adopted and has had a positive impact on individuals and/or communities.
2. Innovative and creative	That it is innovative and/or creative in its design and implementation
3. Environmentally, economically and socially sustainable	A “good practice” meets current needs, in particular the essential needs of IE entrepreneurs/workers or potential entrepreneurs/workers, without compromising the ability to address future needs.
4. Gender sensitive	A description of the practice must show how actors, men and women, involved in the process, were able to improve their livelihoods.
5. Technically feasible	Technical feasibility is the basis of a “good practice”. It is easy to learn and to implement
6. Inherently participatory	The good practice involves project stakeholders through meaningful participation and ownership. Participatory approaches are essential as they support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions.
7. Replicable and adaptable	A “good practice” should have the potential for replication and should therefore be adaptable to similar objectives in varying situations.

Given that the 15 projects analysed in Volume 4.3 were not explicitly focused on the informal economy, the good practices and lessons learned identified by the project staff and project evaluators in the project narrative and evaluation reports are often formulated in a way that does not directly connect to the informal economy context, neither they necessarily conform to the above- described criteria used for identification of good practices and lessons learned. Therefore, for the purposes of the current Volume, the RNSF team analysed the project documents including narrative and evaluation reports with the aim to identify and highlight lessons learned and practices that are relevant in the informal economy context. Thus Volume 4.3 uses a two-pronged approach:

(a) screening the good practices and lessons learned identified by the project staff and evaluators in the project narrative and/or evaluation reports, and

(b) analysing the projects from the informal economy point of view, to highlight the linkages to the IE relevant context, and to eventually identify further good practices and lessons learned relevant in the IE context.

This mixed approach can provide complex observations and insights valuable for the IE practitioners, as well as for other experts and agencies that face the issue of informality when implementing projects. It can also provide guidance for the formulation of policies that attempt to tackle the informal economy from multiple entry points.

For the sake of better orientation among the 15 analysed projects, we group them into 4 major groups according to the key **Research Questions (RQ)** defined in the RNSF Research Matrix:

RQ 1) Enabling environment

What are the key ways to successfully support the enabling environment at national and sub-national level for enhancing the livelihoods of those dependent on the informal economy, with special attention to social inclusion? This includes legal and policy framework development, institution and capacity strengthening as well as coordination.

RQ 2) Decent work and enterprise growth

What key elements have been proven to contribute to successful formalisation of growth oriented informal economy enterprises and that help ensure informal economy decent work conditions?

RQ 3) Direct actions in communities

What are the key proven direct actions at local level that contribute to the successful enhancement of livelihoods and working conditions for those working in informal economy enterprises with special attention to social inclusion?

RQ 4) What innovative approaches do national and international entities use to enhance livelihoods, equity and inclusion of people dependent on the informal economy? In addition: what are the new strategies adopted by people relying on informal economy activities themselves? What are the approaches used by / relevant for the specific vulnerable groups?

In fact, the above-mentioned research questions span a two-dimensional classification defined by:

- (a) the level of intervention: **macro-level (corresponding to RQ1)** and **micro-level (corresponding to RQ3)**, and
- (b) the topical focus of intervention (**corresponding to RQ2**): **quantitative/aggregate issues** (subsumed under the heading of enterprise growth) and **qualitative/structural issues** (subsumed under the heading of decent work).

An important additional dimension of the classification is represented by **cross-cutting issues (corresponding to RQ4)**, which include innovative approaches and focus on special vulnerabilities.

Each of the four RQ's includes a number of further sub-headings. Given that each project touches upon several above-mentioned issues, we first split them into four main groups according to the RQ's based on the prevailing character of intervention. Then we allocate to each project further "tags" that refer to other relevant topics of the Research Matrix. An overview is provided in the Table 1.1. Thus each of the analysed projects can be viewed from multiple points of view according to the specific topic of reader' interest.

Table 1.1 Research Matrix Overview: Research Questions, topics and sub-topics

	Level of Intervention	
	Macro RQ 1	Micro RQ 3
Topical focus RQ 2	Enabling Environment	Direct Action at Community Level
Quantitative/ Aggregate Issues: Enterprise Growth	<p>1.1 Global and regional strategies for enhancing the livelihoods of those dependent on the informal economy, with special attention to social inclusion</p> <p>1.2 Advocacy Methods on IE legal and policy framework development</p> <p>1.3 Supportive legal frameworks development, adoption and implementation</p> <p>1.4 Supportive policy frameworks development, adoption and implementation</p> <p>1.5 Macro-economic approaches identified to stimulate IE and formalisation as appropriate</p> <p>1.6 IE statistics and use to enhance of livelihoods with attention to social inclusion</p> <p>1.7 Labour market statistics to enhance of livelihoods with attention to social inclusion</p> <p>1.8 Education/vocational/skills statistics to enhance of livelihoods with attention to social inclusion</p> <p>1.9 Institution and capacity strengthening on IE</p> <p>1.10 Linkages between formal and informal economy</p> <p>1.11 Coordination and sustainability planning</p>	<p>3.1 Social and behaviour change communications</p> <p>3.2 Entrepreneurship: Capacity strengthening on starting, improving, growing economic activities</p> <p>3.4 Information Technology (IT) and enhancing of livelihoods</p> <p>3.5 Micro finance</p>
Qualitative/ Structural Issues: Decent Work Aspects	<p>2.1 Promotion and implementation of decent work</p> <p>2.2 Formalizing work on IE</p> <p>2.3 Occupational safety and health (OSH) implementation in IE</p> <p>2.4 Environment and sustainable management & IE</p>	<p>3.4 Leadership, life skills, empowerment training, literacy/numeracy</p> <p>3.6 Vocational education/skills training</p>
Cross-cutting Issues RQ 4	<p>Innovative approaches to enhance livelihoods, equity and inclusion</p> <p>4.1 Social dialogue and IE</p> <p>4.2 Statistics on vulnerable groups to enhance livelihoods</p> <p>4.3 Social inclusion promotion (awareness raising on social inclusion in IE)</p> <p>4.4 Social protection</p> <p>4.5 Improving food security through enhancing livelihoods with attention to social inclusion</p>	<p>Special Vulnerabilities and Gender</p> <p>4.6 Strengthening IE with attention to gender issues</p> <p>4.7 Strengthening IE with attention to youth and children</p> <p>4.8 People affected by HIV</p> <p>4.9 People with disabilities</p> <p>4.10 Elderly</p> <p>4.11 Migrants, Refugees, Trafficked persons</p> <p>4.12 Other vulnerable people</p>

2. Overview of the analysed projects

In this section we present descriptive statistics for the sample of 15 analysed projects in terms of their key characteristics. The characteristics were identified on the basis of a questionnaire that was designed and filled by the RNSF team (the questionnaire template can be consulted in Annex 2). They include type of implementing and partner agencies, structure of project target groups, specific sector of intervention, prevailing location, key areas of focus, types of direct actions, focus on social inclusion and social protection, etc.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide an overview of the project implementing and partner agencies. As can be seen, more than half of the implementing agencies were international institutions (NGOs or donors), the rest were national institutions (NGOs and civil society organisations). Civil society organisations and NGOs prevail also among the partner agencies, national or sub/national government institutions represent about 40 % of the implementing agencies.

Key target groups of the projects include most often women, youth, children and migrants. Relatively frequent was also focus on elderly and people with disabilities. Figure 2.3 documents that vast majority of key target groups was selected amongst various vulnerable groups and populations. As regards the specific sector of intervention where the IE entrepreneurs and workers could be confronted by the project activities, services were by large the most frequent option, followed by agriculture/livestock, and processing of agricultural products (Figure 2.4). The prevailing location of the studied projects was in rural areas (39 %), in 22 % of cases the location was in both rural and urban areas. 17 % of projects were focused on urban areas and for the remaining 22 % the location could not be clearly determined (Figure 2.5).

As regards the key areas of project focus, these were assigned to the projects according to the Research matrix topics and subtopics described in the previous section. By far the largest number of projects was focused on the capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations (including on microfinance), followed by advocacy with government to improve legal and policy framework to support the informal economy enterprises (Figure 2.6). Relatively frequent was also the focus of environment and sustainability, including green jobs and environmental impact. Other focus areas included improved coordination and collaboration among IE enterprises and the issues of international labour standards and decent work for the IE workers.

Figure 2.7 shows the types of direct actions undertaken in the studied projects. Awareness, behavioural change communication and dissemination of information was the most frequent type of activity, followed by start-up guidance, vocational training, and actions focused on environmental protection and green jobs. Other frequent actions included production management training, organising of associations, identification of profitable activities for start-ups and training on supply chain management.

Finally, we were interested in the types of actions focused on social inclusion and social protection. Figure 2.8 shows the structure of target groups that were addressed by the

approaches supporting the social inclusion and/or protection, and also types of activities aimed at supporting them. The focus was on vulnerable groups, e.g. women in the informal economy, women associations and cooperatives, migrants, child labourers, people with disabilities, victims of trafficking and minorities. The typical actions included leadership, life skills and empowerment training, addressing health issues, social protection, literacy and numeracy support.

Figure 2.1 Types of implementing agencies

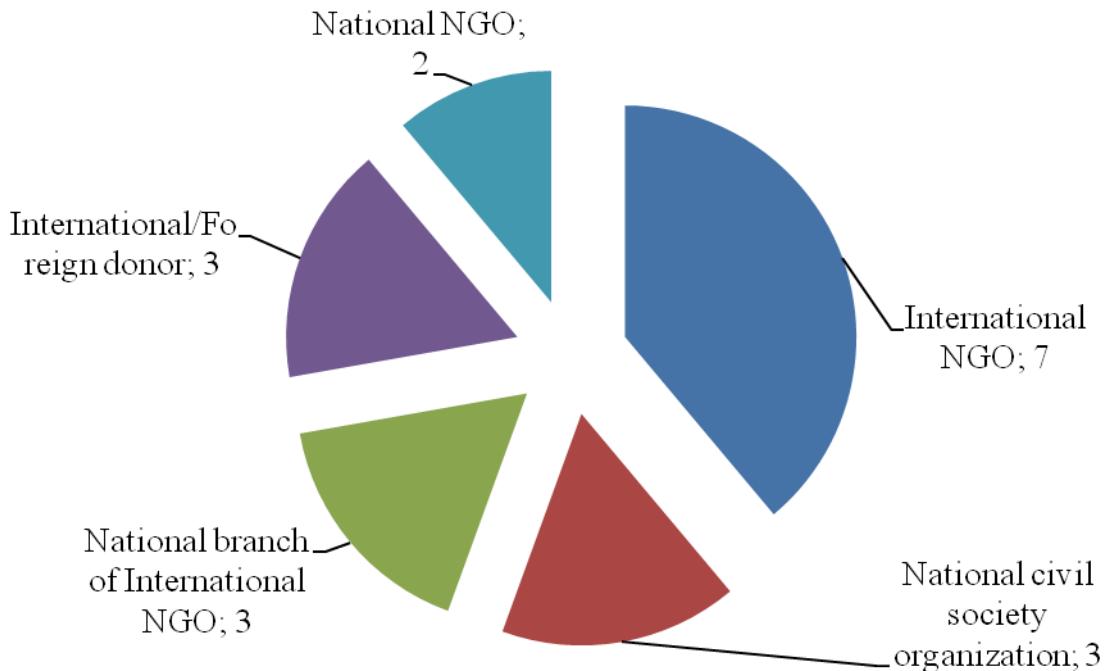


Figure 2.2 Types of partner agencies

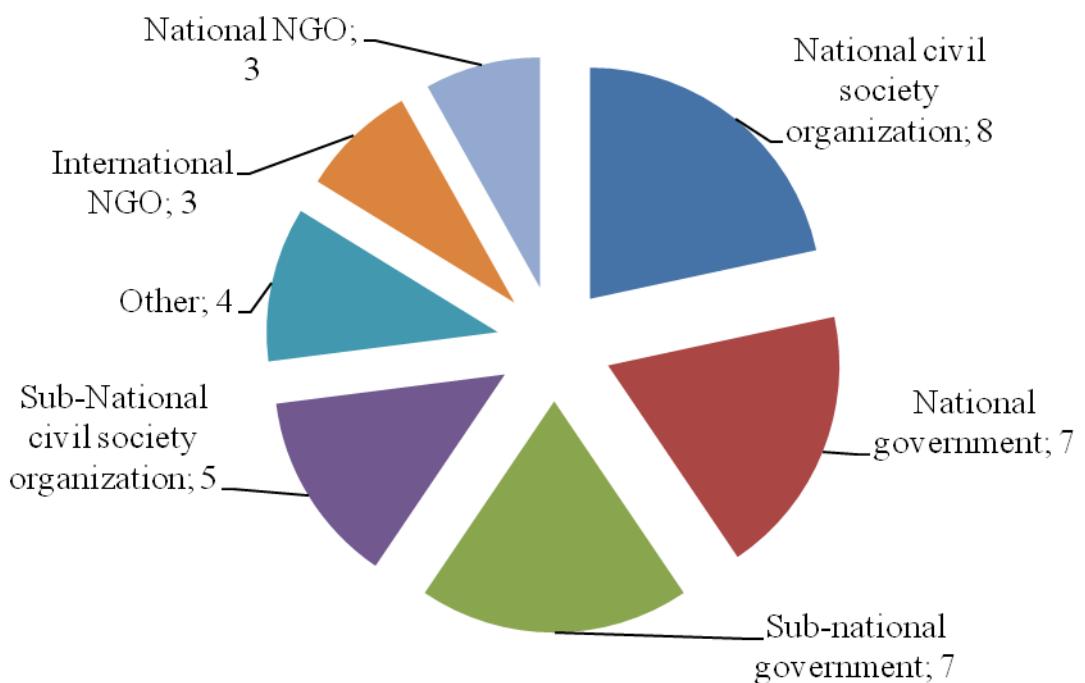


Figure 2.3 Key target groups

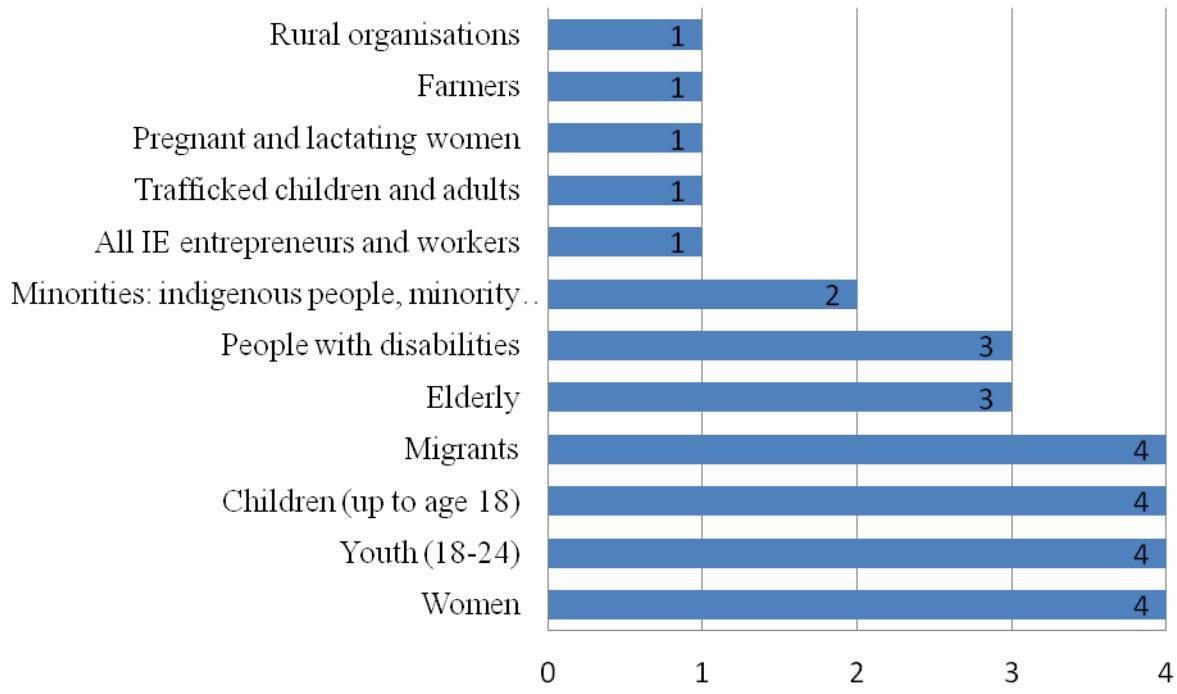


Figure 2.4 Specific sector of IE entrepreneurs and workers

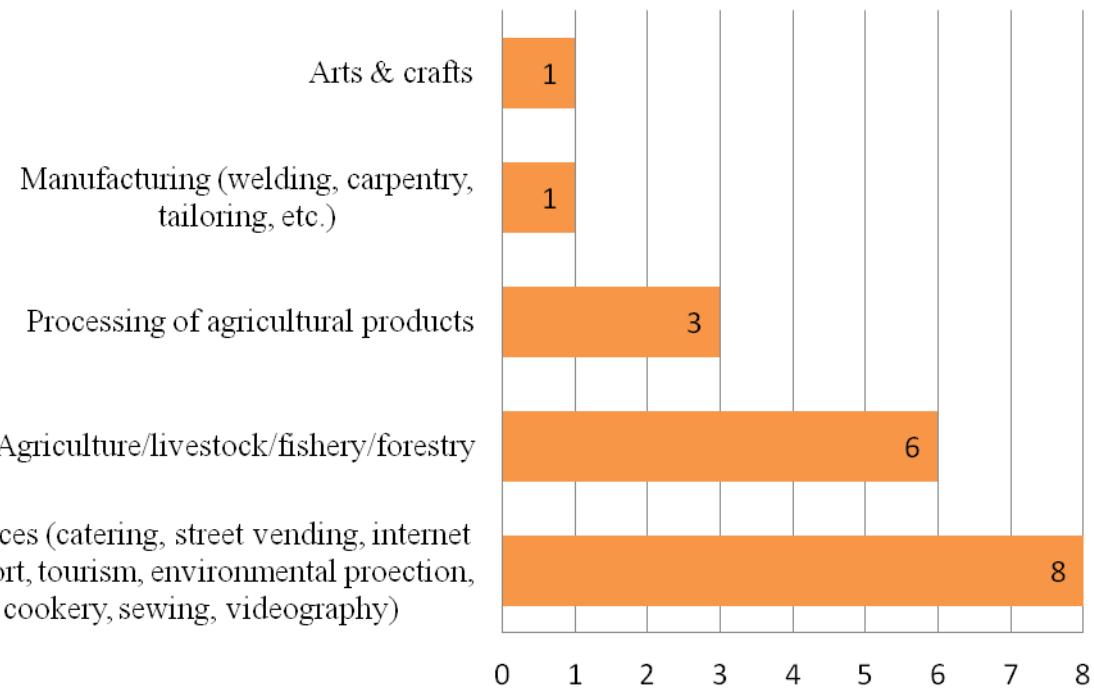


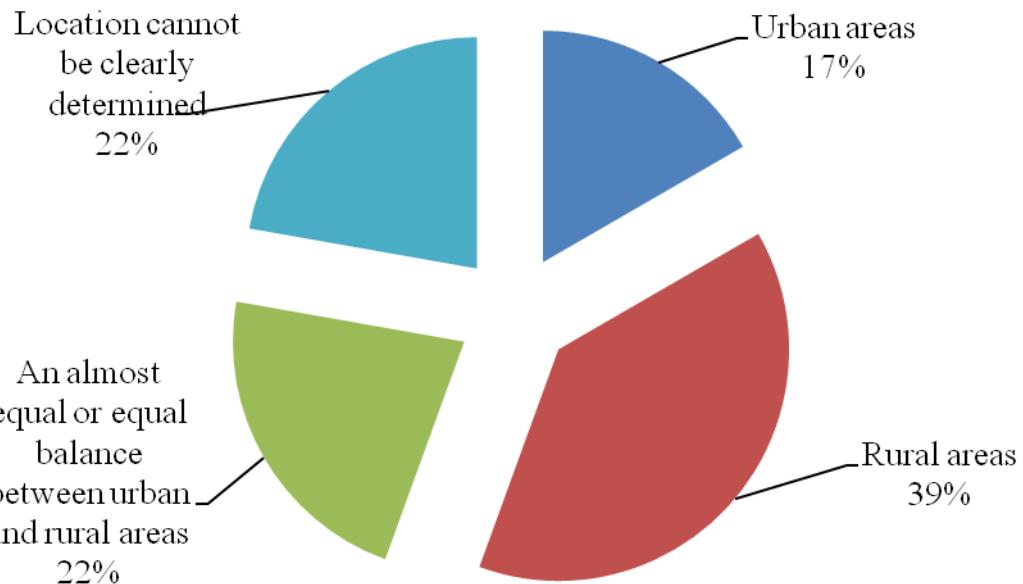
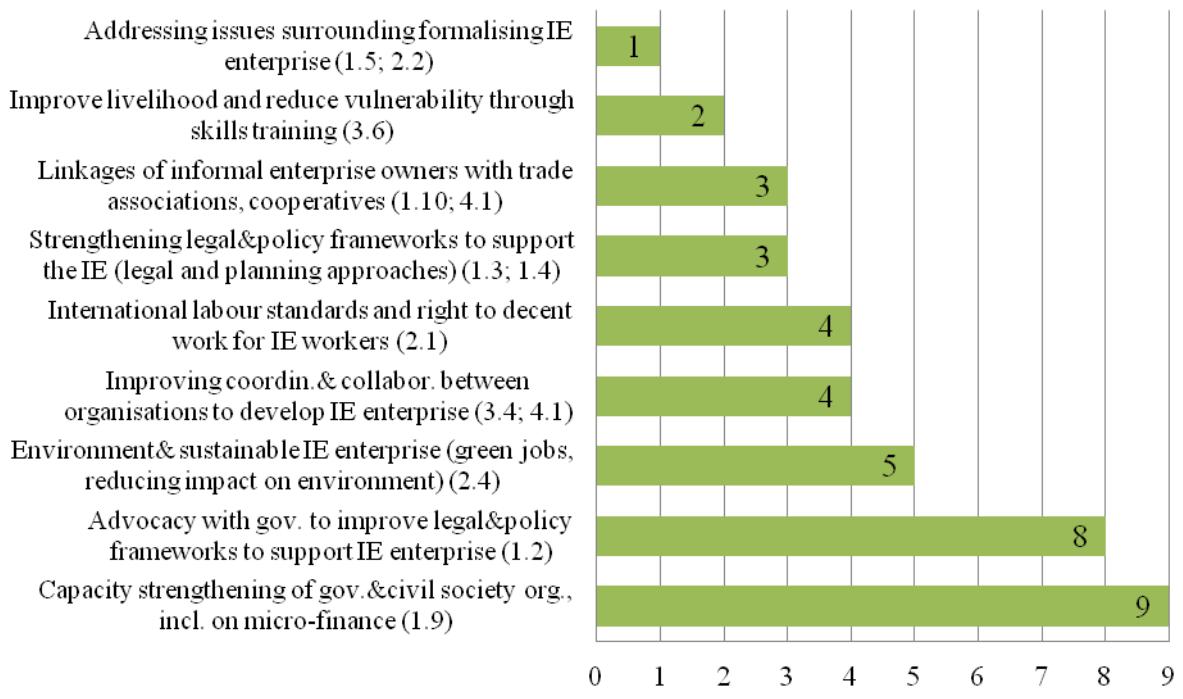
Figure 2.5 Prevailing location of projects**Figure 2.6 Key areas of project focus**

Figure 2.7 Direct actions

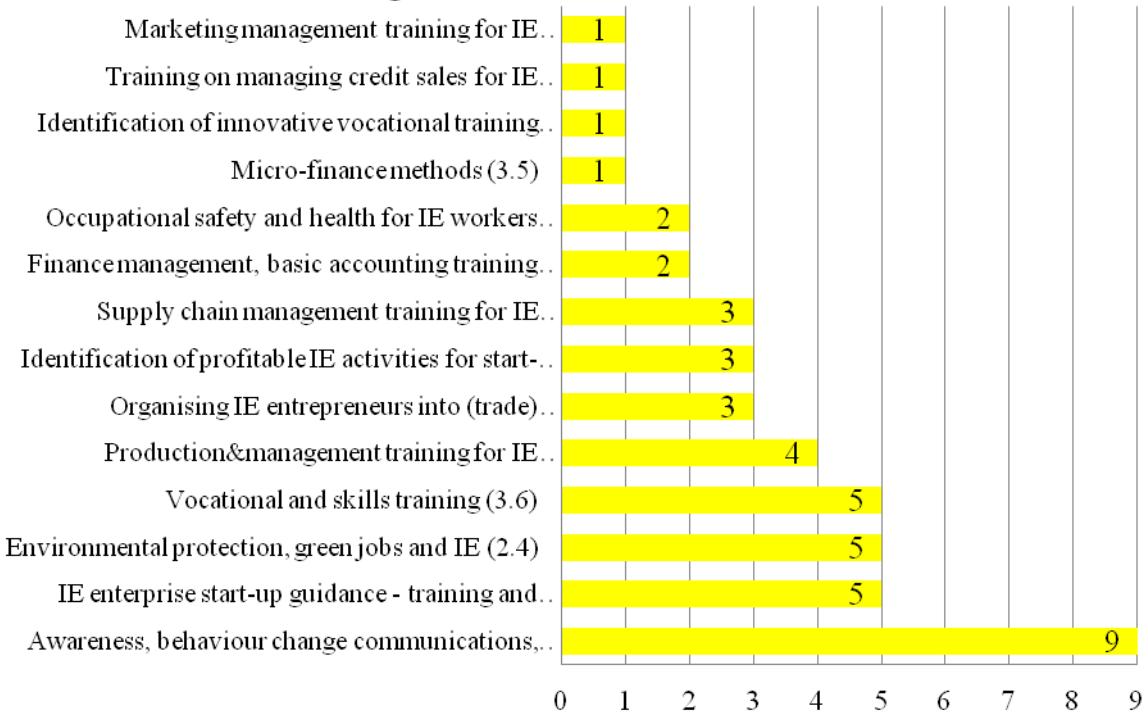
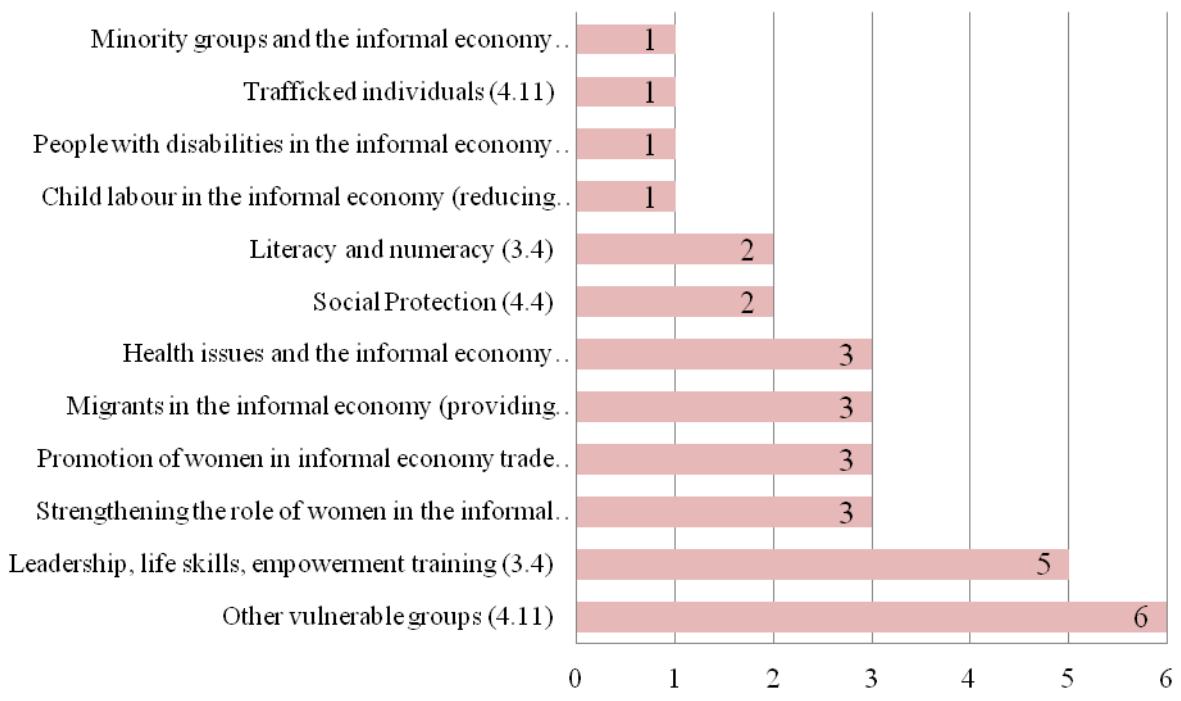


Figure 2.8 Social inclusion, social protection



3. CASE STUDIES OF 15 EC-FUNDED PROJECTS

In this section we provide case studies of concrete projects that contain the information on good practices and lessons learned identified by the project implementers and/or evaluators, as well as the analysis and additional GP's and LL's identified by the RNSF team extracted from the project documentation, narrative and evaluation reports. For easier orientation, each of the case studies follows a common structure:

Project name, Implementing agency, Country/Region
Brief summary of the action & Key target groups
Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics. Since multiple items are possible, the projects are classified into one of the 4 main groups according to the prevailing character of action. The project is then tagged by further relevant topics and sub-topics.
Good practices and lessons learned identified by the project implementers and/or evaluators (extracted from the project narrative and evaluation reports)
Good practices and lessons learned identified by the RNSF team
Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

We present the case studies classified into four groups according to the four basic research questions (for details see Section 1). Given the complex nature of the projects and their activities, each project corresponds to more than one research question. We base our classification on the prevailing character of the project, while providing further "tags" corresponding to other relevant topics and sub-topics of the Research matrix.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

3.1.1 Project name: Women in Action and Solidarity against Poverty in Kyrgyz Republic

Implementing agency: Forum of Women NGO, Public Association Epkin, Social Fund "DIA"

Country: Kyrgyzstan, Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action

The project aims to provide vulnerable and poor women living in deprived rural areas of Chui and Osh regions with comprehensive support and income generation opportunities, through access to an integrated system of assistance services. The main goal of the project is to contribute to equitable development and poverty alleviation in the Kyrgyz Republic through improvements of interaction between State and Non-State actors on the issues of poverty alleviation at local, regional and trans-regional levels, capacity building of selected NSAs to make them strategic partners of the State in social decision making, empowerment and increased participation of the rural communities in sustainable development.

Key target groups: Women, Women NGOs, rural organisations, business and financial organisations, community groups, national and local authorities and institutions

Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics

Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)

Further tags:

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Improving coordination and collaboration between organisations to develop informal economy enterprises (3.4; 4.1)

Linkages of informal enterprise owners with trade associations, cooperatives (1.10; 4.1)

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

Informal Economy enterprise start-up guidance - training and technical support (3.2)

Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Good practices and lessons learned

The RNSF team highlighted the use of the following participative and innovative approaches that are particularly relevant for the IE context:

1. Establishment of the so-called **Regional Service Networks** in the two pilot districts that (among other components) included also: (a) **groups of solidary producers**, and (b) **time banks**
2. **Initial needs analysis carried out among potential project beneficiaries and stakeholders**
3. **Focus on the application of standardisation and certification procedures** on the production of informal economy producers, **development of brands and logotypes**
1. The Regional Service Networks were established in the pilot regions as a system of interacting agencies and organisations that were developed around the Centre for Entrepreneurship Support. Network members included groups of solidary producers, time banks, and help centres for women. These elements were established in the pilot regions and they established a mutual cooperation across a wide range of services and aid that they were able to provide.

Groups of solidary producers (GSP) were inspired by the Italian experience of groups of solidary purchase, based on the principles of mutual trust, transparency, decent work, and respect for the environment. This experience was adapted to the national context in Kyrgyzstan. Groups of solidary producers were established on the basis of common values and common interests of the participating women. The group members launched the process of joint purchases and joint sales of their production, which allowed them to achieve better transaction conditions. The groups engaged in dialogue with producers of equipment and materials, as well as with the distributors of final products. The groups were also able to share more effectively the purchased resources, as well as the business risks. Collective purchases were realized mainly in terms of seeds, working tools and equipment.

Time banks were established in the course of the project as one of the elements of the Regional Service Networks. The main goal of the time banks was easing the heavy burden of domestic work by rural women. Typical services traded in the time banks included organisation of weddings and celebrations, processing of fruits, harvests. Two time banks were established in the framework of the project and another one was opened after the project end. The time bank opened in the village Saray in a dedicated office equipped with computer, printer, phone line, Internet and web camera. Five people work in the office. There is a register where the inputs by the members are recorded and time credits are allocated. The bank developed a system of cooperation with other agencies included in the Regional Service Network. In case that a woman asked for defence from domestic violence, depending on the situation and her preferences, she is referred to the specialized services (psychologist, central office, etc.).

2. Another important good practice used by the project was the needs analysis among the potential project beneficiaries and stakeholders. The analysis was carried out at the beginning of the project among 1100 rural women – potential direct beneficiaries. The analysis was focused on the characteristics of households, their needs, and the type of services needed. In the course of the analysis, 54 interested subjects defined their role, influence, potential activities and inputs that they could provide in the framework of the project. Subsequently 32 partner agreements were signed between the two regional agencies that implemented the project and other regional and local actors (including local government and community organs). The framework agreements define types of cooperation, rules and obligations of the parties. These efforts helped to overcome the initial stand-off between the governmental agencies and NGO's and provided important elements of public-private partnership.

3. A significant finding that was highlighted by the direct beneficiaries of the project was the importance of standardisation and certification procedures. It became clear that standardising and certifying of their production increased their market competitiveness. Valuable information about the standards and corresponding certificates was provided during a meeting with the representatives of the Centre for Standardisation and Metrology of the Ministry of Economy. The meeting was organised in the framework of the project activities. Subsequently they were able to develop also brand names and logos that were used on the packaging materials.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Income generating activities of rural women are usually highly interlinked with the informal economy. Therefore, it is recommendable to use the approaches that contain elements of association building, self-help and supporting the economies of scale. Typical examples of such approaches are associations formed around common purchase/sales operations and time banks. Common purchase and sales operations increase the volume of traded goods, which facilitates better financial conditions. They also foster the coordination of group members and represent a step towards further cooperation in other aspects of production and representation. Time banks represent an alternative monetary system that bases its value on units of time rather than on the formal currency. Time banks represent a system of reciprocal services among the group members. The time credit can be accommodated and traded among the group members. In essence, each member contributes by certain services and can receive services from others.

Proper needs analysis and data collection at the planning stage or initial stage of the project can serve as an important tool for identifying the true needs of project beneficiaries that are important enough to trigger association building and mobilisation of the local resources and actors around these shared goals.

Standardisation and certification of informal production is an important step toward increasing its recognition and market competitiveness. Cooperation with the official

authorities, such as Centres for standardisation and Metrology, can be crucial in terms of providing orientation, information and bridging between informal producers and formal markets (including distribution networks and export facilities).

3.1.2 Project name Guiding and Integrating a Sustainable Economic Revitalization of Local Communities Dependent on the long-term Stewardship of Lake Hovsgol National Park

**Implementing agency: Global Nature Fund, Mongol Ecology Centre
Country: Mongolia, Region: Central Asia**

Brief summary of the action

The main goal of the action was to support the economic revitalisation and proper stewardship of the lake Hovsgol area. The project aimed to help both the park and the surrounding communities coping with the inevitable growth of tourism and to ensure that the Hovsgol region develops in a sustainable manner, with minimised impact to the rich environmental and cultural heritage that characterises this remote area.

Key target groups: Local officials and tour service providers

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Further tags:

Environmental and sustainable informal economy enterprises (green jobs, reducing impact on the environment of the IE) (2.4)

Vocational and skills training (3.6)

Good practices and lessons learned

In 2011, when the Mongol Ecology Centre (MEC) visited Lake Hovsgol National Park (LHNP) with a team of international experts, it became immediately apparent that prompt action was needed to prevent unlawful commercial fishing, logging, and overgrazing. The shorelines were littered with debris and heavily damaged by off-road vehicles. There were *ger* and other tourist camps with faulty or insufficient sewage facilities that did not meet minimum standards, along with a new extension of a major highway leading into the park. The availability of the highway resulted in a dramatic increase in visitors, adding stress on the already limited park capacity to handle tourism. The adjacent gateway communities of Hatgal and Hankh were equally unprepared for burgeoning volumes of tourists. Data shows that the number of park visitors increased from 7,700 in 2004 to 49,000 in 2012 (with a forecast of 80,000 visitors for 2015).

To tackle this large spectrum of challenges, the MEC implemented this project and established the Lake Hovsgol Conservancy (LHC), so as to:

- 1) support the proper management of Lake Hovsgol National Park and its adjacent protected areas and assist the park management in building capacities, training and visitor services;
- 2) help the park sustain its wilderness resources;
- 3) protect local nomadic culture; and
- 4) promote sustainable recreation and locally-provided tourism activities thereby increasing employment and job opportunities for local residents;
- 5) create a higher awareness about the importance of protecting the LHNP.

As noted in the project Final Report, several outcomes positively affected the target groups and beneficiaries. In particular, the local populations became more aware of challenges they face, and better prepared for dealing with future development and with climate-change impacts on their water ecosystems. More opportunities were made available for tourism development involving local communities and small scale entrepreneurs. Last but not least, the elected officials were in a position to request continuing assistance for the park and for local communities to enhance sustainable tourism development and tourism facilities, improve waste management, and promote the growth of tourism-related retail developments.

During the Action the MEC learned several lessons that caused them to modify both its tactics and strategies. Strategically, the MEC learned to appreciate the complex layering of decision-making within the government, and compensated with timely meetings with Ministry and the park leadership. The MEC also learned that partnerships with newly formed organizations or associations required constant follow-up, so as to ensure that the follow-up actions would meet the assigned goals. Tactically, the MEC learned that language barriers required regular translating for international exchanges, and that international experts would need to understand and adjust to the learning style of local Mongolian participants. In the end, experiential learning, more than classroom coursework, became a very effective learning tool at the park. The MEC grew to understand that talking in abstract concepts was far less effective than using straightforward graphic presentations or other concrete illustrations.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Although the project achieved a number of positive outcomes in particular at the local level, the achievement of one of its main goals – facilitation of enabling environment – has been complicated by the complex and diversified relationships with the national authorities. There has been a high turnover at the main counterpart Ministry during the project implementation period, which complicated the relationships and national ownership of the project. In the course of the project implementation it turned out that enforcement from the national authorities was inevitable for reaching some of the projects' goals (e.g. implementation of controls and bans in illegal tourist camps and irregular activities in the neighbourhood of the lake). The deterrence of these irregular activities from the side of the authorities was weak and the project staff did not have the capacity/authority to enforce. Similarly, an insufficient

coordination between the project and the national authorities led to the acceptance of important documents (Zoning of the Park) came as a surprise to the project team. In this sense, the project team found itself in a position in between the informal activities run by the illegal camp owners and the formal activities performed by the authorities, whereas it has been to an extent detached from both these stakeholders. Therefore, the potential role of providing a bridge between the two stakeholders has not been fulfilled. Potentially the people dependent or engaged in the illegal camps and other illegal activities in the park should have played a major role in the project. The lack of contact with this group of actors, lack of dialogue and understanding of their situation led to the frustrating situation that has been described in project Final report (quoted below).

“How would you assess the relationship between your organisation and State authorities in the Action countries? How has this relationship affected the Action?

2012-2013:

Frankly speaking, at the beginning the relationship with the State authorities was smoother than it was at later times. With the change of Mongolian governments in the summer of 2012, a new director of the Specially Protected Department at the Ministry was appointed. This new director welcomed the project at first, approved recommendations included in our management action plans, and later took time to visit the park and witness the implementation of the project. The Park Director, on the other hand, has consistently proven to be less than capable of coping with complex park administrative matters, community relations, and tour business partnerships. Regardless of this shortcoming, the project proceeded quite well in the first year with the support of the Ministry.

2013-2014:

However, as time elapsed for this project, the MEC’s relationship with the Ministry of Environment and Green Development and its Specially Protected Areas Department (SPAD) became nuanced and challenging. The MEC’s 2012 agreement with the Ministry addressed the importance of basing all management actions on science-based information, while improving management capacity and the park’s implementation of the recommended action-plans.

At all stages of this collaboration the MEC staff did not lost sight of the fundamental significance of the park’s resources as a whole; nor has the MEC lost focus on the overall purpose of the park, and its vision for desired future conditions in the park (for example, please see the: General Management Plan Foundation Document). In addition to this Foundation Document, the 2012 project team developed 3 subset Management Action Plans, addressing issues related to Visitor Services, Interpretation & Education, and Transportation.

In 2013, Ms. Erdenechimeg Tegshjargal, the Director of the Mongolian Specially Protected Areas Department joined the MEC planning team in a tour of the park. Interaction with the Director seemed productive at the time. In addition to visiting key sites in the park, discussions were candid in relation to site-specific issues of tourism development and maintaining standards for sustainable tourism. Many other topics were discussed with the Director at length, including water quality and supply, sanitation and waste management, and issues related to park access and local transport. In the end, the MEC settled on 3 priority topics for further discussion and resolution – 1) maintaining internationally accepted

standards for the development of sustainable tourism, 2) improving park transportation and establishing a shuttle bus system and 3) possible revisions to the park's land-use zoning system.

During the summer of 2013, the MEC team reviewed and provided comments on the draft eco-tourism development standards that had been set forth earlier. In November of 2013, new *ger* camp standards were officially approved for the park. These new and improved standards would provide an excellent platform for future development.

Discussions regarding a transportation shuttle system were not fully successful, however—at least in the way the MEC had anticipated. The MEC had strongly recommended that a survey of existing transportation patterns be conducted in 2014. But the Ministry advised that there was no time for this research and a shuttle system would be initiated at the beginning of 2014, without any real efforts at assessing needs. Paradoxically, as of today, no shuttle system has been initiated for the park.

In months prior, several members of our MEC expert team travelled with another Ministry representative, visiting several Soum centres, and seeking community advice and input on park zoning.

The MEC also asked the Lake Hovsgol Conservancy's Science Advisory Committee to review the proposed zoning when drafted. However, in March of 2014, the MEC was given a previously unannounced copy of Park Zoning documents, as officially approved in January of 2014. The new zoning pattern had essentially been established without any outside or public review. As mentioned earlier, the most significant change was a reduction of the “special” (or no-development) zones of the park, resulting in a 25% increase in the “limited use” zone (earmarked for wider-spread development).

The impact of this zoning change is not insignificant. In the 1990s, the Mongolian government helped identify Lake Hovsgol as an International Long-Range Ecological Research area—one of 40 ILTERs in the world at that time. As part of this program, an area along the northeast shoreline of the park became the focal point for climate-change and permafrost research for the last 2 decades. This area has only now been summarily rezoned for tourism development. As a result, in a very sensitive area a large tourist camp was established in the last 12 months. When the MEC inquired about its legality, it was advised that the local government improperly permitted the development, and that the camp owners had been directed to remove the camp. In the summer of 2014, however, this camp—which is owned by a Mongolian mining company and used by its employees and guests for summer getaways—had not been removed. In fact, it was much larger in scale.

Yet again, when the MEC inquired about this turn of events, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Green Development, Mr. Tulga Buya, advised that no new licenses for any *ger* camps had been issued. At the same time, local park rangers in this area have told the MEC in confidence that they were instructed to “mind their own business” when it comes to this camp. In addition, in the southwest sector of the lake, just northwest of Hatgal, the growth of *ger* camps and guesthouses continues unchecked. Both the old and new legal standards require a 1 km separation between tourist facilities; yet 50 facilities exist in this area, or an average of more than 2 *ger* camps per kilometre. When asked about this situation, the local rangers readily agreed that “the area is being trashed”—a statement that clearly indicates that

the Ministry has fallen far short of assuring that the park is administered in compliance with national laws and officially approved standards.

The MEC has written the ministry repeatedly to address these issues, and has yet to receive a full answer. In spite of these issues and concerns, the MEC has chosen to continue its program of demonstrating best management practices at Lake Hovsgol National Park. In fact, the MEC remains convinced that the continued demonstration and sharing of best management practices will result in a real positive change for the park over the long run.

A final note: in March 2014, a MEC team met with Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, the Mongolian Minister of Environment and Green Development. Opportunities were discussed for federal funding of the park, particularly for building up its Visitor Centre, its park ranger stations/entrance posts, and a park sign system. At the end of this meeting, the Minister advised the MEC that it should fundraise on its own for the proposed visitor facilities and other improvements, as government funding would not be available.

Given this blunt statement from the Ministry, the MEC finds that it must continue with its Blue Waves and other global campaigns to fundraise for park improvements.

2014-2015:

Over the last 4 years changes within the government have required the MEC to work with 3 different Ministers and 3 different Protected Area Department Directors. Currently the government is reorganizing yet again—by the end of 2015 the MEC will be working with a newly appointed Minister and Department Director.

At the park level, the Lake Hovsgol National Park Director has remained in place since 2011. He is proud of his position and the historic traditional culture of Lake Hovsgol; but in the eyes of the MEC, he lacks real vision for the future of his protected area. He also has shown little inclination towards team-building with his staff, and his community partnership-building skills with the two “gateway” villages adjacent to the park have also been wholly latent.

Given these deficiencies, MEC’s efforts at helping Lake Hovsgol National Park and its Ministry supervisors to build up park management capacity have been only sporadically successful. Under these conditions the MEC believes that its only recourse is to continue to provide services and support the park and the surrounding communities in the hope that someday recommended actions will take hold, and positive changes will endure within the park and at the Protected Area Department in the Ministry.

At the same time, the MEC’s relationship with the Governor of Hovsgol Aimag, and with the Deputy Governor and Mayor of Hatgal, have been very positive and productive. Local authorities have shown themselves very interested and eager to address issues of sustainable tourism development and job creation, both inside and outside the park.”

3.1.3 Project name: Support to SME development in Mongolia

Implementing agency: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Country: Mongolia, Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action:

The project supported the sustainable development of a competitive micro, small and medium sized enterprises sector in Mongolia through the enhancement of the business enabling environment and the strengthening of the relevant Mongolian institutions. The overall objective was to contribute to poverty reduction in Mongolia. The specific objective was sustainable development of competitive micro, small and medium sized enterprises sector in Mongolia.

Key target groups: SME's, mainly in rural areas

Classification according to the Research Matrix:

Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)

Further tags:

Strengthening legal and policy frameworks to support the informal economy (legal and planning approaches) (1.3; 1.4)

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Identification of profitable informal economy activities for start-ups (3.2; 3.5)

Finance management, basic accounting training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)

Training on managing credit sales for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)

Good practices and lessons learned

The project was focused on enabling environment in general, not explicitly for IE enterprises. However, one of the main aims was the provision of support to SMEs at the grass-root level through the provision of financial and consulting business development services mainly in rural areas and in the least developed regions. Thus the project was supposed to outreach to a number of people and enterprises whose livelihoods depend on the informal economy. The main tools included the provision of loans and business development services, mainly financial services and consulting. The activities were focused mainly on the capacity building of multiple national stakeholders (Government agencies, Employers, NGOs, associations).

As transpires from the Final Evaluation report, **the project encountered many difficulties in reaching out to the beneficiaries in small and micro-SME segment, in particular to those in rural areas and in less developed regions. The project Evaluation report mentions the following shortcomings in terms of outreach:**

“Highly skewed allocation by size: of the firms receiving BDS support, 19% were micro, 59% were small and 22% medium sized; the support was extremely skewed both towards both medium and small enterprises. Proportionately to the size of the sector, across the Mongolian economy as a whole, the medium and small SMEs benefited enormously but at the expense of the micro sector”.

“Highly skewed allocation by urban areas (Ulanbaatar/Darkhan and Erdenet): The three urban areas, namely Ulanbaatar (1 Million), Darkhan (180,000 inhabitants) and Erdenet (75,000 inhabitants) received 74% of all projects. From a development perspective, insufficient attention was paid to the rural areas, resulting in concentration of support to the already well-developed urban centres. We note that the Mongolian constitution identified Ulanbaatar as the only urban area, but in BDS terms, there is always a strong emphasis on supporting BDS provision and providers beyond the capital city.”

“Financial leverage: a major unintended project bonus is the fact that 32% of the SMEs were able to access 75 million EUR. However, two points are worth noting: firstly, a median loan size of €146,500 almost certainly means that the access to finance was mainly by medium-sized enterprises (many if not most of which are already bankable) and secondly, EBRD lent 28% of the amount (21.8 million EUR) resulting to concerns about the dual role played by EBRD in this (and other project) activities, namely partly as a development bank and partly as a commercial rival in a small and immature financial market.”

“Highly skewed BDS providers: out of the database of 150 (mostly) active BDS providers, only 1 has recently been added which is not based in Ulanbaatar. From a BDS development perspective this is poor performance and needs to be improved, including reconsidering the EBRD internal rule of working only with consultancy companies, rather than individuals, outside Ulanbaatar.”

As demonstrated in the Evaluation report, EBRD rules made it difficult to implement the project priorities in particular in relation to the specific project goals and the vulnerable target groups, such as the people whose livelihoods depend on the informal economy. As noted out in the project Evaluation report:

“The micro component was affected by the application of EBRD-wide Business Advisory Services rules. While recognising the importance of having a framework for the management of the overall programme, this cannot be applied rigidly across 25 countries regardless of their specificities, needs and priorities. This would be an absurd approach, especially in view of the fact that the micro component would not have happened at all (according to EBRD discussions) without EUD funding and that such funding will exist for over a decade in Mongolia. The evaluation raised important gaps which require a more customised response in relation to the new phase of support for the next five years.”

“The recommendations must take into consideration the previously mentioned caveats: the access to finance elements of the evaluated project were mainly connected with the macro (regulations) and meso level (agricultural leasing and micro finance) and there was no explicit element of SME access to finance in relation to the micro level where the focus of the intervention was on business development services (BDS).”

Another issue highlighted by the project Evaluation report was the potential conflict of interests between the EBRD's role as project implementing agency and its role of bank and investor:

“The EBRD has two other roles to play in Mongolia: as a development bank / investor in SMEs/financial institutions, and as the implementer of the access to finance components of the project. There have been claims of possible conflicts of interest in the EBRD’s role in the evaluated project, such as the support for XacLeasing (owned by XAC Bank, which is partly owned by EBRD) and EBRD/XAC bank lending to medium-sized / bankable SMEs, which the commercial banks operating in a relatively small market could have lent to. The potential for conflicts of interest increases in relation to the new project. Therefore, in the Inception Report, Progress Reports and Final Report, the EBRD will specifically declare any interests (e.g. direct or indirect ownership of financial institutions), any possibilities of a conflict of interest arising and what has been done to ensure that this does not happen. If there is the possibility of it happening, it must set out how the issue will be communicated in a transparent manner, such as to the PSC and Mongolian Bankers’ Association.

“The project has demonstrated that financial initiatives can and do go wrong: all 12 lessees of the agricultural leasing product with XacLeasing are in default. This requires the EBRD to analyse and set out all the possible risks and liabilities that might arise from the two access to finance project components, including an explicit discussion: of i) the moral hazard issue and ii) the possible liabilities that might arise to the EBRD and the EUD. “

“Since competition is a critical factor in stimulating greater access to finance for SMEs, the evaluation team strongly recommends that in future, the EBRD also considers other financial partners than just the market leaders. If this is not feasible, the EBRD should explicitly set-out what it has been done to engage second / third tier institutions and why it is not possible to work with them. This is not to suggest in any way that the EBRD should not follow its normal due diligence and other procedures.”

Therefore, the evaluation team recommended foregoing EBRD lending to bankable SMEs, especially medium sized enterprises:

“The EBRD is a development bank, not a commercial one. It has no role in lending to SMEs that are already bankable and capable accessing finance through commercial banks. This would mean zero additionality, unfair competition vis-à-vis other banks as well as potential for market distortion. Therefore, it should be a requirement that if a medium-sized firm utilising the micro component wishes to access finance, the EBRD will not provide such finance if it is a bankable business, as it almost certainly will be. This role will be left entirely to the commercial banking sector. The EBRD’s role will be restricted to lending to micro and small businesses, but only and if they are not bankable and therefore unable to access commercial finance independently of the EBRD.”

Finally, the lessons learned identified by the project evaluators and recommendations included also the issues **multiple projects and funding limit and the need to provide for a wider Micro Consultants Register:**

“The EBRD-defined limit of 10,000 EUR per SME cuts across the project target of reaching a minimum number of SMEs, thus spreading the benefits of co-financed BDS to as many SMEs as possible. Furthermore, it is probably the medium enterprises that are benefiting

disproportionately from the upper limit, but they are also the most likely to be able to afford BDS and be able to pay for it after one intervention. In the case of medium-sized firms, the additionality of co-financed BDS support may decrease to close to zero after the first intervention. The current EBRD-defined rule should be modified in the case of the future Mongolian micro activities. We propose the following: Upper limit of 10,000 EUR for Micro; 6,000 EUR for Small; and 3,000 EUR for Medium; Only one intervention per medium SME until the micro and small SMEs targets are reached.

“After 8 years of undertaking micro activities in Mongolia there is only 1 non- Ulanbaatar based company (out of 150) in the EBRD database. This fact speaks for itself and is illustrative of the fact the insufficient policy attention has been paid to the importance of developing BDS provision beyond the capital city. The project team is well aware of the difficulties of engaging Ulanbaatar -based BDS providers for non- Ulanbaatar projects. This may also be part of the reason for the heavy concentration of projects in Ulanbaatar / Darkhan/ Erdenet. If necessary, the EBRD-wide rules (e.g. only companies, limit of 20 projects / 75,000 EUR per company before being removed from the Micro register) will need to be modified in order to promote and develop non- Ulanbaatar -based BDS providers in recognition of the different market conditions applying. Over time, the approval rules may be tightened and brought in line with the ones for Ulanbaatar -based BDS providers. The EBRD should work closely with MMCI, including targeting greater delivery of business consulting courses beyond Ulanbaatar, concentrating on locations with economic development potential.”

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

The project did not sufficiently reached out to small and micro-enterprises, neither to the companies in rural areas i.e. to the people whose livelihood are most likely to be affected by their dependence on the informal economy. This is an illustration of the issues discussed also in the Volume 3 (Global Policy Review), in particular the fact that IFI's and other international banks lack the proper operational framework to access and work with the people and firms in the informal economy.

The project ended up covering medium enterprises rather than small and micro-enterprises. The minimum loan amount disbursable under the EBRD rules was prohibitively high for smaller enterprises. The roster of business consultants did not include enough experts that were in touch with the IE enterprises. The covered companies were concentrated in more developed regions and in urban area, contrary to the project intensions.

As formulated in the project Evaluation report: “The overall project management on the part of the EBRD could have been better: although the EBRD is an expert institution in access to finance, in Mongolia it lacked experience in implementing a (nonaccess to finance) policy-making technical assistance project. The project was re-orientated towards the areas that EBRD Mongolia was technically comfortable with, rather than what the original project was seeking to achieve.”

3.1.4 Project name: Programme d'Appui au Renforcement des capacités du Système d'État Civil du Niger (PARSEC) (Programme of Support to Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Registration System in Nigeria)

Implementing agency UNICEF

Country: Niger, Region: Africa

Brief summary of the action

Further to a pilot experience in 20 districts, and with the support of the EU, UNICEF engaged with the government of Niger towards the progressive implementation of a universal, compulsory, continuous and free of charge, statistically useful and reliable system of civil registration.

Key target groups

All populations, especially in rural and remote areas, and nomads

Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics.

Institutions and Capacity Strengthening on Informal Economy (1.9)

Further tags:

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

Good practices and lessons learned

Informality is roughly defined by, and limited to the non-registration of the enterprise or the activity operated by the person. But in many developing countries, especially those with dominant rural areas, people themselves are not registered because of the lack of an efficient civil status registration. When a boy or a girl is born without civil status, he (or she) will be unable to claim his (her) rights because the person cannot provide the proof of his (her) name, age, residence, nationality, etc. Again, when he (or she) marries without civil status registration, no proof of marital status can be brought and finally when he (or she) dies without civil status, his (her) heirs will not be able to claim for the ownership of the land or the house. The rule of law, with its rights, freedoms and obligations, can apply if and only if citizens have a legal "existence".

The project was focused on conducting training and incentivising local or central administrations (Civil status registration, health services) to search and convince populations to register births, marriages, and deaths, in order to secure the key protection rights during the person's lifespan. It also included conducting outreach and incentivising populations to register births, marriages, and deaths.

For UNICEF and its specific mandate towards the protection of children, “the right to be registered is a key protection right. Without legal registration, other rights are difficult to claim. Birth registration establishes formal proof of a child’s name, existence and age. This proof can help protect the child against child marriage, under-age recruitment into the armed forces, and against child labour. By having a national identity, it is easier to fight abuse and child trafficking. Proof of age can protect adolescents from being prosecuted and sentenced as adults. A birth certificate, as proof of birth, can assist in tracing support unaccompanied and separated children. Not being counted leaves a child vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, which is particularly crucial for children from marginalised groups. Birth registration may be required for children to access health care, education and other social services and social assistance. Birth registration contributes to gender equality, reinforcing equal treatment of girls and boys. Access to social services and transfers should not be made contingent on birth registration.”³ Moreover such a system of demographic data collection is essential for better implementation of social and development policies.

The parallel between non-registration of the person to civil status and informality (or non-registration of the activity of the person to official registries) is enlightening in the sense that for populations in remote rural areas (but also in poor urban compounds), there is no clear understanding of the usefulness and the necessity of having a civil status clearly identified in official papers. Similarly, for the poor in search of earning a living, there is no clear understanding of the reasons why they should declare and register their activities, if not for paying taxes even before starting collecting income, which is therefore felt as illegitimate. And by the way no government in developing countries would require from traditional farmers to register in order to obtain a license.

The issue is therefore a matter of sensitisation on the demand side (institutions), but it is also a matter of efficiency of the public services on the supply side (households), through the strengthening of capacities and the expansion of human and material resources.

UNICEF is involved in several projects designed for improving birth registration in Central and West Africa where coverage rates reach only 40% in average, whereas immunisation rates have reached 70% thanks to a better coverage of health services. It is observed that a growing number of countries in these regions are using immunisation and maternal and child health check-ups to register births as a more cost-effective way. Another innovation that is tested is the use of mobile phone text messaging to transmit information about new-born children to civil registration offices.

However such technical solutions cannot replace an efficient civil registration system itself. This is why projects such as the Support Program for enhancing the Civil Registration System in Niger 2012-2015 are important.

Further to a pilot experience in 20 districts, and with the support of the EU, UNICEF engaged with the government of Niger towards the progressive implementation of a universal, compulsory, continuous and free of charge, statistically useful and reliable system of civil

³ (https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/overview_6592.html)

registration. A preliminary assessment revealed a birth coverage under 30% and death coverage under 5% due to the weaknesses of local public services on the supply side as well as an opportunistic demand. Demand was restricted by the direct and indirect costs of access to civil registration as well as cultural and traditional obstacles such as the non-transmission of the first name of the child before baptism or the shame for the mother of the child to pronounce the first name of the child. Niger decided to make of civil registration a national priority since 2007.

The strategy of the project has been to consolidate the supply of civil registration by strengthening their capacities and material resources and also incentivising the development of new centres for registering, nearer the populations. Simultaneously the sensitisation of populations and community mobilisation intended to increase the demand for civil registration.

Once means of travel, knowledge of techniques and laws were allocated as well as recognition of the importance of their work, the executives and officials in charge of civil registration in the centres were motivated to accomplish their tasks. In three years, the coverage of births increased from 48% to 65% and seems to be on an upward trend. Forensic audiences held during traditional meetings among nomadic populations, but also among rural sedentary populations and among school children and their parents, were organised in collaboration with regional jurisdictions in order to regularise acts of civil status beyond regulatory deadlines.

During the three years of the project, 189 outreaching campaigns were organised, equivalent to 10 per centre (with more than 1,250,000 participants), and that were as many opportunities for people to share their experience: “Oumarou tells that those who went to gold sites had to come back because they had not identity card. A village teacher said that he did not accept children to be registered at school if they had not a birth certificate. A couple witnessed that they were rejected at the border because they had not a marriage certificate. Another couple indicates that a death certificate (...) allowed them to obtain a tax relief. A matron explained that thanks to her birth certificate, she got an identity card and consequently received money thanks to the proof of affiliation with a deceased parent”.

However, it seems that many beneficiaries have not come to withdraw their acts (40 to 60% in Niamey, and up to 80% in some districts). Several factors explain why progress has not been as fast as expected: Where the rate of non-withdrawal is lower, it is mainly due to the fact that the agents of civil registration come and withdraw the acts at the district level and then distribute them to the beneficiaries in the villages, without any obligation to do it. For instance the agents in charge of the transcription of the acts, who are volunteers (and paid 100 Francs per act, an amount that does not comprise costs of delivery), and health workers in the villages transmit, at their own expenses, the acts to the beneficiaries: in some cases it is done by walking and despite long distances; in other cases, it is done with the motorbike made available by UNICEF, but without any budget for gas provided by the district. In other districts, distance explains the high rates of non-withdrawal. Another weakness is about delays that have been particularly long in health centres. And since the exam for the entry at secondary school has been suppressed, school children have no more the obligation to present

their birth certificate and teachers cannot play anymore their role of relay in the accomplishment of formalities in this regard.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Among the lessons learned, the evaluation report identifies the wrong level of governance of the programme: to be effective and operational it should be located at ministerial level and coordinated with the Ministries of Justice and Health because it was observed that declaratory judgments were not transcribed into acts of civil status, judges did not supervise and control some parts of the acts, health workers did not sign the notebook of declaration.

As for the recommendations, it is essential to conceive and implement a system that would economically secure and retain clerical employees and health workers in civil registration centres; to this aim it is necessary that remuneration and allowances be paid entirely and on time, that remuneration per act be increased and that volunteer clerical employees benefit of a kind of status entitling allowances similar to village chiefs'.

Also it would be wise to put in competition the villages in a district in view of awarding a prize to the villages with the best score for civil status registration.

It is recommendable to coordinate action with Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health and Education in order that all major actors in the field of civil status registration contribute to and aim at the universalization of civil status, as a key protection right for the poor and destitute.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: DECENT WORK AND ENTERPRISE GROWTH

3.2.1 Project name: Her Right to Decent Work: Arab and Ethiopian women in secondary schemes of employment in Israel

Implementing agency: Kav La Oved
Country: Israel, Region: North Africa and Middle East

Brief summary of the action

The project's objective was to improve the socio-economic situation of Arab and Ethiopian women workers in Israel and to promote their right to decent work. Working women from these communities are most often employed in secondary schemes of the labour market, mainly in subcontracted, temporary and hourly labour, resulting in low pay, poor working conditions, and vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The outstanding experience of the four project partners, i.e. Kav LaOved, Kayan Feminist Organisation, Itach-Maaki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice and the Law Rights Clinic of Tel Aviv University, provided the targeted group with the resources they needed to practice and materialise their potential to be much more aware of their rights, organize and improve their situations, for which neither the main Israeli trade union (Histadrout) nor the governments were providing meaningful services.

Key target groups: Women, Minorities: indigenous people, minority ethnic groups, minority religious group members. Arab, Ethiopian and Bedouin Communities in Israel, mainly in urban areas

Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics

International labour standards and right to decent work for informal economy workers (2.1)

Further tags:

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

Strengthening the role of women in the informal economy (4.6)

Promotion of women in informal economy trade associations and cooperatives (4.6)

Minority groups and the informal economy (providing support and inclusion of) (4.11)

Leadership, life skills, empowerment training (3.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

The overall assessment of the project was undeniably positive. Its scope was comprehensive and the actions followed a well-defined and clear path, addressing one of the most deep-rooted and complicated problems of the Israeli society - namely the marginalisation of minority communities - with a strict focus on women. As argued by the Final Evaluation, the activities were relevant and based on actual needs, because civil rights awareness, conceptual understanding and knowledge about citizenship, legal aid means, and law procedures were totally lacking in the socio-economic context of such groups as those targeted by this project.

The first drawback of the project was be related to its over-ambitiousness. The scope was too broad and too many issues were at stake (i.e. three different communities with different habits, social rules and concept of woman; the double role of women as private workers and as a part of society; the balance between the public and private approach towards the targeted workers, etc.). In particular, it was clear that working rights violation was just one of the problems that women faced within the targeted communities. Sometimes these violations were accompanied by local communities' discrimination, prejudice and lack of collaboration. The Final Narrative Report illustrates the story of an Arab woman who resorted to Kav LaOved to lawsuit the mayor of her village for sexual abuse. After she took this decision, she was deeply shamed by her community, which refused to accept her and her "dishonour". In other situations, hierarchies of gender and power, especially in the case of women employed by family members or friends, further weakened women's abilities to demand their right to decent work. One of the conclusions was that it was advisable to narrow the scope of the action, **perhaps focusing just on one single community and involving also other actors (especially men and employers in the engaged communities)** who deeply contribute to women's economic and social independence.

The second weakness of the project was related to the inadequate involvement of the private sector. The project was focused only on the victims' perspectives, neglecting the other side of the problem, namely employers' exploitative approach and economic stakeholders' negligence. Apart from some sessions addressed to local authorities and public officers, the project completely excluded these fundamental actors from its activities (as asserted by the Final Evaluation, probably the NGOs leading the project were not fully confident with them). Dedicated informative sessions or **tailor-made training with private sector actors might have given more sustainability** and plenitude to the project's purposes.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

The project raises **two important concepts that are related to informal economy: ethnic enclave and secondary job market.**

Ethnic enclaves are geographic areas with high ethnic concentration, characteristic cultural identity and economic activity based on small ethnic firms providing numerous low-wage jobs to the enclaves' members. The barriers of entry into the enclaves and their singular

economies are significantly lowered due to the ethno-centric nature of businesses and firms. Goods and services tend to be offered in the language of the enclave. Additionally, social and cultural norms specific to the host country are not required. Thus, the ethno-specific nature of enclave economies create an alternative job market, making it attractive to new **immigrants who lack the social and cultural skills necessary to integrate into the mainstream economy** (Portes & Jensen, 1992).

From the Final Report and the Final Evaluation of “Her Right to Decent Work”, we can determine that part of the actions specifically targeted villages or neighbourhoods with high Arab, Ethiopian and Bedouin concentration, and that some of the engaged women were employed in community-related activities. Thus, we can objectively state that, across its various goals, the project targeted ethnic enclaves and enclave economies. Basically, enclaves economies are not a bad concept: they represent a useful incubator for the newly arrived immigrants, and can provide for an alternative welfare based on traditional safety nets and community self-help. The main drawbacks arise when enclave economies aim at covering bad practices, such as informality. Indeed, enclave economies are often characterised by informal activities, as the entrepreneurial services making the core of the enclave's founding are historically informal ventures. Informality is favourable for immigrant entrepreneurship, allowing them to bypass costly regulations, and to women, who are informally employed by their husbands, other relatives or friends living in the same community. The informality of the enclave economy is however a reason for risk and fraud. Informal activities are constantly under the risk of detection by the formal sector, which has a negative effect on job security. Furthermore, due to the absence of legal framework, enclave members often remain silent about various forms of exploitation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, 2002). This issue has been clearly acknowledged by the Final Report, but no activities were specifically directed to it. For this reason, the above mentioned recommendation should be strengthened and extended: cooperation projects dealing with enclave economies need to be targeted not only to victims, but also on employers and other economic actors with a key role in the treated enclaves. The real change can be achieved only if the community as a whole is conducted towards a better approach and a mindful behaviour in respect to the workers and the National labour rules.

The second concept is about secondary job market, even quoted by the title (i.e. secondary schemes of employment). This concept stems from the “dual theory” of the job market, created by the American economists Doeringer and Piore in 1971, who envisaged a split labour market in two segregated spheres: primary and secondary job market. In the primary job market, the workforce as a whole is motivated to serve their employer because of wages, health benefit, and pension and job security. The primary sector generally contains higher-grade, higher-status and better-paid jobs, with employers who offer the best terms and conditions. Salaries are relatively high, as well as status and responsibilities, career mobility and good working conditions (understandingsocialscience.com). On the other hand, the secondary labour market is characterised by high-turnover, low-pay, and usually part-time or temporary work. These jobs give low emphasis on job morale and their workers lack motivation. The secondary jobs are mostly low-skilled, require relatively little training, and can be learned relatively quickly on the job. There are few barriers to job mobility within the

secondary sector. Because the jobs are unattractive, there is little incentive to stay, and there are high levels of labour turnover, with workers moving on to other jobs or employers. Wages are low, the terms and conditions of the job are poor, and there is few unionisation (World Bank, 2006). Historically, secondary labour market has been dominated by women and minorities, while the primary labour market has been dominated by white males.

Secondary job market and informal economy are not exactly alike. While informal workers completely miss any kind of protection (in terms of wage, working time, lay-offs and social benefits), secondary job market workers are covered by formal job contracts. Yet, the two concepts have similar traits. In fact, given the high turnout from the demand side and the possibility to be easily replaced, secondary workers cannot afford to perform badly or to get maternity and sick leave. At the same time employers have no interest in improving workers' conditions, since one of their main goal is saving money, and they can do it by assigning low-quality tasks to low-skilled workers. Thus, to what extent formalisation can be considered a good practice, if that means moving informal workers towards secondary schemes of employment? Even the analysed project shows how basic labour rights, in spite of a formal contract, can be constantly undermined. Another recommendation is therefore to combine awareness raising and self-empowerment programmes with TVET or entrepreneurship trainings (either simultaneously or after project's deadline). In this way, participants will be empowered with new technical and professional knowledge, gaining better chances not only to be more aware of their rights, but also to skip easily from primary to secondary job market.

3.2.2 Project name: Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as Tools for Peace in Myanmar

Implementing agency: ILO

Country: Myanmar, Region: Asia

Brief summary of the action:

In Myanmar forced labour was perpetrated for decades and now makes up part of the country's cultural context.

The action intended to work with stakeholders in the peace process to build the foundation to a more cohesive society where human rights are better respected and vulnerable communities are offered economic development opportunities and can benefit from the opening of the Myanmar economy. Ultimate beneficiaries were: victims of forced labour in communities affected by armed conflict: vulnerable men, women, children, disabled and the elderly; the populations (women and men) employed in or residing in proximity to Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and other major projects; Government officials including those of lower rank; law enforcement officials; social partners; ethnic nationality organisations.

Key target groups: Women, Children (up to age 18), Elderly, People with disabilities, Minorities: indigenous people, minority ethnic groups, minority religious group members

Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics.

International labour standards and right to decent work for informal economy workers (2.1)

Further tags:

Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Promotion of full respect for and application of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in Myanmar as a means to ensure practices of forced labour no longer continue. This rights-based foundation is the basis for addressing the developments made in the national peace process, as well as economic reforms introduced by the government in line with the priorities laid out in the Action Plan. By addressing fundamental rights, it was envisaged that the country's reconciliation and development would be more in line with a fundamental respect of rights, and thus more inclusive of the needs of all the country's constituents.

In the end, the design proved to be overambitious, characterised by a theory of change that may have been clear to those responsible for the initial design but has not proven sufficiently solid to ensure its understanding by all stakeholders. This means, first of all, that stakeholders

will interpret the project in their own way, placing emphasis on one or another of the specific objectives according to their own interests, rather than taking a more global approach. Under such circumstances, no good practice could be extracted from the project.

3.2.3 Project name: Engagement Communautaire et Développement Durable (Community Engagement and Sustainable Development, ECDD) 2008-2013

**Implementing agency: Vétérinaires sans frontières
Country: Comoros, Region: Africa**

Brief summary of the action

The project was conducted in 9 villages of Anjouan Island and aimed at improving the living standards of the population through agricultural development, sustainable management of natural resources: soils, water, forest and biodiversity. It consisted in supporting and counselling the farmers through farmer field schools (150 demonstration plots) and individual monitoring in the villages (with technicians present 3.5 days a week): seedlings under vegetal cover, micro-irrigation and ox-park with proximity fodder, all techniques successfully tested in Madagascar.

Key target groups: farmers

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Environment and sustainable management and IE (2.4)

Further tags:

Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Environmental protection, green jobs and the IE development, (2.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

The ECDD project was run by Bristol Conservation & Science Foundation (an operating unit of Bristol, Clifton & West of England Zoological Society Ltd.) in partnership with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Government of the Union of the Comoros and the Administration of the Island of Anjouan, and with the support of Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières. The project was conducted in 9 villages of the Anjouan Island and aimed at improving the living standards of the population through agricultural development and sustainable management of natural resources: soils, water, forest and biodiversity. It included supporting and counselling the farmers through farmer field schools (150 demonstration plots) and individual monitoring in the villages (with technicians present 3.5 days a week): seedlings under vegetal cover, micro-irrigation and ox-park with proximity fodder, all techniques successfully tested in Madagascar.

Regarding sustainable management of natural resources, the project focussed on community water management based on collective unpaid work. A new national NGO was created towards this goal. In order to gain the trust from the villagers it was necessary for the

technicians in charge of extension services to clearly identify the role of the actors in the communities. They had to insist on the inclusion of youth, women and elderly, and on the exclusion of corrupted people, so that some actors were able to develop the sense of responsibilities to initiate reforestation around catchments, collection of funds from communities, etc. Self-help groups and traditional mutual assistance were revived.

However, in the absence of social cohesion and leadership, and of decentralised governance, the project objectives turned out to be difficult to achieve. Building of trust could not be achieved: community hen houses or vegetable gardens had to stop because individualism was taking precedence over collective behaviour: all collective income generating works were abandoned, except for water management.

Among the experiences of the project, one can note that a cow was provided in sharecropping in each village to a motivated beneficiary not previously involved in animal husbandry: the first calf was for the beneficiary and 6 months after calving, the cow was given to another beneficiary. Prophylaxis costs were paid by the project. A lesson learnt was that once the beneficiary had got the calf, he was not willing any more to feed the cow correctly. Also prophylaxis costs were high and it was then decided not to continue with the activity. Also, despite efforts, the production and use of manure and compost were not efficient and would have required longer support.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Social action must be carefully prepared and based on a thorough and practical knowledge of power relations that exist within communities: these power relations cannot be ignored, it is vain to think that a project action can go against them, even if it advisable to ensure that the action will not be used to reinforce them.

Technicians or agricultural extension workers are not trained for social experimentation. Actions that involve communities and leaders must be prepared and accompanied by social scientists, especially where work is mobilised without cash.

3.2.4 Project name: Handicraft and business through regional integration and fair trade market

Implementing agency: Fondazione CEVSI
Country: Tajikistan, Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action

The aim of the action is to contribute to the development of the Tajik and Kyrgyz private sectors with a special focus on regional integration of the handicraft sector. The specific objective is to reinforce the representative role, the sustainability and the competences on supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) of Tajik and Kyrgyz Handicraft Business Intermediary Organisations (BIOs), particularly bolstering their representative role, their sustainability and their competences in supporting SME's. The fair trade focus implicitly promotes also environmental sustainability.

Key target groups: SMEs and craftsmen/artisans in handicraft sectors, business organisations, staff of Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Culture. Focus on Arts & Crafts

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)

Further tags:

Strengthening legal and policy frameworks to support the informal economy (legal and planning approaches) (1.3; 1.4)

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Improving coordination and collaboration between organisations to develop informal economy enterprises (3.4; 4.1)

Environmental and sustainable informal economy enterprises (green jobs, reducing impact on the environment of the IE) (2.4)

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

Micro-finance methods (3.5)

Identification of profitable informal economy activities for start-ups (3.2; 3.5)

Marketing management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)

Supply chain management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Good practices and lessons learned

This project was a continuation of a previous action that was designed according to the lessons learnt and best practices achieved during the EU funded project, in the framework of

CAI II programme, “Promoting the development of the handicraft sector in Tajikistan through fair-trade links and BIOs networking”. The following good practices and lessons learned were identified in the project’s final report and evaluation report:

- the national network of handicraft producers was created, the Union of Craftsmen of Tajikistan (UCT), as a link between the expected results of the previous project, and it will be one of the main partner and the main beneficiary of the proposed action;
- the participative approach (BIOs and SMEs will be implementers in some activities, while beneficiaries in others) guarantees a larger commitment and a better future sustainability;
- the approach learning by doing is more effective: interactive workshops will be favourite when possible, as well as direct exchange of experiences will be preferred;
- the transportation cost in Central Asia are high, hence it might be a problem for export: the lesson learnt is to focus on high value and low weight products, easier and cheaper to export;
- international expertise, directly link to the target market, guarantee higher efficacy to penetrate the market, addressing the Central Asian SMEs on marketable and profit-making products;
- Central Asia landscape and the Silk Road history have a strong evocative brand that should be fully exploited;
- fair-trade was introduced by CESVI for the first time in Central Asia: the pilot experience in Tajikistan was successful, despite the initial difficulties to make understand the benefits for the artisans. Fair trade will be strengthened in Tajikistan and expanded to Kyrgyzstan;
- established links with European fair trade buyers will be used to explore the market potentialities.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

One of the project components was focused on the field of regulation and legislation, notably the **aim was to introduce a new Act that would give the handicraft sector a new grounding. Production of handicrafts was defined in the legislation as a “folk art”, but it was not recognised as income generating activity**. Given that the sector provides income opportunities to a large circle of producers, including in the informal economy, the project aimed at creating the legal basis for handicraft production that would allow for further development of the sector. Inevitably, adoption of such a law would have also certain regularizing effects on the producers in the sector.

However, **the activity came to a stalemate. Legislative proposals developed by the civil society organisations were not upheld by the executive and legislative bodies. The Ministry of economic Development and Trade was not willing to propose a new piece of legislation due to the lack of information and data about the sector. This lack of information was partly due to the informal status of the producers**. Therefore, the project revised its strategy and introduced a survey of handicraft producers. A questionnaire with 41 questions was designed and pilot-tested on a smaller sample of producers that participated in a handicraft fair. Based on the pilot phase a distribution strategy was designed to reach the handicraft producers and carry out the needs assessment for the sector at large. The survey

and needs assessment were supposed to generate the data and information that will be necessary to justify the intention to create dedicated legislation and to provide support to the related lobby. The example illustrates the need for monitoring, data gathering and collection of statistics on formal and informal producers by dedicated surveys (capable to capture also the informal segment) in the sectors under consideration.

Another serious issue was the lacking capacity of the national partners – the business associations. Therefore, some of the project activities were aimed at training of the business associations' staff. This effort resulted in **increasing the number of motivated and enthusiastic staff members, notably young people**. However, this resulted in certain tensions and antagonisms between the new initiative young staff members and the old staff members (insiders) who held important positions in the BA's. The example illustrates the need for awareness and when possible also prior analysis of the existing relationships, hierarchies and governance structures in the implementing organisations in order to reveal the potential antagonisms/competitive relationships that could hamper the project implementation. The recommendation is particularly important in the countries that are characteristic by hierarchical social structures and relationships (patriarchal societies, societies with strong respect for old-age and tenure, etc.).

Potential examples of innovative practices include a database collection of Central Asian machineries and raw materials to improve the supply chain. Regional and National Workshops were be held on 'made in CA' brand and its marketing.

Further innovation elements can be related through the involvement of other actors:
- altraQualità, Italian cooperative of fair trade experts, imports distributing handicraft and food products from developing countries, guaranteeing transparent production line, fair price, with no misuse of work and in line with fair trade principles. altraQualità has deep knowledge of the European fair trade market and it will give market orientation to the project.
- Whomade designlab, Italian creative agency specialized in running participatory design workshops for the innovation of crafts, will address the project on the European taste for crafts.

3.2.5 Project name: Y CARE International 'Empowering civil society to promote the enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Myanmar'

Implementing agency: National Council of Myanmar Young Men Christian Associations (YMCA) of Myanmar and Y Care International

Country: Myanmar, Region: Asia

Brief summary of the action

The project aims to contribute to the social and economic empowerment of vulnerable young people in Myanmar. It consists in (1) strengthening the capacity of 5 CSOs to meet the needs of young people; (2) providing sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable young people; (3) empowering young people to participate in community life and decision making; (4) reducing stigma and discrimination against marginalised young people.

Key target groups: Youth (18-24), Children (up to age 18), People with disabilities, Trafficked children and adults

Classification according to the Research Matrix: Research Question and sub-topics.

Innovative approaches to enhance livelihoods, equity and inclusion: Social inclusion promotion (awareness raising on social inclusion in IE (4.3)

Further tags:

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

People with disabilities in the informal economy (providing support and inclusion of) (4.9), Trafficked individuals (4.11)

Other vulnerable groups (4.11)

Leadership, life skills, empowerment training (3.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

Implementation of the Action involved a steep learning curve, during which staff built their capacity and understanding of how to work most effectively with extremely vulnerable youth. The most significant lesson has been how difficult it is to attract and retain extremely vulnerable and marginalised young people to development programmes, even those with tangible benefits such as livelihoods training and associated support (starter kits/sub-grants). There are multiple barriers limiting young people's ability to participate, including:

- their economic need to earn a daily income
- parental/family pressure to work to support the family or help with domestic tasks
- family migration/seasonal migration for work

- lack of time to participate in training programmes
- extreme poverty which means young people do not have any money to pay for transportation costs even for relatively small distances
- perceptions of their own worthlessness/lack of value or stigma and discrimination, which mean they do not have the confidence to apply to participate in the first place.

The Action has employed a number of strategies to address these barriers, in particular:

- working closely with beneficiaries and their families through sensitization and home visits to communicate the value of the programme and the changes it could lead to in their lives;
- payment of transportation costs / provision of bicycles;
- scheduling of activities with beneficiaries to try as much as possible to fit with their other commitments;
- shortening of training programme/implementation of some activities concurrently so that young people could realise the benefits more quickly;
- rights-based training and activities to reduce stigma and discrimination against vulnerable groups;
- working with specialised CSOs (MILI and Kings N Queens) to ensure additional support for particularly vulnerable young people with disabilities and LGBTI young people.

In addition to the above, the project has also learnt the following key lessons:

- While those with additional vulnerability factors such as disabilities and LGBTI groups are undoubtedly marginalised, young people who do not fit these categories but are extremely poor, under-educated and un-skilled are also extremely vulnerable and can in some cases experience greater vulnerability due to lack of support from CSOs. (There are specialised CSOs working with people with disabilities and LGBTI groups.) They also experience stigma and discrimination from their communities who perceive them as worthless and unskilled with nothing to offer. This should be considered when designing target groups and selection criteria for future programmes.
- It is important to work closely with families from the start of a programme in order to build their understanding and acceptance of the programme and gain their support for young people's participation.
- Community sensitisation at the start of a programme should be done directly by project staff and others (e.g. local authorities and community leaders) should not be relied upon to share accurate information.
- Livelihoods support activities must be designed bearing in mind target beneficiaries' education level. It was found that job finding support (e.g. CV and interview preparation) and job linking with formal employment opportunities has been relevant for only a small number of the selected beneficiaries due to their low education levels.

- In addition to proficiency in livelihoods skills, trainers must be supported to build their training/facilitation skills and should be sensitised to work effectively with the target group.
- Young people in Myanmar have extremely low levels of knowledge and understanding of civic education and sustained education and training is needed to build this. This Action has successfully started this process, but further efforts will be needed to ensure that young people continue to build their skills and confidence to effectively participate in their country's development.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

It was not possible to find out from the evaluation report good practices or lessons learned that could be of interest for IESF. Lessons essentially concern the management, implementation and strategy of project.

Although one of the objectives of the project was to set up a kind of informal activity for the beneficiaries, little is said about the implementation of this aspect of the project and it is only referred to difficulties due to the absence of interest from the parents and the lack of additional funding.

The most significant lesson has been how difficult it is to attract and retain extremely vulnerable and marginalised young people to development programmes, even those with tangible benefits such as livelihoods training and associated support (starter kits/sub-grants).

3.3. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: DIRECT ACTIONS IN COMMUNITIES

3.3.1 Project name: Support to Medium and Long Term Needs of Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Implementing agencies: UNHCR, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes et al.

Country: Lebanon

Region: Middle East

Brief summary of the action

The main goal of the project is to mitigate the impact of Syrian crisis on Lebanon by alleviating the medium and longer term needs of both the local population and Syrian refugees in the main host communities in Lebanon. The project aims to improve the capacity of existing Lebanese institutions and structures to deal with crisis, to reinforce the capacity and quality of the national primary and secondary education structures in the regions hosting Syrian refugees, and to strengthen the social and economic tissue of communities.

Key target groups: Youth (18-24), Children (up to age 18), Migrants, Migrants – refugees

Training and capacity building targeted also staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Internal Security Forces, Community Support Centres, Social Development Centres

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)

Further tags:

Identification of innovative vocational training subject areas (3.6)

Vocational and skills training (3.6)

Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Good practices and lessons learned

Given that no formal refugee camps were established in Lebanon, Syrian refugees were integrated into Lebanese communities and have been accessing public services including

education and other community support structures, such as community centres. The majority of Syrian refugees settled in Lebanon in the poor locations where schools were already overcrowded and suffered from the poorest quality of education.

The project was quite successful in providing access to both formal and non-formal education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Although the main focus of the action was on school children, there were also activities aimed at adults, such as life skills training, provision of vocational training, and psychological and social support.

The project came up with several innovative approaches that allowed for targeting much more beneficiaries than originally expected (due to continued influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon). The main tools included distribution of the “School in a box” sets to students, provision of remedial classes and Accelerated Learning Programme. An after school programme was initiated to allow Syrian children to catch up on lost time, as well as provide them with language support classes. In order to offer quality education, a teacher training programme was initiated. Education induction training for teachers in ALP and remedial classes was provided to 170 teachers under Save the Children. Trainings were given to public school teachers, frontline staff and Syrian teachers recruited by the implementing partners for ALP (Accelerated Learning Programme) and remedial classes. Syrian teachers for the ALP are identified in the communities through outreach workers and referred to implementing partners. The themes in the training included interactive teaching methods and skills to manage a heterogeneous classroom, while UNICEF trained teachers on Early Childhood Development and Child Friendly teaching, as part of the Child Friendly Spaces implementation.

According to the project Final Narrative Report, The lessons learned include mainly the development of the Accelerated Learning Programme which received initial funding through this action. Initially the ALP used a manual previously developed by Save the Children International that has a global experience in the sector. The manual was originally a summer programme condensing parts of the Lebanese curriculum in order to place special emphasis on language of instruction and learning. In the course of project implementation a new ALP manual was developed, which included programmes for three levels of ability, covering basic competences in level 1 on Maths, Science, Arabic, and English or French. The new manual was used in order to harmonise the approach used by the project partners. With the help of the project teacher team, the implementing partners complemented this material based on children's needs and additional competences needed. Based on the discussions and feedback, a new ALP curriculum was developed based on the Lebanese National Curriculum. Therefore, the ALP tool facilitated a catch-up and preparation for school involvement of the Syrian refugee children and students in Lebanon.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

The project faced serious difficulties that were linked to the informality of circumstances under which the sizeable Syrian refugee community resided in Lebanon.

There were particular challenges to reach many persons who resided in informal settlements in locations far away from schools. Information on how to register for schools needed to be improved. Therefore, the UNHCR recruited Refugee Outreach Volunteers who have been integral in strengthening communication with refugee populations. UNHCR has also incorporated a participatory approach to better accountability and to adapt outreach activities based on feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Originally little or no tracking of exam results and dropout rates existed. UNHCR implemented a child tracking system which allows for checking the progress of each individual child benefitting from the UNHCR education programmes.

The continuous influx of Syrian children brought about changes to the ALP tools. While originally the ALPs were used only during the summer months, The ALPs have been redesigned to represent a more structured form of condensed learning, or catch-up programme in order to help with the transition of Syrian children into formal education in Lebanon.

Activity focused on community involvement (actively involving parents in education) aimed to introduce Parents Associations (PA's) or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's). The activity faced difficulties due to the informal character of Syrian residencies in Lebanon. The Lebanese school system does have the Parent Associations. The members are elected annually or bi-annually and they participate in the management of the budget and other affairs. However, the Syrian parents could not be effectively involved in PA's mainly due to the difficulties with registering their place of residence, as their stay in the Lebanese communities was often informal. MEHE was against the establishment of associations which included Syrian parents due to the complications with the Lebanese residencies and the legal status of Syrian parents. The problem was quite serious mainly for the second shift school activities where the students were exclusively Syrians. UNHCR did manage to implement some PA's in Tripoli through their implementing partner NRC. However, during the evaluated period of implementation the project did not manage to find a solution to introducing formal PA's with Syrian participation into the formal education system in Lebanon.

3.3.2 Project name: Building the Productive, Organizational and Commercial Capacities of the Agricultural Sector in Arkhangai Aimag

Implementing agency: Vétérinaires sans Frontières - Centre International de Coopération pour le Développement Agricole

Country: Mongolia, Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action:

The overall objective of the project is to promote an inclusive and empowered rural society facilitating the participation of the local Non-State Actors in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies in Arkhangai. The specific objectives are (i) to contribute to income generation and the creation of employment opportunities in agriculture, including both animal and horticultural sectors in rural areas, thus limiting rural exodus, and (ii) to build capacity of human resources in the agricultural sector in rural areas.

Key target groups: Livestock producing households, cooperative, association, network

25 Grass-root groups of livestock producers (GGLP), a cooperative and its members, provincial animal health network, 45 vulnerable sedentary households in small rural centres, provincial federation of herders

Classification according to the Research Matrix:

Improving coordination and collaboration between organisations to develop informal economy enterprises (3.4; 4.1)

Further tags:

Organising informal economy entrepreneurs into (trade) associations (3.4; 4.1),

Informal Economy enterprise start-up guidance - training and technical support (3.2)

Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Supply chain management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Linkages of informal enterprise owners with trade associations, cooperatives (1.10; 4.1)

Environmental and sustainable informal economy enterprises (green jobs, reducing impact on the environment of the IE) (2.4)

Environmental protection, green jobs and the IE development, (2.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

The project was focused on supporting enabling environment in horticulture in general, not explicitly for the informal economy enterprises. However, given that the target group included grass-root groups of livestock producers and 45 vulnerable sedentary households in small rural centres, it is clear that a substantial part of the direct beneficiaries of the project was involved in the informal economy. The main tools and activities included training, provision

of advisory services, and support to market access and association building among the horticultural businesses. Support was provided to livestock producers mainly in the field of grazing, veterinary hygiene and medical issues (diagnostics of animal diseases), as well as environmental issues (preservation of pastures). The project was based on value chain approach in the field of livestock production, processing and trade. The main focus was on rural areas.

As stated in the project Final Report, Since the end of the collectivist system 20 years ago, nomadic livestock producers were developing new links with the modern economy and looking for solutions to generate more income, in order to ensure the sustainability of their activity. To achieve this goal, livestock producers' strategy has been focused on increasing their herd size, while seeking to specialize in breeding goats for cashmere. This overall strategy now generates serious issues related to natural resources management. The Mongolian rural sector is also characterized by a lack of employment opportunities and poor diversification skills, especially for sedentary people and rural populations.

The final narrative report stated that the project accomplished a real step forward for targeted herders and gave them the means for a better empowerment and an increase of their income. Regarding the project sustainability, the future of the Federation of Arkhangai Herders is not certain as the activities performed by this entity can only be funded with difficulty in Mongolia and the organization is still very dependent from the implementing organisation (Veterinaires Sans Frontiers). Whilst the cooperative Ar Arvirhin Delgerekh is still dependent from the project, the strategy implemented and the efforts made during the project period gave this organization the possibility to survive by itself within the next following years.

By contributing to the strengthening of agricultural livestock and horticulture sectors in Arkhangai, the project gave to herders' organizations the means to increase their incomes and encouraged job opportunities in rural areas. More specifically, although the project did not succeed in setting-up a reliable meat value chain for cooperative members supported by the project, the yak down value chain, which started one year before the project, has improved a lot during the last three years. By diversifying their production and promoting their product at an international level the established cooperative is now on the right track to financial autonomy.

Generally after 40 months working on the project, the AVSF learned 3 important things to be taken into account for its next projects:

The area of implementation shall be smaller as it is too difficult for the field team to travel in Mongolia due to weather or natural conditions.

The local government shall be more involved at the beginning and before the project. Many Soum Governors didn't want to be involved in the project because they were lacking information at the beginning of the project. This may have an impact for the diffusion of the activities at the end of the project. Consequently, local authorities shall be involved before the project for activities like brucellosis in order to be more supportive during the project.

Collective natural resources management approaches, including pastureland management, need to be implemented at a larger scale to ensure real impact and coherence (e.g. a single GGLP can implement sustainable pasture management practices, but these could easily be jeopardized by a neighbouring group of families which would not have adopted the same approach, and would then compete for the same pastureland).

On another hand, AVSF and CAAD learned a great deal on local and international textile industry during those 40 months. This experience will be capitalized without any doubt in new projects and shared with local authorities in due time. During this project, the Action also enabled a better understanding of group mobilization and linkage with the market for horticultural products, but also an involvement of schools and hospitals for a better diet spreading. This cross-cutting approach will be used and promoted in future actions and projects.

A lesson learned was related the lack of cooperation and participation from the local and national authorities. In particular, as regards animal disease (brucellosis) control, the Federation of Arkhangai Herders worked consistently on awareness raising for the targeted population but didn't succeed in bringing the results of the project at a national level due to a lack of will from national authorities. The lack of participation of local and national authorities before and at the beginning of the project made some activities more difficult to implement and lessons have been learnt for the next project.

Another lesson learned was related to the establishment of meat value chain. The intention of the project was to identify and support the direct value chain from the meat producers to retailers. Several surveys and workshops were organized on this topic. While herders were still interested by the meat value chain, they explained their concern regarding the availability of their animals. Most of them were not sure they would be able to provide enough animals in a regular way. It seems that they would be able to match the meat industry requirements, only if they could sell their meat at a higher price – which was not the case yet. Because the project partners never succeeded in finding a real partner to support the meat value chain, no further workshops have been organized in the framework of this project. The problem was related to the economies of scale and the limitations of production due to the small volumes. Although the first steps were successfully made towards overcoming these limitations by setting up associations/groups and boosting the cooperation among the herders, the extent was of sufficient to enable access to regular meat at a higher price – which was not the case yet. Because the project partners never succeeded in finding a real partner to support the meat value chain, no further workshops have been organized in the framework of this project. The problem was related to the economies of scale and the limitations of production due to the small volumes. Although the first steps were successfully made towards overcoming these limitations by setting up associations/groups and boosting the cooperation among the herders, the extent was of sufficient to enable access to regular meat industry value chain.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

The project used approaches that are suitable for supporting the people whose livelihoods depend on the informal economy. For example, the project attempted to overcome the isolation and lock-in effects by assisting producers in organizing themselves in groups and establishing linkages with local markets. In particular, each horticultural unit supported by the project was run by members from several households. The organisation into groups allowed for joining forces when purchasing the inputs, to pool yields, labour and other resources, to market the production, to share the costs for market access and marketing (transport, private shop rent, participation to annual fairs, etc.) .

The project also supported the establishment of market linkages to the local markets based on the short supply chain approach: Potential customers or retailers were identified through surveys and local advertising, and linked to the beneficiaries who established a supply mechanism with the help of the project. Technical assistance was provided to the beneficiaries in terms of packaging, pricing and promotion support.

The project included innovative practices based on the use of Passive Solar Greenhouses in agriculture and other environment-saving approaches. Given the fragility of the Mongolian pastureland under climatic changes and the dependence of the local population on natural resources to sustain their income, the preservation of environment is of great importance. Therefore the project included activities focused on the co-management of pastures, development of horticultural production in “3 seasons” model based on the use of passive solar greenhouses, organic farming pest control, soil fertilization and efficient use of water.

The project provided valuable leads for bottom-up approach to organisation of fragmented producers. For example, the individual herders were organised into groups that included siblings, neighbours, or individuals working already together for other activities (small animal husbandry, felt factory, etc.). It must be noted that 14 groups out of 16 were led by women. Most of the groups gathered 3 to 5 households, and in most cases, households were joining the group in couple (the wife and the husband), often with one child if the couple is relatively old. In 2015, there were 100 active members, with whom 137 people were living (of them 109 children). Those people were often former herders; some of them still kept few animals.

Although the above-mentioned volume limitations did not allow for establishing a viable meat value chain, the project activities successfully supported the yak down value chain that existed already before the project start and in the framework of the project it became sustainable.

3.3.3 Project name: Support the use of remittances for new businesses and jobs creation

Implementing agency: Caritas Ceska Republika Sdruzeni

Country: Moldova, Region: Eastern Europe

Brief summary of the action:

The Project is aimed at fortifying the development of Moldova by stimulating the creation of opportunities for income generating activities in the country through the creation of new businesses. The overall objective is to contribute to the promotion of the sustainable use of remittances for income generating activities in Moldova. The project aims to foster entrepreneurship among 900 Moldovan Returnees and recipients of remittances and the use of remittances for the creation of privately owned business.

Key target groups: Migrants, returned migrants and recipients of remittances (400 family members that receive remittances; 300 returned migrants; and 200 senders of remittances to Moldova). Beneficiaries include also Local Public Administration (involved through Cooperation Agreements) and those who benefit from goods and services provided as the result of business start-ups

Classification according to the Research Matrix:

Identification of profitable informal economy activities for start-ups (3.2; 3.5)

Further tags:

Informal Economy enterprise start-up guidance - training and technical support (3.2)
Finance management, basic accounting training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)
Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)
Addressing issues surrounding formalising informal economy enterprises (1.5; 2.2)
Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)

Good practices and lessons learned

The work of the project team has been focused on supporting the beneficiaries of the project in registering their enterprises, developing their business plans, applying for loans, and on the provision of post-creation assistance to newly established entrepreneurs.

The corner stone for successful implementation of the project and capacity building was trainings on entrepreneurship, management, business start-up and elaboration of business ideas. The returnees/recipients of remittances could send their application forms either to local public authorities, to the project coordinator in the respective regions. The received

applications were assessed by the project team and the eligible candidates selected, according to the eligibility criteria that had been set up previously. During the implementation period 16 training sessions were provided to 275 participants.

An important good practice was the provision of post-creation assistance for newly established entrepreneurs (labour contracts, legal aspects, business management, marketing development, training fields of business development, contracts). Once new businesses were established in the framework and with the assistance of the project, provision of post-creation assistance was commenced. Along with the support provided for businesses start-up in registration procedure, business plan elaboration, the establishment of relationship with financial institutions and investment implementation, the newly established entrepreneurs received the required assistance to sustainable business development. In this regard, the 59 newly established entrepreneurs that commenced the operational activity benefitted from post-creation assistance, including: Legal aspects and taxation; Business management; Accounting and financial reports preparation; Marketing development; Preparation of supply or sales contracts.

A brochure “The Guide on business opportunities” was developed with complete and detailed business plans for 30 business ideas actual for Moldova that could be considered by the prospective entrepreneurs, project beneficiaries. The content is based on the findings of the market analysis to identify business opportunities, carried out in initial project period.

Dissemination of information among potential beneficiaries was among the project strengths. During the implementation period, 10 articles on good practices represented by success stories of the project beneficiaries were published in newspapers, reaching 54 932 readers. Through these articles, the project team encourage as many migrants/recipients’ of remittances to consider investing their savings rather than “consuming” them. Although in the project did not initially plan the promotion of best practices involving television, in the course of the project implementation three TV programs presenting the successful experience of four of the project beneficiaries during a famous TV program called “Bastina”.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

The main focus of the project was on support to legal enterprises. Although the project does not explicitly mention informal economy, the implicit focus is obvious, as many of returning migrants and remittances recipients must have been in the IE either in the host country or in Moldova.

One of the good practices that were particularly relevant for the informal economy concept was the organisation of outreach through media that are accessible also to the individual and companies in the informal economy, notably dozens of radio and TV broadcasts. At the same time, the evaluation team pointed out that there was poor dissemination of the project at the national level as the activities targeted local communities. The project was little advertised on the internet and there was no dedicated website created for the project.

Another important aspect of reaching out to all the regions including rural areas was the establishment of partnership agreements with Local Public Authorities. The representatives of Local Public Authorities are acquainted with the Project, value it and encourage the implementation of similar projects in future. They mentioned that business start-ups contribute to the improvement of the quality of live in the community by providing the necessary services, employing some inhabitants and accumulating money to the local budget. Services provided at the local level are diverse and help work the land but also improve people's health condition by increasing the consumption of rabbit meat, quail eggs etc. However, the lesson learned was that the level of intervention with the Local Public Authorities was still too high. The project cooperated mainly with Rayonal (district) Council and less with the mayors from the first level (localities). There were examples when mayors were interested in identifying the participants of the training session, after being supported in starting a business, but a part of them were indifferent and not interested in local business development.

The evaluation team recommended to establish collaboration between entrepreneurs and rayonal (district) control bodies as the entrepreneurs were not acquainted with all the rules and were afraid of representatives of these institutions. Another recommendation was to provide support in the local collaboration with representatives of various institutions (State Fiscal Inspectorate, Preventive Medicine Centres, etc.).

Another important good practice was the support to the creation of various business associations. "Becoming member of relevant Associations will also increase the sustainability of the business. Only few are members of some rayonal or national Associations of Producer. The example of M. Bugai, the businessman (quail breeding) that together with other quail breeders from Drochia rayon set up the Association of quail breeders "Agrocom" deserves to be followed. Most often, these associations help accelerate start-up activities and consolidate their members' efforts in attracting investments. The businessman pointed out the following benefits of setting up or becoming member of such kind of associations: "at the moment we do not have the possibility to export meat, eggs; we do not have enough knowledge to process it (to make flour of eggs)... The association could consolidate efforts reducing the risks". Therefore, the benefits of joining an association shall be explained during training."

However, the evaluation team stated that the lack of cooperation between businessmen and relevant associations existing in the country and the lack of knowledge about these associations was one of the project weaknesses. The large majority of people worked individually.

Most importantly, the informality of migrants businesses and irregularity of their conditions caused serious problems in terms of reaching out to the target groups abroad. The evaluation team pointed out that there were certain circumstances that hindered the participation of few migrants and remittance recipients in the project, although these ones were not caused by the implementing agency ProRuralInvest. Circumstances and factors that prevented the

participation relate to the irregular character of migration and the impossibility to present any documents proving the migration experience. Some representatives of LPA did not issue certificates although their number is not so big – 3-4 cases in the rayon and 84-110 cases all over the country. The lack of any strategy on the involvement of migrants working abroad in project activities even that they represented one of the target group. There was lack of activities targeting the senders of remittances to Moldova. Similarly, the lack of connection with Moldovan Diaspora organizations and the dissemination of the project within these organizations was mentioned among the negative lessons learned. Such an attempt was made within the first stage of project implementation but no further possibilities have been sought for collaboration with these organizations to promote the project.

An unexpected benefit of the project was the positive effect on the return of youth to villages. This happened frequently where there were successful examples of young people who started a business. Another aspect that should not be neglected refers to the creation of a socio-emotional climate in the family by the presence of parents near their children thus reducing the negative consequences that result from these situations.

3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENHANCE LIVELIHOODS, EQUITY AND INCLUSION OF PEOPLE DEPENDENT ON THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

3.4.1 Project name: Comprehensive socio-economic development in rural Mongolia

Implementing agencies: Finnish Red Cross, Mongolian Red Cross Society

Country: Mongolia

Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action

The project was aimed at improving access to and quality of social care services and also at increasing employment opportunities in the participating rural communities. It specifically targets the most vulnerable community members, for example children, people with disabilities, domestic migrants, elders, homeless families, single parents and the unemployed. Since its start in September 2012, the project has reached thousands of people through various forms of support. Among them, vocational training, seasonal work campaigns and grants for small business start-ups have an important role.

Key target groups: Migrants, Elderly and bedridden, other marginalized groups

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Social inclusion promotion (awareness raising on social inclusion in IE) (4.3)

Further tags:

Social protection (4.4)

Entrepreneurship: Capacity strengthening on starting, improving, growing economic activities (3.2)

Promotion of social norms supportive of enhancing opportunities for those dependent on the informal economy (4.3)

Leadership, life skills, empowerment training, literacy/numeracy (3.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

According to the Project Final Report, the Action built on the experiences, best practices and learnings from the previous Action implemented in January 2009-January 2013. The Action

strengthened the significance of Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)' Social Care Programme as a priority programme for national government, and further consolidated programme's content and methodological base. While MRCS Social Centre Policy was developed during the previous Social Care (SC) programmes, there are a couple of new important learnings adapted by MRCS through this Action. In previous years, MRCS has been delivering relief materials and food assistance to the most vulnerable in the form of hand-outs. This Action sought to also empower and motivate the extremely poor and unemployed through seasonal work, vocational training and being part of the small business start-up groups thereby seeking to increase their resilience and reduce reliance on materials aid.

Resource mobilisation and income generation activities are not activities that the Red Cross in general is familiar with and this requires a better up-front training and closer monitoring.

Another key aspect was the importance of volunteer selection, a solid training programme and continuous investment in volunteers' capacity. The volunteers were the back-bone and the key element of success for any SC programme and its sustainability. The value of the volunteers was also clearly demonstrated in the external final evaluation, in which the beneficiaries assessed volunteers in terms of their skills, preparedness, communication skills and accessibility, and more than 90 percent of them evaluated as 'excellent'. On the other hand, MRCS recognised the need to support the volunteers not only in technical matters but also to help them cope with the sometimes difficult situations they may face. The "Caring for Volunteers" tool adapted and translated into Mongolian will come to good use.

For both Finnish Red Cross (FRC) and MRCS, one of the main learning experiences has been the success of how the SC concept has been taken by the beneficiaries, volunteers and authorities and contributed to the community-based approach which is integral to the Red Cross work, irrespective of the programme sector. Addressing the community needs comes first. Building on its success, MRCS has adapted social care activities as one of the minimum standards for all its Medium Level Bodies (MLBs) and the learning gained through this Action will be widely applied. FRC is actively disseminating the methodology, approach and evidence based results from the Action and applying the same learning in other SC programmes supported by FRC in other countries.

According to the evaluation of the Action, its main contribution to the field of social care was that it had successfully demonstrated an effective model for community based social care services by volunteers by delivering tailor-made services to the target groups, something that cannot be offered by the Government. In addition to establishing a functional model for SC services, it also concluded that although the financial support has ceased, home visits, psychosocial support and health and life skills trainings through SCC and volunteers can be continued further: Mongolian state and authorities are by law required to provide its citizens with social care. They are looking for knowledgeable partners (NGOs, other entities) who can be subcontracted these services. The model where trained volunteers provide quality care with a low cost is cost-efficient and have proven to be beneficial to the authorities.

Final evaluation of the project was carried out by the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) that organized a representative survey of 300 beneficiaries, focus groups with project staff, and key informant interviews with key stakeholders. According to the Final Evaluation Report prepared by IRIM the following best practices and new solutions were highlighted by the evaluation survey participants:

- Uvurkhangai Medium level body organizes vocational training in collaboration with the aimag Labor Department
- Erdenet volunteers in Orkhon Medium level body deliver psychological support to vulnerable group without any incentive,
- Khuvsgul aimag Medium level body collaborates with Social Welfare Department for allocating incentive for volunteers and with Water and Sewerage Authority for enabling its 50 beneficiaries to have free shower once a quarter,
- Khuvsgul Medium level body got approval on its “Humanitarian Program” for including it in the Aimag Governor’s Action Plan.
- In Govi-Altai the volunteers acquired vitamins that were donated by the local pharmacy to be distributed among beneficiaries.
- Uvurkhangai the nurse volunteers organised a campaign to have systematic health check-ups for the the children aged 6 months to 5 years in the area
- In Uvurkhangai aimag, the local Medium level body organised with the local trade and agricultural department five-day training on more efficient vegetable cultivation methods for the summer time.

Furthermore, benefits and challenges of the project activities identified by the evaluation survey participants included the following:

Benefits: Beneficiary-specific outreach services, Regular home visits and psychological support, Local residents and volunteers got trained, Increased opportunity to get various information and knowledge, Established network of Volunteers.

Challenges: Due to limited funding, participation number is restricted, Office spaces are small to organize activities, Material support increased dependent mentality, Training and activities are not regular, Long-term beneficiaries, a lack of work aimed at increasing the economic potential, Volunteers’ safety.

Medium level bodies are experienced in delivering social care services to vulnerable groups. The most highly appreciated initiative towards target group was referral services aimed at helping elders, disabled, migrants and extreme vulnerable people to obtain civil registration documents, receive health service, and involve in pension and welfare allowance. It opened gate for enjoying rights to benefit from social welfare services. SCC visitors’ social engagement is strengthened, and gained more positive attitude towards family and society as a result of psychosocial support.

The Project created good practices on implementing human resource and social care activities. For instance, Project activity were reflected in *aimag* governor action plan, training conducted

in cooperation with vocational centres, collaborative services delivered to vulnerable group with related organizations, and allowing volunteers to work with *heseg* leader.

Although financial support is ceased, home visits, psychosocial support and health and life skills trainings through SCC and volunteers can be continued further. Many good practices were recorded which can be used sustaining Project activities on basis of partnership and resource. Local authorities are also thinking about maintaining the project results sustainably in long term.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

A general drawback of the project was related to certain over-ambitiousness in terms of the scope of activities. Based on the previous experiences, **the project designers appreciated the need for active approaches, such as providing the beneficiaries with training and start-up support rather than just passive distribution of material aid in the form of various handouts and services**. Putting the beneficiaries in the position of passive recipients of aid increases their dependence, passive mentality and undermines the sustainability of effects. Therefore, the project adopted an **integrated approach that combined social services and material aid with activation components, such as vocational training and assistance with business start-ups**. However, the implementing agencies (Red Cross Centres) and their staff (mainly volunteers) had little experience with providing support for income generating activities, training and entrepreneurial start-ups.

Therefore, the overall impression is that the implementing agencies were much more effective in delivering social care services and support (Component 1) than in income generating activities and entrepreneurial support (component 2). It would have been desirable to cooperate with institutions that have experience with income generating activities, e.g. in microfinance, start-ups, entrepreneurship training, identification of economically viable opportunities, etc.

In general it is advisable to adopt more comprehensive integrated approaches that tackle several interlinked problems. However, broader integrated approaches should be delivered in partnership and cooperation with agencies and institutions that have the appropriate expertise. Otherwise the good effort can be wasted (e.g. if social care agency tries to deliver entrepreneurial support, the identified business options may not be economically viable, etc.).

The project offers a **valuable experience in the area of extending the social care services to the most vulnerable groups, notably those in the informal sector (bedridden, poor, migrant ex-herders, etc.). The main focus of the activities was on direct action at the community level**.

Good practice included **pulling people from informal sector into formal sector by helping them to gain formal registration, which generated eligibility to health services and social benefits.**

Another good practice was related to the **positive behavioural change when training people to become volunteers supported their skills in helping the poor and needy members of the community, which helped to build up and uphold the community morale, values and feeling of belonging.** These “soft” skills and features represented the largest assets that seem to be sustainable after the funding has stopped. These assets are recognized by the local institutions and authorities that build upon them and embed them into formal development programs and plans.

3.4.2 SMART Myanmar (SMEs for Environmental Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency)

Implementing agency: SEQUA GGMBH
Country: Mongolia, Region: Central Asia

Brief summary of the action

SMART Myanmar actively promotes and supports the sustainable production of garments “made in Myanmar” striving to increase the international competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in this sector. Working closely with companies and business support organizations located in Myanmar, the SMART project aimed to build capacity and increase skills and knowledge in local partner organizations, facilitating the development of marketing and export strategies for the garment sector. Overall objective of SMART Myanmar was to increase the competitiveness of SMEs in the garment sector of Myanmar and set preconditions for replication towards other sectors. Specifically, the project increased the competitiveness of SMEs by establishing a group of approximately 25 Myanmar Garment Manufacturers as show-cases and making them ready to comply with European standards and establish business relations with EU clients. The garment factories benefited from newly available business developing services, such as productivity enhancement measures (including reduction of energy consumption, water consumption, waste, etc.) as well as social compliance trainings. Workers in the garment industry, mostly women, have benefitted from improved working conditions in the form of OHS, decent working hours, adequate compensation, or other corporate social responsibility measures.

Key target groups: Although the Project’s target group was primarily Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA), the final beneficiaries of the action were garment factories and workers in the garment sector.

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)

Further tags:

Environmental Protection, green jobs and the IE development (2.4)

International labour standards and right to decent work for informal economy workers (2.1)

Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs. Supply chain management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2)

Occupational safety health for informal economy workers (2.3)

Good practices and lessons learned

In order to understand the relevance of this project, it is very important to disclose its **background**. As highlighted by some statistics released by the MGMA (Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association), the Myanmar garment sector was considerably growing in 2015. Influx of foreign direct investments increased rapidly, and some major European brands (e.g.

H&M, Adidas, etc.) decided to expand their operations in the country. Exports from Myanmar to the EU more than doubled in 2014 compared with 2013, and the projections foresaw an even faster growth for the next decade, employing around 1-1.5 million workers by 2024. In spite of this outstanding development, the Myanmar garment sector was still facing several problems with ownership and standard compliance. About 50% of factories were foreign owned and about 20 - 30 % were partially foreign owned, with the numbers sharply increasing, mainly from China and Korea. **Local factories felt side-lined, as they were not yet up to the standards compared to their foreign owned competitors**, needing time and investments for gaining international standard in product and quality but also in social and environmental terms. From a broader point of view, the major obstacles against the achievement of more competitive conditions were:

- 1) An **internal underdeveloped financial system**, restricting the possibility for local firms to get loans.
- 2) **Poor value chain** in the garment sector (many inputs like zippers, buttons, fabrics had to be imported from abroad).
- 3) **Precarious working conditions** (high staff turnover, difficulty to get trained employees, problems with full compliance of OHS).
- 4) **Low capacity in production and management**. Specialized training services for the garment sector had to be improved and the training opportunities increased, enabling a transition from Cut Make Pack (CMP) to Free on Board model (FOB – full scale business model with more value addition).

Grounding on this potentially thriving but complicated background, the project SMART Myanmar strived to achieve three main objectives by implementing 15 different actions. The following classifies and summarises each undertaken action, according to the comments given by the Final Evaluation report.

Generally speaking, the project has been assessed as highly relevant because it was suited to the priorities and policies of the target groups. The efficiency of the project in terms of cost-efficient delivery has been assessed as good. Finally, the effectiveness of the project can be assessed as high in terms of achievements of indicators, since almost all the activities accounted for 100% (or more) of accomplishment.

On the other hand, coming to the crosscutting issues addressed by SMART, the Final Evaluation reports these lessons learnt:

- 1) The impact of this project on **poverty reduction** was surely limited as it worked together with a mere 10-16 garment factories. However, improvements in productivity and social compliance in these showcase factories lead to the conclusions that workers in these factories improved working conditions and for some even wages increased.
- 2) The share of **women participants in trainings and consultancies** was not documented. Altogether 1.105 participants were involved in the projects activities. 740 were female,

accounting to 67% female participation. This percentage looks inadequate, given that the majority of workers in the garment factories are women from rural areas.

3) About **environmental sustainability**, the project enabled 15 energy audits/consultancies to decrease energy consumption, mainly focusing on water consumption, lighting system and wasting. According to the collected data, the factories that implemented improvements regarding energy consumption reduced their energy cost by 10 to 20% based on current consumption. Waste reduction and productivity improvements led to 3% to 65.5% savings based on current values regarding wastage.

4) The adoption of the **Code of Conduct in the garment sector** was a major progress to set minimum standards in the sector. The SMART social compliance trainings and consultancies for 10 garment factories made a real difference to the workers, achieving up to 70% compliance against the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) international social standard. The project laid the foundation for the replication of social compliance in the sector.

In view of the wide array of issues addressed by the project, the internal analysis just focuses on three topics that are considerably relevant for the RNSF project.

1) **Advocacy:** As explained by both the Final Report and the Final Evaluation, SMART project emphasised its action on the MGMA, by providing the association with strong assistance for advocacy training and lobbying on an ad hoc basis. However, MGMA seems not having a precise advocacy strategy to follow, as well as little ownership in the field and poor representativeness towards garment factories. To the same extent, MGMA never shared some underlying information with the government, letting Burmese decision makers incapable to understand the main problems and needs of the garment sector. Last but not least, garment factories don't trust government, and so far they have refused any kind of dialogue with it. Thus, the whole picture looks weaker than originally thought. Probably if the project wanted to achieve a more effective action of advocacy, it should have been addressed to all the involved stakeholders (MGMA, government and garment factories) on more equal terms.

2) **Training on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP):** The training of SCP Consultants on resource efficiency, productivity and cleaner production (energy, waste, water) was together with international consultants in the form of in-factory consultancies for factories. Most of the consultancies by international experts were assessed as qualitatively positive by both SCP consultants. Even factories assessed the in-factory consultancy very positively and say that it is much more effective than in-class trainings. However, several problems of arrangement, timing and focusing arose. The international experts changed too often and quickly and there was no hand-over of information already gained during previous consultancies. Then, too many issues were debated during the trainings (better production, respect for environmental conditions, OSH, minimum wage, etc.), leaving little time to follow them up. Finally, factories and consultants perceived European experts as too far from them. Engaging international experts from Asia (such as from Vietnam) could have definitely been more tailored to the Burmese reality. In general, the overall training methodology seemed

pretty undefined, deprived of a clear action plan and without clear responsibilities for the various actors.

3) Code of Conduct: The adoption of the code of conduct by MGMA was a major milestone for the project. The bulk of the training received by the SCP consultants was about corporate social responsibility, national labour law and OHS in Myanmar; social dialogue, freedom of association, labour organisation law and labour dispute settlement law. As a first step, the undertaken activities have been more than successful and all the set goals achieved. However, the real impact of this CoC should be assessed by workers' behaviour and factories' compliance in the near future. As reported by the Final Evaluation, many factories found difficult to change the mindset of its workers. It was difficult to make them wear masks, gloves and make them comply with the OHS rules. Factories complained that workers often felt as slaves and did not want to improve their skills or change their working habits. In light of this, a better cooperation with national labour inspectors would have been recommended. The labour inspectors were not aware that 10 showcase companies were trained and coached on social compliance. Interviewed by the evaluator, they emphasized the importance on monitoring, and of trade unions' inclusion in this process. The labour inspectors even proposed to take the SCP consultants along with them and introduce more factories to them. Labour inspectors are a very good entry point to get to know more factories and gain more know-how in that field for the SCP consultants.

Another drawback against the full-compliance of OSH measures was the weak involvement of international buyers\suppliers into the project. International buyers usually demand high compliance from their subcontractors (for instance, they tend to refuse business with firms taking on minor workers). Therefore, further technical assistance from international buyers could have concretely helped local garment factories to understand the importance and the profitability of OSH standards' compliance.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

It is clear that SMART Myanmar is not a project specifically focused on informal economy. The project targeted Burmese regularly registered firms, and all the activities were being conceived to foster higher quality production and internationalisation of well-framed entities. However, many of SMART's valuable outcomes might be applied to further initiatives addressing informal economy workers and informal firms. Among these, the in-factory training for SCP consultants; the strengthening of MGMA and its own power of advocacy; the awareness-raising campaign about OSH standards and decent work; the conversion of older production techniques into more sustainable ones in terms of environmental protection and profitability.

All of these good practices should be deployed as a second-step action by national governments, being integrated into programmes of monitoring, awareness-raising and tax allowance aimed at tackling undeclared work and gaining formal registration from informal economic actors. The new target group should not concern only small local factories, but rather the whole supply chain directly or indirectly linked with the internal sector-based

production and distribution. That's why - as previously claimed - stronger connections among sectorial associations, policy makers, trade unions and labour inspectorate are fundamental to enlarge the scope and the benefits of such a composed and well-structured project.

3.4.3 Project name: Innovative and ‘nutrition-sensitive’ Food Security intervention for Improved Nutrition

**Implementing agency: Action Contre la Faim
Country: Myanmar, Region: Asia**

Brief summary of the action

The SUSTAIN⁴ program aimed to sustainably improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable population through the introduction of innovative ‘Nutrition-sensitive’ interventions to address food insecurity in Myanmar. This 46-month programme tackled nutrition from several angles, and aimed to establish synergies between agriculture, food security, nutrition and health activities. The action was implemented in five agro-ecological and culturally distinct regions of Myanmar, by a consortium formed by Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Groupe de Recherche et d’Echanges Technologiques (GRET), and Welthungerhilfe (WHH). The consortium piloted three innovative approaches (MAIN⁵, Nutriderve⁶, LANN⁷), including nutritious food production, natural resources management (NRM), market linkages, income generation, nutrition and care practices.

ACF field-tested the guidance to maximise the nutritional impact (MAIN) of food security and livelihoods in vulnerable communities of Kayah State. GRET supported a local private company to develop and commercialize a high quality and affordable complementary food product for children 6-23 months old. A communication component for improved knowledge related to nutrition and care was also implemented by GRET in Sagaing and Yangon Divisions. WHH adapted a pioneering, community-based training on LANN approach in the Northern Shan State and the Ayeyarwaddy Delta.

Key target groups: 5,300 households (26,500 individuals) coming from vulnerable communities with specific attention for women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating women, and children under two.

The socio-economic vulnerability criterion was set as the entry point for targeting communities and individuals. Vulnerable communities from different ethnic groups have been involved. These were farmers with no or restricted land access, former poppy producers, victims of forced migration, households with limited access to income, chronic food insecurity.

⁴ Sustainable Approaches for Improved Nutrition

⁵ Maximising Impact on Nutrition

⁶ The Nutriderve programme has been implemented since 1994 by the GRET and the IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement). Further information at <http://www.nutriderve.org/>

⁷ Linking Agriculture, Natural Resource Management and Nutrition (LANN) is an innovative community-driven training approach to nutrition (in particular for remote areas with low access to public services) which has been developed by Welthungerhilfe and six other non-health oriented NGOs in Laos.

Classification according to the Research Matrix

Improving food security through enhancing livelihoods with attention to social inclusion (4.5)

Further tags:

Social inclusion promotion (4.3)

Women and children (4.6, 4.7)

Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)

Social and behaviour change (3.1)

Entrepreneurship: capacity strengthening on starting, improving, growing economic activities (3.2)

Life skills and empowerment training (3.4)

Vocational training (3.6)

Environmental and sustainable informal economy enterprises (green jobs, reducing impact on the environment of the IE) (2.4)

Good practices and lessons learned

As argued by the Final Evaluation, the SUSTAIN programme broadly achieved most of its objectives, although there were some areas in which the programme could have been improved.

In terms of **design** of the programme, each of the three partners employed different strategies to improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations. The needs of the beneficiaries were well identified through a participatory approach. The cause-effect logic behind the interventions was clear and, at the time, realistic. However, several problems were encountered during the implementation that could have been avoided with better programme design, for example, with regard to the integration between Partners, which was quite limited during Programme duration, and the M&E system, not adequately implemented. With regard to implemented activities, Income Generatig Activities (IGAs) were identified as the least successful, due to the lack of specific skills among programme staff that could have informed the design phase, thus supporting the Programme effectiveness. Further involvement of the villagers in the design of IGAs was also cited as a possible solution to this as well as the consideration of several aspects never formally considered in the design process -with the exception of one geographic area involved (Demoso) - and affecting the effectiveness and sustainability of this component (rate of consumption, potential buyers, production possibilities, consumer's preferences, local context features such as seasonal migration of labour force).

The evaluation argued that the needs of the target population were well identified and the Programme was **consistent** with the Governments long-term food security goals, although a different approach from the Project and the Institutions has to be mentioned. With regard to **effectiveness**, there has been a high level of beneficiary participation in the programme implementation. The evaluation found that overall 82% of respondents felt that their knowledge of food and nutrition had been largely improved as a result of the programme.

Although this type of subjective answers must be taken with caution without means of verification, it could be observed that the prevalence of positive nutrition habits have become more widespread during the program implementation (“nutrition sensitive” home gardening through multiple crops; women eating more during pregnancy and lactation).

With regard to IGAs, it has to be mentioned that successful ones included those that sold the popular breakfast meal ‘mohinga’ or fruits. Moreover, successful IGA beneficiaries had book-keeping skills and tracked all revenues and expenses, sold their goods at good locations (e.g. by a main road), or had prior experience. Although this seems positive it does not give a full indication of their future sustainability and many IGA beneficiaries reported recent problems due to the increasing costs of raw materials and lack of demand. In addition, internal programme documents mention lack of time amongst beneficiaries and insufficient capital as limiting factors to the success of IGAs.

Evaluation argued that, in general, the Programme has good chances for **sustainability** and **impact**.

The following **lessons learnt and best practices** of potential interest for IESNF Project were highlighted by the evaluators:

Greater integration between implementing partners. The implementing partners (IPs) had a distinct approach to the issues tackled based on their previous experience in other countries. This should have requested a higher level of integration supporting the knowledge and expertise sharing of the innovative approaches introduced. IPs have shown an unwillingness to adopt certain activities that were not familiar or not traditionally associated with the particular implementing partner, even when these could have been appropriate to the needs of the local communities.

Better targeting of women. The evaluators stated that one of the strengths of the programme was the high level of participation amongst women. External evidence suggests that, given their closer affiliation with the household and their role as child caretaker, behaviour change targeted at women is likely to have a greater general positive impact. In addition to this, the role played by women in the programmes implementation contributed to their empowerment in their communities. During programme’s implementation women reported that their role in decision making grew significantly at community level. Thus, it can be argued that this aspect of the programme likely contributed to its effectiveness and impact.

Continue realistic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to measure sustainability of expected behaviour change.

Overall the evaluation identified that monitoring and evaluation was generally considered to be a weakness of the programme. The low level of spending on M&E activities suggests that it was not considered a priority and it was implemented only by the Project Coordinator while it would have been positive to have an M&E responsible. Moreover, given the difficulties measuring behaviour changes, expected outcomes within the limited time-frame of the programme should be as much realistic as possible. Such M&E activities could also be

implemented as part of other future projects, or from other development actors working in the same geographic area and in a similar sector.

Ensure a better understanding of local cultural, socio-economic and environmental context. An understanding of the local contexts was accomplished to an adequate degree, but the evaluation argued that it should be improved for the future. For example, many women involved felt that some form of male involvement would make it easier for them to implement the activities, highlighting the need for **more robust gender analysis** in the design phase of the programme. A greater inclusion of male participants would have promoted their understanding of the programme. An **understanding of the local economic context** is particularly important for future IGA programmes. The potential wider impact of the introduction of IGAs at the wider level of village economy is unknown, due to the absence of previous feasibility studies and market surveys. The evaluators considered this essential in order to inform how future IGA initiatives should be designed and implemented to maximise their benefits.

Properly assess the environmental suitability of programme activities. Within the Project, paddy wish was used. This, while innovative, was undermined by the fact that during the dry season the paddies have little, or any, water. Ensure a stable, continuous water supply throughout the year is recommended for future similar initiatives.

Conclusions and recommendations relevant for the informal economy context

Given the nature of the Programme, the good practices and recommendations are partially relevant also for the Informal Economy context. However, some of the above mentioned observations could be of interest for IESF Project. Since the main focus of the activities was based on linking agriculture, natural resource management and nutrition, we found interesting the approach to consider nutrition as a focal point. By increasing availability of and access to nutritious foods from own production, collection in the wild, or purchase and knowledge, the targeted beneficiaries will improve their food/nutrient intake and reduce their vulnerability to seasonal changes. This will lead to improved health of workers included those in the Informal Economy thus limiting their vulnerability and enhancing their livelihoods. This will contribute to an improved job capacity thus suggesting to include in some form the nutritional component into the Projects/Programmes tackling the informal economy.

Some of the above mentioned considerations are also relevant for IESF Project. These include:

- a) targeting on women and a robust gender analysis; b) greater integration between implementing partners; c) continue and realistic M&E activities; d) a better understanding of local cultural, socio-economic and environmental contexts; e) the need of initial feasibility studies when introducing Income Generating Activities and/or home gardening to assess which type of IGAs and/or vegetables is realistic to be promoted and which ones can have positive impact.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we summarize the lessons learned and good practices identified from the case studies analysed in the previous sections. We focus on the recurrent issues and practices that were repeatedly identified in multiple projects in relation to the informal economy context and/or issues of informality.

A general conclusion is that practically every development project, notably the EC-funded projects analysed in this report faces the issues of informality in its implementation and thus is related to the informal economy context in implicit or explicit way. Therefore, it is timely that the EC pays increased attention to the IE agenda and eventually could consider include the IE among the usual set of cross-cutting issues that are taken into consideration in project design and evaluation. Alternatively, the Informal Economy can be accepted as the underlayer on which almost all interventions and initiatives undertaken in developing countries are based.

4.1 Good Practices and Tools

The analysis of 15 EC-funded projects led to the identification of the following good practices relevant for the IE context:

- Regional Service Networks
- Groups of Solidary Purchasers
- Time Banks
- Initial Needs Assessment of beneficiaries' needs
- Survey of Beneficiaries informing the project evaluation phase
- Standardisation/Certification/Branding.

The following tools relevant for the IE workers and enterprises were developed in the framework of the analysed projects:

- Accelerated Learning Programmes
- School in a Box
- Guidebook of Economically Viable Activities for Returned Migrants
- Code of Conduct of Garment Producers.

4.2 Lessons learned

Detailed case studies of the 15 EC-funded project revealed the following lessons learned that were found repeatedly in multiple projects:

- **The need to secure cooperation and enforcement from local and national authorities**

One of the key lessons learned that came up repeatedly in several projects was the crucial role of the various authorities in providing support and enforcement to the project activities and results. Numerous projects were effectively focused on the beneficiary groups and target populations (to whom they provided effective support) found out that the results of their actions were annulled or not sustained after the project closure due to the fact that the project activities were not supported by the competent authorities. This conclusion came out repeatedly in the project narrative and final evaluations reports. For example the project aimed at support to the Hovsgol Lake community in Mongolia concluded that the lack of support from national authorities annulled some of the project efforts aimed at the protection of the national park. Another project aimed at horticulture in rural Mongolia came to the conclusion that the lack of involvement of local authorities decreased the beneficiaries' participation in project activities. Similarly, the enforcement of civil registration in Nigeria was undermined by the lack of involvement of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health. The lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade brought to a stalemate the project activities aimed at developing enabling environment and national legislation for handicraft sector in Tajikistan.

- The need for establishing suitable operational framework and outreach to the beneficiaries in IE and other vulnerable target groups**

Several projects run by competent institutions in the field of action resulted in frustration and negative evaluations due to the fact that they were not able to establish a proper operational framework for working with and reaching to the intended beneficiaries. This could be for various reasons. For example, the EBRD as an excellent and competent banking institution was not able to work with the small and micro-enterprises due to its stringent rules that proved to be unsurmountable barriers for the vulnerable informal firms. The bank lacked consultants, channels and expertise to reach out to the intended project beneficiaries and to involve them in the action. Similarly, other projects struggled with the outreach problem due to the lack of specialist networks able to work with the target group (the case of poor and vulnerable young people in Myanmar), or due to the fact that the beneficiaries could not be located (Syrian refugees in Lebanon in the case of UNHCR project, or Moldovan emigrants abroad in the case of the project run by Caritas Ceska Republika).

- The need to take into consideration social interaction, hierarchies and power relations in the targeted communities**

The project evaluation and narrative reports very often reported serious problems due to the clashes with the existing habits, hierarchies and power structures in the beneficiary communities. For example, the women from ethnic minorities in secondary job markets in Israel could not be effectively helped because of the lack of support from men, employers, and other members of their own communities. The lack of understanding by project stakeholders brought the activities a stalemate. The collective activities supported in the framework of a project in Comoros were disrupted by the individualistic and selfish behaviour of some beneficiaries that annulled the collective efforts developed by the project. The power relationships between "old" and "new" business associations established in the handicraft

sector in Tajikistan disrupted some of the project activities aimed at supporting the handicraft producers and connecting them to international markets. Participation of extremely vulnerable young people in Myanmar in the project activities was weak due to the lack of cooperation and support from their parents. In another project, better awareness of specific gender-related issues would have made a nutrition-based programme in Myanmar more effective, as many involved women felt that some form of male involvement would have made it easier for them to implement the activities. An understanding of the local economic context was also found to be particularly important for future Income Generating Activities programmes.

The need to identify the right level of governance and the involvement of right stakeholders to overcome informality by registration, tracking or surveys of beneficiaries

Several projects have been openly confronting the lack of registration (e.g. civil registration or registration in the framework of the project) and the resulting lack of information about the target groups, their rights and entitlements. For example, a project aimed at civil registration support in Niger was struggling to convince the beneficiaries that they should register themselves with the authorities in order to be able to claim various civil rights and social benefits. In a project run by UNHCR for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the tracking of Syrian students, recording their performance and getting their parents to participate in Parents Associations was complicated due to the irregular status of the Syrian refugees and the lack of information about their whereabouts. Similarly, in the social protection project run by the Red Cross in rural Mongolia, one of the most appreciated services was the referral service that assisted the nomad and rural populations to get civil registration and thus also the access to social rights and benefits.

- The need to support association building and use economies of scale

One of the main problems of the informal economy workers and enterprises is the fragmentation, isolation, and small scale of their operations and production that pose limitations to their lending abilities, ability to buy equipment, increase the quality of production, get access to the formal markets, etc. The most obvious solution to this problem is the association building among the IE producers that enables them to join forces and to use the economies of scale. Support to building cooperatives and other associations is often included in the projects as a way to overcoming the obstacles and limitations of the informal activities. The importance of associations was underlined also in the projects focused on poor and vulnerable women in Kyrgyzstan, rural sedentary populations in Mongolia, and handicraft producer in Tajikistan.

- The need to avoid over-ambitiousness in project design (inspired by the complexity of the IE issues) and to scale down the project activities and to focus on the necessary dimensions that could lead to achievement of the concrete project goals

Informal economy is a complex and multifaceted issue. The projects dealing with informality often aim to address a wide range of issues that could help to tackle the problem from several

sides. Although it is very important to get the proper expertise and to mobilize the proper partners, the analysed projects were often found as overambitious. Therefore, one of the common lessons learned was to scale down the project activities and to focus on the necessary dimensions that could lead to achievement of the project goals. For example, the project focused on Arab and Ethiopian women in Israel was found to focus on too many communities and ethnic situations, the projects aimed at supporting vulnerable rural populations in Mongolia were found out to have too wide geographical coverage and too ambitious goals in terms of complexity of support (focus on “passive” social protection and “active” income generating activities component).

ANNEX 1 List of summarized projects

Title	Agency	Countries	Duration	Summary
Engagement Communautaire pour le Développement Durable (ECDD)	Dahari, CIRAD, BCSF, Burrell	Comoros	2008 – 04/2013	The project aims to scale up activities of agricultural intensification in nine villages south of Anjouan and to initiate the zone into community management of natural resources. A new dynamic has been developed. Dahari (the IP) technicians stay in the village and get to know all the residents. They also recommend improved, environment-friendly techniques and varieties of crops to farmers. Village residents have noted that the presence of these technicians has made the soil more fertile and has significantly contributed to improving yields. In order to ensure the sustainability of the improvements, Dahari has recruited two men from the village, to train farmers in Adda. Dahari, recognising the importance of cultivating the future generations of farmers, started to work with local schools to set up school gardens. The garden is helping the children from an early age to become good farmers. It also helps to generate revenue for running the school. "Teaching farming techniques to children is important for their future, especially as the plot is on school grounds, making practical work easier".
Appui au renforcement du système d'état civil au Niger	Direction de l'Etat Civil et des Réfugiés, UNICEF	Niger	04/2012 – 11/2015	Civil registration is key for enhancing livelihoods of the most vulnerable population, because it is often a requirement for accessing to some social benefits (see for instance poor rural women who are excluded from some of their rights because they lack IDs). In the case of this project implemented by UNICEF, it is a technical support to the National Statistical Office for implementing an efficient system of civil registration. However a good practice is certainly the implementation of mobile court hearings among nomadic population to register people who have missed the legal deadline for registration, without penalising them.
Guiding and Integrating a Sustainable Economic Revitalization of Local Communities Dependent on the long-term Stewardship of Lake Hovsgol National Park	Global Nature Fund	Mongolia	08/2012 – 07/2015	The project aims to help both the park and the surrounding communities coping with the inevitable growth of tourism and to ensure that the Hovsgol region develops in a sustainable manner, with minimised impact to the rich environmental and cultural heritage that characterises this remote area.
Her Right to Decent Work: Arab and	Kav LaOved, Itach-Maaki,	Israel	03/2013 –	The aim of the project is to improve the situation of Arab and

Ethiopian women in secondary schemes of employment in Israel	Kayan, The Clinics		02/2016	Ethiopian women in Israel via enforcement of labour laws and promotion of the right to decent work.
Women in Action and Solidarity Against Poverty in Kyrgyz Republic	Forum of Women NGO, Public Association Epkin, Social Fund "DIA"	Kyrgyzstan	02/2012 – 02/2014	The project aims to provide vulnerable and poor women living in deprived rural areas of Chui and Osh regions with comprehensive support and income generation opportunities, through access to an integrated system of assistance services
Support to Medium and Long Term Needs of Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon	UNHCR (several partners such as Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes etc.)	Lebanon	07/2012 – 01/2015	The project aims to improve the capacity of existing Lebanese Institutions and structures to deal with crisis, to reinforce the capacity and quality of the national primary and secondary education structures in the regions hosting Syrian refugees and to strengthen the social and economic tissue of communities
Building the Productive, Organizational and Commercial Capacities of the Agricultural Sector in Arkhangai Aimag	Vétérinaires sans Frontières - Centre International de Coopération pour le Développement Agricole	Mongolia	07/2012 - 06/2015	The overall objective of the proposed action is to promote an inclusive and empowered rural society, facilitating the participation of local Non-State Actors in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies in Arkhangai (Mongolia)
Support to SME Development in Mongolia	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Mongolia	08/2011 – 05/2016	This EBRD project supports the sustainable development of a competitive micro, small and medium sized enterprises sector in Mongolia through the enhancement of the business enabling environment and the strengthening of the relevant Mongolian institutions.
Comprehensive socio-economic development in rural Mongolia	Finnish Red Cross, Mongolian Red Cross Society	Mongolia	09/2012 – 08/2015	The project aims at improving access to and quality of social care services and also at increasing employment opportunities in the participating rural communities. It specifically targets the most vulnerable community members, for example children, people with disabilities, domestic migrants, elders, homeless families, single parents and the unemployed. Since its start in September 2012, the project has reached thousands of people through various forms of support. Among them, vocational training, seasonal work campaigns and grants for small business start-ups have an important role.
Innovative and 'nutrition-sensitive' Food Security intervention for Improved Nutrition	Action Contre la Faim	Myanmar	03/2012 – 12/2015	The project (Action Contre la faim) aims to contribute to the improvement of the nutritional status of vulnerable populations through innovative and pro-poor Food Security and Livelihoods interventions in five different locations of Myanmar. The dietary intake of vulnerable populations is sustainably and innovatively improved through increased consumption of micronutrient-rich foods/products, and enhanced practices of optimal nutrition and care.
Empowering civil society to promote	Y CARE international	Myanmar	2/2013 –	The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the social and

the enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Myanmar			1/2016	economic empowerment of vulnerable young people in Myanmar by (1) strengthening the capacity of 5 Civil Society Organisations to meet the needs of young people; (2) providing sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable young people; (3) empowering young people to participate in community life and decision making; (4) reducing stigma and discrimination against marginalised young people.
Promotion of Fundamental Principles and Rights At Work as Tools For Peace in Myanmar	ILO	Myanmar	08/2014 – 01/2016	The ILO project aims to support the consolidation of the peace process through a holistic approach which will seek to address past, and prevent future human rights abuses through the operation and extension of the Forced Labour Complaints Mechanism, the enhanced respect for International Labour Standards and national law and the promotion of the application of national and international labour standards in the Special Economic Zones.
SMART Myanmar (SMEs for Environmental Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency)	SEQUA GGMBH	Myanmar	01/2013 – 12/2015	SMART Myanmar actively promotes and supports the sustainable production of garments “made in Myanmar” striving to increase the international competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in this sector. Working closely with companies and business support organizations located in Myanmar, the SMART project aims to build capacity and increase skills and knowledge in local partner organizations, facilitating the development of marketing and export strategies for the garment sector.
Handicraft and business through regional integration and fair trade market	Fondazione CEVSI	Tajikistan	01/2014 – 01/2016	The aim of the action is to contribute to the development of the Tajik and Kyrgyz private sectors with a special focus on regional integration of the handicraft sector, through the reinforcement of the Tajik and Kyrgyz Handicraft Business Intermediary Organisations (BIOs), particularly bolstering their representative role, their sustainability and their competences in supporting Small and Medium Enterprises
Support the use of remittances for new businesses and jobs creation	Charita Ceska Republika Sdruzeni	Moldova	07/2011 – 06/2014	The project aims to foster entrepreneurship among 900 Moldovan Returnees and recipients of remittances for the creation of privately owned business.

Annex 2 Project Overview Questionnaire

Overview Projects Form

Contact person *

We request that this be the key contact person in the Lead Implementing organisation who is charge of the action. Please always alert the Support Facility project staff should this person be replaced by someone else throughout the implementation of your action.

Country *

Country(ies) in which project is taking/took place.

Date form is filled in *

:

Title of the EC funded action under the call of proposals *

Name of Lead Implementing Partner *

Primary email address of up to 2 contact persons responsible for grant implementation

Brief summary of key subjects of project

Key target groups

Check all that are listed in proposal

- All IE entrepreneurs and workers
- Women
- Youth (18-24)
- Children (up to age 18)
- Elderly
- People with disabilities
- Migrants
- Trafficked children and adults
- Cross-border traders

- Minorities: indigenous people, minority ethnic groups, minority religious group members
- Iné:

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Specific sector of IE entrepreneurs and workers

Insert here the type of sector(s) of key focus

- Agriculture/livestock/fishery/forestry
- Processing of agricultural products
- Manufacturing (welding, carpentry, tailoring, etc.)
- Arts & crafts
- Services (catering, street vending, internet support, etc.)
- Mechanical repairs
- Iné:

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Is the project mostly in:

Check the answer that applies most specifically

- Urban areas
- Rural areas
- An almost equal or equal balance between urban and rural areas
- Border areas between countries
- Location cannot be clearly determined

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Types of implementing agency

- National government
- Sub-national government
- National civil society organization
- Sub-national civil society organization
- National NGO

- National branch of International NGO
- International NGO
- International/Foreign donor

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Types of Partner Agencies

- National government
- Sub-national government
- National civil society organization
- Sub-National civil society organization
- International NGO
- National branch of international NGO
- National NGO
- Iné:

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Mark all relevant key areas of project focus- Enabling Environment, Decent Work

Place a mark in applicable boxes. Note that some areas need attention in both enabling environment and/or directions actions, social inclusion, etc. For ease in recording answers they have been separated.

- Advocacy with government to improve legal and policy frameworks to support informal economy enterprises (1.2)
- Strengthening legal and policy frameworks to support the informal economy (legal and planning approaches) (1.3; 1.4)
- Development of local by-laws to support informal economy enterprises (1.3)
- Addressing issues surrounding formalising informal economy enterprises (1.5; 2.2)
- Capacity strengthening of government and civil society organisations, including on micro-finance (1.9)
- Improving coordination and collaboration between organisations to develop informal economy enterprises (3.4; 4.1)

- Linkages of informal economy enterprise owners with formal sector employers' organisations (1.10; 4.1)
- Linkages of informal enterprise owners with trade associations, cooperatives (1.10; 4.1)
- Linkages of informal economy enterprise owners with the media (to support IE development) (1.10; 3.3)
- International labour standards and right to decent work for informal economy workers (2.1)
- Environmental and sustainable informal economy enterprises (green jobs, reducing impact on the environment of the IE) (2.4)
- Iné:

Direct Actions

Key focus areas relevant to direct actions with target groups/beneficiaries and related areas, note that here there is an overlap with the other main thematic areas.

- Awareness raising, behaviour change communications methods, dissemination of information methods- including on social inclusion in the IE (3.1, 4.3)
- Organising informal economy entrepreneurs into (trade) associations (3.4; 4.1)
- Micro-finance methods (3.5)
- Managing micro-finance mutual support groups (3.5)
- Identification of profitable informal economy activities for start-ups (3.2; 3.5)
- Providing support to informal economy entrepreneurs to formalise/register their businesses (3.2; 3.5)
- Informal Economy enterprise start-up guidance - training and technical support (3.2)
- Identification of innovative vocational training subject areas (3.6)
- Grow your business training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)
- Finance management, basic accounting training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)
- Training on managing credit sales for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)
- Training on separating business from personal expenses for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)
- Marketing management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.2; 3.6)
- Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)
- Supply chain management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)
- Occupational safety and health for informal economy workers (2.3, 4.4)

- Basic human resources management training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)
- Environmental protection, green jobs and the IE development, (2.4)
- Using IT to strengthen IE enterprises (3.3)
- Vocational and skills training (3.6)
- Iné:

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Social Inclusion, Social Protection

Key focus areas relevant to social inclusion, social protection and related areas

- Strengthening the role of women in the informal economy (4.6)
- Promotion of women in informal economy trade associations and cooperatives (4.6)
- Child labour in the informal economy (reducing child labour, improving working conditions for older children (16-18) (4.7)
- Support for the elderly working in or aspiring to work in the informal economy (4.10)
- People with disabilities in the informal economy (providing support and inclusion of) (4.9)
- Migrants in the informal economy (providing support and inclusion of) (4.11)
- Trafficked individuals (4.11)
- Minority groups and the informal economy (providing support and inclusion of) (4.11)
- Cross border traders (4.11)
- People living with or affected by HIV (4.8)
- Other vulnerable groups (4.11)
- Social Protection (4.4)
- Health issues and the informal economy (challenges related to food security, gender based violence, HIV, infant and maternal mortality and growth of informal economy enterprises) (4.4)
- Leadership, life skills, empowerment training (3.4)
- Literacy and numeracy (3.4)
- Iné:

Does the project's documentation mention any tools, such as guides, manuals were used to help informal economy entrepreneurs?

(1.9, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.4-3.6, 5.2.2-5.4)

- Yes
- No

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Were the tools, guides, manuals provided with the information provided on the project?

If no, follow up with project contact and try to obtain a copy

- Yes
- No

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Did the project include the carrying out of a baseline or other survey in the first year?

If yes, try to obtain a copy if not already included in documents provided. (1.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.3-4.11)

- Yes
- No

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Did the project include any endline and/or impact survey?

If yes, try to obtain a copy if not already included in documents provided. (1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4-3.6, 4.3-4.11)

- Yes
- No

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Was there an external evaluation of the project?

If yes, try to obtain a copy if not already included in documents provided.

- Yes
- No

Comments on preceding question

Enter any comments as relevant here

Other relevant information of importance

If applicable