



International  
Labour  
Organization



## ► **Emergency employment**

Providing immediate and decent jobs  
through infrastructure, community  
and green works in post crisis situations

**Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)**

The Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) supports direct short-term employment creation (emergency employment) that provides immediate short-term cash income opportunities to vulnerable people or communities. Emergency employment schemes emphasize productivity, impact and decent working conditions.

## Conflict and disasters

Today, 1.8 billion people are estimated to live in situations of fragility, representing 23% of the world's population. 76.5% of these live in extreme poverty<sup>1</sup>. In such contexts, a multitude of human-made and natural risk factors can give rise to armed violence, exploitation, disaster and associated unemployment, often leading to conditions of severe vulnerability.

In conflict and disaster situations, livelihoods are weakened or even destroyed, businesses interrupted, workplaces damaged and people lose their jobs and sources of income. Furthermore, conflict and crisis situations reduce or immobilize the functioning of national and local institutions that usually provide social protection, basic needs and services, as well as law and order. This particularly affects the most vulnerable and poorest people who are trapped in a vicious cycle of inequality and poverty. Consequently, there is an increase in instability and insecurity across the affected communities and neighbouring societies. Vulnerable groups experience increasing unemployment and lack of income earning opportunities, which sometimes leads to migration.

Climate change and environmental degradation are also having a significant impact on many populations in developing countries as sea levels rise, rainfall and flooding become extreme, and heatwaves and droughts affect agricultural production and people's health.

## What is the ILO's role in such fragile contexts?<sup>2</sup>

**The ILO's response in the context of fragility is to promote employment, decent work, and social dialogue as a way of "building back better"**. The Decent Work Agenda is an essential element of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus where employment, decent working conditions and social dialogue can contribute to peace and resilience. In collaboration with Member States, tripartite constituents, international and national partners, and with the direct involvement of local populations and stakeholders, a two-fold approach to crisis response can allow for an immediate response centered on employment, which simultaneously stimulates and assists long-term socio-economic development in an inclusive and rights-based manner to "build back better".

**The ILO's role in the context of fragility is defined by the [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation \(No. 205\)](#), adopted in 2017.**

This international labour standard provides guidance to ILO constituents and the broader international community in developing responses, through the world-of-work, to conflict and disaster situations with the aim of promoting peace, preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience. Guided by the R205, the ILO's Flagship Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR) can be a vehicle for mitigating the socio-economic impact of fragility, conflict and disaster to ultimately contribute to more peaceful and resilient societies through the promotion of employment and decent work. The JPR strategic approach combines conflict sensitive employment-intensive investments, technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training, employment services and private sector and local economic development approaches in a coherent and context-specific manner.



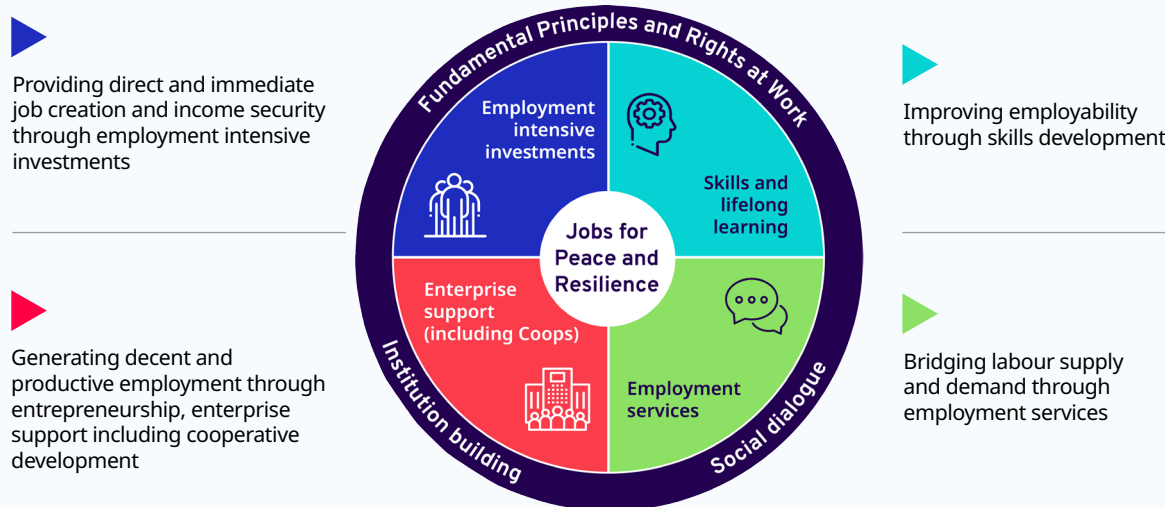
<sup>1</sup> OECD (2020), "State of Fragility 2020."

<sup>2</sup> Refers to advantages arising from "the downstream activities of projects that address the immediate needs of crisis-affected populations such as immediate livelihood development through increased job opportunities." See: ILO (2016), "Employment and decent work for peace and resilience". International Labour Conference, 105th Session, Geneva. pp. 14, 19.



## ► ILO's Jobs for Peace and Resilience

The EIIP is the foundation for one of the four components of the ILO's JPR flagship programme launched in 2016, as demonstrated in the illustration below. The JPR acknowledges the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus by pursuing interrelated and mutually reinforcing strategies through a downstream-upstream approach. While delivering quick and tangible benefits in terms of job creation, skills development, employment services in the humanitarian phase, the JPR promotes an enabling business environment as well as inclusive and effective labour market governance in the longer term, which is essential for sustaining peace and resilience in conflict and crisis situations. These key objectives are achieved through institution building, the respect and promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work and social dialogue. The programme places a strong focus on youth and women, given the specific challenges and needs they face in situations of crisis, conflict and disaster. By enhancing simultaneously the economic prospects, inter-group contact, and by addressing grievances of the most vulnerable communities, Jobs for Peace and Resilience projects aim to reinforce social cohesion and build resilience against future shocks.



The JPR approach focuses on the above objectives but this note focusses on just one element of the approach: emergency employment schemes.

## The Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) and Emergency Employment

**The EIIP has been instrumental in operationalizing the ILO's policy framework by supporting countries with an employment-intensive crisis response through the reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed infrastructure and community assets,** also contributing to social cohesion. The EIIP approach orients infrastructure investments towards creating higher levels of productive employment and improving access to basic goods and services. The distributional effects of such investments benefit vulnerable populations affected by crises through the provision of immediate job opportunities, while contributing to the economy through infrastructure and skills development.

**The EIIP offers ways of restoring the livelihoods of people in affected communities through short-term and mid to long-term objectives.** In the short-term,

wage payment schemes serve as an immediate income security measure to vulnerable people affected by a crisis. In the long term, infrastructure and individual skills built through the EIIP become assets that stimulate the local economy and generate local multiplier effects. The EIIP also builds the capacity of local public and private institutions and enterprises so that these become more resilient to future shocks.

**Infrastructure investments through the employment-intensive approach create decent jobs for vulnerable people by repairing and reconstructing infrastructure facilities.** These facilities include public buildings (e.g. health centres and schools), transport infrastructure, irrigation systems, flood control and drainage, water and sanitation facilities, environmental protection measures, and land conservation measures and erosion control. While substantial financial investments in different sectors affected by the fragility help countries recover from crises, it is essential to assess and promote the employment generation potential of these investments.

**While the EIIP promotes a long-term development approach, there is often a need for rapid employment interventions to generate immediate jobs. Such schemes can provide entry points for longer term development work.**

## What are policy options?

Reconstruction and recovery from crises require immediate humanitarian responses as well as long-term developmental approaches. The EIIP approach often bridges the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus**, ranging from support for ensuring human security to prevention and preparedness against future shocks.

### 1. Short-term emergency employment

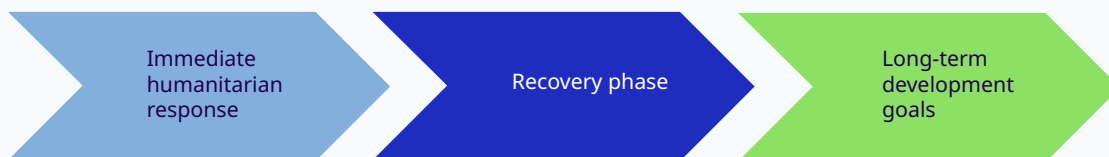
EIIP provides direct employment creation (emergency employment) in the form of immediate short-term

Equally, in societies where warring parties have called a ceasefire or signed a peace agreement, emergency employment can respond to the expectations of livelihood development, including infrastructure improvements and increased job opportunities. Employment creation may also avert tensions from rising in communities by promoting inclusion, equality, and mutual understanding through the works. Employment has been and continues to be key to sustainable peace.

### 2. Medium and long-term crisis response and disaster risk reduction

Initial short-term emergency employment may transition into a more integrated medium- to long-term approach to facilitate recovery from crises and to better prepare communities for potential future emergencies. A key feature of most EIIP programmes has thus been the commitment to provide long-term support through all stages of the crisis response process, starting from the

► **Figure 1. Stages of the crisis response process**



cash income opportunities to vulnerable people or communities affected by fragility. Work is mostly carried out on public or community infrastructure and green works<sup>3</sup> addressing the immediate economic, social and environmental needs of those affected and thereby reviving the local system.

Emergency employment differs from various cash for work initiatives due to its special focus on training, productivity and decent working conditions. These include: occupational safety and health (OSH); the exclusion of child labour; equal pay for work of equal value; safeguards for environmental protection; mechanisms to ease the transition to sustainable livelihoods; and the creation of quality infrastructure assets. In the case of conflict, the provision of employment to the disenfranchised through conflict-sensitive designs can also contribute to defusing tension in volatile communities, lowering the risk of future incidents and increase trust between communities and between local population and the local governments

emergency and humanitarian phase, and linking it to recovery and long-term national institution building. It is equally important to build resilience, strengthening local and national capacity to respond to the emergency phase and immediate recovery, and to ultimately achieve sustainable development.

Local and community-based infrastructure development using participatory and employment-intensive approaches have been effective tools for building disaster preparedness and climate resilience, during the medium- to long-term recovery and reconstruction works. In the case of climate change adaptation, the provision of sustainable climate-resilient infrastructure is vital to better prepare for future shocks and impacts of sudden and slow onset natural disasters. EIIP has been promoting green works to protect and restore the productive capacities of ecosystems and support people's adaptation to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, while at the same time creating decent jobs locally. This approach impacts positively on disaster risk

<sup>3</sup> For more information, please see ILO (2020), ["Green works - Creating decent jobs through investments: Promoting forest restoration, irrigation, soil and water conservation, and flood protection"](#)

management and contributes to the transition towards a low-carbon economy that is socially inclusive.

By building governments' institutional capacity to manage the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure and strengthening local construction industries with the skills required to rebuild, the EIIP supports countries to generate mid- to long-term job opportunities in response

to demands arising from crises. Such support results in locally maintained sustainable infrastructure and improved performance of local small- and medium-sized enterprises. All of this contributes to economic stability and sustainable development and subsequently, to further job creation and local economic development.

### ► Emerging employment and COVID-19

Employment intensive initiatives contribute to tackling the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, but also to addressing potential grievances, discrimination and stigmatization over access to resources, livelihoods and health services. A focus on employment and decent work can help maintain and reinforce social cohesion and peaceful coexistence during the COVID-19 crisis, preventing outbreaks of social tension among communities experiencing a sense of inequality and injustice, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities. While focusing on the immediate and direct needs of the responses required to mitigate and contain the economic effects of the disease, responses may also alleviate social tensions that may arise in communities. .

### ► Box 1: Country example Lebanon: Emergency employment in response to the Beirut explosion

On 4th August 2020, an explosion at a port shook the entire capital city of Beirut, killing over 200 people, injuring over 6,500 and leaving 300,000 people homeless. This catastrophe forced the country to cope with double casualties in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

The EIIP team reacted quickly to the emergency situation. The team immediately began coordinating with donor countries, ministries and municipalities. Within a few days after the explosion, the ILO was able to launch an emergency employment project to remove debris in Beirut and 200 jobs were created for the people directly or indirectly affected by the disaster.

In providing such emergency employment assistance to the most vulnerable people affected by the casualties, the ILO Office developed Guidelines on the selection process for workers to ensure that these vulnerable people were given special consideration. In order to reach out to this group of vulnerable people, job advertisements were quickly disseminated through various channels, including on the Internet and SNS, through local and international NGOs, as well as within the local Government

networks to make sure that the most vulnerable people had access to these job opportunities.

Setting up infrastructure projects in Lebanon requires a detailed process that not only promotes women's participation, but also enhances social cohesion through the provision of appropriate and balanced employment opportunities for both local Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees. Lebanon is known as one of the largest host countries for Syrian refugees, but relations between the two groups are sometimes strained because of the country's pressing fiscal situation and limited employment opportunities. However, both the Syrian and Lebanese people worked hand in hand with a common goal in mind: rebuilding the city of Beirut while containing the threat of the COVID-19.





► **Box 2: Country example**

**Myanmar: The Kroeng Batoi pilot project in Mon State – support to the peace process in Myanmar**

The Kroeng Batoi Project was implemented between January and June 2013, and between August 2015 and March 2017, with the support of the Norwegian Government and the ILO. The aim was to contribute to the rehabilitation of social and rural infrastructure, and the empowerment of conflict-affected communities with skills and knowledge transfer in the Tanintharyi Region. The project benefitted 2,742 people from 496 households in nine villages. The focus was on internally displaced people as a result of past conflicts. In a fragile ceasefire context, the project, at each stage, demonstrated the efficient use of an integrated livelihoods approach with the active involvement of the local communities, community-based organizations, civil society organizations, women's organizations and the New Mon State Party (NMSP).

Project implementation and contracting was carried out through local community-based organizational and management arrangements. This was very effective during the peace and transitional process in which the project operated. It proved to be a key contributor to the success of the project in terms of building trust among and between the different stakeholders, empowering the communities, and successfully improving livelihoods through the provision of social and economic infrastructure, which was prioritized by the communities themselves. A variety of awareness raising, empowerment and technical training activities were organized. Local community contractors were used to implement the physical works (drinking water supply systems, concrete footpaths, school buildings, latrines, health clinics and an agricultural training centre).



► **Box 3: Country Example**  
**Haiti: Emergency response to disasters**

The increasing intensity and frequency of cyclones and hurricanes, and the growing threats from climate change, have compounded the socio-economic and environmental impact of recurring disasters on the population, increasing the vulnerability of already poor urban and rural households in Haiti. The country is considered the most vulnerable of the Caribbean islands, with indicators of vulnerability to cyclones of 12.9 on a scale of 13.

In response to Hurricane Jeanne, which devastated Haiti in September 2004, the ILO worked closely with the Government of Haiti within the framework of an employment-intensive environmental programme in Gonaïves. This programme aimed at creating jobs, protecting the environment and building institutional capacity of local and community actors through the 12 federations that were created, focusing on six micro-watersheds to create a source for 324,043 inhabitants. A total of 9,000 people (54,000 households) directly benefited from the programme through labour-intensive activities (e.g. afforestation and tree nurseries, anti-erosive ditches, reinforcing bridges, river training, etc.).

The community contracting approach helped to clarify roles and responsibilities, rights and obligations, and establish technical capacities for environmental protection and maintenance systems. The approach also promoted cooperation among workers, local organizations and their federations, local authorities and regional technical departments.

Seven professional associations were created and started operations, and 12 federations of local associations coordinated all activities, including helping to recruit workers, selecting foremen, monitoring and controlling wage payments and food distribution (with WFP). The project also contributed to capacity building and social organization, and increased awareness of environmental issues, which has been a key element for sustainable development and the preservation of future livelihoods.



► **Box 4: Country Example**  
**Mozambique: Emergency employment**  
**in the wake of cyclones**

The ILO has implemented a dynamic employment policy support project *MozTrabalha*. Operationalizing the employment policy by way of direct job creation through the EIIP is one of the key components of the project, and it has been demonstrated as an effective tool. Since 2017, the project has supported young women and men to develop their skills in the gabion ditch infrastructure construction works to minimize the land erosion risks. The project also supported the development of recreational infrastructure within a community space to create a sense of belonging and social cohesion to enhance community vitality.

These efforts, however, were hampered by the massive destruction of infrastructure caused by the Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019. More than 200,000 houses were destroyed, and remote rural areas still face difficulties accessing basic goods and services. The victims of the disaster, in addition to meeting their basic needs, faced the challenges of increasing unemployment as well as decreasing incomes, which were all detrimental to human security.

Building on its long-standing experience in employment-intensive community-based works and youth employment programmes in the country,

the ILO quickly responded to the aftermath of Cyclone Idai and Kenneth through the restoration of public services. The ILO rehabilitated a technical and vocational educational training (TVET) center in the disaster-affected areas, using climate-resilient alternative construction materials, while generating immediate employment for the young workers who were affected by the disaster. In the short-term, this public employment scheme served as a form of social protection.

In a context where extreme weather events will become more common due to climate change, the need is expanding for resilient construction techniques to be mainstreamed throughout the project design for long-term sustainable development outcomes. The rehabilitated TVET center through the emergency employment scheme will serve as an institution to mainstream such resilience in technical and vocational education.





#### ► Box 5: Country Example

##### Timor-Leste: Emergency employment in response to the COVID-19 crisis

Lack of access to schools, market places and hospitals has been a major challenge for remote communities in Timor-Leste. Roads are their lifeline. The ILO supports the Government of Timor-Leste to rehabilitate rural roads through the Road for Development (R4D) programme helping to break the communities' physical isolation, provide jobs, and improve livelihoods. R4D is the leading rural roads programme in Timor-Leste that aims to enhance the connectivity of the remote communities. During the COVID-19 crisis, the importance of rural road rehabilitation has become more eminent than ever: these roads are vital to community health services.

Facing the imminent needs of these communities for jobs and access to basic goods and services, the ILO made funding available to support the Government of Timor-Leste as part of its COVID-19 recovery efforts, leveraging on the capacity of the existing roads programme. In August 2020, the ILO and the Government of Timor-Leste signed contracts with 10 local contractors to implement an emergency employment programme with the aim of creating immediate jobs for vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 crisis. This emergency scheme covers 12 municipalities and provides immediate decent employment and income support to 1,850 direct beneficiaries in need - including 50% of women and 2% of persons living with disabilities, while improving 275 km of core rural roads and enhancing their accessibility.



## Recommendations

### ► Place employment at the core of recovery schemes

In conflict and disaster situations, livelihoods are weakened or even destroyed. Employment, decent work, and social dialogue are key for “building back better” in the context of fragility. It is essential to assess and promote the employment generation potential of recovery investments in different sectors and industries. Employment-oriented recovery initiatives can enhance social cohesion to prevent tensions in communities, strengthen resilience through green works, introduce social and environmental safeguards, and raise people’s awareness of occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in the aftermath of disasters. Emergency employment schemes provide immediate employment opportunities while providing entry points for longer-term development initiatives.

### ► Design emergency interventions that bridge the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through the employment-intensive investment approach

Immediate jobs and livelihood opportunities can be effective in the humanitarian response, but they have to be designed with?? as an entry point for investments in long-term development and embedded into a longer-term employment strategy aiming to create decent jobs for strengthening dignity, security, trust and peace. Reconstruction and recovery from crises require both immediate humanitarian responses to meet the urgent needs of communities affected by the fragility, as well as long-term developmental objectives to stabilize society, the economy, and the environment. Infrastructure investments and green works can, through the employment-intensive approach, create quality jobs for vulnerable people in the short term, while repairing and reconstructing infrastructure facilities and developing human capital in the long term. It is important to ensure that the immediate emergency employment interventions contribute to longer term development objectives and are compliant with good labour standards and practices.

### ► Generate employment and income opportunities that meet the immediate needs of affected communities, but do not compromise the decent work principles

The EIIP provides direct employment creation through emergency employment in the form of immediate short-term cash income opportunities to vulnerable people or communities affected by fragility. Emergency employment should be distinguished from cash for work initiatives by its special focus on productivity, training and decent work principles. This includes social and environmental safeguards as well as emphasis on fundamental principles and rights at work.

### ► Integrate capacity building support for institutions and the private sector to deliver sustainable infrastructure assets in the long-term

Initial short-term emergency employment interventions should be integrated into medium- to long-term approaches to facilitate recovery from crises and to better prepare communities for potential future emergencies. Emergency employment schemes should not be considered as a one-off initiative, but one that could be further developed to contribute to more sustainable infrastructure development. An integral aspect of such schemes is a long-term commitment through all stages of the crisis response process, from the humanitarian phase through to national institution and industrial capacity building for sustainable development and capacity building of national partners is important in the effort.

## Key ILO resources and publications

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Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).

[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3330503](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3330503)



## ► Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)

- Employment impact assessments
- Public employment programmes (PEPs)
- Public and Private Sector Development
- Green works
- Local resource-based approaches and community infrastructure
- Emergency employment

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