



Moving from fragility to resilience in Afghanistan

Building capacities for promoting rural youth employment in fragile contexts

Grania Mackie and Carmen Mollman of the Gender Research Alliance and Joel Alcocer of the ITCILO



JUSTITIA SOCIAL
TRABAJO DECENTE



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



International Training Centre

Copyright © International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, 2019. All rights reserved.

First published 2019

Publications of the International Training Centre of the ILO enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Applications for authorization to reproduce, translate or adapt part or all of its contents should be addressed to the International Training Centre of the ILO. The Centre welcomes such applications. Nevertheless, short excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated.

Promoting Rural Youth Employment in Afghanistan through Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational Training:
First Phase Final Report

ISBN 978-92-9049-837-7

The designations employed in publications of the International Training Centre of the ILO, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Centre concerning i.a. the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the Centre of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Publications of the Centre, as well as a catalogue or list of new publications, can be obtained from the following address:

Publications, International Training Centre of the ILO
Viale Maestri del Lavoro, 10 - 10127 Turin, Italy
Telephone: +39 011 6936693
Fax: +39 011 6936352
E-mail: Publications@itcilo.org

Photo credits: ITCILO, ILO, Unsplash
Design by the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin – Italy

Contents

1. The challenges of working in fragile settings.....	1
1.1 Afghanistan: the context.....	1
1.2 The challenge of youth unemployment in Afghanistan.....	2
1.3 The ITCILO's response to fragile settings	3
2. The project: Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training	4
3. Supporting systemic approaches to employment creation in fragile communities: A roadmap	5
3.1 What is a roadmap to resilience?.....	5
3.2 How can the roadmap be used?.....	5
3.3 Who could use the roadmap?	5
3.4 The roadmap: building resilience and reducing fragility.....	7
4. The ITCILO project: using the roadmap approach to employment creation in fragile communities.....	10
4.1 Getting to know the local context: Developing analytical studies and dialogue with ILO constituents and key stakeholders	12
4.2 Systemic approach: Involving ILO constituents and key stakeholders in the process.....	13
4.3 Social dialogue in action: Consolidating local relationships and implementing new programmes.....	14
4.4 Learnings from South-South cooperation: Building connections between India and Afghanistan	16
4.5 Supporting a robust private section: Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurial initiatives led by youth at the local level.....	18
4.6 Connecting people from different places: the ITCILO as knowledge facilitator	22

5. Summary of the outputs and results of the project (2016–2019)	24
6. Learning from employment projects in fragile settings	26
6.1 Lessons learnt from threats, risks, and challenges, working in fragile settings.....	26
6.2 Lessons from the project approach to capacity building in fragile settings.....	27
6.3 Replicability of the ITCILO approach to promoting employment in fragile settings.....	28
7. Bibliography	29
8. Find out more	30



1. The challenges of working in fragile settings

1.1 Afghanistan: the context

Conflict over four decades has rendered the security situation in Afghanistan precarious, resulting in a challenging social, economic, and investment climate. Despite reforms to the legal and regulatory framework, there are still serious shortcomings in terms of developing the private sector. Years of warfare have meant that successive regimes have struggled to govern centrally and are often thwarted, largely due to the lack of a tax base or a legitimate indigenous source of revenue (ITCILO, 2018).

The Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (2016–2017) has recorded a sharp deterioration in welfare of the Afghan population. Despite some economic growth, the proportion of population living below the national poverty line increased from 34 per cent in 2007–08 to 55 per cent in 2016–17 resulting in nearly 40 per cent of Afghans living in poverty (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018).

Out of a total working-age population of 15 million, only 8.5 million women and men participate in the labour force. Of the total employed population, 20 per cent are underemployed. Moreover, 80 per cent of all jobs are classified as vulnerable employment. Unemployment and inactivity rates for women are worse than those for men, with an unemployment rate of 17.5 per cent for men and 36 per cent for women. While men have a labour force participation rate of 81 per cent, women score much lower with only 29 per cent (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2016). Although Afghan legislation no longer purposefully excludes women from economic and social participation; cultural and societal norms and women's roles and responsibilities hinder their access to the labour market and entrepreneurial opportunities (European Union, 2019).

Vulnerable employment is an employment status often made up of groups of own-account workers and contributing family workers. They are less likely to have formal work arrangements and are therefore more likely to lack decent working conditions, adequate social security, and “voice” through effective representation by trade unions and similar organizations. Vulnerable employment is often characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine workers’ fundamental rights (ILO, 2010).

Source: Dr. Ellina Samantroy of the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in India

It is estimated that over the last forty years one in three Afghans have been forcibly displaced, internally and externally, by war or its socioeconomic consequences (MoRR, 2018). Despite a fragile security situation in many parts of Afghanistan, between 2002 and 2018, over six million Afghans returned to the country (UNHCR, 2018). As returnees seek to reintegrate and create a livelihood for themselves there is an increasing pressure on support from the government and humanitarian actors. In summary, high unemployment rates combined with the impact of ongoing conflict and population movements have put Afghan public services under severe strain. Overall, governance and the rule of law are severely undermined. The current combination of protracted conflict, weak institutions, and poor economic and social development creates a vicious circle that is difficult to break (The World Bank Group, 2016).

Afghanistan development indicators

- 2017: 42 per cent of youth were not in education, employment, or training (ILO, 2019)
- 2017: 610,000 refugees returned home to Afghanistan (IOM & UNHCR, 2017)
- 2017: female human development index value for Afghanistan is 0.364 in contrast with 0.583 for males, resulting in a poor gender development index value of 0.625. Ranking it 168th out of 189 countries

1.2 The challenge of youth unemployment in Afghanistan

More than 60 per cent of the Afghan population is below 24 years of age, this means that the number of young Afghans joining the labour force radically outstrips the number of available jobs for young women and men (The World Bank Group, 2016). The youth unemployment rate was 30.7 per cent in 2016-17 – 39.1 per cent for urban youth and 29.6 per cent for rural youth. The overall female youth unemployment rate is worse at 47.4 per cent, with 63.7 per cent of urban female youth being unemployed (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018). Widespread poverty among Afghanistan’s youth means young women and men are forced to take on whatever work is available to them and leads to high levels of vulnerable forms of employment and working poverty (Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2013). Another bottleneck for youth employment is the poor employability of many young women and men due to a lack of educational achievement, vocational and technical skills, and work experience. The local institutional environment to facilitate the school-to-work transition of young women and men is evolving slowly.

Women are less educated than their male counterparts. For instance, among young men in the age group 20 to 24 years, 26.2 per cent have finished upper secondary school, 4.6 per cent completed teacher college and 11.9 per cent technical college or university. Among young women of the same age group these percentages were 10.1, 3.6 and 3.4 per cent respectively (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018). Enrolment numbers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has significantly increased in the past three years from 18,361 (11% female) in 2009 to 61,000 (13% female) in 2013. However, young women’s and men’s interest in TVET is low compared to general education due to the lower status of TVET in the Afghan society (ILO, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education is not systematically embedded in school curricula and provision is largely left to non-governmental organizations and, sometimes, representative business associations.



© Unsplash/Want to create

1.3 The ITCILO's response to fragile settings

While Afghanistan receives considerable support in terms of funding from donors, attention to the issue of long-term sustainable capacity building at the institutional level is still evolving. Strong and resilient institutions take many years to develop and even longer to become sustainable and retain capacity. A characteristic of a fragile state is the combination of fragility factors that are fluid and unique to each community. There is no blueprint to promote employment promotion in this kind of context.

The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) response to situations of fragility in Afghanistan has been “institutional capacity building for the promotion of decent work and income-generating activities in fragile situations: building resilience in the transition to peace and recovery from crisis”. ILO constituents (Ministries of Labour, Employers’ and Workers’ Organizations) play an important role in promoting economic development through youth entrepreneurship, skills development, and employment. However, in crisis situations they can lack the knowledge, skills, tools, political legitimacy and trust to develop policies and implement coordinated approaches.

A fragile community is one in which “... the social structures, systems and institutions intended to provide for the satisfaction of fundamental human needs such as identity, subsistence, protection, participation and understanding are dysfunctional and [not fit for] purpose. This condition undermines the legitimacy of the social contract between state and society, the governors and the governed”

Source: (CORDAID, 2015)

2. The project: Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training

The ITCILO project “Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training” was a capacity development project, aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of ILO constituents, social partners, and other relevant stakeholders in Afghanistan. Reflecting global good practices in countries affected by fragility, the ITCILO assisted constituents and other stakeholders to tackle the employment challenge for young women and men through developing and implementing appropriate policies and programmes. Table 1 below outlines the phases and stakeholders of the project. The project was implemented within the framework

of the ITCILO’s initiative “Promotion of Decent Work in Situations of Fragility” that supports the ILO’s flagship programme “Jobs for Peace and Resilience”. The project forms part of an expanding body of knowledge of implementing effective employment programmes with the goal of building peace and resilience.

The project was financed under the ILO-Norwegian Partnership Agreement (from June 2016 to June 2019) and facilitated by the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) in partnership with ILO field offices in Kabul and New Delhi – with the support of the ILO’s Decent Work Team for South Asia.

Table 1: The ITCILO project “Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training” outline

Objective: Supporting the capacity of ILO constituents and ILO social partners to design policies and implement concrete projects to support youth employment	
Phase I June 2016 – May 2018	Supporting the capacity of ILO constituents and ILO social partners to design policies and concrete projects to support youth employment.
Phase II June 2018 – June 2019	Local capacity-building support for policy implementers and service providers. The focus areas of intervention are (i) entrepreneurship education, (ii) skills development, (iii) women’s empowerment and (iv) internal displaced people and returnees. Interventions in these areas were targeted at young women and men.
Key stakeholders	Afghan Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), Employers’ Organizations: Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Balkh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and Workers’ Organizations: The National Union of Afghan Workers and Employees (NUAWE)

Afghanistan still has severe security concerns, therefore the project activities were mostly focused in Kabul, where government control is strongest, and in the Mazar-i-Sharif region where another ILO project “Road to Jobs (R2J)” operates. The R2J project was important in providing access to Afghanistan’s Balkh province

and allowing the project to extend its reach beyond Kabul. In Phase II the project supported its constituents to implement projects and services beyond the areas in Phase I to young women and men in Balkh, Bamyán, Kabul and Samangan Provinces through local service providers.

3. Supporting systemic approaches to employment creation in fragile communities: A roadmap

In fragile settings development partners must work for collective action that replaces patterns of short-term, uncoordinated and one-off projects, and narrow technical assistance. There must be a unifying framework for action (Brookings, 2018). In the case of Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training project, the ITCILO developed a “roadmap to resilience” to provide a flexible adaptable framework for promoting resilience in fragile contexts – through the promotion of decent work, training, and capacity building programmes.

3.1 What is a roadmap to resilience?

This roadmap is designed to be used by people who are seeking to build resilience in fragile contexts, through the promotion of decent work, training, and capacity building programmes.

A roadmap sounds like something that can be followed, arriving at the desired destination. But in fragile contexts, there is not simply a journey from A to B. Instead, when following a roadmap for peace and resilience, stakeholders need to adjust according to the landscape. Perhaps a turn-off on the map is not marked or a part of the road has been washed away. A person can follow the main route, but the details might differ. When applying a project to a new context the local conditions, networks, infrastructures, and resources must be considered. This is even more important when talking about fragile contexts, where conditions can vary radically from place to place. However, the six elements introduced in this roadmap are critical to promoting decent work in Afghanistan and will be relevant in other fragile contexts.

3.2 How can the roadmap be used?

The roadmap was intended to be a guide for those who seek to build training and employment programmes and opportunities in a fragile context. It provides a way to frame good practices in promoting decent work in fragile settings and illustrates the desirable outcomes. However, when working in fragile contexts, there are no blueprints. In this regard, it is very important to be flexible and innovative when designing and implementing activities.

This roadmap is made up of elements that can be combined and built into a programme to strengthen the relationship and collaboration between the various actors, and support more direct provision of youth employment initiatives. These elements are not intended to be linear, with one happening after the other – they are systemic and may happen throughout the project, or they may only occur in specific phases. The ITCILO project also recognized that it may not be possible to incorporate each element in every fragile context – however, some variation of them should be pursued to design a successful programme of support. Figure 1 illustrates the elements of the roadmap, illustrating that all the elements are connected rather than simply steps in a process.

3.3 Who could use the roadmap?

The roadmap can be used by all development actors who work on the promotion of decent work, employment and enterprise creation in fragile settings. Some examples of organizations that have used the roadmap as a capacity building framework have been ILO constituents, employment and entrepreneurship policymakers, training and labour institutes, development consultants, and donor organizations.

ILO Constituents in Afghanistan

Government: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD)

Workers' Organization: The National Union of Afghanistan Workers and Employees (NUAWE)

Employers' Organization: Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) and Balkh Chamber of Commerce (BCCI)

The ILO, and its International Training Centre (ITCILO), is the only tripartite UN Agency with government, employers' representatives and workers' representatives. For the ILO and ITCILO their constituents' usage and adaptation of the roadmap presents a unique forum that connects governments and social partners, enabling them to openly exchange and learn from each other about challenges and approaches to promoting decent work in fragile settings.

Figure 1: The ITCILO roadmap





© ILO/Berger H.

3.4 The roadmap: building resilience and reducing fragility

It is estimated that 20 per cent of the world's population lives in situations of conflict and fragility (1.4 billion people out of 7 billion) (ILO, 2015). In situations where armed violence, exploitation, and underemployment are coupled with natural disasters, severe conditions of vulnerability are generated. These situations often deny women and men from income-generating opportunities, socioeconomic progress and heavily impedes progress in achieving internationally agreed development goals (ILO, 2015).

The relationship between promoting peace and employment programmes are well-established

but several layers of empirical support on the link are missing (Brück, T. et al., 2016). It is a logical theoretical assumption that employment programmes are likely to impact employment outcomes and that peacebuilding programmes are likely to influence peacebuilding outcomes. The challenge for the ITCILO project was what programmatic strategies and actions could be taken by the project to assist constituents, government, private sector, civil society, and international partners to generate employment and thereby contribute to conflict prevention, social cohesion and peacebuilding in Afghanistan. Box 1 below outlines three theories of change that constitute a logical link between employment programmes and the goal of building peace (ILO, UN Peacebuilding, The World Bank and UNDP, 2016).

Box 1: Three theories of change between employment programmes and building peace

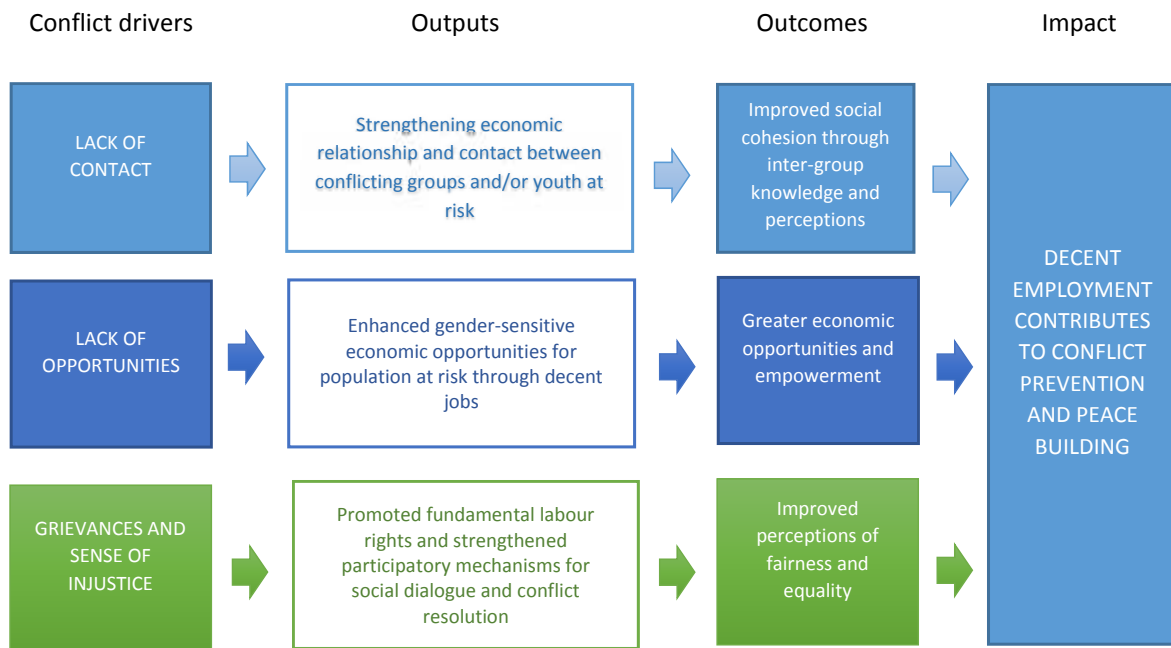
Contact: If conflict is driven by negative perceptions among groups, employment programmes may reduce conflict by fostering mutual understanding. By bringing people together, providing opportunities for dialogue among social groups, and breaking down stereotypes, employment programmes may increase social cohesion.

Opportunity: If conflict is driven by adverse economic circumstances (e.g. unemployment or underemployment), decent employment, by providing income and livelihoods, may reduce the incentive to engage in violence as a means of improving economic circumstances.

Grievance: If conflict is driven by grievances over real or perceived injustices, employment programmes may reduce the risk of conflict by addressing them. Furthermore, delivering employment programmes through a transparent and accountable governance process may reduce the perception of inequity and injustice and ultimately reduce violent behaviour”.

Source: (ILO, UN Peacebuilding, The World Bank and UNDP, 2016)

Figure 2: Theory of change on “How Decent Employment contributes to Peacebuilding” based on Brück et al. (2016) “Jobs Aid Peace”



The theory of change in the ITCILO roadmap is reflected in approaches based on building the capacity and skills of tripartite constituents to:

3.4.1 Strengthen social and economic relationships between stakeholders (improve contact). The capacity building programmes brought organizations together that hold different paradigms in labour policy and employment. Bringing these organizations together to explore differing points of view in a neutral environment increased constructive inter-group contact which strengthened social and economic relationships to collaborate on supporting employment programmes and approaches in Afghanistan.

3.4.2 Establish mechanisms for capacity building, service delivery, and implementation of existing policies and programmes thereby enhancing gender-sensitive economic opportunities (create opportunity). Capacity building of constituents and key partners in design, governance, and implementation of

inclusive and transparent employment programmes ease constraints to growth while ensuring the rights of workers. This support for new and existing businesses benefits economic development whilst creating employment opportunities for young women and men.

3.4.3 Respond to opportunities for improved social dialogue and strengthen participatory mechanisms for social dialogue and conflict resolution (address grievance). Through the establishment of supportive relationships, a platform was created between constituents and other partners which allowed them to build legitimacy, develop a shared understanding of good practices in youth employment, build the constituents ability to cooperate, improve public goods/services, and encourage political legitimacy.

Combining the roadmap elements into an overall approach creates opportunities for systematically driving the theory of change.

Figure 3: Combining roadmap elements



Contributions to conflict prevention, social cohesion and peacebuilding in Afghanistan

There is an emerging set of principles for action suggested when designing and implementing employment programmes that aim to foster peace and stability in fragile settings (ILO, UN Peacebuilding, The World Bank and UNDP, 2016). These principles are detailed and elaborated within the context of the ITCILO’s roadmap and project strategies in Table 2.

Table 2: Principles for action for employment programmes that aim to foster peace and stability in fragile settings in the context of the ITCILO’s roadmap

Principles for Action (ILO, UN Peacebuilding, The World Bank and UNDP, 2016)	Relationship to roadmap elements
OWNERSHIP: Build on national and local ownership, and support and strengthen capacity of national and local governments in developing and implementing employment programmes for peacebuilding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building for self-driven change and adaptation in promoting decent work • Implementation of projects • Systemic approaches
PARTNERSHIPS: Involve the private sector and civil society early on, and have clear criteria and conditions for their role in the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know local context in Phase I and Phase II • Tripartite social dialogue events and capacity building in good governance • Systemic approaches • Partners are drivers
ANALYSIS: Ensure that programmes are based on solid conflict analysis; demonstrate understanding of the motivations of beneficiaries; and provide a relevant theory of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social dialogue in action • Getting to know local context in Phase I and Phase II
GENDER: Identify the gender dimensions of employment programmes and their potential in promoting gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s participation targets and enforcement of targets in capacity building • Gender equality capacity building activities
YOUTH: Consider youth as active agents of change during and after the employment programme, merge short-term interventions with long-term strategies to ensure successful transitions to adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary target of capacity building • Youth (women and men) as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) trainers and part of SIYB Afghanistan key part of sustainability strategies • Supporting robust private sector
SUSTAINABILITY: Integrate the sustainability of both the peacebuilding impact and the economic impact of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social dialogue in action • SIYB methodologies (trainer of trainers) • Integration of programme in ILO’s constituents • Capacity building of ILO’s constituents • Supporting robust private sector (ACCI, BCCI, SIYB Afghanistan company)
COLLABORATION: Maximize the comparative advantages of partner organizations and minimize the transaction cost when implementing employment programmes in conflict-affected countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social dialogue in action • International development community collaboration • Maximized South-South and triangular collaboration • Leveraged other donor agencies strengths and resources



© Mohammad Hassan Forouzanfar

4. The ITCILO project: using the roadmap approach to employment creation in fragile communities

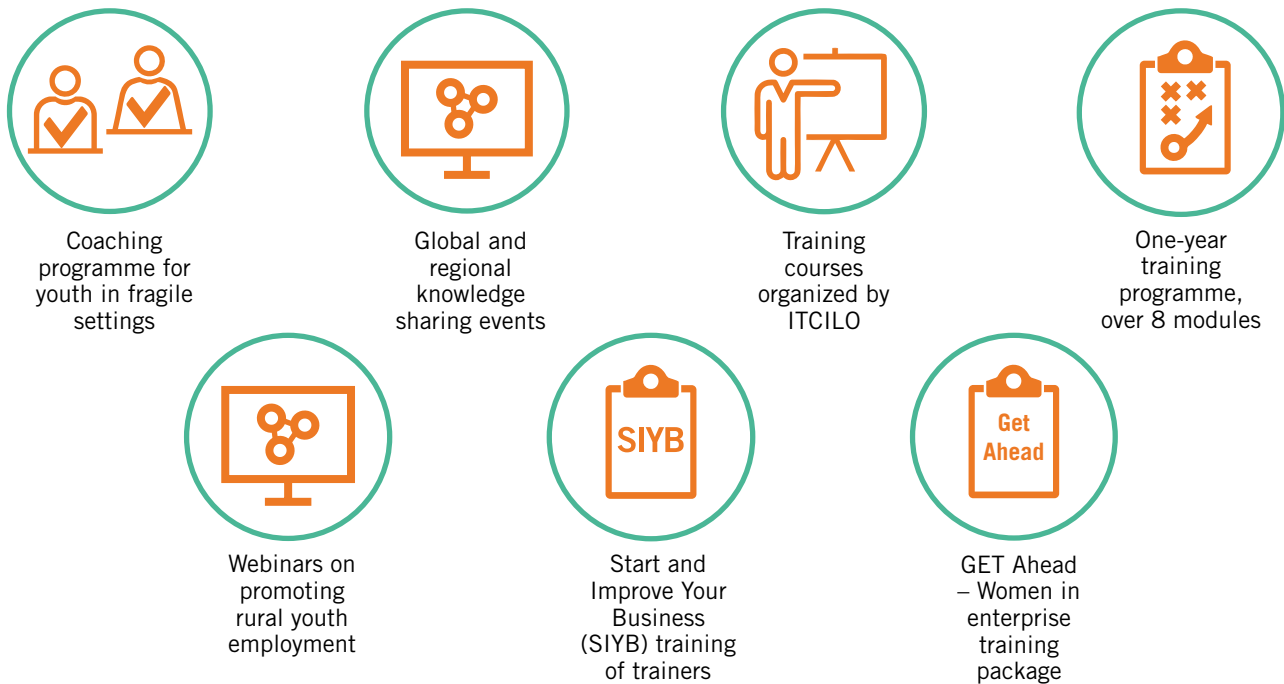
The ITCILO Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training project ran for three years (2016-2019) and comprised two phases. In both Phase I and Phase II the project's capacity development activities were designed to create a learning journey. This encouraged ILO constituents and other stakeholders to continuously improve their approaches to promoting youth employment. It comprised a carefully designed mix of face-to-face courses, study visits, knowledge sharing events, and ITCILO training courses (these included distance learning components that complemented and enhanced the face-to-face training).

Phase I: Activities focused on supporting the capacity of ILO's constituents and ILO's social partners to design policies and implement concrete projects to support youth employment. Over the course of Phase I, Afghan nationals

were invited to attend some or all the activities on offer. The core of the programme included:

- An ITCILO one-year training programme – with eight modules covering employment policies tailored for Afghanistan with the aim of moving from fragility to resilience.
- A coaching programme for youth in fragile settings, focused on training of Afghan business coaches and coaching of entrepreneurs.
- Training of trainers to introduce ILO's global training programme SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) in Afghanistan.
- Training of entrepreneurs in SIYB conducted by the newly certified trainers.
- Webinars on promoting rural youth employment.

Figure 4: Illustration of each capacity building component in each element during the life cycle of the project



- Participation in open training courses organized by ITCILO.
- Participation in global and regional knowledge sharing events (South-South and triangular cooperation).

Phase II: Focused on a local, micro level to leverage the capacity built in Phase I. Activities centred on capacity building support for policy implementers and service providers were targeted at young women and men, with a focus on (i) entrepreneurship education, (ii) skills development, (iii) women’s empowerment and (iv) supporting internally displaced persons and returnees. The core of the programme included:

- Supporting constituents in rolling out their programmes developed in Phase I.
- Participation in open training courses organized by the ITCILO.
- Participation in global and regional knowledge sharing events.
- South-South and triangular cooperation.
- Training of Afghan trainers in the SIYB Programme and roll out to entrepreneurs.

- Training of entrepreneurs ILO’s GET Ahead (Women in enterprise training package)

To build sustainable capacity in fragile contexts, the project worked on two levels:

- The first level was to enhance the capacity within Afghanistan to create and implement policies, programmes and support mechanisms for building decent work. Specifically, it aimed at strengthening the capacity of local ILO constituents to support the development and implementation of employment policies that promote rural youth employment through entrepreneurship and skills development.
- The second level provided targeted capacity building support for:
 - Local actors (private and public) – to nurture entrepreneurship attitudes among youth (meta-level intervention).
 - Government and private vocational training institutions – to provide skills development services to young women and men (micro-level intervention).

4.1 Getting to know the local context: Developing analytical studies and dialogue with ILO constituents and key stakeholders



One aspect of fragile settings is the combination of fragility factors that are fluid and unique to each community. This element of the roadmap emphasizes the

importance of context-specific information and clear analysis on which to base a capacity building programme. It also supports a shared perspective of youth employment challenges ensuring that constituents and other stakeholders are starting from the same point.

During the inception Phase of the project (2016) the ITCILO commissioned two research studies. This was in response to a lack of up-to-date information on youth employment and entrepreneurship, common in fragile states. The aim of the studies was to gather strategic and up-to-date information on the Afghan context and to help identify strategic routes to promote entrepreneurship and skills development in Afghanistan¹. In addition, during this Phase several consultation meetings were held at the ILO in Geneva (headquarters), New Delhi and Kabul. During these meetings, the ITCILO project presented the initial project proposal and invited feedback and suggestions on the implementation strategy and on some specific operational issues. During July 2016 Dr. Salehi (the then Deputy Minister of Labour) visited the ITCILO in Turin (Italy) to officially launch the project, while attending a South-South Academy. During his visit several meetings were held to discuss the project implementation strategy. The initial project proposal was disseminated amongst constituents; feedback and suggestions on the implementation strategy and on specific operational issues were included. At the end of these meetings the ITCILO project agreed upon and validated a

¹ Research studies: Promoting Rural Youth Employment in Afghanistan through Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational Training: An Analytical Study & Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship, education and vocational training: Opportunities for ITCILO in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

strategy and implementation plan for the first Phase of the project.

Mr. Qasimi, Chief Executive Officer from the Balkh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) reflects that after the programme they could understand the root causes of the challenges that enterprises were facing and design more effective strategies, programmes and projects.

He suggests: *“Without the ITCILO project, we would never have been able to do so otherwise”*

In early 2018, a consultative workshop on Promoting youth employment in Afghanistan took place between Phase I and Phase II of the project. The five-day workshop brought ILO’s constituents from Afghanistan and previous participants of the ITCILO one-year training programme together. The main objective of the consultative workshop was to review lessons learnt, to revise the project approach and to develop a stakeholder driven work plan for the second Phase of the project.

In addition to consultation and research during the project, there was a more systemic impact on knowledge of the local context for promoting youth employment. The ITCILO capacity building improved the constituents and other stakeholders’ ability to consistently analyse Afghan specific challenges in youth under/unemployment, gender discrimination, and the impact of forced displacement of qualified youth on the economy.

“I am very comfortable to identify and design a project now whereas I wouldn’t have been before (the ITCILO training)”

Mr. Ebadullah Ahmadi from the MoLSAMD

The ITCILO one-year training programme, access to new South-South and triangular networks as well as online resources built the capacity of constituents to develop analytical research and assessment frameworks in youth employment and entrepreneurship. The constituents stress that these frameworks have assisted in designing programmes based on the realities of their context and following through with implementation based on local relationships.

4.2 Systemic approach: Involving ILO constituents and key stakeholders in the process



The complexity of fragile environments means that understanding the causality, multidimensionality and impacts of fragility on youth employment is challenging. This element of the roadmap addresses the issue of developing and implementing systemic and commonly shared strategies for youth employment and entrepreneurship.

True sustainability relies on the organizational capacity of the main ILO constituents and their ability to collaborate and work together to address the multiple causes of youth under/unemployment and entrepreneurship. The phased approach ensured to gather and review information, and engage and reengage stakeholders in the projects design.

From the inception of the project, local stakeholders and constituents were included in the design of the content of their learning journeys. This was not just to incorporate their local knowledge and expertise, but also to build a sense of ownership to the project. The project supported ongoing contact throughout training, South-South and triangular cooperation, and knowledge sharing platforms.

“It is not every day that you spend time with employers, workers and government together and think things through in a facilitated way, so it adds a lot of value...”

Dagmar Walter: Director of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office

This systemic approach element of the roadmap was important in ensuring the specific interests, needs and priorities of young Afghan women were taken into consideration for the design and implementation of the project. Consultation with ILO constituents, combined with ITCILO’s experience in promoting gender equality in

fragile settings, lead to the programme design including:

- Gender analysis in situational project research studies.
- Targets for women’s and men’s participation in the programme.
- Specific training modules in empowering women in fragile settings.
- Constituents developing a specific project proposal on decent work for Women’s Economic Empowerment.

“From the private sector, from the government sector, in different ways the project made an impression and made an impact...”

Source: Manzoor Khaliq: ILO Representative to Afghanistan

Systemic approaches imply that stakeholders have the capacity to apply systems thinking and systems analysis, which can help them understand the causality, multidimensionality and impacts of fragility on youth employment. The ILO support for constituents has strengthened their understanding and skills in good governance, managing socio-political risks, reducing socioeconomic inequalities and to continue mitigating the factors that drive fragility. Training programmes have built the capacity of constituents to use their knowledge and skills to self-organize and act – resulting in an improved ability to plan, decide, and engage collectively for better service provision for youth in Afghanistan.

Cross-constituent projects developed during the one-year, eight module training course continuously placed constituents in the driving seat of national youth employment development. Each of the four final projects focused on a different area of vulnerable employment in Afghanistan. Each project outlined the problem – who is affected, the strategy to support the vulnerable group, why the approach is innovative, and what is needed to start.

Youth employment initiatives developed by ILO constituents during one-year, eight module training course:

- Fostering entrepreneurship for decent work.
- Women's economic empowerment through cooperatives.
- Building skills for returnees and the internally displaced.
- Building robust employment to combat internal migration.

During the project ILO constituents and other stakeholders built the capacity to drive forward these final projects. A few of the processes and outcomes are described in the following roadmap elements.

4.3 Social dialogue in action: Consolidating local relationships and implementing new programmes



Fragmented development approaches and conflicting narratives, common in fragile settings, challenge political trust and stability and ultimately the

effectiveness of institutions. This element of the roadmap considers two aspects of capacity building: creating the networks and connections between people and their organizations to facilitate dialogue around youth employment; and developing skills and tools that support action in addressing under/unemployment in young women and men.

By creating relationships and conversation between actors in the local context, the programme built more robust connections between ministries, employers, unions and other development agencies. Two prominent strategies to stimulate connections and exchange were:

1. South-South and triangular cooperation and
2. Joint stakeholder training programmes.

Central to the projects training programmes was an one-year, eight module course for ILO constituents (30 per cent of the participants in this course were women). The course was developed in consultation with Afghan constituents focussing on the country's specific issues in youth employment, as well as their self-assessed capacity gaps.

The primary beneficiaries of the course were ILO constituents as they built new skills and competences. However, the ultimate beneficiaries were young women and men.



Box 2: The one-year, eight module training course for Afghan constituents

The objective of the training was to strengthen the institutional capacity of Afghanistan's constituents to tackle the youth employment promotion challenge through adjustment of existing employment promotion policies and programmes to reflect global good practice in countries affected by fragility. The training was geared to helping participants acquire the following:

- knowledge of key concepts relating to employment policy with emphasis on situations of fragility
- the capacity to participate actively in the process of formulating gender-sensitive employment policies
- the capacity to implement employment policies through action planning
- the capacity to advocate and coordinate integration of employment policies with development interventions

The rationale of the programme was not only to train individual participants but also to empower them to share their newly acquired knowledge within the ministry or partner organization, thus maximizing the capacity building potential of the training activity. The training programme was made up of eight one-week training courses delivered over a nine-month period, and covering the following themes:

1. Economy and Labour, 2. Labour Market Analysis and Employment Policies, 3. Youth Employment: From Policy to Action, 4. Entrepreneurship, 5. Migration and Employment, 6. Skills and Employability, 7. Gender and Labour towards Empowering Women in Fragile States, 8. From Design to Implementation: Institutions for Employment Policies.

The course had a blended structure, which allowed participants to access course presentations, handouts, further reading materials, and quizzes and exercises. The course participants were exposed to varying teaching methodologies including theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and project development and management methodologies. Part of the training involved distance learning – facilitated through the ITCILO eCampus platform. Webinars, Skype calls, one-on-one chats that fostered knowledge-sharing and continued learning. Participants were in constant contact with their tutors for feedback and had a continuous exchange of ideas. This methodology helped overcome travel and visa logistics, as well as travel outside of Afghanistan – particularly to Schengen visa countries that can be difficult. Most importantly, the distance learning helped to link each of the face-to-face modules, creating a real learning journey rather than a series of one-off training sessions.

At a strategic level this occurred through the improved capacity of policymakers and implementers to design employment promotion policies. At a more direct level it occurred through training and capacity building, but also through other types of interventions such as developing skills for employability and entrepreneurship.

The Balkh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) suggests the training has taught them to analyse the enabling environment for private sector development and better understand the context of entrepreneurs' problems before developing related services. As a result, BCCI services have become more "homegrown" and relevant to the Province. Mr. Barat, the Deputy Chairperson of BCCI, says the results are noticeable, developing new and more impactful projects established by BCCI. New linkages with constituents and other stakeholders have extended BCCI's geographic

scope to enterprises in neighbouring provinces. BCCI has also shown donors that the Chamber has improved outreach and impact applying the acquired good practices, knowledge in private sector diagnostics, programme planning, and management. Since the ITCILO capacity building, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) have become increasingly important development partners in BCCI's small and medium size enterprise development programmes. For example, in supporting the new projects that involve improving access to finance for small and micro enterprises, women's entrepreneurship development and facilitating market linkages. BCCI directing and hosting of diverse programmes means that enterprise development support in the Province has become more cohesive, long-term, and coordinated.

“The Chamber is now far better equipped to collect the right data, analyse their problems, develop solutions for their problems and then get the right people around the table to discuss it and solve the problem.”

BCCI CEO Mr. Nasir Qasimi

The capability to establish supportive relationships is an important factor in reducing fragility (Berkenhof, 2007). These supportive relationships include creating and managing linkages, alliances and partnerships with others to leverage resources and actions and build legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders. At the start of the ITCILO project, there was little communication and coordination between local Employers’ Organizations, the Ministry of Labour and Trade Unions. Through the active participation of the ACCI, BCCI, NUAWA and MoLSAMD in the training and capacity building, new relationships were forged. Ms Fatema Kashefi, from the MoLSAMD, indicated that her knowledge of the importance of social dialogue and the need to work together (public and private sectors) in developing countries has substantially increased. The training allowed her to see the value of balancing different interests through dialogue, as well as the benefits of expertise in social, environmental, labour and economic analysis in these discussions (Ms Fatema Kashefi, one-year training course participant).

“The capacity development has had an impact on better employment policy dialogue and development in Afghanistan. For example, the ILO constituents have worked to include youth employment and entrepreneurship into the Decent Work Country Programme for Afghanistan (2018-2022), the National Labour Policy for Afghanistan (2016), the National Migration Policy, the Social Protection Policy, the National Employment Policy and the National Export Strategy”.

Source: Mr. Manzoor Khaliq, ILO Kabul Senior Coordinator

In fragile and conflict-affected situations the relationship of women and girls to institutions are often limited or mediated by family or customary structures (OECD, 2017). This includes women’s engagement with dialogue

in youth employment and entrepreneurship development. Through the ITCILO training and exposure to the experiences of the Indian Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) of India, the BCCI and ACCI have strengthened their strategies to ensure that the voice of women is heard and included in programme strategies. The BCCI and ACCI have gained a more in-depth understanding of women entrepreneurs’ needs, and as a result are in a better position to offer more tailored enterprise support. For example, young women are actively supported by both single sex and mixed sex business networks by the BCCI and ACCI. The BCCI has improved its support to women through linking them to markets, finance, and ongoing business coaching. As a result of their improved outreach and service offering, women’s membership at BCCI has increased by 100 per cent between 2018 and 2019.

The ACCI has adapted its membership strategy where women can join the organization with a marginal fee.

The BCCI has also established a Women’s Committee within the Chamber, for members and non-members, chaired and run by women, to increase the voice of women in business in Balkh. This platform allows women entrepreneurs to voice their business concerns directly to the Chamber, which then acts upon them; it has also provided women with a trustworthy business platform.

4.4 Learnings from South-South cooperation: Building connections between India and Afghanistan



Developing countries and those experiencing fragility can learn a lot from each other because they understand the unique challenges of fragile contexts. This element of the roadmap promotes fragile-to-fragile transfer of knowledge without an intermediary. It encourages better labour market analysis and resulting employment and entrepreneurship development policies.

While training from the ITCILO also has strong benefits, Fragile-to-Fragile and South-South cooperation (in contexts where economies are developing, even if they are not necessarily fragile) is effective because it is context-specific: from people who understand the challenges of fragile contexts on a first-hand basis. South-South cooperation in the project was facilitated in collaboration with V.V. Giri National Labour Institute of India and ILO New Delhi. V.V. Giri was a strategic partner in the design, adaptation, and implementation of the different training activities offered in the project. It played a central role in creating meaningful connections with local realities in India and in organizing study visits for Afghan participants in the country. These visits provided a space where horizontal dialogue and knowledge exchange could flourish; allowing Afghan counterparts to find approaches that could be adopted and adapted to the local Afghan context.



“The way that capacity building is put into practice, it really fosters South-South and triangular exchange in knowledge between Afghanistan, India and Turin. This is an enriching exchange and cross fertilisation of ideas and experiences.”

Source: Dagmar Waltar, ILO Director, Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia and Country Office for India.

“Capacity Building encompasses the country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options concerned.”

(UNECD, 1992)

For the participants of the capacity building activities, this kind of horizontal learning process provided insights that were meaningful and relatable, with achievable methods, goals and advice on how to create sustainable employment promotion and training opportunities in Afghanistan. Other locations for study visits in India included the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI), the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Business Development (NIESBUD), the Associated Chamber of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM) and Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) and the IL&FS Institute of Skills.

South-South cooperation offers an unparalleled opportunity for countries to share their achievements and lessons learned. For V.V. Giri in India, this experience helped to expand their role in their own country, while also supporting other countries. It also opens future opportunities of collaboration with neighbouring countries.

“It takes our institution to greater heights in terms of South South cooperation”.

Source: Dr. Ellina Samantroy, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

Over the course of Phase I and Phase II of the project (2016-2019), approximately 1300 people from ILO constituents and other stakeholders from Afghanistan participated in the various other training activities connected to promoting employment in fragile states (see Table 5). In the spirit of South-South and triangular cooperation much of the training was held in other fragile or developing country settings.

Table 3: below details some of the courses in the training events

Number	Course name
1	Academy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation
2	The Future of Work Dialogues for Young People in Fragile States
3	Start and Improve your Business: Make it work. Make it last
4	Academy on the Promotion of Decent Work in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries
5	Promotion of Youth Employment in Fragile Settings
6	Consultative Workshop on Promoting Youth Employment in Afghanistan
7	Leadership for Development in Fragile Settings
8	Project Cycle Management and Results Measurement in Fragile Settings
9	Promotion of Youth Employment in Fragile Settings
10	Project Cycle Management in Fragile Settings
11	Leadership for Employment Promotion in Fragile Settings
12	Strengthening the Capacity of Technical and Vocational Educational and Training in Afghanistan

4.5 Supporting a robust private section: Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurial initiatives led by youth at the local level



Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development in fragile contexts has the potential to stimulate local economic development and job creation opportunities. This element of the roadmap promotes sustainable business development support for enterprises and entrepreneurs by improving service provision mechanisms, which provide demand-based capacity building training to women and men entrepreneurs.

Despite Afghan entrepreneurs and SMEs being the engines for much needed development, foreign assistance has been declining and the country still struggles to attract private investment. In addition, lack of business support is hindering the development of Afghanistan's private sector and reduces the incentives to start or formalise a business (OECD, 2019). The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) has also highlighted that the shortage of labour with managerial and entrepreneurial skills is a core obstacle to private sector and entrepreneurship development (ACCI, 2017).

In the ITCILO project, trained advisors and policymakers made a difference on the ground, by supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and to be more productive. Capacity building efforts focused on promoting private sector entrepreneurship to spur sustainable job growth and increase the demand for skilled workers.

Part of the training completed by the project participants was to improve the way they worked with entrepreneurs in Afghanistan; helping women and men to acquire the skills to start, grow and improve their business and in coaching them to consolidate the new skills, and also to overcome the potential obstacles in their businesses. Capacity building programmes included activities that reached out to end-beneficiaries by providing hands-on experience for trainers to have their first experiences in





training or coaching micro, small and medium enterprises.

"Doing business is my goal and my target in life... be a role model for other women. Recently I see the limitations for these girls. They are starting their businesses, they are participating in training, they are getting advice for the trainers and they are trying to start their businesses and achieve their goals and that is a good thing for our country!"

Source: Yalda Bari SIYB trainer and Entrepreneur

The project combined two different kinds of training to help provide the groundwork for this local level initiative, i.e. business coaching and enterprise training.

The coaching programme:

The coaching programme trained and certified local women and men to be business coaches. Participants learned how to coach youth in fragile settings with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship. In hands-on coaching experiences the trainee coaches had to complete a set number of coaching "flying hours" with local entrepreneurs who were experiencing

business problems and needed to find solutions. Throughout the whole process the trainee coaches were supported when they were out in the field and dealing with entrepreneurs – they were able to Skype their coaching tutors and use the dedicated eCampus platform to share their experience and get assistance from their peers.

The coaching programme included partnership development and capacity building for the BCCI. It now provides a business coaching service for all members, with youth enterprise start-ups as a priority. Business coaching is offered free of charge to grow youth-owned businesses (50 per cent women), assisting them with market access, networking opportunities, and access to finance. In 2019 the BCCI is planned to establish a small business incubator for 20 young women and men (free of charge for six months) within the Chamber. The aim of the incubator is to support the growth of youth business start-ups and to reduce some of the barriers that these young women and men face to access office space. Through the SIYB training, coaching and business incubation, the BCCI can better support emerging businesses and track and monitor the progress of the trainees, their growth, and their needs.

Enterprise training:

The enterprise training combined Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead)². It strengthened the capacity of selected women and men from MoLSAMD, BCCI, ACCI and business development service providers. With support of the project 15 trainers of SIYB trainers were certified.

"The SIYB is becoming popular (in Afghanistan) ... and is a reflection of the success of the SIYB"

Manzoor Khaliq: ILO Representative to Afghanistan

Through SIYB Afghanistan Company, the BCCI has expanded training (beyond direct provision

- 2 The GET Ahead (Gender and Entrepreneurship Together) training programme aims to address some of the barriers women face to starting and running a business (lack of knowledge, lack of skills, low confidence, family expectations and responsibilities, etc.) and bridge the gender gap by offering women and men business management skills and key soft skills.

by the project) for local entrepreneurs, training over 3000 women and men (approximately 1,500 women) in SIYB and 900 women in GET Ahead. Recent impact research on SIYB and GET Ahead programmes showed that 53 per cent of the trainees generated new business ideas after the training and 94 per cent of those trained had completed a business plan by the end of the SIYB training. (Tanin Consulting Service Company, 2018).

Total Entrepreneurs trained:

4817

52% women; 48% men

Total Entrepreneurs trained directly by the project:

917 (phase 1: 415, phase 2: 502)

60% women; 40% men

Total Entrepreneurs trained in collaboration and with local providers:

3900 entrepreneurs

3000 SIYB; 900 GET Ahead

50% women; 50% men

Box 3: SIYB Afghanistan – a story of improving the enabling environment for young entrepreneurs

SIYB Afghanistan is a business development services provider that aims to create employment for women and men, contribute to economic growth, and eradicate poverty in Afghanistan. It was established in 2017 by a network of ten SIYB certified trainers (three women and seven men) to act as an institutional hub for business development knowledge and to serve as a quality assurance platform for the ILO SIYB package in Afghanistan. Although the ILO SIYB package is the central training mechanism used by the company, it is supported by a variety of complementary enterprise development tools. SIYB Afghanistan is an independent company offering services across Afghanistan and is based in the BCCI in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. The BCCI recognises the synergies with SIYB Afghanistan and indicates that *"SIYB has had a big impact on the BCCI [...] we are now able to offer more business development services to members"* (BCCI Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Qasimi).

SIYB Afghanistan has taken advantage of all the capacity building elements of the ITCILO project, while also acting as a catalyst for enterprise development by connecting organizational capacities, stimulating social dialogue, and generating local knowledge. By so doing, SIYB Afghanistan ultimately contributes to a more robust SME sector. SIYB Afghanistan has seen remarkable growth over the period Nov 2017–May 2019. Although the ITCILO programmes have been the catalyst to the development of SIYB Afghanistan, the ILO and ITCILO now play a minor role in its sustainability.

Source: ITCILO

Gender and entrepreneurship in Afghanistan

Often, Afghan women do not have the same physical and social mobility, and access to productive resources and services as Afghan men (ILO, 2019). The project ensured gender-based barriers to enterprise training were considered in all training activities. For example, in the SIYB training cycle women were encouraged to become certified trainers and were actively sought out to participate in teaching entrepreneurs. The enterprise training packages used by the ITCILO project not only contained technical skills to generate a business idea and to start a business, but also aimed to develop the soft skills of beneficiaries; for example, in communication and negotiation. These soft skills boosted self-esteem and confidence in women entrepreneurs which were key in empowering them to negotiate in business dealings, as well as with their families.

The BCCI and ACCI directly run enterprise training programmes (this function was previously

subcontracted). This direct provision has resulted in a sustainable revenue stream and better quality control in the BCCI's enterprise training. BCCI management, and young women and men within the Chamber attended the Training of Trainers (ToT) for ITCILO SIYB. The training has had a substantive impact; the Chamber now regularly rolls out SIYB training directly in provinces other than Balkh in northern Afghanistan (for example, Bamyán, Kabul and Samangan).

In 2018, BCCI membership increased by 100 per cent, with women members increasing by 240 per cent (from 50 to 120 women). The BCCI attributes its growth and sustainability in service provision to the ITCILO support received in capacity building. These improvements have not only contributed to the BCCI's capacity directly, but have also supported wider private sector governance where businesses can start and grow in a more enterprise-friendly environment. Two stories of women entrepreneurs supported by the BCCI and SIYB Afghanistan are described in Box 4.

Box 4: Stories from entrepreneurs: business development skills development and coaching

Ms. Sultani, a returning refugee from Iran came back to Afghanistan to rebuild her life. She realized there was a demand for mushrooms, and started to explore mushroom cultivation options. For Ms. Sultani, learning about bigger scale mushroom cultivation came with a steep learning curve as her business had failed twice. In 2018 Ms. Sultani attended SIYB training where she not only learnt basic business skills, but through mentoring she also gained knowledge and insight into the agricultural equipment needed to make her business sustainable. The training gave Ms. Sultani the capacity to plan and cost her business idea better, the confidence to reach out to those involved in the industry, and to research superior farming practices. She developed a list of equipment requirements (to increase productivity of the mushroom farm) and through the National Refugee Council she applied for (and received) an equipment grant. Since receiving the equipment and applying the lessons learned from SIYB, her business has grown, she is making a profit, and she is creating jobs (she currently employs 3 people). The SIYB training was the missing link for her to better understand her business needs and to use her networks to raise the necessary capital to establish and grow her business. The SIYB "boosted and skilled me" says Ms. Sultani.

In 2017, twenty-three-year-old Ms. Yaqobi had many business ideas but was at a loss as to how to convert them into viable projects. She was contacted by the CEO of the BCCI who told her about the ILO's Start Your Business (SYB) training. SYB helped her to generate a business idea, and "following SIYB to the letter", gave her the confidence to start up. With 1 000 USD Najima established Amu in 2018 and has built it into a successful local online store, selling Afghan jewellery, imported bags, and clothing. She has recently expanded her business to Kabul.

Ms. Yaqobi had to find a business idea that would be accepted by her family as they objected to her trading in person. The SIYB training gave her the confidence to negotiate with her family and after exploring different business ideas she developed an online shopping business that allowed her to trade remotely (and thereby not defy her family). With less support at home she relies heavily on the BCCI to assist her business, gain relevant skills and market information, and benefit from the BCCI's mentorship opportunities. As the business has grown her confidence has increased with her ability to negotiate more freedom of movement; and Ms. Yaqobi now uses networks to grow her business. She employs two people who work full time and has additional associates available to assist where necessary, ensuring deliveries are made within 24 hours. From being unsure where to start, Najima now dreams of "a branch of Amu in each country and to sell Afghan women handicrafts to the world".

Source: ITCILO.

4.6 Connecting people from different places: the ITCILO as knowledge facilitator



A lack of social capital in fragile states can lead to intermediation gaps between institutions. This element of the roadmap focuses on how ITCILO acted as a hub for knowledge and dialogue in promoting youth employment in fragile states.

Through technological platforms like eCampus and ILO's wide network with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other national and international partners around the world, the ITCILO is well-placed to facilitate knowledge sharing in fragile settings. The ITCILO has the capacity to bridge and connect policymakers, practitioners, and training offers in different countries. The wide network and role as a UN agency allowed the project to bring people together to discuss, exchange knowledge, and cooperate. This includes strong strategic and logistical support from existing ILO offices and programmes running within countries.

The project network allowed for valuable South–South learning opportunities; the ITCILO project connected the participants from Afghanistan with agencies and businesses in India, facilitated in collaboration with V.V. Giri, and invited participants to events in South Asia and Africa. This gave participants an opportunity to network with other government agencies and representatives from different regions.

Participants in the project consistently suggest that the element of networking and additional opportunities for contact magnified their learning, innovation and confidence in the programme development and implementation. Sharing contexts in which challenges are being addressed helps to create both formal and informal exchange of knowledge between policymakers. The ability to organize regional and global workshops in different countries and in the ITCILO centre in Turin offered projects an international environment in which cross-cultural and cross-country exchange and cooperation flourished. The ITCILO as a facilitator of South-South cooperation has also built the capacity of organizations beyond Afghanistan.



“The program has helped us to understand fragile settings better [...] this kind of collaboration, if you look at it from a future perspective, it will definitely take us, with the institutions, to much greater goals in terms of designing frameworks for other fragile contexts.”

Dr. Ellina Samantroy of the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

The ITCILO project set out to create an interconnected programme and not merely a series of isolated, one-off training events. The ITCILO project invited the same group of participants to attend the one-year eight module training programme, with each module connected to the next by distance learning. In addition to this unique blend of distance learning and face-to-face training, this strategy of working with the same women and men for a longer period and on a wider set of topics created the feeling of embarking on a learning journey. In a similar fashion, a group of women and men participated in the coaching journey (comprising two face-to-face workshops plus distance learning and practice sessions).

The group work in the one-year, eight module training course led to the design of four thematic project outlines, which also benefited from the use of eCampus for participants to get early feedback, additional information, and materials on project design and project management. The coaching programme likewise made extensive use of eCampus. Following the two face-to-face sessions in New Delhi, participants were able to take part in online sessions and ask their trainers’ questions about situations that came up once they began to coach entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, and to continue to develop their skills.

The project facilitated by the ITCILO has a global online community for managing knowledge on topics connected to fragility; a virtual space to build an evidence base on what works (and what does not) to promote decent jobs and economic development in fragile settings. This platform invites users to access and contribute content that is relevant

for facilitating the transition from fragility to resilience through the promotion of decent work. It specifically addresses policymakers, humanitarian and development practitioners, and students and academics who work on fragility-related topics. The platform (<https://fragilestates.itcilo.org/>) is hosted and supported by the ITCILO and the ILO and revolves around three key functions:

4.6.1 Knowledge management for a global community of practice on fragility: the platform fosters cross-project learning and inter-project knowledge transfer, and boosts mutual learning through the sharing of experience.

4.6.2 An information point: for other training opportunities offered by the ITCILO worldwide, and online courses.

4.6.3 As a source of resources: a comprehensive, ever-growing collection of online resources, case studies, documents and videos on the topic of job creation in fragile settings, and material illustrating the phases of projects undertaken.

Connecting people through technology

The ITCILO brings technological platforms to projects facilitated by the Centre, supporting distance learning in extending training opportunities to people who cannot attend all the courses. This is achieved through the eCampus platform, distance learning, self-guided modules and ensures a deeper integration of distance and face-to-face learning (<https://ecampus.itcilo.org/>).

The digital education platform of the ITCILO is eCampus. It responds to the diverse learning needs of ILO constituents and offers a wide range of learning modalities, including self-guided e-learning modules, tutor-based e-learning programmes, online communities of practices, webinars, promotional material, Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), and relevant ILO knowledge products. eCampus gives the ITCILO an ability to offer engaging distance learning that is a valuable and meaningful complement to face-to-face training programmes.

The one-year training course relies heavily on the use of eCampus to encourage a continuous exchange of ideas amongst participants and between facilitators.



© UNHCR

5. Summary of the outputs and results of the project (2016–2019)

Table 4: Summary of outputs of the project (2016-2019)

Phase I	Phase II	Result
<p>Focus: Support the capacity of ILO constituents and ILO social partners to design policies and concrete projects to support youth employment.</p>	<p>Focus: Support the capacity of local capacity building providers and ILO constituents and social partners for policy implementation. The focus areas of intervention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) entrepreneurship education (ii) skills development (iii) women's empowerment (iv) migration <p>Interventions in these areas were targeted at young women and men.</p>	<p>Supporting employment programmes in building peace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen social and economic relationships between stakeholders (improve contact). • Establish mechanisms for capacity building and service delivery, and implementation of existing policies and plans thereby enhancing youth and gender-sensitive economic opportunities (create opportunities). • Respond to opportunities for improved social dialogue and strengthen participatory mechanisms for social dialogue and conflict resolution (address grievances).

Table 5: Summary of results of the project (2016-2019)

Phase I	Phase II	Total	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 trained policymakers (123 women; 127 men) • 1 Year of training in policy making, 1 Coaching Programme and 1 SIYB Programme • 1 Knowledge sharing platform • 4 Project proposal outlining policy option to address employment challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 189 trained policymakers (45 women; 144 men) • Collaboration, inputs and facilitation of three recent policies in Afghanistan. • 2 Project proposals implemented to address employment challenges in Afghanistan. • One sustainable business development service provider operating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 439 trained policymakers (168 women; 271 men) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved social cohesion through inter-group knowledge and perceptions. • Strengthened participatory mechanisms for social dialogue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 415 trained entrepreneurs directly by the Project (184 women; 231 men) • 15 trainers certified to deliver SIYB courses (6 women; 9 men) • 13 coaches certified to promote youth entrepreneurship in fragile situations (7 women; 6 men) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 502 trained entrepreneurs directly by the Project (351 women; 151 men) • 3000 trained entrepreneurs in SIYB in collaboration with service providers (1500 women; 1500 men) • 900 trained entrepreneurs in GET Ahead (540 women; 360 men) • 14 trainers certified to deliver SIYB courses (6 women; 8 men) • 20 certified GET Ahead trainers (17 women; 3 men) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4817 trained entrepreneurs (2391 women; 2426 men) • 29 trainers certified to deliver SIYB course (12 women; 17 men) • 20 certified GET Ahead trainers (17 women; 3 men) • 13 coaches certified to promote youth entrepreneurship in fragile situations (7 women; 6 men) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced gender-sensitive economic opportunities. • Strengthened institutional capacity to deliver services to women and men.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49 per cent women policy makers trained • 44 per cent women entrepreneurs trained • 40 per cent women certified SIYB trainers • 40 per cent women certified coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 per cent women policymakers • 54 per cent women entrepreneurs trained • 43 per cent women certified SIYB trainers • 85 per cent women certified GET Ahead trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 per cent women policy makers trained • 50 per cent women entrepreneurs trained • 41 per cent women certified SIYB trainers • 85 per cent women certified GET Ahead trainers • 51 per cent women coaches certified to promote youth entrepreneurship in fragile situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed norms and roles of targeted Afghan women entrepreneurs. • Support the increased capacity for Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality.

6. Learning from employment projects in fragile settings

6.1 Lessons learnt from threats, risks, and challenges, working in fragile settings

Several key learnings from the Afghanistan project may be relevant for other fragile contexts. Practical lessons learnt in implementing the ITCILO project in Afghanistan are illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Lessons learnt in addressing threats, risks, and challenges in working in fragile settings

Category	Details	How the ITCILO project addressed it
Insecure with limited mobility	Internal travel in Afghanistan is frequently difficult, unsafe or impossible. Moving around Kabul and major cities requires planning, permission and precautions. International staff are confined to their fairly secure facilities, with no outside social events or entertainment. This makes it difficult to attract foreign lecturers, trainers and experts.	The ITCILO project held several training events in locations in Asia, Africa and Europe. These were complemented with distance learning activities.
Political instability	The national unity government created after the 2014 Afghanistan presidential election appears to enjoy widespread public support. Nevertheless, party political tensions remain. Within the short timescale of this project, the Parliament has dismissed seven cabinet ministers, including those for Education and MoLSAMD.	Gaining the enthusiastic support of at least one main advocate in a key ministry role was helpful in establishing the project so that subsequent leaders would be likely to support it. Where possible, cultivated “change agents” to drive the project forward.
Finding ways to include women	In Afghanistan, cultural norms make it difficult for women to travel alone and take part in training courses in Turin or other international locations. This was a great challenge in engaging women in the programme.	The ITCILO project found it was easier for women to travel when they travelled in groups or with supervisors. The ITCILO project needed to push back on initial lists of potential participants (mostly men), and ask that more women be included. Advocates representing ILO constituents helped to boost the female participation rate recognising that it was critical for women to be included in the training.
Navigating a multilingual environment	Dari and Pashto (both with Persian alphabets), are the main languages of education in Afghanistan. Russian is also spoken discreetly, while modern educational material and software are mostly in English.	The project team involved field staff from the ILO Afghanistan office, who were able to offer support and share expertise in local languages and context.
Working around challenging visa requirements	According to the Visa Restrictions Index, Afghan passports rank 104th. It takes around eight weeks to issue a Schengen visa. For certain managerial positions in the public sector, presidential administrative approval is required prior to leaving the country for capacity development. This situation created several difficulties to include more Afghan participants in the planned activities for 2016.	To minimise the risks, several training activities took place in India as visa procedures are quicker and the probability of receiving a visa is much higher when compared to other countries. Distance learning was also used to complement the face-to-face courses of the one-year training programme.

6.2 Lessons from the project approach to capacity building in fragile settings

Building partnerships for sustainable long-term results: The project resources were invested in project activities and guided by the roadmap that paved the way for long-term impacts through collaborative partnerships that lasted over three years. The combination of long-term support guided by different elements of the roadmap provided a tailored programme for constituents and other stakeholders in Afghanistan which had both short- and long-term impacts on direct beneficiaries and beyond. Key to this was building constituents' capacity to devise and implement self-driven initiatives that are based on their realities, and developing solutions reflected by these challenges.

The program... "has helped us to understand fragile settings better".

Source: Dr. Ellina Samantroy of the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in India

Capacitating youth as change agents: The project focused much effort on promoting entrepreneurship and skills development for young women and men. The roadmap embedded gender, skills and youth unemployment issues into the mainstream of all project activities (one-year programme, study visits, programme strategy development and policy development). Youth were capacitated both as entrepreneurs and as SIYB trainers to support efforts in youth enterprise business development service provisions, and to remove gender stereotypes. This success is demonstrated by the growth of SIYB Afghanistan Company and of youth start-ups, and the demand for programmes from SIYB from the private and public sector.

Promoting gender equality: The project promoted gender equality in its activities and ensured the equitable inclusion of women in strategy, design and implementation of the project. This focus on the economic empowerment of women further strengthens the future position of women within the labour market. This is visible in the programmes



© ILO/Berger H.

developed by beneficiaries targeting women, the ring-fenced jobs for women in the workplace by some participants, and policies that are gender-mainstreamed.

"Wherever I go, it (gender) is now with me so whenever I design a project, I have to consider this – this knowledge came from the ILO project"

Source: Mr. Ebadullah AHMADI, Ministry of Labour and social affairs. Programmes

Social dialogue to build trust between constituents: The project applied development principles guided by the roadmap aimed at building capacity and increased dialogue between constituents, to build on their social contract. Through the activities in Afghanistan and India (South-South cooperation and learning of others), the project was able to increase this dialogue whilst also building personal capacities and confidence.

Multiplier effect for stability and sustainability: Institutions and beneficiaries involved in the programme have a crucial role in the wider enabling environment in Afghanistan. Through the efforts of the project, these institutions have adopted approaches, tools, and knowledge, and have multiplied their impact beyond the project locations, demographics, target groups, into other institutions and ministries in Afghanistan where ITCILO approaches have become more commonly used and generalised.

The importance of local knowledge: Despite the participants in the ITCILO project being embedded in national structures and institutions formal knowledge about the situation of young female and male entrepreneurs was lacking. Without the technical capacity to research and design systemic policies and strategies practitioners cannot fully address the underlying barriers to development. The training support and mentoring in practical applications has taught project participants to analyse the enabling environment for private sector development; also to better understand the context of entrepreneurs' problems before creating related development solutions.

Long-term capacity building approaches: The nature of fragile states implies engagement in fragile situations focused on addressing the root causes of state fragility, and needs to be long-term to be effective. The one-year, eight-module capacity building course for ILO constituents in Afghanistan provided consistent and continued interaction, rather than a series of one-off training programmes where momentum and knowledge is lost in the interim. The eight-module training programme has built the capacity of constituents to use their knowledge and skills to self-organize and act. This has resulted in an improved ability to decide, plan, and engage collectively for better service provision for youth employment in Afghanistan.

"The project was very welcomed by the constituents, and the Ministry of Labour in particular expressing his satisfaction with this project".

Source: Manzoor Khaliq: ILO Representative to Afghanistan

South-South cooperation: Learning from others during the training programme (between participants, trainers and through the South-South collaboration) was transformative for all the constituents and was key to the programme's success. South-South cooperation fosters knowledge sharing and practical learning through the involvement of technical experts and practitioners (such as policymakers), to allow for direct exchange without intermediaries.

6.3 Replicability of the ITCILO approach to promoting employment in fragile settings

Replicating existing approaches can be faster and less costly than redesigning them anew. The approach also caters for organizations in fragile situations where the capacity and skills to develop their own approaches may be limited by the very fragility they seek to overcome. The replication approach has been seen as more scientific as it allows a model to be designed and tested for future replication, thus reducing the design Phase to refinement and adaptation. (Jowett, A., 2010)

The approach of the ITCILO project in long-term capacity building of constituents was on "how" rather than "what" to do in promoting employment in fragile settings. This capacity building approach reflects the call of fragile settings for adaptive development rather than "best practices" and "quick-win" projects. In addition, the design of the implementation of the roadmap elements lends to replicability in areas of fragility because its application can be localised. Depending on the context of fragility, the focus of the roadmap elements can be emphasised to meet local needs. This interconnectedness between the roadmap elements reduces the risk of replicating stand-alone initiatives and may have a positive consequence in one situation and a negative consequence in another.

"This is definitely replicable and can be replicated in other fragile contexts"

Source: Dr. Ellina Samantroy of the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in India

The roadmap element of South-South cooperation gives momentum to replicability of the whole map by providing an interface whereby informants from Afghanistan (for example) could discuss the details of practices behind the elements – to see whether they are replicable in the whole or partially bilaterally with other fragile communities.

7. Bibliography

- ACCI, 2017. *Business Monitor 2017*, Kabul: ACCI.
- Berkenhof, D. W., 2007. *Capacity development in fragile states: Discussion paper No 58D*, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management.
- Brookings, 2018. *Future development*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/11/08/fragile-states-and-the-search-for-what-works/> [Accessed June 2019].
- Brück, T. et al., 2016. *Jobs Aid Peace: A Review of the theory and practice of the impact of employment programmes on peace in fragile and conflict-affected countries.*, Berlin: International Security and Development Centre.
- CORDAID, 2015. *Position paper June 2015: Focus on fragility*, s.l.: CORDAID.
- European Union, 2019. *Focus on Women's Rights in Afghanistan*. [Online] Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/59493/focus-womens-rights-afghanistan_en [Accessed June 2019].
- Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2013. *Afghanistan national youth policy*, Kabul: Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
- ILO, UN Peacebuilding, The World Bank and UNDP, 2016. *Employment Programmes and Peace: A joint statement and analytical framework, emerging principles for action and next steps*, s.l.: s.n.
- ILO, 2010. *Vulnerable employment and poverty on the rise. Interview with ILO chief of Employment Trends Unit*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_120470/lang--en/index.htm [Accessed June 2019].
- ILO, 2015. *Employment and Decent Work in Fragile Settings: A Compass to Orient the World*, Switzerland: Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.
- ILO, 2018. *Afghanistan decent work country program 2018-2022*, Kabul: ILO.
- ILO, 2019. *Constraints and good practice in Women;s entrepreneurship Development in MENA*, Geneva: International Labour Office.
- ILO, 2019. *Country Profile*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/ilostat> [Accessed June 2019].
- IOM & UNHCR, 2017. *Returns to Afghanistan in 2017: IOM-UNHCR joint summary report*, Kabul: IOM & UNHCR.
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2016. *Afghanistan living conditions survey 2016-17*, Kabul: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization.
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018. *The Afghanistan living conditions survey (2016-17)*, Kabul: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization.
- ITCILO, 2017. *Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training: analytical study*, Turin: ITCILO.
- ITCILO, 2018. *Promoting rural youth employment in Afghanistan through entrepreneurship education and vocational training*, Turin: ITCILO.
- ITCILO, n.d. *Developing the institutional capacity of ILO constituents to implement policy: the case of MoLSAMD*, Turin: ITCILO.
- Jowett, A., 2010. Paths to scaling-up through replication: An educational perspective. *POLIS Journal*, 4 (Winter 2010).

MoRR, 2018. *Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation: Return and Reintegration Response Plan - 2018*, s.l.: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

OECD, 2017. *Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations*, Paris: OECD.

OECD, 2019. *Boosting Private Sector Development and Entrepreneurship in Afghanistan*, Paris: OECD Publishing.

Tanin Consulting Service Company, 2018. *Impact Assessment of SIYB and GET Ahead Training Report*, s.l.: s.n.

The World Bank Group, 2016. *Afghanistan to 2030: Priorities for Economic Development under Fragility*.

UNECD, 1992. *Agenda 21; Chapter 37: National Mechanisms and International Cooperation for Capacity Building*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-building.html> [Accessed July 2019].

8. Find out more

If you want to learn more on how the ITCILO contributes to peace building, national reconciliation and social cohesion through employment generation and decent work opportunities for women and men in conflict-affected and disaster prone countries, contact:

Jobs for Peace and Resilience
Training Programme
jpr@itcilo.org

Visit the following web sites:

<https://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/programmes/jobs-for-peace-and-resilience-programme>

and

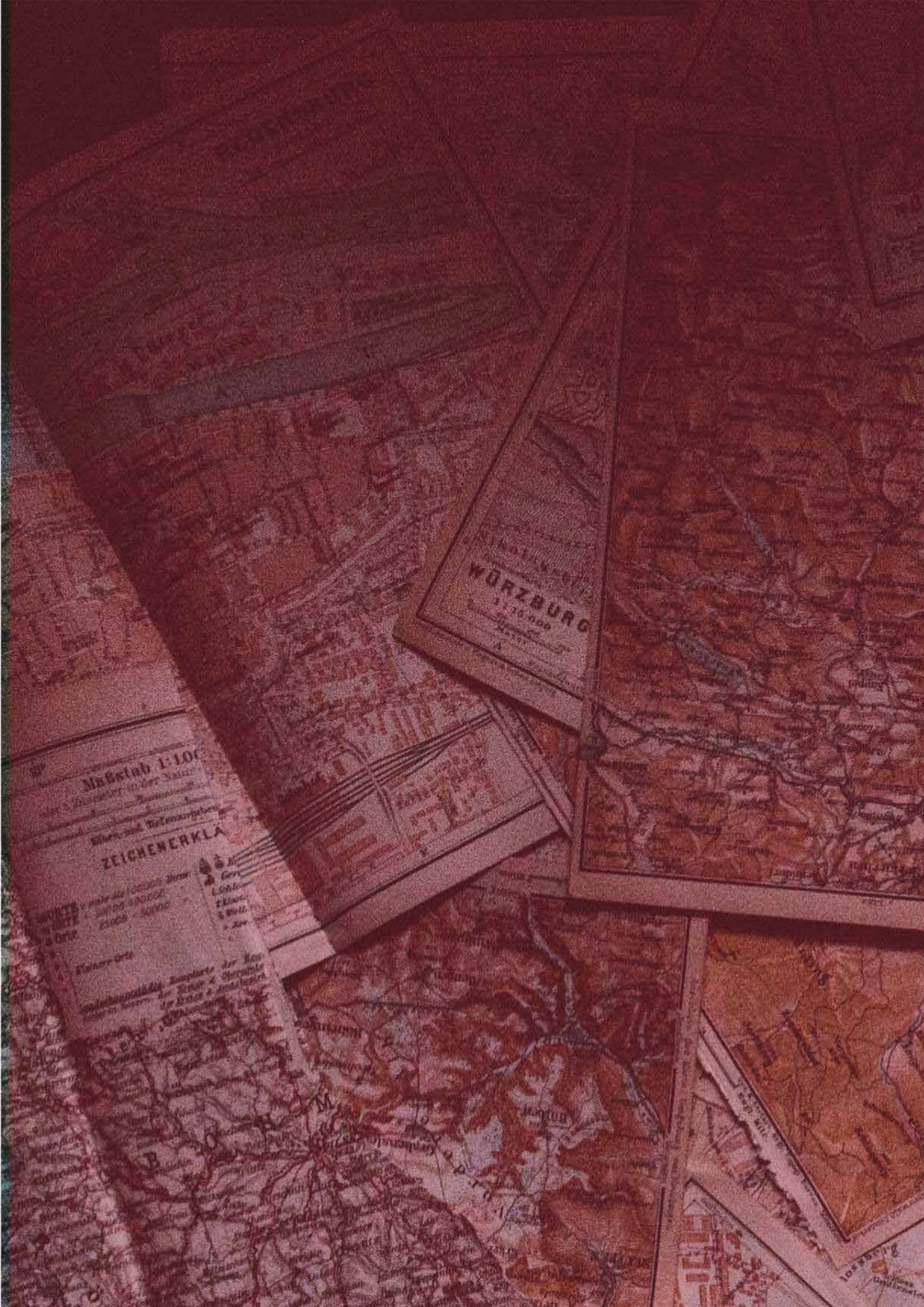
<https://fragilestates.itcilo.org/latest-news/>

The project has been financed by the Government of Norway under the Norway-ILO Programme Cooperation Agreement 2018–2019.



International Labour Organization





WÜRZBURG
1:100,000

Maßstab 1:100,000
Maßstab in der Natur
1 cm = 1 km

ZEICHENERKLA

• A. Gewässer
• B. Höhenlinien
• C. Eisenbahnen
• D. Straßen
• E. Orte

Stationsort
Hauptort
Ort
Dorf
Weiler
Mühle
Wald
Berg
Höhe
Karte

LOS BAYRE
Höhe
Ort