



CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN KURDISTAN

IRAQ

**FUNDED BY RDPP
WRITTEN BY NAHED FREIJ**

Evaluation Report for the Independent Final Evaluation of:

***CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN
KURDISTAN***

Submitted to:

Action Against Hunger

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Summary Table

Project Name	Creating job opportunities for young adults in Kurdistan
Contract Number	DANIDA/RDPP/2.1.2/2016-29370
Partners (if applicable)	N/A
Location (country/ies, region/s)	Zakho district, Dohuk Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)
Sector(s)	Livelihood/Income Generating Activities
Duration	14 months, NCE-17 months
Starting Date	01 May 2017
Ending Date	30, Sept 2018
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Country Office administering the Programme/Project	Action Against Hunger - Kurdistan Region of Iraq
Responsible Action Against Hunger HQ	Action Against Hunger France
Evaluation Type	Independent Final Evaluation
Evaluation Dates	From July 26 to September 6, 2018

Acknowledgements

This final evaluation report of “CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN KURDISTAN” was prepared in my capacity as external evaluator to Action Against Hunger. The evaluation was carried out between July 26 and September 6, 2018.

The main findings and recommendations contained in this report include the inputs provided by the interviewed project stakeholders who made sincere efforts and demonstrated willingness and openness to being interviewed for the evaluation and sharing of necessary documentation. From Action Against Hunger Coordination team in Erbil, special thanks go out to Ms. Valeria BACCI Deputy Country Director – Programmes, Mr. Ashok Kumar FSL Head of department, and Ms. Soraya MEAL Officer for their overall guidance and support and for their openness in being interviewed for this evaluation. Special thanks are further extended to Mr. Vincenzo Schiano Lomoriello RDPP Program Manager for Iraq and Jordan for his participation in informing the evaluation.

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Many thanks are also extended to the numerous people listed in (Annex 2) from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Zakho Vocational Training Center, Directorate of Labor and Vocational Training, Chamber of Commerce, apprentice hosting enterprises, young men and women supported by the action as well as their families who all took serious interest in sharing their Project experience with me.

I hope that the conclusions, lessons and recommendations presented in this report will be used in view of shared learning and improvement in future similar programming.

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“This report was commissioned by Action Against Hunger to the external evaluator. The content does not necessarily reflect the point of view/opinion of the organization”

List of abbreviations

3RP	Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan
BRHA	Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs
CBO	Community Based Organization
CoC	Chamber of Commerce
DIB	Disputed Internal Boundaries
DKK	Danish Kroner
DoLVT	Directorate of Labor and Vocational Training
ELA	Evaluation, Learning and Accountability
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HC	Hosting Community
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and Levant
KAB	Know About your Business
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MHCP	Mental Health and Care Practices
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MTR	Mid Term Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCE	No Cost Extension
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PS	Private Sector
PSS	Psychosocial support services
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
RDDP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SSI	Semi structured in-depth interviews
VfM	Value for Money
VTC	Vocational training center
ZVTC	Zakho vocational training center
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations World Food Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With 90% funding from the Regional Development and Protection Programme, Action Against Hunger has been implementing a 17-months project titled “Creating Job Opportunities for Young Adults” in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The 10,806,000 DKK (Danish Kroner) project was implemented in Zakho District of Dohuk Governorate. It aims to “improve the economic situation of vulnerable host communities, Internally Displaced Persons, and refugee families through the creation of new businesses. Through key interventions of i) a vocational training in coordination with a local Vocational Training Centre in Zakho district, ii) an apprenticeship job placement programme and iii) business startup support (Startup kits, grants and follow up) for self-employment, the project aimed at realizing the following results:

- R1 - Local community has been mobilized to participate in training and to raise business opportunities in specific sectors available in linked to residence targeted areas.
- R2 – Host community, IDPs and refugees have enhanced technical and business skills to enter the labor market.
- R3 - Innovative micro/small entrepreneurship initiatives supported for increased opportunities for self-employment.

This final evaluation is undertaken to provide an independent external analysis of the project in terms of achievement of its objective and its impact on beneficiaries. It serves accountability towards project’ actors while adhering to Action Against Hunger’s Evaluation policy and donor’s requirements. It further fosters learning to ensuring that good practices and lessons learned are analyzed and incorporated Action Against Hunger’s future programming.

The evaluation covers the timeframe of the project through August 2018. It addresses five OECD- DAC criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability and mainstreams gender and human rights to the extent possible. The evaluation adopted a multi-tiered participatory qualitative methodology and analysis of quantitative data generated by the project. The utilized a methodological approach encompassed literature review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and site visits to project sites (business start-ups). The evaluation consulted around 72 informants of whom 29 (14 women and 15 men) were direct beneficiaries; 20 IDPs, 7HC, and 2 Syrian Refugees.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Relevance/ Design: The project **aligns** with operative **humanitarian response priorities** and plans in the country. It aligns with Action Against Hunger’s **strategic objectives** regarding FSL and catalyzes the organizations’ **strategic positioning** direction on reinforcing foundations to make HQ Mission sustainable. The project design reflects a **strong understanding** of the **different target groups’ vulnerabilities**, needs and constraints to livelihood and employment. It acknowledges institutional capacity and accessibility constraints in both components and made significant inroads for further capitalization in future programming. Its result framework is found logical overall, but **targets** are **ambitious** given the **limited timeframe** for implementation and the direct implementation approach. The dual-approach of **integrating psychosocial element is unique**. While proving relevant to beneficiaries, the adopted approach (outweighing target groups’ vulnerability and interest over market-potential) has **sustainability implications** for the longer-term business viability as well as the VTC capacities and offering of relevant market-informed and promising vocational trainings.

Effectiveness: The project is proving **largely effective** in realizing its objective to improve the economic situation of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees’ families as well as the project’s expected results. In **R1**, the project overachieved its outreach targets largely enabled by the **gender balanced team** and **complimentary** dual-approach (PSS and livelihood) though direct outreach and selection approach can be

enhanced. Through partnering with ZVTC, the project **effectively increased beneficiaries' skills** and knowledge in life, business and vocational skills which they have largely **put in practice** in their business startups and waged-jobs (**R2**). However, in delivering trainers, VTC trainers' awareness and consideration to protection and beneficiaries psychosocial state requires further attention. In **R3**, the project effectively supported the **establishment of 102** new businesses in IDP camps and Zakho (85% realization of Target). Most consulted businesses report small profitability at the time of the evaluation. The project successfully partnered with 16 private companies and institutions (106% realization of Target) to employing 54 (180% realization of target) young adults. Despite a challenging environment for private sector resilience and growth, the **apprenticeship modality** was found **highly effective** due to the applied approach and continuous follow up.

Efficiency: for shifted programming from an emergency to a post emergency/recovery phase, the evaluation finds the project to operate in **an insufficient duration**. Nevertheless, the project provided **good value for the money** overall that well exceeds numerical calculations. Overall utilized human resources and systems are found both efficiently utilized. Thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team from MHCP department was not envisioned but would have been valuable for the project and the field team. Monitoring and evaluation tools are sufficient but can benefit from revision to promote result-based management.

Impact and sustainability: The project is influencing significant areas of impact on target groups. It is improving household's **resilience** through dignified income generation activities and employment amidst improved psychosocial wellbeing of young men and women. The project is also contributing to **women (economic) empowerment** through meaningful engagement in economic activities and public life and is helping **mitigate social tensions** amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources. For Action Against Hunger, the project enhanced positioning of Action Against Hunger as a key actor in FSL in the region while promoting learning within the organization. Businesses can be expected to sustain generating income for the supported young men and women especially as they are turning into family-businesses and so long that they remain market oriented and practice proactive marketing. More time is still needed for businesses and technical coaching and follow up. Some apprentices are likely to sustain employment post project funding. Local ownership by the MOLSA and VTC is key to sustainability and the project has nurtured a good foundation for future programming that can build on this through stronger and more engaging support for these actors to remain relevant.

Main Recommendations; future programming can consider

1. Strengthen promotion of local ownership and synergetic engagement at strategic and programing levels through a defined FSL partnership strategy and formulation of steering committees on project levels.
2. In post emergency and recovery situations, consider FSL programming within the wider market (Market-development approach). The approach should invest in identification of sectors and vocations that offer opportunities for business startups and apprenticeship and preferably during an inception period while maintaining balance in final selection of beneficiaries.
3. Action Against Hunger is strongly advised to assess the potential for catalyzing improved access to finance by vulnerable groups in Iraq through targeted study, policy dialogue and pilot projects.
4. Consider Practical hands-on business and vocational skills enhancement modalities such as a hybrid of a non-paid apprenticeship modality for vocational training and on-the job feasibility assessments for business startups as well as business coaching.
5. Streamline the monitoring and evaluation system and include thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team from the MHCC department.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Context

The conflict in Syria is largely acknowledged as the worst displacement crisis in today's world. The Syria crisis has displaced 5.4 million Syrian refugees into Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, and there are an estimated 6.1 million internally displaced people within Syria (UNHCR-December 2017¹). The living situation for many refugees continues to be extremely challenging, with many lacking the necessary resources to meet their basic needs. Meanwhile, millions of vulnerable people in refugee-hosting communities in host countries also require assistance.

Broader political, economic and social trends in Iraq compounded the conditions facing both refugees and host communities. Mass executions, systematic rape and horrendous acts of violence became widespread, and human rights and rule of law under constant attack resulting in more than 3 million people fleeing from their homes and seeking alternate protection in the country since the start of 2014 and over 260,000 becoming refugees in other countries. According to United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Iraq had welcomed 247, 057 Syrian refugees 97% of them hosted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) as well as 1.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), making one in every four either a refugee or an IDP.

UNHCR estimates that communities, authorities and infrastructure are at breaking point in Iraq. The decade long armed conflicts, weak economic growth, stressed public finances have long been major challenges facing the country and undermining any development gain in the country. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), limited resources, services and livelihoods opportunities, which are already stretched due to the global reduction in oil prices, decrease in domestic and foreign investment, government salary cuts and the military effort against Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) greatly limited the capacity of local communities and authorities to adequately respond to the continued influx of IDPs and Syrian refugees facing protracted displacement. A World Bank report estimated that economic growth in the Kurdistan region declined by five percentage points in 2014.² To further exacerbate the effects of the refugee crisis, the decline in oil prices has cut the federal budget with a deficit estimated at \$25 billion, equivalent to 25% of the total budget. Across the region, limited livelihoods opportunities, compounded by increased indebtedness and the exhaustion of savings, further exacerbated protection risks and negative coping mechanisms for vulnerable populations, refugees, IDPs and Hosting communities.

Expanding economic opportunities for Syrians and host communities dominated 2017 as it remained one of the greatest challenges facing the region. However, by the end of 2017, the least funded sector in Iraq was Livelihoods at 4% (1m out of the required 28 million)³.

Action Against Hunger has been working in the country since 2013 with interventions to respond to the Syrian Crisis in Dohuk governorate. Since then operations expanded into Ninewa, Erbil and Sulimaniyah governorates, scaling up the humanitarian response with integrated, multi-sectorial approach, addressing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Mental Health and Care Practices (MHCP, which includes psychosocial support services - PSS) and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) for refugees and Iraqi populations both in camps and out of camps. Interventions have included Food in kind, vouchers and multi-purpose cash assistance, WASH rehabilitations in health facilities, and nutrition services; with financial support coming from World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Regional Development and Protection Programme amongst others.

¹ 2017 Annual Report 3RP regional Refugee and Resilience Plan

² Economic effects of the Syrian war and the spread of the Islamic state on the Levant, World Bank, January 2014

³ Sectors received 35%, or USD 80.7 million, of the total 2017 appeal (USD 228.1 million).

2.2 Brief description of the project subject of the evaluation

With 90% funding from the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDDP)⁴, Action Against Hunger has been implementing a project titled “Creating Job Opportunities for Young Adults in KRI”. The 10,806,000 DKK project was implemented in Zakho district of Dohuk Governorate. Project implementation started on May 1, 2017 and was set to end on June 30th. After granting a No Cost Extension (NCE), its duration was extended through September 30th, 2018 for a total implementation period of 17 months.

The Project aims to contribute to expanding livelihood opportunities in communities with large concentrations of displaced families. Its Specific Objective is “to improve the economic situation of vulnerable host communities (HC), Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugee families through the creation of new businesses” in Dohuk governorate. The project targets 150 vulnerable young adults between the ages of 18 to 35 years; 60 HC, 75 IDPs and 15 Syrian Refugees.

Three Results were expected to be realized by the project end:

- R1 - Local community has been mobilized to participate in training and to raise business opportunities in specific sectors available in linked to residence targeted areas.
- R2 – Host community, IDPs and refugees have enhanced technical and business skills to enter the labor market
- R3 - Innovative micro/small entrepreneurship initiatives supported for increased opportunities for self-employment

In realizing the project’s goal, Action Against Hunger’s main lines of interventions include i) **a vocational training** in coordination with the local Vocational Training Centre in Zakho ii) an **apprenticeship/ job placement** programme and iii) **business startup support** (Startup kits, grants and follow up) for self-employment.

During the project implementation, some of the project HR structure and activities were revised and approved by RDPP in August 2017. In terms of activities and targets, revisions were mainly made to introducing an apprenticeship programme and inclusion of direct support for all the beneficiaries through; increasing the target for financial grants/startup kits from 50 to 120, Increasing of the number of beneficiaries accessing job opportunities (from 10 to 30); and increase the number of individuals benefiting from the training (from 150 to 170) individuals to better respond to possible dropout/movements to other communities and guarantee a minimum number individuals completing the training. The changes were also reflected on the internal structure of the project namely; the combination of shorter-term ‘community mobilizers’ and ‘business development officers’ positions into a “livelihood Technician” position and reallocation of some costs and activities namely; removing referral group mechanism, advertising, and reducing costs of grants/ startup kits, amongst others.

According to the revised project document, the project’s revised activities at the time of the evaluation are:

Result 1:

A1.1: Community mobilization activities and household visits

⁴ RDPP is a multi-donor European initiative combining humanitarian and development funds with objective to support Lebanon, Jordan and the Northern Iraq to better understand, plan, and mitigate the impact of forced displacement of Syrian refugees on the host communities. Currently eight European donors support the RDPP: the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Denmark manages the programme.

A1.2: Identification of private companies and local institutions for the Apprenticeship Programme

Result 2:

A2.1: Market assessment and design of livelihoods training curriculum

A2.2: Identification and selection of direct beneficiaries of livelihoods trainings and vocational training courses

A2.3: Publication of market assessment

A2.4: Implementation of livelihoods trainings and vocational training

Result 3:

A3.1: Launch of the Apprenticeship Program

A3.2: Organization of Zakho Job Fair

A3.3: Provision of start-up kits, consulting and entrepreneurship projects follow up

3. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This final evaluation aims to provide an independent external analysis of the project's achievement of its objective and impact on beneficiaries. It serves accountability while adhering to Action Against Hunger's Evaluation policy and donor's requirements and fosters learning to ensuring that good practices and lessons learned are analyzed and incorporated Action Against Hunger's future programming.

The evaluation covers the timeframe of the project from May 2017 to August 2018. In adherence with Action Against Hunger's evaluation policy and those of RDPP/DANIDA, it addresses five OECD-DAC criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. To the extent possible, the evaluation adopts a gender and human rights lens in assessing efforts made to integrate them in all stages of the project. Focus was also drawn to the project's effect in mitigating social tensions amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources as per the evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR).

3.1 Methodological Approach

Provided the scope of evaluation and the project nature, the evaluation utilized a multi-tiered participatory qualitative methodology and analysis of secondary quantitative data. Methodological tools included literature review, semi-structured interviews (SSIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and site visits to project sites (business start-ups) engaging a total of **72** informants. Of these, 29 direct beneficiaries (15 M, 14 W) were consulted; 20 IDPs, 7HC, and 2 Syrian Refugees. The evaluation used the following data sources and data collection methods in undertaking this evaluation:

1. **Comprehensive analysis of various secondary sources** of information including the project documents and revised project proposal and action plan, monthly progress and financial reports, training materials and evaluations, donor visit reports, sample business plans, midterm review (MTR) and others (Annex 3: Bibliography of reviewed literature).
2. **Semi structured in-depth interviews (SSI)**; based on purposeful sampling, **20** SSIs were conducted with Action Against Hunger management, RDPP focal point, national stakeholders in Erbil and Duhok, 3 hosting companies (representing manufacturing, service and retail). Interviews with direct beneficiaries were held through site visits to select men and women HC, IDPs and refugees who benefitted from the project's two components; 3 apprentices, and 5 livelihoods projects.
3. **Focus Group Discussions**: a total of **6** expertly moderated collective discussions were held with the project implementation staff (1 FGD), vocational training center trainers (1FGD), men and women beneficiaries from the apprenticeship program (1 FGD), beneficiaries from the livelihood projects

(1FGD with women and 1 FGD with men), and family members of supported young adults (1FGD). Representation of population status was maintained throughout.

Table 1-Profile of Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholder	Participants Profile	Location	Methods
Action Against Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Team-DO (3 W, 2M) Senior Manager-CO (2W, 1M) 	Duhok Erbil	1 SSI, 1FGD 2 SSI
RDPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- PM (M) 	Skype	SSI
National Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA (1M) BRHA (2M,2W) Zakho VTC (1M) VTC trainers (1W, 7M) Duhok Directorate of VT (1W) RWANGA NGO (1W) Chamber of Commerce (1M) 	Erbil Duhok Zakho Zakho Duhok Skype Duhok	SSI SSI SSI FGD SSI SSI SSI
Target Groups	Participants Profile	Location	Methods
Apprenticeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1M, IDP +1WFamily 1M, HC 1W, R 1W, IDP Mixed (4 W, 2 M) 1IDP Family (3W) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkar Zakho Zakho Darkar Zakho Bersive 2 	SSI/Home visit SSI/Work site visit SSI/Work site visit SSI/site visit FGD SSI/Home visit
Hosting Companies (Apprenticeship Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PVC/Doors (1M) Sweets Factory (1M) Public Hospital (1M) 	Zakho	SSI/ Site visit SSI/Site Visit SSI/ Site visit
Business Startups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 W, HC-Sewing + 1W Family 1M, IDP, Service shop+1 M Family 1M, HC, Café' +2M Family IDPs, 6W, mixed businesses Mixed businesses 8 M (4IDP, 3 HC,1R) 1W, R, Sheep +1M Family 1M, IDP, Car maintenance 2W IDPs (sheep +Beauty) + 3M, 1F Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zakho Bersive1 Batifa Bersive1 Zakho Hizawa-Za Bersive1 Chamishko 	SSI/Work site visit SSI/Work site visit SSI/ Work site visit FGD FGD SSI/ site visit SSI/Site visit FGD

The evaluation was carried out in **four sequential stages**:

- ❖ **Stage One: Familiarization and preparatory stage:** in which project literature and relevant documents were consulted to equip the evaluator with sufficient knowledge and awareness of the project, milestones, operations, amongst others. This stage set the base for the design of the evaluation and

creation of different research tools. It culminated in an inception report that was reviewed by Action Against Hunger and shared with RDPP.

- ❖ **Stage Two: Field work/ data collection:** Upon approval of the inception report primary data gathering was initiated with stakeholders during a field mission to Erbil and Dohuk from August 3 to Aug 16, 2018. The evaluation visited Action Against Hunger personnel and national stakeholders in Erbil and Duhok as well as project sites in Zakho; vocational training center (VTC), companies engaged for apprenticeship and jobs and businesses facilitated by the project, all according to selected methods described in the inception report. Annex 2 presents list of all people consulted. The stage concluded with debriefing on preliminary findings from the field to the project team in Duhok, as well as the coordination office in Erbil with participation from Evaluation Learning and Accountability unit (ELA).
- ❖ **Stage Three: Data processing and analysis:** Interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using in-depth analysis methods. The results and analysis were synthesized by the consultant and clustered under various themes that address all the questions and issues determined in the evaluation objectives. A thorough analysis of the gathered data and information was conducted to arrive at findings and conclusions that answer the questions and issues determined in the TOR.
- ❖ **Stage Four- Reporting:** Action Against Hunger was provided with a preliminary draft on the overall review in accordance to the outline presented in the TOR. The draft report was reviewed and commented on by Action Against Hunger as a feedback, in track change mode. The consolidated comments and recommendations received have been addressed to the extent possible in this final report.

3.2 Limitations and considerations

Action Against Hunger has been extremely cooperative in sharing the project literature and coordinating a rather smooth access to participants during the field mission. Whereas no major limitations to the evaluation were encountered, in reading this report, the below considerations and limitations should be maintained;

- ✚ **Availability of up to date monitoring indicators against the project log frame:** provided the project ends on September 30th, the project team was still implementing final follow-up and monitoring activities during the evaluation period. Key activities that were still underway are the end-line household survey and final evaluation of businesses' financial viability' reports that generate some indicators against the log frame (on objective and result levels). In addressing this limitation, when possible, the evaluation relied on the available quantitative performance indicators captured in the project's M&E such as individual activity reports, the Post Distribution Monitoring and training evaluations. Also, the Project log-frame indicates the final evaluation as the sole source of information regarding some indicators (namely; Overall objective indicator: *"Number of refugees, HCs and IDPs who are able to sustain themselves through newly established businesses after project cycle completion"*) which was not possible to generate in this evaluation.
- ✚ The **budgetary and time constraints** have their own ramifications on the selection of qualitative methodology. As such, the qualitative methods were sought to answer on 'why' changes and or/ indicators have/ have not been achieved.
- ✚ Lastly, the evaluation had planned to hold 2 FGDs with families and community members of the supported young people to gain their perspectives on the impact of the project on their households/

communities and their perception regarding the established businesses. Organization of one FGD proved challenging due to distances and timing constraints but it was replaced with direct visits to beneficiaries' homes in IDP camps and HC. Nevertheless, through direct home visits, the evaluation was able to consult with enough families representing the different profiles and backgrounds to draw the conclusions presented in this report.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

Project alignment with the humanitarian response priorities and Action Against Hunger strategy

Humanitarian response to Syrian and Iraqi crises stands on the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP)⁵. The 2016 HRP that was in effect at project design time aimed at reaching as many people in need as possible, giving options to families to live in the country with dignity, support voluntary, safe and dignified returns, bridge critical gaps in the social protection floor and help people brutalized by violence to cope and recover from trauma. The (2016 – 2017) 3RP was also dedicated to Refugees assistance while aiming at addressing the longer-term self-reliance of individuals and communities and the stronger role of Government in delivering equitable basic services to refugees and host communities in the various sectorial response plans. During the project implementation, the 3RP 2017-2018 was in effect. By then the 3RP reinforced commitment to invest in resilience in countries neighbouring Syria and mobilize the necessary financial resources and domestic political support to create up to 1.1 million jobs by 2018 while recognizing the centrality of using and supporting national systems and local responders and mitigating social tensions amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources. As such, **the project aligned and continued to align with these humanitarian response priorities** through; working with existing national actors such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs Vocational Training center in Zakho in the delivery of the vocational training, supporting job creation through self and waged employment and in attempt to reduce social tension over economic opportunities it supported the different population groups (IDPS, Refugees and HC).

Action Against Hunger's mission to Iraq country strategy (2016-2020) identifies Food Security and Livelihoods as one of 3 main humanitarian priorities alongside WASH and MHCP. On strategic objectives' level, the project comes in direct alignment with two SOs in the IQ strategy; SO2 - To respond to humanitarian needs with immediate impact at household level pertaining to 'enhancement to cover existing and future needs in water, livelihoods and mental health" and SO3 - To contribute to development response with structural impact at community and institution levels especially two of its outcomes i) Communities Livelihoods mechanism is reviewed through **agriculture sector** revival as evident in the project supporting 24 livestock projects and ii) '**Jobs** and innovative **micro-small entrepreneurship initiatives** are supported' through supporting the creation of 102 small businesses.

Of equal but strategic importance is the **project's alignment with the Action Against Hunger's strategic positioning direction** regarding reinforcing its position as a key humanitarian actor in KRI through 'taking advantage of Action Against Hunger's existing positioning and legitimacy- in WASH sector and Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) areas- and reinforce its Livelihoods intervention and adjust its MHPSS approach, in a **double-fold approach** and reinforce foundations to make HQ Mission sustainable⁶. The project **catalyzes operationalization** of this direction through building on existing ground presence and

⁵ Since 2014, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) has acted as the regional coordination and planning tool to address the humanitarian and resilience needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.

⁶ (i.e. Mission with long term approach combined to a strong emergency preparedness and response capacity) Source: IRAQ Mission – Action Against Hunger France – Strategy 2016-2020

work of Action Against Hunger in WASH and MHPSS and integrating psychosocial technicians in the project structure and streamline it in activities to support the identification, integration and mental health support of young adults in the livelihood program.

Good and Replicable Practice

The project well-understood and tailored its implementation approach to a factor that is often overlooked in conventional ‘private sector development’ programs or other sectoral-focused interventions, into a more integrated fashion. The project **incorporates understanding of the importance of psychosocial wellbeing of young adults to be supported in livelihood projects and vice versa** i.e. utilizing economic engagement in promoting the psychosocial wellbeing to bringing a sense of normalcy through active and rewarding engagement in daily lives and economic activities and help recover from hardships, grievances and loss. This is evident in the project’s structure incorporating psychosocial technicians that would take part in the socio-economic assessment, accompany beneficiaries throughout the course of the project and provide further targeted/individualized support as needed. This was catalyzed in some important trainings such as the Life skills and KAB that offered platform for beneficiaries’ self-exploration while promoting confidence and self-esteem, and a motivation for their future direction in life and work.

Alongside youth employment national objectives, agriculture and tourism were repeatedly mentioned as the promising nationally-set priority sectors, but coordination and training priorities are not well defined or communicated. The project aligned with these and the agricultural sector was pursued in the project design that highlight the agricultural sector as offering livelihoods opportunities especially for women⁷. The sector is also of significance considering the current national challenges in diminishing government subsidies and support to the sector due to limited budget envelop. Recognizing the need for understanding land ownership in the region, the market assessment highlights the sector’s potential especially for IDPs that have experience in it in their places of origin.

Coverage, Appropriateness and Responsiveness to the needs

The project is implemented in Duhok Governorate that hosts **a large concentration of IDPs** and refugees; Duhok hosts 20% (about 397,290 individuals)⁸ of Iraq’s total IDPs and received 36% of the total Camp IDP population in Iraq. Zakho district has a significantly large concentration of IDPs and is hosting 4 IDP camps of over 18,000 families. It is worth noting that though the project concept was initially designed in mid-2016, by the time it was launched IDP numbers had climbed in light of the Mosul operation in late 2016. Thus, the proportionate weight of 50% of the target being from IDPs is overall appropriate especially given that Syrian refugee camps are primarily in Duhok⁹ and the increased influx of IDPs.

In supporting expansion of livelihoods opportunities in Zakho, the **project design** acknowledges several constraints that it seeks to address. Some are at wider operational context level, while others at micro level;

⁷ Agriculture was identified as a key sector to be strengthened to re-establish economic growth, especially in Dohuk Governorate where agricultural potential is high and under exploited. (Assessment of livelihoods opportunities in the KRI, Tearfund, December 2015; 2016 FAO assessment on Livelihood opportunities in KRI). The Agriculture sector is also identified as one of Action Against Hunger’s key sectors of livelihood support interventions.

⁸ IOM DTM 46 May 2016.

⁹ With a population of 350,000 individuals, the Zakho district hosts over 18,057 IDP families and 924 Syrian refugee families, including approximately 70,000 local households. Source: Zakho market assessment, 2018 pg 10.

1- **Lack of Access to Formal and Promising Vocational Training for self and waged employment:** there are systemic impediments in the existing vocational educational system in KRI. According to Directorate of Labor and Vocational Training (DoLVT) and Zakho VTC (ZVTC), vocational schools' curricula is outdated and has not been updated since 1979. The existing 6 VTC centers in KRI are governmentally funded but amidst the economic crisis they have significantly reduced their budget and regular program offering (usually for HC), trending at 2-3 training programs/ year. As such, VTCs have become significantly reliant on external funding, estimated 90% reliance on externally funded projects by the DoVT. Such setting has influenced VTCs acting as a 'service providers' for humanitarian and development actors and INGOs, each determining its own training courses that are often repetitive and conventional and for 'their own beneficiaries' that then include IDPs and refugees. This has implications on young adults seeking employment as they remain largely uninformed, and arguably even misguided regarding promising vocations. No significant investment is made in accredited or unified or market-informed training curricula and **capacities of VTC and its trainers** according to consulted national stakeholders including MoLSA **remain an unaddressed but persisting need.**

Project Responsiveness: Initially, the project had envisioned a **market-driven strategy** through undertaking a market assessment that identifies niche sectors that offer self and waged-employment opportunities for young people in the district. However, the limited project time, the quality and subsequent delay in production of the assessment till the end of the project influenced the course of implementation to become beneficiary-driven (beneficiary vulnerability, existing skills and interests) outweighing market-potential and feasibility. This has also **influenced the reduced focus away from entrepreneurial and green businesses** as originally planned in the project document. This is mostly understandable since the project's **household assessment revealed significant vulnerability** of target groups and the market assessment appears to have validated the choice of trainings and businesses that were eventually supported¹⁰. From a strategic and longer-term development view, it can be argued that the adopted approach may **comprise a missed opportunity** in terms of clear **identification of marketable vocations** and businesses and **adopting a more deliberate approach to supporting VTC's capacities and curriculum.**

The revised approach is found very relevant for the target group. Most interviewed young women and men highlighted that they had never had access to any formal vocational training opportunities even in topics they had interest in/ or previously practiced and required strengthening for them to (re)start their livelihood projects. Women and those with lower educational levels appeared more marginalized in terms of access to trainings as well as IDPs and refugees who would otherwise be conventionally excluded from regular VTC programs. This explains why around **77% of the supported livelihoods projects are in these sectors** (30% sewing, 24% barber/hairdressing, and 24% livestock) as these were primarily selected based on background and interest of beneficiaries who had taken vocational training in the same area of livelihoods projects they eventually started.

Table 2- Distribution of Business start-up projects according to type and status

Type of Business	% of total businesses	HC (38%)		IDP (56%)		Refugee (6%)		Women	Men	Total
		M	W	M	W	M	W			
Sewing	30%	1	17	0	12	0	1	59%	2%	31
Barber/hairdressing/ beauty shop	24%	10	2	5	5	2	0	14%	33%	24

¹⁰ The market assessment identified community priorities in barbershop/hairdressing, mobile maintenance, air-conditioning repair, sewing shops and agriculture (vegetable and field crop production and sheep and poultry husbandry).

Type of Business	% of total businesses	HC (38%)		IDP (56%)		Refugee (6%)		Women	Men	Total
		M	W	M	W	M	W			
Livestock	24%	6	1	8	7	1	1	18%	29%	24
Shops (book, sports, clothes, groceries, etc.)	18%	1	0	12	5	0	0	10%	25%	18
Cafeteria/ Restaurants	2%	1	0	1	0	0	0	0%	4%	2
Workshops: Car maintenance/ Carpentry	2%	0	0	2	0	0	0	0%	4%	2
Confectionary	1%	0	0	0	0	1	0	0%	2%	1
Total	100%	19	20	28	29	4	2	51	51	102
% of total		19%	20%	27%	28%	4%	2%	50%	50%	100%

Limited access to waged-labor (unemployment)

Besides business startups, the apprenticeship modality was introduced as platform to also help target group enter the waged-labor market¹¹. The project document highlights employers' lack of knowledge of young adults and their skills and the market assessment revealed that 'it is not common for companies to employ people who are not known to them'. The market assessment further found 'the major challenges to penetrate the labor market for unemployed people are the lack of technical skills and shortage of jobs on the labor market, lack of job matching support services and language barriers¹²'. As such, from the lens that this modality offers on-the-job skills enhancement and learning for young adults, offers opportunities to refugees and IDPs to be hosted by local enterprises that are often hesitant to employ them, and *matches apprentices' skills with positions* - mostly unskilled or semi-skilled (Zakho companies that are 'mainly working in import and export business, packaging and food production industry), the **apprenticeship modality is found extremely relevant and appropriate**.¹³

I had been looking for a job for a long time before Action Against Hunger visited our house. My father is sick and unemployed, and I have 3 young siblings in school. I am the only person providing for my family and the apprenticeship has given me the first step to work. The employer is opening another branch now that is even closer to my home. I'm staying in this job after the Action Against Hunger support ends. 22-year-old Syrian refugee woman employed at a grocery store in Zakho city

Building on this, the apprenticeship program could serve as entry step to **potential sustained employment** through further in-depth understanding of specific technical vocations and management needs¹⁴ while also supporting the private sector in its development challenges (to stay resilient and continue employment) in a win-win formula and obviously through longer-term development programming cycle.

¹¹ According to the Trade Economics figure, the unemployment rate in Iraq has been increasing from 15.5% in 2015 to 16% in 2016 and increased of only half point in 2017. Among the unemployed people, youths represent 18% of the total. Although there is lack of updated data on the unemployment rate in KRI and Dohuk governorate, Statistical Office – Ministry of Planning KRI stated that the unemployment rate in Dohuk was 14.4% by the end of 2016 and this figure seems to continue to rise in 2017 due to the financial crisis. However, the unemployment rate is much higher than this figure as interviewed stakeholders indicated that the unemployment rate among youth is approximately 50%. Source: Zakho market assessment report, 2018

¹² Language was also cited as a barrier to employment since most IDPs do not speak the Kurdish language, which is the common language in Zakho district and the rest of KRI

¹³ Zakho Market Assessment Report, 2018- Action Against Hunger

¹⁴ The market assessment revealed that the private sector is in need for skilled business management (marketing, accounting administration and PR) which would require future programming to take a different methodology including selection/ profile of beneficiaries and partnership modality (with universities, business community representative bodies, etc.)

- 2- **Absence of key market actors**; compared to the MENA region, the Iraqi financial sector is underdeveloped and is playing a limited role in financial intermediation¹⁵. Microlending is practically not existent in the country. Historically, a state-owned microfinance operation was in place but has not been active in years now according to all consulted national stakeholders. Young adults, whether HC or IDPs and refugees who have lost all or part of their savings after experiencing severe shocks induced by their displacement are all disadvantaged when it comes to formal access to finance. IDPs and refugees are further disadvantaged as they are not part of informal-group lending and savings mechanisms which may be available to HC. According to one study, Non-bank financial institutions and markets are small and under-developed but have the ‘potential to provide access to sources of finance¹⁶’. However, all consulted beneficiaries, including HC are unaware of any party offering finance in Zakho. **Limited access to finance is not exclusive to target groups** nevertheless. According to all consulted national actors, Chamber of Commerce and private sector companies, even the SMEs have no access to production and trade-related finance for enterprise growth (A USAID project has estimated that less than 5 percent of SME’s in the formal sector have ever received a bank loan in Iraq¹⁷), a finding that was further confirmed in the project’s market assessment.

Project responsiveness:

Overall, in the absence of accessible financing actors, the project’s response through provision of startup kits and grants to startup businesses is found suitable, especially when serving as asset replacement and recovery grants. The project did not pursue any symbolic contribution (in kind, cash) from target groups that could promote ownership and commitment. There is no evidence that it explored potential non-bank financing mechanisms that may exist such as saving and loans associations.

Main Findings

1. The project aligns with operative humanitarian response priorities and plans, Action Against Hunger’s strategic objectives and outcomes regarding FSL and catalyzes Action Against Hunger’s strategic positioning direction on reinforcing foundations to make HQ Mission sustainable.
2. The project has appropriately responded to target groups needs regarding access to quality and formal business and vocational education, access to finance to starting livelihoods projects and follow up.
3. In the absence of existing actors, the project appropriately approached catalyzed the first apprenticeship modality in the governorate. Assumptions regarding enterprises’ capacities to absorb apprentices posed a challenge amidst difficult economic conditions.
4. While proving relevant to beneficiaries, the adopted approach (outweighing target groups’ vulnerability and interest over market-potential), has sustainability implications for the longer-term business viability as well as the VTC capacities and offering of relevant market-informed and promising trainings.
5. The grant/ startup kit support is facilitating target group access to much needed capital and assets to (re)starting their livelihoods projects. The project did not envision symbolic contribution from target

¹⁵ The banking system is still by far the most important part of the Iraqi financial system, accounting for more than 75 percent of the assets and dominated by state ownership. Seven state banks dominate the banking system (particularly Rafidain Bank, Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI), and Rasheed Bank). Private banks are generally quite small, and many have been established relatively recently. The banking system is small, with an adjusted asset to GDP ratio of 73 percent compared to 130 percent for MENA region. Though growing rapidly, Bank credit remains low in Iraq. In 2010 credits to the economy only amount to 10 percent of GDP compared to 55 percent for the MENA region. As a corollary, banks are very liquid; foreign assets and deposits at the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) amount to 63 percent of assets.

¹⁶ UN Women, “Women’s Financial Inclusion in Conflict and Post Conflict situations” a study by Muhannad Sandouka, 2016

¹⁷ World Bank; Republic of Iraq financial sector review middle east and north African region, a study led by Sahar Nasr

groups (in kind, cash) that could promote ownership and commitment. There is no evidence that it explored potential non-bank financing mechanisms / actors that may exist.

4.2 Effectiveness

In assessing the project’s effectiveness, reference is first made to the extent of realization of the project’s expected results and conclusion as to the project’s realization of its specific objective. At each result level, the report presents a brief on the project implementation for potential external audience that are unfamiliar with the project. Challenges encountered, facilitating and hindering factors are also herein discussed.

R1 - Local community has been mobilized to participate in training and to raise business opportunities in specific sectors linked to residence targeted areas.

Target indicators	Actual achievement
400 people informed about the project through household visit	483 Households (2,377 individuals aged above 18 years) were informed about the project

Implementation: The project applied a two-stage selection process conducted by a gender balanced two-member team (livelihood technician and psychosocial Technician); direct household outreach utilizing the HH assessment tool¹⁸ in the camps and the hosting communities followed by socio-economic assessment. The final selection was made by the Action Against Hunger project team based on beneficiaries’ vulnerabilities, skills and motivation.

The reviewed assessment tools provide for the project’s orientation to prioritize those most in need and with some level of skills, interest and motivation all while maintaining gender balance and appropriation of population status (HC, IDP and refugees) with project targets. Retained attention to the refugee target should have been maintained (project reached 7 of the 15 target). While overall appropriate, the assessment tools can benefit from stronger and more explicit gender and inclusion dimensions¹⁹.

The evaluation captured **strong confirmation regarding target groups having sufficient information about the project objectives and activities.** This was further confirmed in the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report (97% of the respondents from the business startup support declared having received clear information about the day/time and location of the distributions and 100 % of beneficiaries from the livelihoods and vocational trainings noted receiving clear information regarding the objective content, timing and modalities of the training). With regards to business grants, the PDM finds that only 17% of the business startup respondents affirmed having received clear information about the amount of money that was going to be distributed and 48% not receiving clear information about the types and quantity of kit items that they will be receiving. However, **the evaluation finds this normal as business ideas were yet to be developed during the project and investment amounts would be determined only upon defining clear business plans.** The delay in the production of the market assessment may explain why target groups are unaware of its eventual production or findings.

¹⁸ HH Assessment factors included size of household and dependency ratio; number of children and elderly in the house, location (in camp-out of camp), income and employment status, educational level and school enrollment status, shelter condition and access to basic services, disability, and others.

¹⁹ While the assessment does disaggregate sex of household members, it can further benefit from assessing other gender dynamics at the level of beneficiary (such as whether and if women are married, care taking as in presence of children under the age of 6, etc) as well as focus on PwD and their status and potential for direct participation (not merely HH having PwD).

During the outreach and selection, the project encountered several challenges as captured in the MTR and evident to the evaluation; the intensive outreach load on the project staff-especially in urban settings²⁰, some people’s tendency to misrepresent their conditions to avoid being excluded of a possible assistance delivery, as well as issues regarding sustained motivation with expectations for more ‘immediate delivery of assistance’. Also, while ALL selected beneficiaries were given the option to choose between starting out their business or joining the apprenticeship program early on during the socio-economic assessment process, some beneficiaries were changing their minds which path to choose during the project. The evaluation finds that these are largely due to utilized approach (reduced community engagement for more efficient and due diligent outreach and selection- although no alarming incident was found during the evaluation- the focus on vulnerability-based approach and the choice to support all selected beneficiaries in either component that could influence misrepresentation and ‘implicitly guaranteed’ expectation of the promising outcomes i.e. eventual support). Alternative selection approach that balances beneficiary vulnerability and motivation with viable business ideas should be considered.

Apprenticeship Programme

In the outreach, the project referred to the Chamber of Commerce for a list of registered businesses in the district and the team reached over 300 enterprises of which 16 agreed to hosting a total of 54 apprentices. Private sector companies under the project conditions were required to pay 2 of the 6-months salaries whereas Action Against Hunger covered the remaining 4. For public institutions and in light of the government budgetary constraints, apprentices were to be hosted for 4 months with no further contribution by the organization (public hospital in this instance). The most pressing challenge according to the team and the interim report was that enterprises are under severe economic conditions and laying off their existing employees, which provides the case for approaching the apprenticeship within a wider private sector development framework.

Although outreach and mobilization targets were largely realized, the evaluation takes note of the project’s direct outreach and selection. Community ownership and participation through existing actors (civil society organizations, private sector representative bodies, etc.) are paramount to more efficient utilization of the project human and time resources, but more importantly for sustainability and local ownership while also serving human rights-based programming (beneficiaries as right holding constituents represented in/ by these organizations).

Main Findings

1. The project effectively outreached to 483 households in IDP camps and Hosting Communities as well as 300 business enterprises. The utilized assessment tools are largely appropriate with minor room for improvement to strengthen the gender and inclusion dimensions.
2. Alternative selection approach that balances beneficiary vulnerability and motivation with viable business ideas should be considered.
3. Although outreach and mobilization targets were largely realized, the evaluation finds that the altered choice to direct outreach not only undermines efficient utilization of project resources but also sidelines national stakeholders’ role as duty bearers, reducing local ownership and sustainability.

²⁰ “Sometimes the team choose to visit some houses or some locations according to the house situation or how the house is look like from outside specially for the host communities’ families, and in some locations the community members were guiding Action Against Hunger team to some poor families”. Source: Internal Mid Term Evaluation of the project.

R2 - Host community, IDPs and refugees have enhanced technical and business skills to enter the labor market

Target indicators	Actual achievement
- 150 (60 HC, 75 IDPs, 15 refugees) successfully passing training's final evaluation	-164 individuals (96.5% realization of target) completed the livelihoods training (Life Skills, Business Skills and Employment Skills); (84 women, 80 men)
- 1 market assessment publication produced.	- 1 market assessment produced

Implementation: Almost all young adults were provided with livelihoods trainings (Life Skills, Know About your Business (KAB) and Employment Skills trainings) initially through the project staff in IDP camps (after receiving TOT to train the first batch²¹) and later through VTC trainers in Zakho. The project team took part in and had the ultimate say in the selection of VTC-nominated trainers. The selected vocational trainings were primarily based on the socio-economic assessment and beneficiaries' choice to support them in starting out their businesses and enhance their employability potential in these areas. The topics included; Animal Breeding, confectionary, barbering, hairdressing, customer care, sewing, AC maintenance, mobile maintenance, IT and PVC. The training curricula was reported to be based on national standards considered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

A review of individual training reports reveals an **overall increase in trainees' knowledge in the topics** (Average **26%** increase knowledge in **life skills**, **13%** in **Business skills** and **72%** in **Employment skills**). The below is also a summary of change in pre and post knowledge test score of some of the **vocational trainings** that were made available to the evaluation.

Table 3 Change in pre and post test scores in select vocational training topics

Training Topic	Average Pre-test Score	Average Post-test Score	Improvement %
Livestock	64	92	53%
Barbering	89	92	4% ²²
Customer Care	53.15	61.35	17%
Confectionary	51	85	71%
Hairdressing	54	97	83%
Sewing	63	90	49%

Consultations with target groups during the evaluation were consistent with those in training evaluations confirming beneficiaries increase in knowledge. Overall, all trainees confirmed that the training increased their technical skills and confidence in the topic and **most of the consulted beneficiaries reported using the knowledge/skills acquired in the trainings in practice**. In the PDM, around 98% of beneficiaries

²¹ In October 2017, FSL team attended Life Skills and Business Skills Training of Trainers (ToT), enabling the delivery of the training to the selected beneficiaries. Source: OCT 2017 APR

²² For 5 of the 17 trainees, their post-test score was low compared to pre-test, however the project provided extra session for them at their work place, to support them in their business. Source: Barbering Training Report

interviewed reported the training as **helpful** and the same percentage reported a **strong satisfaction with the training** as well as the training facilities.

Of those **most recalled trainings during the evaluation were the life skills and KAB trainings**. It is evident that these appeared to have served as starting points for most beneficiaries to explore themselves, explore potential pathways in life and their livelihoods, promoting their confidence, self-esteem and feeling of self-worth. This is particularly relevant and was strongly captured for IDPs that gained motivation and optimism for their future to restart their lives and take their livelihood matter in their own hands regardless of where they end up according to them.

The evaluation captured **strong satisfaction with the vocational trainings** at the level of beneficiaries which is also consistent with the PDM findings. According to many interviewed beneficiaries, the vocational training was the first-time opportunity to have professional training in topics that they had informal experience with, sometimes incorrect practices, had forgotten, or even knew nothing about. IDPs in particular valued the importance of the trainings in enhancing skills that they can use upon returning (primarily from Sinjar).

“In my teen years I used to work at a sweets shop in Syria. I have long had the interest to learn confectionary, but I never had a formal training in it. It had been over ten years that I had been away from the profession and the training helped refresh my memory on ingredients, measurements and recipes that I had forgotten, and I learned more in this training” 34-year-old Syrian refugee man

“We learned many best practices in livestock breeding such as how to improve productivity through artificial insemination. We used to think it’s not good and didn’t know how it works. The training improved our perception and we intend to apply it this season” IDP and 22-year-old Refugee woman

Some **variance** was found however as beneficiaries’ perception regarding **sufficiency of training**. Around 42% of the beneficiaries interviewed in the PDM declared that more sessions would have been needed. In the field interviews, this was primarily captured in sewing and hairdressing/barbering. The project has adapted to the request through either increasing the number of days or conducting on-site training when relevant. This is well-documented in the training reports (barbering, hairdressing, livestock, sewing). The evaluation finds that those reporting vocational trainings being inadequate appeared to benchmark it as **insufficient to running a full business project more so than those seeking waged-employment in the field**. Further review of the profile of those reporting insufficient sessions reveals that they **had not necessarily had any background in the training topic**, an area that some trainers and project staff reported to have been a challenge (different levels of knowledge/ previous experience). Their choice in the training was either primarily based on their interest or on the presence of someone in their household that has experience in it upon which they would later rely on.

During the FGDs with trainers and project staff, some challenges were noted regarding the variance in target groups’ levels in terms of skills, knowledge and educational background as well as with language dialects. These were largely addressed through customized support and adjustment. However, one challenge that is worth further noting pertains to **trainer’s understanding of target groups’ psychosocial status**.

“This is by far the hardest group of trainees I had ever had”. VTC male trainer

Some other trainers agreed and reported seeing that some trainees lacked focus, crying in silence and grouping with each other to support each other, especially women. This is further evidenced in the PDM with some of 12% of interviewed beneficiaries reporting being “somewhat satisfied with the trainers’ explaining it due to their ‘shouting’ or being ‘angry’²³. The project team, especially the psychosocial counselors when present in the training took corrective measures with the trainers and supported trainees when needed. **A good practice was also to take note for their follow up with the trainees on individual level during and after the training.** The evaluation and the project team thus recognize the **importance of attending to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and psychosocial wellbeing of the trainees** through **trainer sensitization** in future similar context/ programming. Such sensitization would also prove important for **trainees themselves** especially women who are about to join the labor market as proposed by an interviewed enterprise.

On a more positive note, women from all groups, especially those with limited educational background and those who had spent the past few years ‘idle’ at home, were particularly influenced by these trainings. Whether HC, refugees or IDPs, women who had not left the camps or stayed at home became mobile and left their sites for training. Those who are not used to mixing with men in the same setting also noted that it was a good preparatory step especially as they eventually had to deal with men in the workplace and the trainings offered them the opportunity to experience that and learn how to deal with them in advance.

Main Findings

1. The project was effective in realizing the second result in terms of increasing trainees’ knowledge in the life skills, business and vocational training topics and most of the consulted beneficiaries reported using the knowledge/skills acquired in the trainings in practice.
2. The evaluation captured strong satisfaction with the vocational trainings in terms of increased skills and or/ correcting previous practices that they had informally acquired.
3. Life skills and KAB trainings also appeared to have effectively served as platforms for beneficiaries’ self-exploration (potential pathways in life and their livelihoods), promoting confidence and feeling of self-worth) all necessary ingredients to integrating in the market.
4. Variance in beneficiaries’ skills and educational level and potential need for more training sessions were sufficiently responded to by the project through either increasing the number of days or conducting on-site training when relevant/ feasible.
5. Some Vocational Trainers demonstrated a lack of understanding of GBV and the varying psychosocial state of trainees.

R3 - Innovative micro/small entrepreneurship initiatives supported for increased opportunities for self-employment

Target indicators	Actual achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 70 new enterprises still profitable 3 months after the completion of the trainings/provision of grant - 120 enterprises supported with start-up kits - 15 private companies and institutions joining the apprenticeship program and employing at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N/A - 102 enterprises (85% realization of Target) supported with start-up kits - 16 (106% realization of Target) private companies and institutions joining the apprenticeship program and employing 54

²³ No further disaggregation according to sex was present in the draft PDM report.

<i>least one apprentice at the end of the intervention</i>	(180% realization of target) at the time of the evaluation.
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Of the 156 beneficiaries from the project, 102 (65.4%) received the vocational and livelihoods trainings and were supported through the business start-up program (grants and startup kits). The remaining 54 beneficiaries (34.6%) who were part of the apprenticeship program, also received livelihoods trainings and some of them were also part of the vocational trainings. This section will discuss the findings pertaining to each component.

Business Startups

Implementation: Upon developing a business plan (through training and individual but rapid coaching by livelihoods technicians), the project supported 102 startup businesses with an average of \$5,282 (grants +startup kits). The project team is currently conducting periodical follow up on all supported business through the end of the project.

The evaluation conducted site/business visits to 5 business startups of the different types and consulted with 14 others in FGDs (total 19) representing all types of supported businesses. At the time of the evaluation, most consulted business had been open for just about 3 months and no data regarding their profitability was yet available in the project’s M&E or businesses’ own books. The following observations can however be made at this stage:

1- Evolving business models and the continued need for business management support

Whereas most businesses stayed consistent with their original business model, three of the 5 visited business have further diversified their businesses since starting out. For example, one woman’s sewing shop is also partly selling fabric, the bookshop has included mobile accessories, and the car maintenance shop is also selling spare car parts and does oil change now. Essentially what this could mean is that **some beneficiaries are revising their business models based on identification of opportunities in their market** (in both camps and HC) to promote earnings and profits. This is highly commendable and can be **interpreted as a strong sign of commitment to growth and entrepreneurship**. In some instances, though, beneficiaries could not explain their most profitable products, or what their business model would ultimately be (for example, producing dairy products from sheep and/or sheep fattening for sale (or a mix), their marketing and distribution channels, etc.). Very **limited evidence** was captured as to businesses practicing **clear marketing techniques** to drawing new customers and most appeared more reliant on word of mouth. Further support could then be needed to help in basic accounting (i.e. costing, pricing and markup, cash flow management) product development and marketing.

2- Continued learning at business sites

The business startups have offered beneficiaries the chance to apply learning such as trading and negotiations, merchandising, as well as technical skills in their own projects. Some are at a stage of trial and error. Nevertheless, some internal support mechanism has also evolved; for example, the sewing trainer and the veterinarian reported being referred to by the beneficiaries for further advise and support. Women from the livestock training who started out their animal breeding projects are referring to each other for advice through virtual means (social media, phone, etc.). It is worth noting that the project rightly responded on a few common instances (death in some sheep due to disease that struck the region) and commissioned a veterinarian from the Ministry of Agriculture (free of charge) to conduct checkups on all sheep businesses. As such, **continued technical backstopping** is another area worth building on as earlier mentioned.

3- Profitable businesses- albeit small profits

During the evaluation, **almost all consulted business owners stated that they are making small profits**, disregarding startup/ investment cost made possible with the project support. One business was found stagnant and incurring loss in its third month (Gaming Cafeteria)²⁴. The sheep businesses have yet to generate income (next husbandry season) and not profits have yet generated. The evaluation could not further validate business profitability as the project is in the process of assessing them and visited beneficiaries do not appear to keep updated financial records.

The evaluation captured a laudable strong commitment by beneficiaries and their families towards their businesses that in some part turned into a household project; amongst the several examples, one IDP woman's salon business now employs two sisters. Another sewing shop being run by the beneficiary and her mother where even the entire family relocated to live closer to a more promising / upscale neighborhood and clientele where their shop is now situated, and the car maintenance operation that receives cross referral for spare parts from the beneficiary's brother who works at another car shop that does not sell parts.

Apprenticeship

Implementation: Upon completion of livelihoods trainings, a total of 54 beneficiaries (**180% of target**) were finally placed in 16 companies and local institutions. The project signed MoUs with hosting companies as well as apprentices highlighting commitments, duties and rights. Action Against Hunger contributed towards 400 USD monthly salary to each apprentice for 4 months and hosting companies cover the same amount for the two final months. After 3 months of implementation, the project team also decided to add a transportation allowance for those distant from their work sites as a response to feedback received by participants. The evaluation consulted with 10 (3 M, 7 W) apprentices (3 had finished, and 7 still employed within the apprenticeship scheme) as well as 3 hosting organizations.

Despite the significant outreach performed by the project to secure mostly private sector companies amidst economic turmoil and layoffs, overall, the evaluation finds the **apprenticeship modality extremely effective**. In a region where public sector and public security provide for around a third of the region's income earning population, engaging with **private sector companies as the sustainable employer** is certainly an effective new modality and is equally acknowledged by the interviewed national actors. This is all while bearing in mind that despite being small in scale with some having their own economic challenges and experiencing layoffs, private sector employers committed to host and pay 2 months of the total 6-months apprenticeship duration as confirmed by interviewed apprentices and project staff. It is evident that the **co-payment scheme promoted companies' investment in apprentices**, hence training them to work just as their regular employees (i.e. maximizing on their contribution) **while committing to not lay off any of their existing employee because of the placement, is a well-held and proper approach by the project**. During the apprenticeship period, two of the companies closed operations nevertheless, which is reflective of the economic crisis affecting the region. Action Against Hunger team worked on re-inserting the apprentices in other companies.

²⁴ explained in part due to increasing competition in the village (9 other similar businesses opening in the same area and due to the summer season. The beneficiary is hopeful that business will pick up in winter season but some measures that he has taken up so far are worth following up on during the follow up visits; from 1000IQD/per game he has now reduced the price to 250 and has only generated 30,000 IQD in July.

Consulted companies and institutions all assessed the apprenticeship experience rather highly. For them, placing young adults comprised means to help them fill gaps in workers/employees (mainly in unskilled or semi-skilled positions), hence improving efficiency with their taking up some work load of their regular employees. The public hospital also validated that the apprenticeship opportunity of 15 young women helped fill employment gaps in local health centers and hospitals due to budget constraints.

Our company was branching out into packaging sweets for a sizeable contractor. We did not previously employ female workers, but the factory was new the project was timely for us. Food Packaging company-Zakho

Overall, the provided apprenticeship salary was **compatible with companies' salary scale for such positions** according to the consulted companies and apprentices, though this is subject to further assessment. Apprentices had the rights and obligations as those of their regular employees (work hours, break, sick days, etc.) according to all consulted apprentices and employers, although insurance regarding work injuries remained unclear.

The modality provided a practical work and training experience with a regular income flow for a short-time period that all interviewed apprentices highly assessed. The effectiveness of the livelihoods training was magnified in this modality as all apprentices underwent interviews at the companies before being hired and 100% of the beneficiaries interviewed in the PDM reported taking advantage of the skills/knowledge they learned in the trainings, in their daily work with their companies. For some apprentices, they were employed in the field at which they were trained such as confectionary training and worked at a sweets packaging factory. Some had taken up positions in new areas for them that they still valued as great learning experience. To others, the apprenticeship was **their first time to become employed** in their lives. This was particularly the case for the consulted IDPs and the refugee who had either not pursued employment or could not find employment prior to the project.

"My background was in agriculture, but I could not start an agricultural project in the camp as there is not land. I joined the apprenticeship program to learn a new skill and don't regret it one minute. In my experience with the project I made new friends, I learnt what a company is and what company culture entails. It's a new lifestyle that I am not used to. I learned business skills and applied them in planning my work, such as in merchandising. I am more aware of the locations and points of sales and I have experience in paperwork and merchandizing bills. It's an experience I can take elsewhere now" 24-year old IDP man-Darkar Camp

Some challenges were reported in the apprenticeship follow-up report that documents 5 apprentices facing challenges with supervisors from the original hosting organizations which the project addressed through continuous follow and alternatively placing apprentices in other companies. During the evaluation, **almost all those consulted spoke well of supervisors' commitment to training them, professional behaviour and adherence to a respectful work environment.** This is consistent with the PDM findings with around 65% of surveyed apprentices reported their supervisors' as polite and respectful, kind and ready to listen (the remaining were almost employed at one company that was closing its operations and the project was searching for another hosting company at the time of the evaluation). Also, in the PDM (57% of the 14 surveyed apprentices i.e. 8 persons) declared that 'the job that they are doing is not what was agreed with their manager. Among these 8 beneficiaries, 3 of them mentioned that they did not inform Action Against Hunger about it. The evaluation does not have a clear assessment on this, but Action Against Hunger is following on this.

Beyond the apprenticeship period, most apprentices and companies stated to **apprentices' commitment to prove themselves hoping to sustain their employment after the apprenticeship duration.** The project

staff **estimates 20 apprentices to sustain their employment**. During the evaluation a few of the consulted beneficiaries (in the sweets factory, PVC and beauty salon) reported being offered jobs post the apprenticeship scheme and the interviewed private companies state that continued employment is likely for some of them indeed. For others whose employment has now ended, they were either not renewed and searching for new jobs now. Two IDP apprentices were offered a salary lower than the Action Against Hunger incentive as they would spend around 30% of the offered salary (300 USD) on transportation deeming continued employment uneconomic. One apprentice however reported working on daily-waged scheme (3-5 days/ month on average) at two other beauty salons that were supported by the Action Against Hunger project in the camp.

Good practices

Attending to cultural and gender specific constraints to women's employment:

The project team heavily engaged with young women's families for placing their daughters at distant jobs (due to trusting Action Against Hunger team). It also utilizing collective apprenticeship modality where several young women work in the same place. This is a good practice in facilitating young women's employment.

Attending to HC companies' hesitancy to hiring IDPs

In addressing some employers' initial hesitancy to hiring IDPs for reasons related to population status, ethnicity, religion, amongst others, the project offered multiple apprentices of mixed backgrounds to be placed. Some of those who were initially hesitant, now appreciate the apprentices' work and commitment with some likelihood of sustained employment even.

Main findings

1. Through grants and startup kits, the project effectively supported the establishment of 102 businesses (85% realization of Target) in IDP camps and Zakho and partnered with 16 private companies and institutions (106% realization of Target) to employing 54 (180% realization of target) young adults.
2. Most consulted businesses report small profitability at the time of the evaluation. Some businesses are diversifying their business model which demonstrates strong commitment to success. Very limited evidence was found regarding some beneficiaries practice of marketing techniques. Further business support is still needed especially in basic accounting, product development and marketing, and business model refinement when necessary.
3. Despite a challenging environment for private sector resilience and growth, the apprenticeship modality was found highly effective due to the project's approach (profile of apprentices in relation to the placement positions and private sector contribution to apprentice salary). This has been promoted through project continuous follow up.
4. During the evaluation some of the consulted beneficiaries reported being offered jobs post the apprenticeship period and the interviewed private companies state that continued employment is likely for some of them indeed including women, IDPs and refugees that were hired for the first time (project team estimates 20 to sustain employment).

Realization of the project Specific Objective

The project sought "To **improve the economic situation** of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees' families" through realizing the previously discussed ERs and the below target indicators. Not all quantitative indicators are readily available to be further gauged through the evaluation. However, given the phrasing of the indicators it can be said that actual realization as of the time of the evaluation stands at:

Target indicators	Actual achievement
<p>1- 120; 48 HC 60 IDP 12 refugees – including 50 women generating new incomes at the end of the project through the establishment of business following the vocational trainings.</p> <p>2- 30; 12 HC, 15 IDP, 3 refugees – including 10 women generating new incomes at the end of the project through accessing jobs.</p> <p>3- 150; 60 HC, 75 IDP, 15 refugee households have improved their living conditions (measured as increased expenditure and/or not resorting to negative coping mechanisms) at the end of the interventions</p>	<p>1- 102 (85% of target); 39 HC (81% of target), 57 IDPs (95% of target), and 6 refugees (50% of target)- including 51 Women businesses (102% of target) are now established and 78²⁵ are generating new incomes at the time of evaluation.</p> <p>2- 54 (180% of target) 39 HC, 14 IDP, 1 Refugee- including 27 Women generating new incomes at the end of the project through accessing jobs</p> <p>3- Of the beneficiaries surveyed in the PDM, 98% reported positive impact on their daily lives, of these; 37% of the answers given towards “Better HH living conditions”, 18% towards “Larger quantity of food available” and 15% towards “More diversity of food” (respondents had the option to select more than one area of influence).</p>

Discussions with the various project stakeholders including target groups reveals that **the project has been progressively effective in realizing its specific objective regarding improving target groups economic conditions** through business creation and the apprenticeship program. During FGDs with target groups from different backgrounds it was evident that many were in debt and the income is helping pay off debts (to families/ friends/ grocery stores, etc), help pay for family members’ medical care, pay for students’ education (IDPs whose children are enrolled in Arabic schools in Chamishku have to pay for their education due to reduced governmental funding) and contributing to paying for their household daily expenses. While improvement in economic conditions is the primary objective of the project, the project has managed to achieve several areas of impact on their psychosocial wellbeing and empowerment as will later be discussed in the Impact section.

4.3 Efficiency

Value for Money (VfM)²⁶: Efficiency of the Action should indicate the degree of success in its utilization of available resources. In line with common standards²⁷, VfM entails making sure interventions get the desired quality at the lowest price and to maximize the impact of aid (i.e. maximizing the impact of each cent spent to improve targeted people’s lives). Therefore, a reduction of costs or the number of inputs does not necessarily result in greater VfM. In assessing this project, the evaluation looked at the 3Es – economy, efficiency, and effectiveness utilizing the set log frame targets to the extent possible in the analysis.

- **Cost Economy**; The global budget of the project is 10,806,168DKK which is equal to around \$1,728,987. Economy here means getting the best value inputs. Action Against Hunger follows procurement procedures to get the best quality for the price including price quotations and tendering. Echoing qualitative data gathered through the evaluation findings from the PDM survey also confirm **beneficiaries’ satisfaction with the quality of services** received through project (trainings, kits, etc.) where 90% of the beneficiaries interviewed declared being “Very satisfied’ with the kits that were distributed by the project, 98% were very satisfied with the trainings. Staff salaries also remained

²⁵ Excluding all 24 sheep projects that have not started generating income for beneficiaries.

²⁶ DFID, ‘DFID’s Approach to Value for Money (VfM)’, July 2011, p.2.

²⁷ ICAI’s Approach to Effectiveness and Value for Money’, Independent Commission for Aid Impact, Report 1, November 2011. See also Penny Jackson, ‘Value for Money and International Development: Deconstructing Myths to promote a More Constructive Discussion’, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, May 2012.

within the average range when compared with other projects in the country and the staffing structure is filled with qualified personnel. Therefore, overall the action is found cost economic.

- *Cost-Efficiency*; Indirect costs amount to 7% of the action budget. Aside from these, Personnel costs comprised 31.18% of the total budget, Support costs at 6.16%, Program Activities for R1, R2 and R3 comprised around 49% of the budget and Other costs (audit, evaluation, law and bank charges) account for around 3% of the budget. The unit cost per directly supported young adult (156) is 69,270 = \$11,083. The cost per indirect beneficiaries (final beneficiaries who are 'expected' to benefit from the action in the long term at the level of the family members of business owners and apprentices Ξ 1248²⁸ which is around 40 % more than the target of 750) is 8,659 DKK=\$1,385. The project's revision of the size of grants, transportation costs to beneficiaries in line with norms by other actors appears to have been largely proper according to national actors and the 80% of beneficiaries in the PDM that assessed them as sufficient for their business needs. Hence overall, the action can be said to be cost efficient.
- *Cost-Effectiveness*; The standardized metric of cost-effectiveness that applies to the project is the cost per unit of indicator (Calculated by dividing the total cost of the action over each achieved indicator). Accordingly, the estimated cost of generating new income through either business projects (78) or apprenticeship (54) is around 81,864 DKK=\$13,95 per beneficiary/ household. The cost effectiveness of the third indicator (improved living conditions) cannot be quantified due to unavailable data. However, if calculated against 37% reporting improved living conditions in the PDM the cost per improved living conditions/ household averages around \$29,810. This number should be cautiously read as it is subject to further assessment upon the findings from the project end line assessment.

A cost subject to consideration is the '**adverse incentive cost**' commonly known as the cost that encourages dependency or diminishes participation in productive economic activity. This can be said about provisioning sub grants young adults without requiring any symbolic contribution (financial/ material, in kind) which may promote future dependency and raise expectations²⁹. **During the evaluation, a few of the consulted businesses had in fact partly contributed to their projects** (buying air conditioning unit, etc.) and so future programing may consider this while making exceptions as needed.

Time and Human Resources

Though the project commenced in May 2017, the full project staffing was only completed by August. The three-month inception period was invested in administrative and project set up (hiring, developing MoUs, etc.) which practically meant that the project was set to deliver within 11 months initially. Overall, project activities were in line with the operational plan with slight exceptions (extensive outreach period, some training delays during the referendum period).

Echoing RDPP evaluation report (April 2018)³⁰ findings on insufficient project duration for livelihoods development projects, **the evaluation finds the project duration insufficient**. In this project it inhibited sufficient set up, (market assessment and design of the project activities), development of business ideas as well as the much-needed business coaching and follow up, let alone to the increased target of all beneficiaries. **The staffing (re)structure largely attended to maximized utilization of human resources that were paramount to drive such laudable realization of results and objectives in a short period of time**. Concern over efficient utilization of their time in direct outreach remain nevertheless. Also, of

²⁸ The project document had estimated the indirect beneficiaries/ household at 5, but the project data and the PDM estimate the average household members of 8.

²⁹ Zakho VTC also confirmed this as they witness more people referring to them for grants after Action Against Hunger action.

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significance is the **gender balanced team in project staffing that has enabled the project's attention to gender considerations** across its implementation cycle and gaining the confidence of women beneficiaries and approaching them more easily. Interviewed stakeholders in the evaluation spoke highly of the team's commitment, professionalism, understanding and respect which is further evidenced in the project's PDM report (unanimous agreement regarding their treatment with respect and dignity, feeling safe and respecting confidentiality of information shared with Action Against Hunger staff). The evaluation did not come across significant evidence regarding thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team and this is not reflected in the HR structure (such as MHCP department), an area worth considering in future programming.

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems and Processes

The project utilizes Action Against Hunger's standardized monitoring and evaluation tools³¹. Besides, an independent MEAL department composed of a MEAL officer based at coordination level and a MEAL Assistant are in support for ensuring data quality and analysis and a feedback and complaint mechanism. The project also underwent a midterm evaluation and this final evaluation as well as PDM (which is a valuable organizational tool and practice but not reflected in the project log frame). While a management response was not developed for the MTR, one is envisioned for this final evaluation according to the coordination and field staff. Nevertheless, the reviewed MTR noted some recommendations that the project applied for the remaining course such as stronger engagement with family members for participation of women beneficiaries in the apprenticeship, and actions pertaining to beneficiary selection and participation in the second batch of the selection. Most other recommendations pertain to future programming. The project was also set out to have a complaints and feedback mechanism. Initially it was not launched due to delayed hiring of a MEAL staff at base and coordination level according to the MTR. An internal mechanism as used though not formally documented according to interviewed project staff.

The reviewed monitoring and evaluation tools are found suitable for 'activity/ output management' and adherence to operational plans. Except for indicator 3.1 "*# of businesses profitable 3 months after the completion of the trainings/provision of grant*", the remaining result indicators are related to efficiency (input-output) more so than effectiveness³² which weakens result-based management of the project. Continuous utilization of the log frame as a management tool is advised. Room also remains for improved individual monitoring tools; the business follow-up tool to attend to basic accounting (i.e. costing, pricing and markup, cash flow management, product development and marketing as well the psychosocial support tool (life plan) as confirmed by some project staff. Cross cutting improvement pertains to tools' user-friendliness for analysis since they are identified as sources of verification for indicators in the project log frame.

Coordination and Capitalization

Recognizing Action Against Hunger's engagement in cluster and inter-cluster coordination platforms which the Action Against Hunger and Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs acknowledge as semi effective and inconducive to synergetic and pool programming but help avoid duplication and overlap, at project level the evaluation came across several examples at which the project reached out to and

³¹ These include weekly progress from the team to Project Manager; Monthly Activity Progress Report (APR) to the Head of Food Security and Livelihoods department responsible for monitoring progress of the project and strategic oversight, and financial follow up in form of Budget Follow Up (BFU).

³² The market assessment TOR gives too simplistic a view regarding the assignment scope and rationale compared to its use in devising the entire project methodology. Also, the indicator as phrased and measured "Number of views of online publication and distribution lists of hard copies and CDs" does not well capture its use with the VTC trainings and with target groups.

consulted with other actors. These include Rwanga³³ NGO's provisioning of space for training at Chamisku camp, Qandil³⁴ in providing initial list of potential beneficiaries to be assessed, camp management for initial list of potential beneficiaries and set up of businesses in the camp, and CoC for a list of registered enterprises to host apprentices, and VTC and Zakho VTC as part of the reported business plan committee and VTC delivery of trainings. The MTR cites Action Against Hunger's lacking a proper strategy for local partners which could have helped for the building of the relationship with ZVTC and the evaluation seconds this need. The evaluation further finds significant room to further expand its scope to further engage local NGOs, private sector representative bodies, academia, etc. under an FSL partnership strategy. The MTR also cites 'The lack of representation of Action Against Hunger in external meeting and mainly in camp meetings which was validated during this evaluation and highly advised to promote synergetic programming when possible.

Good Practice

The project leveraged its facilitation role through 1) engaging with camp management to designate an area for the setting up of businesses in IDP camps, and 2) engaged with VTC for business registry at CoC for a refugee startup.

Main Findings

1. The evaluation finds the project to operate in an insufficient duration amidst ambitious targets.
2. The project provided good value for the money, overall it proved cost economic and efficient.
3. Project activities were in line with the operational plan with slight exceptions.
4. Excluding direct household outreach, human resources in the project management and implementation are found optimized.
5. The evaluation did not come across significant evidence regarding thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team.
6. Provisioning sub grants young adults without requiring any symbolic contribution (financial/ material, in kind) can be considered as an 'adverse incentive cost' which could influence dependency and raise expectations.
7. The reviewed monitoring and evaluation tools are suitable for 'activity/ output management' rather than result based effective management. Room remains for improved analysis friendly follow up tools.

4.4 Impact

The project has contributed to several areas of positive impact as discussed below;

1- On individuals and households

- a. Contributed to supporting target household's resilience through dignified income generation activities and improved employability outlook amidst improved psychosocial wellbeing of young men and women.**

With the project support target groups have benefited from increased livelihoods opportunities whether through starting out their own businesses or through the apprenticeship model. According to many, the project has enabled them in generating hard-earned and dignified living as compared to before and contributed to more resilient households. The evaluation captured a general improvement of their livelihood conditions as earlier noted and most anticipate being further promoted overtime.

³³ <http://www.rwanga.org/>

³⁴ <http://www.qandil.org/>

*The project is like a dream come true. We came here with nothing, barely with our clothes...we were emotionally drained and with no assets. I'm tired of humiliation. For me, having my own businesses even if it brings 5000 IQD a day is better than 100 dollars. I earn them with **dignity** at least” 32-Year-old IDP man*

According to the PDM, **improved psychological wellbeing was the highest positive effect** that the project had on the target group (around 42% of those surveyed declared that Action Against Hunger intervention helped them to improve their psychological well-being, and 98% declared that their relationship with their families, friends and neighbors improved). This finding was repeatedly echoed during the evaluation and was not merely exclusive to young women but also young men. In their own words, target groups referred to hardships they encounter in their lives whether to due to prolonged unemployment, harsh experiences during their displacements and refuge taking and almost all confirmed that the project helped them having a sense of normalcy, meaningful and rewarding engagement in life and economic activity. The project staff and trainers have also confirmed observing these changes, initially during the trainings and later on during the follow up visits. Improved psychosocial wellbeing can thus be viewed within the wider frame in terms of its contribution **to resiliency; economically and mentally.**

I used to rely on my father and brother sometimes, but their situation is not much better than mine. My wife passed away last year, and I have a two-year-old daughter to support. My entire mental state was bad; I was not leaving the caravan, and I barely interacted with people. The first change happened when I started the trainings and I met people and interacted with a new setting. My net profit is about 200 USD now but its growing. When Action Against Hunger staff visit me, it means the world to me the someone out there is looking out for me. I am in a better state now’ 27-year-old IDP man

a. Project contributed to Women (economic) Empowerment and meaningful engagement public life and economic activities

The evaluation captured a rather strong sense of agency and determination at the level of women participants. Recognizing that empowerment is a multidimensional and interlinked process of change, the project’s approach is found to have promoted women empowerment and social inclusion³⁵ well beyond providing them with equally opportunities as their fellow men. Power relations operate in different spheres of life (e.g. economic, social, and political) and at different levels (e.g. individual, household, community, market, institutional). The project influenced promote women’s i) **Power within** which entails enabling women to articulate their own aspirations and strategies for change. This was evident in the project giving each woman the ultimate choice regarding the livelihood support component to choose-given her circumstances- recognizing their individual aspirations and self-worth during the life skills training as earlier noted and defining their pathway to change through the utilized life plan that the psychosocial counselors used in the follow up. ii) **power to:** enabling women to *develop the necessary skills and access the necessary resources* to achieve their aspirations was evident in the equal opportunity to the provisioned trainings and assets (through the grants or employment) which in turn has been enabling them to access other necessary resources such as market linkages and networks with suppliers and employers, etc.; **power with:** enabling women to examine and articulate their collective interests, to organize to achieve them and to link with other women’s and men’s organizations for change. This happened indirectly and to a lesser extent amongst some women forming their own informal references; and **power over:** changing the underlying inequalities in power and resources which constrain women’s aspirations and their ability to achieve them. The project helped promote young women overcoming

³⁵ Drawing on Bennett description of empowerment as Social inclusion is defined as “the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities.”

barriers to their participation and mobility through a gender-specific approach that the evaluation lauds in boldly challenging cultural and gender constraints (familial reservations regarding young women's employment, joining their fellow male participants in mixed trainings, provision of grants for married women who are unable to leave their immediate surrounding due to domestic duties).

"I was sitting at home with nothing to do. I had long wanted to start my own work. Now I interact with people, I have a business to run and I learn how to manage and deal with others"

'Some neighbors complained that women were leaving their children for no reason for the day. But we had the support from our husbands or fathers. Now we have our own businesses and make our own money...neighbors got used to it and stopped talking'

"I was a depressed woman...not anymore"

"I benefitted psychologically and financially. I'm in a much better place"

2- At community level

a. Mitigating social tensions amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources and supporting the case for social cohesion

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the project appears to have influenced some signs of improved social cohesion at the level of target groups beyond inclusion of the different population groups in the intervention. Initially, trainings for mixed groups of various backgrounds allowed for initial interaction amongst them, some friendships were struck then and continued after the training. Social cohesion was further promoted through the apprenticeship model as earlier noted. The diversity element amongst the project staff also plays a facilitating factor through their cross interaction with the different groups, identification and even addressing some drivers for social tension. Moreover, the evaluation captured some business relationships being struck between beneficiaries and others (for example IDPs and Refugees procuring the hosting and herding services of herders from the hosting communities).

3- On institutional Level

a. Catalyzing a new VTC program offering at ZVTC and positively influencing its role

Though the project did not particularly aim at building institutional capacities of the ZVTC, Action Against Hunger did support furnish a PVC training room at the center. Interviews with the directorate of vocational training, MOLSA and ZVTC reveal that this has enabled the center sustainably expanding its training program offering for **other initiatives that had since requested PVC training**. During the project period, around 83 students had enrolled in additional trainings in May and June 2018, 17 of which took PVC training. Furthermore, ZVTC spoke of the impact that the project has had on improved image of the center that has since its establishment in 2014 initially served as an emergency aid distribution center. Partnership with Action Against Hunger alongside other actors in vocational training supports improving the centers' image and uptake of trainings by the Zakho community. In one case, the VTC is reported to also advocate on behalf of one established business for a Syrian refugee for registration at the Chambers of Commerce and Industry which comprises an informal policy change which was a result of lengthy engagement and growing partnership between Action Against Hunger and ZVTC over the course of the project.

b. Enhanced positioning of Action Against Hunger as a key actor in FSL in the region and promoted learning within the organization

This project comprises a significant learning opportunity for Action Against Hunger in the region; from the one angle, Action Against Hunger to catalyzed integrated approach in FSL and mental health in reinforcing streams and RDPP recognizes it helped Action Against Hunger to establish its presence in a stronger institutional way. The project is also Action Against Hunger's first attempt at launching an apprenticeship

program and working with the private sector in the region. According to several interviewed Action Against Hunger staff this journey has not been easy, some gave examples as to their previously upheld emergency aid mindset compared to the shift to longer term development programming and others appreciating the integrated approach that makes impact more 'visible' and reassuring. Action Against Hunger's undertaking of this evaluation alongside the previous MTR demonstrates its strong commitment to institutionalizing learning in the IQ mission and possibly also other relevant settings.

Main Findings

1. The project landed significant areas of impact on target groups. It is improving household's resilience through dignified income generation activities and employment and improved psychosocial wellbeing of young men and women. The project also contributed to Women (economic) empowerment through meaningful engagement in economic activities and public life.
2. The project is helping mitigate social tensions amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources and supporting the case for social cohesion.
3. The project helped catalyzing a new VTC program offering at ZVTC and positively influencing its role.
4. The project enhanced positioning of Action Against Hunger as a key actor in FSL in the region while promoting learning within the organization.

4.5 Sustainability

The evaluation could identify several sustainability elements that are herein discussed;

Sustainability of the supported businesses is likely but subject to several factors. As these remain traditional professions and a sizeable number is constrained to IDP camps, meaning that beyond the project accompaniment, sustainability of their projects is subject to individual variances and market dynamics. It is only realistic to predict that some of the livelihoods project will struggle and potentially even close in time. Nevertheless, two factors could potentially promote chances of these businesses' success; the first is the trend of most of these projects becoming family-led businesses is a promising sign of commitment in bringing household resources and skills to the projects which was found in several occasions during the evaluation. Secondly, businesses that appear more market-oriented as evident in their business model revision/ expansion and practicing marketing.

In the apprenticeship model, sustained employment can be expected for some apprentices. It is also subject to individual performance and hosting companies' ability to absorb and retain the young adult workers. As such, Action Against Hunger's current direction in its attempt to identify Private sector needs for higher skilled professionals and vocations is a much laudable step for its future apprenticeship programming.

Sustainability of benefits gained so far in terms of women empowerment is promoted through the witnessed familial support, especially by male members of their households and / or mothers. Future programming may consider building on the indirectly formed support catalysts through more deliberate approach, and ideally through engagement with local women economic empowerment (WEE) actors/ NGOs on the ground (linking them together and partnering with WEE organizations when present)

Local ownership by the MOLSA and VTC is key to sustainability and the project has nurtured a good foundation for future programming that can build on this through stronger and more engaging support in terms of the revision of curricula and the development of VTC capacities.

The project does not have a documented exit strategy, but the evaluation came across exit actions (planned) to be taken by the project or recommended to be taken prior to its end (including by RDPP as captured in the last visit report);

- 1- Action Against Hunger is evaluating whether cases that were supported by the project PSS can be considered closed or in need of referral for continued support after the project closure.
- 2- Action Against Hunger and VTC liaise with local authorities (Ministry of Agriculture, government coordination office-BRHA, Health Directorate, intelligence offices-Asayish) on behalf of beneficiaries to follow up on registration, hygiene requirements, etc. This can be considered as an added-value of the project support as it contributes to establish the relation and the trust between displaced beneficiaries and institutions and allow beneficiaries to potentially be included in their programming and follow up individually for future matters.
- 3- The evaluation learned that a GIZ funded project with ZVTC will launch a job-matching virtual platform. Action Against Hunger is recommended to engage with VTC and GIZ for enlisting the beneficiaries from this project if, and when possible.
- 4- Action Against Hunger to continue following-up on apprentices' situation in the final month and liaise with companies where there is room for employment and provision of a direct contract aligned to labor legal framework in Iraq to the extent possible.

Main Findings

1. Businesses can be expected to sustain generating income for the supported young men and women especially as they are turning into family-businesses and as long as they remain market oriented and practice proactive marketing. More time is still needed for businesses and technical coaching and follow up. Some Apprentices are expected to continue employment.
2. Local ownership by the MOLSA and VTC is key to sustainability and the project has nurtured a good foundation for future programming that can build on this through stronger and more engaging support for it to remain relevant.
3. The project does not have a documented exit strategy, but the evaluation identified some exit actions (planned) to be taken by the project or recommended to be taken prior to its end.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance/ Design: The project aligns with operative humanitarian response priorities and plans in the country. It aligns with Action Against Hunger's strategic objectives regarding FSL and catalyzes Action Against Hunger's strategic positioning direction on reinforcing foundations to make HQ Mission sustainable. The project design reflects a strong understanding of the different target groups' vulnerabilities, needs and constraints to livelihood and employment. It acknowledges institutional capacity and accessibility constraints in both components and made significant inroads for further capitalization in future programming. Its result framework is found logical, but targets are ambitious given the timeframe for implementation and the direct implementation approach. The dual-approach of integrating psychosocial element is unique and future programming can benefit from a stronger reflection of it in the result framework, monitoring and support from ACF's MHPSS department. While proving relevant to beneficiaries, the adopted approach (outweighing target groups' vulnerability and interest over market-potential) has sustainability implications for the longer-term business viability as well as the VTC capacities and offering of relevant market-informed and promising vocational trainings.

Effectiveness: The project is proving largely effective in realizing its objective to improve the economic situation of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees' families as well as the project's expected results.

- In the first result (outreach), the project overachieved its outreach targets largely enabled by the gender balanced team and complimentary dual-approach (PSS and livelihood). The utilized direct outreach approach should however be reconsidered. An alternative selection approach that balances beneficiary vulnerability and motivation with viable business ideas is further advised.
- Through partnering with ZVTC, the project effectively increased beneficiaries' skills and knowledge in life, business and vocational skills which they have largely put in practice in their business startups and waged-jobs. The project effectively responded to variance in trainees' skills, educational levels and need for more training sessions. Life skills and KAB trainings also appeared to have served supporting key ingredients to integrating vulnerable groups in the market. However, in delivering trainers, VTC trainers' awareness and consideration to beneficiaries' psychosocial state and protection is found weak and worth addressing in future programming.
- Through grants and startup kits, the project effectively supported the establishment of 102 businesses in IDP camps and Zakho (85% realization of Target). Most consulted businesses report small profitability at the time of the evaluation Further business support is still needed especially in basic accounting, technical product development, and marketing.
- Despite a challenging environment for private sector resilience and growth, the apprenticeship modality was found highly effective due to the project's approach and continuous follow up. The project partnered with 16 private companies and institutions (106% realization of Target) to employing 54 (180% realization of target) young adults.

Efficiency: The evaluation finds the project to operate in an insufficient duration amidst ambitious targets. Nevertheless, the project provided good value for the money overall that well exceed numerical calculations. Excluding direct household outreach, human resources and systems utilized in the project management and implementation are found both efficiently utilized. Thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team from MHCP department was not envisioned but would have been valuable for the project team and inclusion of activities that can further promote it. Monitoring and evaluation tools are sufficient for 'activity/ output management' but can benefit from streamlining revision to promote result-based management. A potential for reflection of the PSS outcomes and improved individual monitoring and coaching tools that are user-friendly for analysis and monitoring is advised.

Impact and sustainability: The project landed significant areas of impact on target groups. It is improving household's resilience through dignified income generation activities and employment amidst improved psychosocial wellbeing of young men and women. The project is also contributing to Women (economic) Empowerment through meaningful engagement in economic activities and public life and is helping mitigate social tensions amongst communities concerning access to economic and job resources. For Action Against Hunger, the project enhanced positioning of Action Against Hunger as a key actor in FSL in the region while promoting learning within the organization. Businesses can be expected to sustain generating income for the supported young men and women especially as they are turning into family-businesses and as long as they remain market oriented and practice proactive marketing. More time is still needed for businesses and technical coaching and follow up. Some apprentices are likely to sustain employment post project funding. Local ownership by the MOLSA and VTC is key to sustainability and the project has nurtured a good foundation for future programming that can build on this through stronger and more engaging support for these actors to remain relevant.

6. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

6.1 Good Practices

1. The project rightly understands on the vital importance **of target groups' psychosocial wellbeing in livelihood and vice versa**. This is reflected in the project's structure that incorporates psychosocial technicians that would take part in the socio-economic assessment, accompany beneficiaries throughout the course of the project and provide further targeted /individualized support as needed. It is was catalyzed in select trainings such as the Life skills and KAB that offered platform for beneficiaries' self-exploration while promoting confidence and self-esteem, and a motivation for their future direction in life and work.
2. **Private sector contribution to the apprenticeship modality** through the co-payment scheme, while committing to not lay off any of their existing employees promoted companies' venture in training apprentices and maximizing on their contribution.
3. **In attending to cultural and gender specific constraints to women's employment:** the project team practiced heavy engagement with young women's families for placing their daughters at distant jobs (due to trusting Action Against Hunger) and utilizing collective apprenticeship modality where several young women work in the same place. This is a good practice in facilitating young women's employment.
4. In attending to **HC companies' hesitancy to hiring IDPs** for reasons related population status, ethnicity religion, etc., the project offered multiple apprentices of mixed backgrounds to be placed. Some of those who were initially hesitant, now appreciate the apprentices' work and commitment with some likelihood of sustained employment even.
5. The project played a facilitation role in engaging with camp management to designate an area for the setting up of businesses in IDP camps.

6.2 Lessons Learnt

1. **Longer programming period is essential** to allow devising livelihood support and apprenticeship programs that are pro-poor and market-driven in protracted crisis response settings.
2. **Effective engagement with local institutions and actors** is paramount to local ownership and sustainability while also promoting human rights-based programming.
3. **Consideration to Gender equality, GBV and Psychosocial wellbeing** should be practiced by all those who engage with vulnerable groups especially IDPs and refugees. This includes all external consultants, trainers and experts that have direct engagement role with target groups.
4. Mitigating social tension and promoting social cohesion is a cross-cutting issue across the project programming and can be further promoted when there are shared interests amongst the different groups.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations appeared throughout the report. The below are **main** recommendations that Action Against Hunger can consider in future programming.

Priority: High

1. **Strengthen promotion of local ownership and synergetic engagement at strategic and programing levels.**

1.1 Action Against Hunger's FSL department at the coordination office should consider **developing a clear FSL partnership plan** that reflects deep understanding of stakeholders, networking and linkages and identifies which partners and for what purpose and when to partner with them.

Though starting out as direct/ sole implementer, Action Against Hunger's project role evolved and leveraged its engagement with the VTC and linking target group with relevant national institutions, etc. Action Against Hunger's FSL department can step up this role more prominently through a partnership strategy. An important ingredient in the strategy is its relationship with VTC partners, universities/ academia, industry federations and promoting their capacities and offering of relevant livelihood promotion services.

1.2 **In programs/ Projects, consider the formulation of a Steering Committee of an advisory /guidance role.**

The steering Committee may include private sector representative bodies and relevant public actors (MoA, MoLSD, etc.), VTCs, and local NGOs/ CBOs. The platform can promote their active engagement in outreach, selection criteria and process, avoiding duplication and identification of areas of synergies, and playing facilitative role as in business registry and provision of technical backstopping to the business startups.

2. **ACF is strongly advised to explore potential for improved access to finance by vulnerable groups in Iraq.**

2.1 Assess potential non-bank financing mechanisms within a wider market assessment and cooperating with them when present.

2.2 Preferably alongside other humanitarian and development actors engage in policy dialogue and lobbying to catalyzing inclusive financial products.

2.3 If regulatory framework permits, partner with an existing bank or financial institution in developing and launching pilot financing program or even catalyzing a Social Venture Capital.

3. **In post emergency and recovery situations, consider FSL programming within the wider market (Market-development approach);**

3.1 Invest in identification of sectors and vocations that offer opportunities for business startups and apprenticeship during an inception period and before selection of final beneficiaries.

3.2 Revise the selection approach to balance beneficiary vulnerability with viable business ideas/ apprentice opportunities according to market demand.

Through longer term development programming, the apprenticeship and business startup modalities could serve as a mechanism to potential sustained employment and income generation when informed by market potential. The apprenticeship model can be viewed to also supporting the private sector in its development challenges (to stay resilient and continue employment) in mutually beneficial formula. In scaling up the modality in the future, consider

targeted and in-dept private sector assessment that identifies management and technical capacity gaps in devising added value-apprentice training and capacity building programs.

Priority: Medium

4. Support social cohesion through cross-cutting programming

Future programming can build on social cohesion programming through both mainstreaming it across and also through designated specific activities that speak to common interests (learning exchange visits amongst business startups, or a business exchange platform for beneficiaries to buy from each other's or use each other's' services, etc.).

5. Consider Practical Hands-On business and vocational skills enhancement modalities:

5.1 A hybrid of a non-paid apprenticeship modality for vocational training (i.e; placing young adults in existing businesses in areas that they intend to start their business through grants). This will give participants the extended hands on experience by experts or vocation masters including those from the community. Not only can this serve in enhanced technical and business skills, but it could also as a platform for mitigating social tensions as evident in this project experience.

5.2 Utilize an on-the-job learning modality in developing feasibility assessments and business plans. This can promote learning at the level of target group while also serving as a filtering stage in terms of commitment and motivation. It may also prove efficient in data generation within a wider market assessment that would inform the project, target groups and other actors.

5.3 Following business set up, provide business coaching that includes focus on basic accounting and marketing. This would also entail investing in improvement of coaching tools to be utilized during the coaching visits.

5.4 Consider creating a technical committee (VTC trainers and/ or subject matter experts) that can engage national actors such as Ministry of Agriculture and facilitate learning exchange visits amongst beneficiaries for technical and business guidance, sharing best practices and know-how and as a group support platform.

6. Include thematic or technical backstopping to the psychosocial support team from the MHCC department.

The project experience has revealed significant impact on beneficiaries in this domain. Future programming can build on this through allocation higher-level advisors that would work with the PSS team on enhancing the intervention tools, coordinate within the wider referral pathway and introduce targeted activities as needed.

7. Strengthen the project monitoring and evaluation system to better serve result-based management.

7.1 Streamline and possibly even reduce the monitoring tools reflected in the project log frame's sources of verification (especially in shorter period projects).

7.2 Revise some of monitoring tools to drive user-friendly analysis and to allow continuous monitoring and respective decision making.

7.3 Consider utilizing the PDM as Means of Verification in project log frame, when possible.

7.4 Consistently develop a management response for midterm and final evaluations. Develop respective action plans and monitor them regularly to support institutional learning at Action Against Hunger in the country and potentially elsewhere.

Priority: Low

8. In outreach, the project can consider organization informational sessions through engaging with existing CBOs and local NGOs.
9. Consider introducing in-kind or symbolic cost-contribution to business start-up to promote ownership and commitment
10. Revise the outreach assessment tools with a stronger and deliberate consideration to further gender analysis and inclusion elements and allocate direct beneficiaries who are PwD in project targets.
11. In attending possible varying levels of trainee skills, future programming can consider disaggregation of trainees according to their skills and educational levels.

8. ANNEXES

8.1. Evaluation TOR

(Abstract from the) TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the Independent Final Evaluation of Action Against Hunger's project:

CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN KURDISTAN

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1. Rational for the Project

The Syrian crisis entered into its seventh year. It has torn apart families, displacing more than 11 million individuals: more than 6 million inside the country and more than 5.6 million³⁶ who have fled the conflict in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq, and further afield in Europe.

Iraq welcomed 248,092 Syrians³⁷, 35.1% of them (i.e. 87,080)³⁸ being hosted in Dohuk governorate. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), is hosting 97% of Syrian refugees while hosting as well more than 752,226³⁹ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Furthermore, in addition to the generous hosting of displaced populations, the KRI continues to share frontlines of armed conflict and faces a budgetary crisis that presents serious challenges in the access to services for displaced and host community populations. Regarding their settings in KRI, 38.2% of refugees live in camps and 61.8% in non-camps. The IDPs as March 2018 in Dohuk governorate were about 354,342 individuals⁴⁰ representing 47% of the total number of IDPs in KRI.

The presence of IDPs and refugees in need of accessing the job market creates significant competition among the different target groups and causes social frictions in many areas. In terms of general unemployment picture among young people in Kurdistan, a report written by local NGO KEDO in 2013 shows that 21.5% and 10.6% of young people are unemployed respectively aged between 15 and 24 and between 25 and 34. An urgent need identified is then the provision of sustainable job opportunities in particular for young people, as their capacity to access the job market is low or absent.

Both young women and men from all communities need support to access labor market. People willing to setup their own business through innovative approach have to cope with financial constraints linked to the current economic situation.

³⁶ Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response as of March 29, 2018: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

³⁷ Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response as of February 28, 2018: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103>

³⁸ Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response as of February 28, 2018: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/5>

³⁹ International Organization Migration, Displacement Tracking Matrix as of March 2018

⁴⁰ International Organization Migration, Displacement Tracking Matrix as of March 2018

The presence of displaced population (refugees and IDPs) in host communities facing a limited access to income and resources due to the ongoing countrywide economic and social crisis, leads to an increased competition in job searching.

Action Against Hunger (AAH) has been working in the country since 2013 with interventions to respond to the Syrian Crisis in Dohuk governorate. Since then operations expanded into Ninewa, Erbil and Sulimaniyah governorates, scaling up the humanitarian response with integrated, multi-sectorial approach, addressing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Mental Health and Care Practices (MHCP, which includes psychosocial support services - PSS) and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) for refugees and Iraqi populations both in camps and out of camps. Interventions have included Food in kind, vouchers and multi-purpose cash assistance, WASH rehabilitations in health facilities, and nutrition services; with financial support coming from WFP, UNDP, IHPF, CDC, SDC and RDPP amongst others.

1.2. Project objectives:

Overall Objective: To contribute to expand livelihood opportunities in communities with large concentrations of displaced families

Specific Objective: To improve the economic situation of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees' families through the creation of new businesses in Dohuk governorate

The project log frame is attached in Annex I.

AAH is currently implementing this project in Zakho district of Dohuk governorate for vulnerable young adults aged between 18 to 35 years old; focusing on improving the economic situation of 150 vulnerable families comprising of:

- 60 Host Communities
- 75 Internally Displaced Persons
- 15 Syrian Refugees.

In order to achieve the project goal, Action Against Hunger is implementing a vocational training program focusing on the promotion of business and employment opportunities in coordination with a local Vocational Training Centre in Zakho district.

Action Against Hunger met different stakeholders during the preparation of the proposal, including international NGOs working on livelihoods sector (in different districts), local NGOs experienced in vocational training, Dohuk Emergency Livelihoods and Social Cohesion Cluster, Dohuk Governorate representatives, Zakho mayor, Zakho Vocational Training Manager, Dohuk Chamber of Commerce. In Dohuk, Action Against Hunger participates in Vocational Technical Working Group to contribute to the development of Vocational Training SoPs, better capitalize learning and avoid duplications between members of the group (UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, University of Dohuk).

The project's implementation is monitored by the Program Manager and the Head of Project, with support from coordination team notably the FSL Head of Department.

AAH uses its regular standardized monitoring and evaluation tools to follow thoroughly on the projects' progress. The team uses regular weekly reports of their activities that will be submitted to Project Manager. Activity Progress Report (APR) is used to monitor and evaluate project's progress on monthly basis. The APR provides information on achievements, beneficiaries, adherence to workplan and flags potential challenges and sticking points in the implementation of the project. APR is complemented by financial follow up in form of Budget Follow Up (BFU) which is another standardized tool AAH uses to closely monitor project's financial progress. These tools are developed with support from coordination team in Erbil office.

Moreover, the progress of activities and its adequacy with initial work plan is monitored by the Head of Food Security and Livelihoods department based in Erbil, who provides technical support and guidance. If necessary, other specific tools for the follow-up of indicators are developed by the Program Manager with the support of Head of Food Security and Livelihoods Department and validated by Action Against Hunger's headquarter. Besides, an independent MEAL department composed of a MEAL officer based at coordination level and a MEAL Assistant are in support for ensuring data quality and analysis and a feedback and complaint mechanism.

An internal mid-term evaluation was conducted in December 2017 with the participation of the project team, logistic department and finance department. The Field Coordinator, the MEAL officer and the MEAL assistant, the FSL HoD and the Grants and Reporting Officer came to support the process. This internal evaluation aimed at reflecting on the progress, challenges and adjustments made to the pilot project, to determine best practices and ways of improvement, for both continuation and potential replication of the project. The report with findings and recommendations will be available for desk review.

1.3. Project Current Status

The project is in the final stage to complete all activities including the apprenticeship programme, vocational trainings and will be followed by distribution of business start-up kits and grants provision to 120 beneficiaries. However, there were some amendments in the project design regarding HR structures and some key program activities in line with project's targets and objectives. The report and needed information will be shared with the evaluator for desk review.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION/ASSIGNMENT:

2.1. Rational for the Evaluation

According to Action Against Hunger evaluation policy, and donor's requirement, a final evaluation is required to be conducted at the end of the project. The evaluation report and the recommendations will be used for **strengthening future projects and accountability**. Besides, the report will be shared with the different stakeholders of the project to ensure effective and sustainable development of their businesses.

2.2. Objective of Assignment:

This evaluation aims to look at the level of achievement of project objectives.

The evaluation will also generate lessons learnt in order to inform future Action Against Hunger interventions, local strategy and in-country programming, for improved designing, implementation, and monitoring of future projects and accountability. These lessons learnt and good practices (take into account specific 'lens' dedicated to the mitigation of social tensions among communities concerning access to economic and job resources) and specific recommendations will be written into a separate document and in a usable format to be shared with AAH, RDPP, the Governorate level Directorates of vocational training centres, and other stakeholders implementing same kind of interventions in Dohuk Governorate of Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

2.3. Users of the Evaluation

- Action Against Hunger field teams in Iraq, Action Against Hunger France HQ, Action Against Hunger International Network
- Donor (RDPP/DANIDA)
- I/NGOs operating in Kurdistan Region of Iraq specifically in Dohuk governorate
- Vocational Technical working group members
- Vocational Training Centres at Governorate, local government, and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA)
- Emergency Livelihood and Social Cohesion working group
- Food Security and Livelihood Cluster

2.4. Use of the Evaluation

The evaluation findings, lessons learnt and good practices (specifically with the "lens" dedicated to the mitigation of social tensions among communities concerning access to economic and job resources among different groups -Host community, IDPs, Refugees, and different social groups-) and specific recommendations will be capitalized to inform future AAH interventions, local strategy and in-country programming, for improved designing, implementation, and monitoring of projects, accountability, and advocacy.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE

3.1. Elements covered by the evaluation

The focus of the evaluation is to review the project interventions against its objectives and to assess the impact on beneficiaries from the intervention. The current evaluation will focus on the activities implemented by Action Against Hunger in Dohuk governorate and in the frame of the project

The core themes of the evaluation are to:

- Establish the relevance of the project design with respect to context for beneficiaries and contribution to the wider landscape in Dohuk governorate;
- Determine the implementation efficiency of the project, bring an objective assessment of what has worked and suggest areas of improvement, including identification of the main challenges;
- Assess the extent to which the project has effectively achieved its stated objectives and to identify the supporting factors and constraints that have led to this achievement or lack of achievement;
- Analyze the impact of the intervention on the community from renewed access to economic opportunities and business, and vocational skills.
- Identify lessons learnt and potential good practice;
- Provide recommendations to project stakeholders to promote sustainability and support the continuation of service delivery, expansion or scaling up of the life skills, business skills, vocational skills trainings, apprenticeship, jobs creation and micro and small enterprise development that are supported by the project and; inform the design of future stages of programme.

3.2. Elements not covered by the evaluation

Not Applicable

3.3. Cross-cutting issues

Throughout the evaluation process, gender concerns should be addressed in line with the AAH Policies. All data should be sex-disaggregated and different needs of young women and men and of vulnerable groups targeted by the project should be considered throughout the evaluation process. Furthermore, the community participation should be assessed to understand how AAH involved beneficiaries in the programme cycle. Moreover, it should be considered either businesses selection is done taking into account the local environment and climate, ensuring the businesses supported will be sustainable in the local context.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

As per Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy and Guidelines⁴¹, Action Against Hunger adheres to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria⁴² for evaluating its programmes and projects. Action Against Hunger uses the following criteria: Design, Relevance / Appropriateness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact. The relevancy of focusing on specific criteria will be discussed and agreed with the external evaluator.

All independent evaluations are expected to use DAC criteria in data analysis and reporting. In particular, the evaluator/s must complete the DAC criteria-rating table (Refer to Annex V) and include it as part of the final evaluation report.

Evaluation questions have been developed to help the evaluator assess the achievement and impact against these criteria (Refer to Annex II). The evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the FSL HoD, the MEAL officer and the evaluator and reflected in the inception report.

5. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the suggested methodological approach for the evaluator/s to collect qualitative data. As far as contextually possible, the evaluator will develop data gathering instruments and methods that allow collection of sex-disaggregated data. The instruments need to make provision for the triangulation of data where possible.

Evaluation will be conducted looking at a representative sample of the direct and indirect beneficiary target group, that have received support to assess impact of Action Against Hunger intervention, key informant interviews, and will also include an overview analysis of the intervention procedures and protocols with reference to the local

⁴¹ <http://www.alnap.org/resource/6199>

⁴² <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

context. The evaluation will be according to the Action Against Hunger (AAH) Evaluation Policy and Guidelines, and those of RDPP/DANIDA. (DANIDA Evaluation Guidelines Attached in Annex VII)

5.1. Evaluation Briefing

Prior to the evaluation taking place, the evaluator is expected to attend an evaluation technical briefing with the FSL HoD, the MEAL officer and the Deputy Country Director.

5.2. Desk review Desk Review

The evaluator/s will undertake a desk review of project materials, including the project documents and proposals, progress reports results of any internal planning process and relevant materials from secondary sources. (Please refer Annex V)

5.3. Action Against Hunger HQ Interviews

As part of the evaluation, the evaluator will interview FSL Advisor from Action Against Hunger France HQ (if required) to get preliminary information about the project being evaluated. Briefings by telephone or Skype must be agreed in advance.

5.4. Inception Report

At the end of the desk review period and before the field mission, the evaluator will prepare a brief inception report based on the format provided. The report will be written in ENGLISH and will include the following sections:

- Key elements of the Terms of Reference (TORs) to demonstrate that the evaluator will adhere to the TORs;
- The methodological approach to the evaluation includes an evaluation matrix in annex to specify how the evaluator will collect data to answer the evaluation questions, pointing out the limitations to the methodology if any and the choice of sites per field visit;
- A detailed evaluation workplan and;
- Statement of adherence to Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy and outline the evaluation report format.

The inception report will be discussed and approved at mission level.

5.5. Field Mission

Primary data collection techniques

As part of the evaluation, the evaluator will interview key project stakeholders (i.e. expatriate/national project staff, local/national representatives, local authorities). The evaluator will use the most suitable format for these interviews as detailed in the inception report. The evaluator is also expected to collect information directly from beneficiaries (If the evaluator does not know local language, AAH will facilitate and arrange a translator for the purpose). Towards enriching triangulation, the evaluator could also conduct Focus Group Discussions (beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, key informants – Vocational Training Centre representatives, trainers, and companies engaged in apprenticeship) and surveys.

Field visits

The evaluator will visit the project sites including vocational training center, companies engaged for apprenticeship and jobs, businesses facilitated by Action Against Hunger to the beneficiaries according to selected methods described in the inception report.

Secondary data collection techniques: Desk review

The evaluator will further review complementary documents (Annex III) and collect project monitoring data or any other relevant statistical data.

5.6. Evaluation Report

The evaluation report shall follow the format below in English:

- Cover Page
- Summary Table to follow template provided

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary must be a standalone summary, describing the intervention, main findings of the evaluation, and conclusions and recommendations. This will be no more than 2 pages in length
- Background Information
- **Methodology:** describe the methodology used, provide evidence of triangulation of data and presents limitations to the methodology, whether occurs
- **Findings** includes overall assessment of the project against the evaluation criteria, responds to the evaluation questions, all findings are backed up by evidence, cross-cutting issues are mainstreamed and; unintended and unexpected outcomes are also discussed
- **Conclusions** are formulated by synthesizing the main findings into statements of merit and worth, judgements are fair, impartial, and consistent with the findings
- **Lessons Learnt and Good Practices** present lessons that can be applied elsewhere to improve intervention or country office performance, outcome, or impact and; identify good practices: successful practices from those lessons which are worthy of replication.
- **Recommendations** should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible; that is, they should take careful account of the circumstances currently prevailing in the context of the action, and of the resources available to implement it both locally. They should follow logically from conclusions, lessons learned and good practices. The report must specify who needs to take what action and when. Recommendations need to be presented by order of priority.
- **Annexes:** These should be listed and numbered and must include the following: logical framework, Activities Reprogramming, Evaluation Questions, Good practice template, Evaluation Criteria Rating Table, list of documents for the desk review, list of persons interviewed, data collection instrument, evaluation TORs.

The whole report shall not be longer than 30 pages, 50 pages including annexes. The final report will be submitted no later than the end date of the consultancy contract. Annexes to the report will be accepted in the working languages of the country and intervention/country office subject to the evaluation.

The report will have to be in compliance with AAH and donor evaluation policy and will have to follow AAH template during inception period. The evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklist and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report. Sources of information will have to be properly identified and listed in an Annex. Recommendations will have to be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical and specific with defined responsibility for the action.

5.7. Debriefing with coordination team

The evaluator should provide a debriefing at mission level to discuss any issues related to the quality of the evaluation report.

Debriefing with Action Against Hunger HQ

The evaluator should provide a debriefing with the relevant Action Against Hunger HQ (France and UK) on her/his draft evaluation report, and on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. Relevant comments should be incorporated in the final report.

6. OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

The following are the evaluation outputs the evaluator will deliver to Action Against Hunger focal point of evaluation specified in contract:

Outputs	Deadlines
Inception Report (Refer to the section 5.4)	<i>August 2nd, 2018</i>
Debriefing with teams and presentation of main findings	<i>August 16, 2018</i>

Draft Evaluation Report	<i>August 25, 2018</i>
Final Evaluation Report with Separate document with good practices, lessons learnt, and recommendations. (Refer Section 5.6)	<i>September 5, 2018</i>

All outputs must be submitted in English and under Word Document format.

The quality of all the deliverables will be assessed by the Action Against Hunger KRI Deputy/Country Director, Head of Department Food Security & Livelihood, and MEAL Officer. **The evaluator is expected to follow the format, structure and length as defined under section 5.4 and 5.6 above.**

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND WORKPLAN

The evaluator will directly report to the FSL HoD within the Action Against Hunger Iraq mission and will submit all the evaluation outputs directly to him. The FSL HoD and the DCD (CD in his/her absence), and MEAL officer will do a quality check (ensure required elements are there) and decide whether the report is ready for sharing.

The focal point at mission level will forward a copy to key stakeholders for comments on factual issues and for clarifications. The focal point at mission level will consolidate the comments and send these to the evaluator by date agreed or as soon as the comments are received from stakeholders. The evaluator will consider all comments to finalize report and will submit it to the focal point who will then officially forward to relevant stakeholders.

Once the evaluation is completed the focal point will prepare the management response follow-up form to track implementation of the recommendations outlined in the evaluation report. A review of the follow-up process will be undertaken six months after the publication of the evaluation report.

7.1. Profile / Qualifications of consultant(s)/Team

An international evaluation consultant with the following profile will carry out the evaluation:

General qualifications:

- Master’s Degree in economics, social science or relevant degree in humanitarian/development and food security with 5 years’ experience related to the evaluation in post-conflict affected areas;
- Good communication skills and experience of presentations;
- Ability to manage the available time and resources and to work to tight deadlines;
- Understanding of donor requirements;
- Significant experience in coordination, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes;

Adequacy for the assignment:

- Extensive experience in the implementation of vocational, life skills, and business skills trainings and micro and small enterprise development
- Significant field experience in the evaluation of humanitarian / development projects;
- Good knowledge and experience of gender equality and nondiscrimination;
- Understanding of donor requirements will be preferred
- Proven ability to manage the available time and resources and to work to tight deadlines;
- Proven ability to write clear and useful reports (required to produce examples of previous work);

Experiences in the region and language:

- Good knowledge of KRI context and or/ conflict affected areas
- Fluent in English; Arabic is an advantage

8.2. List of people met/ consulted

Name	Organization	Location	Method	M/W
Valeria Bacci	ACF- Iraq Deputy Country Director	Erbil	SSI	W
Vincenzo Schiano Lomoriello	RDPP Program Manager for Iraq and Jordan	Skype/ Jordan	SSI/ Skype	M
Bridget Corliss	ACF- Iraq Human Resources Head of Department	Erbil	SSI	W
Ashok Kumar	ACF- Iraq Food Security and Livelihood Head of Department	N/A	SSI/ Questionnaire	M
Dr. Atif Hito	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs General Director of Labor, Social Insurance and Vocational Training	Erbil	SSI	M
Joytar Khidir Tahir	Zakho Vocational Training Center Director	Duhok	SSI	M
Mr. Ayad AbdulHalim	Duhok Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman of the Board of Directors	Duhok	SSI	M
Idriss Naby Salih	Head of BRHA (Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs)	Duhok	SSI	M
Laylan Muhammad Salih	Programme Manager			F
(protection) Baravan Husen	Protection Officer			M
Eng. Ammar Mohammad Saleh	Directorate of Labor and vocational Training Deputy Director of Vocational Training	Duhok	SSI	M
Andrea Bigio	ACF-FSL Programme Manager	Duhok	SSI	M
Pirjeen Jaseem	ACF-FSL Head of Project	Duhok		F
Ismail Haji Khalaf	ACF- Livelihood Technician (business startups)	Duhok	FGD	M
Alhan Zaido Murad	ACF- Psychosocial Counselor	Duhok		F
Midia Osman	ACF-FSL Employment Technician	Duhok		F
Ismail Abdullah Ahmad	ZVTC- Customer care trainer	Zakho	FGD	M
Hamid Sabry Fatah	ZVTC Confectionery trainer			M
Khisar Abdulla Mustafa	ZVTC Hairdressing trainer			F
Ali Habib Naamat	ZVTC Animal Breeding trainer			M
Ahmad Shakir Muhammad	ZVTC Business Skills trainer			M
Logman Nory Ahmad	ZVTC Life Skills trainer			M
Dilovan Ahmad Husen	ZVTC Sewing trainer			M

Name	Organization	Location	Method	M/W	
Shivan Salman Asaad	ZVTC Barbering trainer			M	
Mohammad Bistany	Muhamad Bistany Company	Zakho	SSI	M	
Muhannad Muhsen Yusuf	Muhammad Muhsen Company	Zakho	SSI	M	
Dr. Qeran Saeed Abdullah	General Hospital Director	Zakho	SSI	M	
Beneficiaries					
Name	Status	Location	Method	M/F	Component
Mosa ezat mosa	IDP	Darkar camp	SSI	M	Apprentice
Emad Saleh sleman	HC	Tilkebere	SSI	M	Apprentice
Fatma Yosuf Ibrahim	Refugee	chemkurka	SSI	F	Apprentice
Kajin Sami Ahmed	IDP		FGD	F	Apprentice
Shero xalaf xodeda	HC			M	
Hamin Ahmed mohammed	IDP			F	
Karwan Majid Ibrahim	IDP			M	
Shahla nawaf qasim	IDP			F	
Fasil ali rasho	IDP	Bersive 2 camp	SSI	M	Car Maintenance
Hawas hamo elyas	IDP	Bersive 1 camp	SSI	M	Copy shop
Nohat naamat khalil+ Brother in Law	Refugee	Firqe	SSI	F	Livestock
Khani basher hamad + Mother	HC	Batifa	SSI	F	Sewing
Ramdhan Jahwar ismail +Father	HC	Batifa	SSI	M	Café
Monifa kosa darwish	IDP	Bersive 1 camp	FGD	F	Confectionary
Majda eido khadida	IDP	Bersive 1 camp		F	Salon
Sana said khalaf	IDP	Bersive 1 camp		F	Sewing
Pakiza abdullah hasan	IDP	Bersive 1 camp		F	Women's apparel
Noora rasho alyas	IDP	Bersive 1 camp		F	Salon
Jozah hajem salih	IDP	Bersive 1 camp		F	Livestock
Suliman	IDP		FGD	M	Women's apparel
Ahmad	IDP			M	Barber
Ktu	IDP			M	Restaurant
Basel	IDP			M	Mobile Store
Yaser	Refugee			M	Confectionary
Ismail	HC			M	Barber
Taher	HC			M	Sewing
Sa'd	HC			M	Barber
Amira +Husband+ Mother in Law	IDP	Chamishko	FGD	F	Salon
Asia+ husband	IDP	Chamishko		F	Livestock

8.3.

8.4. List of documents reviewed

Serial #	Documents
1	<i>Action Against Hunger Country Strategy - KRI</i>
2	<i>Action Against Hunger Gender Policy</i>
3	<i>Action Against Hunger Evaluation Policy</i>
4	<i>Action Against Hunger Evaluation Guidelines</i>
5	<i>EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN LEBANON, JORDAN AND IRAQ 2014-2017</i>
6	<i>Evaluation Guidelines DANIDA</i>
7	<i>Interim report</i>
8	<i>Project proposal, LFA, Work plan (and amendments)</i>
9	<i>Partnership Agreement with VTC</i>
10	<i>Market Assessment TOR and Market Assessment Report</i>
11	<i>Contents of Training for beneficiaries (Life skills, business skills, vocational skills etc.)</i>
12	<i>Business plans of beneficiaries (5 as a sample), List of start-up kits (Type of businesses)</i>
13	<i>List of beneficiaries with provided support for businesses start-up</i>
14	<i>Monthly progress reports through June 2017-May 2018</i>
15	<i>List of companies engaged with apprenticeship and jobs</i>
16	<i>Missions and field visits reports by Donor; Dec 2017, March and July 2018</i>
17	<i>Internal review report (Mid-term Evaluation)</i>
18	<i>Training reports/Training evaluations</i>
19	<i>Post Distribution Monitoring</i>
20	<i>Follow up tools; Business follow up tool, life-plan template</i>
21	<i>Household Assessment template</i>
22	<i>Socio Economic Assessment Template</i>
23	<i>Grant Commitment Agreement Template</i>

8.5. Logical framework

Annex C - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROJECT “Creating job opportunities for young adults in Kurdistan”

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement⁴³	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objectives	O1 – To contribute to expand livelihood opportunities in communities with large concentrations of displaced families	<i>Number of refugees, HCs and IDPs who are able to sustain themselves through newly established businesses after project cycle completion.</i> Baseline: 0 – Target: 80	<i>Final evaluation at end of project</i>	
Specific objective	SO1 – To improve the economic situation of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees families through the creation of new businesses in Dohuk governorate	<i>SO.1 Number of refugees, IDPs, host community households generating new incomes at the end of the project through the establishment of business following the vocational trainings:</i> Baseline: 0 - Target: 48 HC 60 IDP 12 refugees – including 50 women <i>SO.2 Number of refugees, IDPs, host community households generating new incomes at the end of the project through accessing jobs following the vocational trainings:</i> Baseline: 0 - Target: 12 HC, 15 IDP, 3 refugees – including 10 women <i>SO3. Number of households that have improved their living conditions (measured as increased expenditure and/or not resorting to negative coping mechanisms) at the end of the interventions. Baseline: 0 - Target: 60 HC, 75 IDP, 15 refugees (included in SO 1 and SO 2)</i>	Final evaluation report of new enterprises Mid-term and final evaluation of businesses’ financial viability’ Baseline and endline survey of targeted households.	The security situation remains stable in Dohuk governorate, no military event occur during project’s duration. Local markets remains stable and integrated, no closure of Syrian and Turkish borders occur during the duration of the project.

⁴³ The OO has been reformulated according to Livelihoods Cluster objective at national level

<p>Expected results</p>	<p>R1 - Local community has been mobilized to participate in training and to raise business opportunities in specific sectors available in linked to residence targeted areas. R2 – Host community, IDPs and refugees have enhanced technical and business skills to enter the labour market R3 - Innovative micro/small entrepreneurship initiatives supported for increased opportunities for self-employment</p>	<p>1.1 <i>Number of people informed about the project through household visits :</i> Baseline: 0 –Target: 400 (R1) 2.1 <i>Number of host community members, IDPs and refugees benefiting from business skills and vocational trainings:</i> <i>Baseline: 0 - Target:68 HC, 85 IDPs, 17 refugees</i> 2.2 <i>Number of host community members, IDPs and refugees successfully passing training’s final evaluation:</i> <i>Baseline: 0 – Target: 60 HC, 75 IDPs, 15 refugees (R2)</i> 2:3 <i>Number of publications produced</i> Baseline: 0 - Target: 1 3.1 <i>Number of new enterprises still profitable 3 months after the completion of the trainings/provision of grant (R3)</i> Baseline: 0 – Target : 70 3.2 <i>Number of private companies and institutions joining the apprenticeship program and employing at least one apprentice at the end of the intervention</i> Baseline: 0 – Target: 15 3.3 <i>Number of enterprises supported with start-up kits.</i> Baseline: 0 - Target: 120</p>	<p><i>Indicator 1.1: Field and household visit reports</i> <i>Indicator 2.1: External consultancy report</i> <i>Indicator 2.1: Results of business skills evaluation</i> <i>Indicator 2.2: Results of vocational trainings final evaluation</i> <i>Indicator 2:3 Number of views of online publication and distribution lists of hard copies and CDs</i> <i>Indicator 3.1: Businesses follow-up reports</i> <i>Indicator 3.1: New businesses accountancy</i> <i>Indicator 3.2: Final evaluation report</i> <i>Indicator 3.2: Trainees follow-up at the end of the project</i> <i>Indicator 3.3 Final evaluation report</i> <i>Indicator 3.3</i> 3.3 <i>Periodical progress reports and final report</i></p>	<p>No massive influx of IDPs and refugees disturbing local economy occurs during the project’s implementation. Prices in the market remain stable and physical access to markets is secured.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>A1.1 – <i>Community mobilization activities and household visits (R1)</i> A.1.2 <i>Identification of private companies and local institutions for the Apprenticeship Programme (R1)</i></p>	<p>Means: <i>What are the means required to implement these activities, e. g. staff, equipment, training, studies, supplies, operational facilities, etc.</i> <i>Program Management:</i></p>	<p><i>Sources of information on activities’ progress:</i> <i>Activities Progress Report updated every month (internal Action Against Hunger tool)</i> <i>Mid-term report</i></p>	<p>Security condition in the targeted sub-districts remains good, allowing the team to move in all areas. Local authorities, IDPs and refugees representative offer</p>

	<p>A2.1 – Market assessment and design of business skills training curriculum (R2)</p> <p>A2.2 – Identification and selection of direct beneficiaries of business skills trainings and vocational training courses (R2)</p> <p>A2.3 Publication of market assessment study (R2)</p> <p>A2.4 - Implementation of business skills trainings and vocational training (R2)</p> <p>A3.1 – Launch of the Apprenticeship Program</p> <p>A3.2 Organization of Zakho Job Fair</p> <p>A.3.3. Identification of start-up kits beneficiaries</p> <p>A3.4 - Provision of start-up kits, consulting and entrepreneurship projects follow up (R3)</p>	<p>1 Program Manager (14 months)</p> <p>1 Head of Project (12 months)</p> <p>1 Data analyst / MEAL (10 months)</p> <p>1 car (14 months)</p> <p>Office facilities</p> <p>Stationaries</p> <p>It and communication equipment</p> <p>R1 (A1.1, A1.2):</p> <p>5 Livelihoods Technicians (11 months)</p> <p>Stationaries and equipment for meetings and households' visits</p> <p>IT and communication equipment</p> <p>2 cars</p> <p>R2 (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)</p> <p>5 Livelihoods Technicians (11 months)</p> <p>1 External Consultant (3 months)</p> <p>Stationaries and refreshment for meetings</p> <p>IT and communication equipment</p> <p>Contract with Zakho Vocational Training Center for the implementation of the ToT (premises)</p> <p>2 cars (1 additional car for the start-up kits delivery)</p> <p>5 professional trainers (2 months)</p> <p>R3 (A3.1, A3.2, A3.3)</p> <p>5 Livelihoods Technicians (11 months)</p> <p>Stationaries and refreshment for meetings</p> <p>IT and communication equipment</p> <p>MoU with private companies (Apprenticeship Programme)</p> <p>Business start-up kits</p> <p>3 cars</p> <p>5 professional trainers (2 months)</p>	<p>Final project report</p> <p>Final evaluation</p> <p>Costs</p> <p>Total activity costs: 7,070,391 DKK (including 1,083,208 DKK of HR means, 535,248 DKK of transportation means and 5,438,608 DKK of activities.</p> <p>Please refer to the budget and narrative for details per result and activity</p>	<p>support to the project and actively participates in its implementation.</p>
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8.6. Good practice template

Title of Good Practice
Wellbeing, a vulnerability element and essential ingredient and driver to economic participation and livelihoods
Innovative Features and Key Characteristics
<p>The project incorporates understanding of the importance of psychosocial wellbeing of young adults to be supported in livelihood projects and vice versa i.e. utilizing economic engagement in promoting the psychosocial wellbeing to bringing a sense of normalcy through active and rewarding engagement in daily lives and economic activities and help overcome socio-economic impacts from crisis. The project well-understood and tailored its implementation approach the wellbeing factor that is often overlooked in conventional ‘private sector development’ or livelihood promotion programs and other sectoral-focused interventions. This understanding was reflected in the project’s outreach and selection approach as well as implementation strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- The project’s structure incorporated psychosocial technicians who took part in the socio-economic assessment of target groups, accompanied selected beneficiaries throughout the course of the project implementation. 2- First signs of change started appearing in some collective project activities such as trainings that offered platform for beneficiaries’ self-exploration while promoting confidence and self-esteem, and a motivation for their future direction in life and work. These structured platforms offered PSS councilors the opportunity to identify select beneficiaries in need of further tailored/ individual support and follow up.
Background of Good Practice
<p>Incorporating PSS in the project approach was innovative in the sense that it was not dealt with as a standalone and visible component but rather mainstreamed; in outreach and assessment (included tools); in PPS accompanied livelihood technicians, each assessing HH needs from their areas of specialty. The same approach was maintained in the trainings and the follow up on apprentices and business startups.</p> <p>At community level, it was smoothly introduced and not a blunt “PSS” messaging hence promoting acceptance in an environment where it could potentially be stigmatized. PSS alone could have also not been perceived as “a priority” compared to meeting basic needs and harsh economic conditions. On the other hand, a pure livelihood support lens often misses individual, gender, and population status variances, thus the integrated approach promoted an inseparable objective.</p>
Practical/Specific Recommendations for further development and Roll Out
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include thematic backstopping and support from Action against Hunger’s MHPSS department to the PSS councilors. The support can take a form of supervision and training, devising and enhancing intervention support, activities and tools. 2. Introduce gender equality and protection sensitization to beneficiaries, host companies and VTC trainers and other externals that would have a direct contact role with target group. 3. Integrate PSS outcomes in the project result frameworks and utilize necessary and user-friendly monitoring tools. 4. Coordinate with other actors, especially when referral pathways are present, for further referral and follow and include such in programming exit strategies.

8.7. Evaluation Criteria Rating Table

Criteria	Rating (1 low, 5 high)					Rationale
	1	2	3	4	5	
Design ⁴⁴				X		The project design reflects a strong understanding of the different target groups' vulnerabilities, needs and constraints to livelihood and employment. It acknowledges institutional capacity and accessibility constraints in both components and made significant inroads for further capitalization in future programming. Its result framework is found logical , but targets are ambitious given the timeframe for implementation and the direct implementation approach. The dual-approach of integrating psychosocial element is unique and future programming can benefit from a stronger reflection of it in the result framework, monitoring and support from ACF's MHPSS department.
Relevance/ Appropriateness ⁴⁵				X		The project is extremely relevant and responsive to target groups needs and constraints. Intervention strategies are largely appropriate. While proving relevant to beneficiaries, the adopted approach (outweighing target groups' vulnerability and interest over market-potential), has sustainability implications for the longer-term business viability as well as the VTC capacities and offering of relevant market-informed and promising vocational trainings. In the longer run, partnerships with local actors and coordination on higher level are further needed to further understand and address systemic constraints impeding target groups access to skills and resources necessary for market-informed self and waged-employment.
Coherence ⁴⁶					X	The project strongly aligns with operative humanitarian response priorities and plans, ACF's strategic objectives and outcomes regarding FSL and catalyzes ACF's strategic positioning direction on reinforcing foundations to make HQ Mission sustainable
Coverage ⁴⁷				X		The project interventions meet the need to reach the different groups in desperate need for livelihood support and income generation in the district. Outreach and participation strategies have strongly maintained their choices to livelihood/income promotion streams and attended to different social differentiation and vulnerability factors (education, gender-considerations, population status, etc.) while promoting equitable access and non-discrimination. Stronger reflection and mainstreaming of inclusion of PwD is advised.
Efficiency ⁴⁸				X		The project provided good value for the money overall. Despite limited time resources, financial and human resources are optimized. The Monitoring and evaluation system is sufficient and can be improved to support even stronger result based project management.
Effectiveness ⁴⁹					X	The project is proving largely effective in realizing its objective to improve the economic situation of vulnerable HC, IDP and refugees' families as well as the project's expected results; The project effectively increased beneficiaries' skills and knowledge in life, business and vocational skills . Through grants and startup kits, the project effectively supported the establishment of 102 businesses in IDP camps and Zakho (85% realization of Target) and partnered with 16 private companies and institutions (106% realization of Target) to employing 54 (180% realization of target) young adults.
Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact ⁵⁰				X		The project landed significant areas of impact on target groups . It is improving household's resilience through dignified income generation activities and employment amidst improved psychosocial wellbeing of young men and women. The project is also contributing to Women (economic) Empowerment through meaningful engagement in economic activities and public life and is helping mitigate social tensions amongst communities

⁴⁴ A measure of whether the design is logical, allows for RBM and includes a sustainability strategy involving local partners and beneficiaries.

⁴⁵ measure of whether interventions are in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policies, thus increasing ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness).

⁴⁶ A measure of whether interventions are consistent with existing interventions, global and national policies and strategies to ensure consistency, maximize synergies and minimize duplication.

⁴⁷ A measure of whether interventions meet the need to reach major population groups facing life threatening suffering wherever they are.

⁴⁸ A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results

⁴⁹ A measure of the extent to which the interventions' objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance and illustrating the effectiveness of Action Against Hunger's approach.

⁵⁰ A measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn and activities officially cease. Early signs of positive and negative, primary and secondary, short, mid and long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

				<p>concerning access to economic and job resources. For ACF, the project enhanced positioning of ACF as a key actor in FSL in the region while promoting learning within the organization.</p> <p>Businesses can be expected to sustain generating income for the supported young men and women especially as they are turning into family-businesses and as long as they remain market oriented and practice proactive marketing. More time is still needed for businesses and technical coaching and follow up. Moreover, some apprentices are likely to sustain employment post project funding. Local ownership by the MOLSA and VTC is key to sustainability and the project has nurtured a good foundation for future programming that can build on this through stronger and more engaging support for it to remain relevant.</p>
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8.8. Sample Data collection instruments

VTC management and Staff/ Trainers interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used.
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
 - Have participants give a brief introduction about the center and themselves.
1. Please give me a briefing about the center; years in operation, programs and services offered to men and women, main funding streams, cooperation with other INGOs and national actors, etc.
 2. Has the center historically offered services to IDPs and refugees?
 3. How long have you been cooperating with ACF and how? (context on cooperation, project design, implementation arrangements, etc).
 4. In this project, how were topics for training selected? how were trainers selected? How equipped was the centre's staff and facility to offering them and did the project provide any support to strengthening them (evaluator to consider equipment/ room support as well as HR).
 5. Were you engaged in outreaching for participants? In selection? In delivery and evaluations? How? Please describe along each.
 6. In your view, how did the trainings go? Were they effective, why? How did the beneficiaries perceive them and what were their feedback?
 7. Does participating in this project have any affect on your center and its ability to provide relevant technical and vocational skills in the future? Please elaborate.
 8. Were you shared with the market assessment produced by the project? Does it have any ramifications on your program offering?
 9. In your view; To what extent do you believe the project was efficient in utilizing the resources and especially those relevant to its cooperation with your center (timing, quality, quantity, TOT, etc)? Please elaborate.
 10. Were you engaged in the follow up services after the training (grants, etc)? please describe.
 11. What do you consider the main achievements of the project on your center and on the beneficiaries? Does it have any reflections on the employment enhancement and economic landscape in Zakho and Dohuk in general? How so?
 12. How satisfied are you regarding participation in the project overall?

13. If the project was to be repeated, what would you keep? What would you change/ add for young adults accessing livelihood opportunities and practicing their economic rights in your community? On the VTC offering in the area as well?
14. What aspects or benefits do you anticipate sustaining after the project and at what level? Please describe your plans in offering relevant VTC to young men and women?
15. Final remarks, recommendations?

Thank you!

Action Against Hunger Management Interview Guide

1. Can you please give me a brief description of your role at ACF and particularly as it pertains to the RDPP project?
2. Have you taken part in the project design? and if so, please explain the project design process (concept development, engagement with other stakeholders and consultations).
3. What have been ACF's most pressing response challenges in recent years (and in light of IDPs in the country, and Syria crisis)? What have your priorities been over the past year or two? (specific to Dohuk Area as suitable and regarding FSL).
4. To what extent do you believe that the project objectives are still valid? Are activities and outputs consistent with the overall goal and attainment of objective? with intended impacts?
5. Please describe the cooperation landscape in the region especially around FSL? Who does ACF cooperate with and what does this entail in terms of programming, avoiding overlap, synergetic programming?
6. Has there been a change in context since starting implementation? What were the main changes that were made in the project during implementation and what were the reasons? (expls; removing the reference groups and doing household approach in outreach, staffing change/ merging positions, grant sizes, and **other changes** that you can think of?
7. How did the project address social differentiation⁵¹, such as inclusion of young men and women with disabilities/ psycho social difficulties, economic, education status, refugee/hc/idp etc.?
8. Has there been a variance in implementation and results across the different project locations/ target groups? why?
9. To what extent do you believe the project realized its objective and expected results (-generating new income through business establishment &-Accessing jobs & households reporting improved living conditions) and if you speak on the different components of it (apprenticeship/ business startups).
10. What were the main challenges that the project encountered, and how did you go about addressing them? would you do anything differently in future programming and what? Can u also talk about the market assessment here please and if it was shared with others and which parties/ people was it shared with?
11. To what extent has the project used Financial, Human, and time resources in most efficient manner? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? (what other alternatives could there have been?
Sub question: what was the training budget line for staff for? It was not used up entirely yet, why?
12. To what extent quality assurance including M&E and accountability to affected populations were appropriate and supported contributed to or hindered the achievement of results. If not, why?
13. What do you consider the main achievements of the project? What has changed as a result of it and on who?
14. What was the main areas of impact on beneficiaries?

⁵¹ Note: social differentiation factors will mainly include: Gender, PwD, economic conditions, educational attainment, political and religious affiliation, tribal/ familial ties.

15. What sustainability elements does this project exhibit? What benefits do you anticipate lasting after the funding is over? What factors can undermine or promote sustainability of these?
16. What have been the main areas of learning for ACF and potentially others in FSL programming of such nature (lessons learnt)?
17. If similar programming was to be repeated, what would you keep? What would you change/ add for young adults accessing livelihood opportunities and practicing their economic rights in your community? On the VTC offering in the area as well? On access to finance? coaching?

Any final recommendations for future programming?

Thank you

Young Adults Group Discussion Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used.
- Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
- Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
- Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves (name, age, educational/ economic background (educational attainment, employment, etc.) , activities in which they participated in the project. (Note to the evaluator: **Ensure that ALL participants sign the sign-up sheet**)

Relevance:

In your view:

- 1. Prior to participating in the project, please describe the situation of young Adults in your village/ camp/ community in general, and your (and your household's) situation more specifically.**

Note: Evaluator to gather information regarding the below and distinguish between young women and men (IDP vs. HC vs. Refugee)-when relevant-and constraints they face regarding:

- Employment at existing companies and local institutions, others.
- Access to livelihood services and other local services being offered and capital (MFI, Vocational training and skills enhancement, access to business support, coaching and business skills, finance, etc.) in the community and by who?
- Representation and engagement with local CBOs/ NGOs or professional representative bodies

- 2. How did you hear about the project/ activity and why did you join?**

Evaluator to look for: Perceived needs and expectations prior to joining

- Unemployed and young women and men (seeking employment)
- Educated and uneducated
- Required knowledge and skill enhancement to enter decent employment

- Required knowledge, skill enhancement and access to finance and business support to establish/ strengthen livelihood projects
- Required supportive social support structures
- Reasons for joining specific training vs. others.
- Potential other needs...

3. Which activities did you participate in? How/ on what basis did you determine which activities you needed vs. others?

4. Were you consulted about your needs and priorities prior to the activities? During? How, and what did the project do?

Evaluator to look for:

- Potential verbal/ documented participation in consultations/ planning with the project staff/ others
- Evaluation of activities (such as trainings, business coaching, apprenticeship follow up etc.)
- If they perceived that consideration was paid to their opinion.
- Other means

Equity:

5. To what extent do you believe that young people most in need and from different backgrounds had the opportunity to participate and benefit? If not, why?

Evaluator to look for:

- Perception of Young people as to consideration of social differentiation factors in the project's outreach and implementation: (HC/ IDP/ Refugee status, PwD, economic conditions, educational attainment, political and religious affiliation, tribal/ familial ties) in outreach, selection and implementation/ participation
- If Any variance between apprentice vs. livelihood businesses.

Efficiency:

In your view:

6. How would you assess the quality and sufficiency of the support you received/ activities you participated in?

Evaluator to look for:

- Quality of the trainers/ training/ coaching and follow up/ etc. according to participants. (evaluator to distinguish: animal breeding, sewing, barbering, confectionary, hairdressing, customer care)
- Quality of startup kits
- Timing and sufficiency of the activity (including sufficiency of days, support, planning, grants size and modality, etc.)
- Quality of apprenticeship support (provides learning opportunity, type of labor required, etc.)
- Other dimensions as perceived by the participants.

Impact and effectiveness:

In your view

7. **What has your participation in the project changed in you/ your situation. Please elaborate.**

Evaluator to heavily facilitate and cross check with each of dimensions in Question 1 separately & distinguish between change in action/ relationships/ activities vs. attitude

- Change in self-perception about their role and engagement in economic activity and employment potential.
- Other Personal attributes/ drive/ aspirations such as pursuing further training/ specialized education, expanding project scale, career path, etc.
- Change in the way they approach their businesses, plan it and manage it (ref; business plans, etc.).
- Positioned/ Ability to secure and seek Employment (considerations to take in pursuit of employment (CVs, applications, interviews, communications, can name places to look for employment, if they pursue it on their own, etc.)
- Businesses/ livelihood projects: (change in practiced technical skills through training according to technical training given- etc.)
- Change in income (new/ increase/ decrease)
- Change in living conditions (expenditure, reverting to negative coping mechanisms): Examples needed.
- Representation and voice (engagement with relevant professional bodies such as COC, local organizations, etc.)
- Familial and societal dimensions
- Other areas..

8. **Filter down from Q 7 above to focus on change in practices, action and relationships: What did /do you do differently now, compared to before? Why?
Evaluator to collect concrete examples**

9. **Has there been any change at your household level? What was it?**

- Evaluator to look for examples in income increase, gender roles and work distribution, family support, intra-familial relationship and with community, with other groups, family's participation in social events or payment for other necessary expenses and services such as medical/ education due to increased income, etc.
-

10. **Has there been any change at your community level? What was it? (including new people joining in, women motivation, clientele of their business, etc.)**

Project design:

11. **If the project was to be repeated, what would you keep? What would you change/ add for young adults accessing livelihood opportunities practicing their economic rights in your community?**

Sustainability:

In your view:

12. From the changes mentioned above, what will continue after the project ends? And what is still needed to strengthen the chances for their continuation/ benefits.

Evaluator to also look for whether:

- Young people supported through **livelihood interventions (grants / startup kits)**
 - o Continued utilization of business plans
 - o Perception of their ability to continue generating and increasing their incomes and/ or
 - o Can specify further support needed to strengthen their livelihood business and know where to seek it.
 - o Recommendations for Potential follow up needs to strengthen sustainability of their businesses.
- **Young people supported through apprenticeship program:**
 - o Continued employment outlook after completion of the program (whether at the same institution/ other places).
 - o Perception as to enhanced employability potential without further support.

13. From the changes mentioned above, what will continue after the project ends? And what is still needed to strengthen the chances for their continuation/ benefits.

Evaluator to also look for whether:

- Young people supported through **livelihood interventions (grants / startup kits)**
 - o Continued utilization of business plans
 - o Perception of their ability to continue generating and increasing their incomes and/ or
 - o Can specify further support needed to strengthen their livelihood business and know where to seek it.
 - o Recommendations for strengthening sustainability of their employment.

14. Open for Final Remarks/ recommendations.

Thank you!

Site visit Semi structured interview Guide

Apprenticeship companies

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used.
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
 - Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves (name, age, business/ company, number of employees, etc).
1. Please give me a brief description about your company? business, years in operation, staffing, membership in COC and industry representative bodies, etc.
 2. How would you describe the economic landscape in your area and its impact on your company? (growth, stagnant, declining, etc.). Has your business been growing lately? Have you been hiring? Or not? why
 3. How did you get engaged with ACF's apprenticeship project? Why did you participate?
 4. Did you play any role in selecting the apprentices prior to being hosted? Did the ACF project provide any support in nominating/ selecting them? how?
 5. Please describe the agreement terms you had with ACF and the young adults, and what do you think of them?
 - a. how many apprentices did you receive, did you interview them?
 - b. what were their jobs, how long have they been working?
 - c. salary arrangement?
 6. How do you assess the experience overall and in terms of;
 - a. Duration
 - b. The apprentice qualifications, commitment, and skills.
 - c. Financial terms
 - d. Follow up
 7. Have you faced any challenges in the program? With the apprentices? Did you address them with ACF and how?
 8. If current apprentices are still working: for how long will they stay and what's the outlook for continued employment at your company?
 9. If finished the term; Did you sustain their employment? why
 10. Has the apprenticeship program have any effect on your company? please describe (positive and negative). What do you think are the main achievements and what are the main weaknesses that we can reconsider in future programming?
 11. How satisfied are you regarding participation in the project overall?
 12. If the project was to be repeated, what would you keep? What would you change/ add for young adults accessing livelihood opportunities practicing their economic rights in your community?

Open for Final Remarks/ recommendations. Thank you!