



POST-PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-15-661-TUN: Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion
of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia

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Key recommendations are related to continuing to experiment and enhance the model of connecting economic empowerment and democratization. This pilot project was useful to identify the weaknesses and challenges that such a project may face and has laid the ground for improved interventions through this approach. Other recommendations include taking stock of this experience and developing a detailed risk assessment of the microfinancing component, a contingency plan that would address the impact of delays on the democracy-

improve their situation and many choose to head to the capital or migrate. Some have also been drawn toward extremist movements.

As for public participation, the new decentralization framework offers the first tangible experience with local democratic representation based on the 2014 constitution. With new public policies and legal frameworks, interim delegations were set-up at the local level during the transition process. The first democratic municipal elections took place in May of 2018. The creation of 350 new municipalities is no small feat which brings its own set of challenges.

Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia

- ◁ Improve the economic independence of marginalized youth through the creation of income-generating activities, and
- ◁ Improve the social inclusion of marginalized youth through the strengthening of their civic engagement and their adherence to the principles of participative democracy.

The targeted beneficiaries of the project were unemployed youth, whereby 1,200 youth (600 women and 600 men) would receive trainings and 200 of those would further receive a microcredit to support the creation or strengthening of their agricultural production. Of these 200 beneficiaries, half would be women, 20% would be completely unemployed, 5% would be with special needs and another 5% would be young adults who had lost one of both their parents.

The project contained two main components or phases. The first aimed at strengthening the economic independence of marginalized youth. After an initial process of establishing an office in the region, a three-day soft skills training aimed at developing the capacities of 1,200 youth on public speaking (one day) and participative democracy (two days). Out of the large pool of participants, 200 would be selected further develop their technical capacities through a 15-day certified training and be granted a microcredit to

- ◁ 16-day training of 200 youth (14 groups of 13 people and 1 group of 18 people) 15 days for the technical training and 1 day for economic capacity building (total 240 days)
- ◁ Providing microcredits to 200 youth (20,000 TND over 5 years)
- ◁ 2-day training of 30 groups of 40 people (1,200 total participants) on participative democracy over 15 months
- ◁ Creation of a group of 50 leaders (10 in steering committee)
- ◁ Organization of 5 conferences and public debates by beneficiaries
- ◁ One action per month by the groups: 8 radio broadcasts, 21 articles, a website, 5 video capsules, a Facebook page
- ◁ 4 groups of 5 youth produce an awareness campaign around the importance of economic empowerment for meaningful civic engagement
- ◁ 5 initiatives to apply acquired knowledge and exercise participative democracy
- ◁ Advocacy for socio-economic development programs based on a beneficiary-led investigation (with survey) on the impact of economic empowerment on civic participation.

The intended outcomes of the project were:

Outcome 1: Economic independence of marginalized youth through the creation of income-generating activities

Outcome 2: Improvement of the social inclusion of marginalized youth through the strengthening of their civic engagement and their adherence to the principles of participative democracy.

IV. Evaluation Findings

The project was relevant as it addressed the democratic participation of youth in rural areas through an economic empowerment approach. Three crucial elections took place during the implementation period of the project: legislative, municipal and presidential. The economic situation has yet to be fully restored as the government put in place new austerity measures in 2018 and as the world continues to grapple with fragile economies.

As such, the activities as designed were timely and the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development in this context. However, it seems that there was limited planning around risk mitigation, and a lack of development of contingency plans relating

However, the Tunisian dinar has faced a rising inflation rate, from 3% at the end of 2016 to around 7.5% in 2018, coupled with a devaluation against the USD by about 25% over the past two years. By the time of the implementation of the project and selection of beneficiaries, it seemed increasingly unlikely that the dairy cattle would be an income-producing investment. Milk-producing cows budgeted to cost 5,000 TND saw their price double in a short time span. Despite costs of production going up, the cost of milk fixed by the government was unchanged for months, incurring devastating losses for hundreds of farmers.

Instead of dairy cattle, Zitouna Tamkeen and T4D decided to provide three options for the microcredit beneficiaries based on their current situation and interests: veal farming, sheep farming and beekeeping.

Women

limited the ownership feeling of the process to the remaining participants of the project, especially when it came to transfer their new skills in potential actions toward democratization.

In total, five conferences

microcredits are effectively managed, it seemed that T4D staff had less time to allocate to the remaining activities and provided more assistance to Zitouna Tamkeen in processing the

of the project document (more in Annex 5) as it provided for small grants to youth conducting their democratic engagement activities and a survey.

However, none of these transfers were made, and a total of almost 20,000 USD was left unspent. The survey was delayed and conducted directly by T4D and the youth initiatives and awareness raising campaigns were not implemented. According to the final report, it seemed that T4D had purposefully decided not to organize these activities because transferring funds in highly partisan contexts may have been perceived as political influence. In fact, other solutions for implementing meaningful activities could have been discussed and agreed upon.

All interviewed participants (all of whom were microcredit recipients) described their participation in the project as a rewarding and enriching experience. Many noted that as farmers, they felt isolated from all activities surrounding democratization and civic engagement. The three-day training transferred knowledge and skills that were seen as interesting and useful. The participants seemed to be more conscious of their roles and obligations with their municipalities.

T4D was meticulous in following-up with the participants to document four ways in which they engaged with democratic processes: voting in the elections, volunteering or becoming a member of an NGO, observing the elections, and being active in a political party. Below are excerpts of the results (disaggregated data by sex and region is also available, although there were discrepancies indicating that these numbers were left unverified¹.)

	Total number	% of total participants
Voting	1031	85.3%
Joining an NGO	220	18%

microcredits) to engage deeper in democratic processes. Findings and conclusions were agreed on, but there seemed to be limited follow-up. The exposure of other

choice of business. For example, sheep farming was seasonal, and most sales would take place by the end of Ramadan, as opposed to a monthly reimbursement model imposed by the microfinance institution. Another beneficiary mentioned his preference for cash rather than in-kind, as he had to wait several weeks for the provider to deliver his veal.

The project provided some opportunities, despite delays and setbacks, to create an impetus towards democratic development. However, there were missed opportunities and challenges that prevented the project from fully accomplishing a sustained application of democratic engagement and a spill-over effect beyond the scope of the project.

The microfinance component was the most sustainable element of the project as 142 individuals (with the commitment of Zitouna Tamkeen to reach 200 beneficiaries beyond the closure of this project) improved their livelihoods and were economically empowered. One of the risks around this sustainability is the fact that the technical trainings that were organized for the project were designed to take place over 15 days. The certification received could only be used as a pre-condition to the Zitouna Tamkeen microcredit and would not be accepted by other microfinance institutions. The regular trainings usually take up to four months, and while the short trainings were seen positively by some beneficiaries, others mentioned their preference to having received support for the regular trainings that would have allowed them to apply for other microcredits in the future.

As for the democratic engagement component, a select number of beneficiaries were able to truly take on roles of agents of change in their communities as mentioned above. Besides these few motivated and engaged individuals, the project seemed to have limited tangible impact beyond the encouragement to vote. While creating NGOs can be seen as a positive development, questions remained on their sustainability as they would also require extensive efforts to develop their programs and fundraise accordingly.

Participants to the three-day trainings, recipients of microcredits and steering committee of the project had acquired knowledge that newly elected municipal councilpersons may not have had. There could have been multiple opportunities to work with the new municipalities on the topics that they had learned about, especially on participative budgeting. Some youth were also motivated to work on the access to information law and the links with participative democracy, but the project could not encapsulate this work.

As for the 1008 participants who did not benefit from the economic empowerment component, a new grant was being discussed with Silatek, a Qatari foundation, to continue training 400 of them on project management and to receive some type of funding. It was not clear to the evaluator whether the Silatek grant would also include a democratic engagement component.

It was clear that UNDEF was able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to fund an innovative initiative that would have been difficult to find support for from other traditional donors. The premise was highly enticing, as the links between economic empowerment, reducing inequalities and democratization are at the heart of the current global challenges in political and economic power systems.

This project was the first ever undertaking of T4D and to have received funds from the UN seemed to greatly enhance their credibility. The UNDEF executive director also helped in raising the profile of the organization and its host, Zitouna Tamkeen, as her visit to their offices in June 2019 was covered by the media.



Annika Savill, Executive Director of UNDEF, taking part in a panel and presentation of Ms. Boudour Lahzami of the project, June 2019.

There were some missed opportunities in the project design and implementing modalities to better use UN's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues, as was presented through this report. However, for a first attempt at this type of project, lessons learned (developed below) added value in this specific field joining economic empowerment and democratization.

In addition, the presence of a UN logo on project materials seems to have enhanced the credibility of the project. A local public relations company was also hired by Zitouna Tamkeen to help with visibility. In terms of visibility, all documents and materials reviewed by the evaluator showed an appropriate use of the UNDEF logo.

VI. Lessons Learned

The model used in this project to connect economic empowerment with democratization through micro-financing and engagement of beneficiaries in democratic processes is worth further reflection to improve its local implementation first, especially on the democratic engagement component, before scaling it up to other regions or countries.

Actions plans should be realistic in reflecting the time for procedures to review and approve microcredit recipients, as well as include additional monitoring tools. In projects that include microfinancing, an assessment of the risks of the microfinance component should be further elaborated with more precise analysis or the economic situation and contingency planning should be developed and designed within the project document.

The proximity of the trainings was extremely useful to attract famers and people with limited transportation options. The advantage in the flexibility around the locations of the trainings was palpable and should continue to be considered in projects whose audience is rural, of modest and poor means and generally more conservative than in urban settings.

VII. Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	<p>To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?</p>	<p>Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? Since the project strategy was changed, how appropriate and relevant was this change to better address the needs of the beneficiaries and to achieve the project Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse? How were the location of the activities selected to better fit the needs at the beneficiary, local and national levels? To what extent were decision makers (local municipal council members, microfinance institutions, agricultural companies and others) involved in the project in order to open up more formal channels of public participation? To what extent the intervention as designed enhanced public dialogue on public participation issues? Did the project reach beyond those that were already engaged on the issue?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?</p>	<p>To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this? Did the project have an effective way to measure the progress and achievement of objectives? Was the microfinance element an adequate medium to engage on public participation? On the strategic change in the microfinance product: would this have been mitigated had there not been delays in project implementation? Did this create missed oppo</p>

To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in community (a) Z-8

Impact

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Background documents

- ◁ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Tunisia's municipal elections*: <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/76299>
- ◁ International Foundation for Electoral Systems, *Elections in Tunisia, 2018 Municipal Elections: Frequently Asked Questions*: https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2018_ifes_tunisia_municipal_elections_faqs_english_final.pdf
- ◁ Inflation rates, <https://tradingeconomics.com/tunisia/inflation-cpi>
- ◁ Middle East Eye french edition, *Tunisie : la crise du lait, dernier malaise d'une économie en crise*, 8 August 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/reportages/tunisie-la-crise-du-lait-dernier-malaise-dune-economie-en-crise>
- ◁ Middle East Eye french edition, *Tunisie : les éleveurs pris à la gorge par la crise du lait*, 20 December 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/reportages/tunisie-les-eleveurs-pris-la-gorge-par-la-crise-du-lait>

Project documentation - UDF-15-TUN-661

- ◁ Project document
- ◁ Reports: mid-term progress report, final narrative and financial reports
- ◁ Milestone verification narrative and financial reports
- ◁ Supporting documents from the grantee 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 internal summaries, photos, consultancy reports.
- ◁ Contract with CORP

Project outputs

- ◁ PowerPoint presentations of the soft skills and participative democracy training
 - ◁ Questionnaires and survey results
 - ◁ Social media page of T4D (photos, videos, updates from the project)
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Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

Tamkeen for Development and Zitouna Tamkeen	
Nabil Kesraoui	Treasurer of the Board of Directors, Director of Business Engineering, Zitouna Tamkeen
Chekib Besbes	Project Manager, T4D
Boudour Lahzami	Development and Partnerships Manager, T4D
Mehdi Ben Dahr	Dairy cattle farming project manager, Zitouna Tamkeen
Aymen Majri	

Annex 5: Examples of confusing project document output titles

Output	Title in project document	Cross-cutting with titles in action plan	Cross-cutting with budget details
2.2	Contact direct réalisé, y compris échange et la communication des revendications des jeunes aux représentants des autorités locales (5 évènements pour 200 participants)	Conférences, débats et échanges publics (5 évènements pour 200 participants)	
2.4	Evènements au grand public et aux jeunes sont sensibilisés aux préceptes de la démocratie participative (5 évènements pour 200 participants)	Campagne de sensibilisation sur le lien entre la capacitation économique et la démocratie (5 évènements pour 200 participants)	
2.5	Le sens de la citoyenneté et la responsabilité sont développés chez les jeunes via leur implication dans des initiatives de participation démocratique (5 propositions pour 200 participants)	Création engageant activement les jeunes dans le processus démocratique (5 évènements pour 40 participants)	Compensation pour des initiatives de suivi local à 4 groupes de 5 jeunes (\$25/jeune/intervention * 20 jeunes = \$500 par intervention) pour la campagne de sensibilisation (tous les 3 mois - à dire pour un projet étale sur 24 mois/3 = 8 interventions récompensées)
2.6	Le plaidoyer de la part des jeunes renforce auprès du gouvernement afin de les convaincre à mettre en place des programmes de développement socio-économiques adaptés à leurs besoins et répondant aux préceptes de la démocratie participative	Enquête Analyse Large évènement avec les autorités publiques pour présenter les résultats.	Compensation pour des initiatives de sondage à 4 groupes de 5 jeunes (\$25/jeune/intervention * 20 jeunes = \$500 par intervention) pour la campagne de sensibilisation (tous les 3 mois - à dire pour un projet étale sur 24 mois/3 = 8 interventions récompensées) pour l'épanouissement économique et l'épanouissement de la démocratie.