

"Reinforcing Social and Solidarity Economy for the Unemployed, Uneducated and Refugees"

MoreThanAJob Consortium

Outline

- Executive Summary;
- Overall Context;
- About MoreThanAJob Project;
- Results, Conclusions and Recommendations
- References

Executive Summary:

This policy brief in the second year of project implementation, presents a concise summary of the way that project results are integrated in operating policies in the partner's regional countries (Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Italy and Greece) and thus have an increased impact and ensure continuation of activities. In other words, this brief of studied policies provides insights about the implications of "MoreThanAJob" project outputs through implementing the developed framework efficiently and effectively. The study targeted mainly policy-makers, social enterprises and professionals and public institutions in the field of interest of the project.

Problems and gaps that hinder the growth of communities in terms of employment and job opportunities is studied and analyzed in each partner country. The main aim is to support the development and the growth of the **Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)**, this brief proposes ways in which SSE should be reformed and improved from different aspects which will directly maximize the impact for the target groups.

Consequently, number of recommendations are provided based on the researches and field visits to the targeted actors and ministries who are in charge and where the answers can be found. An overview of the context is an integral part of this study, where the statement of study problem is illustrated. different regional contexts were analysed in the field of the operating employment policies and its efficiency on the project target group 'vulnerable'.

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These policies were expected to be just and fair for the whole community with all its various categories and groups yet number of gaps and issues illustrate an obstacle before some groups of people who are according to the project concept defined as ‘vulnerable’ and less fortunate in terms of job opportunities and social inclusion.

Therefore; this policy brief seeks for identifying the challenges confront the employment policies in the regional countries, assessing, analysing the overall contexts and accordingly developing number of recommendations that are expected to improve and enhance the current operating policies and eventually to be shared among the main actors and stakeholders, get approved from the policy makers, adapted and systematically implemented.

Overall Context:

(Introduction) general overview, reflection of reality of poverty in regional partners

Figuring out the context of the studied case is crucial in determining the possible solutions and recommendations for guarantee better life condition and promising environment for a community. The following implications are elicited from various contexts that are the real reflection of the partner countries state of play. A quick review of number of regional contexts is presented as follows:

In Palestine, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented fiscal crisis, around 150,000 Palestinian lost their jobs from the first of March 2020 to the end of December 2020. In 2020, the Palestinian economy contracted around 10 to 12 percent-of the largest annual contractions since the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994. As a result of this Palestinian system of social protection, education, and health have come under great pressure facing the increasing needs and complicated operating environments. Furthermore; the global health crisis and the Israeli occupation restrictive policies imposed on Palestinians by cutting the revenues. This contributed to 80 % reduction in the Palestinian Authority (PA) overall revenues, which forced the adoption of additional austerity measures and this greatly amplified the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinians. Statics published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics PCBS show the decreasing in unemployment rates starting from the year 2018 up to July 2021. “Unemployment Rate in Palestine decreased to 26.40 percent in the second quarter of 2021 from 27.80 percent in the first quarter of 2021”.

In the case of Lebanon, for nearly 18 months now, Lebanon has been assailed by compounded crises—specifically, an economic and financial crisis, followed by COVID-19 and, lastly, the explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. Of the three, the economic crisis has had by far the largest negative impact. Moreover, at least 1.2 million children across Lebanon have had their education disrupted for more than one year, with many having last attended school in October 2019, following protests and civil unrest. In addition, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that Lebanon has 865,530 registered Syrian refugees and estimates all Syrians in Lebanon at 1.5 million.

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The integration of refugees within the Lebanese marketplace created an unsolicited edginess between the displaced individuals and the host community. The upsurge of this social pressure between the refugees and the host local area is interpreted as a type of negative social inclusion which hinders the social stability in Lebanon. To moderate the consequences of this negative inclusion, the execution of suitable guidelines is seen as a crucial need to properly regulate the integration of these vulnerable groups in the community.

For Jordan, its economy has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic amid already low growth, high unemployment and growing debt. The World Bank estimated the Jordanian economy to have contracted by 1.6%, with unemployment rising to 24.7% and youth unemployment rates reaching an unprecedented 50%. The economic shock of COVID-19 has exacerbated both existing structural weaknesses in the economy and unresolved social challenges, putting pressure on the country's fragile macroeconomic stance.

In Greece, the ongoing wars in the Middle East, the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, but also the environmental crisis will lead to new refugee and migration flows. This situation, combined with the already existing economic crisis and high unemployment rate at the national level, will create major challenges that Greece will have to face immediately. In addressing these challenges, the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) sector in Greece could be an important factor at the social and economic level to enable all these vulnerable groups to become socially integrated and financially independent. In the last 10 years, Greece has experienced 3 major crises: economic crisis, refugee crisis, and pandemic. The impact of all these crises on society has been enormous and will continue. The SSEs in Greece have developed because of the crisis and still have great growth potential.

In Italy, the Covid19 pandemic and the related restrictive measures highlighted already existing social and economic issues as well as the possibility of the welfare system to address these inequalities. The employment rate, which had been growing between 2014 and 2019, albeit at a slower and slower pace, fell sharply in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, with consequences extending into early 2021. The employment rate fell by 1.7 percentage points between February and April 2020 (57%) and reached the lowest point in January 2021 (56.5%). It raised again to 56.9% in April 2021, but still lower than the pre-pandemic phase. In 2020, the percentage of NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) amounted to the 23,3% among people aged 19-29. The employment rate lowered of 0,9%. [ISTAT, 2021] Moreover, the pandemic underlined how the support of the private sector is crucial in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups and delivering welfare services that can reach each citizen. This has emerged from the dialogue with local actors in Palermo, both private and public. The forthcoming challenge is how to make sustainable this dialogue and cooperation allowing a more effective share of means and resources to address the above-mentioned challenges and foster the inclusion of all citizens.

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About MoreThanAJob Project

This second policy brief of the MoreThanAJob project is based on the findings of the analysis of policy updates in the fields addressed by the framework developed as part of the project. It takes into consideration the recommendations developed in the first year of the project and, in addition to revising the national strategies that focus on social solidarity economy in each partner country.

The project aims at enhancing the development of cooperation mechanism between the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and the public administration to improve the social services for vulnerable groups in order to increase their opportunities of social and labour inclusion. As part of the project, the consortium has developed a framework to support the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) actors and the public administration (PA) representatives in co-developing and implementing innovative social schemes to reach the project aim.

Based on the analysis of the international and local best practices in services for the promotion of social and employment inclusion of vulnerable people, MoreThanAJob framework identifies three main priorities that will support the development of welfare services: (1) Social service delivery is increasingly responsive, and generates greater social stability and livelihood outcomes, based on the needs of host, refugee and immigrants' populations, (2) Social and Solidarity Economy is progressively growing and provides greater local economic development opportunities for the most vulnerable community members, and (3) Education System is dynamically adaptive to market needs and allows greater access to innovative and agile technical education and vocational training programmes targeting different levels of education including un-educated population.

This policy brief aims at providing an overview of the current status in each partner country on implementation and ongoing discussion on policy areas identified under each priority within the MoreThanAJob framework. Based on the current context, some policy recommendations are identified that could support the actors involved, namely the PA and the SSE actors, in the development of policies and action plans aligned with the indications provided in the MoreThanAJob framework.

Recommendations:

Based on the provided information, several partnership consortium conducted, analysis and the desk reviews for the new different strategies and policies employed by different regional PAs. In addition, partners carried out several face-to-face meetings with relevant public administrative representatives and key stakeholders in order to collect all employed policies and eventually to come up with joint recommendations that would enhance collaborations and include the social solidarity economy in future policies.

Number of recommendations and conclusions are elicited that are intersecting at some points from the shared realities and employment conditions of partner countries, with performing the most prior actions needed to be undertaken in this context to strengthen the institutions and actors of SSE.

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Main Policy Recommendations:

Rec. (1) Joint Collaborations and Coordination Among Various Stakeholders and Actively Involving SSE Actors in the Development and Definition of Social Policies;

Generative welfare can only be implemented through the deployment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism under the oversight authority of the council of ministers' office. To achieve this, a clear understanding of the scope of coordination, the development of relevant policies and procedures as well as the inclusion of third sector organizations such as SSEs in policymaking is highly recommended. An important contribution can be played by volunteer and non-profit organisations in planning social policies in their area of competence and in developing clearer guidelines and approaches on third sector organisations in the delivery of social services. In addition, the promotion of cooperation between SSE actors and PA is also important in the development of solidarity economy value chains allowing to reach more effectively the final beneficiaries.

Rec. (2) Strengthen the Capacity of State Institutions;

It is very important to enhance the capacity of public administration that directly and closely deal with employment and education. This would be achieved by increasing the cooperation between those Public Administrations, positive inclusion will be fostered, and vulnerable groups will be given access to adequate opportunities to lead a decent and respectable life. Furthermore; such enhancement would help these institutions planning, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the social service delivery with other stakeholders. On the other hand, the platform should include training materials for SSE actors on feasibility studies, business planning, decision making, etc.

Rec. (3) Planning a National Integration Strategy;

It is highly recommended to raise the awareness regarding the entrepreneurial potential of vulnerable groups and the labour market needs; this is achieved through: (a) Registering the situation of vulnerable groups at the national and regional level, taking into account the differences within each target group. (b) Identify the skills, education, and experience of vulnerable groups to understand the full potential for market integration and social entrepreneurship. (c) Research, analysis, and mapping of the labour market, all economic sectors, and the productive potential of each region.

Once these phases are completed and the needs and opportunities are fully known, a coherent strategy of social entrepreneurship for vulnerable groups will be developed, focused on multilevel support (assistance, training, etc.) and the process of integration of vulnerable groups in the social sphere, and the solidarity economy and consider allowing them to participate in entrepreneurial initiatives and activities to receive support to ensure that such support does not deter entrepreneurship or livelihood activities.

Rec. (4) Dealing with Legal & Regulatory Issues and Enhancing the Legal environment;

The regulatory and legal framework for entrepreneurship is dysfunctional for vulnerable groups (especially migrant and refugee entrepreneurs). To address this, it is recommended to assess and simplify administrative procedures, as well as regulatory and legal requirements for entrepreneurship

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in vulnerable groups (especially migrant and refugee entrepreneurs). Furthermore, a framework for cooperation between public administration, stakeholders, and the private sector should be created to provide vulnerable groups (in particular entrepreneurs with a migrant background and refugee entrepreneurs) with information, facilitation, and assistance. Necessary on official business and legal requirements for business registration, public services, and business support services for refugees, migrants, and other stakeholders (e.g. local legislators, support providers).

It is also highly recommended to enhance legislations which encourage social and solidarity economy this can be achieved on different levels:

- (a) Encouraging laws and regulations translated into actions in place. For example, providing discounts on the fees for registering a new start-up company, reducing the taxes on the companies that employ people from marginalized or less fortunate groups, etc.
- (b) Reduce taxes for micro enterprises, especially for people who have low income, and work from home, this will encourage marginalized groups and unemployed population to start their own projects.
- (c) Having clear policies and legislation for minimum wages especially on private sectors.

Rec. (5) Publicises Success Stories & Best Practices

Building on the success stories and best practices will enhance and develop the best practices in the social and solidarity approach, and will be a motivator to create change and to integrate marginalized population to develop their situations.

Rec. (6) Change The Intervention Approach from Relief to Empower Targeted Populations

Focusing on empowering marginalized groups so they become a producer instead of a seeker for services and help. This is a common approach among the different sectors, which needs more coordination and collaborations. It is recommended not only to use empowerment approach targeting marginalized groups, but also to use the social and solidarity economy as a way of fighting poverty and to improve their lives conditions.

Rec. (7) Enhance Social Cohesion;

It is crucial to promote a positive social inclusion through the enhancement of the capacity of public administration dealing with employment and education, and increase inter-ministerial coordination for a wider, equitable and non-discriminative inclusion. In addition to that, there is a high necessity to engage social and solidarity economy actors in the policymaking through developing government-led policy dialogue and social participation. Moreover, all concerned parties are asked to develop mechanisms for social stability and tension reduction Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and draft inclusive policies for refugees' employment regulations.

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Rec. (8) Capitalising on the Best Practices on Labour Market Integration through Skills Matching & Youth Empowerment;

Capitalising on the best practices namely, the existed projects and programmes that focused on facilitating the matching of demand and supply by involving both higher education institutes and potential employers who should actively cooperate for the development of skills matching programmes, in particular for migrants and refugees. Therefore, cooperation mechanisms between these two authorities should be fostered and plans for improving their communication should be enhanced. On the other side, a closer cooperation between the competent ministries is needed to bridge the gap between education and work. These public authorities shall promote the development of bridging programmes that could be accessed even without a certificate of acquired qualification.

Rec. (9) Exchange of know-how and Creation of Networks

To achieve successful entrepreneurship for vulnerable groups, connections between entrepreneurs, the exchange of knowledge, and the promotion of innovation are required. Otherwise, there will be no sustainability in any commercial enterprise. Start by providing funding for innovation, especially gadgets, digital media, and workplaces. Jobs could be shared with successful local entrepreneurs to achieve knowledge sharing. In addition, there is a need to develop linkages and channels between migrant entrepreneurs and refugees, business ecosystems, and the private sector in general. Create a matching platform between entrepreneurs (and potential entrepreneurs) from vulnerable groups and potential employers, partners, and investors.

Rec. (10) Promote Active Citizenship

It is highly recommended to promote active citizenship through community service programmes: community service develops an increased sense of social responsibility among the youth, which promotes active citizenship within the younger generation. In fact, Community Service builds relationships and 'social connectedness' with peers and adults and exposes the youth to diversity and multiculturalism. The establishment of this civic engagement will lead to the promotion of active citizenship and synergies building mechanisms.

Rec. (11) Advocate for Social Entrepreneurship and Promotion of the Social Generativity

It is recommended to create a pressure group gathering representatives from both the private and the third sectors. The impact of such social pressure is expected to increase the urgency for the public authorities to regulate and draft laws for the establishment of social enterprises. Moreover, and after putting relevant laws, regulations, and memos into action, it is highly recommended to engage the establishment of socially responsible enterprises through the Promotion of private-public partnerships leading to a decentralized economic development.

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It is also important to promote the concept of Social Generativity at policy level among the actors involved in the generative welfare, namely: municipalities and local public authorities with the role of promoting, regulating, monitoring and evaluating social actions; SSE actors, association of citizens, and any other private actor of the social economy for the development and implementation of social actions.

Rec. (12) Development of Business Education

Education in social entrepreneurship ought to be primarily based totally on entrepreneurship facilities and vocational education establishments to educate the uneducated, immigrants, and refugees. Training packages ought to have great flexibility in phrases of education methods (sensible education) and education location (distinct nearby contexts, which includes refugee camps, settlements, etc.). The context of the education packages ought to range and be technical, monetary, etc. Skills primarily based totally on social entrepreneurship.

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- The prepared questionnaire for activity 4.1.1 was used also in addition to some papers and literature review.
- Paper: *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* Copyright 2019 2019, Vol. 6, No. 1, 117-129 ISSN: 2149-1291 117 Syrian Refugees' Challenges and Problems of Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Jordan as an Example Heba M. N. Alefsha & Dina A.H Al-Jamal

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