

EVALUATION BRIEF

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE Y-MED PROJECT



This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type:	External independent final evaluation
Evaluator(s):	Ylenia Rocchini and Bernardo Venturi, Agency for Peacebuilding (AP), Italy
Field visit dates:	30 January–3 February (Tunisia) and 20-24 February 2023 (Morocco)
Final report date:	26 May 2023
Commissioned by:	IOM Mission in Italy
Managed by:	Migration and Development Unit, IOM Italy

Evaluation purpose: To provide an external and independent assessment of the project as a whole, and specifically to identify achievements, challenges and lessons learned. Furthermore, the evaluation aims to determine factors enabling or limiting the project's scalability and replicability and to formulate recommendations to inform the design of the project's fourth edition.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Evaluation methodology: Document review, key informant interviews, online questionnaires and focus group discussion.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project aims to support the development and transfer of young people's professional skills across Mediterranean countries and to facilitate their job-placement to ultimately promote their agency in sustainable development processes.

The first project edition supported the internship of young Moroccans at Italian enterprises based in Morocco. The second and third editions provided young students and graduates from Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt with the opportunity to develop their skills and carry out internships at companies in Italy. Upon their completion of the internship, the project facilitated the interns' job placement in countries of origin.

The Y-MED project is implemented by IOM Italy in coordination with IOM missions in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. To ensure the effective implementation of the project, IOM Italy and IOM missions in the involved countries worked in close collaboration with public and private partners active in the fields of employment, professional training and education.

To date, the Y-MED project has involved a total of 78 interns from the four North African countries and involved 44 Italian companies based in Morocco and in two Italian regions (Veneto and Lazio).

Project information:

Geographical coverage: Italy, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia

Project type: Migration and Development

Project code: CE.0370, MD.0003, MD.0021

Project period: November 2017 - December 2022

Donor: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Budget: 1.520.340 euros

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KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The project was found to be relevant not only for its direct beneficiaries, interns and Italian companies, but also for the many public and private actors involved in employment and professional training policies.

Y-MED is the only project supporting a circular labour migration scheme between Italy on the one side and Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia on the other; it complements several interventions that sustain skills development and mobility between European and North African countries.

The project delivered its planned results of improving soft and technical skills of interns and raising the knowledge of Italian enterprises on cultural diversity and cross-cultural management issues. The main challenge in achieving results was related to the number of internships activated, which remained lower than initially planned. Another challenge was represented by the dropout of Moroccan interns from the second edition: they decided not to return to Morocco to participate in the job placement phase without providing to the project team any further information about their stay in Italy.

The project's management and learning systems proved to be appropriate to achieve results. However, in some countries, the choice of local partners did not allow having all the expertise required to achieve the same standards in implementing the different activities. The coordination mechanisms among IOM missions allowed for regular exchanges but those between them and the stakeholders involved in project implementation did not always ensure the full commitment of key partners.

At the impact level, the project contributed to increasing the employability of interns and the Italian companies' awareness of the value of skill circulation and cultural diversity. However, there is no evidence that the project has as of yet contributed to facilitating synergies between companies in Italy and North African countries, neither that it has increased the engagement of public and private sector stakeholders in skills development and mobility.

The sustainability of results related to interns appears strong, while those concerning Italian companies present some limits. No structures, resources or procedures were adopted by participating companies and public institutions to facilitate the activation of international internships in Italy and the implementation of circular migration schemes in the future.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The project took into account the needs of women and, importantly, ensured equal access to internship opportunities for men and women.

Despite the lack of a communication and visibility plan, the project team developed several tools to disseminate the project goals and activities. Nonetheless, the visibility of the project could be improved by widening the content and communication channels and by holding closing events involving stakeholders from all target countries.

LESSONS LEARNED

The participation of interns with a job or previous working experience (more than 1 year) is not very consistent with the project's aim to enhance participants' employability and facilitate their integration into the labour markets of their home countries.

The project staff correctly informed interns about the risks and challenges connected to irregular stay in Italy after the internship. Together with strengthening the job placement support upon return to countries of origin, the project has no other tools to prevent irregular overstay as it cannot interfere with interns' agency.

During the third edition, the project staff addressed in an appropriate and transparent way the expectations of interns and Italian companies, including those diverging from the objectives pursued and the support provided by the project.

Employment opportunities for returned interns in countries of origin increased when the private sector in these countries was involved since the project's inception phase; in addition, such opportunities are more likely to materialize when Italian hosting companies operate or have business collaborations in countries of origin.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build synergies with other interventions on skill development and circulation.
2. Foster the engagement of public actors in departure countries.
3. Strengthen private sector engagement in all countries and across the Mediterranean.
4. Increase cooperation between relevant private and public sector partners and promote networking opportunities between them.
5. Widen the number of universities participating in the project.
6. Strengthen the placement phase.
7. Develop a communication and visibility strategy and communication plans for all target countries.
8. Improve the replicability and scalability of the project.