

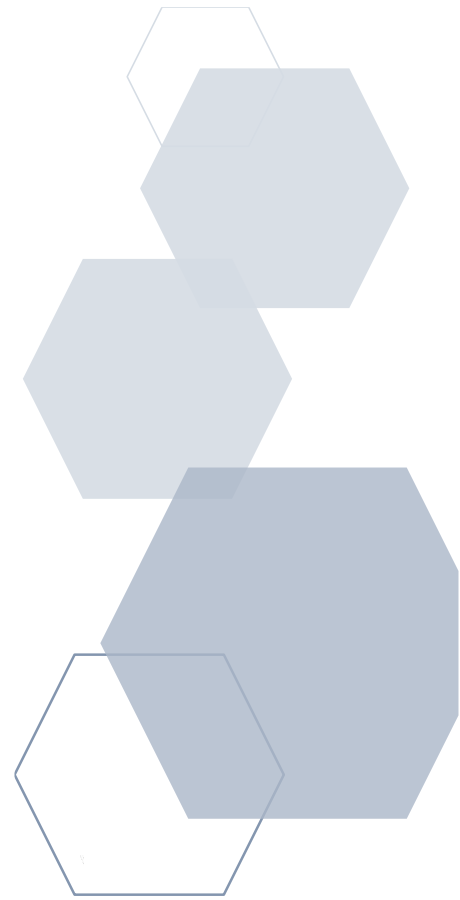
Evaluation of the Local Employment for Development in Africa programme in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia

Final report

June 2019

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Voluntas Advisory

Independent external evaluation of

the SPARK implemented Local Employment for Development in Africa (LEAD) programme

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1 Executive Summary

The Local Employment for Development in Africa (LEAD) programme has been implemented by SPARK and through local partner organizations in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia, based on funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The programme aims to reduce irregular migration and radicalization by improving employment opportunities for young people, with a particularly focus on women. More specifically, in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia collectively, the programme aims to contribute to the setup of 109 new enterprises, the growth of 245 established companies, and the creation of 3220 sustainable direct jobs and 17.710 indirect jobs. The initial implementation period of the programme was 2016-2018, after which the programme has been extended for one year.

The report at hand presents the results of the final evaluation of the programme, covering the initial implementation period. In alignment with the OECD DAC criteria for evaluation of development assistance, the evaluation considers the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the intervention.¹ The evaluation was carried out by Voluntas Advisory in partnership with Diwan Marketing for data collection in Libya, and independent consultant Barry Sesnan for data collection and analytical support on Somalia.

In total, six different data sources were included in the evaluation, namely: Desk research of programme documents and external documents, key informant interviews (KIIs) with SPARKS staff and the programme manager from the Dutch MFA, KIIs with local implementation partners and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries. Data collection for each indicator in the evaluation has been sequenced and triangulated through a variety of different methods, to cover all angles of the programme, and allow for iterative testing and verification of hypothesis throughout the evaluation. Data was collected in the three target countries during the period March-April 2019.

Voluntas finds that the programme had varying relevance in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia, with respect to radicalization and irregular migration, as a result of the different trends in each country. The program appears particularly relevant for tackling migration flows from Tunisia. The nomad background of Somalis, however, implies that Somalis have a different attitude to migration. Somalis migrate frequently to and from the country, and experience from abroad is seen as a significant asset upon return. As such, Somali migration is characterized more as a “pull” phenomenon due to the possibility of gaining experience, rather than a “push” phenomenon because of poor economic opportunities. This implies that the program, which is aimed at increased economic opportunities, is of less relevance to reduce migration. Finally, in Libya, it was recognized during programme implementation that the aim of reducing irregular migration was of little relevance for. Although the country is an important transit country for migrants, few Libyans migrate to Europe, and the program does not target migrants that are in transit. Therefore, the programme aim for Libya was altered to enhancing entrepreneurship culture and acceptance in lieu of reducing irregular migration.

Further, the evaluation finds that all three target countries experience significant challenges in tackling radicalization, which implies that the reduction of radicalization is a relevant thematic focus. However, radicalization is a complex phenomenon guided by several factors which ultimately lead to a sense of exclusion among the affected persons. Although employment contributes to enhance a sense of inclusion, and thus lessen the inclination for radicalization, it is not necessarily sufficient as a stand-alone measure.

Further to the overall aim of the programme, there programme states two specific objectives:

1. Create sustainable youth employment in growth sectors with special attention to young women;

¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1991, *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*

2. Promote entrepreneurship among young people by integrating entrepreneurship education in secondary and higher (vocational) education.

The evaluation concludes that the two objectives correspond to acute priorities in tackling youth unemployment in all three target countries, with some reservations. First, the needs of the target population were not fully met through the activities implemented. In some instances, the programme curriculum appears to have aimed too high, when beneficiaries could have benefitted from more basic training in for instance CV formatting. These unaddressed needs mean that although programme activities were generally successful in technically preparing youth, this did not always translate into employment. To tackle this issue, SPARK has proposed add-on activities in 2019 extension, to which the Dutch MFA has agreed. Another pressing need relates to access to finance. While the original SPARK programme included an Access to Finance component, this component was cancelled as the final proposal for implementation came late into the cycle of the programme. The cancellation implied that the significant finance gap that newly established entrepreneurs and SMEs face was not met, thus inhibiting growth and job creation. Finally, a range of external factors, namely bureaucratic procedures, inefficient labor market policies and the depreciation of the Tunisian and Libyan dinar, are also cited as affecting employment. These remained unaddressed by the programme.

The programme has been efficiently managed from the Tunis office through local partners, and appear cost-efficient. Moreover, based on statements from beneficiaries and SPARK staff, the program activities were overall efficiently implemented. The success in management and implementation should partly be ascribed to the available inputs, in terms of tested reporting mechanism and ICT systems, which eased the overview and reporting of the project - although in some instances the various systems entailed an unnecessary overlap of information. Other inputs, such as the availability of relevant resources, were missing due to registration issues for the SPARK Tunis office, causing challenges to programme management.

As the table to the right indicates, the programme met the target outcomes for direct jobs created and formal SME's expanded during the period, while targets for establishment of formal businesses and indirect jobs created are lacking. The achievement of outcome targets also varied significantly across countries. While outcome targets in Somalia were either met or exceeded, in Tunisia only one target was met, and some were not even half-fulfilled.

Outcome indicator	Intended	Achieved	%
# of Formal Businesses Established in selected sectors	109	72	66%
# of Formal SMEs expanded in selected sectors	245	473	193%
# of Direct jobs created	3220	3607	112%
# of Indirect jobs created	17710	2970	17%

Table 1: Overview of intended and achieved targets for outcome indicators

The results from Libya were particularly dire, and targets were far from being met within the programme period. Given the adverse circumstances in Libya, the programme needs to align to target relevant, achievable outcomes. In particular, it seems relevant to focus on building an entrepreneurial mindset in young people instead of fostering job creation. Changing mindsets appears crucial to foster SMEs and jobs creation after the war, in a context where people are emotionally drained from the current political situation.

According to beneficiaries, the programme succeeded in enhancing a culture of entrepreneurship among targeted youth across the three target countries. The focus group discussions showed that even though for some of the beneficiaries some time has elapsed since they partook in activities, they generally still held a positive attitude and dedication to entrepreneurship. Moreover, Voluntas found that the program has brought about positive effects beyond those envisioned, most notably in providing a much-needed confidence boost to beneficiaries.

For sustainability, Voluntas finds that local partners took a high degree of ownership of the activities, including their design, outputs and outcomes, and showed significant initiative in implementation.

Moreover, the programme saw a high degree of local capacity building among partners during implementation. The jobs created were of at least 6-month duration, which by the programme definition made them sustainable. However, as a side note, the fragile environment of most newly created companies would suggest that the jobs are not as sustainable as regular employment with larger companies. Finally, the programme strived to align with the strategy of national stakeholders and create synergies with local actors in order to increase sustainability of results. However, the qualitative data suggests that this alignment was not fully understood by partners and beneficiaries.

The main recommendations for future programming center on tailoring the programme to the context, adopting measurable goals and making the M&E systems leaner.

The evaluation was conducted using an analytical framework which divided the programme into different evaluation components across the DAC criteria. The figure below sets out our overall assessment across individual evaluation components.

	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Impact
Input	High	Medium	Medium	High	N/A
Activities	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	
Output	N/A		High	High	Medium
Outcome	Medium	Low	High	Low	Medium
Effect	Low	High	Low	Low	High

Figure 1: Overall assessment within each evaluation component

Overall, the evaluation finds eight high performing categories (e.g. the relevance of inputs), eight medium performing categories (e.g. the efficiency of inputs) and five of low score (e.g. the outcome efficiency).



2 Introduction

Economic data suggests a causal relationship between entrepreneurship level and economic growth, as wealthier countries experience significantly higher entrepreneurship levels than many developing countries.² Even among developing regions, economies that are more open and embrace global trade, as well as those that foster attractive investment climates, score relatively higher on the entrepreneurship scale. Inversely, those characterized by economic or political instability rank at the bottom. Reasons for low levels of entrepreneurship in developing countries are manifold. For some countries, an overreliance on natural resources - such as oil exports - discourages entrepreneurial initiatives and incentives. In other instances, rampant corruption and burdensome bureaucracy make starting a business less attractive.

At the same time, since entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a driver of economic growth, the promotion of entrepreneurship is deemed of high importance. In fact, the resulting productivity from new enterprises and innovative solutions can contribute to bring countries out of recession as well as drive economic self-sufficiency. This is achieved through growth from the generation of employment, added value, gross domestic product, and export activities.

The Local Employment in Africa for Development (LEAD) programme is a €25 million grant scheme set up by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Through LEAD, the MFA seeks to tackle the causes of migration and radicalization by improving young people's prospects in African countries through encouraging local entrepreneurs and creating jobs. The LEAD programme was initiated in 2016 for a three-year period. Four organizations were selected for implementation, namely SPARK, Hivos, Oxfam Novib and SOS Children's Villages. These organisations carry out the programme in 7 African countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Somalia, Mali, Nigeria and Tunisia.

The SPARK-implemented LEAD programme takes place in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia. SPARK is a Dutch-based NGO that focuses on developing higher education and entrepreneurship to empower young people "to lead their post-conflict societies into prosperity."³ SPARK has 25 years of expertise, and over 100 staff members in 17 different regions globally. The implementation in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia is implemented by the SPARK representatives in Tunis and Hargeisa offices, and through local partners, including entrepreneurship development organizations. The programme management for all three countries resides in the SPARK office in Tunis. While originally intended for the programme period 2016-2018, the programme implementation period has recently been expanded to include 2019.

The LEAD programme implemented by SPARK in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia has two strategic objectives, namely:

1. Create sustainable youth employment in growth sectors with special attention to young women;
2. Promote entrepreneurship among young people by integrating entrepreneurship education in secondary and higher (vocational) education.

These objectives are nested within the overall goal for the LEAD programme of preventing irregular economic migration and radicalization.

The current evaluation considers the SPARK implemented LEAD programme in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia for the regular programme period 2016-2018. The evaluation follows the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The evaluation was carried out by Voluntas Advisory, covering Tunisia and Libya, in cooperation with independent consultant Barry Sesnan, lead consultant on Somalia. Voluntas Advisory had overall responsibility of the evaluation.

² Zoltán J. Ács, László Szerb, Ainsley Lloyd, 2018, *The Global Entrepreneurship Index*, Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute

³ SPARK, 2019, *About Us*, SPARK website, visited May 31st 2019

3 Country Context

3.1 Tunisia

Despite being the only nation to emerge as a democracy in the aftermath of the 2011 revolts known as the Arab Spring, Tunisia still faces severe political, economic and social challenges in its post-revolution era. Its domestic turmoil breeds resentment, especially among Tunisia's youth, and is associated with large fluxes of illegal migrants to Europe and continuous threat of radical organizations such as the Islamic State. In the words of European Union's ambassador to Tunisia, Patrice Bergamini, "socioeconomic crises are the best fuel either for illegal migration or, in worst-case scenarios, for feeding terrorism."⁴

The unemployment rate has increased considerably since before the revolution, particularly affecting young people, including university graduates "whose number has skyrocketed in the last two decades."⁵ Moreover, Tunisia sees considerable regional disparities between inner and coastal areas in terms of growth and work opportunities.

For these reasons, Tunisia sees both a considerable amount of international migration, and a large national migration from the suburbs to the cities, which contribute to social tensions among the young population. According to IOM, "more than 25,500 Tunisians took to the sea in the aftermath of the fall of the Ben Ali regime with the hope of finding work or joining their families or friends in Europe."⁶ In fact, in the ranking of countries with most frequent refugee origin, Tunisia comes in as the 14th country thus far in 2019.⁷ Moreover, Tunisia is increasingly becoming a hub for Sub-Saharan migration movements towards Europe. For these reason, migration is a national priority for the government.⁸

Regarding radicalization, Tunisia has long been a disproportionate source of recruits for extremist groups. Since 2014, at least 7,000 Tunisians have travelled to Iraq, Libya and Syria to join the Islamic State and al-Qaeda - more than any other nationality.⁹ Moreover, both ISIS and al-Qaeda have affiliates operating along the border with Algeria, especially in impoverished areas like the southwestern mountains.

Tunisia's informal economy accounts for between 39 and 50 percent of its GDP.¹⁰ Entrepreneurship is relatively uncommon in Tunisia compared to countries in a similar development phase. Out of a population of 11 million, only 1.6 million people work in the formal private sector. That mainly relates to lack of an entrepreneurship culture, bureaucracy burden, low access to finance and lack of skills and training.

However, the government, as a part of a wider plan to foster entrepreneurship, recently passed the Start-Up Act, a law making it easier for entrepreneurs to launch a business. The law provides for a state-funded salary for up to three founders per company during the first year of operations, tax breaks and a one-year leave period for public- and private-sector employees to set up a new business with the

⁴ Raghavan Sudarsan, 2018, *Tunisia feared the return of militants from abroad. The threat now is those who never left*, The Washington Post

⁵ Unemployment rose from 14.2 per cent in 2008 to 18.3 per cent in 2011. International Organization for Migration, 2019, *Tunisia*, International Organization for Migration website, visited June 10th, 2019

⁶ Ibid

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019, *Sea and land arrivals to Europe*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Website, visited June 10th, 2019

⁸ International Organization for Migration, 2019

⁹ Zarocostas John, 2015, *More than 7,000 Tunisians said to have joined Islamic state*, McClatchy DC

¹⁰ Pollock, Katherine and Wehrey, Frederic, 2018, *Tunisian Libyan border security aspirations and socioeconomic realities*, Carnegie endowment for international peace

right to return to their old jobs.¹¹ The practical implementation and effect of these government initiatives are yet to be seen.

The recent government initiatives to foster a good business and entrepreneurship environment contributes to Tunisia's ranking as the 80th country on the global Ease of Doing Business index.¹² Moreover, Tunisia ranks as number 95 in the fragile state index, putting it in a category of "elevated warning."¹³

3.2 Libya

Libya has seen increased lawlessness following the 2011 revolution as no single national actor has been able to control the country's borders, which has resulted in ongoing local power struggles in many Libyan cities. Today, the country lives a national power scramble between the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) and the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA). In the absence of a centralized power, armed militia groups based on local or regional alliances have flourished. At the same time, tribal affiliations further determine vested interests and allegiances, often contributing to the outbreak of local-level conflict.

Despite its fast security deterioration, Libya continues to be the most frequently travelled point of transfer for refugees and migrants heading to Europe, many of whom remain in the country in search of job opportunities. Libya has also historically been a popular end-destination for African migrants, mainly due to the country's oil-generated wealth and plentiful job opportunities compared to its neighbors. In recent years, however, Libya has evolved into a transit hub for migrants heading from Sub-Saharan Africa towards the Mediterranean.

According to IOM, the political instability following 2014 has resulted in massive internal displacement.¹⁴ Although historically few Libyans migrate to other countries, Libya has seen a considerable migration of people to surrounding countries, such as Tunisia, due to the prevailing political instability. Moreover, Libya is an important transit and destination country for migrants searching for employment or trying to reach Europe.¹⁵ The total number of migrants in Libya is estimated at between 700.000-1 million.¹⁶ The large influx of migrants has become a cause as well as an effect of destabilization. The numerous migrants arriving in Libyan cities aggravate tensions in local communities with scarce economic and social opportunities. Southern Libya - stretching from Kufra in the East to Ghat in the west and Brak al-Shati in the North - is particularly affected by migratory movements and human trafficking, as it is the entry point for migrants heading North from Sub-Saharan Africa.

These migrants are often discriminated against and are subject to arbitrary arrest general exploitation. They have difficulties receiving even the most fundamental services in Libya, let alone employment opportunities. For these reasons, many migrants who had intended to stay and work in Libya eventually choose to depart for Europe, perceiving this option as a safer living environment.

This chaotic mix of large fluxes of people, low government capacity and poor economic prospects has enabled local militias and international extremist organizations to increase their influence in the country, placing Libya among one of the 25 most fragile States in the world by the Fragile State Index, with several active nationally based radical groups.¹⁷ Radicalization in Libya requires no formal entry point (such as using a passport to leave the country) which means that the number of people radicalized

¹¹ Wood, John, 2019, *In Tunisia budding entrepreneurs can apply for start-up leave from their jobs*, World Economic Forum

¹² Trading Economics, 2018, *Ease of Doing Business in Libya*, Trading Economics Website, visited June 10th, 2019

¹³ Categories are: Very sustainable; Sustainable; Very stable; More stable; Stable; Warning; Elevated warning; High warning; Alert; High alert; Very high alert. Fund for Peace, 2019, *Fragile States Index*, Annual Report.

¹⁴ IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) identified and located 348,372 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Libya. International Organization for Migration, 2019, *Libya*, International Organization for Migration website, visited June 10th, 2019

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Mezran, Karim and Talbot, Frank, 2018, *Going Local in Libya*, Atlantic Council

yearly is almost impossible to assess. However, given the ongoing political turmoil and low barriers of entry for radicalization, numbers could be expected to match those of Tunisia.

As a consequence of political unrest, civil security and social services have collapsed. The country experiences an economic crisis, characterized by a drop in GDP, drastic depreciation of the Libyan dinar and a severe liquidity shortage. The economy is undergoing a process of ‘black marketization’ - a vicious cycle in which the shadow economy both feeds on the liquidity crisis and exacerbates it.¹⁸ Potentially more than half of the money circulating in Libya is in the informal sector. The economic crisis and the rapid rise of the shadow economy since 2014 has a significant impact on the vulnerability of Libyans.

For these reasons, Libya is ranked 186 among 190 economies in the ease of doing business, according to the latest World Bank annual ratings, and is number 28 on the fragile state index, in the “alert” category.¹⁹

3.3 Somalia

Although Somalia from an international point of view is one country, in reality, Somalia is divided. The region known as Somaliland bears all the characteristics of an independent country apart from official recognition by other countries. Furthermore, the region of Puntland, while identified as part of Somalia, is largely autonomous. Both Puntland and Somaliland, except for certain fringe areas, are peaceful and have functioning authorities. The rest of Somalia has varying degrees of governance while under the loose control of a Federal Government in Mogadishu. This government is not recognized by Somaliland and has no sway there. The UN and international NGOs have various methods of dealing with this situation.

Somalia is also one of the poorest countries in the world, a situation which is aggravated in many areas by the civil war and the absence of a functioning national government for over a decade. The impact of state failure on human development in Somalia has been profound, resulting in the collapse of political institutions, the destruction of social and economic infrastructure, and massive internal and external migrations. This is more pronounced in Central South Somalia.

According to IOM, every year, tens of thousands of migrants and refugees make the journey from South-Central Somalia and Ethiopia “*through the north-eastern region of Somalia, Puntland, and onwards across the Gulf of Aden for both economic and security related reasons.*”²⁰ Especially young people consider migrating (60%) because of growing youth unemployment and lack of job prospects. However, Somalis only make up 15% of the flows to Yemen while Ethiopians make up the rest. Moreover, Somali migration seems to have sowed down in recent years. In 2014, 16.405 Somali migrants relocated to Europe, while in the first three months of 2019 only 25 migrants of Somali origin were recorded to have arrived at the European borders.²¹

Moreover, Somalia is a much more “fluid” society than Libya and Tunis in terms of migration flows, and migrants often go back and forth from other countries. In fact, migration is often seen as a step to becoming wealthy diaspora and many migrants come home regularly and contribute to society. As an example, there is a business group made up of Dutch Somalis who are particularly well-regarded and mentioned often by Somalis spoken to both formally and informally.

Like both Tunisia and Libya, Somalia suffers from internal radical Islamic tendencies. The organization known as Al-Shabaab, an internationally listed terror organization, has been active over the last 15 years and poses a threat to the country’s security. Despite considerable setbacks, Al-Shabaab has proven capable of hitting the Somali authorities and the African Union Force set out to protect them.²²

¹⁸ Mercy Corps, 2017, *Libya shadow Economy*

¹⁹ Trading Economics, 2018

²⁰ International Organization for Migration, 2019, *Somalia*, International Organization for Migration website, visited June 10th, 2019

²¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019

²² Marchal, Roland, 2018, *A reading of jihadi radicalization in Somalia*, Politique Africaine, 2018/1 (No 149)

The threat to security has led many IDPs to move to the more stable regions of Puntland and Somaliland, which puts additional pressure on the labor market in these regions.

Regarding the entrepreneur culture, Somalis are considered as naturals in trading and business, although they often run businesses in ways that would be regarded as very informal with structures based on family and clan. There is for instance a very well-developed money transfer and exchange system available throughout the country (and into East Africa). Cheaper, and more efficient than banks, it relies on personal relations.

Moreover, the private sector has flourished during peace, trading with neighboring and Asian countries, processing agricultural products and manufacturing on a small scale, and providing services previously monopolized or dominated by the public sector.²³ Nevertheless, it is estimated that about 65,5% of the urban youth are formally unemployed.²⁴ This does not mean that they do not work. Even an unemployed youth may be in a gainful activity.

Despite these positive notions, Somalia is ranked 190 among 190 economies on the ease of doing business index, and number 2 on the fragile state index (only surpassed by Yemen), putting it in the “very high alert” category.²⁵



²³ Echo Bravo, and Somaliland Ministry of Education, 2013

²⁴ UNICEF, 1995

²⁵ Fund for Peace, 2019

4 Programme design

The LEAD programme in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia seeks to improve employment opportunities for youth by supporting entrepreneurship and helping create sustainable jobs in the target countries. The program works with the primary assumption that addressing labour-market constraints will generate a significant impact in the sense of inclusion of young people while decreasing their motivation to migrate illegally or sustain radical views. The program proposes to achieve its objectives by offering training and support for young entrepreneurs and promoting a better business environment for SMEs overall.

The programme can be described in a classic Theory of Change (ToC) terminology as is visualized in the figure below. Each step in the figure from one arrow to the next represents a set of assumptions necessary for achieving results (for simplicity, the assumptions are not listed in the figure, although the main assumptions are considered in the text below).

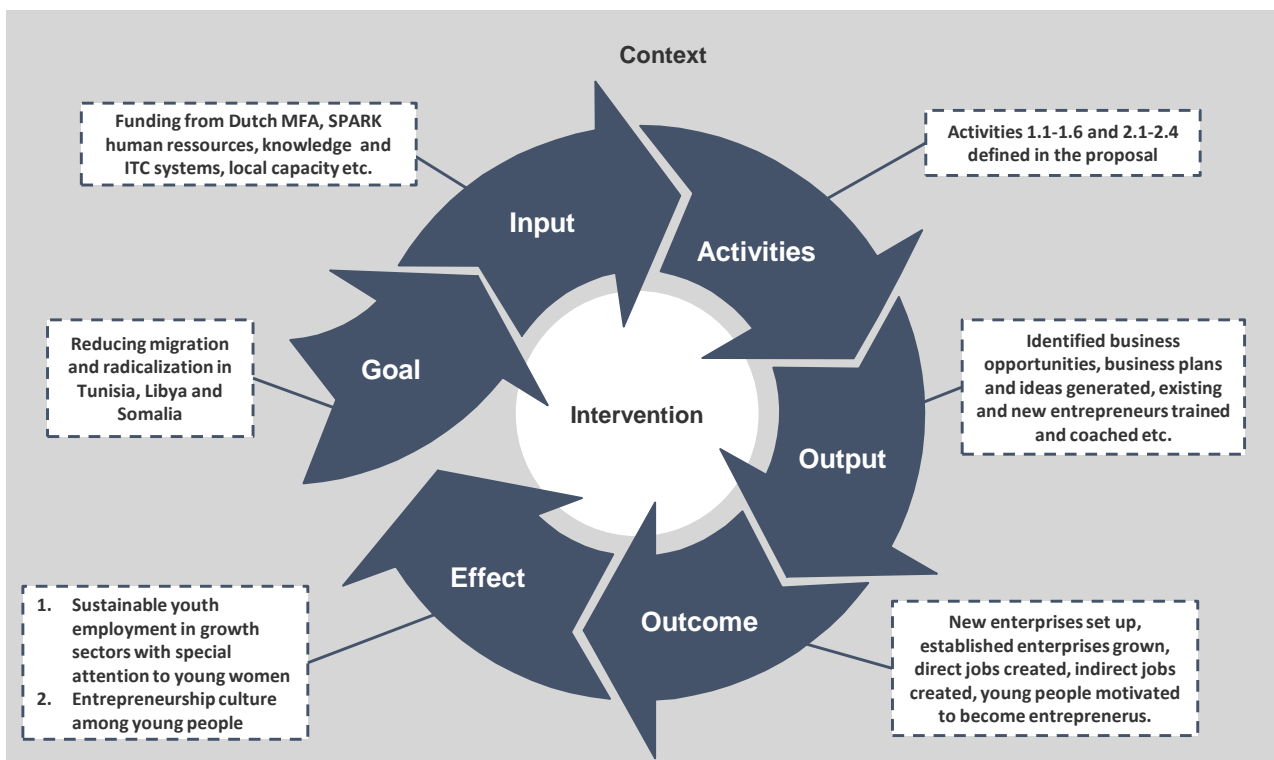


Figure 2: LEAD programme explained using classic Theory of Change terminology for Interventions

The overall goal of the intervention is to reduce migration and radicalization in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia. To achieve this, the programme has a specific set of inputs at its disposal. In ToC terminology, input should be understood as the available resources, knowledge, expertise, funding etc. For the LEAD programme, these consist, among others, of funding from Dutch MFA, the human resources and knowledge available from SPARK, established ITC systems, local capacity and so on.

In turn, SPARK uses these resources to set up different activities deemed relevant to achieve the overall goal. The activities relate to the two objectives of the programme, which constitute the programme's desired effect. These activities are designed to lead to different direct outputs, such as identified business opportunities, business plans and ideas generated, existing and new entrepreneurs trained and coached etc.

The outputs of the programme are expected to lead to specific outcomes, including the setup of 109 new enterprises, growing 245 established companies, create 3220 sustainable direct jobs and 17.710 indirect jobs, and ensure that young people are motivated in becoming entrepreneurs.²⁶

Finally, the different outcomes are expected to lead to two main effects: sustainable youth employment in growth sectors with special attention to young women and promoted entrepreneurship among young people.

The relationship between activities, outputs, outcomes and effects are seen in the results chain detailed in figure 3 below.

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Effect	
Additional market research in identified growth sectors	24 business opportunities and markets identified	Set up 135 new enterprises by young people in focus sectors, of which 80 young men and 55 young women	1. Sustainable youth employment in growth sectors with special attention to young women	
Recruit successful existing and new entrepreneurs through existing entrepreneurial activities	1.600 business plans and ideas of young entrepreneurs created			
Create/expand entrepreneurship centers	18 incubators established and reinforced			
Improve local financial service institutions and business service providers	34 financial institutions improved	Help to grow 315 established companies in focus sectors		
Develop entrepreneurship skills of existing and new entrepreneurs through coaching & training	7.000 existing and new entrepreneurs trained	Create 4000 sustainable direct jobs, of which 2400 set up by young men and 1600 by young women, and 22,000 indirect jobs		
Facilitate access to finance for existing and new businesses by means of guarantee funds	150 loans issued through guarantees to local banks			
Facilitate local SMEs in the value chain of MC and large local companies	135 businesses started and reinforced in MC value chain			
Promote successful young entrepreneurs (especially young women) in the media	37 media publications and/or performances published	Ensure that young people are motivated to become an entrepreneur and work in the private sector (50% increase in motivation)		2. Entrepreneurship promoted among young people
Introduce or improve entrepreneurship courses in curricula of institutions	12 modules introduced or Improved reaching 42.000			
Introduce or improve training programmes in higher (vocational) education	12 apprenticeship programmes introduced or improved			
Organize summer modules in entrepreneurship in higher (vocational) education institutions	Two-week summer modules organized reaching 1.440			
Organize a Global Entrepreneurship Week with further and higher (vocational) education	18 GEW events with a range of 9.000			

Figure 3: Programme Results Chain

As mentioned above, each step in the ToC is guided by a set of assumptions. For instance, it is assumed that the outputs will lead to the expected outcomes, which in turn will lead to the expected effect. These assumptions can be more or less valid, and should incorporate the context in which they are expected to operate.

The most contested assumption supporting the programme’s ToC, is that increasing employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship culture will lessen the desire for youth in each of the three target countries to migrate or become radicalized. This is the assumption that ties the effects in Figure 2 to the goal. The section on relevance will discuss the validity of each of these assumptions in, both in general and for each of the target countries.

In terms of the target group, SPARK’s activities related to objective 1 target beneficiaries aged 18 - 35, while activities related to objective 2 target beneficiaries aged 15-35. It should be noted that while

²⁶ SPARK uses the terminology “main output” to describe these outcomes. From an M&E perspective, this is not the correct terminology.

the program keeps a broad scope of beneficiaries, it emphasizes people between 15 and 24 years of age (+65% of beneficiaries) and women (40% of beneficiaries).



5 Evaluation Approach & Methodology

5.1 Evaluation approach and framework

Voluntas has shaped the monitoring and evaluation framework around all six program levels, related to the ToC narrative of the intervention (see Figure 1). This allows Voluntas to assess program implementation and performance at both granular and wide-scale levels and determine where, if any, breakdowns in program implementation and achievements have occurred.

The primary purpose of this assignment is to help SPARK evaluate the program's (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, (iv) sustainability and (v) impact across different stages of the program. The OECD-DAC definitions for evaluation criteria are developed specifically for evaluating development projects, programmes or policy, including their design, implementation and results. The criteria are seen as complementary and were defined to enable a comprehensive evaluation that provides useful and credible information and points to lessons learned for future programming.

The evaluation takes outset in a range of key questions outlined in the ToR, which have been fitted with the OECD recommended guidelines for best practice within evaluation.

I. *Relevance*

Relevance/appropriateness is determined as a result of the relationship between needs and the project objectives. This means that a project or programme is only relevant when the identified needs are addressed by the activities implemented as part of the project and these contribute to reaching the overall objective of the project.

According to the standard OECD DAC criteria, the relevance of a program pertains to "the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor."²⁷ In evaluating the relevance of a programme or a project, the OECD suggests to consider the following questions:

- *To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?*
- *Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?*²⁸

In the overall evaluation, the two questions are weighted equally. In order to tackle each of these questions in the context of the programme, they have been broken down into several sub questions, as described below:

To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?

- *How relevant was the programme to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization?*
- *How relevant was the programme in the three different programme countries?*
- *Are female entrepreneurs more vulnerable (compared to men) in fragile contexts (compared to non-fragile context) and how did the programme address these vulnerabilities?*

²⁷ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1991

²⁸ Another question suggested by the OECD on relevance is: "Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?" For the purpose of this evaluation, this question is deemed too similar to the already stated question.

Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

- *Did the intervention solve an existing problem (lack of youth employment in growth sectors specifically for young women actually one of employability, or are there other things (i.e. cultural barriers, cost, work permit issues, etc.) that are keeping youth (especially women) out of a job?*
- *How relevant was the programme to the needs of its target group? And if not, how should that inform the future design of the program?*

II. *Effectiveness*

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an intervention attains its objectives. Determining effectiveness is therefore contingent on a well-developed results framework, as well as ongoing documentation in the project of activities and achievements. In the evaluation of effectiveness, the following main questions are suggested in the DAC guidelines:²⁹

- *To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?*
- *What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?*

In the context of this evaluation, these main questions have been broken down in a list of sub-questions listed below.

Achievement of objectives:³⁰

- *To what extent did the programme contribute to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization of young people in Libya, Somalia and Tunisia?*
- *To what extent did the programme (technically) prepare and motivate youth (especially women) to remain in their countries of origin and not resort to irregular migration or radicalization in the three programme countries?*
- *How effective were the local partners of the programme in implementing their activities?*
- *Was a gender balance and inclusiveness achieved in the programme?*
- *How effective was the Access to Finance component of the programme?*

Major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives:

- *Local circumstances and context influence on the programme effectiveness*
- *How does Programme effectiveness in fragile countries differ from Programme effectiveness in non-fragile countries?*
- *What determines Programme effectiveness in fragile and non-fragile countries and how can this be utilized to increase the effectiveness of this Programme?*

The assessment of effectiveness has focused mainly on the question of whether objectives were achieved, as is considered to be controlled by the programme, while the factors of influence also include external event.

III. *Efficiency*

According to the OECD DAC criteria, efficiency measures the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- *Were activities cost-efficient?*
- *Were objectives achieved on time?*

²⁹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1991

³⁰ Although effectiveness of ICT systems is also mentioned in the ToR, Voluntas finds that the ICT systems is best dealt with under efficiency.

- *Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?*

In terms of project implementation, we will consider the programme's management structure and the ICT systems used.³¹

The evaluation of efficiency generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. This has not been part of the scope of this assignment. Instead the evaluation of efficiency will focus on timeliness of activities and the perceived efficiency of the management of local partners.

In the overall evaluation of efficiency, the three bullet questions above are given equal weight.

IV. Sustainability

Sustainability is, according to OECD, a measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.³² Voluntas interprets sustainability in two ways. First, we believe it should consider the sustainability of the main outputs measured in the activity. Second, it should consider whether the activity itself is sustainable, in the sense that partners will continue the activity after donor funding has been withdrawn. When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, OECD suggests considering the following questions:³³

- *To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?*
- *What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?*

In the overall assessment, we have weighted the first of these questions as $\frac{3}{4}$ and the second as $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total, in the belief that we are mainly interested on gaging the sustainability of the main output of the programme. Again, we have broken the questions down into sub-questions for the purpose of this evaluation:

To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?

- *Did the local partner organizations take ownership of their activities, outputs and outcomes?*
- *To what extent did the programme increase the capacity of its local partner organizations?*
- *To what extent did the programme build synergies with other relevant local initiatives and organizations?*
- *To what extent did the entrepreneurship activities offered to beneficiaries through the programme promote sustainable employment for them?*
- *To what extent did the Business and market opportunities identified conducted for the programme ensure youth (especially women) become employed in the growth sectors within the three programme countries?*

What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

- *What are the greatest risks to the programme?*
- *Has the programme been environmentally as well as financially sustainable?*

V. Impact

Impact is defined by OECD as "the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended."³⁴ This involves the main effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators.

³¹ The ToR also asks for challenges to efficiency due to local circumstances. To prevent repetition, these will be dealt with under the respective themes.

³² Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1991

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1991

These can be of a direct or indirect nature and have come about intended or unintended. When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, OECD suggests considering the following questions:³⁵

- *What has happened as a result of the programme or project?*
- *What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?*
- *How many people have been affected?*

The three questions have equal weight in the overall measurement of Impact. In order to tackle the first two questions, these have been broken down into further sub questions, as shown below:

What has happened as a result of the programme or project?

- *To what extent did the programme Entrepreneur activities scale existing MSMEs and lead to job creation?*
- *Is there any unintended (positive and/or negative) impact in the areas of the programme (Libya (Benghazi, Tripoli), Tunisia (KEF, Kairouan) and Somalia (Somaliland & Puntland and Mogadishu))?*

What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?

- *To what extent did the programme create or enhance upon the entrepreneurship culture among the targeted demographic in the three programme countries?*
- *To what extent did the programme activities reduce migratory and radicalisation tendencies amongst targeted youth?*
- *To what extent did the programme activities have an impact on employability, employment, income or other higher-order things like consumption, net assets, savings.*

Figure 2 below presents the visualization of performance which will be attached to each of the OECD DAC criteria as part of the evaluation.

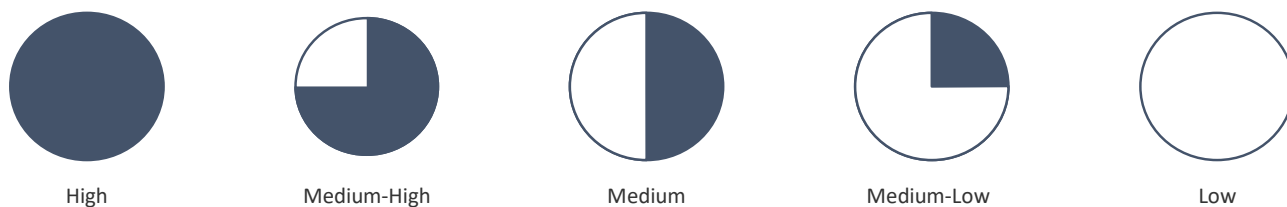


Figure 4: Visualization of performance

The evaluation framework pertaining to each criterion as outlined in the TOR and developed by the Voluntas project team is presented below in figure 5.

For consistency, the outcome targets and indicators used in this evaluation connect to the monitoring protocol for the period of the evaluation (2016-2018), although these have been revised for the 2019 continuation of the programme.

³⁵ Ibid

	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Impact	Sum
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were there any country factors affecting relevance? Are female entrepreneurs more vulnerable in fragile contexts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the determinants of efficiency in fragile vs. non-fragile contexts, and how to utilize them? How did local circumstances and context influence the program's efficiency? How did the fragility of the countries impact efficiency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does fragility impact effectiveness, what determines it in fragile vs. non-fragile countries, and how can such insight be utilized? What country factors affected effectiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What risk factors affect sustainability? 		
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the process for needs identification? How appropriate were devoted inputs/resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient was program management structure? How efficient were ICT system of the program? How efficient was program partner reporting scheme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective was the ICT system of the program? What organizational factors enhanced/hindered timely results achievements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what degree were local partners and beneficiaries included in needs identification? 		
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was vulnerability of female entrepreneurs addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were activities cost-efficient? Were activities effective in terms of effort? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective were local partners in implementing activities? How effective was the Access to Finance activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did local partner organizations take ownership of their activities, outputs and outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the activities scale existing MSMEs and lead to job creation? 	
Output			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did or did not the program (technically) prepare and motivate youth to remain in their countries of origin? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of local capacity strengthening (individual/organizational) 		
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the program address the specific needs of the target group? Did the program adhere to principles of good aid? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What factors influenced time-efficiency of the program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were gender balance and inclusiveness achieved? What major factors influence achievement of objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the entrepreneurship activities promote sustainable employment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the business and market opportunities create employment among target groups? 	
Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the intervention address the main problem, or are there others unaddressed? Was the program relevant for preventing irregular economic migration and/or radicalization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was entrepreneurship culture among the targeted demographic in the three program countries enhanced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the program contribute to preventing irregular economic migration/ radicalization in each country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the program build synergies with other local initiatives/orgs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any unintended impact in the areas of the program? Impact on employability, employment, income or other higher-order things 	
Sum						

Figure 5: Analytical framework for the evaluation

5.2 Data Collection Methods and Stratification

Data has been triangulated through a variety of different methods, to cover all angles of the programme. Moreover, data collection has been sequenced, to allow for generation of hypothesis for testing and verification. In total, 6 different data sources have been included in the evaluation:

- 01/** *SPARK programme documents.* The evaluation draws heavily on relevant internal SPARK project documents, including project proposals, quarterly interim reports, narrative reports, financial reports (audits), communication with the Dutch MFA as well as further documents submitted by the SPARK programme team. The documents have primarily been used to get an understanding of the intervention and to evaluate the outcome indicators and cost-efficiency of the programme
- 02/** *External documents.* The evaluation draws on desk research of external documents to answer research questions related to the contextual circumstances and relevance of the intervention (see figure 3)
- 03/** *Key-informant interviews with programme staff.* During the evaluation Voluntas conducted 10 key-informant interviews (KIs) with relevant SPARK staff both at headquarter (M&E department), and local spark staff in Tunisia and Somalia. Moreover, an interview was carried out with the LEAD programme representative from the Dutch MFA. The interviews were mainly used to answer questions related to the input, activities and outputs of the programme, with focus on effectiveness and efficiency. The interviews were based on semi-structure interview guides based on the questions in the analytical framework and was of 1-2-hour duration. A complete list of interviewees is provided in the annex.
- 04/** *Key-informant interviews with partner staff.* Voluntas conducted semi-structured key informant interviews with 11 staff from current and former local entrepreneurship centres, as well as SPARK members responsible for direct implementation of the programme. These interviews answered questions related to context, activities, output and effect of the intervention, focusing on relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. A complete list of interviewees is provided in the annex.
- 05/** During the evaluation, we also conducted semi-structured *key informant interviews with programme beneficiaries.* Three interviews were conducted per country. The interviews with beneficiaries assessed the programme's success in creating the desirable impact and achieving its strategic programme objectives through its activities.
- 06/** Finally, the evaluation incorporates the use of participatory methodologies through *Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries.* In total, 8 focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries in each of the programme locations of the project. In Tunisia the discussions were held in Kef and Kairouan, in Libya they were held in Tripoli and Benghazi, and in Somalia they were conducted in Hargeisa, Borama, Garowe and Mogadishu

5.3 Security and risk mitigation

Operating in unstable and insecure environments requires experience and in-depth knowledge of the local environment and context. Diwan and Voluntas have extensive experience with conducting data collection and surveys in difficult environments and in the Libyan context in particular. Over the past 7 years of field operations Voluntas Advisory has developed a method for working with our local field teams that allows for them to feel safe and protected and most importantly able to share their immediate impressions from the field with the Project Team

Manager regarding any changes to security that might affect the safety of our local teams, whether they be political, social or economic.

The security of the field research teams is of utmost priority for us. So far, we had no security incidents, though we have had to mitigate occasionally especially in Libya. We have a conservative approach when it comes to the security of our researchers. All our researchers are instructed not to compromise their personal security for any research tasks. In summary, this is our approach to security:

- Our risk mitigation plan is to primarily recruit researchers / co-researchers / local sponsors from the target communities. This is more effective in managing security risks because the research team will be more aware of the security conditions in their community. As part of the security assessment, we discuss with the client different options for the optics of the activities and how it is presented to the researchers and respondents.
- We instruct the researchers to prioritize their safety over work. Once security conditions worsen in any area because of escalation of armed conflicts we delay the research for days/weeks.

Voluntas followed the same approach for collecting data in Somalia and Somaliland, where it will collaborate with Mr. Barry Sesnan and Mr. Hussein Ali to perform data collection respecting every local security consideration.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitivity of some topics in this research, such as issues related to gender equality, respondents could face reprisals if statements made in interviews were to become known. As such, it is important that research participants undergo an informed consent process and that the assessment team follow strict procedures to ensure that information remains confidential.

During data collection, all assessment researchers abided by the following:

- **Ethics agreement:** Given that some of the beneficiaries are considered minors at the time of the evaluation, all assessment team members have reviewed and signed the ‘Child protection, ethics, and data security agreement’, which is provided in the annex.³⁶
- **Privacy:** Interview locations were to the extent possible private, such that interviews could not be overheard by third parties.
- **Informed consent:** All research participants were informed about the study and potential risks of participating in the study and provided their consent to participate.
- **Note taking:** Notes were to the extent possible taken on password protected devices.
- **Data storage:** Notes and other electronic data were stored in a secure location.

5.5 Challenges and limitations

The evaluation faced several constraints and challenges, both in terms of design, data collection, analysis and reporting. In terms of design, a considerable limitation of the programme lies in the somewhat limited amount of data collection among beneficiaries, in particular the absence of a baseline survey. Moreover, the evaluation sets out to assess the degree to which the programme has contributed to the reduction of irregular migration and radicalization. Providing a consistent answer to this question, was challenging for several reasons:

- **No reliable baseline survey was carried out.** SPARK had initially designed a baseline survey, to gauge beneficiaries’ and non-beneficiaries’ inclination to migrate or become radicalized. Unfortunately, however, the survey was deemed inappropriate in the partner countries and partner organizations. Therefore, it was not cohesively implemented. As such, there is no baseline for comparing the results of the current data collection.

³⁶ The age of legal consent is 18 in all three partner countries

- **The evaluation does not sufficiently include non-recipients.** In addition to a baseline survey, methodological best-practice would warrant that the evaluation looks at values before and after the receipt of services not only for participants, but also non-participants, in order to measure the effect of the intervention. Unfortunately, non-recipients were not sufficiently included in the evaluation.
- A relatively limited amount of data was collected from beneficiaries through key-informant interviews and focus group discussions. While the data collected was useful to discuss topics related to entrepreneurship and skills enhancement, sensitive topics such as gender, migration and radicalization would more suited for a survey. When sensitive topics are dealt with through participatory methods, interviewees tend to respond as they believe is expected of them. Therefore, the answers we received to sensitive topics from the FGDs and KIIs should be handled with caution, and not necessarily be considered representative for the beneficiary group.

A final challenge in terms of design was the short timeframe available for the evaluation, which left little time for reflection, desk research and instrument development during the inception phase.

During the data collection, the evaluation was challenged by unresponsive focal points with the partner organizations, particularly in Libya. This caused significant delays to the evaluation. Moreover, some focal points, primarily in Libya, were not particularly keen to answer questions during interviews, which affected the quality of the data, which caused limitations to the analysis.

The analysis and reporting were further challenged by the format set out in in the ToR, in which key questions do not follow the classic interpretation of Theory of Change and DAC guidelines. As an example, scaling of existing MSMEs and job creation is considered in the “Impact” section, although in the classic interpretation, this should be considered an “outcome” of the intervention, and as such be estimated as part the “effectiveness”. Further confusion is added as SPARK refers to indicators on scaling of existing MSMEs and job creation as “output indicators”, although in reality they should be considered “outcome indicators” (see figure 3). The confusion in terminology challenges the understanding of the logical coherence of the programme and limits the understanding of which elements SPARK should be expected to control (input-activities-output) and which are dependent upon wider assumptions and the acts of beneficiaries (outcomes-effects).



6 Relevance

Overall assessment: Medium 

Tunisia, Libya and Somalia show different trends with regard to radicalization and irregular migration. The program appears relevant to tackling migration issues in Tunisia and is a good match with national initiatives. In Libya, an important transit country for migrants, the program does not target migrants that are in transit, making the programme of little relevance for reducing irregular migration. For exactly this reason, the programme aim for Libya was altered to enhance entrepreneurship culture, instead of reducing migration. Finally, Somali migrants seem more intrigued by the “pull factors” of immigration, making the program of little relevance to reduce migration. Regarding radicalization, it appears that although increasing unemployment is relevant to reduce radicalization, it is not necessarily sufficient as a stand-alone measure. For these reasons, Voluntas finds that the programme has medium overall relevance.

6.1 Validity of programme objectives

6.1.1 Programme relevance to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization

As mentioned in the chapter on programme design, the Theory of Change of the programme rests upon a set of logical assumptions. In general, Voluntas finds the assumptions related to the connectivity of input, activities, outputs, outcomes appropriate and valid to reach the set objectives in terms of the desired effect. What is more questionable, however, is the link between the effect of the programme and the desired goals of reducing irregular migration and radicalization. This is the assumption that closes the circle in figure 2. Migration and radicalization are two different phenomena, each with distinct root causes and trends. Therefore, the ToC in fact nurtures two separate assumptions:

1. Improving employment and promoting entrepreneurship has a negative impact on irregular migration
2. Improving employment and promoting entrepreneurship has a negative impact on radicalization

We will consider the relevance of the programme for the two phenomena in turn, both at a general level and for each partner country.

6.1.1.1 Programme relevance to the reduction of irregular economic migration

The link between economic opportunities and migration seems well established and generally accepted. The common perception is that migration consist of a variety of “push” and “pull” factors, that collectively causes an individual to migrate. According to historian Delia Davin: *“Individuals migrate because they think that they can improve their own lives or those of their families by doing so. Economic migration is triggered by the knowledge (or belief) that better economic opportunities exist in some other place. It follows that where regional and local economic inequality is considerable, people are likely to migrate if it is possible for them to do so. Factors such as poverty, lack of economic opportunity, land shortage and low living standards at home function as push factors, while prosperity, opportunity, available employment and higher living standards in the place of destination are pull factors.”*³⁷

The established literature, which emphasizes the economic push and pull factors for migration, is based on historical data, such as the great migration from Europe to the US in the late 19th

³⁷ Davin, Delia, 1999, *Internal Migration in Contemporary China: Why People Migrate*, Palgrave Macmillan, London

century.³⁸ More recent studies of migration flows to Europe show that the factors influencing an individual's decision to migrate operate at a number of levels and that international and national policies, economic conditions and political situations are all important factors.³⁹ In line with this, beneficiaries cited the overall economic and security situation, government policies, despair among the youth as main reasons behind migration.

Interestingly, findings from the World Bank and UNDP show that exists a “hump-shaped” relationship between income and migration flows. The explanation is that extremely poor people lack the financial means to migrate. So, with increased economic development, up to a GDP per capita threshold of USD 7,000-10,000 per annum (measured in purchasing power parity (PPP), people's ability and propensity to emigrate increases. Once the tipping point is reached, the relationship is reversed, and people are more likely to stay in their home countries.

According to World Bank data from 2017, GDP (in PPP) per capita is USD 11,936 in Tunisia.⁴⁰ Further, as mentioned in the country overview, Tunisia sees both a considerable international migration, and a large national migration from the suburbs to the cities. By creating local employment opportunities in the outskirts (Kef and Kairouan), the programme provides incentive to remain in one's location of origin. On the other hand, according to SPARK staff in Tunisia and local partners, Tunisians migrate not only because of the push factor in terms of lack of economic opportunities, but also in search for pull factors such as a different lifestyle which they believe they will find in Europe or the USA. Nevertheless, the program appears relevant to tackling migration issues in Tunisia and is a good match with national initiatives.

As such, the programme should have relevance in Libya. The migration flows from Libya suggests that Libyan nationals do not migrate to Europe. Although Libya is considered a major transit hub for migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the programme design does not specifically target migrants in transit. Moreover, given the poor status of Sub-Saharan migrants in Libyan society, little effect in terms of indirect job creation could be expected. For these reasons, the programme has little relevance in Libya in terms of reducing migration flows to Europe, even though GDP (in PPP) per capita in is above the threshold value.⁴¹ This conclusion is supported by beneficiaries from Tripoli, who see little relevance for the programme in Libya in terms of tackling migration to Europe. For these reasons, the programme aim for Libya has been altered to fostering an entrepreneurship culture. Interestingly, however, beneficiaries from Benghazi consider that the activities were very important in preventing migration through opening up new prospects for youth. Indeed, they identify the lack of employment opportunities as the main factor leading people to migrate. Although the sample is too small to draw conclusions on these results, further investigation into the differences between beneficiaries in Eastern and Western Libya could be considered.

In Somalia migration is a common and well-regarded phenomenon, which has its roots in the nomadic culture of historic Somalis. Somalis are thought to migrate predominantly due to the “pull” factors, which are considered very high. Therefore, the relatively small interventions by SPARK, which focus on diminishing “push” factors, do not seem likely to counteract this incentive. Moreover, although no world bank data exists for Somalia, but other sources from 2010 suggest GDP (in PPP) per capita in Somalia of a mere USD 547.⁴² This brings Somalia below the threshold, which implies that initiatives focused at improving the economic conditions for Somalis looking to migrate, merely increases their migration incentive. Finally, the number of Somalis that migrate to Europe seems to be decreasing. Indeed, for many Somali migrants Saudi Arabia and Dubai are the end-destination. For these reasons, the programme has relatively less relevance in Somalia in terms of reducing migration flows to Europe.

³⁸ Mintz, Steven, *Historical Context: Why Do People Migrate?*, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

³⁹ Overseas Development Institute, 2015, *Why people move: understanding the drivers and trends of migration to Europe*. Working Paper 430

⁴⁰ The World Bank, 2019, *GDP Per Capita, PPP*, The World Bank Website, visited June 10th 2019

⁴¹ Recorded at USD 19.673 in 2017 by the World Bank. The World Bank, 2019

⁴² Trading Economics, 2018

6.1.1.2 Programme relevance to the reduction of radicalization

Each of the three target countries face severe radicalization tendencies. The question is therefore not so much whether radicalization is a relevant topic in itself, but rather whether a causal relationship exists between employment and radicalization, ensuring that the programme approach is relevant.

A recent conference named “Tackling Youth radicalization through inclusion in post-revolutionary Tunisia” hosted by Maghreb Economic Forum (MEF) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) presented findings from research conducted by the MEF on the topic and hosted a panel of experts discussing root causes of extremism.⁴³ Key takeaways from the conference were, that a feeling of exclusion is the root cause of violent extremism. Exclusion is defined as the opposite of inclusion, which for youth is constituted by three main elements: social acceptance, (nonpolitical) civic engagement and employment. Social acceptance mainly relates to support from the community. In some regions the media plays a big role in creating stigma by covering only negative aspects and stereotypes of youth, which is a barrier to social acceptance. In Tunisia, moreover, civic engagement mainly occurs through nonpolitical means due to the loss in faith in the political system because of the outcomes of 2011 revolution.

The main reasons cited during the conference as fostering a feeling of non-belonging and ultimately leading to extremism were:

- Lack of freedom of speech: E.g. people expressing that they are not religious facing defamation on Facebook, or the fact that criticizing government leads to imprisonment
- A widening gap between those governing and the governed
- Marginalization (understood as high unemployment): New research by Oxford University finds a strong association between high unemployment and recruitment into radical organization⁴⁴

Interestingly, a 2014 study of Somali Al-Shabaab fighters identified similar factors facilitating their recruitment, including religious identity, socioeconomic circumstances (education, unemployment), political circumstances and the need for a collective identity and a sense of belonging.⁴⁵

Thus, the programme in general appears relevant to countering radicalization through increased employment. Nevertheless, the programme only seeks to tackle one of several root causes of extremism, which contribute to the sense of exclusion.

The data collected show mixed results on the relevance of the programme to counter radicalism. While local partners across all locations find that the programme is relevant for tackling issues of radicalization (3-4 on a 5 scale), beneficiaries had differing opinions on the relevance of the programme activities to the overall goal. Beneficiaries in Tunisia considered program activities fairly relevant, while beneficiaries in Libya saw no relation between SPARK activities and the overall goal of reducing radicalization.

6.1.2 Vulnerability of female entrepreneurs in fragile contexts

The programme design places special attention to women, based on two main assumptions. First, women are considered more vulnerable to human trafficking and likely to suffer abuses during migration. Second, women are thought to make more financially coherent choices regarding spending. Both of these assumptions are supported by existing literature.

According to UN women, “a record number of women are now migrating to seek work and better lives.”⁴⁶ For some, migration yields these benefits, while for others it carries dangerous risks, such as exploitation in domestic jobs, and vulnerability to violence. Migration policies and

⁴³ The conference was held in Tunis on April 11th, 2019

⁴⁴ Stern, Jessica, 2016, *Radicalization to Extremism and Mobilization to Violence*, Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science, SAGE Publications

⁴⁵ Botha Anneli and Abdile Mahdi, 2014, *Radicalisation and Al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia*, Institute for security Studies and Finland Act Alliance, ISS Paper 266

⁴⁶ United Nations Women, *Employment and Migration*, United Nations Women Website, visited June 10th 2019

practices have been slow to recognize these risks and take steps to make the process safe for women.

Moreover, according to Women's World Banking: "Women spend, save and invest money in profoundly different ways than men...On average, women spend 90 cents out of every dollar earned on education, health care, and housing, in comparison to men's 60 cents."⁴⁷ Improving a woman's financial access is therefore thought to entail a higher "multiplier effect" which is critical for realizing the potential of financial inclusion, and the role of women in reducing poverty and driving economic growth.

Nevertheless, female entrepreneurs in developing countries face specific challenges.⁴⁸ Female entrepreneurs often lack access to financial and human capital, which impedes business growth. They often have different mindset constraints (such as greater risk-aversion) and are not equally trained in soft skills (such as leadership capabilities). In addition, women have culturally-imposed constraints that psychologically and physically impede their independence, aspiration, and priorities.⁴⁹

Given the underprivileged status of many women across the North-African countries, these constraints are considered relevant for the context of Tunisia, Libya and Somalia. In Tunisia for instance, while there is a near gender parity at the time of creation of a MSME, there is a lower survival rate for women owned businesses, with a rate of 30% of women among leaders of established businesses, and only 18-23% among owners of formally registered firms.⁵⁰ Further, and perhaps as explanation, their financial needs are largely unmet and their credit demand (among formal MSMEs) is estimated to be USD 595 million.⁵¹

Yet, neither program beneficiaries nor project partners in Tunisia nor Somalia showed awareness of the existing gender gap. In fact, partners focused mainly on the positive narrative, and cited more women than men success stories and anecdotes of female participation and leadership. They explain that female entrepreneurs are considered more determined and hardworking than their male counterparts. Likewise, beneficiaries cited women participated more than men in programme activities. In Libya, however, some partners cited that there are barriers in society against female entrepreneurs, who face specific challenges and difficulties when they seek to start a project.

Interestingly, the majority of the beneficiaries who participated in focus groups believed that women do not face specific challenges when applying for jobs or working in public places, and that women and men have equal opportunities.

Several explanations can be provided for the apparent contradiction between the accepted literature on the topic and the data collected in this evaluation. First, the programme has perhaps put too little focus on exemplifying the gender gap, leading to a lack of knowledge among partners and beneficiaries about its existence. Second, partners and beneficiaries could have felt uncomfortable discussing the topic of gender equality in a participatory context, therefore answering what they believe is most politically correct. Third, there is the possibility that the accepted literature exaggerates the barriers to female entrepreneurship, and that such barriers are not present to the degree expected in the three target countries.

6.2 Activity and output consistency with overall goal

6.2.1 Did the intervention solve an existing problem, or are there other that are keeping youth out of a job?

The two objectives which constitute the expected effects of the programme both correspond to acute priorities in the target countries. Youth unemployment ranges from 42% in Libya to 67% in

⁴⁷ Iskenderian, Mary Ellen, 2018 *Empowering Women in the Developing World: Barriers and Opportunities*, Women's World Banking

⁴⁸ Siba Eyerusalem, 2019, *Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Developing Countries*, Brookings

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Fondation Biat, Roland Berger, 2016, *Création d'une initiative dédiée à l'entrepreneuriat en Tunisie*

⁵¹ International Finance Corporation, June 2018, *Banking on Women in Tunisia, Innovations in the Banking industry*

Somalia - among the highest in the world - while the female labor participation rate is as low as 24% in Libya and 26% in Tunisia.⁵²

Partners and beneficiaries interviewed were in unanimous agreement that the programme seeks to tackle a highly pressing issue through the two objectives. For instance, in Somalia discussants in both FGDs demonstrated that the greatest challenges for the Mogadishu community right now is unemployment. According to one beneficiary: *“Unemployment is rampant in Mogadishu and the whole country, and it affects both the educated and the uneducated youth.”*⁵³

However, while the program seeks to tackle unemployment through activities focused on entrepreneurship and scaling SMEs, a range of other factors, namely bureaucratic procedures, inefficient labor market policies and the depreciation of the Tunisian and Libyan dinar, are often cited as affecting employment negatively.⁵⁴ Further, Libyan beneficiaries in focus groups mention youth mindsets as a significant barrier hampering willingness to work, as a result of suboptimal national education. Moreover, in Libya the ongoing political instability and economic insecurity has obvious consequences in terms of livelihood opportunities.

While SPARK activities cannot alone tackle instability in Libya, its intervention can be adjusted to tackle some of the abovementioned factors. For example, SPARK could consider including a component of mediation with Libyan national stakeholder, in concertation with other NGOs, to reduce bureaucratic procedures and improve national education curricula.

6.2.2 Programme relevance to the needs of its target group

The programme delivers activities related to entrepreneurship and scaling SMEs to youth. According to SPARK staff and local partners, a key challenge in securing the programme relevance to the needs of the target groups relate to the different understanding of entrepreneurship in each context. For example, business plan competitions were by some partners conceived as a “western” phenomenon, not necessarily relevant for an Arab context. Moreover, a partner in Tunisia found that the MSMEs had a long-term need for coaching, even after the activities had ended. Therefore, activities focusing on tailored mentoring, already implemented by SPARK in Tunisia, appear particularly crucial.

Both SPARK staff and local partners recognize that activities should focus on what is relevant to the needs of the target groups in each specific context, which may also differ from what is relevant in Europe. Therefore, the programme relies on local partners for specific program design and implementation. This process has ensured that the program emphasis is tailored to local needs and is acknowledged by local partners in both Somalia and Tunisia. From the point of view of one local partner, this guaranteed that relevance was built in to the program: *“From the beginning of the project, the direct beneficiaries and the stakeholders were involved in planning and implementation through an open dialogue and joint planning with the project staff”*. Indeed, the programme has also proven flexible to adjust to local needs, providing the Tunisian partner with extended mentoring option for MSMEs. This, the partner claims, has resulted in a considerably lower turnover rate for new MSMEs.

Nevertheless, some needs remain unaddressed by the programme. For instance, some beneficiaries lack even basic knowledge, for instance on how to write CVs or approach job opportunities. Although these are not directly related to job creation, such basic skills are needed for beneficiaries to pursue their business ideas in a confident and credible manner. Therefore, the programme has been adjusted in the 2019 extension to include a more “basic” module which introduces beneficiaries to these elements, before launching more advanced courses on business plans etc.

Moreover, newly started MSMEs often need a capital injection, as was also the original purpose of the access to finance component. For example, studies from Tunisia show that 24% of

⁵² Petri Gornitzka Charlotte, 2013, *Somalia's lost generation: why youth employment is key to stability*, The Guardian

⁵³ FGD participant, Mogadishu

⁵⁴ Assaad, Ragui and Boughzala, Mongi, 2018, Tunisia's labour market in an era of transition, Economic Research Forum

corporate failures are related to the difficulty of finding finance.⁵⁵ As this component was removed from the programme, MSMEs are dependent upon loans from regular sources, which are either unavailable or offered on unfavorable terms.


Further partners and beneficiaries in Tunisia reported that mentorship programmes take a long time and require long-term follow up. For this, the planned time-frame of the program is too short, which affects the possible impact the programme may have.

As final a note, it could be questioned whether the overlap in target group and beneficiaries, is the most efficient way to improve employment opportunities for youth. Admittedly, education and coaching of youth often lead to individual employment. However, compared to mentoring more mature individuals and companies, it rarely leads to job creation. Indeed, partners from Tunisia and Somalia found that providing services to an older group of beneficiaries would increase job creation, and thereby enhance employment opportunities for young people. Older beneficiaries are more mature in their approach to business creation, and thus have a greater chance of success. In turn, successful new or expanded enterprises would need employees from the young target group. As such, the programme might still meet its objectives vis-à-vis the target group, although indirectly by focusing on an older group of beneficiaries.



⁵⁵ Fondation Biat, Roland Berger, 2016

7 Effectiveness

Overall assessment: Medium 

The evaluation finds that programme activities were effective in technically preparing youth to remain in their countries of origin and not resort to radicalization. Local partners were also reasonably effective in implementing activities and the program managed to be gender-balanced and inclusive.

Nevertheless, the removal of the access to finance component implied that the programme did not address funding, which is considered a main barrier for entrepreneurs. This was a considerable blow to the effectiveness of the programme. Moreover, the scarcity of available data from beneficiaries implied that there is little specific evidence to measure the programme contribution to the reduction of irregular migration and radicalization.

For these reasons, the evaluation finds that the overall programme effectiveness was medium. Voluntas also finds that local external factors caused by the fragility of the context influenced the achievement of objectives in each target country, both positively and negatively.

7.1 Achievement of objectives

7.1.1 Contribution to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization

Although the program sets out to contribute to the reduction of economic migration and radicalization, a scientifically stringent evaluation of the contribution of the programme in this regard has not been possible due to reasons elaborated upon as part of the challenges and limitations of the evaluation.

Nevertheless, the data from FGDs suggests that activities were effective in fostering a sense of hope and strengthening participants' confidence in their future. This fosters participants' sense of belonging to the community which in turn can affect their attitude towards irregular migration and radicalization.

7.1.2 Programme effectiveness in (technically) preparing and motivating youth to remain in their countries of origin and not resort to irregular migration or radicalization

The qualitative data suggests that program activities were effective in technically preparing youth to remain in their country of origin.

In Tunisia, some beneficiaries reported that they had developed soft skills like communications and leadership capabilities and learnt about finance and tax laws. However, according to other beneficiaries, trainings sometimes remained too theoretical and did not lead to enough skills development. Moreover, some beneficiaries reported that trainings were not sufficient to allow them to start their entrepreneurial activities. Although activities were encouraging, beneficiaries remain apprehensive about loans and risk averse to launching their projects. Therefore, although technical skills were enhanced, for Tunisian beneficiaries' participation in the programme did not necessarily translate into job creation.

In Libya, partners claim that activities raised the level of professionalism of micro-enterprises, who are now able to conduct a business plan to attract funding. Indeed, they mentioned that most of participants developed business plans for their project and learned how to budget. Beneficiaries stated that the trainings were very useful to enhance their skills, both for their self-development and to strengthen technical skills, including financial management skills, project management, marketing, building business relations, problem solving and communication skills. Whether their project was in its initial phase or being implemented, beneficiaries cited that the program allowed them to better define their ideas and correct past mistakes. Furthermore, beneficiaries in Benghazi stated that the activities improved

employment prospects particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises, enhancing participants awareness and motivation. Overall, findings suggest that the programme was effective in fostering a change in mindset in Libyan youth, and thereby enhancing a culture of entrepreneurship.

In Somalia, respondents across genders reported that through Shaqodoon projects, the trainings equipped them with skills improving the quality of how to conduct business. Moreover, the trainings encouraged youth to continue their entrepreneurial activities. However, access to finance is reported a key obstacle, which remained unaddressed by the programme as the component intended to address this issue was taken out.

7.1.3 Effectiveness of local partners in implementing activities

Generally, partners in Somalia and Tunisia have implemented activities as expected, although with some delays. Partners in Libya have been less effective in implementation, which is also reflected in the target outcomes for Libya (see section on impact). Low capacity of partners coupled with high staff turnover are noted as considerable challenges to effective implementation. Moreover, the programme period is perceived as too short to set up effective implementation processes for partners. Finally, some partners proved incapable of delivering the required outcomes, for which reason SPARK was forced to terminate some partnerships and find more suitable partners.

In Tunisia, SPARK had two main partners for the period of the evaluation: IACE and TAMMS. IACE is reported by SPARK staff to have done quality work but their implementation process has been much longer than expected. Delays were due to a lack of experience in project implementation and disruptions due to constant changes in their team. IACE has also required a lot of capacity building from SPARK in terms of collecting and reporting programme results. These problems have led the team to discontinue its partnership with IACE from 2019 onwards. However, since IACE was a partner in the original proposal, the contractual nature of the agreement meant that terminating the relationship was dependent upon an approval by the Dutch MFA. To grant approval, the Dutch MFA required evidence of underperformance by the partner. Therefore, even though collaboration challenges were detected early in the relationship, SPARK was forced to wait for a case to be built up before terminating the partnership. This process was not optimal, as in the meantime both time and resources were spent on IACE which could have been spent more favorably on a new partner.

TAMMS has remained a partner throughout the project period and is generally perceived to deliver effectively on activities. The main challenge in the collaboration with TAMMS has been the screening of beneficiaries. While the programme targets beneficiaries between 15-35, TAMMS often follows its own framework allowing participants of up to 55 years old to attend the activities. TAMMS claim that these beneficiaries are more mature and therefore are more likely to succeed in setting up businesses and generate employment opportunities for the target group.

In terms of quality of materials, Tunisian beneficiaries deemed the activities organized by local organizations as excellent. Trainers were considered good and treated beneficiaries with respect. However, participants to the programme cited language as an issue, as trainings were held in French. Although French is an official working language in Tunisia, beneficiaries particularly in the rural inland areas are not sufficiently fluent to receive training in French.

In Libya, ENALA was the main implementing partner in the Tripoli area in 2016. Performance of this partner had been inconsistent due to the impact of the conflict on their work. According to SPARK staff, there were constant changes in the implementation team or disruption of necessary services. For these reasons, the partnership was discontinued. In 2017, there were no activities in Tripoli, while activities were implemented through Idea Drivers in Benghazi in the East. Idea Drivers conducted research on the sectors in the east of Libya with the most viable business opportunities. The following business opportunities were identified: Medication and Medical Supplies, Catering, Poultry Breeding and Events Management. In addition, Idea Drivers implemented summer entrepreneurship courses and reopened the Benghazi Business Center, an incubator center that had been forced to close down due to violence and political unrest. Again, the partnership with Idea Drivers was discontinued after only one year. Finally, for the period

2018-2019 Deraz and Jusoor in Tripoli have been the main partners. According to interviews with Deraz, activities were successfully implemented, despite challenges such as time pressure. Indeed, the project duration changed from 6 months to 4 months, however this did not impact the results achieved as the partner developed alternative plans. According to interviews with Jusoor, the program was effective, despite working on a specific segment and not reaching a wide audience.

Beneficiaries from Tripoli were generally very satisfied with the activities. They stated that activities were “excellent”, trainers were “experts in their field” and beneficiaries received help and advice even after the training. With regard to the content of activities, beneficiaries mentioned that the trainings were easy, the material was first-rate, and trainers managed to make difficult topics easy to understand. They agreed that activities were better than expected. Some beneficiaries suggested teaching more in depth the legal aspect of setting up a business. Similarly, beneficiaries from Benghazi expressed satisfaction with the activities. They mentioned that the trainers were very good, and the material was easy to understand. Beneficiaries benefited greatly from the activities as they had never had a chance to participate in similar activities before.

Finally, Shaqodoon is the only partner in Somalia, and also reported by SPARK staff to be the strongest in SPARK’s network. They have a broad reach and have been successfully in implementing the program and reporting results, requiring little capacity building. However, they have used their strength in their advantage and the team has struggled to receive reports on indicators and comply with specific deadlines.

Beneficiaries reported that Shaqodoon tends to be selective in their recruitment of beneficiaries and adopt nepotistic tendencies. Furthermore, also in Somalia, some of the beneficiaries supported are over 35, beyond the age range initially targeted by the intervention. With regard to activities, participants reported that the duration of training programs varied and complained about not receiving a certificate of participation.

With regard to internship payments in Somalia, cash contributions were not at all consistent in either frequency or amount. They varied from nothing to USD 100 a month. In one case, a medical doctor’s internship, the beneficiary was apparently given a top up of salary amounting to more than USD 300 a month. Even within a single focus group the variation was considerable.

7.1.4 Gender balance and inclusiveness

The evaluation finds that the programme managed to be gender-balanced and inclusive, particularly in Tunisia. According to interviews with local partners in Libya and Tunisia, a higher rate of women participated in programme activities. In Tunisia, the rate of female participation in activities ranged from 60% for Education for Employment to more than 80% for TAMSS. Furthermore, according to program beneficiaries in Kef (Tunisia) activities were particularly effective for female artisans. In Libya, out of 275 new entrepreneurs trained between 2016 and 2018, 118 were female, constituting 43%. Finally, in Somalia, out of 2476 new entrepreneurs trained between 2016 and 2018, 904 were women, totaling 37%.

In Libya, beneficiaries from Tripoli cited that, thanks to a focus on women’s barriers and needs, trainings activities were successful in contributing to close the gender gap among the trainees. However, because of the magnitude of this gap in society, they considered trainings insufficient in closing the gender gap in general. On the other hand, beneficiaries from Benghazi showed no awareness of the gender gap.

In Somalia, beneficiaries expressed different opinions regarding the contributions of the programme activities in closing the gender gap. Interestingly, the majority of the participants believed that girls do not face specific challenges when applying for jobs or working in public place, and that girls and boys have equal opportunities.

Overall, findings from qualitative data in Tunisia, Libya and Somalia suggest that there is a general lack of awareness of the specific challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. Across the countries, women are often considered to be more successful than men because of their hard-working attitude. As a consequence, local partners and beneficiaries do not seem cognizant of

the issues that female entrepreneurs face. The findings suggest that while programme activities managed to be gender balanced and inclusive, awareness and misconceptions need to be tackled to close the gender gap.

7.1.5 Access to Finance component

The Access to Finance component was intended to improve the services and gender sensitivity of local financial institutions. Indeed, access to funding is often the main barrier for entrepreneurs in target countries.

Unfortunately, the Access to Finance component was removed from the programme after different assessments had been conducted to determine how to approach the component without a consistent recommendation. The component was deemed unfunctional due to the inconsistency of different proposals for each target country, changes within the Access to finance expert (particularly in Tunisia and Somalia) and uncertainties about the appropriateness of the intervention given specific political constraints (e.g. governance in Somaliland and lack of a functioning banking system and liquidity crisis in Libya). As a result, after more than a year insecurity about the component, the Dutch MFA decided in 2017 that it was too late to move forward with the component in neither of the three target countries. The component was thus fully removed from the programme, and the pertaining funds were divided among the other activities.

The cancellation of the activity was a major blow to the effectiveness of the programme, as it addressed one of the main barriers for entrepreneurial growth and job creation. Indeed, beneficiaries and partners in both Tunisia and Somalia mention barriers to finance as a recurrent theme

From an institutional perspective, the cancelling of the access to Finance component could be expressive of broader organizational problem within SPARK related to a lack of human resources. Indeed, changes in the fund manager led to the elaboration of three different proposals.

From the perspective of the SPARK M&E team, operational lessons learned can be drawn from this. The M&E team's original approach was to engage in programme management matters, which was not efficient, effective and feasible, given its limited capacity. Therefore, the M&E team's current role is to provide technical advice, training and tool development for monitoring, evaluation and learning, and troubleshooting to programme teams. This will ensure that there are no unrealistic expectations in terms of the monitoring and steering of interventions by also engaging in programme management.

7.2 Major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of objectives

The programme faced specific influencing factors in each target country, as elaborated in the section below. Nevertheless, some general factors influenced the achievement of objective across all target countries:

- A difference in work ethics and style between Western and Eastern countries has made the collaboration difficult at times, as local staff and partners need more support in approaching tasks and display lower initiative.
- Low capacity of partners in the target countries has influenced the programme effectiveness and efficiency. Generally, partners have also had low ability to report back to SPARK. As a result, SPARK has had to build partners' capacity and structure which has put constraints on both time and resources available.
- The supportive stance of Dutch MFA allowed for the required flexibility to adjust the program to the challenging local environment for implementation.
- Dutch embassies have generally been uninvolved in the activities related to programme implementation, and as such it has not been possible to harvest synergies through collaboration. A general recommendation moving forward would be to increase their involvement in the programme.
- The short timeframe of the programme left little time for planning and setting up offices and partnerships, which forced unqualified decision. For SPARK, which did not have previous presence and established partnerships in either of the countries, the short timeframe left little time for the inception research to inform the project implementation and adjust for

local circumstances. At the same time, the programme was very quickly expected to deliver results. Consequently, time and resources were invested in setting up partnerships with local organizations that were not a good fit for the programme. Additional time for research in the inception phase might have prevented this.

7.2.1 Local circumstances and context influence on the programme effectiveness and efficiency

In addition to the factors above, programme effectiveness and efficiency was influenced by local factors in each target country.⁵⁶

In Tunisia, an unexpected and difficult challenge to overcome has been the difficulty in fully establishing the SPARK office in accordance with Tunisian local law, which in turn has affected payment processes and difficulties in building a long-term local staff. Since programme management is conducted from the team in Tunis, difficulties in building a long-term local staff has not only affected Tunisian programme implementation, but programme management across all three target countries. However, the partners also cite infrastructure and bureaucratic procedures as well as economic, political and social circumstances as having a direct negative impact on job creation. In terms of positive external factors, a conducive ecosystem and reaching out to experts in fields of expertise needed by the companies helped the achievement of objectives according to local partners. Moreover, the Tunisian political environment and recent legislative developments, such as the Start-Up law, was useful to increase programme effectiveness in fostering an entrepreneurship culture.

In Libya, the ongoing political turmoil and economic instability caused constant disruption of programme implementation. Staff and partner interviews reveal that the conflict creates constant practical challenges and delays due to unforeseen circumstances such as roadblocks, power shortage etc. Similarly, beneficiaries cite lack of security, lack of support and lack of liquidity as key factors affecting the programme effectiveness. Moreover, the political circumstances have implied constant changes in terms of local staff and the opportunities for service provision, thus affecting the ability to effectively implement programme activities. Finally, even the establishment of the programme in Libya has been challenging as there seems to be some suspicion associated with projects targeting ‘entrepreneurship.’ That could relate to two main factors: the first one is cultural, as there is a lack of understanding of entrepreneurship and a resistance against programmes that could change the societal equilibrium, secondly international actors are not trusted and there is an overall suspicion with interventions by them. Partners in Libya also cited the lack of an existing market and lack of functioning infrastructure as impacting the youth ability to launch a business. This was confirmed by beneficiaries in Benghazi, who mentioned that local circumstances have a significant impact on the program’s effectiveness. Yet, local partners cite the presence and commitment of the target group to the project as a major factor enabling effectiveness.

In Somalia, government relations have proven to be difficult as the government has insisted on being closely involved in every step of the programme and have money set aside for ‘monitoring and evaluation.’ People in the ministry present this as a facilitation fee. It was further noted that inadequate income makes life difficult for everyone and there is some sympathy expressed for the Ministry staff and their plight.

Moreover, the majority of beneficiaries expressed the need for the government to come up with long-term strategies of alleviating poverty through reducing unemployment and establishing sustainable industrial investment for economic growth while guaranteeing equal access to opportunities. Furthermore, the need for improved coordination between government and aid organizations to mitigate duplication and redundant projects were consistently mentioned.

⁵⁶ In the ToR, this question was posed as two separate questions, focused on effectiveness and efficiency respectively. To avoid repetition, Voluntas deals with the question of local circumstances and context influence under the evaluation of effectiveness, which is in line with the OECD DAC guidelines.

Beneficiaries recommended that government, aid organizations and project implementers should support small-scale businesses.

In Somalia, efficiency is affected by the “monopoly” of the local partner Shaqodoon. Although the partner is responsive, they also take advantage of their position for donors in the field. While other organizations and initiatives do exist, there are no synergies as Shaqodoon ignores these, even denying their existence.

Finally, in Somalia there needs to be some indication of strength and status to gain credibility and bargaining power, and SPARK has a challenge to reach the visibility and presence of the partner. The first impression of the Shaqodoon office in Hargeisa is that it is an opulent building where many activities take place. This is reinforced by the series of high-profile events which take place in Hargeisa and Mogadishu. Although, when reaching the field, especially in Borama, the number of activities is much lower, and the ‘presence’ is less. On the other hand, SPARK appears weak on the ground and does not seem to have a car, which is a notable issue.

As a positive factor, the Somali tradition for entrepreneurship helped the effectiveness of the programme in the country.


7.2.2 Determinants of and differences in programme effectiveness in fragile countries vs non-fragile countries

While Somalia and Libya are high on the fragile state index, Tunisia is somewhat middle range, which opens for a comparison of programme effectiveness in fragile versus semi-fragile countries. The programme has been least effective in Libya, and quite effective in Tunisia, which supports the argument that fragility impacts effectiveness. However, countering this argument is the fact that the programme has also been effective in Somalia, which has the highest score on the fragility index. This implies that fragility itself does not determine programme effectiveness. Rather, programme effectiveness also seems influenced, and perhaps even more so, by the presence of a culture conducive to entrepreneurship, which is present in both Tunisia and Somalia.

It is also noteworthy that in fragile countries job creation for youth is a multi-faceted process, addressing intertwined processes and factors. One general feature is the dominance of the informal sector and weak institutional setting. To secure livelihood, young people tend to perform not one single professional activity, but a range of activities, combining formal and informal employment, rather than focusing on a fixed, full-time, well identified job position. Under these conditions, the notion of employment itself becomes vague and flexible. Ignoring this reality is self-defeating. Job promotion and skill training must therefore accommodate this variety and inherent vulnerability, focusing on developing a range of skills rather than specific tasks or professional training, and responding to the flexible and demanding schedules of young people.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ GREAT Insights, February/March 2017 *Youth employment in fragile countries*, Volume 6 – Issue 1

8 Efficiency

Overall assessment: Medium 

Voluntas finds that the efficiency of the intervention has been medium. The programme overall did not meet the targeted outcome indicators for employment and SME expansion during the period for the above reasons, which challenged programme timeliness. Nevertheless, programme management is applauded both internally by SPARK staff and by the Dutch MFA. Indeed, the programme set-up has served as an inspiration for advancing regional hubs throughout the SPARK organization.

8.1 Cost-efficiency

SPARK is usually very cost-aware due to a combination of good planning practices, tight and controlled budgets and careful due diligence of every phase of the project (from partner selection to expenses report practices and resource use). Although cost efficiency of activities is generally not something SPARK reports upon on programme or activity level, nor something the Dutch MFA measures, the general sentiment from staff is that activities overall were cost-efficient. Some staff members believe that for the activities aimed at MSMEs the project was the most cost-efficient when focusing on a specific business problem, and less so when doing broader strategy. For entrepreneurs the trainings were deemed as the most cost-efficient, while activities falling under the second objective, e.g. apprenticeships, were the least cost-efficient.

Financial auditing data from 2016 and 2017 for the three countries, are shown in figures 6, 7 and 8 below. The figures show the total approved budget, remaining budget and the expenses incurred during the year. At the time of writing, the financial auditing report for 2018 was not yet finalized. Instead, data from the draft financial report has been used, which reflects expenses incurred until April 30th, 2018.

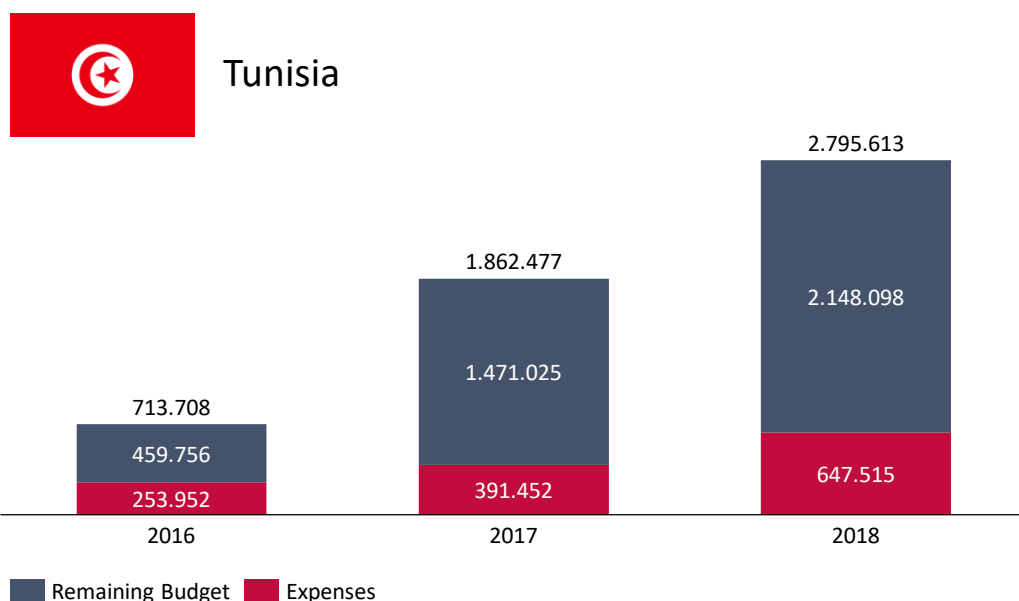


Figure 6: Financial data 2016-2018 for Tunisia. All values in EUR



Libya

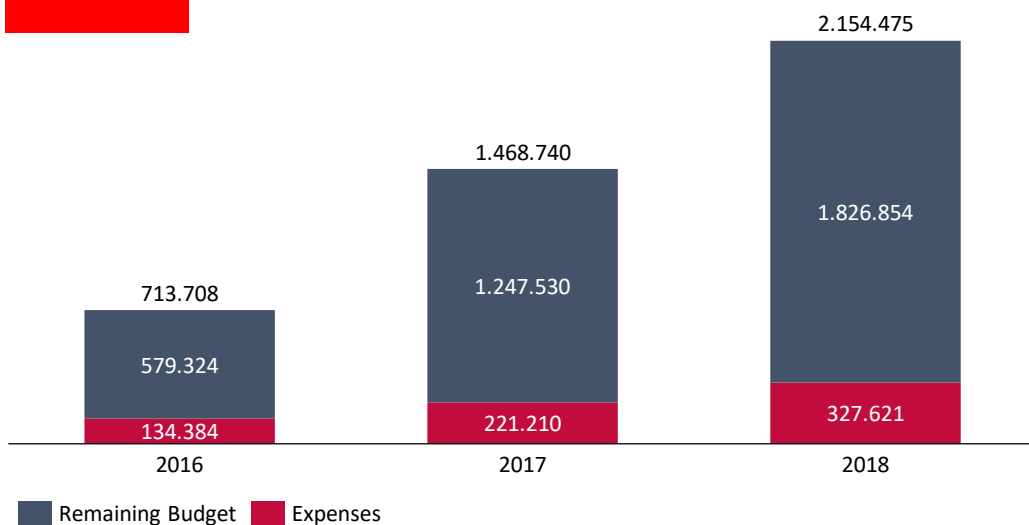


Figure 7: Financial data 2016-2018 for Libya. All values in EUR



Somalia

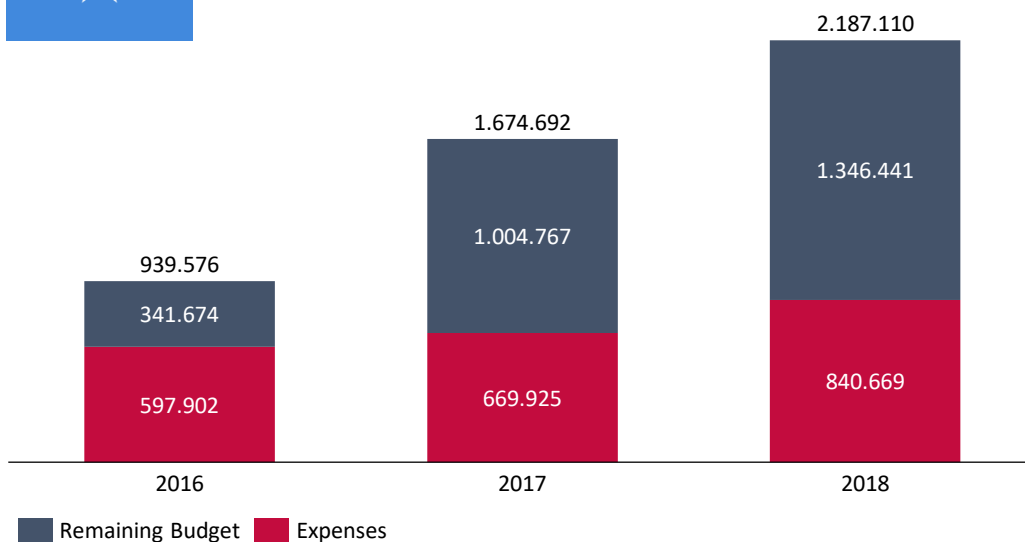


Figure 8: Somalia financial data 2016-2018. All values in EUR

The three financial data overviews suggest, that the total budget is far from met.⁵⁸ One reason for this is the reallocation of funds from the Access to Finance component, which have not yet been spent. Moreover, a series of country specific factors have contributed to the underspend: first, the Libyan Dinar has devalued significantly against the EURO and reporting expenditures is based on the informal rate. In Tunisia, the lack of registration has impacted SPARK's ability to implement the programme, reducing the number of SPARK-led activities that could be executed. Additionally, the lack of a formal business arrangement has also imposed challenges for internal processes, like sending funds, processing payments, etc. Finally, in 2016 the startup of local partner activities took some time and therefore signing of grant awards took place in the second

⁵⁸ The overviews are based on auditing reports for each country for 2016 and 2017. The audit report for 2018 was not ready at the time of writing, and numbers are therefore based on the draft financial report.

and third quarters, ultimately affecting spending. No contextual explanation has been provided for the underspend in Somalia.

8.2 Programme timeliness

Voluntas finds that the programme implementation was delayed, which reflects the fact that only half of the budget was spent in the years 2016-2018. According to SPARK staff, programme timeliness was impacted by the fragility of the countries. At the program level, some delays occurred at the inception phase given the initial lack of connection of the programme to the field. The programme should have included a longer inception phase for the required logistical arrangements, but given the agreed timeline with the donor, the programme was expected to deliver on outputs.

Moreover, high staff turnover, insufficient staffing both at SPARK and local level and difference in work ethics in European versus Eastern countries influenced the implementation and overall timeliness of the programme. In August 2018, SPARK senior management sought to counter the issue of understaffing by approving an almost double staffing for the programme. Moreover, programme timeliness in each target country was further impacted by challenging contextual circumstances, as explained in section 6.2.1 above. In Libya in particular, this meant that the program had to be extended to achieve the results expected within the programme period. To overcome timeliness issues the partners developed alternative plans.

A further note is warranted on timeliness of reporting, which has proven a significant challenge for all partners. Partner reports also vary significantly in terms of quality. In General, Shaqodoon (the partner in Somalia) deliver high quality reports, Tunisian partners are somewhat in the middle range while Libyan partners show weaker reporting quality.

8.3 Efficiency in Implementation

The programme management structure is overall very efficient, notwithstanding the lack of human resources until August 2018. Moreover, according to local partners, activities were implemented in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Nevertheless, the short timeframe of the programme, intended for only 3 years, affected its efficiency, making the timely achievement of objectives challenging.

Differing opinions exist, moreover, with regard to the efficiency of the ICT systems. SPARK staff generally considers the ICT systems efficient and easy to navigate. Nonetheless, while local partners also find the reporting systems easy to navigate, they found the reporting requirements burdensome and time consuming and are therefore less attentive to detail. They complained that some of the indicators and verification means requested by SPARK were exceedingly difficult to heed because of local circumstances. In 2019, SPARK has adapted its monitoring protocol to make it easier for partners to report and verify results. Minimizing data requirements, using strictly indicators used for monitoring purpose could make the process smoother.

The introduction of multiple systems to collect data and report to donors created a complex system spanning across different platforms. The overlap of information and the lack of integration in the reporting overall impact efficiency negatively.

8.3.1 How efficient was the programme's management structure?

The programme is thought to have been managed in an efficient manner. SPARK M&E staff confirmed, that the management of the LEAD programme was a best-case example, and that other programmes could learn from the management approach and techniques. This is also confirmed by the Dutch MFA, who finds the program to be well-managed and efficiently executed. Moreover, SPARK staff generally finds that the programme would benefit from a decentralization of decision-making power within staff, so that the programme manager would be empowered to make more decisions independently, making the programme more efficient.

One management tool implemented by the programme is the quarterly reporting on so called “output indicators”.⁵⁹ The indicators include and expand on indicators put forward by the Dutch MFA and are explained in detail in the monitoring protocol. For 2019, the monitoring protocol has been revised, significantly reducing the complexity of indicators to be reported on.

According to M&E staff at SPARK, the indicators used during the evaluation period are theoretically the most adequate in evaluating the outputs of the programme. However, from a practical point of view, some of the indicators included in the first monitoring protocol were extremely difficult to measure, which is why they were removed from the 2019 monitoring protocol. Examples of these are indirect jobs created, business in value chain of multinational corporations, and institutions being gender sensitive (activity 1.4). In this sense the 2019 monitoring protocol is a simplification of the original monitoring protocol, which makes it easier for partners to report and verify results.

It is also worth noting that the original monitoring protocol was revised after partner recruitment and did not precisely match the content in some of the contracts. In the beginning of the programme SPARK therefore experienced monitoring problems with partners reporting on the indicators agreed in the contract and not the monitoring protocol. Arguably, this could have been prevented by allowing more timing for planning during the inception phase.

Partners have also complained about difficulties to comply with some of the verification means proposed by the team, such as presenting the employment contract of beneficiaries. The programme team has adapted to such challenges by introducing alternative means of verification, like creating template statements to be signed by the beneficiary and the employer, and then verifying the information through a call to beneficiaries.

Some internal and external factors also influenced programme management efficiency. First, the mere geographical set-up of the programme is worth noting. The programme management resides in Tunisia, with local SPARK staff in Somalia and help for technical implementation and support in Libya through Libyan Enterprise. According to SPARK staff, this set-up has inspired the establishment of regional hubs throughout SPARK.

Moreover, the programme was initially understaffed, and the lack of the right support in terms of human resources affected the overall management efficiency. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the programme was intended for only 3 years. Already by the second year, programme staff start looking for other employment. There is no explanation from the Dutch MFA for why the programme was originally only intended for 3 years. Indeed, the MFA programme coordinator agrees that a 4-5-year programme would appear more appropriate.


8.3.2 How efficient were the ICT systems of the programme?

Overall, the data reported in the various ICT systems is considered sufficient, both by SPARK staff and the Dutch MFA and the partners’ reporting scheme, in terms of Excel sheets and narrative reports, are generally found efficient and easy to navigate, although some partners found them burdensome.

However, the introduction of multiple systems to collect data and report to donors created a complex system spanning across different platforms, using GoogleSheets, IATI and Management Information System (MIS). Each platform has a different audience and includes slightly different information and is conceived as effective and user-friendly. However, there is a lot of overlap of information, and the lack of integration in the reporting affects its overall efficiency. Given that SPARK is in a rare position to have its own software programming team, it could be worthwhile integrating all systems into one, to reduce the waste of efforts and risk of error that lie in duplication of information.

⁵⁹ The terminology used by SPARK is misleading. According to regular ToC practice, these should be called “outcome indicators”

9 Impact

Overall assessment: Medium-high 

The evaluation of impact shows that within the three-year period, the programme generally achieved its targets of scaling existing MSMEs and direct job creation but has been less successful in achieving targets on indirect job creation and establishing new businesses. Moreover, there is considerable variation on achievement of targets across the three countries. While the program has been successful in Somalia in reaching outcome target, it has been less successful in Tunisia, and unsuccessful in Libya. The assessment should be seen in the light of the relatively low financial burden of the programme to date. It is expected that the programme will meet its targets when the full financial allocation has been used. Moreover, the programme helped promote a culture of entrepreneurship, and made a real difference to beneficiaries, also in terms of unintended impact such as providing hope and self-confidence. For these reasons, the overall assessment of impact is medium-high.

9.1 Consequences as a result of the programme

9.1.1 Scaling of existing MSMEs and job creation

The tables below present the performance of the programme on the relevant outcome indicators for each of the three target countries. While the evaluation has shown that indirect jobs were particularly difficult to verify, the number of verified jobs are shown in the graphs below nonetheless, to adhere to the original monitoring protocol.

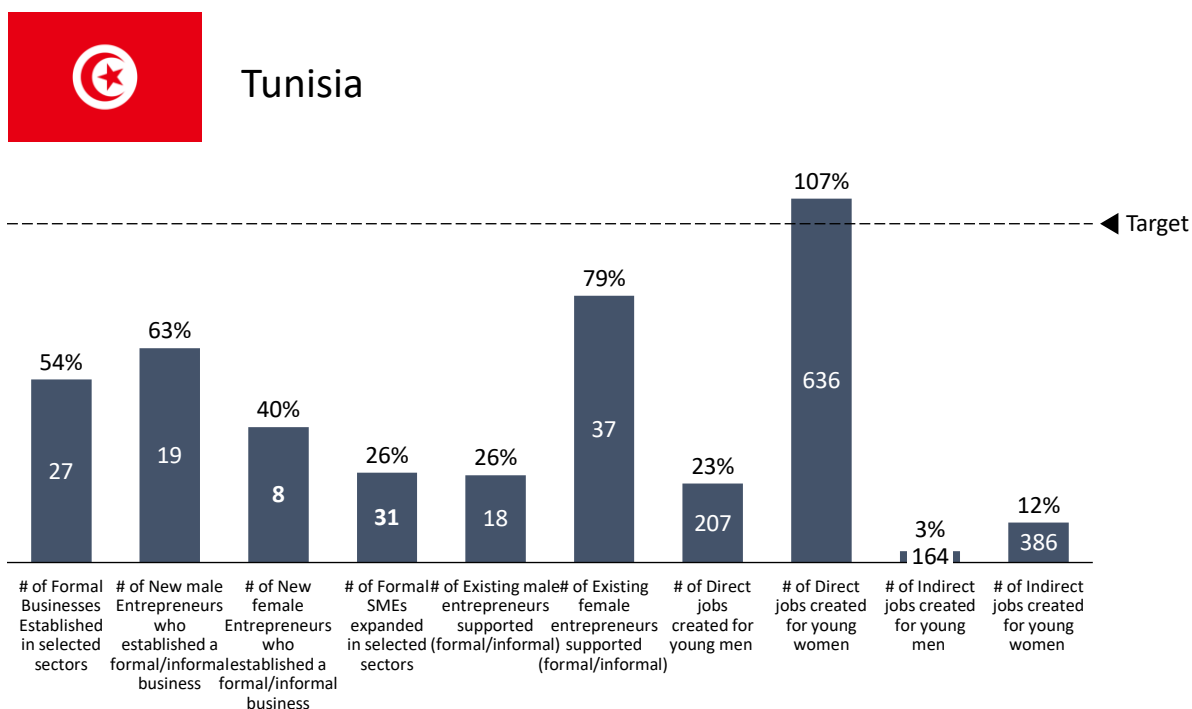


Figure 9: Main outcomes for Tunisia 2016-2018

In Tunisia, none of the outcome targets were met during the evaluation period. The most successful outcomes were within the areas of supporting existing female entrepreneurs and direct jobs created for women. It is noticeable that outcomes are higher on these indicators for females compared to the male counterpart. This indicates that Tunisian partners have successfully implemented a gender focus throughout their activities. Low performing areas in

Tunisia were direct job creation for young men, existing male entrepreneurs supported, and formal SMEs expanded in selected sectors. One reason for the latter relates to MSMEs reluctance to formally register their business, thus making it impossible to count them among the formal MSMEs expanded, despite supporting them.



Libya



Figure 10: Main outcomes for Libya 2016-2018

The figure above shows outcome indicators for Libya. As the table shows, indicators are either not achieved or not sufficiently reported upon. The low quality of reporting from Libyan partners suggests that outcome indicators in Libya are unreliable.



Somalia

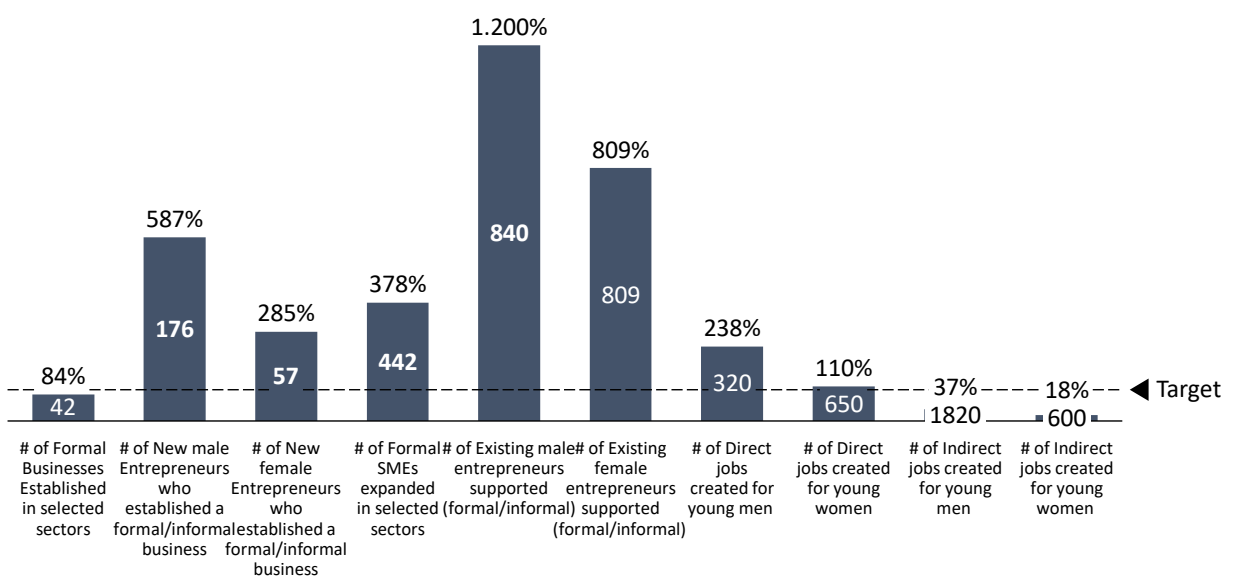


Figure 11: Main outcomes for Somalia 2016-2018

In Somalia, outcomes concerning establishing formal/informal businesses, supporting existing entrepreneurs, SMEs expansion in selected sectors and direct job creation for men were all comfortably exceeded over the period 2016-2018. Direct job creation for women and formal business established in selected sectors were slightly above and below target respectively.

9.1.2 Unintended (positive and/or negative) impact

Across locations, there are important qualitative effects that are not measured by the monitoring protocol (e.g. increase in hope, confidence, sensation of winning) which increases the overall impact of the programme.

A specific positive impact that has not been focused on is how the programme provides a much-needed confidence boosts to beneficiaries. With stronger confidence, beneficiaries are more inclined to pursue and succeed with new business ideas. This impact is reported by partners, who experience the change in beneficiaries. According to SPARK staff, this is an often-seen impact in SPARK programmes, although it is never formally reported upon.

9.2 Real difference to beneficiaries

9.2.1 Enhancement of the entrepreneurship culture among the targeted youth

Across the three target countries, the programme managed to enhance a culture of entrepreneurship among the targeted youth.

In Tunisia, the programme created a lot of confidence and hope for beneficiaries. This support is important to foster an entrepreneurship culture in beneficiaries as they generally perceive that the ecosystem is not favorable for setting up businesses. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is not conceived as an easy way to get an income.

In Libya, according to local partners, activities were effective in disseminating a culture of entrepreneurship in universities. Moreover, local partners created an environment of communication between the stakeholders. However, there is a lack of understanding of entrepreneurship in Libya, and a general skepticism towards donor-funded programmes, which raises suspicion about the programme. Therefore, fostering an entrepreneurship culture among youth remains a challenging endeavor as cultural barriers persist. Nevertheless, beneficiaries from Libya mentioned that activities were a strong encouragement for young people to start their own project and fostered their entrepreneurship culture. Indeed, some participants successfully started their project after the trainings.

In Somalia the training made a real difference for many participants, as they have learned to think strategically about setting up a business, which involves different steps, such as how to attract customers, seek advice, etc. One entrepreneur mentioned that he could make better decisions as a result of the programme. However, the local partner reported that the internships and the coaching programme were too short to make a real difference. Likewise, beneficiaries reported that although the internships were useful and fostered a hard-working attitude, the activities should be longer to achieve greater impact.

9.2.2 Reduction of migratory and radicalization tendencies amongst targeted youth

As mentioned in the section on challenges and limitations to the programme, it has not been possible to measure the impact of the programme to the overall goal of reducing migration and radicalization.

10 Sustainability

Overall assessment: Medium 

The overall assessment of the sustainability of the LEAD programme is medium. Partners have taken ownership of activities, outputs and outcomes, and the programme has sought to increase the capacity of partner organizations and build synergies with other initiatives. However, the employment offered by the program within start-ups and SMEs is high risk and should not be considered fully sustainable although they meet the formal requirements. Moreover, the programme did not account for the analysis of growth sectors to inform decisions on industry. Moreover, the risks to the programme have not been sufficiently identified, and there are no formal mitigation strategies. Finally, the programme has little focus on environmental sustainability.

10.1 Continuation of the benefits of a programme

10.1.1 Local partner organizations ownership of activities

In general, SPARK staff and partners agree that the partners have displayed a great level of autonomy and ownership of activities, outputs and outcomes. They are fully responsible for the activities and have taken initiative in adjusting to local challenges. SPARK's intervention regarding activities implemented by partners has been limited to funding, upfront capacity building and eventual visits and/or follow-ups as means of quality control, with no major problems encountered.

In terms of funding, some partners are seeking alternative methods to continue activities even without financial support from SPARK. For example, Deraz in Libya, charges membership fees for the entrepreneurship center or a participation fee to trainings as well as hiring out spaces to other NGOs to deliver trainings and charge fees to MSMEs to showcase their products. TAMMS (Tunisia) is currently mapping alternative sources of funding beyond LEAD and has developed proposals based on the formal businesses they have created through the programme.

10.1.2 Capacity building of local partners

SPARK has placed significant effort in capacitating partners, both through knowledge acquisition and network expansion. As part of these efforts, SPARK has provided local partners with intensive trainings (particularly in M&E methods, finance and report writing) and proprietary materials to be used by partners in conducting activities within LEAD or elsewhere. SPARK has also trained partners to enhance their communication and reporting skills in order to increase the quality and efficiency of reporting. Moreover, partners received formal and informal capacity building on how to understand entrepreneurs' needs so that they can continue the project without SPARK support.

In general, the local partners were strengthened as a result of the program and are likely to continue to conduct similar programming and create jobs after the end of the support. Partners mentioned developing their relationships with the network, developing communication and reporting skills as well as knowledge on how to develop a solid plan and measure outputs.

Some challenges to capacity building were mentioned during qualitative interviews. In Libya, partners identified the lack of experts as a challenge in building capacity. They also mentioned the importance of addressing needs in a more context-specific way, considering local Libyan circumstances. Moreover, a high staff turnover in partners' staff are mentioned to threaten the sustainability of capacity building.

10.1.3 Synergies with other initiatives and organizations

SPARK has strived to include local partners in an extended network of people and organizations within each country's ecosystem as means to increase their capacity and reach. Some partner organizations also tried to build synergies and partnerships with other organizations.

In Tunisia, the programme built synergies with the ministry of higher education for initiatives in universities, and SPARK worked closely with Centre d'Affaires, the government-affiliated body mandated to support SMEs and entrepreneurs. Moreover, SPARK coordinated activities with other organizations such as Injaz and Cogite. Furthermore, IACE activities under the programme comprised an observatory that provided for exchange for different actors. This has become an association with all the stakeholders, that is continuing its work even after the program. Finally, though Centre d'Affaires, SPARK ensures its intervention is complementary to the activities implemented by GIZ, by sharing its tools and making sure there is no overlap of activities.

In Libya, SPARK's efforts are coordinated with the Libyan Enterprise which are mandated to support SMEs and entrepreneurs based on the national strategy developed by the Ministry of Economy and GNA. The programme also built synergies through coordination of activities with Expertise Française.

In Somalia, SPARK activities are coordinated at the national level with the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and adjusted to the national strategy. On the local level, however, there seems to be little effort at synergy across the field. Indeed, the partner denied that any other institution does related work, which is untrue. For instance, SPARK in Somalia collaborated with UNDP related to the tech summer schools. Moreover, there are signs of rivalry with Havoyoco, the oldest NGO working in skills training which was founded after the war and has strong links with 'old' politics. This extends to denying that they work in the field. Beneficiaries in Somalia said, wrongly: "The Shaqadoon organization is only the one works in Borama" and "[We are not] involved with any other organization relevant with the issue of training programs whether its internships or something else".

Overall, the intervention undertook several efforts to create synergies, by working with local partners mandated by national governments and seeking to create alignment with national initiatives and policies regarding entrepreneurship.

10.1.4 Promotion of sustainable employment

The LEAD definition of "sustainable employment" is a formal contract of more than 6-month duration. As described in the impact section above, following this definition the programme has resulted in a considerable amount of sustainable employments. Nevertheless, employment in start-ups is generally high risk, and for this reason it is difficult to estimate whether the employment created through the programme is indeed sustainable.

In Tunisia, beneficiaries reported that entrepreneurship activities offered through the programme were unsuccessful in promoting sustainable, long term employment. In Libya, according to local partners, programme activities alone were not enough to support beneficiaries start a project. Indeed, findings, from beneficiaries' interviews highlighted that most participants did not find a job through the training received. Nevertheless, some participants started to create their own projects. Similarly, in Somalia respondents mentioned that the programme was too short to see the lasting impact. There are also no systems in place to continue monitoring the development of the businesses supported in the programme and organizations that received capacity training.

In Mogadishu, the labor market cannot absorb the high number of youth who graduate from local universities, which is a challenge to employment sustainability. Furthermore, the nepotistic mindset in hiring family members rather than qualified young candidates is explained as another reason for unemployment. Nevertheless, the partner in Somalia claims, that *"From our trace study we have done recently, it has shown that a lot of young people landed a job and some of them increased their business productivities that created opportunities for young people to get a job. Also, a huge number of entrepreneurs we have trained have improved their business*

productivity and they hired young people as well they improved financially.” The convincing outcome data from Somalia supports this claim.

10.1.5 Youth employment in growth sectors

As part of the initial phases of the programme, key growth sectors in Tunisia and Libya were identified for business and market opportunities. The intention was to direct entrepreneurial youth towards these sectors. For reasons unknown to the evaluation team, there were no growth sectors identified for Somalia. The high growth sectors that are likely to create jobs are currently being reassessed and a mapping of the relevant skills in these sectors is intended to inform training content and increase beneficiary employability in these areas.

The key growth sectors were identified during the evaluation period were:

- Libya: Medication and medical supplies; Catering; Poultry breeding; Events management
- Tunisia: Textile, clothing and leather; Agrobusiness; Diverse industries; Building materials; Chemical industries; Mechanical and electric Industries

In Tunisia, the mapping of growth sectors was said to be accurate with the addition of ICT, hospitality and renewable energy sectors. Furthermore, partners commented that some of the growth sectors identified, such as agrobusiness, do not lead to sustainable employment since work is seasonal.

There were no changes in the program to fit the findings at the time. Perhaps for this reason, neither SPARK staff nor partners seemed to attach much importance to them. Overall, the identification of key growth sectors has had little effect on the implementation of the programme. It appears that beneficiaries are not as such consistently guided by partners to enter a specific sector, rather they choose a sector based on their own disposition. As a result, these sectors have not seen any significant increase in employment compared to other sectors.

10.2 Factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability

10.2.1 Programme risks and mitigation strategies

Generally, programme staff show little awareness of potential risk factors, and there are no structured mitigation strategies for potential risks. However, the risks to implementation in each specific region/country are mapped by partners in the proposal stage, and partners are responsible for indicating mitigation measures.

One considerable internal risk for the programme is the lack of formal registration in Tunisia, which may have judicial consequences due to what is now de facto illegal operations. SPARK is currently trying to ensure formal registration.

For all three target countries, the contextual fragility is a cause of considerable external risk, although particularly Tunisia but also Somalia are relatively stable. In Libya, the current fighting around Tripoli is an ongoing risk to operations.

10.2.2 Has the programme been environmentally as well as financially sustainable?

In the interviews with SPARK staff, it appears that there have been no consistent considerations on the environmental sustainability of the programme. Nevertheless, the implementation team from SPARK decided not to work in the oil industry, which was part of the original proposal as a growth sector for Libya.


In terms of financial sustainability, the analysis under cost-efficiency shows, that the program has been financially stable for the duration of the programme period.

11 Evaluation of Results

Chain components

Having evaluated the DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability of the SPARK implemented LEAD programme, we now turn to evaluate the various steps in the Results Chain, as set forth in figure 5. As the figure indicates, the questions used for the evaluation are identical to those for the DAC criteria, while the analytical focus is on the various steps in the results chain as shown horizontally. Rather than repeating each question in the analysis above, the current section will summarize the findings for each step as an explanation for the evaluation.


11.1 Input

Overall assessment: Medium-high 

Voluntas finds that the inputs, in terms of funding, organization and resources were very appropriate to reach the objectives of the programme. As shown by the cost-efficiency analysis, the programme has had sufficient funding throughout the programme period. Moreover, the programme has had appropriate management capabilities and structure, which has effectively driven the programme forward. Another positive factor is the organizational set-up of SPARK, with well-established roles and responsibilities as well as tested reporting mechanism and ICT systems, which has eased the overview and reporting of the project. Finally, during the proposal stage of each project, SPARK has included local partners in needs identification, thus leveraging knowledge about the local context.

Nevertheless, SPARK has experienced some difficulties during the implementation of the project, which relate to programme input. For instance, the missing registration of the SPARK office in Tunisia has had consequences for the availability of competent staff for programme management. Likewise, a high staff turnover with partners implied a loss of organizational knowledge. Finally, more knowledge on the local context and relevant partners could have reduced some initial unfortunate decisions on the choice of partners and could possibly have prevented the annulment of the Access to Finance component.

11.2 Activities


Overall assessment: Medium 

Activities are evaluated in terms of cost-efficiency, effort, effectiveness and ownership of local partners. The overall assessment of activities is medium. As a positive factor, the activities are considered highly appropriate to achieve the two objectives of the programme. Moreover, the activities appear cost-efficient. Finally, the activities generally appear to have been effectively implemented by partner organizations, because of significant scoping by the partners and SPARK during the proposal stages. The local partners also took a high degree of ownership of the activities, including their outputs and outcomes, and showed significant initiative in the implementation.

On the other hand, some elements affect the evaluation of activities negatively. For instance, the programme sought to foster women entrepreneurship by ensuring female participation and leadership. Nevertheless, partners seemed unaware of the specific challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in their country. Moreover, some activities could be added or modified to increase effectiveness. For instance, partners and beneficiaries find that the mentoring activities for


MSMEs were of too short duration, and some partners extended the mentoring period. Also, some activities presupposed specific skills which the beneficiaries did not possess. Finally, the implementation of one activity, the Access to Finance activity, was fully unsuccessful in implementation. Thus, the programme failed in addressing the finance-gap for newly established entrepreneurs or MSMEs seeking to expand, which is seen as a major barrier for success.

11.3 Output

Overall assessment: Medium-high 

The qualitative data suggests that across the three countries, the program activities were effective in technically preparing youth to remain in their country of origin through the various activities implemented, although this does not necessarily translate into employment. For example, business plan competitions were by some partners conceived as a “western” phenomenon, not necessarily relevant for an Arab context. Moreover, the programme saw a high degree of local capacity building among partners during implementation. Local partners were for instance taught how to make proposals and do financial reporting. As such, the programme achieved the desired output, which is given the overall assessment of medium-high.

11.4 Outcome

Overall assessment: Medium-high 

The evaluation of outcome looks at whether the outputs, in terms of for instance the number of trainings sessions held, has translated into tangible outcomes such as improved employment or scaling of existing MSMEs. While some specific outcome targets were surpassed, and others not achieved, the programme overall achieved the set objectives in scaling existing MSMEs and lead to job creation in Somalia and Tunisia, but not in Libya. As described in the impact section, following the LEAD definition, the programme has resulted in a considerable amount of sustainable employments. Nevertheless, employment in start-ups is generally high risk, and for this reason it is difficult to estimate whether the employment created through the programme was truly sustainable. The programme also managed to be gender-balanced and inclusive. According to partner interviews in Libya and Tunisia, a higher number of women were actively engaged in program activities. As a downside, however, the identified business and market opportunities had little effect on the programme.

11.5 Effect

Overall assessment: Medium 

The objectives of the intervention correspond to acute priorities in the target countries, and the programme managed to enhance a culture of entrepreneurship among the targeted youth across the three target countries. Moreover, the programme had a considerable unintended impact in boosting the self-confidence of beneficiaries.

Although the programme in theory seems relevant from preventing irregular migration and radicalization, in Tunisia more than in Libya and Somalia, the scarcity of available data makes it difficult to assess whether the programme has significantly contributed to the reduction of these phenomena in the three partner countries. Lack of data also makes it difficult to assess any higher order impact on employment and income.

12 Lessons learned and best practices

12.1 Supporting and creating MSMEs

The evaluation shows the importance of tailoring solutions in supporting and creating MSMEs, both in terms of local context, the relevant sector and the capabilities of beneficiaries.

SPARK could consider getting increased support from local experts to improve programme integration in the local context. Setting up a business requires deep understanding of the business context and regulatory framework. It is crucial to understand what registrations and permits are required for setting up the business and prepare a strategy for obtaining these permits. Given that beneficiaries often cite high levels of bureaucracy as a substantial obstacle, a realistic understanding of the processes and timelines is important. Moreover, it is key to identify and address legal and regulatory barriers to women's access to finance, in order to successfully promote gender inclusiveness.

Moreover, when deciding to set up a business, knowing the market is essential for success. Building a new market requires time, effort and a comprehensive marketing strategy, and the resources required must not be underestimated. The national plan for the SME sector of operation will include information about major developments planned for the coming years and should be thoroughly studied.

In creating MSMEs, the programme has followed key guidelines from SPARK's own manual with an MSME specialist, which includes ensuring that entrepreneurs are invested in business growth and creating jobs. For instance, SPARK has adopted a cost-sharing mechanism, whereby MSMEs share with SPARK the costs for technical assistance, after an assessment conducted by SPARK. Furthermore, one of the best practices adopted in supporting MSMEs relates to the long-term coaching, which allows for mentoring tailored to their needs.

Finally, while some general training modules are relevant to all beneficiaries, the capabilities of the beneficiary should be assessed more thoroughly prior to enrolling, in order to adjust trainings and other support according to beneficiaries needs. In the same vein, more courses should be launched, as SPARK has already initiated, to provide training on soft skills to increase professional readiness (e.g. communication, CV writing and e-mail writing,) that were not covered by the programme during the evaluation period.

12.2 Reinforcing educational institutions

The evaluation shows that in future activities it is important to make sure that teachers and institutions build ownership of the provided materials. When this happens, they are capable of engaging students and carry out teaching activities without SPARK. It also shows that universities are challenging partners due to their high status in society. Having a good personal relationship with them is crucial in order to gain influence on curriculum activities.

The data from the evaluation also suggest that to improve educational quality it could be more effective to work on a national level rather than engaging directly with educational institutions. In principle, one could argue that education is the prerogative of national governments. Therefore, if SPARK gets directly involved in developing educational institutions, there is no regulation of the curriculum to make sure they comply with certain national levels of quality, which might dilute the value of the curriculum diploma. In this regard, the LEAD programme adopted some best practices, by working with the government through the 4C center in Tunisia

and with the Ministry of Higher Education in Somalia, where the internship program was made mandatory through national legislation

Finally, the evaluation team suggests that SPARK is consistent, transparent and regular in payments to interns, which has not been the case during the programme.

12.3 Program development

The programme was developed with an overall goal of reducing irregular migration and radicalization. The evaluation suggests that regarding migration the programme is relevant in the Tunisian context but of less relevance in Libya and Somalia. Concerning radicalization, the programme only seeks to tackle one of several root causes of extremism, although the thematic focus is relevant for all three countries. In order to streamline the programme, Voluntas suggests that the programme focuses on one single main goal in those countries were one of the current goals is inappropriate. This would ease the understanding of the intent of the programme and lessen reporting requirements.

The evaluation also shows considerable confusion in the terminology within the logical framework. This creates an unclear understanding of which elements can be controlled by the programme (input-activities-outcome) and which elements are dependent upon assumptions regarding the acts of others (outcome-effect). The programme would benefit from a clear and stringent Theory of Change, which uses the correct terminology and includes all relevant assumptions, in order to set expectations and verification methods at the right level.

Furthermore, the identification of growth sectors at the outset of the programme did not result in any in any changes to fit the findings. Beneficiaries were not guided by partners to enter a specific sector, rather they chose a sector based on their disposition, as it was difficult to steer people into a different direction when they have come up with a business idea. Another issue with the was sectoral study was that it was too broad, and as such not useful for beneficiaries who were looking for specific opportunities. As a consequence, the activity seemed to provide little added value. For the extension of the programme, SPARK has focused on undertaking market studies on specific business opportunities in target countries, such as infrastructure development, instead of broader sectorial studies. We would recommend that when the new evaluation is ready, SPARK takes deliberate action to tailor activities to suit the results.

12.4 Programme management

The evaluation showed that the programme has, overall, been well managed. However, a potential for improvement to prevent delays of similar programmes is better planning to accommodate local challenges. In particular, it is important to conduct thorough research of potential partners before selecting them to fully understand their expertise and capacity requirements. After selecting partners, SPARK should continue to align on expectations about how activities are carried out.

Lack of appropriate human resources also affected the overall programme efficiency. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the programme was intended for only 3 years. Allocating the right resources and time appears crucial for the overall programme management. Indeed, the program has been extended and SPARK has taken measures to increase its competitiveness as a recruiter.

12.5 Monitoring and evaluation of the programme

Several lessons learned can be drawn regarding the monitoring and evaluation framework of the programme.

First, SPARK failed to formulate suitable questions for a baseline measure of inclinations towards radicalization and migration. This means that the survey among a selected target and control group was not implemented. For these reasons, there is little tangible evidence in terms of the programme's contribution to these phenomena. For future programmes, Voluntas suggests that SPARK seeks external guidance in how to set up the baseline survey from experts in the local context, to avoid questions that are found insensitive.

Moreover, some of the indicators included in the first monitoring protocol were difficult to measure. The M&E reality in Libya, Tunisia and Somalia is far from optimal and partners do not have the means of verification for all the indicators included in the monitoring protocol (e.g. indirect jobs). As a quality standard, unverified data is not reported, which can often lead to a false perception of 'low' results or impact. Therefore, for 2019, the monitoring protocol has been revised, significantly reducing the complexity of indicators to be reported on.

While the programme has an excess focus on measuring and verifying outcome indicators, there is little focus on verification and follow-up of activities. For instance, beneficiaries in Tunisia, mentioned that there is a lack of follow-up of activities. In remote locations of Somalia, moreover, there is virtually no follow up of how Shaqodoon carries out activities. Nearly all the usual indicators were absent including objective audits. Although the FGD participants in Somalia were filtered for us, even the basic philosophy seemed not to have permeated outside the capitals. Within this is the problem of feedback, as several beneficiaries claimed of getting no feedback. Indeed, Somali beneficiaries commented on lack of monitoring from Shaqodoon organization on what takes place. We would recommend that the verification of activities should be by first-hand verification, by SPARK, conducted regularly. The evaluation team would recommend that verification of activities is conducted regularly and first-hand, by SPARK, not by second hand reporting.

On a related note, the evaluation finds that the time allocated internally in SPARK to develop and evaluate programmes is insufficient. It takes time to organize and deploy the required resources for a programme or develop businesses locally, and SPARK staff find that there are unrealistic demands from donors for the M&E team given the time and money allocated. To counter this, SPARK engaged in a large staff expansion in August 2018. Another lesson learned for the M&E team is that internal data reporting should not create extra burdens to programme teams but be a side product of donor and programme management data reporting.

Finally, the evaluation shows that the use of multiple systems to collect data and report to donors created a complex system spanning across different platforms, using Googlesheets, IATI and MIS. While each platform in its own is conceived as easy to navigate, overlap of information and the lack of integration in reporting affects the overall efficiency of reporting. Given that SPARK is in a rare position to have its own software programming team, it could be worthwhile integrating all systems into one, to reduce the unnecessary efforts and risk of error that lie in duplication of information.

12.6 Local partner organization management

SPARK's brainstorming with partners on what activities they can conduct with regard to planning and budgeting has been crucial to the efficient planning of the programme. While this endeavor is time consuming, it is necessary as partners tend to overestimate both their capacity and budget.

Given the relatively limited programme period, the timeframe did not allow to set up effective implementation processes with partners. In general, low capacity of partners coupled with a high turnover of partner staff are experienced as substantial challenges to effective implementation. As a consequence, SPARK has devoted considerable resources to build the capacity of partners, with its local staff very engaged with local partners and involved in partners' day-to-day business, even engaging in changes within the local partner's teams.

Finally, a general suggestion would be to carefully select partners as to minimize partner changes to allow for better alignment of processes. Partners selection is an important element of programme efficiency. In Somalia, a suggestion would be to increase the number of organizations in SPARK's network to widen the reach and to rely less on only one partner, especially as it seems that in Somalia the existing partner 'dominates the field'.

12.7 Local partner organizations' reporting scheme

SPARK met with the partners prior to signing an agreement to discuss their proposals and agree on the reporting mechanisms for each component. Nonetheless, findings from data collection

suggest that at the beginning partners were unclear about what they needed to report on, as reporting requirements were changed after the programme had started. Furthermore, many partners have mentioned that reporting requirements were difficult to comply with in terms of outcome verification. In turn the timeliness of reporting has proven a significant challenge. A general suggestion would be to minimize data requirements, using only indicators needed for donors to monitor, in order to make monitoring and evaluation less burdensome.

12.8 Gender inclusion

The program sought to foster female entrepreneurship by ensuring female participation and leadership in activities. Providing business skills trainings is a basic step toward empowering women entrepreneurs.

However, the evaluation showed that partners and to some extent also beneficiaries, both male and female, were not aware of specific barriers to women. Therefore, to truly achieve transformative change, training programs need to address deeper psychological and social constraints facing women. First, consciousness needs to be shifted, overturning internalized constraints and aspirational barriers that keep women in situations of subordination. Second, cultural beliefs about gender and power must be challenged. Finally, the limited number of programmes targeting women lead to a lack of data and information about the factors that inhibit women entrepreneurship. To make sure interventions are evidence-based and with a likelihood of success, it is important to conduct research to understand the needs of female entrepreneurs.



13 Annex

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13.2 Evaluation questions from Terms of Reference

Relevance:

- Did the intervention solve an existing problem (lack of youth employment in growth sectors specifically for young women actually one of *employability*, or are there other things (i.e. cultural barriers, cost, work permit issues, etc.) that are keeping youth (especially women) out of a job?
- Are female entrepreneurs more vulnerable (compared to men) in fragile contexts (compared to non-fragile context) and how did the programme address these vulnerabilities?
- How relevant was the programme to the needs of its target group? And if not, how should that inform the future design of the program?
- How relevant was the programme to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization?
- How relevant was the programme in the three different programme countries?

Efficiency:

- How efficient was the programme's management structure?
- Were activities cost-efficient?
- How efficient were the programme's partners' reporting scheme?
- How efficient were the ICT systems of the programme?
- What factors influenced the time-efficiency of the programme?
- How do the local circumstances and context influence the programme's efficiency?
- How does Programme Efficiency in fragile countries differ from Programme efficiency in non-fragile countries?
- What determines Programme efficiency in fragile and non-fragile countries and how can this be utilized to increase the efficiency of this Programme?

Effectiveness:

- Was a gender balance and inclusiveness achieved in the programme?
- How effective were the ICT systems of the programme?
- How effective was the Access to Finance component of the programme?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of objectives?
- To what extent did the programme contribute to the reduction of irregular economic migration and radicalization of young people in Libya, Somalia and Tunisia?
- To what extent did the programme (technically) prepare and motivate youth (especially women) to remain in their countries of origin and not resort to irregular migration or radicalization in the three programme countries?
- How effective were the local partners of the programme in implementing their activities?
- How do the local circumstances and context influence the programme's effectiveness?
- How does Programme effectiveness in fragile countries differ from Programme effectiveness in non-fragile countries?
- What determines Programme effectiveness in fragile and non-fragile countries and how can this be utilized to increase the effectiveness of this Programme?

Sustainability:

- Did the local partner organisations take ownership of their activities, outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent did the programme increase the capacity of its local partner organisations?
- To what extent did the programme build synergies with other relevant local initiatives and organisations?
- To what extent did the entrepreneurship activities offered to beneficiaries through the programme promote sustainable employment for them?
- To what extent did the Business and market opportunities identified conducted for the programme ensure youth (especially women) become employed in the growth sectors within the three programme countries?

Impact:

- To what extent did the create or enhance upon the entrepreneurship culture among the targeted demographic in the three programme countries?
- To what extent did the programme Entrepreneur activities scale existing MSMEs and lead to job creation?
- To what extent did the programme activities reduce migratory and radicalisation tendencies amongst targeted youth?
- Is there any unintended (positive and/or negative) impact in the areas of the programme (Libya (Benghazi, Tripoli), Tunisia (KEF, Kairouan) and Somalia (Somaliland & Puntland and Mogadishu))?
- To what extent did the programme activities have an impact on employability, employment, income or other higher-order things like consumption, net assets, savings.

Lessons Learned:

- What are the best practices, as per the programme's implementation, in supporting and creating MSMEs in the programme's target countries?
- What are the best practices, as per the programme's implementation, in reinforcing educational institutions in the programme's target countries?
- What lessons learned can be drawn in terms of the how the programme was developed?
- What lessons learned can be drawn in terms of the management of the programme?
- What lessons learned can be drawn in terms of monitoring and evaluation of the programme (focusing specifically on the digital reporting (IATI, GoogleSheets))?
- What lessons learned can be drawn in terms of local partner organisation management?
- What lessons learned can be drawn in terms of the local partner organisations' reporting scheme?

Recommendations:

- How can the several Programme Activities be improved regarding to the mentioned evaluation questions?
- How can the programme's management structure be improved?
- How can the partners reporting scheme be improved?
- How can the programme's monitoring and evaluation systems be improved?
- How can learning from data be mainstreamed within the programme?

13.3 Key informants

Name	Organization	Country	Position	Interview date (dd-mm-yy)
Ferdinand Francken	Dutch MFA	Netherlands	Project Manager	20-03-2019
Majdalene Bentaher	SPARK	Tunisia	LEAD Regional Programme Manager	06-03-2019
Laura Brinks-Janssen	SPARK	Netherlands	M&E Manager	06-03-2019
Laza Lazarevic	SPARK	Serbia	M&E Data Officer	13-03-2019
Daniel McCormick	SPARK	Somalia	Regional Deputy Programme Manager	12-03-2019
Nikolaos Koufos	SPARK	Netherlands	Monitoring, Reporting and Quality coordinator	18-03-2019
Nesrine ben Milad	SPARK	Tunisia	Tunisia Programme Manager	12-03-2019
Mohammed Elsayi	SPARK	Tunisia	Lead finance manager	03-04-2019
Asma Guerfali	IACE	Tunisia	Co-founder	08-03-2019
Moukhtar Mohamoud Mohumed	SPARK	Somalia	Finance officer	13-03-2019
Joachim Thomas Oluba	SPARK	Somalia	Senior Programme Manager Somalia	12-03-2019
Karim Hammami	SPARK	Tunisia	Local consultant	08-03-2019
Mehdi Oueslati	Centre d'affaires	Tunisia	Program Manager	21-03-2019
Lamia Cheffai	Education for Employment	Tunisia	Project Manager	04-04-2019
Yasmeen Khoja	Jusoor	Libya	Project Manager	01-04-2019
Mohammed Abu Helga	ENALA	Libya	Former director	23-03-2019
Sulaiman Kanun	Idea Drivers	Libya	Project director	19-04-2019
Shada Almajry	Deraz	Libya	M&E officer	21-03-2019
Ramadan Sulaiman	Libyan Enterprise	Libya	Manager of MOU with SPARK	04-04-2019
Abdiqani Dirie	Shaqodoon	Somalia	Programme Manager	13-03-2019
Abdullahi Guled	Shaqodoon	Somalia	Project Officer	13-03-2019
Abdi Sameed	Shaqodoon	Somalia	Organizer in Borama	14-03-2019
Mohamed Khalif	Shaqodoon	Somalia	Deputy executive programme in Garowe	16-03-2019

13.4 Ethics statement

Child Protection, Ethics, and Data Security Policy

All researchers involved in this evaluation are required to adhere to Social Impact, Inc.'s (SI) Child Protection, Ethics, and Data Security Policy throughout all evaluation tasks. The Policy states that you are responsible for working to proactively protect children, abide by ethical standards in research, and work proactively to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Evaluation personnel in each country may not be below 18 years of age and must not have prior convictions of child abuse or any other child related crime. All research personnel are responsible to abide by the principles communicated during the ethics training. This includes the informed consent/assent process that is required before each interview. Consent must be obtained or else an interview cannot be conducted. This also includes the requirement to keep all information confidential—whether it is information stored electronically, on paper, or on the mind.

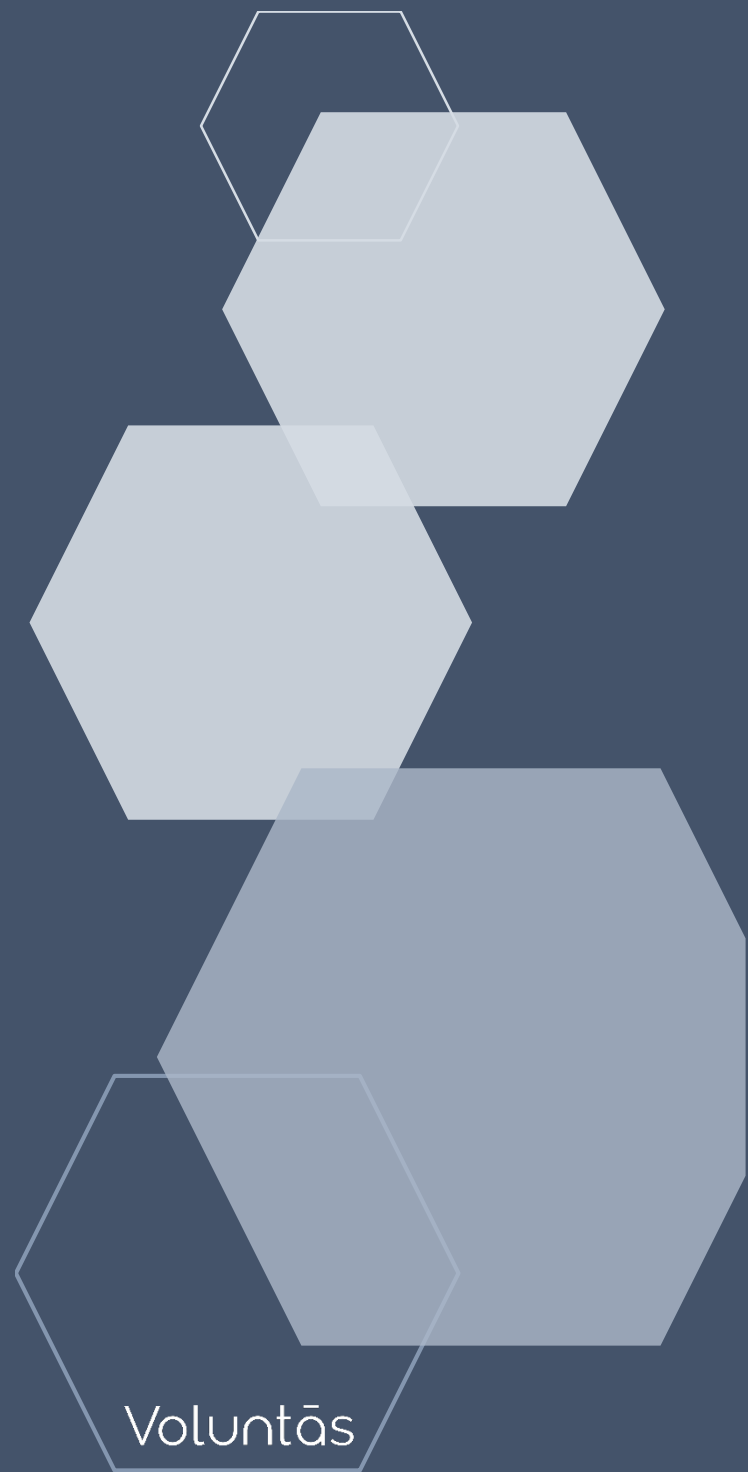
All evaluation activities involving children must be conducted in a location visible to others. While it is advised to conduct interviews out of hearing range from others to retain privacy for the sake of the interviewee, evaluation personnel are not allowed to be alone with a child under any circumstances. This rule is in place to protect children and to protect evaluation personnel from the presumption of impropriety.

I, _____ (print name) promise that I will abide by the SI Child Protection Policy and Data Security Policy and ethical guidelines as listed above and during all research activities. Specifically, I confirm that:

- _____ I am at least 18 years of age.
- _____ I have no prior convictions of child abuse or any other child-related crime.
- _____ I will never be alone with a child out of sight from others.
- _____ I will always obtain prior informed consent before interviewing any respondent.
- _____ I will be vigilant to prevent excess risks to participants in this study.
- _____ I will keep all personal information I gather confidential and will not disclose it in verbal, written, or electronic form to anyone other than approved SI staff
- _____ I will keep my computer password-protected and will not allow someone outside the evaluation to use it while assessment files are on it.
- _____ I will change my password immediately upon suspecting it has been stolen and will report this immediately.
- _____ I will immediately report to the Team Leader and SI any suspected instance of breach of confidentiality or privacy of respondent data.
- _____ I will ask the Team Leader for guidance in any scenario in which my actions or the actions of others participating in data collection may endanger the confidentiality or privacy of respondent data.
- _____ If my computer is lost or stolen I will immediately report it to the Team Leader.
- _____ I will never fabricate data or misrepresent data for any reason.

Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date:



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