

Feasibility to Adapt Solutions Across Countries and Fragile Context Settings

While successful strategies to adapting innovative economic solutions have emerged in **Jordan, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and Sudan**, scaling these solutions necessitates contextual adjustments to ensure their effectiveness in new environments. The following insights will be collated from research within each country's unique context. The insights will be related to both Pillars A and B from the research, with Pillar A focusing on **how private sector SMEs in fragile contexts can contribute to job creation and employment ecosystems to attract and sustain women and youth employees**, while Pillar B examines **the challenges and adaptations needed for programs like CFYE to operate effectively in conflict-affected zones**.

From a private sector perspective, **flexible work arrangements, microfinancing models, and sector-specific training** have proven impactful. However, **adaptation feasibility depends on factors such as digital infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and cultural acceptance**. For instance, digital employment opportunities seen in Jordan's fintech sector may be replicated in other conflict zones with sufficient internet penetration but may require alternative delivery mechanisms in areas with poor connectivity. In such cases, **hybrid models that combine mobile-based job platforms with offline training hubs** can serve as an effective alternative. Likewise, **village savings groups and microfinance institutions**, successful in Burkina Faso, require supportive local financial policies and community engagement strategies to scale effectively elsewhere. In regions with limited formal banking access, **agent-based banking models**, where local intermediaries facilitate financial transactions could provide a viable adaptation strategy.

SMEs in different fragile settings must also contend with varying economic stability and market access. In Ethiopia and Sudan, **supply chain disruptions and currency devaluation** have hindered business resilience. Transferring adaptive SME strategies, such as **product diversification and cross-border partnerships**, will depend on regional trade policies and economic integration efforts. Successful replication demands **collaboration with local stakeholders to navigate country-specific regulatory and economic landscapes**.

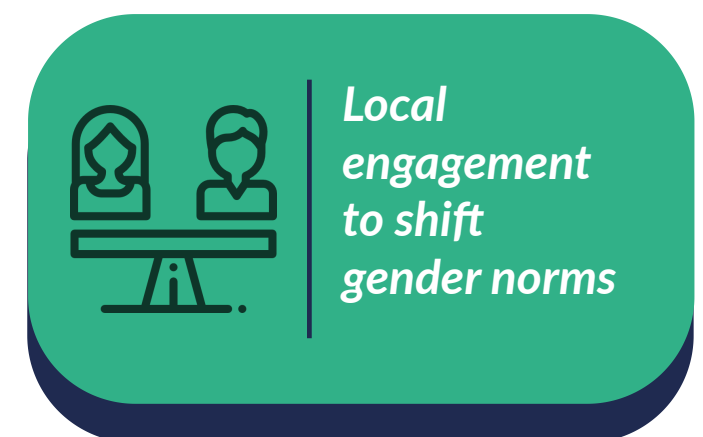
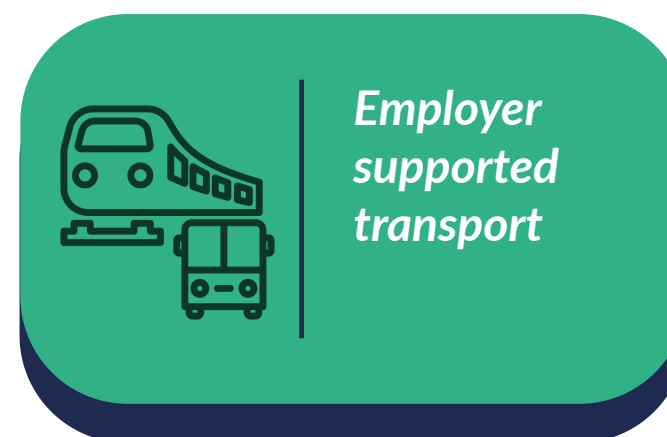
From a programmatic standpoint, **funds like CFYE have demonstrated flexibility by modifying employment support strategies in conflict-affected regions**. This flexibility is evident in several key areas, including **contract periods, reporting structures, implementation timelines, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators**. For example, rather than requiring immediate job placements, CFYE has enabled **phased employment models** that first focus on training and upskilling before transitioning beneficiaries into work.

This is particularly relevant in fragile contexts where immediate job creation may not be feasible, and long-term employability needs to be prioritized. However, **the feasibility of such adaptations depends on donor priorities, government cooperation, and the overall flexibility of the implementation model.** In more rigidly structured programs, bureaucratic hurdles may slow the rollout of employment incentives, requiring alternative approaches such as **informal sector engagement** or **community-based economic initiatives**. For instance, Sudan's financial adaptations—such as flexible loan repayment—could be transferred to other conflict zones with banking disruptions, but **sustainability may require partnerships with international financial institutions** to ensure continued liquidity and risk mitigation.

The feasibility of scaling these solutions also hinges on **security considerations** and **social norms**, which are often deeply interconnected. In many fragile contexts, women's economic participation is not only constrained by cultural expectations but also by safety concerns, such as **harassment in public spaces** or **risks associated with commuting**. Addressing these barriers requires a dual approach: **shifting social norms to increase acceptance of women in the workforce while simultaneously implementing concrete measures to enhance their safety and mobility.**

Programs promoting digital literacy and remote work, as seen in Jordan and Ethiopia, can provide alternatives for women facing mobility restrictions. However, these interventions must be accompanied by **investments in safe transportation, legal protections, and gender-sensitive workplace policies to ensure long-term impact.** For example, Ethiopia's CAMS initiative under CFYE successfully tackled safety challenges in grain threshing by integrating flexible, community-based transportation solutions into the value chain.

This approach not only improved women's access to mechanised agricultural work but also demonstrated how targeted interventions—such as:



can create safer, more inclusive work environments. Similar models could be adapted in other conflict-affected settings to **overcome gendered employment barriers while reinforcing broader economic resilience.**

Opportunities for adaptation and expansion of these solutions exist across multiple dimensions. The increasing penetration of **digital technologies** offers significant potential for **remote work**, **e-commerce**, and **online education**, which can provide employment opportunities for youth and women even in unstable environments. **Public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in expanding market access**, with governments facilitating **SME-friendly policies** while international organisations provide funding and technical expertise. Furthermore, the rise of **impact investment** and **social enterprise models** presents a new avenue for financial inclusion, allowing businesses to scale in ways that prioritise both economic and social development. **Strengthening regional economic cooperation** and **trade agreements** can also foster **cross-border opportunities**, enabling fragile economies to integrate into wider markets and leverage collective resilience strategies. To ensure success, a multi-pronged approach is needed.

Multi-Pronged Approach

Governments, private sector actors, and international organisations must collaborate to tailor interventions to local realities.

This includes policy advocacy for SME-friendly regulations, investments in infrastructure to support digital and financial inclusion, and adaptive programming that can respond dynamically to shifting conflict dynamics.

By prioritising local engagement and leveraging existing economic strengths, scalable solutions can be implemented to enhance resilience and opportunity in multiple fragile settings.