



Evaluation Summaries

Country Programme to Combat Child Labour in Malawi

Quick Facts

Country : Malawi
Mode of Evaluation: Independent mid-term
Date of Evaluation: Sept. 2007
Technical Area: Child Labour
Evaluation management: ILO-IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED)
Evaluation team: John Murimi Njoka
Project Start: September 2005
Project end: December 2008
Project code: MLW/05/50/USA
Donor: United States Department of Labor (USDOL) (2, 100,000 US\$)
Keywords: Child labour

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

ILO/IPEC has been operational in Malawi since 2000 when it was chosen to be one of the 5 countries of a sub-regional project on the withdrawal and rehabilitation of children who were engaged in commercial agriculture (Comagri project), funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The Comagri project was able to facilitate the creation of local structures that have continued to be actively involved in dialogue with the community on issues of child labour as well as helping in the formation of the Child Labour Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training as well as a National Steering Committee (NSC) on child labour. Experiences of the Comagri project revealed the great need for support to working children to enable them to participate in education and vocational training as

well as the need for ILO/IPEC, the government of Malawi and the social partners to consolidate the gains made by the Comagri project. Further support to the government to develop a National Plan of Action to eliminate child labour and to embark on a time-bound programme were also seen to be important.

The experiences of the Comagri project revealed the great need for support to working children to enable them to participate in education and vocational training as well as the need for ILO/IPEC, the GM and the social partners to consolidate the gains made by the Comagri project. Further support to the Government to develop a National Plan of Action to eliminate child labour and to embark on a time-bound programme were also seen to be important.

In response ILO/IPEC with USDOL funding designed the Country Programme in Malawi (CP Malawi). The project was developed in consultation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations and the social partners in Malawi. The project follows the ILO/IPEC Country Programme Approach. The programme is based on national priorities and needs as outlined in the stakeholders' meeting. The CP Malawi had the development objective of contributing to the progressive elimination of child labour in Malawi. Two strategic objectives and five Immediate Objectives were planned as follows:

- **Strategic Component A:** Promotion of an enabling social, political and legislative environment leading to effective action against child labour.
 1. **Immediate Objective:** By the end of the project, the national legislation will be

harmonized in view of the child labour conventions

2. **Immediate Objective:** By the end of the project the national capacity for enforcement will have been increased.
 3. **Immediate Objective:** By the end of the project cultural values and attitudes in relation to child labour and education will be modified
 4. **Immediate Objective:** By the end of the project the policy environment for dealing with child labour issues in the country is improved.
- **Strategic Component B:** Effective direct action with girls, boys and families to prevent child labour and to withdraw and rehabilitate child labourers.
5. **Immediate Objective:** By the end of the project effective models of interventions for the withdrawal and prevention of boys and girls engaged in child labour in the agricultural sector and child domestic labour will have been developed and documented.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to review the ongoing progress and performance of the project (extent to which immediate objectives have been achieved and outputs delivered), to examine the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives and to examine the delivery of the project inputs/activities and an investigation on nature and magnitude of constraints, the factors affecting project implementation and an analysis of factors contributing to the project's success. Specifically, the evaluation addressed issues of project design, implementation, alternative strategies, any lessons learned, replicability and recommendations for the future strategy of the programme as it proceeds to the final part. The MTE focuses on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the CP & APs and draws critical conclusions and recommendations.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology adopted entailed the following activities:

- Review of sources from DED and the CP Malawi.

- In-depth discussions and interviews with the CP Malawi staff, government officers at headquarters in Lilongwe and in the districts covered by the programme, stakeholders such as UNICEF and UNDP, the supported APs and their partners such as district officers of line ministries in DCLCs, local opinion and other leaders and the donor.
- Interviews with beneficiaries, e.g. parents of the supported children, boys, girls, teachers .
- Interactions with the supported children.
- Direct observation of project components.
- A stakeholder workshop which consolidated the preliminary findings and recommendations. The field mission was undertaken in July 2007.

Main findings and conclusions

The overall finding of the MTE is that CP Malawi was picking up the pace after a slow start in the beginning and is on the way to attaining its targets. Work on downstream is, however, achieving more than the upstream, the latter of which has potential for more strategic achievements. The Evaluator concludes that CP Malawi has been delayed as a result of communication difficulties, slow cooperation on the part of MoL and the overall challenging socio-cultural and political terrain of working on elimination of child labour. The major conclusions of the evaluation are:

- CP Malawi has managed to set the ground for downstream work but upstream activities are still challenging.
- The context of support from MoL is weak thus rendering the activities of CP Malawi highly challenging and with little progress at the beginning of the project.
- Effective communication with project actors within ILO-IPEC and GM is a major asset to project success and this will require improvement.
- Networking with other actors stand out as a major step towards dealing with the difficult context and hence achieving most of the IOs.
- Re-thinking of some of the outputs and objectives needs to be strategically done so that focus is placed on what is realistically achievable

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up :

- Due to the lost time in 2005 and 2006 and in order to have time for final reports/winding up, it is advisable to extend CP Malawi by not less than 4 months. A longer extension will, however, call for added costs since the budget cannot support more than four extra months.
- The CP team should, however, remain intact as it is capable. There will nonetheless be need for constant updating and strengthening of the staff with certain skills as opportunities arise, e.g. administration and finance, gender mainstreaming, effective communication and negotiation, etc. CP Malawi should be proactive in making requests for support in human resources capacity building.
- Given that Malawi still has no Child Labour Policy or a coherent child law, CP Malawi needs to focus heavily on influencing the MoL to start in earnest a process of developing a Child Labour Policy, which could be in draft form at the end of the programme. This should be done in tandem with the NPA and list of hazards, with the three articulating the future GM-led journey for the elimination of child labour in the country. Once this is done, IPEC could then consider supporting a TBP in Malawi. CP Malawi should proactively assist MoL in this, and help it consolidate its ownership on the NPA and child labour policy formulation.
- CP Malawi has not been able to have an AP with GM (MoL) arguably due to policy shifts from USDOL on justification for what funds are implemented by the government. In order to address this, CP Malawi should impress upon the MoL/Child Labour Unit to take a firmer control of planning and implementing the planned upstream activities. This will

require more constant engagement of the CTA with the MoL leadership.

- CP Malawi needs to plan more deliberate opportunities for the APs to network, share experiences and synergise. This is already happening in a small way as exemplified for instance by ECAM linking with AYISE, but will need to be more deliberately planned by CP Malawi, tightened and sustained.
- CP Malawi will need to sustain engagement with UNICEF, WFP and other actors with more influence in the GM to tighten the process of policy formulation and overall upstream work. The planned study on child trafficking that is to be funded between CP Malawi and UNICEF is another area of joint action that also requires jump-starting.
- Some funds need to be expended on innovative initiatives, e.g. rapid assessment of business opportunities to support the IGAs component, post-harvest storage technologies to address food security particularly in the supply component of AYISE II, etc. The rapid business opportunities could have been done under Comagri but this did not happen. APs are expected to do this for their IGAs but CP Malawi may re-think these disjointed assessments and get a way of having a coherent and coordinated rapid assessment by an institution of excellence within Malawi using a common approach.

Important lessons learned:

- Given the challenges of working with the MoL and MCTU and the subsequent difficulties in getting things moving, CP Malawi has appreciated the inevitability of working with the tripartite if the war against child labour is to be won.
- In view of the need to share experiences, maximize project impact and avoid duplication and confusion at the target districts, the need for planned synergies within APs has been realized and will be planned for in the second half of the project.

- Given the difficulties of effective communication and its subsequent impact on the project's progress, the importance of frequent and effective communication with all stakeholders within a project at all levels are now clearer.
- The experience with the MoL especially the limited cooperation reveals that in the course of efforts towards the elimination of child labour, failure or delays in mobilizing government as a key stakeholder can lead to failure of a project in totality.
- Given the ability of the IAs to raise supplementary funding from elsewhere as well as develop synergies with other actors such as Ministry of Education, local government and donors, APs have learnt that they can still undertake mobilization work, e.g. for school infrastructure, as they perform their mainstream tasks.