



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic - Supporting the Time Bound Programme in the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic

Quick Facts

Countries: Dominican Republic
Final Evaluation: May 2007
Mode of Evaluation: Independent
Technical Area: Child Labour
Evaluation Management: ILO-IPEC Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section
Evaluation Team: Claudia Iburguren
Project Start: September 2001
Project End: December 2006
Project Code: DOM/01/P50/USA, DOM/02/P50/USA, DOM/04/P50/USA
Donor: US Department of Labor (USA)
US \$6,006,243
Keywords: Child Labour, Time Bound Programme, Worst Forms of Child Labour, Hazardous work

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

In 2001, the Dominican Republic became the second country in the Americas to develop and implement a Time Bound Program (TBP) aimed at eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL).

Within this national process, the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) plays an important role by offering technical expertise and acting as a facilitator. In this capacity, IPEC, with funds from the United

States Department of Labor (USDOL), implemented a Project of Support for the TBP in the Dominican Republic.

The Project had three 'phases' with separate budgets and Project documents:

- 'Preparatory Activities for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic' (Preparatory Activities) which ran from September 2001 to September 2004.
- 'Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic-Supporting the Time Bound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic' (The TBP Project). This was the largest Project of the three. It began in September 2002 and concluded in December 2006.
- 'The Trafficking/Smuggling Amendment to Supporting the TBP for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic' (the Trafficking/Smuggling Amendment). Its period of execution was from September 2004 to July 2006.

The Preparatory Project was originally planned to run from September 2001 to September 2004. The TBP Project from September of 2002 to December 2005. During implementation the issue of trafficking and smuggling, and its connection with exploitative child labour, came to the fore. As a result a trafficking/smuggling amendment was introduced. Partly due to the incorporation of this amendment an extension was granted to the TBP Project to the end of 2006.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The final evaluation was done as an Expanded Final Evaluation (EFE) combining a target group impact assessment study with a final evaluation. The EFE analyzed the design process, the implementation of the national-level components (enabling environment), and the Action Programs (target action) and the impact on target groups. It reviewed the achievements of the project in the light of five evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). It assessed the lessons learned and good practices and offered a set of final recommendations. As an evaluation of one of the first TBP projects of support, it can provide input to better the performance of future phases of a TBP or of similar Projects of support in other countries

Methodology of evaluation

To assess the overall performance and execution of the Project, the evaluating team began with a desk review of relevant documents, brochures and studies. During a period of three weeks the team conducted 21 individual interviews and five group interviews. These included people from the Dominican government, NGOs, universities, labour unions, implementing agencies, international institutions and the US Embassy. The entire staff of ILO-IPEC Dominican Republic was also interviewed. The evaluation was complemented with a field visit to two communities in San Francisco de Macorís and a final stakeholder workshop held on November 8th 2006 in Santo Domingo.

The target group impact assessment was done as a repeat baseline by a local consulting firm to measure the direct impact on children and their families that directly benefited from targeted interventions. It compare the situation before and after the intervention in five major impact areas.

Main Findings & Conclusions

- The Project was instrumental in supporting actions that have produced an environment where today it is easier to launch initiatives aimed at reducing the WFCL in the country. Specifically, the Project positioned the issue of child labour and CSEC in a prominent place in the national agenda and they contributed significantly to the future improvement of the
- legal framework. The Project also forged linkages with sectors that need to be part of the fight against the WFCL, such as the labour movement and to a lesser extent, business.
- The Project implemented most of the planned activities and accomplished the majority of outputs of the Preparatory Project and the TBP Project. An objective that was not achieved was the execution of a national child labour monitoring system (SINAMOTI).
- In general terms, the results of the trafficking/smuggling amendment were less successful. This can be traced, at least partly, to political/historical factors of the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.
- The Project of Support made great strides in contributing to the body of knowledge on child labour in the Dominican Republic. The study on CSEC and Urban Informal Work (UIW) offered insight on two sectors that are particularly difficult to research. The support of the project in the mapping helped national authorities compile a listing of hazardous activities in accordance with Convention No. 182.
- The Project sponsored a comprehensive review of Dominican legislation relating to children and child labour. It offered concrete recommendations for changes to the Labour Code, the Children's Code (Law 136-03) and the Penal Code. The Project also funded an examination of the Law on the Illicit Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking of Persons (Law 137-03).
- The training and capacity building of legal operators such as the Police resulted in positive changes in the treatment of children and adolescents. The Project provided free and accessible legal counsel through its relationship with the Law Department of the Universidad Iberoamericana (UNIBE) to minors who were victims of sex offences. Together with a strong commitment on the part of the Attorney General's Office, jail sentences were achieved for perpetrators in Boca Chica. This has established a powerful precedent that Dominican courts will persecute such crimes.
- The Project was instrumental in achieving the National Strategic Plan in the fight against the WFCL (NSP). It financed the facilitation and moved forward the process despite the delays resulting from presidential elections and the change in Administration. There was consensus that the NSP process was very

participatory and therefore national organizations feel ownership of the Plan.

- Mainstreaming into national policies has not been altogether achieved. Child labour is addressed in UN assessments such as the Common Country Assessment and the UN Development Assistance Framework. However, it is not yet fully integrated in educational policies or transfer programs.
- The public awareness campaigns were successful in raising the profile child labour and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) as a serious problem in the country. The campaigns were implemented in conjunction with government, or international organizations (UNICEF). This helped achieve a wider coverage. At a local level each Action Program also implemented mini campaigns and used local channels of dissemination.
- Engaging journalist and the media through trainings and workshops has helped increase both the quantity and quality of reporting on child labour and CSEC in the Dominican Republic.
- The Project emphasized social mobilization through a network running from communities to municipal and provincial level and up to the national Steering Committee. The Local Support Committees (CALs) have a mandate to educate the community on the risks of child labour and act as the first line of alert in cases of child labour in their locality.
- The five impact studies of target groups, in general showed that the services provided by the APs were perceived positively. Those services that, according to participants, had the largest positive impact on their lives were the Salas de Tareas, the donation of school uniforms and supplies and, in some localities, IGAs. Findings indicate that a lower proportion of children were working in 2006 than in 2003 before the AP commenced its activities. The decrease was more pronounced in some APs such as San Francisco and Constanza working in hazardous agriculture. Similarly, the proportion of school attendance increased from what children remembered in 2003, to the current time.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

This final evaluation proposed a number of recommendations, some of which are highlighted below:

1. It is important to include in the design of a Project of Support a better sense of how political timetables can affect the implementation of activities.
2. In terms of information development and monitoring, it is important to expend more effort and time not only in producing studies but also in disseminating them. For the second phase, a review of the different but disconnected initiatives with the private sector could help clarify where and with whom there would be more probability of success.
3. The basic software and instruments for the management of the information from the child labour monitoring system are in place. However, it is necessary that the Project, in the second phase, continue to offer technical assistance to the Child Labour Unit (CLU).
4. Great strides were made in training the legal profession so that it is willing and able to persecute perpetrators of sex crimes against children. A specific activity for the Project in the II phase could be to divulge jurisprudence on CSEC from other countries. This would help in the capacity building of judges.
5. The second phase of the Project should concentrate on lobbying and advocacy to support the ratification of the suggested reforms to the laws.
6. The CLU has assumed the primary responsibility for their development and consolidation of the Local Action Committees but it is important that the Project continues to support them as they become better established.
7. In general, although it is encouraging that the CLU has assumed the responsibility of important initiatives, the Project should continue to support it, offer technical expertise and help it consolidate its institutional presence within the Labour Ministry.
8. All organizations part of the National Strategic Plan assumed roles and

responsibilities. The Project could support the development of a mechanism to verify that the organizations are abiding by the agreed to timetables and are complying with their obligations.

9. In the second phase the Project needs to dedicate more time and effort to nurture and develop linkages with certain organizations/groups, most notably the private sector, the Ministry of Education and the National Council on Children. Furthering the relationship with DevTech should also be explored.
10. In the case of the Action Programmes (APs), ILO-IPEC must communicate clearly and explicitly those activities and/or areas for which Project funds can not be used. This would avoid a problem such as the one in 'Las Terrenas' where the implementing agency used funds for micro-credits.
11. Extending the implementing period of APs should be explored. The time it takes to actually begin executing the Program is not always accounted for. An AP that was originally 24 months might be reduced to 18 months which is not enough time.
12. When adding an amendment to an ongoing TBP Project of Support, additional human resources are essential.
13. The specifics of how trafficking and smuggling occur in the Dominican Republic are still not properly understood. A study carried out jointly with an international organization with expertise on the issue, such as the International Organization for Migration, needs to be carried out in the second phase.

Good Practices Identified

When trying to establish a CLMS

1. It was not realistic to expect the development and execution of a national CLMS in the time frame established by the Project's documents. A successful CLMS requires first establishing working relations with relevant national authorities (those that will gather the information for the CLMS); then progressively introducing these authorities to the concept and the added value they can expect from a monitoring system; and finally negotiating how each organization will contribute to

the CLMS. In the Preparatory stage a Project of Support should concentrate on establishing positive working relationships. This is the foundation for the development of a CLMS later on.

When Working with Implementing Agencies

2. In Boca Chica, IDEFA was enlisted to execute the AP. IDEFA was one of the first organizations to address the problem of CSEC in the DR and had a strong family therapy component. Nonetheless, its lack of field presence and contacts complicated the identification of beneficiary children and families. Particularly in an AP dealing with CSEC the executing APs needs to have a prior presence in the locality.
3. Frequently the region where a Project plans to implement an AP does not have NGOs with executing capacity. Other NGOs from the capital or provincial centers need to be enlisted. Experience from Constanza and Boca Chica showed that when this is the case at least six months of adaptation, which includes establishing its presence, is required.
4. Initially, the Project could not issue checks and the disbursements for IA were constantly delayed. These financial deferrals, apart from delaying the entire timetable of an AP, sometimes negatively influenced future relations with IAs. Establishing a financial system in which the Project itself (and not regional or international offices) can disburse funds in a timely manner should be seen as a priority as it can have important impacts (negative or positive) with partners.