



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: *Preventing and eliminating child labour in identified hazardous sectors in India (child labour component) - INDUS*

Quick Facts

Countries: India (selected States: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, UT Delhi)

Mid-Term Evaluation: February 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: ILO-IPEC Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section

Evaluation Team: Zenda Ofir (Team Leader), Chaman Lal, Shamshad Khan, John Vijghen

Project Start: 16 February 2004

Project End: 31 December 2008

Project Code: IND/01/P50/USA

Donor: US Department of Labor (USA) US \$40 million

Keywords: Child Labour, Worst forms of child labour

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

On 31 August 2000, the US Department of Labour (USDOL) and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) of the Government of India signed the Joint Statement on Enhanced Indo-US Co-operation on the Elimination of Child Labour, committing both governments to a joint programme of work and technical assistance in the area of child labour. The Joint Statement reiterated the common concern of the two Governments over the problem of the worst forms of child labour and expressed their commitment to combat it through the newly established 'Comprehensive Projects' of the Labour Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC)..

The INDUS Child Labour Project was developed within the framework of the Joint Statement as a sustainable model to complement and build upon existing child labour projects, in particular the district National Child Labour Project (NCLP) and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) Societies. While continuing with the existing components of NCLP and SSA, the Project was designed to address some of the critical gaps and challenges in these major national initiatives through additional components referred to as "NCLP Plus" and "SSA Plus".

In seeking to reach the development objective of 'Contribute to the prevention and elimination of hazardous child labour by enhancing the human, social and physical capacity of target communities and improving compliance with child labour policy and legislation in the target districts', the INDUS project set out the following immediate objectives:

- Children working in selected hazardous occupations in the target districts are identified, in collaboration with communities and other partners;
- Children withdrawn from hazardous work are provided with transitional and pre-vocational education, and social support to prevent relapse;
- Provide adolescents withdrawn from hazardous work with vocational training and alternatives for income generation;
- Increased economic security of families who withdraw their children from hazardous work by encouraging savings and development of alternative livelihoods;
- Access provided for children to quality education to prevent children from entering or re-entering hazardous work;

- Monitoring and tracking takes place of children released from hazardous work to ensure that their situation has improved;
- Public support and momentum created against child labour in the target districts and in favour of educational opportunities;
- Strengthen capacity of national, state, district and local institutions so that they can function as ongoing support for eliminating hazardous child labour;
- Interest in other areas in adopting measures to prevent, remove and provide alternatives for children in hazardous sectors.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The mid-term evaluation was commissioned as a joint evaluation in response to a requirement in the Project Document. It took place after an extensive consultative process on the Terms of Reference and selection of evaluation team members between the major stakeholders, the GOI Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) and the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD DoE), USDOL and ILO-IPEC.

The stated purpose of the evaluation was as follows:

- To assess the design, approach, achievements and progress to date as well as the plans for long-term sustainability of Project benefits;
- To identify strategic lessons and formulate recommendations to strengthen Project implementation and inform relevant local and international stakeholder initiatives;
- To be forward-looking and provide useful information on those elements that can be considered for large-scale implementation or integration with existing initiatives;
- To determine the extent to which INDUS approaches and experiences can inform models for interventions in other countries.

Methodology of evaluation

Various methods were used for data collection, with an emphasis on qualitative methods due to the formative nature of the evaluation.

The methods applied were:

- A study of key documents was used to inform the evaluation team before, during and after the field mission.

- Open-ended face-to-face group meetings were held in each site visited during the field mission
- Limited field observation was done in each of the sites visited during the field mission
- Four state level stakeholder workshops, one per participating state (with the exception of Delhi), were held after each observation visit to the districts in order to collect further information at state level.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Selected findings:

- The Project was generally timely and well conceived as a holistic and integrated approach to Eliminating Child Labour, and has remained relevant to date, using the concept of convergence between multiple actions at multiple levels to address underlying and root causes.
- The project was found to be constantly responsive to stakeholder concerns and new opportunities. Several elements were added as needs and tactics brought these to the fore, including a stronger focus on capacity building, social mobilisation with trade unions and employers, mainstreaming of child labour in other policies and programmes and occupational safety and health. NT Delhi was added as 21st district.
- The important major shift to a sector-area rather than sector-based approach changed the constitution of the target audience to include a significant percentage of children and adolescents from outside the ten hazardous occupations, including from non-hazardous sectors.
- Impressive progress has been made in implementing a complex project requiring a wide array of skills, partnerships, strategies and approaches, and horizontal and vertical coordination across sectors and three levels of governance.
- Although the components are being implemented in line with the initial plan, several will not meet their targets or yield the expected results within the available time, even with the extension until August 2007
- Delays have had a negative effect on Project results and may affect participants' motivation, but have also led to valuable lessons in line with the nature of a pilot project

- Six key factors - external and internal - have had a significant influence on implementation: (i) the quality, commitment and management style of the Project leadership; (ii) the capacities, motivation and processes at field level; (iii) the enabling environment; (iv) the need for convergence; (v) the need for quality assurance; and (vi) the Project design. Several of these had both positive and negative effects, the latter often beyond the control of the Project.
- The vast majority of stakeholders consulted concur that INDUS has had significant achievements to date which will increase over time
- The work in INDUS has had an influence on the development of state action plans, moving stakeholders to look beyond the project to an understanding that child labour is a larger development issue. At national level success has been achieved through the recommendation by the CMC to scale up the vocational training component across the country as part of the NCLP
- Several positive unintended consequences of INDUS were identified but one of concern is that comparisons between NCLP and INDUS have become almost inevitable instead of stakeholders seeing one as complementing the other and providing opportunities for exploratory work.
- In spite of inadequate attention to gender mainstreaming in the Project design, the Project Team has improved this situation by moving beyond disaggregated data.
- INDUS was designed to yield sustainable results and this notion has been expanded during implementation. At least 11 strategies for sustainability have been used but challenges remain.

Withdrawal and enrolment towards rehabilitation

- The withdrawal and enrolment for rehabilitation of a large number of beneficiaries has been a significant achievement.

Beneficiary monitoring and tracking

- The Beneficiary Tracking System and Child Labour Monitoring System have the potential to be important elements in an Elimination of Child Labour (ECL) strategy, but need to be simplified to be practical and in line with the skills of data capturers and community users.

Transitional education

- The transitional education component, the largest INDUS intervention, has made satisfactory progress but initial delays have caused too early mainstreaming of some children.

Vocational training

- The vocational training component is regarded as an asset to INDUS and a good model for scaling up to more districts.

Income generation for families of child and adolescent labourers

- The income generation component has been slow to make progress. Although Self-Help Groups have been formed in most districts, savings are being made as instructed and skills training programmes have been conducted, as far as the Evaluation Team could determine no financial benefits have yet reached the targeted mothers except in a few pockets in Tamil Nadu.

Public education

- The evaluation team found that the implementation of the public education component started late and is slow in showing any visible result.

Social mobilisation

- The social mobilisation component is seen as one of the most successful and has contributed to mobilising parents and other Project stakeholders at community level - although this is certainly not *only* due to Project activities.

Benefit to NCLP and SSA

- With very few exceptions stakeholders agree that INDUS has the potential to add significant value to NCLP and SSA and national efforts at the elimination of child labour, should it be scaled up or integrated with existing initiatives.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. More results and improved quality will be achieved if the Project period is extended by another 7-8 months until early 2008.

For maximum results during remaining implementation, the project and particularly the partners more broadly, should:

2. Find innovative solutions for the fact that the age of children cannot always be determined, and that implementation of interventions strictly according to age grouping may not be feasible.
3. Build more links that can effectively strengthen convergence and build on synergies between different initiatives based on identification of potential weaknesses in the current system.
4. Focus in the remaining time on the following improvements:

With respect to tracking and monitoring

4.1 Initiate immediate strategies to improve the comprehensiveness and credibility of the monitoring data, especially those aspects that are essential for understanding real progress and sound implementation.

With respect to the public education component

4.2 Use the large amount of funds still available for this component in the remaining period to ensure that this component has some impact during the Project lifetime.

4.3 Unless all withdrawn children are accommodated in special Lead Schools, for high retention aim to strengthen *all* formal schools admitting working children under the SSA and INDUS.

With respect to the transitional education component

4.4 Devise an improved mainstreaming model for the transitional education component.

4.5 Find solutions for the demotivation of NGO implementing agencies as well as community workers whose Project expenses are not adequately met.

4.6 Consider flexibility in the payment of stipends even before mainstreaming in special cases where these are justified by the child's welfare.

4.7 Given the near completion of the Project, put untrained teachers through a crash course to enhance their most important capacities.

4.8 Give urgent attention to ensure that the following are improved or completed before the Project ends:

- The critical issue of the low number of stipend payments and delays in their release to mainstreamed children. This situation should be resolved before the Project ends.

- The training of *all* Transitional Education Centre (TEC) instructors and the strengthening of the instructor training component
- The health care services (for example engaging honorary doctors wherever the Primary Health Centre cover is found to be inadequate).
- The strengthening of the Resource Centres as a strategy to prevent children from combining work and education, supported by well designed activities such as after school tuition by TEC instructors.
- The functioning of the Parent-Teacher Associations.
- The strengthening of the pre-vocational education component, including implementation of the life skills component together with more innovative creative work suited to each specific area's traditions and strengths.
- The provision of free school uniforms to all TEC children under existing government schemes, by making suitable budgetary provisions or by forming public-private partnerships.

With respect to the vocational training component

4.9 Take urgent steps to ensure that the vocational training targets are achieved.

4.10 Consider what can still be done to standardise for at least one year training courses that also include literacy, numeracy and social skills. Employers are generally reluctant to accept Project trainee graduates because their training period is too short, the skills learned are less appropriate for what they need to do or they may lack work experience and discipline.

4.11 Focus on overcoming the problem that many self-employed graduates need to start businesses yet struggle to get access to financial institutions or technical/business expertise, by establishing partnerships that facilitate access to micro-finance and financial institutions, and provide technical or business support.

4.12 Devise strategies that can help break training stereotypes affecting girls in all states with careful consideration of the consequences, and appropriate strategies to avoid unintended consequences. Muslim girls need special attention in the post-training support phase.

4.13 Determine and implement strategies to improve the capacities and processes needed to identify marketable skills, especially as skill

demands change over time and adjustments are needed for urban and rural environments.

With respect to the income generation component

4.14 Urgently give the income generation component a much higher profile, investigating why it has not had the desired effect.

4.15 Urgently ensure that Self-Help Groups (SHGs) who have made progress with savings receive the benefits due to them.

4.16 Determine whether those who have to work with the mothers in SHGs have the necessary empathy and skills, including social sensitivity as well as the skills needed to impart business understanding and innovative approaches to income generation.

4.17 Find ways to draw the SHGs closer to the Transitional Education Centres (TECs), for example by helping to prepare mid-day meals or improve the environment and atmosphere in the TECs.

4.18 Focus on improving convergence through negotiating opportunities with all different potential partners, making information available to stakeholders in a systematic manner and ensuring and monitoring implementation.

With respect to the social mobilisation component

4.19 In order to make social mobilisation efforts among communities and parents in the districts more effective and sustainable:

- Engage and support NGOs and other community-based civil society organisations to continue working to assist in mobilisation activities and training, supervising and improving payment to community workers in the long term.
- Use and support agencies experienced in dealing with migrant families and adolescent migrants to conduct social mobilisation among this interest group;
- Allocate significant resources to enable social mobilisation materials in local languages;
- Tailor-make strategies for different target groups and community structures, including in local languages;
- Develop a system to improve the monitoring of this component.

4.20 Provide funding to those districts that have demonstrated their commitment to raising awareness through innovative methods, and encourage other districts to learn from them, for example through exchange visits of district stakeholders to model locations.

4.21 Further encourage, accept and follow up on ideas for collaboration at state and district levels with trade unions and other partners in civil society to campaign for the Elimination of Child Labour (ECL).

4.22 Increasingly emphasise and give incentives for effective public / private partnerships to assist with the implementation of services and facilities that can strengthen ECL.

With respect to knowledge management

4.23 Ensure that documentation, transfer of knowledge, and support that can inform scaling up is done, including a systematically planned and executed exit phase.

For maximum results after the project for sustainability

1. Despite challenges in implementation, *all* the INDUS components – ‘Plus’ and otherwise - have shown enough merit to warrant their consideration for inclusion in national child labour interventions such as the NCLP and SSA.
2. It is imperative that INDUS and the NCLP should be integrated in a manner that ensures that those elements responsible for the successes in INDUS are indeed incorporated into the NCLP, including the ‘soft’ approaches such as more personalised attention to the children and families, critical institutional arrangements such as the SRCs, SPSCs and the direct engagement of the District Collectors, and effective on the ground monitoring.
3. Six of 21 districts are already covered by NCLP. In view of the continuing presence of child labour in sizeable numbers in all these districts, the GOI should consider *at least* bringing the remaining districts also under the NCLP if it is decided not to extend the INDUS Project beyond its current term.
4. For effective elimination of child labour there should not only be a focus on NCLP and SSA. The efforts started by INDUS to mainstream child labour issues across all relevant government policies, legislation and schemes should be continued and capacities built as the master strategy for the permanent elimination of child labour.
5. Focus on capitalising on potential convergence and synergies between policies, programmes and interventions that can enhance the impact on the target groups.

Important lessons learned

1. In spite of solid project conceptualisation and logic, less visible design elements may pose major challenges.
2. Demographic information determining the withdrawal and rehabilitation strategy for ECL target groups should be used immediately to avoid loss of potential beneficiaries.
3. Pilot projects should be allowed substantial freedom to be responsive to stakeholders and to experiment as long as any deviation is well justified, based on evidence and lessons learnt.
4. Given the realities on the ground, the ethical and practical merit for long-term success of a 'sector area' rather than 'sector-based' approach should be recognised and accounted for in project plans and targets.
5. The quality and commitment of people - whether officials, managers, instructors or community workers - are very important factors in the success of ECL interventions.
6. A cascade system of institutional arrangements from national to state to district level work well in creating awareness, understanding and better ownership of child labour as a key development intervention.
7. Carefully constructed monitoring of progress towards targets for withdrawal and rehabilitation should be done to reflect an accurate picture.
8. For reliable information and conclusions on progress and achievements, quantitative data *as well as* qualitative information need to be cross-checked in the field where the action takes place.
9. Beneficiary monitoring systems are essential for reflecting a true picture of the effectiveness of ECL interventions. Yet they should be relatively simple, in line with the skills of those who have to manage and use them, especially where communities have to take ownership of such systems.
10. Ideally systems should monitor the effect of an intervention and efforts at convergence on the whole family, and not only on the individual child or adolescent. This is complicated to implement due to perceptions of interference in household affairs, unless a truly family centred approach is the basis for ECL interventions.
11. A holistic, coherent ECL strategy aimed at sustainable success ideally needs to target the immediate, underlying *and* root causes of child labour.
12. As income generation for families is fundamental to the success of ECL and essential for any sustainable ECL intervention, this component should receive special strategic attention since its design and implementation

requires different skills sets to those of regular development programmes.

13. A vocational training component is in principle an excellent addition to ECL interventions, and should be replicated or scaled up with very careful consideration of systemic hindrances or weaknesses in design and implementation approaches that may affect results.

14. Effective campaigns for social mobilisation are a crucial component in creating an enabling environment for ECL activities.

15. A variety of contextualised and localised methods and tools should be used to engage stakeholders in ECL interventions beyond pockets around Transitional Education Centres.

16. It is a challenge to engage employers effectively in child labour elimination efforts. Awareness raising in this sector has to be accompanied by special strategies based on public-private sector partnerships and even then success may be limited if appropriate incentives are not available.

17. Knowledge management strategies covering as many elements as possible of the 'knowledge management cycle' should be implemented as early as possible in a project lifetime for the sake of sustainability and the development of appropriate models for replication and scaling up.

18. Basing a pilot project on the foundation or framework of an existing intervention has to be done with circumspection, as success may be limited if weaknesses from the old are carried into the new.

19. It is difficult to have an innovative, exploratory and responsive intervention if managers and implementers are held accountable for detailed strategies and clearly stipulated expected targets and outcomes.