



Evaluation Summaries

Combating child labour in Morocco by creating an enabling national environment and developing direct action against the worst forms of child labour in rural areas

Quick Facts

Countries: Morocco

Final Evaluation: July 2008

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: ILO-IPEC's Design,
Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED)

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Project End: July 2008

Project Code: MOR/03/50/USA

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Background & Context

Project Background

In September 2003, the International Labor Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) received funding from the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) (US\$ 2,081,069) to begin a project for the duration of thirty nine months, ending December 2006. The project then underwent two revisions thus increasing its timeline to June 2008 and its budget to (US\$ 2,251,069) The MOL also contributed to this initiative US\$ 600,000 in-kind. IPEC's launching of this project came at an opportune time for the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco (GOM) as it provided support to several policies in which child labour was a common denominator that needed to be addressed. The GOM also created a

new Ministry of Social Development to focus on addressing poverty, an underlying factor of child labour. Other GOM policies include the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA), whereby the Ministry of National Education (MEN) needs to improve its poor education indicators such as a staggering dropout rate and low enrolment rates especially among girls in rural areas.

In the summer of 2003, the Moroccan Parliament reformed the Labour Code to include provisions regarding child labour to bring it into accord with international standards, in particular ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. This was a significant move on the MOL part, demonstrating its keenness to solving the prevalence of child labour in the country. Conversely, it also highlighted the momentous challenges to be considered in regard to the limited capacity of the MOL responsible for enforcement of the Labour Code. For example, its few labour inspectors with limited training and investigative powers; its scarce knowledge base on child labour and types of hazardous work in Morocco; its lack of a monitoring system; and the country's socio-economic challenges such as poverty and a poor educational system. Within this context, the project aimed to offer the MOL the necessary support at a national scale to combat the worst forms of child labour (WFCL), with the involvement of government and civil society organizations.

Scope and Purpose: In light of the project ending 30 June 2008, the following is an independent external final evaluation. The scope

of this evaluation encompasses the project as a whole and thus is an assessment of its overall performance. Moreover, the evaluation is conducted under a constrained timeline, consequently, a small sample of activities are included. Hence, it is beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide an in-depth technical evaluation of the wide span of project activities that were conducted over the project's five year lifespan.

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold. One is to assess whether the project has reached its objectives; second, is to use this experience to gain an understanding of its strengths and shortcomings and find out what works and what doesn't work. Thus, the information can be employed as a learning tool for IPEC, stakeholders and implementing partners (IP) to enhance project performance and to serve as a precedent for future interventions combating the WFCL.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology is qualitative and conducted in a participatory approach. The evaluation instrument includes a matrix developed by the team leader, which represents the evaluation framework and charts the project's key components (design, implementation and achievements, key issues to be addressed and data collection resources.). ILO/ IPEC's evaluation criteria - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability - are cross-cutting themes in the evaluation.

Data collection was initiated by phone conversations with the evaluation clients, the Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section of IPEC (IPEC-DED) and USDOL. Data collection then proceeded to include the following:

- a desk review of the project document, technical progress reports (TPRs) and other relevant literature provided by DED, IPEC office in Rabat and implementing partners in the field;
- field visits: This included a 10-day visit to project sites in Rabat, Gharb and Taroudant;
- Interviews with IPEC Morocco staff, IPs, project's direct and indirect beneficiaries and project partners (government and non-government) and international

partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and ADROS;

- Focus group meetings were held in project sites to solicit information from direct beneficiaries--children prevented or withdrawn from WFCL-- and indirect beneficiaries-- parents, school principals teachers and community members.
- A workshop including National Steering Committee (NSC) representatives and IPs was conducted for participatory data collection.

After completion of the evaluation a final workshop was conducted to present the findings. Relevant comments were incorporated into the final draft of the evaluation report.

Data analysis included employing the four criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and validity) to assess the overall project performance in relation to each of its components; design, implementation, delivery of services and outcomes; and their strengths and weaknesses in reaching project objectives.

Findings of the evaluation highlight project performance in reaching its objectives, achievements and sustainability. Based on these findings, lessons learned and good practices are highlighted and recommendations for future project interventions are presented.

Main Findings & Conclusions

1. Project Design

The project design was an outcome of a participatory workshop involving IPEC, relevant government ministries and civil society groups in Morocco. This included diagnosing the problems of child labour within the context of the social, economic and relevant government and non-government institutions of the country. Consequently, a project framework was developed identifying objectives, outputs and outcomes required in institutionalizing sustainable action for the elimination of the WFCL.

The following are the projects immediate objectives:

1. Awareness-raising at the national level
2. Capacity building of key actors
3. Improving the knowledge base
4. Prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children

5. Creation of a community-based Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS)

The evaluation found that the project design's effectiveness and relevance was a result of its participatory approach incorporating national efforts in identifying necessary outputs and outcomes relevant to the social and economic context of the country. It consisted of a holistic approach in establishing a sustainable institutional apparatus to combat the WFCL (such as capacity building, knowledge base, CLMS, communication strategy). Moreover, it taps on awareness-raising which aims to change social behaviour critical in eliminating child labour. It also incorporates partnership arrangements with government and a wide array of social partners and civil society groups essential to mobilizing synergies for project implementation. Conducting baseline studies in target zones for direct action programs supplies the project with improved information on how to better reach its beneficiaries.

Yet, the project is also a considerable undertaking which requires significant time and human and financial resources that do not seem to have been efficiently considered in the project design. For example, establishing a CLMS lacked the resources to implement this activity effectively.

Implementation Strategy

According to the Project Document, IPEC's Strategic Programme Impact Framework (SPIF) was employed as the implementation strategy; this entails the "theory of change" whereby impact areas of change are achieved by linking immediate objectives to outputs in order to attain the desired outcomes. Based on observations in the field, the project's implementation strategy translates to macro-micro interventions. At the macro level, the focus is on creating an enabling environment for developing long-term sustainable efforts in eliminating the WFCL. At the micro level, the strategy entails interventions at the regional and beneficiary level. These include direct action programmes (DAP), which are pilot projects, and if proven successful in eliminating the WFCL can be replicated in other regions in Morocco. This is demonstrated in the DAPs in Gharb with Regional Academy of Education (AREF), and the introduction of preschool which has been welcomed by communities in Gharb and Taroudant.

1. Delivery of Services/Outputs: Project outputs were identified as those that would converge to achieve the project's immediate

objectives/outcomes. The following lists the immediate objectives which include national and regional level, with the outputs delivered.

1. Awareness-raising at the national level:
 - *communication strategy*
 - *mobilization of Youth through SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media)*
 - *advocacy for educational reform*
2. Improving the knowledge base on child labour with particular emphasis on the WFCL:
 - *conducting studies*
 - *knowledge sharing*
 - *good practices*
3. Capacity building of key actors;
 - *Support to the production of list of hazardous work;*
 - *Support to the creation of a Child Labour Unit (CLU)*
 - *improving MEN and non-formal education materials for rural areas*
 - *establishing a CLMS*
 - *strengthening the NSC*
4. Prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children:
 - *baseline studies*
 - *community development awareness*
 - *educational and non-educational services*
5. Creation of a community-based CLMS:
 - *partnerships*
 - *monitoring tools*
 - *dissemination of the model*

At the national level, IPEC's training strengthened the capacities of the different national project partners particularly the MOL, the MEN and the NSC. As these partners have different expertise, the effectiveness and relevance of their training is demonstrated in the acquisition of skills which allows them to conduct their respective activities with the same format. The evidence suggests that these improvements are sustainable. In regard to IPs, their capacities have been significantly strengthened to oversee project activities which include community mobilization, monitoring, conducting baseline studies, problem analysis, report writing and record keeping of finances.

The evaluation highlighted a few shortcomings. For example; (1) there is lack of a built-in communication mechanism between the NSCs and IPs, as the only evident link is IPEC (with the exception of the MEN and regional education academies under their jurisdiction). Without this

link, up-scaling successful initiatives cannot be effectively achieved. (2) When interviewed, very few of NSC and IPs made any reference to the National Action Plan on Child Welfare (NAPCW), which is the national framework that should be implemented.

2. Targeting: Targeting efforts were twofold: (1) selecting two rural zones to implement direct action programmes; (2) selecting the target group of working children in the WFCL and prevention of children at risk.

Criteria used for selecting these two rural zones included the following:

- High prevalence of child labour.
- High rates of school dropout.
- Ethnic mix: Gharb province is primarily Arabic while Taroudant is mainly Berber.
- Type of agriculture practices: Gharb comprises large irrigated commercial farms while Taroudant has predominantly small, rain-fed subsistence agriculture.
- Socioeconomic characteristics: lower level of poverty in Gharb, and greater degree of social organization in Taroudant.

The project's original target group/beneficiaries were 5,000 children, as a result of two project extensions in 2006 and 2007, the target was increased to 6,100. The project succeeded in reaching 11,542 beneficiaries; thus exceeding its designated target number.

Beneficiaries are reached by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), parents associations, and/or "village monitoring teams" who visit parents of working children to persuade them to enrol their children in the program. School teachers also identify children at risk of dropping out poor school performance, and school children bring their working peers to school and introduce them to the school principal or the NGO guide for non-formal education classes.

The project's success rate in reaching a number of beneficiaries, almost double its target, is very impressive. However, during the evaluation team's visits it was stated by some stakeholders that there may be a significant number of children under 15 years old, the legal working age, enrolled in the project who are not completely withdrawn from working particularly in farming. In addition, IPs are not effectively reaching vulnerable children,

especially boys, 14 years old and up, who are migrant workers mostly working on farms. The project has given some of these children protective work gear, yet, the issue of how many hours they work per day, any hazards they may be exposed to and whether they are receiving at least a minimum wage which they are entitled under Morocco's Labour Law Code and Conventions No. 138 & 182. There is a strong conviction among some of the IPs interviewed by the evaluator, that children who are given work, shelter, food and some remuneration are fortunate. Some beneficiaries, once they complete their program such as remedial education, are often unable to enrol in vocational training and then migrate to larger cities without any adult supervision. These children are also at high risk of being involved in the WFCL especially in prostitution and trafficking. While it is beyond the project's capacity or scope to follow-up beneficiaries after they graduate from the project, this phenomenon highlights constraints of such a project within the wider social and economic context of the country.

3. Monitoring: IPEC formed and trained forty one village monitoring teams. Monitoring is a collaborative effort made up of the village monitoring team, school teachers, NGOs, CBOs and parents associations. A CLMS was not implemented under this objective due to the lack of human resources to oversee this activity. Institutionalizing a national monitoring system requires considerable effort as it is a nationwide matter, i.e. from the central ministerial level down to the school level.

4. Project Management: IPEC is managed by a team of four: a project manager, two project assistants (one for each province), and an administrative assistant. The project management team oversees the wide array of project activities implemented at the national and regional level. Project management gets support from IPEC HQ, on the other hand, it is often hindered by a long bureaucratic paper trail which includes getting approval from HQ and the Regional Office in Algiers. This was a major issue discussed in the mid-term evaluation. The project team expressed that not much has changed since then.

5. Partnerships: The project's partners include the MOL, who is a principal partner. It has been responsive to IPEC's advocacy to the reform of several legislative texts. Other partners at the national level include the NSC and the MEN. The

NSC consists of government and non-government representatives (such as the Moroccan League for Child Protection, LMPE, and the National Observatory of Children's Rights, ONDE) all of which demonstrates the diversity of partnerships in combating child labour and the WFCP to be carried out in a multi-dimensional approach. Partnership with the MEN has been very effective in educational reforms to provide non-formal education classes and remedial education classes in rural areas.

At the regional level, IPEC is also in partnership with the Office for Vocational Training (OFFPT) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), who provide Vocational Training (VT) services for withdrawn children especially in Taroudant; while AREF has also been a major partner in Gharb. IPEC has also implemented activities with several international partners, the two most important in terms of ongoing activities include Adros and UNICEF. For example, they have been productive in conducting awareness-raising campaigns and enhancing the knowledge base by carrying out joint research studies.

Conclusion/Achievements

The project has made significant contributions in eliminating the WFCL in Morocco. Its effectiveness and efficiency is demonstrated in its comprehensive approach which has laid a strong foundation in Morocco for eliminating the WFCL. At a national level, this includes capacity building and institutionalizing policies and programs. A significant catalyst for the project's success in achieving its major objective of creating an enabling environment for eliminating the WFCL, is the presence of government and social partners such as INQAD, LMPE, ONDE who for a significant period have been active in children's protection programmes. For example, IPEC has cooperated with ONDE in promoting pre-schools and to conduct mobilization activities for civil society at the national level.

At the regional level, its second major objective, implementing DAPs to prevent and withdraw children from the WFCL, has been achieved by effective response to community development needs. This was carried out in spite of challenging factors such as poverty and poor social services in rural areas, particularly when it comes to educational resources, and the lack of local community organizations and weak institutional capacities. The project nonetheless succeeded in

providing appropriate technical assistance and ongoing support that has enabled these IPs to oversee the DAPs. As a result, it has reached 11,542 children and provided them and their communities with an array of educational and development projects, mobilized communities to work together and the establishment of pre-schools which has gained parents support. (More specific achievements are listed in the report.)

Sustainability: At the national level, the evaluation ascertained that an enabling environment has been established and is sustainable. The NSC institutional capacity is prepared to take ownership of the project. Yet, provision of financial resources from the MOL, i.e., a budget for overseeing the implementation of the NAPCW will be a critical requisite.

At the regional level, IPs have demonstrated that they can implement project programs at the village level. Implementing agencies such as smaller NGOs and CBOs, on the other hand, continue to need capacity building as this is evident in their inability to continue some services that have completed their project support. Yet, it is the lack of financial resources that will affect their programs unfavourably. NGOs, CBOs and parents throughout the evaluation complained of a lack of funds and inability to sustain project activities without additional project financing. The reality is that these villages are extremely poor and have become more so in the last few years and their access to funding is limited in the context of a poor country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations have a twofold purpose: 1) to highlight areas where project activities can be strengthened by national actors and IPEC Morocco; and 2) to offer recommendations that can contribute to future projects on eliminating the WFCL; these two objectives are not mutually exclusive. Recommendations for national actors and IPEC Morocco include the following:

1. A CLMS should be implemented with a specified budget, staff and technical support to oversee its implementation. Any future child labour project should support the CLU to pilot test and establish a CLMS.

2. IPEC should advocate that the MOL require employers to maintain a file on children between 15-18 years old, which includes a copy of their birth certificate or identification card as proof of their date of birth. The newly appointed MOL focal points in the provinces could oversee this activity.
 3. The CLU will require additional capacity building as it is newly developed and has not had much experience.
 4. Future IPEC donor funded projects should consider including income generating activities as a major project component. This should entail the necessary funds to attain human and financial resources to implement this activity effectively and ensure its success. Providing parents with alternative financial means is essential.
 5. Vocational training for girls should be considered as a possible income-generating activity. Future projects should consider conducting a market study identifying market demands that girls' VT may supply and practical skills that the beneficiaries can acquire.
 6. Providing school supplies is a very effective means to encourage parents to send their children to school; however, future IPEC projects in Morocco should consider advocating with the MEN to exempt rural children from the requirement to wear a school uniform or alternatively, to simplify the school uniform so as not to burden parents with more school costs which lead them to withdrawing and/or not sending their children to school.
 7. Awareness-raising at the regional level should emphasize that child labour laws do not allow children of less than 15 years to work and that there is no flexibility to this law. Labour inspectors could also reinforce this mandate during their inspections.
- Recommendations for future projects on eliminating the WFCL
8. An effective implementation strategy is most effective when it includes a dual strategy -- upstream-downstream. Consequently, mechanisms can be instituted to include a flow of communication and participation from the national to the local level and vice-versa. Downstream includes institutionalizing programs and policies descending down the administrative hierarchy, i.e. from relevant government institutions to the school level. Upward strategy entails establishing mechanisms at the local level to transmit lessons learned and good practices from local initiatives so that they flow upward where they can be up-scaled. Yet, this strategy should allow flexibility in implementation, especially so that initiatives on all levels can be adaptable to the geographic, social and economic diversity in Morocco, or in similar countries.
 9. Incorporating a strategy of partnerships in project design is an effective means to establish a wide network for project implementation at the national, regional and community level, capacity building, and ultimately mainstream acceptance of the necessity for combating child labour. Hence, this project's design can be used as a model in other project interventions.
 10. The partnership between the MEN-Secretariat for Non-Formal Education (SNFE) and IPEC, where educational reforms were made to accommodate children's livelihoods in agricultural zones by changing the school schedule and introducing non-formal education services to school dropouts and children who have never attended school, provides a second chance opportunity for these children. This is a pragmatic strategy to include in child labour projects in agricultural regions in any developing country.
 11. The US Trade Agreement was a catalyst in the GOM's commitment to taking a more forceful role in combating the WFCL. Hence, this could be a model in which projects with the support of donor governments, such as the EU, can include in their trade agreements in countries where child labour is high.