

**THE TACKLE PROJECT  
(TACKLING CHILD LABOUR THROUGH EDUCATION)**

**A brief  
June 2011**

## **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

In 2008 the European Commission, the ACP Secretariat and the ILO joined in establishing a four-year project designed to fight child labour through education related intervention and policies. The project was named *Tackling Child Labour through Education* (TACKLE). It has a total budget of €16.1 million, with €14.7 million provided by the European Community (EC) and €1.4 million by the ILO. TACKLE's operations are spread across 11 developing countries, namely, Angola, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zambia in Africa; Papua New Guinea and Fiji in the Pacific; and Guyana and Jamaica in the Caribbean.

The TACKLE project is grounded in the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union (EU) and African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries which reaffirmed commitment to the internationally recognized core labour standards, as defined by ILO Conventions, including the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. While education should be regarded as a critical human right and a way to move out of poverty, very often child labour acts a major barrier to partaking in and benefitting from education. Given that under the MDGs the international community is committed to ensure that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course in primary schooling, children who remain outside of the education system, including those in child labour, have to be enabled through focussed interventions. The key objectives of the project, therefore, are:

- to help reduce poverty by providing access to basic education and skills training for disadvantaged children and youth; and
- to strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities in the formulation, implementation and enforcement of policies to tackle child labour in coordination with social partners and civil society.

Project activities seek to achieve the twin key objectives through interventions that:

- strengthen legal frameworks on child labour and education;
- strengthen institutional capacity to formulate and implement child labour strategies;
- implement targeted actions to combat child labour; and
- improve advocacy and dissemination of good practices to enhance the knowledge base and reinforce networks on child labour and education.

## **PROJECT STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES**

In implementing its interventions, the primary focus of the project activities has been on the elimination of child labour by providing access to education, formal and non-formal, to children of vulnerable households. Towards this goal, TACKLE has fostered partnership

protocols between two critical national partners, namely, the Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Education in all the project countries, and has brought together other important government agencies, such as ministries of social welfare, and gender to become actively engaged in interventions to combat child labour. In addition, project activities have been implemented with the support of key national institutions such as labour inspectorates, teachers unions, bureaus of statistics, national planning departments, security forces, as well as with employers' and workers' organisations.

On a broad policy plank, the project has strived to put child labour on the map for the first time in some countries where the issue was hitherto not regarded as particularly important, while in the other more mature environments the goal has been to mainstream child labour in national development programmes and plans. Project activities have thus emphasized policy establishment (where non-existent) and strengthening (where existing) at the national level, but have also accorded importance to institutional capacity building through training and research for sustainability of project achievements. Ultimate project beneficiaries are the working children, especially those found working in hazardous work. In order to ensure success in delivery of services to intended beneficiaries, the project works through and with parents, teachers, community/religious leaders and other key actors. Moreover, support to activities on awareness raising, networking and knowledge generating on all forms of child labour are provided by the project. A critical, and extremely valuable, element of the project is its contribution to national reconciliation that has targeted children caught in armed conflict (South Sudan, Sierra Leone) and support to the economic and social reintegration of the former child soldiers.

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

In 2010, an independent mid-term review assessed the project and its outputs thus far. It confirmed the validity of the project approach and spelled out a number of recommendations in the areas of monitoring, communication and capacity building. Based on the review a validation workshop was organized by the EC in collaboration with the ACP secretariat in May 2011. Key project partners from most of the participating countries attended.

Workshop participants lauded the project for its achievements and stressed its overall relevance to national efforts in the area of child labour elimination. It was decided to (i) extend the project till late 2013; (ii) intensify communication on and dissemination of good practices between and beyond project countries; (iii) design further innovative action programmes to withdraw children from work and prevent them from taking it up; (iv) mainstream child labour in national development policies; (v) give special attention to Angola, North and South Sudan and Sierra Leone; and (iv) prepare a sustainability and exit strategy.

To conclude, as a result of TACKLE's first three years, significant demonstrated benefits to the participating project countries have been recorded, and great potential exists in continuity, expansion and reinforcing of project activities to tackle the global child labour problem through education in order to help reach the world community's goal of the elimination of all worst forms of child labour by 2016.

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