International Labour Organization

INDEPENDENT FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Accelerating action for the elimination of child labour in supply chains in africa **(ACCEL Africa)** Phase 1

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The **ACCEL Africa** (Phase 1) project aimed to accelerate action for the elimination of child labour through a supply chain approach focusing on the gold, cacao, cotton, tea, and coffee sectors, where all actors across the supply chain were engaged.

DURATION

November **2018 – 2023**

DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

1. Public policy and good governance
2. Empowerment and representation
3. Partnership and knowledge sharing among global supply chain actors working in Africa

THE FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

The evaluation aimed to take stock of project's achievements and challenges, ensure accountability, and promote learning at the project, organization and national levels.

Desk research

Stakeholder interviews (45)

Focus group discussions (FGDs) in all project countries (13).

The interviews and FGDs aimed to understand how targeted communities benefitted from the project and the extent to which they became capable of addressing the root causes of child labour: The evaluation applied the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation (2020), and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Norms and Standards in the UN System. The evaluation team also ensured that the voices of female stakeholders and beneficiaries were included in the study.

MAIN FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

- Tackled the root causes of child labour, addressing the needs of beneficiaries and stakeholders effectively.
- Developed through a consultative process, promoting social dialogue.
- Aligned with national priorities and supported the objectives of the **ILO, African Union, EAC, and ECOWAS**.
- Adapted swiftly to COVID-19 lockdowns and health measures.

EXAMPLES:

- In **Uganda** and **Malawi**, beneficiaries from VSLA and business groups found the project's income-generating proposals highly relevant to reducing poverty and reliance on child labour.
- In **Nigeria**, youth received skills training and start-up kits to support their businesses and reduce child labour's impact on education.
- In **Egypt**, the project enhanced the Dual Education model to address child labour.

Inspiration for improvement

- **The supply chain approach needed a more comprehensive view, involving actors at all levels for greater project relevance.** Example: In **Côte d'Ivoire**, despite laws on cacao pricing, truck drivers often negotiated lower prices, but these key actors were not included in the project.
- **Environmental transition aspects were not integrated into the project design.**

COHERENCE

- The project outcomes were coherent, each reinforcing the others, ensuring sustainability of interventions and results.
- Strong partnerships were formed, avoiding duplication with other UN agencies and international organizations.

VALIDITY OF DESIGN

Built on **3 pillars** of action with standalone outputs for a holistic approach.

Conducted an inception phase to consult stakeholders and align objectives.

Developed six tailored theories of change within the main **M&E** framework.

Promoted an integrated strategy on **Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work**, ensuring logic, coherence, and sustainability.

EFFECTIVENESS **Most outputs met or exceeded targets across project outcomes.**

OUTCOME 1:

Nigeria surpassed targets, doubling policies and mechanisms to address child labour, with gender-sensitive roadmaps and validated child labour policies. **Egypt** also exceeded targets in mainstreaming child labour issues into policies.

OUTCOME 2 :

Côte d'Ivoire exceeded its target for cooperative access but underperformed in reducing household action against child labour. **Uganda** and Egypt significantly exceeded targets in improving worker access to services and household action.

OUTCOME 3:

Knowledge-sharing events fostered mutual understanding, stakeholder engagement, and partnership building. A 2023 regional conference highlighted innovative solutions across countries.

Progress varied across the six project countries due to unique challenges such as COVID-19, climate events, socio-economic conditions, and differing levels of involvement.

EFFICIENCY

- Adequate financial and human resources supported project activities and results.
- Valued management and governance mechanisms were in place.
- M&E framework and indicators enabled monitoring across six countries and activities.
- Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting (DBMR) provided a clear view of activities and beneficiaries.

Inspiration for improvement

- **More local-level resources, particularly human, were needed to fully implement activities.**
- **Some countries faced time constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **Certain M&E indicators and tools required refinement for clearer measurement.**

IMPACT

- Decreases in child labour were observed, primarily through increased school attendance in intervention areas.

"People used to go to the farm with the kids and have them carry loads. We no longer see these things in our community, kids go to school"

Evaluation participant
(anonymised for evaluation purposes)

- In **Malawi**, rising child enrolment led to overcrowded classrooms.
- Parents increasingly value education, reflecting a hopeful vision for their children's future.
- Further impact is possible as private sector support for child labour elimination grows.
- Lacked sufficient baseline data in supply chains to fully assess the project's impact.
- The impact on women's empowerment was limited.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Fostered ownership and determination, especially in communities at the bottom of the supply chain.
- Empowered communities with a better understanding of child labour and tools to address it independently.
- Leveraged existing government structures that continue beyond the project.
- Introduced or reinforced laws and policies on child labour.
- Established dialogue platforms for ongoing community collaboration.
- Sustainability may be at risk due to limited resources, some stakeholders' capacity to maintain results independently, and potential natural disasters.

EXAMPLES:

The government of **Uganda** acknowledges its responsibility to persist in eradicating child labour, with or without the project's direct support.

The trade union in **Cote d'Ivoire** emphasises its proficiency and abundant human resources, citing proven experience in implementing projects against child labour.

In **Malawi**, youth empowerment through ACCEL Africa has led to job creation for other young people in the community.

LESSONS LEARNED

GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

The project needed a stronger gender approach in its design and better integration of gender considerations during implementation.

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT:

Involving private sector intermediaries, who influence product pricing, would have enhanced the project's impact alongside its community focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Promote the **exchange of experiences and good practices** between project countries, for both stakeholders and ILO project teams, including through an integrated mechanism to facilitate information flows.

2 Improve **gender mainstreaming** within the project design by measuring gender equality in more detail in the different outputs, as well as further empowering women to play transformative roles in the fight against child labour.

3 Ensure that the **supply chain approach** aims to involve all relevant supply chain actors at local, national and global levels by better integrating private sector intermediaries and multinational companies.

4 Continue active **collaboration with other (UN) agencies** to ensure a more holistic approach that goes beyond just a labour-based mandate, which can help ensure greater impact on beneficiary populations.

5 Ensure that national-level laws and regulations are complemented by **implementation guidance** at the level of local administration.

6 Improve **identification and monitoring** of the incidence of child labour and its worst forms in supply chains and the impact of measures to eradicate them.

GOOD PRACTICES

USE OF EXISTING ILO TOOLS:

Leveraging **Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development programme (WIND)**: training programme on safety, health and working conditions in agriculture and **SCREAM: Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media** tools promoted efficiency and effectiveness, enabling upscaling and replication by training local and national actors.

OVERARCHING THEORY OF CHANGE:

All six countries followed the same three pillars of action, adapting them locally while allowing regional **ILO** management to monitor and manage effectively.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET):

VET empowered young beneficiaries to pursue professions of interest, motivating them and raising parental awareness about alternatives to child labour.

This project was possible thanks to the financial and technical support of our Development Partner

Ministry of Foreign Affairs