



IPEC

Briefing Note



International
Labour
Organization

ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

Promoting Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) through an Integrated Area-Based Approach (IABA)

ILO-IPEC has not implemented many projects with the specific aim of creating Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs), but has extensive experience in applying IABA, which in many cases has resulted in situations where the communities have declared themselves CLFZ.

The text below attempts to capture some of this experience, formulated where appropriate as policy or practice advice.

There are many sources for this issue. The ones with the most thorough information are:

- ▶ IPEC: *Emerging good practices from the integrated area based approach in Uganda*. Kampala, ILO, 2012.¹
- ▶ IPEC: Thuy, P.: *Integrated area-based approach for child labour free zones: A review of ILO-IPEC experiences in Brazil, India, Tanzania, and Uganda*. Geneva, ILO, 2010, not published.
- ▶ IPEC: *Emerging good practices from the integrated area based approach in Malawi*. Lilongwe, ILO, 2013. Forthcoming.

ILO-IPEC interventions aim at assisting the Government and partners to implement policy and plans to eliminate CL, and thus lay the foundations for the creation of CLFZs. The main strategy used is the Integrated Area Based Approach (IABA) in localized geographical areas. The IABA aims to create good-practice models that lay the ground for the establishment of child-labour free zones that can be scaled-up throughout the country.

The IABA comprises an integrated set of interventions that simultaneously addresses all the interlinked and systemic issues that perpetuate child labour in a particular area. The Integrated Area Based Approach (IABA) is a departure from other piecemeal approaches



A CCLC meeting in Rakai district, in Uganda, as part of the Uganda SNAP project.

of addressing child labour. It is a strategy in which eliminating child labour should be approached and managed **as a process integrated in the country's approach to poverty elimination (and its Decent Work (and its Decent Work Country Programme)).**²

The IABA approach as seen by ILO-IPEC is multi-pronged in that it aims at:

- ▶ reaching out to all children in or at risk of child labour;
- ▶ empowering local communities and improving families' and communities' livelihoods;
- ▶ delivering ILO support services to child labourers and families as "One";
- ▶ making a well defined geographical or administrative area (called herewith zone) "child labour free"; and thereby facilitating replication and scaling up of child labour free zones (CLFZ).

² The issue of whether eliminating child labour should be approached and managed as a standalone issue or as a process integrated in the country's approach to poverty elimination continues to be a major question for debate in India (see the joint final evaluation of the IPEC's Project "Preventing and eliminating child labour in identified hazardous sectors (INDUS), 17 September 2009, p. 68, not published.

¹ Available at: www.ilo.org/iphec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_20675.

- » A zone could be a state or a district or a municipality or even a village. For instance, in a federal republic with decentralised institutions like Brazil, one of the major strategic priorities is to bring national-level commitment to bear on action to tackle child labour at the state and municipal levels. The State of Bahia, with the support of the federal Government, is aiming to set a pioneering example by creating a model of a “Child labour-free State”³ that can be replicated throughout the country.

How is it different from other approaches?

The IAB approach differs from a sector-based approach which revolves around the ‘harsh reality’ of child labour, targeting only groups of WFCL or a specific sector or commodity and relying mainly on immediate withdrawal and short term rehabilitation measures. It also differs from an area-based approach which focuses solely on universal compulsory education for all children and thus aims at creating CLFZs only from a rights-based perspective. The IAB approach offers a coherent strategy for addressing all forms of child labour in a well defined target zone. **It eliminates child labour and creates CLFZs from three perspectives: labour-based; rights-based; community livelihoods and decent work perspectives. “It allows close integration of various interventions aimed at prevention, removal and rehabilitation, and protection of young workers with those aimed at empowering vulnerable families and local communities”.**⁴

It thus fits into the ILO-IPEC tradition of applying strategies that make sense both from a social and economic development perspective as well as a human rights perspective, gaining support from and cooperating with people from both camps.

The criteria used to define an Integrated Area Based (IAB) approach are:

- » **An area** in which all worst forms of child labour are prevalent may be the entry point, or one in which one type of worst forms of child labour or child labour in one sector is predominant in a well defined geographical area.
- » **An area** in which child labour and families and to a

³ See the project document of the IPEC’s project “Support to national efforts towards a Child labour-free State, Bahia, Brazil”. Geneva, ILO, 2008, not published.

⁴ IPEC: Tabatabai, H.: *Draft Guide for the preparation of national child labour policies and action plans*, Geneva, ILO, 2009, not published.

larger extent the community are treated as ONE entity and ONE vulnerable target group for assistance and support.

- » **An area** where pilot direct actions, tools and methodologies are already successfully tested for demonstration effects and effectively disseminated for use.
- » **An area** where all or most activities to eliminate child labour are jointly planned and implemented in a well coordinated manner within a decent work country or state programme.
- » **An area** where all interventions, tools and techniques can be delivered as ONE integrated package to improve the livelihoods and the economic and social empowerment of child labourers, families and neighbourhoods (convergence – see below)
- » **An area** where child labour issues are mainstreamed into the major national social programmes and dealt with within the MDG framework and UNDAF process as ONE integrated programme.
- » **An area** where ONE public-private dialogue forum is in place to build alliances for consultation and collaboration among social partners, government and non government agencies and to coordinate their various interventions.
- » **An area** where a decentralisation process is effective at local levels and where public and private funds are converged for the elimination of child labour.

What we do not want anymore

In sector based and former strategies of the area based approaches, eliminating child labour has been approached and managed as a standalone issue either from a labour-based perspective or/and from a rights-based perspective but not fully related to income and social wage poverty issues (at family, community and country levels) as a major root cause of child labour.

In sector based approaches, or approaches which are area based but in which beneficiaries are selected based on one or more pre-defined WFCLs, there is always a risk for **displacement** – that children move from one form of child labour but continue working, sometimes even in worst forms, or where children removed from WFCL are replaced by others.

Example of new IABA

In Uganda, the IABA was implemented at national, district and community level. We worked in 3 defined districts, and project interventions strengthened community capacity to manage risk and address the needs of its most vulnerable members, enhanced local governments’ capacity for social service provision and coordination and created an enabling environment at the district level for combating child labour through awareness raising, training, as well as support for child labour bylaws and their enforcement.

Therefore the IABA integrates the labour perspective and the rights-based perspective and relates them to poverty issues at family, community AND country levels – as a major root cause of CL.

Some definitions

Integration

Integration is a method of networking in order to improve the use of resources, to provide effective services and to reduce costs. The term ‘integration’ in this document refers to the approach to the elimination of child labour in which services and programmes are provided in a comprehensive and interwoven manner, with the aim of ensuring prevention, withdrawal and integration of children. Two levels of integration are important in this respect: integration within the organization implementing a particular child labour project (internal integration), and integration across different stakeholders and sectors.

A Child Labour Free Zone

A child labour free zone is an area where child labour used to exist but no longer does, and all children up to the minimum age for entry into employment are in school and those under 18 are either in continued education or vocational training or in decent youth employment or unemployed. The “zone” refers to a well defined geographical area or administrative area. Within the MV Foundation⁵ context, zones are (geographical) areas where all children are systematically withdrawn from work and (re)integrated into formal, full-time schools. In India, BBA (Save the Childhood Movement) has also promoted the Bal Mitra Gram (“child friendly village”) from the same perspective, with a strong emphasis on social mobilization of the children themselves. A zone could be a state, or a district or even a village.⁶ A Child Labour Free Zone approach entails a sustained engagement with the community to change attitudes and norms concerning child labour and to empower the community to eliminate child labour. CLFZs can exist even in very poor communities if family poverty is to some extent offset by access to services, solidarity within the community, and strong social mobilization.

Convergence

Convergence is used to describe a situation in which all social and educational services, both public and private, are delivered as one with a focus on the community and the families within the community most in need.

⁵ MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh India implements an Area Based Approach for Child Labour and is a pioneer of the concept of “child labour free zones”.

⁶ IPEC: Thuy, Ph.: *Integrated area-based approach for child labour free zones: A review of ILO-IPEC experiences in Brazil, India, Tanzania, and Uganda*. Geneva, ILO, 2010, not published.

The IABA promotes a programme of interventions based on the involvement of local communities and dialogue and cooperation among government entities, employers’ and workers’ organizations and civil society organizations. These stakeholders are supported in identifying the root causes of child labour, promoting alternatives and changes in supply chains through policy coherence, institutional development and community level interventions. This approach allows close integration of various interventions aimed at prevention, removal and rehabilitation of child labourers, and protection of young workers with those aimed at empowering vulnerable families and local communities. This is called the convergence model which supports the creation of Child Labour Free Zones through joint effort of government entities, Social Partners and civil society organizations.

The IABA requires a robust and sustainable monitoring system which is self-sustaining, creates empowerment in the communities and accountability in duty bearers where it is implemented.

Child Labour Monitoring System

Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) is a process of ensuring that as a result of regular and repeated direct observation, children are safe from child labour. It is the active process that ensures that such observation is put in place and is coordinated in an appropriate manner. It is a broad and dynamic concept that covers homes, schools, communities, and workplaces and any environment in which children are likely to be present. CLMS allows organizations and public authorities to keep track of beneficiaries and to measure the impact of their interventions and make adjustments accordingly.



A meeting of the Community Child Labour Committee, in Lilongwe area 23, as part of the Malawi SNAP project support to the community-based CLMS.

Example of CLM in Malawi

In Malawi for example, the Community based Child Labour Monitoring System has been introduced in Kasungu, Mulanje and Lilongwe districts. The model is based on the use of community based organizations (e.g CCLCs) to conduct surveillance and identification of working children and children at-risk in the communities and transfer them on to District Child Labour Committees (DCLCs) for analysis and referral to competent services. Thus the IABA has empowered the communities to take responsibility of monitoring the child labour situation in the zone, speak on behalf of the children to make the duty bearers accountable for achieving good governance.

According to IPEC⁷ a child labour monitoring system is the identification, referral, protection, and prevention of child labour through the development of a coordinated multi-sectoral monitoring and referral process that aims to cover all children living in a given geographical area, not just those that are direct beneficiaries of a project.

Even when initiated by a project, CLM is a system designed to extend beyond it to sustain gains made in elimination of child labour. A CLMS supports the labour inspectorate and/or local government in improving compliance in the informal and rural economy in order to identify, remove, refer and follow up children at risk of child labour and to report the case to the authorities for further action.

The community-based CLMS in Mulanje, Kasungu and Lilongwe districts of Malawi carries out the following functions with active support from the communities:

- ▶ Identifies children in child labour or at-risk of child labour;
- ▶ Withdraw and protect them, e.g: refer them to appropriate services (such as education, vocational skills training or appropriate and decent work) with involvement of District Child Labour Committees,
- ▶ support in awareness and enforcement of by-laws through traditional authorities and plans of action against child labour,
- ▶ supports labour inspection system and prosecution of the perpetrators with law enforcement agencies e.g labour inspection system;
- ▶ Regularly monitor the situation of child labour to prevent children from entering in child labour.

a) identification, the project will train monitors from the community who will work in conjunction with agricultural extension workers and labour inspectors throughout and beyond the life of the project to observe regularly places where children are likely to be found working in order identify children in or at risk of child labour by virtue either of their age or the hazardous nature of the work that they are doing or the conditions in which they are working.

b) removal, when a child is found working, the monitors will advise the employer (if any) as to the legal and health risks, and take appropriate steps to separate the child from danger (or, as the case may be, non-

hazardous child labour) if necessary.

c) referral, the DCLC or child protection committee fills out a form on the child and refers her/him to a school or service as appropriate.

d) reaction, the case is reported to the authorities for further action (Labour Inspectorate/District Labour officer, police, Traditional Authority etc as appropriate)

e) follow-up, the case is followed up periodically to ensure that the child is no longer working and s/he is benefiting from the school or service.

Children are enrolled directly in formal education, and where needed, they benefit from non-formal education as well. In Malawi for example, children are provided with complementary basic education in Multi-Purpose Learning Centres before being mainstreamed in formal government schools.

What about 14/15 to 17 year olds (or 14-17 year olds in countries which have ratified C138 with an initial age of 14 and in which the national legislation states 14 as the minimum age for admission to employment)?

CLM does include the 14/15 – 17 age group. **In Malawi for example, children who are 14/15-17 years old benefit from the structures of the service outlets which provide vocational skills training and promote youth employment opportunities and access to decent work.** Therefore the CLM applies to children 15-17 years old with the steps above but modified as follows:

- ▶ For youth that are working, their working conditions must be monitored. If they perform hazardous work or are at risk in other ways, there is a situation of child labour.
- ▶ For youth found in these conditions, there are three alternatives:
 - Referral to continued education (in most cases vocational or skills training)
 - Transfer – if possible within the workplace – to a safe work station, task, or process
 - Protection, by managing the hazard through technological change, protective equipment, reducing the number of working hours, improving the working conditions, and training both of the young worker and her supervisor.

In all these cases, follow-up is still crucial to ensure that the hazardous work situation is not re-created.

⁷ IPEC: *Training Manual Workshop 1: The Child Labour Monitoring National Orientation Workshop Handouts*. Geneva, ILO, 2004. Available at: www.ilo.org/ippec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_9953.