



Tool kit for development and implementation of
National Action Plans (NAPs)
on Child Labour



National Ownership

Tool C.1

Briefing Note

Promoting National Ownership and Commitment

It is generally agreed that national¹ ownership is essential to the successful formulation and implementation of a NAP on child labour. National ownership is essentially the driving force behind any NAP and without it, sustainable impact is unlikely to materialise.

How to generate national ownership of a NAP depends on a number of factors, which this tool attempt to distil, but users must bear in mind that not all factors are relevant or carry equal weight in different contexts. Therefore, the most critical aspect of facilitating the formulation and implementation of a nationally owned NAP is to know your context, listen to partners and design a process that takes into account the needs and interests of key stakeholders.

Ensuring national ownership of a NAP starts well before the NAP is even formulated. Often, seeds for a NAP may be planted months, or even years, before the formation process starts and therefore, figuring out the timing is essential. “The right process at the right time” is the rule of thumb – and this also includes acknowledging when the time is not right. Even the most well designed process, leading to a beautifully presented NAP, will have little impact if partners are not ready for it and they think that it was forced upon them – it will then become the ILO’s (or another organisation’s) NAP, not theirs!

When deciding on whether the time is right, a number of issues could play a role – some of them not necessarily related to child labour in any way. This may include, for example, national parliamentary election cycles, the presence of champions among policy makers etc. Also, the skills and

¹ In this tool, national ownership refers to the sense of owning and responsibility for delivering what is defined in a NAP by all relevant stakeholders. Some of these stakeholders may not, in fact, operate at national level. Very likely in fact, many of the key stakeholders would work at

knowledge of partner agency staff may need to be considered. If partners think that child labour is not important or that they are not qualified to address it, capacity development may be required, before the time is right.

When the time is right, consultations must start as in earnest. Initially, informal consultations with tripartite and other key partners may be needed, but the sooner formal consultations start, the higher the likelihood that a relevant NAP will be put in place and implemented effectively. Delays tend to dampen enthusiasm.

Whether the consultations process should be a bottom-up or a more top-centred process depends on a range of factors: political culture and bureaucratic tradition, level of decentralisation, capacity at local levels (including of civil society organisations) and the expectations of stakeholders who are likely to contribute to the implementation of the NAP. The key factor here is to ensure that all those, who will eventually contribute to the implementation of the NAP, are involved in the process. If they are not involved, one cannot expect that they consider the NAP their responsibility.

Bottom-up processes tend to move slower than top-centred process and hence, time constraints alone may lead national key stakeholders to opt for a top-centred NAP formulation process. This is perfectly legitimate, but it is recommended that the involvement/roll-out to local government levels need to be considered from day one as the NAP implementation generally is dependent on local government levels. Hence, orientation and planning at local level is required, either as part of the design process or during the very early stages of implementation of the NAP.

Planning at local level must be adjusted to fit into existing planning cycles, organisational mandates etc. Again, a NAP that is “superimposed” on partners is unlikely to be considered their responsibility. A NAP that is

regional, local and community level. It is of course essential to be aware that in order to generate true national ownership, local level stakeholders must also be involved, depending on the context.

mainstreamed into partners' ongoing programmes, budgets, plans and activities on the other hand, is more likely to be implemented effectively.

All of this takes time! It is not uncommon for NAP formulation processes to become substantially delayed along the way and a one to two year timeframe for the development of a NAP is not uncommon.

Finally, an important note on the ILO's role in formulation of NAPs: Formulation and implementation of a NAP must be driven by national (tripartite) partners – ILO's role is to support and facilitate the process, not to lead it. Hence, national oversight (by the National Steering Committee or equivalent) is critical as is a sustained dialogue all the way through. This will include a substantial level of continued informal dialogue with key partners through-out the formulation process as well as respecting partners' interests and aspirations, even when they don't match the ideal scenario. An essential element of the dialogue, however, will always be to ensure that the resulting NAP is in line with C138, C182 and other relevant conventions, recommendations and protocols.

How to use this tool

This tool is meant as guidance for support to national partners to determine, at which points the ILO can come in to support consultations and negotiations that will promote national ownership and commitment

The process varies in countries – so this is not a blue-print step-by-step guide. A specific NAP development plan must be negotiated for each country, but the steps outlined below can help ILO staff to consider the various steps and make sure that none are overlooked or skipped, resulting in no or low commitment to the NAP when it is adopted (and therefore not implemented)

Questions on this tool may be directed to the ILO Country Office. You may also ask your Regional Specialist on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work or ILO FUNDAMENTALS for further advice and ideas.

Further reading

ILO-IPEC (2010): [*Roadmap to make Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic a Child Labour Free Zone. Programming, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide*](#), ILO San Jose.

ILO-IPEC (2013): *Guide for Preparing National Child Labour Policies and Action Plans*, ILO Geneva, unpublished.

ILO-IPEC (2013): [*Implementing the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of Child Labour by 2016. A Training Guide for Policy Makers*](#), ILO Geneva.

ILO-IPEC (2013): *Mainstreaming Child Labour Concerns into Policy Frameworks: Issues and Guidelines*, ILO Geneva, unpublished.

Other related tools from the tool kit

Tool A.1 – Development Process and Issues

Tool A.2 – Costing and Resource Mobilisation

Tool A.3 – Implementation Framework/Operational Plan

Strategic entry points for negotiations to promote national ownership during NAP formulation: Simplified formulation process step-by-step



Specific pointers for support by ILO/FUNDAMENTALS Teams

