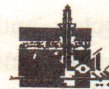


Update Sialkot



"The Project to Eliminate Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Sialkot, Pakistan" is a joint project under the Agreement signed by the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) on 14 February 1997. The project is being implemented by ILO, UNICEF, SCCI, Save the Children - UK, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and Bunyad Literacy Community Council



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SIALKOT & ISLAMABAD

EDITORIAL

The Sialkot Soccer Ball Project has attracted a high level of public attention, both from human rights, consumer, and other organisations, as well as from the media. This is hardly surprising. The publicity before and during the signing of the Atlanta Agreement on February 14, 1997, was bound to result in a close follow-up, especially with the World Cup Soccer coming up in June 1998 in France. The Project Coordinating Committee (PCC), having realized this has decided to produce this *Update Sialkot* which aims to inform an audience already aware of the existence of the project and at least part of its background, on the progress. This Update will be quarterly, unless developments dictate otherwise.

This month marks the ILO's kick-off of the ILO External Monitoring programme. From now on the clock is ticking. Inevitably, the present issue is dedicated to looking back: what has happened since the signing of the Agreement that brought so many of us together. To report on this preparatory phase is as important as reporting on the progress of the actual project activities. It has laid the foundations of a solid organizational structure and a fruitful cooperation between the participating agencies. Let me end this editorial by emphasizing that (written) contributions from participating agencies as well as from others are welcome, indeed essential.

Mr. Rueben Dudley,
Director ILO Office, Islamabad and
Chair, PCC

LOOKING BACK

Pakistan: March 1997

Following the Partners' Agreement, signed by the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), ILO and UNICEF, and involving Save the Children -UK, in Atlanta in February 1997, an ILO-lead mission was fielded to Lahore, Sialkot and Islamabad in March 1997 to develop an operational framework outlining programme priorities of the Partners for the monitoring and social protection programmes of the overall Project. The mission, lead by Mr. Kevin McGrath for the ILO, was composed of representatives of ILO-IPEC, UNICEF and Save the Children - UK and accompanied to selected meetings by SCCI, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC), and others.

The mission achieved its objectives of developing a Partners' Operational Framework, drafting a project document for the ILO-IPEC component of the Project, and exploring possibilities for linkages between specific child labour interventions and existing economic and social development programmes. However, specifics in the Monitoring Programme, of which three options were proposed by the ILO, were to be finalised before the Framework could be operationalised.

The First Meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee was convened in Islamabad on 27 March 1997. It was agreed that ILO would be the first to chair the Project Coordinating Committee, followed by UNICEF and the SCCI. The Partners' Operational Framework was endorsed.

Geneva: April 1997/Bangladesh: May 1997

In an effort to finalise the details of the Prevention and Monitoring Programme under the

overall Project, and subsequently to commence its implementation as soon as possible, the ILO entered into intensive discussions with the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) and the soccer ball industry in Pakistan. It was decided to organize a mission of the officials of the industry, including WFSGI, Sporting Goods Manufacturers of America (SGMA) and SCCI, to Bangladesh to see first hand the monitoring programme developed and operational there to progressively eliminate child labour from the garments industry in Bangladesh.

Pakistan: May 1997

From Bangladesh, the mission accompanied by Mr. Rijk van Haarlem, ILO-IPEC International Monitoring Expert on the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, visited Lahore, Sialkot and Islamabad, where it was joined by Mr. Gert A. Gust, Programme Manager, IPEC, ILO Geneva, Mr. Rueben Dudley, Director, ILO Office Islamabad, Mrs. Sherin Khan, IPEC National Programme Coordinator in Pakistan. The main objective of the mission to Sialkot was to finalize the operational arrangements for the Monitoring Programme.

Sialkot: 28 May 1997

In a Meeting of the ILO-IPEC with SCCI Steering Committee on Child Labour, WFSGI, and SGMA, Mr. Khurshid Soofi, Chairman, SCCI Steering Committee on Child Labour, welcomed the mission members and assured the meeting of the commitment of SCCI. Mr. Gorgemans of WFSGI said the pieces of the puzzle in this partnership had now come together and that the partnership process was a matter of pride for all those involved in it.

Giving his impressions of the mission to the Bangladesh BGMA project, Mr. Zaka-ud-Din, SCCI representative on the Sialkot Project Coordinating Committee, said visit had strengthened the industry's confidence in the partnership. Mr. Tom Cove of SGMA said that the industry would like the ILO to take an active role in designing and implementing the Monitoring Programme in Pakistan. The ILO gave its assurance of its commitment to the programme.

Sialkot: 29 May 1997

A Special Meeting of the Sialkot Project Coordinating Committee was convened to discuss and finalise the Monitoring Programme.

Islamabad: 30 May 1997

The Ministries of Labour Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Commerce, and Foreign Affairs were briefed on the steps taken in regard to the Sialkot project. The Government appreciated and welcomed the initiatives.

June 1997

The revised Partners' Operational Framework of Project to Eliminate Child Labour in Soccer Ball Industry, Sialkot, Pakistan and Annex 1 to the Framework, "A Child Labour Prevention and Monitoring System in the Soccer Ball Industry in Sialkot, Pakistan" were shared with the SCCI and endorsed in the Fourth Meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee in Sialkot.

Subsequent to the endorsement of the Monitoring Programme, positions for the national team leader and monitors were advertised and selections made.

July 1997

Meetings were organised by SCCI for Senior Managers of the Participating Manufacturers and by Save the Children - UK for local NGOs in Sialkot to introduce the Monitoring system to them. UNICEF worked with the Government on the awareness raising messages and support to the Primary Education Act (Punjab) in the context of the Sialkot project. Save the Children - UK set up an office in Sialkot and started surveying the local NGO community.

August 1997

ILO-IPEC selected 15 monitors (male and female) and one national team leader. Preliminary information from the SCCI participating manufacturers. This information would be used for external monitoring purposes.

September 1997

A preliminary orientation was conducted in Sialkot by ILO-IPEC for the selected monitors and team leaders. Project development and finalisation work continued by the Partners.

October 1997

With the ILO-IPEC external monitoring team in place the Prevention and Monitoring programme under the overall Sialkot project formally

commenced on 1 October in Sialkot. The ILO-IPEC Social Protection programme is set to commence on 1 November 1997, after preliminary activities at the selected programme locations. The IPEC project

office premises were rented and the monitoring team started field testing the monitoring system. The Sixth Meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee was held in Sialkot on 17 October 1997.

UNICEF

UNICEF is working with key social allies for launching an awareness campaign on child labour issues. A study has been completed to assess the attitude and practices of children, parents of child labourers, contractors and manufacturers on the child labour issue. The study also made an assessment of the most effective channels of communication. This information is being used in the development of communication material and training programmes for allies and partners. In addition details for improving the formal education system at Sialkot district (to prevent drop-outs) have been worked out. Activities for improvement of the education system will be initiated from January 1997

ILO-IPEC

ILO is the Chair of the Project Coordinating Committee until 1 April 1998 and has been designated as its secretariat. This has resulted in a number of coordination activities, including the production of the present information update. Besides working on the 'common cause', ILO-IPEC has worked out in more detail its components of the project and has proposed this for (external) funding. In September 1997 the US Department of Labour approved the ILO-IPEC programme for over US\$700,000 for 24 months under the overall Sialkot Project. Since then the project went into a higher gear, especially with regard to the Prevention and Monitoring Programme. In September a team of fifteen monitors (four of whom are female) and a team leader was selected. The same month a preliminary training course was given by Mr

Rijk van Haarlem, ILO Expert on Labour Monitoring. During the first weeks of October the team has been making its operational preparations.

The ILO-IPEC Social Rehabilitation programme

Project Coordinating Committee

The first meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee took place some six weeks after the signing of the Atlanta Agreement, with representatives of its signatories and members, ILO, UNICEF, Sialkot Chambers of commerce and Industry (SCCI), and Save the Children UK. The Chair, which will be rotating, has thus far been with ILO. UNICEF will take the Chair as of April 1, 1998; the SCCI as of October 1, 1998. It had been stipulated that within three months after signing of the Agreement the partners would come up with a concrete implementation plan. This was not an easy task, in view of the complexity of the project and its many participating agencies. The implementation plan, i.e., the Partners' Operational Framework was developed during a project formulation mission and endorsed at the First Meeting of the Project Coordinating Committee on 23 March 1997. At the second PCC meeting in May the partners were joined by new members Pakistan Bait-u-Mal and Bunyad Literary Community Council. So far the PCC has met six times. The most recent PCC meeting took place on October 17 1997 in Sialkot.

The Project Coordinating Committee will ensure that each component will serve the overall goal of the project. It also reviews progress of the implementation on a regular basis.

will commence from 1 November 1997. The details of the programme are being worked out with Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC), and with the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM).

SIALKOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The SCCI as one of the signatories of the Partners' Agreement represents the area where the programme activities are carried out. The business enterprises who otherwise compete amongst themselves, have come together to resolve the common threat to the industry and to everyone engaged in the manufacturing and export of hand-stitched soccer balls. Nearly 67 firms, large and small, are engaged in the export of soccer balls from Pakistan. Out of them, 29 have joined the programme of elimination of child labour. These firms export some 56% of the total exports. The industry has reacted aptly to the media campaign against the prevalence of child labour. The project envisages a three-phased programme on the elimination of child labour. In the first phase of six months, firms joining the programme are required to:

- appoint senior managers and internal monitors;
- furnish to ILO lists of their stitching centres giving names of the contractors, names and ages of stitchers and addresses of the stitching locations; and
- achieve the target of no less than 25% child labour-free production of their given target capacity.

The SCCI further facilitates the ILO External Monitoring programme: on the one hand by encouraging its members to join the programme of elimination of child labour; and on the other, to offer all possible assistance to other participating agencies to do social protection and rehabilitation work among the children and families affected by the prevention and monitoring programme. The SCCI will provide skill training to the children who complete informal education and become eligible for work on attaining the age of 14.

SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK

Since the Atlanta Agreement was signed SCF completed its situation analysis on children working in the soccer ball industry which was designed as a basis for action. The report drew attention to the fact that soccer ball stitching is a home based industry which is harmful to only a minority of soccer ball stitching children. It emphasised the need to protect the incomes of the soccer ball stitching families by ensuring that women could continue to stitch soccer balls in community based stitching centres, and through the introduction of savings and credit schemes. It stressed the importance of providing alternatives for working children through improving education and increasing vocational training opportunities. It also highlighted the dangers of ejecting children from work quickly if families are unable to replace the lost income.

Consequently SCF established a project management team in Sialkot which is undertaking social protection work by building village organisations. These organisations will strengthen schools by assisting in their management and deciding on the basic infrastructural support that the schools need. A careful assessment of local NGOs has revealed that the best option for the credit and savings scheme will be to collaborate with the National Rural support programme (NSRP), which has strong programmes in various parts of Pakistan.

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