



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Progressive Eradication of Child Labour in Gravel Production in Retalhuleu, Guatemala

Quick Facts

Country: Guatemala

Final Evaluation: July 2005

Type of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: Rights and Standards Sector

Evaluation team: Regional evaluator

Project Start: September 2001

Project End: June 2006

Project Code: GUA/01/51/USA

Donor: United States (US\$ 584,918)

Keywords: child labour, hazardous work, quarries, income generating activities, vocational training, access to education, local government, working conditions

Background & Context

Project Background: Guatemala is a country with widespread poverty, with poor infrastructural conditions, and it is undergoing a process to build a peaceful development model. However, this national task has not been easy as there are still very poor sectors. Children are one of the most vulnerable sectors in its population, especially children in rural areas, such as San Felipe, San Martín Zapotitlán, Santa Cruz Muluá, and San Sebastián in Retalhuleu.

The first action programme “Children Working in Gravel Production, Retalhuleu, Guatemala”, started in 1998 and was implemented by the Asociación Guatemalteca para el Desarrollo Sostenible (HABITAT).

This project was implemented for two years. At the end of this period, the evaluation stressed both the achievements made in the area of education and the difficulties of the components on income generation, especially regarding the purchase and operation of the gravel crusher.

In 2000, a Logical Framework and Summary Scheme for a new project entitled “Progressive Eradication of Child Labour in Gravel Production in Retalhuleu, Guatemala” were prepared. This project is usually referred to as the “Piedrín Project.”

The development objective of the project was to contribute to the elimination of child labour in the production of gravel in the Samalá River basin, Retalhuleu, Guatemala.

Four immediate objectives have been specified:

- *Immediate objective 1:* By the end of the project, child labour in gravel production will have been reduced through prevention measures and the withdrawal of children from work. The children in gravel production will have been identified and i) the children will receive schooling and other support and vocational training services, and ii) the children will have access to health and hygiene services. The reduction of the health-related costs will also contribute to reducing child labour.
- *Immediate objective 2:* By the end of the project, the target families will have increased their income (salary).
- *Immediate objective 3:* By the end of the project, local and national authorities, communities, and parents will have been made aware about and will have been

motivated to take measures against child labour especially that involved in gravel production.

- *Immediate objective 4:* By the end of the project, the educational system will have been improved as a result of the ongoing efforts made for the eradication of child labour in gravel production in Retalhuleu.

Evaluation Context: The evaluation purpose was to provide knowledge and experience gained with respect to factors related to the project's success, its strengths, and the potential to improve future interventions in similar socio-economic contexts.

The evaluation purpose was also to analyze the effects of the project on the target population and its contribution to the eradication of child labour in gravel production.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Main Findings: Regarding the evaluation of the project design, it should be pointed out that the project is relevant and that it responds to the need to eradicate child labour in the exploitation of rock materials deposited in the Samalá River. The environmental, health, and labour conditions in which this work is carried out are not suitable for adults, and much less for children.

IPEC-ILO's overall strategy for eradicating child labour is theoretically consistent. The strategy is closely related to the problem, its causes, and its effects. The proposal correctly uses education as the strategic line of action that could break the vicious structural poverty cycle of working children. The strategies of health care, generation of economic alternatives, and awareness-raising for the diverse sectors are three integral and indispensable axes that have been well chosen. Education is the foundation or platform and the other objectives are the tripod, that is, the forms of support that hold up this platform.

Regarding the evaluation of the project's performance, the project is holistic, comprehensive, and coherent in its diverse aspects. The coordination team managed to link these parts, despite of delays in making the decision about which implementing agencies were to work with each component. There is no doubt that CEIPA's experience with respect to working with children and its institutional strength had a great deal to do with the coordination and implementation of the various components.

According to the educators and children interviewed, the outcomes produced in education are of high quality. The population covered has been larger than that stated in the objectives. The results achieved in education validate all the investment made, and the cost-benefit ratio is highly positive.

The work of the education strategy component includes activities such as scholarships for children and teenagers, training for teachers, food for children, academic reinforcement, support provided to regional educational activities, an academic degree in children's rights, and many other related aspects.

Each activity was focused on achieving the access of children and adolescents to education in order to decrease the number of hours devoted to working. This concept is consistent with and directly related to both the development objective and the first immediate objective.

The late introduction of the economic alternatives component, the lack of a good baseline study to analyze the situation, and the confusion about monitoring took away some of the coherence and consistency of the larger vision with which the Project was designed. Nevertheless, this did not reduce the achievements obtained in education and the reduction of working hours for children, an orientation which remained constant in all activities.

The mission to progressively eradicate child labour remained effective throughout the Project, despite the fact that the economic and social conditions of the families and within the region moved in the opposite direction. The structural poverty of the region and the crisis of falling coffee prices constantly worked against the achievement of this mission.

Generally speaking, the main stakeholders were very pleased with the project's performance, greatly value its contribution in education, and constantly mention the good relationship established among the parties involved. They have built a relationship of trust and cooperation which has allowed them to think of the Project beyond IPEC's initial monetary investment.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations: The overall concept of the Project is fully replicable in any context in Latin America for the purpose of gradually eradicating child labour. The design, in which education is the main platform, and the components of awareness raising, economic alternatives, and health are the pillars of such a platform, would be politically, culturally, and socially viable throughout the continent.

Nevertheless, the concept should be contextualized in each national, regional, and ethnic situation. Based on a given context, the outcomes, activities, and indicators will change, thus discussion and analysis of the hypotheses, assumptions, and external and internal conditions are crucial. The depth of the analysis is determined by the experience of the planners and a good understanding of the local contexts and reality. In addition, it is necessary to find implementing agencies that specialize in childhood and education. This will make it easier to replicate the successful outcomes that the Piedrín Project has produced.