



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) of the Declaration Programme

Quick Facts

Countries: Inter-regional

Final Evaluation: March 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Declaration, Forced Labour

Evaluation Management:

Evaluation Team: Richard Longhurst

Project Start: Januar 2003

Project End: March 2006

Project Code: INT/03/54/IRL

Donor: Ireland (691,244 US\$)

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Following publication of the Director-General's first global report on forced labour in June 2001, the Governing Body established in November 2001 a Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) with a mandate to spearhead the ILO's future activities in this area and give them more comprehensiveness, vision and cohesion.

SAP-FL operates under the umbrella of the ILO's human rights and labour standards programme. Forced Labour (FL) and trafficking are high profile but politically sensitive issues, difficult to operationalise for

many traditional partners and unpalatable to others. Eradicating forced labour challenges many traditional ways of doing things and the way in which power is accumulated and maintained. There is a criminal element involved in some aspects; there are regional issues including more than one member state and states that act as sending and destination countries.

Since its establishment, SAP-FL activities have expanded considerably in scope and depth, comprising a combination of advocacy and awareness-raising, research and knowledge-sharing, training and capacity-building and country-based or sub-regional technical cooperation programmes. Much of this experience has been summarized in the ILO Director General's 2005 global report, A Global Alliance against Forced Labour. SAP-FL works with other HQ units and departments that have interests linked to FL, as well as with field offices for its technical cooperation (TC) projects. It collaborates also with many external agencies with interests in FL and trafficking issues.

At the departmental level of the Declaration, the objectives are to raise awareness of the Declaration within countries and regions as well as at the international level; to deepen understanding of how these fundamental principles and rights reinforce development, democracy and equity and help empower all women and men; and to promote policies that implement these principles and rights in practice in the development conditions of each country.

The programme of work of DECLARATION is summarized as enhancement and management of knowledge, including research and production of annual reviews and global reports; promotion and advocacy of the declaration and the principles it contains, and provision of gender sensitive TC and advisory services to member states and social partners.

Present situation of project

Over the last 3-4 years, SAP-FL's activities have been divided into research and advisory services, including appropriate legislation and awareness raising; and programmes and projects. A recent ILO Governing Body paper presented half way through this evaluation in November 2005, laid out a second phase to the action plan, building on the concerns identified in the Global Report, and maintaining a balance between operational projects, advisory services and research. Member states will be assisted to establish time bound programmes for the eradication of FL, helped with policy guidance, support for survey methods and data gathering, capacity building for employers and workers associations and for projects that work directly with FL. An additional element at the global level will be network building and advocacy.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the independent evaluation is to assess progress and achievements of SAP-FL to date, in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of programme activities, to identify the main lessons learned over SAP-FL's first 3.5 years of operation; and to contribute to the development of forward-looking operational and fund-raising strategies that will enable SAP-FL to facilitate ILO's leadership of a new Global Alliance against Forced Labour.

Methodology of evaluation

Information was drawn from the following sources:

Review of documents related to SAP-FL development, progress and achievements,

including project proposals, Governing Body documents, Global reports, Performance Reports to donors, Declaration Working Papers and other research outputs, training materials, internal documentation, meeting reports and project mid-term reviews etc.

Interviews and discussions with SAP-FL and other staff in the DECLARATION department, and staff in other ILO Departments as well as collaborators and staff in field offices, either in person or by telephone.

Interviews with donor staff and other financing agencies; with key actors outside the ILO in NGOs and university departments in person or by telephone; an eleven day field visit to the Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour project site in Pakistan and Tamil Nadu, India; and a one day workshop was held with available SAP/FL core staff in March 2006 to discuss the first draft of the evaluation report.

Main Findings & Conclusions

SAP-FL is meeting its objectives although there is some ambiguity as to what these are. Outputs such as research and training materials have been strong and innovative in methodology, and are its greatest strength. The recent launch of the Global Report was very professional and greatly advanced the advocacy of forced labour. However, the issue is a difficult one for the ILO's traditional partners to take on board, for different reasons and so progress in getting these partners involved in SAP/FL concerns is always going to be hard going. Also, FL concerns will, for different reasons, take time to enter the ILO country strategy of Decent Work Country Programmes, mostly because of the under developed nature of this strategy. There will also be space for FL issues to enter the poverty Reduction Strategies and in the longer run, in countries where FL is important, the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs).

SAP-FL has been fortunate to obtain donor core funding in the period 2002-2005 with a high degree of flexibility and also benefited from the ILO TC-RAM rounds, and received

12 months Programme Support Income from the ILO. But the ILO needs to make a greater allocation of flexible funds to ensure SAP-FL continues its work to develop tools and design innovative project structures.

Sustainability is a problem for many development projects, especially in the ILO. SAP-FL projects find that they are not able to build effective counterparts or influence governments as quickly as they had wished. SAP-FL should not fall into the trap of being a 'project factory' although of course it has to make an impact in the field. But it should aim to design projects which have a divestment and exit strategy defined and try to scale up and hand over the project concept as soon as possible. In this regard it should (as should all of the ILO) build links with the International Financing Institutions such as the World Bank and regional development banks. It should continue to build 'tripartite-plus' coalitions as the traditional structure is not strong enough to deal with FL issues.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

The principal recommendation for SAP-FL is to keep going as is. Some of the difficulties it faces relate to problems that the ILO must tackle: greater transparency over allocation of funds, developing a proper system to reward good performing and energetic fund raising units such as SAP-FL, better coordination of donor funding and so on. ILO departments still work in a silo-fashion with little collaboration. A unit such as SAP-FL which has the objective of spearheading a topic previously dealt with in a sporadic way in ILO would benefit from some clear strategising on interdepartmental and inter unit collaboration. There seems too much ambiguity over who does what in forced labour in ILO and within Sector 1, which should be resolved to develop better inter-unit collaboration. Time may be ripe for a policy review and clarification of roles in these areas, and to include local resource mobilisation.

SAP-FL has developed a number of tools, research findings, training materials and approaches for regional and sending-receiving countries. It should focus on these and try to sell them to donors and governments for customisation to different FL situations. These tools can help member governments replicate the models with local ownership, and to use training manuals, clarifying the nature of the situation, understanding the causes, and legalise and regularise what should be legal. ILO has a strong comparative advantage as an inter-governmental organisation best able to bring governments together in a region.

Donors are encouraged to give the flexible support that SAP-FL needs to continue its work on research and influencing policy change in this difficult area. Given the rise in trafficking problems in many countries, along with the persistence of more traditional forms of forced labour, SAP-FL with its collaborating units in ILO can do much to provide policy support.