



Evaluation Summaries

Contribution to the consolidation of a National Policy for the prevention and elimination of child labour in Colombia

Quick Facts

Country: Colombia

Mode of Evaluation: Final independent

Date of Evaluation: 1st June till July 30, 2008

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: DED-IPEC

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Project Start: January 2004

Project End: December 2006

Project Code: COL/04/P01/CAN

Donor and Project Budget: US Department of Labour (USDOL)

Keywords: Child Labour

(WFCL) as a comprehensive part of the National Policy for Infancy; and

2. To develop pilot action programmes for the prevention and elimination of the WFCL.

The project envisaged the implementation of activities at national and local levels in six priority municipalities. It started in January 2004, and although its closure was planned for February 2006, it was extended until December of the same year. The project was implemented by the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), with the support of the US Department of Labour (USDOL).

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project was conceived to support the implementation of the third National Action Plan for the Prevention and the Elimination of Child Labour. The project's main objectives were:

1. To strengthen the capacities of national organizations for the implementation of a national plan for the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labour

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation followed a participatory approach in which its main stakeholders were consulted and informed throughout the overall evaluation process. It also developed an impact-assessment analysis with an emphasis on learning (identification of lessons learned). The evaluation took place in the final months of the implementation of the project.

According to the approved terms of reference, the evaluation's objectives were:

1. The analysis of the design, strategies and intervention models applied;

2. The analysis of the project's results, with an emphasis on identifying changes, effects and impacts;
3. The elaboration of recommendations for its main stakeholders;
4. The identification of lessons learned and accumulated knowledge in the prevention and elimination of child labour as a basis to sustain the design of future efforts in the fight against child labour.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation previewed an initial consultation with IPEC's National Coordinator. Subsequently, it also included interviews with ILO/IPEC DED Unit; staff from the Sub regional Office and from the Project. Interviews were also considered for the project's main stakeholders (functionaries from Ministries and other national governmental entities; employers; trade unions and NGOs, etc.)

The evaluation also included visits to four of the six municipalities where the project was developed: in two of them the project intervened directly (Ibagué and Villavicencio), and in the other two were covered by other projects (Cali and Palmira).

Finally, a workshop of main stakeholders was held to share the results of the evaluation and validate the project's recommendations and lessons learned.

Main Findings & Conclusions

At the end of the project it can be concluded that child labour was acknowledged as a problem of national public policy, and its elimination a responsibility which should be shared by all of the members of society. This

can be considered one of the project's most important impacts.

The inter-sectoral and inter-institutional approaches used in the project were harmonized with simultaneous actions at the national level. Examples of pilot action programmes supported by the project are "The separation of children and adolescents from armed conflict", and "Weaving networks".

One of the project's most important accomplishments was to position the commercial sexual exploitation of children, child domestic labour and the involvement of children in armed conflict as part of the nationally recognized worst forms of child labour. This allowed national stakeholders to recognize the magnitude and seriousness of these specific types of child labour.

The sustainability of project results is assured through the commitment of the national and local governments. This has been reflected through the allocation of concrete resources for elimination and prevention activities with agreed goals.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Although the project achieved considerable advances in institutional strengthening and capacity building, it is obvious that there is technical weakness in some capacity in regions where the problem is acute (armed-conflict zones, municipalities and departments with high poverty levels). Therefore, it is recommended to continue with trainings and technical assistance in those particular regions.

It is recommended that future activities should aim to capitalize on the visibility and positioning of child labour as a problem than involves all actors, with the aim to establish moral-social sanction mechanism as a

complement to the public policy's formal mechanisms of social control. A moral-social sanction is understood as civil society's directed rejection against those who promote or engage in the worst forms of child labour.

The project's focus on personal development is another key aim of the project which should be continued through different expressions such as awareness campaigns for public functionaries, the strengthening of inter-regional support networks for children and adolescents; the generation of social mechanisms of continuity (for not interrupting personal development and support when children reach the legal age of maturity).

Important lessons learned

The sustainability of public policy in complex issues which do not fall within the area of a government's mainstream interest can be strengthened through awareness-raising and mobilization of civil society, especially through its organized sectors. This engages a wide range of social actors and overcomes the problem of the rotation of public functionaries.

Although participation through representation on inter-institutional committees is important, it was also found that these stakeholders needed to go beyond mere participation on committees but ensure institutional commitment through their directive boards to guarantee continuity and sustainability.

In complex and clandestine problems such as the ones posed by domestic child labour, CSEC and, children in armed conflict, it is recommended that - in conjunction with establishing a risk profile of children - it was equally important to investigate the contexts, conditions and characteristics that generate situations and events of risk and vulnerability. This would facilitate the identification of zones where these problems develop and the social conditions which could be targets of future prevention activities.