



Evaluation Summaries

Preventing trafficking in girls and young women for labour exploitation within China (CP-Ting)

Quick Facts

Country: China

Date of Evaluation: October 2008

Mode of Evaluation: Final Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: ILO/IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED)

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Project Start: April 2004

Project End: November 2008

Project Code: CPR/04/01/UKM

Donor / Project Budget: DFID (UK) £3,075,000

Keywords: child labour, trafficking

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The "China Project to Prevent Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for Labour Exploitation" ("CP-TING") sought to contribute to the elimination of trafficking for labor exploitation of girls and young women in China. It is implemented by the International Labor Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) in collaboration with the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), and financed by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID). The project was launched in April 2004, and concluded in November 2008.

CP-TING covered five provinces in China, namely Henan, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangsu and Guangdong. The first three are major sources of out-migration while the last two are major destinations for in-migration. Lessons learned from the project "Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and

Women in the Greater Mekong region (TICW), informed the design of CP-TING.

The project focused on the achievement of three major objectives: (1) mobilizing key stakeholders, promoting conceptual clarity and filling gaps in knowledge about trafficking, (2) developing direct assistance models to support at-risk communities, and (3) building stakeholder capacity and contributing to policy frameworks on trafficking. Field work in China for this final evaluation was conducted from 23 May to 20 June 2008. The evaluation team visited Beijing, Guangzhou, Foshan, Hefei, Nanjing, Changzhou and Zhengzhou.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation was to encompass the CP-TING project implemented in the provinces of Anhui, Henan, Hunan, Guangdong and Jiangsu. The final evaluation was to take the mid-term evaluation as a key reference document and address the recommendations and issues it raises at midpoint. The evaluation should address core evaluation issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, with a special focus on organizational learning issues that can feed into future programming decisions

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation team consisted of an international consultant and a national consultant. The team conducted a desk review prior to the field visits. Evaluation field level activities in China began on 23 May 2008, and concluded on 20 June 2008. The first week was spent in Beijing, where discussions were held with the JNPO and with representatives of ACWF. During the second week, the evaluation team visited Guangdong (Guangzhou and Foshan) and Anhui (Hefei), followed by Jiangsu (Nanjing and Changzhou) and Henan (Zhengzhou) in the

third week. A final debriefing workshop was held at the end of the mission .

Main Findings

Project implementation met with challenges, but was generally successful in overcoming them. Much valuable work was accomplished in the first two years of the project, but provincial offices were not adequately integrated into the management structure and management tools were perceived as too rigid. These factors led to delays in launching direct assistance interventions. A reorganization of the management structure was successful in empowering provincial offices, streamlining procedures and giving new impetus to implementation activities. Steering Committees were especially successful at and below the provincial level. The open project framework – which allowed considerable scope for local initiative in the design of activities – added to management complexity but proved to be a powerful and successful tool for adapting project strategies to local conditions and encouraging the full involvement of local partners. Much attention was devoted throughout to monitoring and evaluation; local partners reported that significant capacity was built as a result of training activities in this area. Nevertheless, monitoring remained challenging in practice.

Achievement of Objectives

Despite a broad scope and ambitious agenda, the project has largely achieved—and in some respects surpassed—the objectives set out in the project document. Some challenges remain, as they do in any project that seeks to be innovative and take reasonable risks. Systemic challenges were greatest in the area of developing the knowledge base. Direct assistance models constituted the signature achievement of the project. Valuable contributions were made to strengthening national and sub-national policy frameworks and implementation capacity to prevent trafficking. Project achievements and challenges are described in greater detail in the following subsections and in the body of the report.

Knowledge base, advocacy and mobilization

Government authorities and the Women's Federation displayed strong ownership of project objectives and activities. This was especially true at and below the provincial level. Local governments showed their support for the project with concrete financial commitments. A total of RMB 13,323,931 (US\$ 2.7 million) was contributed in counterpart funding (vs. \$6 million in international assistance). This is almost double

the original target of RMB 7 million and well above the typical range of counterpart funding for UN projects in China. Consistent and successful efforts were made to mobilize all branches of government around the trafficking prevention agenda. Good inter-departmental cooperation was observed at the local level. An important factor contributing to successful cooperation was that the provincial and local Steering Committees built on existing mechanisms. Inter-governmental cooperation was more difficult to establish between provinces and at the national level.

The project's activities in the area of enhancing conceptual understanding have successfully broadened the terms of the debate and brought new perspectives to bear on the subject of human trafficking. Various statements by senior officials indicate a growing acceptance of the Palermo definition of trafficking. The draft National Plan of Action, with input from CP-TING, reflects the need for prevention strategies as well as a multi-dimensional response to trafficking. Deep rooted linguistic and cultural factors continue to shape national perspectives on trafficking. The commonly used Chinese word for trafficking is strongly linked to the prevailing view of trafficking as consisting of the abduction and sale of women for forced marriage and infants for adoption. Use of the term "labor exploitation" remains sensitive in some quarters.

Surveys commissioned by the project provided useful insight into patterns of migration and trafficking. Migrants were young, they migrated because they wanted to improve their potential incomes, they found jobs through informal channels, had little contact with government organizations, and experienced significant violations of their legal rights. A media analysis looked at trafficking as depicted in major national and provincial newspapers. Unfortunately, the incidence of trafficking was not possible to measure directly. Trafficking for labor exploitation is methodologically difficult to measure in any country, especially given its clandestine nature. The political sensitivity of the subject in China exacerbated this challenge.

Direct assistance models

Five models of direct assistance for at-risk communities were implemented, namely Children's Forums, the Spring Rain campaign, life skills training, Women's Homes and partnering with employers. Children's Forums, Spring Rain and Women's Homes spanned both sending and receiving provinces, life skills training was

conducted in sending provinces and collaboration with employers took place in receiving provinces. Children's Forums consisted of a series of meetings between children and government officials, with the objectives of "giving voice" to children at risk of being trafficked and providing a platform for dialogue with decision makers on policy areas important to children and youth. The Spring Rain campaign employed a comprehensive communication strategy and mobilized volunteers to provide information to migrant girls and young women during Chinese Spring Festival; it was implemented in Guangdong province in 2006 and 2008, and in all project provinces in 2007. Life skills training consisted of a curriculum that prepared 13-15 year old teenagers for the personal and social challenges of city life, and more broadly, for the challenges of adolescence. Women's Homes served as community platforms on which information, training and referral services were provided to women and girls in rural areas and migrant women in urban areas. Partnering with employers worked through employers' associations to raise the awareness of women entrepreneurs and their women employees on trafficking prevention and labor rights; its broader objective was to promote a tripartite public-private partnership between employers, employees and local government.

These direct assistance models were ambitious in scope. The long distances and large populations of the nine rural counties and seven cities in which the models were implemented added to the complexity of the task. Project reorganization led to delays in launching direct assistance activities, which meant that time was limited. Despite these many challenges, direct assistance models were implemented with considerable efficiency and effectiveness.

Policy and Institutional Framework

Project activities exerted noteworthy influence on government policy towards trafficking at both the provincial and national levels. Provincial Steering Committees served as effective mechanisms for integrating trafficking prevention into policies drafted by provincial governments. There were significant policy developments in each province, with the project making direct contributions to many of them. At the national level, the project's primary policy impact lies in its contribution to the development of the National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children (NPA), which went into effect on 1 January 2008. The Joint National Project Office (JNPO), responsible for managing the project at the national

level, provided detailed comments on four successive drafts. While the final version does not adopt the international definition of trafficking for labor exploitation as embodied in the Palermo Protocol, it makes reference to the labor dimension of trafficking and to the importance of prevention strategies to address systemic causes of trafficking. Institutional capacity was built at all levels, but especially at the provincial level. Intensive training activities were conducted for provincial project offices (PPOs) and local partners. Learning also took place by doing. This combination of theory and practice resulted in a better understanding of the design, management, monitoring and evaluation of development projects. Underlying the success of capacity building efforts has been the project's process-based and participatory approaches, and the strong ownership that these have enabled.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations

The challenges and opportunities of very large scale have been a significant feature of the CPTING project. In retrospect, the practical consequences of the vast geographic, demographic and socio-economic scope of the project may have been underestimated during project design. Sustainability of interventions and the achievement of critical mass become more challenging when resources are spread thinly across a wide area. A potential successor project could consider a more limited geographical scope, especially to the extent that it focuses on direct assistance activities.

A positive focus and title may be more conducive to encouraging the involvement and participation of national stakeholders in a successor project. "Safe migration" emerged during project implementation as a message that national stakeholders could easily rally around. However, the CP-TING project was about much more than safe migration, as it also provided support for implementation of ILO Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labor and Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age. Participatory and process-based approaches were highly innovative in their context and are likely to represent a salient feature of the project's legacy. These approaches were especially effective in building capacity of Women's Federation and partner personnel. The excellent work of the project in this area deserves to be actively inherited by further efforts that focus more directly on working with at-risk communities. There are many compelling

arguments for the project's focus on women and girls, but a good

case can also be made for a gender neutral approach to trafficking. Received cultural perspectives and national laws on trafficking of women for forced marriage and children for adoption imply that trafficking is primarily a problem for girls and young women, but clearly, boys and young men are also victims. A successor project may wish to revisit these issues. Government has a central role in trafficking prevention. This role includes promoting trafficking prevention and raising public awareness, addressing the supply and demand of trafficked labor, assisting victims of trafficking, dealing with fraudulent recruitment agencies, registering legitimate agencies and encouraging completion of education. At the same time, it is also necessary to recognize that labor migration in China is increasingly motivated by market forces and takes place overwhelmingly through community-based channels. A successor project should seek to work more actively through market-based mechanisms and engage more directly with informal migrant institutions.

Monitoring and evaluation were strongly emphasized throughout the project, and substantial local capacity was built in these areas. Despite strong efforts, it remained difficult to establish causal connections between numbers of beneficiaries served and impact in terms of trafficking prevention. Authorities were reluctant to authorize the collection of data that they feared could be misused to show them in a negative light. A successor project should consider a positivist objective capable of empirical verification and fully accepted by all stakeholders.

The project's management structure became more flexible and localized over time, and this evolution promoted the project's core values of participation and process, as well as grassroots innovation and impact. At both the national and provincial levels, the project was managed by full-time, dedicated national staff. The clear accountability and strong ownership this enabled was a major factor contributing to the project's success.

Interagency cooperation and ownership was especially strong at the sub-national level. Counterpart funding – an indicator of local ownership – was provided almost entirely at and below the provincial level. Cooperation across provincial boundaries and at the national level was more elusive. While there are no simple means of effecting cooperation, a successor project would benefit greatly from closer ties with other national

ministries and organizations, especially the Ministries of Labor and Education, and the ACFTU.

The project made very successful use of the media to mobilize government, public opinion and migrant girls and young women. A media strategy designed with the assistance of a media consultant promoted pro-active cooperation with media partners and successfully integrated traditional mass mobilization methods with modern marketing techniques. Informational campaigns went beyond conventional leaflets and brochures to include functional items designed to be retained such as playing cards, bags and calendars; these achieved wide currency and achieved near-iconic status. A successor project should take advantage of the great potential of the internet and mobile telephony to empower migrant workers. China has the world's largest communities of both internet and cell phone users. The available evidence indicates that the internet is already widely used by large segments of the urban migrant community, and is increasingly becoming accessible in rural areas. The real opportunity for a successor project to leverage ICT, however, is not simply in providing access to data but in stimulating the growth of peer-to-peer migrant networks.

Direct assistance models were implemented in nine rural counties in the project's three sending provinces and seven cities in the two receiving provinces. Almost three million persons benefited in some form from project activities. If we exclude the large numbers of people exposed to the project's IEC campaigns and those who found jobs with project assistance, we are left with a still very substantial group of approximately 100,000 people who benefited intensively from the CP-TING project.

Four reasons can be cited for the uncertain sustainability of direct assistance models. First, some models, such as Children's Forums, were not intended to be sustained or replicated in the specific form in which they were implemented by the project. Their value lies in demonstrating the feasibility of their approach. Second, implementation began approximately a year behind schedule, so direct assistance models had only two years instead of three to achieve sustainability before project support terminated. Third, experience suggests that complex, process-based models such as Women's Homes typically require a gestation period of more than one project cycle to achieve sustainability. Finally, the scale of activities was vast; in the trade-off between breadth and depth, project stakeholders chose

breadth. While Children's Forums played to the strengths of the Women's Federation as a mass mobilization organization and met with a very positive reception, it appears unlikely that they will continue in their present form. However, the general concept and some of the lessons of the Forums could be replicated in future activities by the Women's Federation and other partners.

Life skills training was a huge success from the point of view of students and teachers in target schools. A curriculum with enduring value was developed. However, the Chinese educational system remains strongly oriented towards preparing for high school and college entrance examinations, and life skills training may be seen by the educational authorities as detracting from the rigor of the standard curriculum. Reform of the Chinese primary and secondary educational system is already under way, but change is likely to occur gradually. In the meantime, a successor project should consider taking the current life skills training program beyond public middle schools. Several options exist, many of which the project has already explored. These include (i) privately funded schools for migrant children in urban areas, (ii) vocational schools sponsored by local Labor Bureaus, (iii) Women's Homes, and (iv) partnerships with employers.

Women's Homes hold tremendous potential as a platform for the convergence of support services to migrant women and girls. Two fundamental challenges need to be addressed in order for Women's Homes to deliver on their promise: first, making the Homes genuinely demand driven, and second, realizing the network effects that are central to the model. Measures to improve sustainability include: (i) securing financial and political support from local government, but operate Women's Homes independently, (ii) focusing on a limited number of Homes, (iii) moving the Homes out of government offices, (iv) hiring dedicated staff, (v) determining which services migrants are willing to pay for, (vi) adapting the life skills training curriculum to the needs of Women's Homes and employers, (vii) establishing a network of Women's Homes, (viii) promoting peer-to-peer support networks among migrants, (ix) creating a virtual network of Women's Homes on the internet, (x) using Women's Homes as a platform to partner with employers, and (xi) possibly extending the model to include men.

Through its work with Women Entrepreneurs' Associations in Guangdong and Jiangsu, the project effectively demonstrated the considerable

potential for partnering with employers. While there are challenges to creating a meaningful alignment of interests between employers and their employees, rapid changes in the regulatory environment and in the sources of enterprise competitiveness in coastal China present important new opportunities. Two strategic directions deserve consideration. First, using market-oriented mechanisms to help employers recruit, train and retain a more skilled and stable labor force, and help migrant workers find decent work and improve their vocational and life skills. Second, supporting and partnering actively with institutions representing the collective interests of employers and workers, especially migrant workers.

There is potential synergy between three direct assistance models developed by CP-TING.

Partnering with employers can provide the motive mechanism, life skills training can provide the content, and Women's Homes can serve as the platform for delivery of this content. There may also be opportunities to partner with the private sector to develop a website to provide information about decent jobs and safe migration through the internet.

Project activities have made valuable contributions to strengthening national and sub-national policy frameworks and implementation capacity to prevent trafficking in girls and young women for labor exploitation. It appears that things are on track for the government of China to ratify the Palermo Protocol. It would be desirable for a future project to continue to provide support for new legislation, although it may not be necessary to make this a major project objective. One of the lessons of the current project is that there is good scope to influence policy at and below the provincial level.