



Evaluation Summaries

ILO project on promoting the elimination of bonded labour in Pakistan (PEBLIP)

Quick Facts

Countries: Pakistan

Midterm Evaluation: April 2007- March 2009

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Forced Labour

Evaluation Management: Declaration (Wael Issa)

Evaluation Team: Fawad Usman Ali (external consultant)

Project Start: March 2007

Project End: April 2010

Project Code: PAK/06/51/NET

Donor: The Netherlands (US \$ 999,363)

Key Words: Bonded labour

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

In March 2007, ILO launched the current phase of the project “Promoting Elimination of Bonded Labour in Pakistan (PEBLIP)” funded by the Government of Netherlands, though the activities did not begin until December 2007.

The PEBLIP Project has been formulated in the wake of the earlier project launched in 2002 in collaboration with government and key social partners to assist a group of about 700 families, mainly haris (agricultural workers) who were

released from debt bondage in rural and peri-urban Sindh. The project sought to establish integrated socio-economic models of direct assistance to these families. The present project has a broader focus on bonded labour and is aimed to address the policy level and capacity gaps within the government and other stakeholders so a sustainable national effort can be launched to eliminate bonded labour in its various forms. The project outcomes are listed below:

1. Reduced incidence of bonded labour through development of knowledge base and awareness on aspects of bonded labour.
2. Institutional capacity of government (at all levels federal to local); judiciary, police; district vigilance committees; labour inspectorates; employers; workers; parliamentarians; media; religious leaders and enhanced civil society.
3. Improved conditions of Labour, particularly for women in targeted sectors through improved contractual arrangements and the introduction of a regulatory framework and increased social/economic development services for families in targeted areas

Present situation of project

The project is performing well in Outcomes I and II pertaining to awareness raising, institutional capacity building of government. Orientation and awareness raising of government officers has been well received, there have been few contacts with the parliamentarians and the training of labour inspectors has not been undertaken.

The social dialogue between employers and workers is proceeding smoothly. The discussion on the legal framework is underway. The religious scholars have been unified on the issue. Work in Outcome III, direct services to bonded labour, has been delayed. Model contract has still not been developed as the participatory process is taking longer than expected.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The midterm evaluation is aimed at assessing whether the project has really delivered what it planned, and whether all the planned activities were undertaken in line with the international good practices. This requires qualitative and quantitative analysis of implementation; institutional mechanisms, norms and practices; indicating issues and opportunities for improvement and providing recommendations for subsequent action.

Scope:

The midterm evaluation covered all the project components, and assessed its assumptions and overall progress made against the planned activities from the start until March 2007. The evaluation also reviewed how the project-level action links with the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Pakistan.

Objectives:

- Extent of progress towards achievement of outcomes
- Success and failure factors and good practices to refine the project implementation
- Assess processes of activities for stakeholders to decide their course of action for another phase
- study of needs/ expectations expectation of the target groups

Methodology of evaluation

The consultant started the work from the desk review of relevant documents. Since the project activities have been undertaken all over Pakistan, the

consultant visited Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, and Hyderabad, and met with project beneficiaries, ILO and government officials (Labour, Law, Civil Service, and Foreign Service), Employers and Workers Representatives, research scholars, media personnel, representatives of NGOs, human rights activists and current and former bonded labour.

A mini-stakeholder workshop was conducted in Lahore to seek the views of primary stakeholders. The mini-stakeholder workshop planned for Sindh could not be organized because of law and order situation. The evaluation norms, standards, and ethical safeguards have been followed during this evaluation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

It was found that the ILO PEBLISA (Promoting Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia), regional project has contributed significantly to the civic awareness, social empowerment and economic stability of freed bonded labour. It empowered *hari* families in Sindh through a package of micro credit and savings, skill development, a land-lease program, and awareness raising, and linkages. PEBLIP, based on the lessons learnt of PEBLISA, was rolled out by engaging a diverse range of stakeholders.

Project Design

The project design is relevant to the National Plan of Action for the Abolition of Bonded Labour and the Rehabilitation of Freed Bonded Labourers approved in 2001.

Project Effectiveness

The project has made satisfactory progress towards reaching outcome I and II but has lagged behind in reaching outcome III. The project suffered delays and finally started in April 2007 while the activities' implementation did not start before Dec 2007.

The awareness raising component has been very successful. The engagement

with the media and religious scholars were extremely effective. The Friday sermon developed for mass awareness, capacity building of key government institutions, media orientation, technical support to Punjab Government for preparing project documents for the brick kiln project have been the strong implementation areas of the project.

The intervention with the top government training institutions, police, foreign services and judiciary have been rated as extremely useful.

However, the frequent changes in management were a problem as three people led the project during a year and a half. Due to time constraints, maintaining quality and rolling out the direct service delivery component became two of the major challenges. The project picked up those activities in priority that could be put on a fast track. Initiation of activities is well taken care of but continuity and sustenance offers some problems and persistent work in the remaining period of the project, though the short duration of the project leaves little room for consolidating activities.

Project Efficiency

The project strategy was based on utilizing minimum project funds and on maximizing the mobilization of political and financial support from key stakeholders. The project was able to leverage government funds to the tune of RS. 123 million (US\$ 1.5 million) by successfully lobbying with the Punjab Government to allocate funds from the regular Annual Development Programme for starting a project to address bonded labour in the brick kiln industry.

Sustainability

Neither of the ILO constituents or other partners is expected to sustain the awareness, advocacy or legal reform activities since all of them are resource intensive. However, the institutional capacity building with several government departments especially the training academies have a strong possibility of being sustained if these can be consolidated in the second half of the project. PEBLIP would need to develop and disseminate information material in such a manner that it becomes useful for all the training academies reached up to now.

Impact

The Elimination of Bonded Labour in Brick Kilns (EEBLIK) project was developed through technical

collaboration between the PEBLIP and the Labour & Human Resource Department in the Government of Punjab. PEBLIP lobbied successfully with the Punjab Government to allocate resources for the EBLIK project and to select this project as a priority for funding in the Annual Development Programme

PEBLIP worked and convinced the Department of Labour in Punjab to launch a major campaign to help the brick kiln workers and their family members to acquire Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs). This campaign proved very successful as over 11,000 workers and their family members benefited from all over the province.

93% of brick kilns in Punjab have been registered under the Factories Act, 1934 to ensure legal protection to the workers under the labour laws. This is a major step forward in implementing the labour laws on the brick kilns and bringing the exploitative practices of poor wages, unfair deductions, and long working hours to an end.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

PEBLIP may continue with the highly successful awareness activities initiated with employers, workers and religious leaders. The social dialogue between the employers and workers must be further encouraged and sustained.

There is a strong justification for carrying the Friday sermon intervention further and expanding its horizontal coverage. Also more information could be added to the sermon to make it more effective and varied than before.

In terms of legal reforms, along with the experts it is necessary to get access to the parliamentarians to inform them of the current situation and seek political support. A national level seminar can effectively get the message across to the legislators.

The capacity building of government officers needs to be consolidated in the remaining project period. This can be done effectively by developing a booklet containing all necessary information for ready reference, a Website and E-Forum to keep the issue alive among the decision makers in the government.

It would be useful for PEBLIP to support the development of District Plans to Combat Bonded Labour to ensure that these issues are taken seriously at the district level. The development of district plans can be entrusted to partners responsible for direct service delivery. PEBLIP could collaborate with the Punjab Government and come up with complementary direct service interventions to strengthen the Elimination of Bonded Labour in Brick Kilns (EBLIK) project and make its outcomes more visible.

As for the knowledgebase, PEBLIP may commission studies in collaboration with experts in government and private sector to study the role of the tenancy system, payment of minimum wages, abolition of *Peshgi*, and activation of District Vigilance Committees.

Important lessons learned

- Any project can act as a catalyst and be able to leverage resources given the right mix of advocacy, awareness and technical support
- Bonded labour can be made a key priority issue within government and other stakeholders through persistent awareness and advocacy efforts
- There is a strong need to promote a healthy social dialogue among the stakeholders especially employers and workers
- The experience with religious scholars demonstrates that they are most effective in spreading the message on the community level
- The state's training academies offer a unique opportunity for social and human rights issues to be debated and government officers informed and motivated to take the right decision

Potential Good Practices

Interaction and community awareness through religious scholars was a unique practice. The expert technical agency hired by PEBLIP arranged several workshops to prepare material for developing a Friday sermon presenting the Islamic viewpoint on International Labour Standards particularly bonded labour.

This effort can become sustainable with more support from the PEBLIP project and be effective in influencing the public opinion against bonded labour practices.

The idea of approaching government training academies and offering them orientation and awareness on bonded labour worked extremely well. The Federal Judicial Academy, Foreign Service Academy and the Civil Service Academy are all interested in making the intervention as part of their regular training courses. PEBLIP can sustain this intervention by documenting the relevant material for reference and use by the government officers.

The launch of EBLIK project is a pertinent example of strong leadership by the government which has shown its resolve to address bonded labour problem. This was made possible through technical support provided by PEBLIP. Similar support can encourage other provincial/district governments to develop viable plans and secure government funding to implement projects addressing bonded labour.