



Evaluation Summaries

Support for the Preparation of the Mali Time-Bound Programme

Quick Facts

Countries: Mali

Mid-Term Evaluation: March 2009

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

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

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Project Start: Sep 2006

Project End: Sep 2010

Project Code: MLI/06/50/USA

Donor: USA US\$ 3,500,000

Keywords: Child Labour

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

It is the aim of the project that by the end of the project duration, the Government of Mali will have in place a **comprehensive national framework** (TBP action framework) for the elimination of the WFCL designed with the participation and consensus of key stakeholders. In addition, the Government will possess strong and sustainable institutional mechanisms staffed by trained individuals to coordinate and monitor efforts to implement the plan. The project will likewise extend the successful efforts made by the Country Programme on Child Labour and LUTRENA to highlight the negative consequences (for the children and society as a whole) of the continued and massive exploitation of children

in the worst forms of child labour via its support for awareness raising and social mobilization activities. It will enhance existing knowledge about the circumstances in which the children work and strengthen legal measures designed to protect them. The project also aims to **test model pilot interventions** by withdrawing 9000 Malian children from the WFCL, either through prevention or direct withdrawal and reintegration activities. They are children working or at risk of working long hours under dangerous conditions in small scale mines, agricultural fields and urban workshops, boys and especially girls suffering from social isolation and hidden risks serving as domestic workers in urban homes, and children whose labour is exchanged for personal gain by intermediaries, children used as beggars, farm laborers and in commercial sexual exploitation. The project is also working on **expanding opportunities for 1800 urban and rural families** with few other means than their children to meet their subsistence needs.

The project is working in four regions in Mali, Mopti, Kayes, Sikassou, and Segou and in Bamako. Activities to combat child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children and HIV/AIDS cross cut all project activities since these dangers are present in all identified worst forms of child labour and need to be considered in all project approaches. The current project of support to the Mali national TBP has six objectives:

1. By the end of the project, the Government of Mali and its relevant partner organisations are equipped with the necessary mechanisms and have committed themselves to obligate adequate human and financial resources to design, implement and monitor initiatives that address the WFCL through a national TBP.
2. By the end of the project, the legal framework that forbids the WFCL is reinforced, diffused and applied.
3. By the end of the project, the GOM and its relevant partners have adequate mechanisms to collect, update, analyse and store child labour data and are actively using the data.
4. By the end of the project, Malian society is more aware of the negative consequences of the WFCL and is mobilized to combat it.
5. By the end of the project, education and vocational training opportunities for working children or children at risk of exploitation in the WFCL are improved and expanded.
6. By the end of the project, model interventions for withdrawal, prevention and rehabilitation of children in WFCL will have been developed in targeted areas and will be available for scaling up.

Present situation of project

The project document foresaw that activities in regard to the formulation of the TBP should have been initiated rapidly after the beginning of the project, but this has not been done. The challenge for the second half of the project will therefore be to muster the political will of partners, in particular the Ministry of Labour, to work without further delay on the national strategic framework. Failing this, the project will merely have been a collection of activities similar to previous IPEC projects, and miss its crucial (yet more difficult to attain) strategic goal.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

Prior to the present project, the majority of the non-governmental implementing partners were already engaged in activities similar to those of the pilot projects, funded either by previous IPEC projects or by other donors. The choice of implementing partners was therefore for the most part guided by the knowledge, through previous collaboration, that the implementing partners being considered had the reach, experience and capacity to take up new projects. Synergies and cooperation among implementing partners have been more a by-product of common activities than the result of a strategy. There could be room for improvement in this respect, as no network of CSOs (civil society organisations) dedicated to child labour exists in Mali.

Social partners, both on the trade union and employers' side, were rather critical of the project and complained about insufficient involvement in the project. They noted that the project had launched activities in areas in which they themselves were running similar projects and this without sufficient prior consultation and coordination. They also complained that the decisions taken by the project, including in the framework of the NSC, were often *faits accomplis* presented as consultations. These critical comments need not necessarily be taken at face value, as some appear to be the result of insufficient communication within social partners' own structures; nevertheless, they should be taken very seriously by the project, as they could create an atmosphere endangering tripartism.

Methodology of evaluation

The monitoring tools included in the project document are both elaborate and relevant. Means of verification rely both on the reporting carried out by project partners and on direct monitoring by IPEC staff. Generally speaking, reporting by the project has been very detailed and supported by documentary evidence. Furthermore, when questions on reports were forwarded by the donor, the project was in a position to provide an exhaustive response, and this to the satisfaction of USDOL. Ultimately, however, it is difficult to measure the impact of project activities given that a baseline study was not undertaken prior to launching pilot projects. The capacity of project partners in terms of

monitoring, reporting and evaluation was inconsistent and has therefore required training and on-site coaching by project staff. Although there is still room for improvement an acceptable capacity level has been reached.

The Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Report System (DBMR) has recently been initiated, but it already appears now that the complexity and cost of the system will make its use tedious and not necessarily sustainable. The child labour monitoring (CLMS) has also started being implemented. The plan established by the CLMS to forward information from village to central level (i.e. the Child Labour Unit in Bamako) is a four-step procedure, each step being entrusted to four different administrative levels. There could be a danger that information be blocked or delayed at one of these levels, therefore hampering the overall data-collection system.

Main Findings & Conclusions

In terms of pilot projects (also referred to as Action Programmes), the objectives of the project are clear and, as far as the evaluation could determine, likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources. The planned numbers of beneficiaries are therefore most likely to be reached if the activities of the project continue at the present rate. It must be pointed out, however, that, although the objectives in terms of numbers of beneficiaries (9000 children and 1800 families) are quite ambitious, they constitute merely a small fraction of the needs identified at the national level. The regions chosen for the pilot projects are based on previous research and discussions. The number of children beneficiaries and their location, on the other hand, are not based on any particular criteria. Without a baseline, indeed, it was impossible to gauge the needs. The geographic distribution of the target beneficiaries was not based on any specific data, but was rather of an arbitrary determination, based on pre-determined budgets.

One of the remarkable achievements of the project for children, by the GOM and social partners, is the compilation of a list of hazardous occupations for children. Indeed, the draft list was the product of a decentralised and extensive consultation process of all interested parties, including social partners. The draft list, at the time of the evaluation mission, had yet to be formally approved by the Government. Likewise, the draft law on trafficking (another achievement attributable to the project) and the draft decrees on the status of the Child Labour Unit and the National Steering Committee are yet to be adopted. Although further development of laws and regulations is necessary to more effectively combat child labour, the real challenge for Mali is the actual implementation of existing texts. According to the data available, very few cases of prosecutions for violations exist, particularly given the breadth of the phenomenon of child labour in Mali.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

The timeframe for the development and adoption of a national strategic framework seems problematic. Indeed, the project document foresaw that activities in this regard should have been initiated rapidly after the beginning of the project. The challenge for the second half of the project will therefore be to muster the political will of partners, in particular the MoL, to work without further delay on the national strategic framework. Failing this, the project will merely have been a collection of activities similar to previous IPEC projects, and miss its crucial (yet more difficult to attain) strategic goal.

1. ILO/IPEC Mali should without further delay initiate activities with a view to launch the development of a TBP, in the hope that the remaining two years will be sufficient.

2. ILO, probably through its Dakar Regional Office, ought to formally remind the Minister of Labour of the engagement of the Government of Mali to develop, with the technical support of ILO/IPEC Mali, a national strategic framework on the WFCL.
3. The concerned national stakeholders should, with the assistance of ILO/IPEC Mali, revisit the “preliminary national umbrella strategic framework for the elimination of the WFCL” formulated in 2006, with a view to determine how far it is still appropriate to serve as a working basis on which a TBP could be developed.
4. This will not only require high-level discussions with national authorities. Indeed, ILO/IPEC Mali has also built over the years solid relations with local authorities, social partners and civil society, and has initiated contacts with members of Parliament. This basis should be mobilised with a view to create a platform in order to lobby the Government with regard to the development of a national strategic framework on WFCL.
5. More concrete inclusion of child labour will require an increased involvement of ILO in the follow-up discussions within the UN – see also recommendations below in the section entitled ‘Other Agencies and Programmes’.
6. As pilot projects are up and running, ILO/IPEC should take advantage of the time and resources now made available to consolidate good practices and lessons-learned as well as to initiate without further delay the development of a national strategic framework on WFCL (see recommendation above on Clarifying responsibilities with regard to the TBP).
7. ILO should urge the Government to adopt the draft law on trafficking, the list of hazardous occupations and the draft decrees on the status of the Child Labour Unit and the National Steering Committee.
8. ILO/IPEC Mali should initiate a debate, first at the level of the NSC, then at the national level, on ways and means to promote the effective implementation of legal texts prohibiting the WFCL. This process will require dialogue with the concerned national institutions, i.e. the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior. The experience acquired and the lessons learned by social partners, CSOs and UN Agencies in advocating for the promotion and protection of other human rights should be taken into account.
9. ILO/IPEC Mali should consult IPEC, USDOL and SIMPOC with a view to taking a final decision on whether or not a baseline study is still needed at this late stage.
10. In the framework of its discussions with the Ministry of Labour, ILO/IPEC Mali should impress upon the Minister the importance of granting the proper legal status of the NSC. Furthermore, the Minister should be encouraged to raise in Cabinet meetings the question of the involvement of other Ministries in the NSC, with a view to obtain a higher level of representation.
11. The NSC should truly play its role of national platform on child labour; in particular, all ministries involved in combating the WFCL ought to share their plans and information with the NSC; the same should apply to social partners, CSOs and UN Agencies.
12. Members of the NSC should be consulted at the early stages of the

- development of projects, and not merely presented with virtually finalised project documents. Members should also be offered increased opportunities to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of projects.
13. In the framework of its discussions with the Ministry of Labour, ILO/IPEC Mali should impress upon the Minister the importance of granting the proper legal status to the Child Labour Units. Furthermore, the Minister ought to be encouraged to provide the Unit and the regional focal points with the necessary budgetary support to carry out their mandate effectively.
 14. ILO/IPEC Mali and the Child Labour Unit should discuss practical ways and means to raise the visibility of the Unit so as to avoid confusion as to their respective identity. One first step would be to clearly indicate (with the appropriate signs and logo) the presence of the Unit on the premises. Ultimately, the possibility of physically separating the offices of the two entities should be considered.
 15. The capacity of implementing partners should be further developed, especially with regard to management and fundraising.
 16. The possibility of creating a national network or platform of CSOs working on child labour should be discussed with interested stakeholders.
 17. ILO/IPEC Mali should raise its participation and profile in UN meetings. In particular, it should increase its participation in technical and planning working groups involved in following up on the PRSP.
 18. The Dakar Regional ILO Office should increase its involvement (including by its sub-regional child labour specialist) in high-level policy discussions taking place in Bamako and/or delegate sufficient authority to the CTA to do so.
 19. ILO/IPEC Mali should ensure that social partners are kept fully consulted and informed of POS TBP plans and activities. They should be given the opportunity to be more involved, whether or not they ultimately decide to actively participate.
 20. In consultation with ILO Headquarters, the CTA should continue to streamline and develop synergies and cost-sharing between ILO projects in Mali.
 21. With the support of IPEC-PSU, ILO/IPEC Mali should consider ways and means to move beyond factual, quantitative monitoring and reporting and develop qualitative monitoring tools. The implementing partner for the child labour monitoring system (CLMS) should receive further coaching to ensure that the project becomes fully operational without further delay. In particular, the forms used to collect data should be checked for appropriateness and translated in national languages.
 22. Given the potential for the CLMS to experience bottlenecks in the flow of information from grassroots to central level, ILO/IPEC Mali should consider the possibility of collecting a copy of data directly at the village level. This would make it possible to monitor whether or not information is appropriately forwarded to the CLU, so as to be in a position to answer questions such as: has the information reached the CLU? How long did it take? Has action been taken on individual cases and at which level? In cases that bottlenecks exist, at which level(s) are they, and what can be done to address them?