



Evaluation Summaries

Combating Child Labour in the Fireworks Industry of El Salvador

Quick Facts

Countries: *El Salvador*

Final Evaluation: *August 2004*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

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Project Code: *ELS/00/05/060*

Donor: *USA*

Keywords: *Hazardous work, Child Labour
Fireworks*

Extracted from the Main Report

This is an external and independent evaluation of the completed Project “ELS/05/060/P 260 08 225 060 Eradication of Child Labor in the Pyrotechnics Industry of El Salvador”. The Project was drafted in October of 2000. It was put into action in February of 2002, and concluded on June 23, 2004. It was financed by the government of the United States.

To implement two of the Project’s components (Social Protection and Income- Generating Activities), the Project called upon two NGO’s to develop the programs of action, El Bálsamo Association, and Fe and Alegría Association. This was done through IPEC-Costa Rica and IPEC-El Salvador. The Project’s target locations were Ciudad Delgado, Apopa, Mejicanos, and Cuscatancingo.

The Project objectives were:

1. Upon completion of the project, child labor will have been prevented and the children will have been isolated from pyrotechnics production in El Salvador.
2. Upon completion of the project, the organization of social partners, community organizations, labor inspectors, local authorities, and employee and employer organizations will have been strengthened to act against child labor in the pyrotechnics industry of El Salvador.
3. Upon completion of the project, communities, heads of family, factory owners, and local authorities will be mobilized to take actions against child labor.

The target population of the Project was the following: 1007 boys, girls, and adolescents of both sexes and by age group prevented from working in pyrotechnics manufacturing; 1493 girls, boys, and adolescents of both sexes and by age group withdrawn from work in pyrotechnics manufacturing, and 500 beneficiary families, which took part in diverse programs, including workshops aimed at developing income-generating activities. 1311 children and adolescents were initially identified.

This evaluation focused on the Project’s design, execution, and performance, and set out to provide an independent analysis of the Project’s results with respect to its initial

objectives. This was done by analyzing the programs of action, assessing the benefits of the interventions, assessing the sustainability of the actions, analyzing the support networks and connections created, assessing the integrity of the intervention strategy, providing feedback to all parts involved, and providing suggestions for future projects and orientations. An evaluation strategy was developed that included the review of documents, field work supported by a wide array of informants related to the actions carried out by the Program, and a workshop for interested actors to analyze the results assess the sustainability of the efforts once the Project was completed.

Main Findings

The external evaluation revealed that the Base Line Study, as part of the design of the Project completed by a university, had credibility issues. This was especially the case when defining the target population; as a result, time had to be invested to verify the information and to create a Project database. Faults were identified in the design; the misapplication of relevant socio-cultural information in the implementing agencies' proposals for operation resulted in inefficient actions. This was most evident in the execution of the Income-Generating Activities component.

Moreover, the design underestimated the impact that some external factors might have on the success of the Project, such as political cooperation at national and local levels, the pyrotechnics culture of El Salvador, the reaction of producers and factory owners, the beneficiary population's economic expectations, the complexity of the legal framework and the difficulty of legal reform, and the impact of changes in the administrative procedures of IPEC and the donor.

The Project's intervention strategy enjoyed various successes in the areas of Social Protection and Income-Generating Activities:

The identification of 467 children less than 7 years of age belonging to families involved in the pyrotechnics industry. In three

municipalities (Mejicanos, Apopa and Ciudad Delgado), daycare centers received educational material, as well as furniture and monetary aid from the Project, with the partial support of the municipalities. One municipality collaborated with the pay of schoolteachers.

The withdrawal of 684 boys, girls, and adolescents of both sexes from pyrotechnics manufacture and their reinsertion in the school system, with support from the local schools and the development of a school support system with four different reinforcement centers. The Project also financed work materials, provided schools with educational kits, and organized recreational, cultural, and sporting activities. These efforts had a strong effect on the families and the children targeted; they value education and hold it as a priority, their perspective on life was widened, and children are significantly more aware of their rights as well as the risks involved with pyrotechnics manufacture.

The training sessions and workshops aimed at creating awareness and instilling a sense of immediacy with respect to the eradication of child labor in pyrotechnics manufacturing to a wider audience, and effective press and radio campaign.

The awareness-creation in families with child workers was an important element that favored the withdrawal. Mothers and fathers were able to count on school support groups for their children, personal reinforcement workshops, counselling, and training in income-generating activities. The awareness-creation directed at other actors has been a key aspect to place child labor eradication in fireworks production on the national agenda. However, this requires follow-up to guarantee sustainability.

The vocational training received by adolescents in areas such as computer maintenance, and metal work, proved effective. It isn't necessarily sustainable unless further training is offered and job placement according to skills learned is carried forth.

The Project was not successful with the Income-Generating Activities component. A strategy was established that had coordination problems between the two implementing agencies, and the agency responsible for this component was late to start its operations. It met with resistance from the target population because of the unwillingness to take out loans and leave behind the relative income security offered by fireworks production. As a result, there was a limited use of the available funds for the planned actions.

A renegotiation of these funds provided for a different use: the purchase of land (with IPEC funds) to build a model workshop for the production of pyrotechnics without child laborers, piloted by a group of associated workers and supported by means of training and the development productive activities. It was difficult to implement changes in the framework of donor requirements regarding remaining funds from Income-Generating Activities, and the Project was in a situation of negotiation at the closing of operations that this evaluation was unable to assess.

Workshops were offered to families on how to take out loans, credit procedures, income-generating activities, investment consulting, and adolescents received vocational training with the help of Fe and Alegría Association. Many families have been able to develop their own productive activities and job placement has been relatively successful.

The creation of local economic support committees met with delays at a Municipal level. Once organized, municipal personnel were trained in all these areas by the implementing agency responsible for this component. The Project was committed to making the execution very demanding to guarantee the achievement of the proposed objectives. In this regard, the Project had two different coordination efforts during its two years of operation, which affected its execution and development. The first coordination effort was inefficient and resulted in delays that affected the Project's actions as a whole. The second coordination effort boosted all components and actions.

Nevertheless, the overall Project, the degree of impact, and the sustainability of the actions are endangered unless the efforts are succeeded by a 1-year follow-up and reinforcement phase.

Important support networks were created that still need strengthening. This includes the public sector: MINEDUC, MINTRAB, INSA, Mayor's Offices, the Ministry of Defense, the National Firefighter's Organization, the Ministry of Health, and local and community organizations.

The Project lacked systematic studies that could support the programs of action and that could be executed in the context of a sustainability phase. The Project's execution had important deficiencies during the initial coordination; the development of planned actions was stunted and reflected upon the entire Project, and there was an ineffective and informal communications structure that did not allow for a proper coordination between the two implementing agencies. The agencies themselves were lacking in management during the first year and there was a poor organization for the implementation of the programs of action. The Project's most significant and effective actions were executed at the Project's end, which compromises the impact and sustainability of the overall efforts.

This evaluation carried out a stakeholder workshop to assess the efforts that needed to be sustained; and in which it was agreed that a sustainability phase for at least a year would be proposed to the donor. This phase would be focused on keeping the children in school, maintaining the developed prevention strategies, and strengthening the awareness-creation strategies aimed at families and community sectors. It would also be focused on guaranteeing the commitments and support promised by the Municipalities, INSA, MINTRAB, MINEDUC, the Ministry of Defense and the National Firefighter's Organization, to support the productive sectors with the collaboration of El Bálsamo. To make this activity successful, support and external consulting services would be included.

The evaluation concludes by offering recommendations to the different entities involved, outlining which efforts are effective at contributing to the eradication of child labor in fireworks production, and suggesting methods that will strengthen the support needed to make the elimination of child labor a reality.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

It is important for IPEC to propose a sustainability phase to the donor of no less than six months in duration, based on a plan that will strengthen the results appreciated thus far and complete specific actions that will benefit the target population.

1. It is necessary to provide continuity to the prevention and scholastic reinforcement efforts directed at the population that was worked with in 2004, especially because the children are in the middle of the school year and it would seem unwise to eliminate the support they have received thus far and crush academic expectations created.
2. Teacher and administrative personnel have valuable experiences from an educational perspective, in communities hoping to keep their sons and daughters in school, and these must not be lost. A progressive process delegating actions in these communities could be implemented for a year: six months to work with community groups that would be responsible for this process.
3. An awareness-creation effort has been initiated that is directed at teachers and school administration personnel. It is recommended to strengthen these actions with a reinforcement plan in the schools. This plan would include the identification and follow-up of children withdrawn from fireworks production, support for awareness-creation directed at the families, and support for school infrastructure.
4. Strengthen the efforts at awareness-creation on the subject of child labour eradication in the pyrotechnics industry, especially in the illegal production of fireworks in households, among governmental institutions.
5. It is urgent to consolidate the withdrawal of boys and girls from the pyrotechnics industry, counting on the support of INSA and MINTRAB for monitoring and follow-up.
6. It is urgent that the adolescents who received professional training participate in reinforcement workshops and find stable work. An accompanying effort of this sort is essential to guarantee lasting results.
7. Document successful experiences of the prevention and withdrawal of child labour in pyrotechnics through the use of qualitative studies. These should be investigative in nature and of high quality, to allow the ILO a widened perspective on interventions directed at similar target populations.
8. Strengthen the synergies created between local governments, economic support committees, school boards, and community leaders by establishing local programs of action aimed at those people who have developed income-generating activities.
9. Identify the needed support, physical, human, and other for the centers of scholastic reinforcement. Universities can act as excellent collaborators and could carry out small projects with the students. Municipalities must be actively committed in this respect.
10. It would be convenient that the commercialization points of Jarica and Lazo that exist, the five kiosks and the workshops created receive follow-up for at least six months by El Bálsamo so other new businesses of pyrotechnics workers receive economic support.

11. The ACOPILTI project must come to fruition. It is important that these pyrotechnics manufacturers not only buy the land, but receive consulting and support to build the model workshop, administer it, and manage the finances.
12. Carry on with the negotiations with the Municipalities so that, through municipal ordinances, participation of children in the production on fireworks is controlled, and families receive needed support. The local governments need to define the means of promoting child labour eradication. Given the illegal nature of fireworks production, it is advisable that the municipalities contribute through means of ordinances to regulate the fireworks production that put children at risk, and that these ordinances be normative means to eradicate child labour.
13. It is important to take advantage of the relatively easy organization of meetings with government institutions, which have prioritized the eradication of child labour in pyrotechnics production in their agendas, but still have other legal matters pending. The National Fire fighter's Organization is of particular importance, along with the Ministry of Defense, in the definition of actions and the focus of such actions.
14. It would be beneficial to the sustainability plan to consider the participation and coordination of personnel specifically hired to develop the Project.

Other recommendations include:

IPEC: Go over and assess the administrative process directed at the execution of projects based on the NGO structure and effort review management, in light of the analysis of procedures, including Project coordination and the reabsorption of technicians who have worked with the beneficiary population.

El Bálsamo: The first priority of the Project is to carry through the commitments agreed upon, especially with ACOPILTI. Those that are part of this cooperative have invested valuable time in the creation of the cooperative, and there are initiatives that must come to fruition regarding the collaboration to complete the structural plans for the model workshop. The second priority is to provide consulting and follow-up to the persons that took out credits.

Fe and Alegría: It is necessary for this NGO to continue with the informal education efforts, the training aimed at female heads of households, and to define its programs of action and how to take advantage of what was learned during the Project's implementation. It would be regretful to let this experience go to waste.

IPEC-El Salvador: It would be desirable for IPEC to document Project experiences as part of its academic body of information. It would be convenient for IPEC to take an active role in the elimination of situations that jeopardize the efficiency of the interventions and the flow of information, and guarantee the permanence of successful actors.

Technical Commission: Must keep working to support the legal framework in place that aims to eradicate child labour in fireworks productions and ACOPILTI.

Municipalities of Ciudad Delgado, Apopa and Mejicanos: Guarantee the necessary support to make sure that scholastic reinforcement centers are maintained, new productive activities remain sustainable, eradication of child labour in pyrotechnics production is promoted, and the activity is safe for all inhabitants.

Ministry of Defense and Fire fighter's Organization: it is urgent that a plan for the gradual elimination of low-end pyrotechnics workshops from households is developed that won't threaten the activity, guarantee its development, and eliminate the use of child labour. A collaborative effort with the Municipalities is essential. It would be best if Ciudad Delgado would spearhead these efforts.