



Evaluation Summaries

Supporting the time-bound programme on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in the Republic of the Philippines

Quick Facts

Countries: *Philippines*

Final Evaluation: *July 2007*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent Technical Area: Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

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Executive Summary of the report

1.1 Introduction

In 2001, there were about 4 million economically active children in the Philippines, aged 5 to 17 years, which constitutes 16.2% of the total population of children in the same age group. Sixty percent, or 2.4 million children, were exposed to hazardous working conditions. As compared to 1995 figures an increase in absolute numbers has been observed of 12%.

Impressive educational enrolment rates have not translated in higher productivity and incomes.

In the absence of reliable data, it is estimated that there are 155,000 children who work in the six priority areas of the National Programme against Child Labour (NPACL). At the onset of the project, ILO-IPEC has commissioned a number of rapid assessments and baseline studies which provide a profile on the magnitude of these six priority areas. During the past decade and with the Philippines' ratification of ILO Convention 182, in 2000, the goal of eliminating the WFCL has become a priority in the

country's development agenda. In June 2002, the Philippine Time Bound Programme (PTBP) was launched, which forms a major component of the NPACL. Phase I of the Project of Support to the PTBP started on 30 September 2002, and was extended beyond the initial completion date of 31 December 2006, by another eight months. The project is addressing two strategic components: (1) Strengthening the enabling environment for the elimination of the WFCL and (2) Reducing the incidence of selected WFCL through direct action for child labourers and their families.

The Time-bound Programme as a whole is responsible for 44,500 children, where ILO-IPEC was responsible for withdrawing 19,000 children and preventing 2,500 children from exploitative labour, for a total of 21,500. A breakdown of this figure shows that the Project of Support was to provide 14,500 children (2,500 at risk and 12,000 working children) with transitional education services or vocational training. Additionally, 7,000 working children aged 15-17 years were expected to be withdrawn from hazards and abuse at work. The Project Document stipulates that the project will be implemented in tandem with the USDOL-funded Education Initiative (ABK). ABK is responsible for another 23,000 children.

ILO-IPEC has fielded the present Expanded Final Evaluation (EFE) mission to (1) determine if the project achieved its stated Immediate Objectives, (2) build off the findings and recommendations of the 2005 Mid-Term Evaluation, (3) provide guidance and scope and design of a second phase, and (4) field a separate Target Group Impact Assessment Study, the results of which will be integrated into the EFE.

1.2 Project design

The excellent problem analysis of the project document indicates to what extent child labour is correlated with poverty and how modestly especially the rural poor have access to affordable and good quality education, which is preparing the children for skills in demand on the labour market. ILO-IPEC's holistic approach, strengthening the livelihood conditions of households with working children, or children at risk, through livelihood skills and social safety nets, as a compensation for the "loss of an economical asset" is an appropriate solution to tackle the root causes of the problem. However convincing this holistic approach, given the relatively limited resources and very short-term interventions, in face of the magnitude of the problem, it can hardly be expected that the project is in a position to provide a "*most significant contribution to the elimination of the WFCL*" as stated in the Strategic Programme Impact Framework. Merely first experiences can be tried out which, when proven successful, can be validated and scaled up. In order to make solutions work, considerable political commitment is needed in favour of equitable development and legislation in various fields. Many of these frame-conditions are beyond the management capacities of the ILO.

The decision to make AP implementation conditional on the establishment of a master-list of potential beneficiaries by external research teams did not prove to be a judicious one. The use of different formats and imprecision have led to lengthy delays in the implementation of APs and, moreover, it became a source of conflict between the two projects, ABK and ILO-IPEC PoS. The master-list did not contain information on household economy and for that reason this has, at times, led to insecure selection of beneficiaries (not systematically based on poverty criteria) and to a split in the mutually supportive approaches which, according to the Strategic Programme Impact Framework, were supposed to be implemented in conjunction: targeting members of the same household simultaneously through education services and strengthening of incomes.

It would be appropriate to pay tribute to the way in which the project document, progress, status reports and APs scrupulously respect the ILO-IPEC logical framework structure. In this way, it potentially becomes an effective instrument for monitoring progress and for steering implementation strategies, provided that the therefore required resources and capacity are made available and that planned activities are allowed to be readjusted through activity monitoring. In fact, in the monitoring of the project and its constituent APs more attention was given to quantitative monitoring of outputs than to the measurement of sustainable outcomes. Critical

assumptions which were a necessary condition for success were mainly formulated at a macro level but were lacking at field level. Detailed activity planning, sometimes four years ahead has no sense.

In order to effectively contribute to the elimination of the WFCL, the two project strategic components need to be intrinsically linked. On the one hand, in order to create awareness on the relevancy of child labour policies and legislation, the later need to be fed with concrete experiences. On the other hand, direct action should be placed in an appropriate legal framework in order to legitimate action, and should be complemented by policies contributing to tackling the root causes of child labour (equitable development, poverty alleviation, access to affordable basic services, etc.). In spite of a high commitment to child labour, this interrelated aspect has not been respected everywhere because certain APs were allowed to be developed and implemented in isolation and were not always addressing the direct action components in a holistic manner.

The question of adequate duration is difficult to answer. According to the logical framework methodology, immediate objectives ought to be defined in such a way, that they can be fully achieved within the implementation period and by doing so the project contributes to the development objective. In the present case, the immediate objectives have been defined as if they were development objectives. The only time-bound standard set (in the TBP) is 2015 by which the 75% reduction in WFCL should be achieved, but no process and time-bound steps have been incorporated in the formulation of the project's immediate objectives.

1.3 Delivery process

Two major aspects have caused constraints and delays in project implementation: (1) the master-listing of project beneficiaries, and (2) the linkage with the ABK project. The two are interrelated. To this we would like to add the early resignation of the first CTA. By the time of the MTE, in November 2005, only nine APs were under implementation and another 31 in the pipeline. In order to achieve the project targets, USDOL approved to extend the project duration by eight months. Given, on the one hand, the apparent need to develop, under time pressure, many APs and, on the other hand, the intensive screening by ILO-IPEC, this resulted in several APs which were cut short in duration and which, thereby, proved to be too ambitious for the remaining time-span.

The big challenge during project implementation was to aim for sustainable outcomes, by creating

synergies and complementarities between the outputs of both sets of strategic components. Given the huge time-pressure and relatively limited absorption and implementation capacity of implementing agencies, resulting in relatively modest funding, this highly time and energy absorbing coordination effort was not given the attention, which was needed. Because of a lack of active field monitoring and strategic project steering, as well as due to pressure for achieving numerical targets, various agencies rather concentrated on outputs than on outcome.

Methodological flaws were not always sufficiently corrected and opportunities for synergy not sufficiently availed. The better quality programmes were found with (1) the more professional and development-oriented organizations with a long term presence and thereby well-established constituencies and alternative sources of funding, (2) with enlightened leaders, and (3) where inter-agency collaboration was coordinated best. Also many community-based organizations demonstrated commitment but lacked matching funds to sustain activities initiated under the auspices of the project. The project has been innovative in creating an enabling environment at a meso level. In this manner an approach was chosen, in line with the national policy on decentralized governance.

Apart from a few very successful examples, time dedicated to direct action has been too short to be conclusive on the long-term suitability and affordability of solutions. Moreover, many APs have been developed and implemented in relative isolation and lack external and internal coherence. A future project will, therefore, have to build synergies between mutually supportive actions within the context of the two strategic components. By its sheer nature such a holistic approach should be regionally packaged and coordinated.

1.4 Implementation arrangements

International and national inputs have been of good quality. The ILO-IPEC team is extremely motivated. IPEC partnership in the Philippines works through a broad-based and strongly committed alliance of government, employers, workers, non-government and civil society organizations. Many of these partnerships had been developed well before the PoS was launched, during IPEC's work in programmes on trafficking, mining/quarrying, domestic services, agriculture plantations, pyrotechnics, deep-sea fishing and prostitution.

1.5 Performance

Relevance: The country continues to suffer from the problems that have given rise to child labour:

widespread poverty, high unemployment rates, high costs of going to school, lack of access to school system, unfriendly school and learning environments, curriculum not relevant to local socio-economic and cultural environments, and parents themselves lacking and not valuing education. Therefore it can be said that the problems which gave rise to the project still exist. At the same time, the project has been instrumental in modestly trying out first experiences to tackle the root causes through APs at meso and micro level, which ought to be brought to maturity before considering scaling up to a policy level.

Effectiveness: The project's specific contribution was especially to support the NCLC to take down child labour friendly policies and legislation to the regional level. This had led to the creation of child labour committees at provincial, municipal and local levels. The project has also been very instrumental in making education policies more responsive to the needs of child labour, working children and children at risk. The project has been particularly effective in creating an enabling environment (immediate objectives 1 to 5) and it has boosted ILO-IPEC's ongoing work in this field. With regards to "direct action" experiences are varied. Many APs have been too short to prove the appropriateness and affordability of solutions, whereas again others have been very convincing. The later were mostly implemented by implementing agencies with a long-term field presence or where there was a strong inter-agency coordination.

Child labour monitoring systems developed at various administrative levels vary in quality and frequently do not go beyond a simple listing of child beneficiaries. High commitment for child labour is hardly ever matched by corresponding funds which make a sustained continuation of activities initiated under the project questionable. With regards to enhancing family income and access to social safety nets, the experience is just as varied. A small number of implementing agencies managed to develop self-financed schemes of micro-credit and micro-health insurance, avoiding external dependencies on donor funding. Such credit schemes were linked to market-oriented skill training. Again other agencies contributed marginally to the strengthening of livelihood and entrepreneurial skills by providing training in skills with a questionable market potential and added value. Many parents interviewed, appreciated this training but did not find access to productive investments. Often livelihood strengthening and educational support did not target the same families, breaking the magic of the holistic approach. AT odds with our limited field

observations, the April 2007 TPR mentions 4,471 adult family members reporting increased incomes. With regards to actions in primary, vocational and non-formal education and other non education related services for children, it has been observed that the USDOL target of 21,500 was exceeded by 37%. All 29,388 children effectively reached were supported through education-related services. The composition between boys and girls was perfectly balanced.

The unique contribution of the project was in Alternative Learning Systems, helping working children to reintegrate the formal schooling system through the so-called Accreditation and Equivalency Programme. Low passage marks can be explained by a too short duration of these weekend courses (longest contract observed in impact assessment was six months). Experiences in vocational training (e.g., SIFI and the Balacod City Government) show how market-oriented skill training can be effectively linked to job placement.

Sustainability: Institutional and financial sustainability varied over regions and partners. The biggest challenge at the level of communities and households is the mobilization of financial resources for school fees. The continued use of external subsidies maintains a dependency on donors and sponsors which does not appear to be a model apt for replication. The country's decentralization policy provides an opportunity to levy local taxes to guarantee that there will be affordable education for all. An alternative is the development of a self-financed savings credit scheme, as successfully practiced by AWFCI.

1.6 Target Group Impact Assessment

A separate Impact Study has been implemented according to ILO-IPEC's Tracer Methodology. Its results show that the project has modestly contributed to a decline in child labour and an increase in formal school enrolment. During the implementation of the programme itself, the number of children in the fishing sector who continued to attend school is still high. There are fewer children enrolled in school in the mining and quarrying sector but the number of cases is minimal. Compared to children working in the fishing industry, there are lower numbers of beneficiaries who continued to attend school in the pyrotechnics sector and in commercial sex.

In addition, with regards to former beneficiaries, it is noteworthy that after attending all programmes or receiving services, a significant number of respondents have continued or decided to attend formal school. 41% of the adult respondents reported an improvement in health conditions and 55% said

that the economic condition of the family had improved. A majority of respondents in mining and CSEC believe that work is acceptable for children below 12.

Positive assessments on "ALS helping children facilitate their re-entry in school" and "increases in household" income have not been substantiated by the mission's own observations.

1.7 Recommendations

Project design

- Complement studies on child labour by the use of the so-called "participatory livelihood assessments" at a household level.
- Detailed activity planning to be finalized as APs progress, even as Project immediate objectives and expected results are respected.
- Quantitative targets to be set as a function of implementing and absorption capacity of IAs.
- Indicate process indicators: a critical time path linked to a minimum of time-bound results.

Delivery process

- Develop a standardized CLMS to be coordinated at regional level, with support of all partners.
- Livelihood and education support should not be shorter than two years.
- While maintaining the present status quo with ABK, reinstate coordination for shared learning and creating synergy.
- Capacity strengthening of staff and partners in participatory planning, monitoring and learning systems, as well as in livelihood assessment.
- Pursue an institutional learning culture. Systematically validate and share experiences with partners. Accept weaknesses as an opportunity.
- Solicit ILO support in enterprise promotion and micro-credit.
- Put emphasis on the development of institutionally and financially sustainable solutions.

Gradually increase counterpart contribution in order to avoid external donor dependency.

- Follow a packaged regional approach of mutually supportive APs under DOLE coordination, in a limited number of regions.

Performance

- Avail the opportunity to match training in market-oriented livelihood and entrepreneurial skills with financial capital generated through savings and credit schemes (see AWFCI).
- Support to strengthening livelihood/enterprise skills and credit to be made conditional on effective willingness to withdraw children from WFCL and to join an educational support programme.
- Match vocational training with job placement through coordination with private sector.
- Sidetrack non performing implementing agencies during implementation according to commonly agreed minimal quality criteria.
- Aim for economies of scale: create a critical mass of beneficiaries to justify overheads.
- Support decentralized government in levying decentralized and progressive school taxes in order to complement user fees and achieve affordable education for all.
- Avoid strong peaks in formulation, approval and monitoring of APs: distribution in time.
- ILO to link up to equitable development policies (collective bargaining, continued agrarian reform).

1.8 Good practices and lessons learned

Good practices: (1) AWFCI in micro-credit and micro-health insurance, (2) QK in agriculture extension on land obtained after agrarian reform, (3) SIFI in linking vocational training to job placement, and (4) BIDLISIW in child and family healing, recovery and re-integration.

Lessons learned:

- Quantitative targets to be based on implementation capacity of implementing agencies.
- Identification of beneficiaries to be an integrated part of mandate to implementing agencies.
- Integration of “participatory livelihood assessment” throughout beneficiary identification.
- Use of standardized, regionally managed CLMS, instead of master-listing, gradually fed with results of participatory livelihood assessments.
- Strategic project components to be implemented in a mutually supportive way.

- Elements constituting ILO-IPEC’s approach to be implemented in a holistic way; focus on households.
- Packaged regional approaches provide better synergy.
- Match self-financed saving-credit schemes with training in entrepreneurial skills.
- The elimination of the WFCL should be accompanied by measures of equitable development (collective bargaining, continued agrarian reform, progressive taxation).