



Evaluation Summaries

Emergency response to child labour in selected Tsunami affected areas in Sri Lanka

Quick Facts

Countries: *Sri Lanka*

Mid-Term: *November 2006*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

Evaluation Team: *Sonali Moonesinghe*

Project Code: *SRL/05/50/USA*

Donor: *United States*

Keywords: *Crisis response, child labour, natural disaster, human trafficking*

Background & Context

Project) has been designed to respond to both existing and emerging post-tsunami child labor (CL) issues in support of the country's recovery, rehabilitation and development process. The project has adopted a dual strategy in its approach in addressing CL issues: (1.) Creating an enabling environment through policy work; and (2) targeted interventions to prevent reduce CL.

All direct intervention programs are naturally aligned with and support the government's efforts at implementing ILO Convention 138 and Convention 182 to prevent children from entering the worst forms of CL and those who are at risk of dropping out. Sri Lanka has a relatively advanced legislative framework, and key policy measures are in place that supports ILO/IPEC projects including the present Post-

Tsunami Response Project. ILO has made significant contributions towards the development of legislation and policy relating to child labor, (CL) through advisory, technical and programmatic input. The project is also supported by solid institutional structures that focus on work relating to childcare and child protection issues. This has provided a strong, supportive environment for the post-tsunami response project, in order to deal with existing and emerging CL challenges.

Project objectives including those of action programs, appear to be designed to reinforce and complement each other at various levels. Work relating to policy and capacity building for instance contributes towards prevention of child labor in the medium to long-term. On the other hand, direct action programs are a means to translate key policy measures into practical, concrete interventions at local/community level. This dual strategy in the overall approach of IPEC in other projects, have been further emphasized to meet the emergency needs of affected children vulnerable to exploitation during and in the aftermath of disaster. The effectiveness of this approach in the context of IPEC is more visible in terms of its preventive and protective role. The project's emphasis on educational interventions indicates the recognition that it is central to prevent and reduce WFCL, particularly during major disasters and increased vulnerabilities.

The project has given priority to education as an important and effective preventive strategy to eliminate CL, in particular the worst forms, in order to address the objective of eliminating CL post-tsunami, in support of national policy. Project programs therefore address education in non-formal environments, particularly through remedial programs for children whose education was affected by the tsunami as well as those who had dropped out before the tsunami. The programs have evolved into extending educational services beyond the post-tsunami emergency context, to those who are more vulnerable and at risk of exploitative CL in the current context.

Important factors that have contributed to the overall effectiveness in achieving project goals so far are closely linked to the following:

- i. A dual strategy focusing on creating enabling environments combined with targeted interventions;
- ii. The project's primary model of intervention through Community Centers newly established through the project or further strengthened and/or extended. The basic modality of direct action programs involve an area-based integrated approach emphasizing the laying of groundwork by creating an enabling environment and establishment of institutional structures that can be sustained at local/district levels, to reach affected children, parents and their families. The CC serves as the main frame within which education interventions as well as non-educational interventions take place;
- iii. The project's selection of key implementing partners for direct interventions, with strong national and/or local community networks and a solid track record in community development; Emergency response to Child Labour in selected Tsunami affected areas in Sri Lanka;
- iv. The projects integrated a holistic approach in addressing CL issues, concentrating on prevention efforts at local community and village levels has been adopted in its action programs. The multi-prong strategy to deal with CL integrates education, livelihood

opportunities, social mobilization and health services in program activities.

Implementing challenges have been faced on the ground which includes those beyond the control of project management. The overall country's security/conflict situation, political events and state bureaucracy generated delays clearly present obstacles for creating enabling environments and ensuring sustainability. The conflict's impact has been felt significantly more in the eastern district. Although the project location in the district has not had a direct impact of armed conflict so far, it has experienced the indirect fallout and has to absorb the periodic influx of IDP movements into the area. The region continues to be highly unstable with escalating armed violence.

The effectiveness of the project's action programs in terms of progress and potential achievements should be considered within the broader context of the country's social-economic climate, cultural specificities, political environment in a 'conflict in transition' phase and the post-tsunami disaster. The project could benefit from a better understanding of implementing challenges it has faced, and could continue to face in the future. In light of the recent, rapid escalations of armed violence and conflict², an acknowledgement of the current situation is important. Conflict conditions that have gone beyond a mere security situation may require an adjustment in project strategy that acknowledges the current conditions, provides clear guidelines and strengthens overall program monitoring. These are important considerations for the continuation of programs in high risk areas for the remainder of this project.

State implementing partners have faced delays at the start of action programs (APs) due to national elections, change of governments leading to the bifurcation and/or creation of new ministries and portfolios. Re-structuring of government agencies, appointment of relevant officers within partner agencies, has

caused delays in the start of APs. Bureaucratic procedure has also slowed down the process of initiating and carrying out AP activities. Additionally, poor infrastructure, lack of transportation and distances has created difficulties for beneficiary access to program activities in certain locations.

An optimally efficient and effective response to a major disaster, in order to achieve results and meet project objectives, is closely linked to the overall country context and implementing challenges outside project management control. The effects of these challenges can be minimized to some extent through the use of appropriate strategies. In order to address CL, the project has primarily focused on preventive measures. This is easier to achieve and more cost-effective in combating the problem of child labor in the long-term.

The likelihood of project sustainability will be determined by political instability, government changes, reorganization and restructuring of state implementing partner institutions/agencies and the escalation of armed conflict. However, the existence of the following factors indicate a strong likelihood for program sustainability: a) political commitment through a solid legislative and policy background, IPECs prior work and its ongoing, supportive policy work with government institutions; b) The selection of key partners who have shown the ability to sustain prior IPEC projects and are now linking up with these projects/agencies to carry out present program activities. c) The integration and cooperation of multiple actors within the community who play a significant role in CL preventive activities ensure continuity after project end; d) Partner contributions towards programs, provide a sense of ownership of the project, and generate a vested interest in the overall success of program activities, essential for the continuity of benefits for the community.

Since the review began the cease fire agreement which was in place has disintegrated and the violence and armed

conflict has escalated rapidly in a matter of a few months. The review noted unstable conditions previously, but has highlighted the situation in the final draft as it could have serious implications for the remainder of program activities in high risk areas.

Emergency response to Child Labour in selected Tsunami affected areas in Sri Lanka. The present Tsunami Response Project as in all IPEC programs in general, emphasizes an integrated, holistic approach in addressing the issue of CL prevention. The IPEC project has been most effective in meeting the immediate needs of affected children through interventions that focus on reducing and preventing CL. IPEC's adaptation of its role in meeting the demands of an emergency should be considered in the context of a medium-term emergency response within the broader aim of addressing longer-term CL issues. Despite challenges, the project has achieved its overall objectives to a large extent in creating an enabling environment through policy work, legal change and achievement of its targeted intervention goals to prevent and reduce CL. Programs show a positive outcome through a range of services offered to children and the community at this stage of the project.

Based on the observations and findings this evaluation has made recommendations that can serve to facilitate, improve and support the qualitative progress and effectiveness of project objectives for the remainder of the project's duration as follows:

Recommendations:

Expand & Strengthen Monitoring Mechanisms stronger program monitoring mechanisms are required in a country where the overall security in general is deteriorating and regional instability in program locations is increasing;

- **Strengthen Existing District/Local Level Institutions** strengthening and expanding DCPCs/DCDCs in all districts where the project's program activities are implemented,

will create stronger DCDCs and encourage the cooperation among district authorities dealing with CL issues;

- **Establish and Strengthen Inter-Agency Links** dealing with post-disaster emergencies, as a jointly coordinated effort among agencies would be more appropriate in the context of ILO/IPEC in responding to emergencies;

- **Factor in Additional Time for Overcoming Procedural Delays** in Project Implementation into the overall project duration period;

- **Develop and Maintain A Comprehensive Database** as a Central Knowledgebase on child specific information and CL issues;

- **Development and Support for Local, Contextual Specific Adjustments** through Educational Interventions in the Formal or alternatively, Non-Formal Education Sector;

- **Strengthen Mechanisms and Develop Indicators** to Track Institutional Capacity Building Progress;

- **Additional Incentives and Support for Capacity Strengthening** and Building Programs;

- **Minimize the Impact of Cultural Practices/Attitudes** and Maximize Child/Beneficiary Participation’

- **Increase Program Emphasis on Youth**, in particularly the 14-18 age group through Educational Interventions;

- **Increase Support and Facilitate Accessibility** to participate in Program Activities;

- **Expand and Strengthen Community-Based/Community Driven** Child Labor Monitoring Bodies;

- **Stronger Emphasis on Publicity and Dissemination** of CL Issues Within Program Activities;

- **Additional Support** for the Continuity of Remedial Classes through alternative means.