Evaluation Summaries

International Labour Office

Combating exploitive child labour through education in Togo

(Also available in French)

Quick Facts

Countries: *Togo*

Mid-Term: *April 2010*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent external*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *Conducted by Macro International*

Evaluation Team: *Stephane Jeannet*

Project Code: *TOG/07/01/USA*

Donor: *United States*

Keywords: *Child Labour, Education*

Executive Summary (excerpt from full report)

On September 30, 2007, the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) was awarded a US$5 million cooperative agreement to withdraw and prevent children from engaging in domestic service, rural agriculture, the urban informal sector, and trafficking, as well as commercial sexual exploitation in Togo. Through the provision of direct educational services, the project targets 10,000 children—4,000 for withdrawal and 6,000 for prevention—from those sectors of exploitive child labor listed above. In addition, it targets 1,000 other children through non-educational services. The project implements activities in all areas of the country, but focuses primarily on the Lomé, Maritime, Plateau, and Central regions.

This midterm evaluation of the Combating Exploitive Child Labor Through Education in Togo Project (CECLET), conducted in April 2010, addresses issues of project design, implementation, management, lessons learned, and replicability, and provides recommendations for current and future projects. The evaluator visited a selection of project sites representing a cross section of sites across targeted child sectors as well as geographical, social, and economic contexts. All categories of stakeholders were interviewed, including ILO-IPEC and implementing agency staff, national and local government officials, community members, child and parent beneficiaries, and United States Department of Labor (USDOL) management.

So far, most of the project's focus has been on setting the groundwork (i.e., activities related to fact-finding and analysis, capacity-building, and awareness-raising). The delivery of direct services to beneficiaries has fallen victim to a number of difficulties and delays but is now underway. However, at midterm, the project is behind on its targets, and its budget appears to be insufficient to carry out planned activities in their entirety.

The project is to be praised for its achievements at the local level in raising awareness of the dangers of child labor and the benefits of school attendance, as well as in successfully convincing local stakeholders—village chiefs, elders and committees, as well as teachers and parents—of the necessity to combat the phenomenon. The project has also created a dynamic leading to increased school attendance in targeted localities, not only by direct beneficiaries but also by children that have not received any of the project's direct services.

The evaluation also found that identification of beneficiaries was somewhat uneven due to a flawed baseline survey. Beneficiary identification was expected to rely on the findings of a national child labor survey, but the baseline survey was not completed on time. The project nevertheless found ways to address most of these shortcomings.

The monitoring systems instituted by the project document, most notably the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring Report (DBMR), have proven cumbersome and highly intensive in terms of financial and human resources. A disproportionate amount of human and financial resources have been spent on fulfilling reporting requirements for the DBMR, making this aspect of the project more costly than anticipated in the budget.

At the local level, the proliferation of committees has created an uneven picture. Here again, the project will have to take further steps to help streamline initiatives with a view to fostering synergies (including with other external stakeholders' own projects in the same locations) and ensuring that child labor remains on the agenda. At the same time, some mechanisms, such as the Child Labor Unit and the National Steering Committee, are not entirely fulfilling their originally envisioned mandates at this stage.

Additionally, the evaluator found the relationship between the government and the project to be somewhat strained due to a misunderstanding of the role of the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA). There were also some tensions involving the fact that the CTA is an expatriate.

The key recommendations from this evaluation are:

In its second implementation phase, CECLET ought to adopt a more strategic vision and move away from the project-centric approach, which was taken until now because of the late start-up and the need to catch up on activities. More specifically, the project should ensure that the national strategy for combating child labor through education, vocational training, and apprenticeship is followed by an action plan.

The continued reluctance of the Togolese Government (as well as of other key stakeholders) to accept the cost associated with the post of the expatriate CTA is clearly problematic as it does not contribute to a serene partnership. USDOL and ILO-IPEC should discuss the issue with a goal of finding a solution to this problem.

Government representatives spoke of fast-tracking initiatives related to education, notably in the framework of debt relief that should occur in the summer of 2010. Togo has also been awarded US$45 million to address the Education for All initiative. Whether the fast-tracking will actually happen, and whether combating child labor will be fully included in these plans, remains to be seen. The project will have to step up its lobbying to support such an outcome, in particular to ensure that sufficient political will is mustered within the government to allocate the necessary budgets.

USDOL should consider granting an extension of the project, not only so that planned activities can be carried out but so that they are not overly rushed in a way that may endanger their effectiveness and sustainability. This would also allow more time to design a proper exit strategy, an activity that will require thorough preparation to maximize the potential for sustainability of achievements.