



Evaluation Summaries

Country Programme to combat child labour in Malawi

Quick Facts

Countries: *Malawi*

Final Evaluation: *February 2009*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC, CO-Lusaka*

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laborers from hazardous child labor and provide them and their families with appropriate alternatives.

In 2000, Malawi became one of the 5 countries in Eastern Africa that were selected to participate in an IPEC programme that was to deal with withdrawal and rehabilitation of children who were engaged in commercial agriculture (Comagri). The programme was implemented up to April 2005 with very good outputs. However, ILO/IPEC realized that there was a need to consolidate the gains made by the Comagri programme and at the same time assist the government of Malawi to make faster progress towards the elimination of child labor.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) is a technical cooperation programme of the International Labor Organisation (ILO). The aim of IPEC is the progressive elimination of child labor with the worst forms of child labor having to be eliminated as a matter of urgency. IPEC support at the country level is based on a phased, multi-sector strategy. This strategy includes strengthening national capacities to deal with this issue, legislation harmonization, improvement of the knowledge base, raising awareness on the negative consequences of child labor, promoting social mobilization against it, and implementing demonstrative direct action programmes (AP) to prevent children from child labor and remove child

The ILO therefore decided to assist Malawi in its ambition to develop a National Plan of Action to eliminate child labor, and to use this to solicit national and international support, and to build sufficient capacity in the country to embark on a Time-Bound Programme to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

The ILO/IPEC country programme in Malawi (CP Malawi) had used two main strategies for addressing child labor, namely:

Strategic Component A: Promotion of an enabling social, political and legislative environment leading to effective action against child labour. The immediate objectives under Strategic Component A were:

Immediate Objective 1: By the end of the project, the national legislation will be

harmonized in view of the child labor conventions.

Immediate Objective 2: By the end of the project the national capacity for enforcement will have been increased.

Immediate Objective 3: By the end of the project cultural values and attitudes in relation to child labor and education will be modified.

Immediate Objective 4: By the end of the project the policy environment for dealing with child labor issues in the country is improved.

Strategic Component B: Effective direct action with girls, boys and families to prevent child labor and to withdraw and rehabilitate child laborers. The immediate objectives under Strategic Component B were:

Immediate Objective 5: By the end of the project effective models of interventions for the withdrawal and prevention of boys and girls engaged in child labor in the agricultural sector and child domestic labor will have been developed and documented. The programme covered two main sectors – children working in agriculture and in domestic services in 8 geographical areas. The four districts previously covered by Comagri (Mchinji, Kasungu, Mangochi and Mzimba) and Lilongwe city were to implement direct action activities.

Three districts in southern region (Thyolo, Mulanje and Phalombe) who are labor suppliers to the tobacco growing districts were targeted in accordance with the findings from a rapid assessment carried out regarding child labor in urban areas and child domestic labor in urban and rural areas. Malawi ratified the ILO Conventions No. 138 on minimum age for employment and No. 182 on the worst forms of child labor in 1999 and 2000 respectively. The focus of this independent evaluation was on the assessment of key aspects of the programme, such as validity of the project design, strategy, implementation, and

achievement of objectives. The team assessed the effect of the work carried out during the implementation phase.

The main purpose of this evaluation was therefore to determine if the project achieved its stated immediate objectives (including specific targets) and explain why or why not and then to assess the overall and specific outcomes and impacts of the project in terms of sustained improvements.

The evaluation also aimed to draw lessons and document potential good practices from the experiences gained during the period of implementation and consider how these could be applied in future programming against child labor in the context of Malawi. The main evaluation issues covered in the framework were Planning and Design (Validity of Project), Achievements (implementation and effectiveness), Relevance and Sustainability of the Project.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology used in the evaluation process involved review of key documents such as the CP Project Document, MGDS, the OVC Policy and the National Plan of Action for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children, Action Programme Summary Outlines (APSO), Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) and ILO/IPEC/DED Documents. These were complimented with stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions with key implementing partners such as Active Youth for Social Enhancement (AYISE), Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM), Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM), Malawi Congress of Trade Union (MCTU), Targeted Nutrition and Relief for National Development (TANARD), Malawi Human Rights Youth Network (MHRYN), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), District Child Labor Committee (DCLCs), Community Child Labor Committee (CCLCs), Government of Malawi (GoM) through the Ministry of Labor and project beneficiaries

comprising withdrawn, prevented children and their parents. Finally, a stakeholders meeting was held whose main objectives were to consult key stakeholders on their perceptions of ILO/IPEC Country Programme on Child Labor, present preliminary findings of the final independent evaluation, identify lessons learnt and propose recommendations for future programmes. The Team Leader had phone discussions with USDOL, ILO/IPEC Programme Officer in Geneva and the ILO/IPEC DED.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The evaluation had the following key findings:

- o The period for implementation of the CP was short and delays in the development of proposals by IAs worsened the process.
- o Despite the delays, the CP achieved its quantitative targets, although most of the achievements were recorded after the midterm review, especially for upstream activities.
- o The CP was more successful with downstream activities than upstream activities. The latter having been negatively affected by weak capacity of the Ministry of Labor and its slow and delayed involvement in the implementation of the CP.
- o Though not gazetted, the CP managed to finalize the list of hazardous occupations, now with the Ministry of Justice for gazetting.
- o The CP did not manage to revise key pieces of legislation, including Employment and the Education Acts.
- o Due to not being able to review any legislation, legislators and other key stakeholders, including trade unions and employers organizations were not adequately sensitized on the reforms.
- o The CP managed to train labor inspectors, police officers, court officials and prosecutors on child labor related legislation through DCLCs and CCLCs. A training manual was also produced by TUM. The CP also developed a National Child Labor Training Manual that is now in print.
- The CP did not manage to translate and publish relevant legislative documents in local languages and in friendly formats. This was mainly attributed to the failure in developing the Child Labor Policy.
- o The CP was instrumental in initiating use of the Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting System (DBMR). The CP has supported the Ministry of Labor with design and set-up of the

Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS). The introduction of the CLMS system itself is a contribution by the CP, although more could have been done to make the CLMS more functional by strengthening the MoL capacity at district and community level data collectors in data collection.

- o The CP initiated a change in cultural values such as keeping girl children in school and aligning traditional ceremonies to the school calendar.

o The project was instrumental in mobilizing youth and children in the promotion of action against child labor and in favour of education through community-based drama, essay competitions and other artistic works such as poetry, song and dance.

- o The CP was partially able to initiate creation of an enabling environment for dealing with child labor through the NAP and list of hazardous work. However, the CP was unable to ensure that the child labor policy was developed and finalized during project implementation as planned.

o The CP managed to support development of the National Plan of Action which was in the final stages as the project ended. Once the National Plan of Action is completed it will facilitate inclusion of child labor issues in national policy documents. This role will be enhanced further if the Child Labor Policy is concluded by government.

- o Due to the lack of a child labor policy, the CP was unable to include or mainstream child labor as a key topic in major related policies and plans. It is envisaged that the CL Policy would be used as a guiding document.

o The CP ably developed and implemented effective direct action with girls, boys and families to prevent child labor and to withdraw and rehabilitate child laborers.

- o The project planned to withdraw a total of 1900 children but managed to withdraw 1965 children, representing a success rate of 103 percent.

o The CP also surpassed its targets regarding prevention of children that were likely to join child labor. The CP planned to prevent a total of 3250 children, but managed to prevent 3422 children, representing a success rate of 105 percent.

- o The CP, through various stakeholders, managed to bring about 96 cases to court for prosecution.

o The CP managed to jointly conduct a study on child trafficking with support from UNICEF. This activity had previously never been implemented by IPEC in Malawi.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

The IFET makes the following recommendations:

1. Although the project has achieved its targets, most of the processes used to achieve the targets started late. It is therefore recommended that ILO should identify funds to continue the programme for at least one more year. The purpose of the additional year will be to consolidate and sustain the achievements made within the areas that the CP had been implemented. Future programmes should extend project implementation to at least five years as the minimum to reflect reality on the ground.

2. The ILO CPs are national programmes that benefit children and the population of Malawi in general that are affected by child labor. The IFET recommends that the Ministry of Labor should provide adequate leadership of CPs, regardless of donor policies, which may not be easy to change in the short to medium term. To facilitate this, it is important that future CPs ensure that the MoL drives CP implementation and that there should be clarity of roles, between the CP team and the MoL. The CP team should be mandated to operate from the Head Office of MoL, not outside, to encourage communication and exchange of skills, knowledge, challenges and experiences.

Provision of office space could be part of the MoU. The MoL and CP should ensure that the governance structures of the CP, particularly the National Steering Committee is functional and supported in its functions. An MoU articulating these aspects of the CP should be developed and signed by both parties and launched together with the CP.

3. Government through the Ministry of Labor should expedite the formulation of the Child Labor Policy and also the National Action Plan on Child Labor to provide national policy objectives and guidelines on child labor. The MoL should also follow-up on the list of hazardous work that is said to be with the Ministry of Justice.

4. Although the CP did well by building strong partnerships with UNICEF and WFP, it is important to strengthen partnerships with other players, especially at district level. Key programmes that the CP should partner with are HIV and AIDS programmes (e.g. NAC), Social

Cash Transfer, MASAF, the EU and other international NGO programmes.

5. Government and other players like UNICEF and WFP should roll-out safety-net programmes such as the social cash transfer programmes and the school feeding programmes to child labor affected communities. These mechanisms have shown through the current CP to be very effective in reducing child labor.

6. ILO Lusaka needs to consolidate its programmes in Malawi and ensure that the country programmes are coordinated and do not combine political and programme roles. It should also ensure that the Lusaka Office plays its oversight roles over programmes adequately. It would be a good idea for ILO to open an office in Malawi.

7. The CP management team or the CTA should ensure that IAs are adequately and appropriately capacitated with human, material and financial resources to effectively implement CL programmes. In the selection of IAs, it is important that appropriate capacity assessments are done, and that where there are gaps, these should be taken into account in programme design, planning and implementation.

8. Provision of vocational skills and income generating activities should be properly analyzed and a strategy/approach, which should be subjected to annual review, should be developed to guide implementation of these interventions. The interventions should be sequenced according to the needs of the children and their households.

Implementation should start early enough so that benefits can be measured within the project lifetime. Linkages with microfinance organizations should be explored while partnerships with TEVETA and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (Economic Empowerment Programme) should be strengthened.

9. Knowledge on child labor is still low in Malawi. There is need to continue raising awareness through multi-track communication initiatives and tools. It should be ensured that once IEC materials are produced they are appropriately disseminated. The role of the media should be enhanced and planned for.

10. The Ministry of Labor should invest in the CLMS that has been established with CP support.

The Ministry should start data collection in the CP impact district. If a one year CP is identified by ILO or the government, as recommended above, the CLMS should be a priority activity and should be implemented together side by side with the DBMR. The Ministry of Labor should be supported to ensure that it utilizes the CLMS from community to national levels.

11. Implementing Partners in supply and demand districts should coordinate their efforts so that the withdrawal of children is also linked to prevention and repatriation between the partners. Sharing of information should be a must not a might.

12. There is a need to bring on board advocacy partners such as civil rights NGOs who should be holding government accountable on child labor policy issues. Such NGOs can be supported to advocate for finalization of the policy, list of hazardous work, national action plan etc. Experience shows that where such NGOs are active, government becomes more proactive rather than reactive. In conclusion, the CP managed to accomplish more of the downstream than upstream interventions. The NAP gives the government of Malawi an opportunity to forge ahead with the wall against child labor by creating an enabling environment through development of appropriate legislations such as the Child Labor Policy.

Important lessons learned

The major lessons that emerged from the design and implementation of the programme include the following:

Lesson 1: Programmes for withdrawal and prevention of children from child labor need sufficient time to be implemented. It is important to consider and link CL programme timeframes to the education systems in the design and implementation of a CL programme.

Lesson 2: Provision of income generating activities is an important component of child labor programmes to address poverty and food insecurity. The IGAs should be however, linked or/and sequenced in a way that they address short-term basic needs first, then medium term livelihoods needs followed by long-term developmental needs. This will address the vulnerability of these households in a realistic timeframe.

Lesson 3: Child labor interventions can be very expensive investments as they have to deal with many facets and causative factors of child labor. The evaluation finds that that it is practically impossible for one programme to address all these needs at the same time, although the children require them to be addressed at the same time. The evaluation team thereby conclude that there is a need for partnerships with other stakeholders to complement each other. These partnerships, however, need to be documented, with clear roles that are also shared between the partners.

Lesson 4: Upstream and downstream interventions in a child labor programme require different tactics and approaches. The CP has shown that it might be easier to implement downstream activities with limited central government involvement, but not so with upstream interventions. CPs should ensure that the Government drives the process so that ownership of CPs by government can be guaranteed. The CP has shown that without active participation from the Ministry of Labor and functioning national coordinating structures, it is difficult to implement upstream interventions.

Lesson 5: Use of an integrated approach to undertake prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children from hazardous agriculture and exploitative child domestic service is an important approach to addressing the many faces of child labor. Provision of vocational skills and IGAs removes barriers that make children go into child labor. Equipping adolescent boys and girls with vocational skills enables them to access employment or start their own enterprises.

Lesson 6: Building the capacity of implementing partners is critical and has to be factored in the design of CL programmes. Where the CP is not able to build local capacity, it has to be linked with other programmes or organisations.

Lesson 7: It is also clear from the CP that vocational skills training is an important component of direct interventions. But these interventions require a lot of programme time to begin to show impact. Hence for these to be effective, they need to start early during implementation and require frequent monitoring and guidance to be given to the children. This should therefore be considered at the design stage and in the process of identifying implementing partners.

Lesson 8: While it is absolutely necessary to work with both labor demand and labor supply districts to ensure permanent withdrawal of tenant farmers' children, it is even more important to ensure that implementing partners and their interventions in these two extremes are linked. Some of the children moved back to their districts of origin with their parents after the tobacco season and no follow-up mechanism was designed to ensure that they went to school in their new environment.

Lesson 9: Child labor programmes are affected by external factors in the health, education, economic and social arena. It is important to include, in the design of the programme, how factors such as poverty, food insecurity, school infrastructure, availability of teachers and school infrastructure could affect implementation of activities. The development of the strategy followed a problem analysis done and the recommendations of a Strategic Planning meeting held in Malawi in April 2005. The strategic planning workshop followed the ILO-IPEC's Strategic Programme Impact Framework (SPIF) approach, which allowed for the preparation of a country-level framework including a range of outcomes that were necessary for the elimination of child labor in Malawi. While outcomes of the process identified critical causes of child labor, such as education, income generation and promotion of food security, vocational training, social and cultural issues and legislation, the design could have been supported by a risk management strategy that should have been done with appropriate mechanisms included in the programme to address such risks.