



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Evaluation
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Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in West Africa and Strengthening Sub-Regional Cooperation through ECOWAS I and II – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria

Final Independent Evaluation: April 2014

Administrative Office: Evaluation section of ILO/IPEC

Technical Office: IPEC

Evaluation Manager: Ricardo Furman

Evaluation Consultant(s): Core team: Andrew Gilboy, Team Leader; Yacouba Konate; Cheikh Tidiane Toure; and National Evaluators: Adabanke Akinrimisi, Nigeria; Fred Afari, Ghana; and Kam Oleh, Côte d'Ivoire

TC/Symbol: RAF/09/51/USA and RAF/10/53/USA

Donor(s) & Budget: USDOL: USD\$ 7,950,000

Keywords: Child labour; Data collecting; advocacy; organizational coordination

Background & Context

(Excerpt from the full evaluation report)

The final evaluation of projects ECOWAS I and ECOWAS II, as defined by the initial Terms of Reference (TOR), focused on the outcomes of relevant projects, programmes, strategies, policies and the likelihood of measurable impact. This evaluation provides an opportunity for in-depth reflection on the strategy and assumptions guiding the intervention.

The first purpose of the two overlapping projects, implemented from 2009 to 2012, supported national

efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in **Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria**. The second aimed to mobilize sub-regional policy makers and improving sub-regional cooperation for the elimination of the WFCL among all fifteen member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The **purpose of the evaluation** was to:

- determine effectiveness at all levels – achievement of objectives at outcome and impact levels,
- identify unintended changes, if any,
- assess implementation efficiency,
- establish the relevance of any outcomes or sustainability attained,
- provide recommendations to sustain project outcomes and impacts, if any, and
- identify emerging potential good practices.

The **scope and limitations** taken into consideration by the team while reviewing findings, conclusions and recommendations, include:

- Data. Although information was plentiful (e.g., quarterly progress reports, log frames, detailed activity descriptions, etc.) on the project hard data on Child Labour (CL) was insufficient.
- Baseline. Without a baseline, findings about impact had to be based on qualitative information only, triangulated throughout from interviews and focus groups.

- Time. The team could spend only two work weeks (for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Benin) and three work weeks (for Nigeria) to meet with all stakeholders, travel up-country to visit at least three sites, and prepare and facilitate a Stakeholders' meeting.
- Sampling. Although all stakeholder groups were interviewed, no statistically significant sampling method, which was not required by the TOR, was conducted.
- Sectors. Fishing in the Lake Volta Region of Ghana was the only sector targeted by the EI&II projects that could not be included in the evaluation.
- Potential Impact. This evaluation considers *potential* impact, per the TOR, of likely changes at the project objective level based on information gathered.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodological approach used to gather and verify information consisting of the following: desk review, information gathering in the field (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria), key informant triangulated interviews of stakeholders, donors and Implementing Agencies (IAs) at the national and local levels.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Design

- Overall validity. The design included in-depth analysis of the socio-economic environment wherein the WFCL of the four countries occurs. The project objectives linked well to analytical findings. Appropriate assumptions were included to address risks. Objectives were detailed and explained. Although the project lifespan was short, it was reasonable to predict the objectives that could be met. The design respected crosscutting aspects. For example, awareness raising as an output, and as an intervention mechanism, affected all beneficiaries from national decision-makers to local entrepreneurs.
- Level of Prescription. The extensive detail in the Logical Framework was cited by IA managers and ILO project managers as overly burdensome. The ECOWAS I logical framework contained 6 Outputs under Immediate Objective 1, and 52 specific Activities spread across the six. Since Output 1 is sufficiently specific in itself, adding highly detailed descriptions of desired activities was unnecessary.

- Monitoring & Evaluation. The design included indicators to measure progress toward each of the two Immediate Objectives. Although some indicators met the classic test of SMART (Smart – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Time-bound), many contained multiple indicators that made measurements problematic. The evaluation team noted the difficulties in verifying the field-collected data. Although the proposed, and subsequently revised, M&E was thorough and closely linked to project activities, the outputs, higher-level objectives, data collection and reporting were cumbersome.
- Data. Two data collection systems are being implemented by the project, each with a different purpose: the **Child Labor Monitoring System** (CLMS), managed domestically by communities, and the **Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring Report** (DBMR), intended primarily for donor use and expected to terminate post-project. CLMS is well designed to collect data on children selected for withdrawal or prevention in order to increase knowledge on the most important target population and verify the eligibility of a child for project assistance. An anticipated by-product of the CLMS is increased community ownership of the entire WFCL reduction process. The other data collection system, DBMR, is donor-driven and aims to gather standardized data on the WFCL. The entities administering the DBMR forms reported that they found the information produced did not add value to their work. Many saw the form as overly burdensome and contained questions inappropriate to the local setting.

Relevance

The EI&II projects address a pressing and growing issue that threatens the future of children. With millions of children between the ages of 5 and 17 engaged in the WFCL, the EI&II projects aim to eliminate the practice through interventions at various levels.

Sustainability

- Increased awareness at the national level of the WFCL will remain with new irreversible public perception.
- Policy continuity. Livelihood assistance to families cannot be sustained, although some families may be able to sustain the effect.
- Vocational training and apprenticeships provided to older children are not readily

sustainable, although the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired may be.

- Local child support committees and community-based interest groups will likely continue to function.

The Regional Action Plan was adopted by the conference attendees in its *Declaration*. The list of items in the Declaration reflects many of the lessons learned during the implementation of the EI&II projects.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Design

The EI&II project designs reflect the extent that the ILO/IPEC has incorporated major lessons learned over the two decades of their involvement in CL. The EI&II project architecture carefully addressed key areas upon which progress to eliminate the WFCL rests: awareness of the problem, policy environment to encourage and support changes, and direct action in proximity to CL where awareness and policy meet to withdraw children.

The ECOWAS II project design incorporated a range of additional community-based activities designed to support and supplement the direct withdrawal of children in the WFCL. By the same token, the level of detail in the design placed unnecessary burden on the implementers, both ILO staff and IAs.

2. Project Achievements

The EI&II projects successfully achieved the outputs anticipated. Nearly all of the outputs listed were achieved or surpassed. The level of prescription cited above set a quarterly reporting that appeared excessive.

3. Data

The project designs included the expected elements of data collection strategies. The DBMR the system is compromised by two factors: a) the excessive burden on those charged with administering it and b) the questions required to ask yielded inaccurate data.

4. Implementation Complexity

Highly complex development interventions were required at the local level to respond to the forces working against eliminating the WFCL. Working in small towns and district capitals required different skill-sets, tremendous patience and an intimate understanding of the socio-cultural context in which to induce a change.

In this challenging environment, the breadth of services that the EI&II projects imposed on the IAs was in some respects unreasonable: from managing a rescue operation with law enforcement to providing micro-enterprise start-up assistance and counselling.

Recommendations

For the ILO/IPEC in designing future projects

1. Apply the gains made at the national level to the local level.
2. Assist districts and communities to identify local resources and advocate for government resources (for education, law enforcement, labour inspecting, child protection, etc.) through a more diverse menu of direct actions.
3. Strengthen local institutions by training, mentoring and coaching officials continually on leadership, resource mobilization and monitoring.
4. Reinvigorate national awareness campaigns with creative and innovative ideas.
5. Continue providing ECOWAS with assistance to implement the Regional Action Plan.

For the USDOL

6. Provide funding to solve the data problem once and for all.

For Stakeholders

7. Advocate for local resource-mobilization and action against the WFCL.
8. Sell the successes of EI&II to new funding sources.

See the full report for lessons learned and good practices.