



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
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Cluster Evaluation of ILO/IPEC Research and SIMPOC Projects - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Global</i>
Final Evaluation:	<i>05/2011</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent cluster</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Technical Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>ILO-IPEC/DED (Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section)</i>
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assessed in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. In addition, the organizational set-up, reporting and sensitivity towards gender are briefly analysed.

The main purpose of this cluster evaluation is to develop forward-looking recommendations that can inform future IPEC and SIMPOC programming.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is twofold. On the one hand, it should provide a clear and fact-based understanding of relevance, effects, performance, use, utility, credibility and sustainability of the project cluster on a strategic and programmatic level. On the other hand, it should derive forward-looking recommendations and identify good practices aimed at informing future IPEC programming.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The present evaluation assesses twelve projects of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), most of which can be considered projects within the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) which was established in 1998 with a particular focus on generating child labour (CL)-related statistical information.

The cluster of twelve projects is not evaluated one-by-one in a project evaluation fashion but by a theoretical approach to the programme that focuses on principal mechanisms – or *Impact Pathways* – across all projects. The performance along these pathways is

Methodology of evaluation

In reviewing intended activities, outputs and outcomes of the twelve cluster projects, it became clear that different projects used similar approaches to reach SIMPOC and IPEC objectives.

This allows focusing and aggregating of the analysis. Instead of assessing twelve individual projects, we assess the principal evaluation criteria relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability along these principal approaches. This leads to more generally valid observations and deeper insights.

Overall, six principal approaches, or *Impact Pathways are identified*, by means of which cluster projects aim at contributing to SIMPOC and IPEC objectives. With the term *Impact Pathway* the fact that these approaches link project activities to outputs and

outcomes is stressed by a series of logical steps of cause and effect.

The following six Impact Pathways have been identified:

- Impact Pathway 1: Supporting Data Collection;
- Impact Pathway 2: Conducting Stand-Alone Trainings;
- Impact Pathway 3: Developing, Improving and Disseminating Data Collection Methods;
- Impact Pathway 4: Standardizing and Harmonizing Definitions and Methods;
- Impact Pathway 5: Conducting CL Research; and
- Impact Pathway 6: Disseminating CL Data Globally.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

The relevance of programme and project objectives and of Impact Pathways has resulted in the following key observations:

- The general objectives of IPEC and SIMPOC continue to be of high relevance, both from the perspective of intermediary and ultimate beneficiaries as from the perspective of the international donor community;
- The objective of SIMPOC itself and its underlying programme theory are not defined with sufficient clarity. A working version has been developed together with SIMPOC management for this evaluation but the development of a comprehensive objectives framework is recommended;
- For those cluster projects that have stated objectives these objectives coherently fit under the umbrella of IPEC's general objective and, with some interpretation, also into SIMPOC. For all 11 projects with stated objectives, output, outcome and impact-level objectives fit together in a logical and coherent way;
- All individual Impact Pathways are perceived as relevant, to an impressive degree, by staff

members of SIMPOC, IPEC, National Statistical Offices, practitioners, policy-makers, members of SIMPOC's former External Advisory Committee and by representatives of donors and international partners that were surveyed. We share this general assessment but remark that CL Research (Impact Pathway 5) might have more relevance under IPEC's general rather than under SIMPOC's more specific objective.

Overall Effectiveness, Efficiency and sustainability

Overall, the cluster projects have implemented activities and produced a whole range of outputs as planned. On the level of outcomes and impacts, the picture is more diverse and can best be understood along the six Impact Pathways introduced earlier.

Before assessing individual Impact Pathways, however, it is important to acknowledge that important synergies exist between different pathways.

These consist of *knowledge and skill synergies*. If results of one pathway can be used in another, for example when in-country statisticians are coached or trained in new survey methodologies during survey implementation and of *operational synergies*; for example when field testing of new methodologies serves data generation purposes as well. In the first example, knowledge and skills are shared between Pathways 1 and 3 while in the second the same activity serves purposes in both pathways.

Overall, these inter-pathway synergies provide a strong motivation for executing all six Impact Pathways in organizational proximity to each other.

Regional Differences and Regional Good Practices

A striking regional difference manifests itself in the likelihood for repeated National Child Labour Surveys (NCLS). While about three in four initial NCLS were repeated in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), only about one in three were repeated in other regions. Interestingly, funding, political will and National Statistics Office (NSO) capacity are considered the main enabling factors for repeat surveys in all regions. It is therefore recommended to further intensify efforts to address the principal in-country bottlenecks that stand in the way of frequent and regular CL survey repetition.

Examples from El Salvador and Uganda can serve as good practices.

Apart from some issues with the degree to which NCLS are up to date across all regions, strong regional differences were visible for Baseline Surveys (BS). Overall, it seems as if BS are timed in a way that makes them more relevant for IPEC project design in LAC than in other regions. The way BS are handled in LAC can therefore be considered good practice.

Regarding dissemination, OECD researchers may not have been targeted enough since that group was least informed about SIMPOC products and had most difficulties finding what they were looking for. The dedicated IPEC website for the LAC region represents, in contrast, good practice.

Organizational Assessment

Currently, SIMPOC is an organizational unit within IPEC. While having advantages and disadvantages with regard to, for example, the option of placing SIMPOC into the ILO's Department of Statistics, the synergies with IPEC, in our view, trump arguments of organizational cohesion. Somewhat surprisingly, interviewed IPEC staff unanimously agreed that cooperation between SIMPOC and IPEC could be improved. SIMPOC itself is somewhat ambiguously set up and acts in three simultaneous roles: as an expert consultancy, as a global programme and as a support unit to IPEC.

It is recommended to organize and consider SIMPOC as an IPEC programme component, fully integrated into IPEC strategy. SIMPOC needs to develop a compelling and concrete strategic plan for CL data-related work that guides SIMPOC fundraising, SIMPOC activities and serves as a visionary guideline for other agencies.

Assessment of Reporting and Indicators

Progress reporting and, particularly, progress indicators need to be urgently improved. The current templates for Technical Progress Reports are for a large part unsuitable for progress reporting for any of the twelve cluster projects. It is recommended to develop a suitable reporting format for future SIMPOC and IPEC research projects that is based on a solid, theoretical approach to the programme and an

understanding of how these projects contribute to IPEC objectives and tracks progress along all six Impact Pathways.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. It is recommended that IPEC/SIMPOC continue planning and implementing activities along all six Impact Pathways with due consideration of the other recommendations made in this report.
2. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC management and staff develop:
 - A general hierarchy of objectives covering output, outcome and impact levels; as well as
 - A set of Impact Pathways that explain how activities, through a convincing and easy-to-follow sequence of cause and effect steps, contribute to reaching these objectives.

Ideally, this framework covers all of IPECs objectives and activities and pays tribute to how SIMPOC-specific objectives and activities serve IPEC and contribute to objectives outside of IPEC. Care should be taken to make impact hypotheses explicit, for example in which different ways more or better data is expected to contribute to the Elimination of Child Labour (ECL). IPEC and SIMPOC management need to buy-in to and fully endorse this framework and ensure that it is consistently used in strategic planning and internal and external communication.

3. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC plan and coordinate implementation of Baseline Studies and Rapid Assessments in a timely manner so that data can optimally inform technical assistance interventions.
4. It is recommended that IPEC take measures to increasing awareness of Baseline Studies and Rapid Assessments among those taking action at national level, i.e. practitioners and policy-makers, and to further encourage the complementary use of NCLS, Rapid Assessments and BS.
5. It is recommended that SIMPOC should systematize the capacity development component when coaching surveys in Impact Pathway 1 by

developing and using a standard curriculum of minimum skills to be transferred.

6. It is recommended that SIMPOC produce a best-practice NCLS schedule for all countries of interest and to use this schedule as guidance for those countries (together with the professional curriculum recommended earlier) as well as for IPEC/SIMPOC internal strategic planning.
7. It is recommended that SIMPOC continue using dedicated group training to develop technical capacity of in-country statisticians whenever motivated by cost-effectiveness arguments, for example when a large group of people can be targeted with one curriculum in preparation of CL surveys. Trainings are likely to be more cost-effective if set up as integrated parts of larger projects, for example of planned or ongoing CL surveys.
8. **Part A:** It is recommended that SIMPOC continue and further push the development of best-in-class CL survey methodology. In order to maximize effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of this work, widespread use of that methodology should be envisaged, for example by training of NGOs and NSOs. As a good practice, a methodology expert should ensure quality of in-country data collection activities.

Part B: It is recommended that IPEC further contribute to harmonizing survey methodology and definitions as used by the ILO, the World Bank, and UNICEF, as well as by in-country statistical offices.

One natural platform for these efforts is the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project. IPEC, as the largest global programme fighting CL, would be a natural patron for revitalizing such a participatory process.

9. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC review how uptake of CL research publications produced by IPEC/SIMPOC and UCW can be increased by adequate targeting and placement, including the option of increasing the share of peer-reviewed and non-reviewed journal articles with their own, proprietary dissemination channels.
10. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC conduct an assessment of ways to better market their knowledge products. This assessment should be conducted by a marketing professional, ideally with experience in marketing knowledge products.

As a minimum, the assessment should consist of user-group segmentation, of product adaptation to user-group segments, also in terms of language requirements, and of the most cost-effective distribution channels and promotional options to reach these groups. Recommendations ensuing from this assessment should be used to improve the content and targeting of the existing internet and intranet platforms and to implement additional cost-effective dissemination mechanisms.

11. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC further intensify their efforts to address the principal in-country bottlenecks that stand in the way of frequent and regular CL survey repetition: insufficient funding, lack of political prioritization, and inadequate NSO capacity. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC investigate innovative ways to address these bottlenecks in addition to continuing successful and established activities such as NSO capacity-development components of Impact Pathways 1 and 2 and the UCW inter-agency report process.
12. It is recommended that IPEC organize and consider SIMPOC as an IPEC programme component that is seamlessly integrated into IPEC strategy. The SIMPOC brand name should continue to be used. SIMPOC should derive a convincing strategic plan with quantitative, programme-level milestones that guides SIMPOC fund-raising and programme activities and serves as a strategic guideline for other agencies. In order to increase strategic focus, CL research that exceeds data synthesis should be removed from SIMPOC and established as a separate IPEC component.
13. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC develop a suitable reporting format for future SIMPOC projects and IPEC research projects that is based on a solid, theoretical approach to the programme and an understanding of how these projects contribute to IPEC objectives and tracks progress on the level of activities and outputs, but also on the level of outcomes, using easily verifiable and attributable indicators in addition to a comprehensive narrative. It is recommended that IPEC and SIMPOC develop suitable standard indicators along each of the six Impact Pathways introduced in the report. Progress reports should indicate which Impact Pathways are covered by a project and reporting should be focused on the set of indicators for those pathways.