



Evaluation Summary



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Stop Child Labour in Agriculture: Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Mexico – Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Mexico</i>
Midterm Evaluation:	<i>02/2012</i>
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Administrative Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Technical Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>ILO/IPEC-DED (Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section)</i>
Evaluation Consultant:	<i>Mauricio García Moreno & Aníbal Quispe</i>
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The project's aim is to make a contribution to the Project for the Eradication of Child Labour (PECL) in Mexico, in particular the worst forms in the agricultural sector, with special focus on indigenous children and child labour (CL) resulting from internal migration. To accomplish this, the project strategy consists of achieving the following immediate objectives:

- 1) To strengthen the legal, institutional and policy framework for PECL.
- 2) To mobilize the workers' and employers' organizations so that they can undertake actions in favour of the PECL.
- 3) To produce and disseminate information about CL in agriculture.
- 4) To implement and document pilot demonstration interventions for the withdrawal and prevention of CL in farm work.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project Stop Child Labour in Agriculture: Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Mexico, in particular the Worst Forms in the Agricultural Sector, with Special Focus on Indigenous Children and Child Labour as a result of Internal Migration began on 30 September 2009. It is being implemented through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization

The evaluation was conducted between 16 January and 8 February 2012. During the evaluation, information in documents was analysed, visits and interviews were carried out with those involved in the project in Mexico City and in the states of Chiapas, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Sinaloa and Veracruz, and a meeting was held with the counterpart institutions in order to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation. The evaluation team was headed by an international evaluator, who was able to rely on support from a national evaluator.

The principal conclusion of this evaluation is that there is a delay in achieving the expected project

outputs due to causes resulting from the project's design, the late hiring of its coordinator, the management approach, and the capacity of the organizations that are implementing the Direct Action Programmes (DAP). This delay jeopardizes the achievement of the immediate objectives, as well as the sustainability of the project. Nevertheless, the project has generated several initiatives and instruments with potential to contribute to the prevention and elimination of child labour (ECL) and has managed to make this issue visible among a number of governmental and non-governmental actors, at both the national and state levels. This is no small accomplishment in a context in which public policies and institutions have traditionally considered CL as a problem in the legal and regulations area but without significant experiences and efforts to address it.

Finally, given the modest progress in the project implementation prior to the evaluation, it seems too soon to establish good practices and lessons learned. Nevertheless, there seem to be some good practices, related to participatory strategic planning exercises as the basis for developing local action plans, analysing the value chain in order to identify the players involved in CL, designing sound instruments for identifying the magnitude and characteristics of CL, and developing protocols for labour inspections. In the area of lessons learned, the project makes it possible to reflect on the particular features that a country like Mexico, with an intermediate to high level of development, poses for the implementation of national projects for the prevention and ECL.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

- To analyse the project's performance and progress during the first half of its implementation;
- To examine the likelihood that the project will achieve its objectives;
- To analyse the progress made in the delivery of project outputs;
- To analyse factors that facilitate or hinder project implementation;
- To identify good practices that could potentially stem from the project's operations.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following aspects of project design and implementation will be analysed:

- Relevancy;
- Effectiveness;
- Efficiency;
- Sustainability.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was performed between 16 January and 8 February 2012, using the following information-gathering techniques:

- 1 Analysis of documents.
- 2 Interviews of qualified informants and visits to the states in which the project is being implemented.
- 3 Stakeholder workshop.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Conclusions regarding project design:

The project analysis reveals that its objectives and expected outputs are pertinent for the country and that its sustainability strategy is consistent with the approach adopted. However, there are not suitable arguments for several assumptions on which the action strategies are based. This has meant that some of these strategies did not adequately take into account the political and institutional context in which the project is being implemented. Furthermore, some of the immediate objectives do not respect the logic of the chain of outputs, and thus there is not a suitable linkage between activities, outputs, effects and impacts. It was also found that, although the project presents 25 monitoring and evaluation indicators, very few of these are conceived so as to measure the expected outputs. Most are indicators of completion of activities. Finally, the composition of the project team was determined to be inappropriate for its objectives and context.

Conclusions regarding fulfilment of Objective 1: strengthening of the legal, institutional and policy framework:

The project's most important progress towards achieving this objective has been the support for the preparation of the list of hazardous CL. In order to be effective, this list should be incorporated into the

Federal Regulations for Workplace Safety, Hygiene and Environments. This is expected to occur in the coming months, and it is an important step towards adapting national laws and regulations to international standards (in this case, to Article 4 of Agreement 182, of which Mexico is a signatory). The project has also managed to support the drafting of a first proposal for a protocol for the inspection of CL in agriculture. The Office of Labour Inspection has made several observations to the protocol which has served to bring the issue to the table.

At the state level, the project has not made significant progress in generating public policies. It has managed to identify the institutional players that should be involved in PECL, has facilitated the production of a shared vision on problems and objectives in the area of CL, and has promoted the establishment of ties between institutions. Nevertheless, the strengthening of an appropriate institutional set-up that can work in favour of the PECL and the formulation of state policies or plans that have resources and people in charge of implementing them is still remote. To a great extent, this is due to the lack of political will among top state officials, the lack of societal demand to address the issue of CL, and the weak institutional capacity in this area. All these problems require medium- and long-term actions to be solved.

Conclusions regarding fulfilment of Objective 2: awareness and strengthening of the capacity for action of the workers' and employers' organizations:

The most promising process regarding awareness and strengthening of the action capacity by employers' organizations is the experience that the project has gained in the sugar cane agro industry, in coordination with the System for Integrated Measurement and Improvement of Productivity (SIMAPRO) project, working from the premise that it is necessary to prevent and eliminate CL along the whole value chain. It has thus managed to generate a willingness to work to prevent and eliminate CL, among a series of players ranging from sugar cane growers to industrial consumers of that crop. Despite these advances, it can still not be seen that the players are actually implementing actions of prevention and withdrawal of child labourers on sugar cane plantations. The sugar cane growers and sugar mill employees point out that, although several meetings have been held, no concrete action has been taken because a clear strategy for delivery of services by public organizations is lacking.

The project has made little progress with employers in other productive sectors. Moreover, the fact that there

are no farm worker unions is an important obstacle to incorporate the voice of workers in this process.

Conclusions regarding fulfilment of Objective 3: generation and dissemination of relevant information on child labour:

The project strategy geared to form a working group among the growers' organizations to disseminate information on CL is appropriate because it will lay the groundwork to strengthen the capacity for gathering, analysing and using the necessary information with a view to develop policies geared to the PECL. The studies and investigations generated should be published as soon as possible which will contribute to that end. Nevertheless, a directed strategy is lacking, particularly for the use of that information by decision-makers.

Conclusions regarding fulfilment of objective 4: pilot demonstration interventions for the withdrawal and prevention of children of child labour in agriculture:

The DAPs that are being implemented in Sinaloa and Veracruz have still not completed the prior steps required to implement the activities of prevention and withdrawal of children of CL (identification of project beneficiaries and commitments by the service-providing institutions). Meanwhile, the DAP programmed for Michoacán cannot be implemented as it was foreseen. This causes a serious problem to achieve this objective, because there are only 18 months left before the project ends. Moreover, the period for the prevention and withdrawal activities will be only six months long due to the fact that it is conditional on the farming cycle. Intervention and the subsequent follow up on the activities during at least two farming cycles would have been appropriate to corroborate the ECL among farm workers. Furthermore, the project has not formulated demonstration interventions to make an impact on the basic cause of CL among farm workers which is migration caused by the lack of income in the communities of origin.

Multiple difficulties have led to this delay:

- i) Administrative problems that caused a delay in hiring the project staff;
- ii) Institutional weakness of the NGOs to successfully carry out the type of DAPs required by the ILO;
- iii) An increase in violence in the states of Sinaloa, Michoacán and Veracruz;

- iv) Difficulties to coordinate support from government programmes in the provision of services;
- v) Changes in state officials.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

- 1 Promote and support the design and implementation of a federal programme for the prevention and ECL in rural areas, with the participation of different state secretariats.
- 2 Promote and support the design and implementation of two state programmes for the prevention and ECL.
- 3 Train federal and state inspectors in managing and applying the list of hazardous jobs and the labour inspection protocol.
- 4 Expand to other productive sectors the strategy used by the sugar sector for the prevention and ECL in the entire value chain.
- 5 Promote the organizing of farm workers in order for them to have entities that can represent them in front of employers and the state.
- 6 Decentralize the project's human resources in order to strengthen DAP implementation by assigning more personnel to provide technical assistance to the DAPs.
- 7 Concentrate DAP implementation efforts in terms of the number of municipalities which will be involved in each state. A DAP design is also suggested for Oaxaca, focusing primarily on addressing the issue of families' low income levels in their communities of origin.
- 8 Extend the project implementation timetable until at least December 2012.

Important lessons learned

Meanwhile, the lessons that can be learned from the implementation of this project are as follows:

1. The design of a national project for the prevention and ECL must take into account the degree of a country's development and the specific characteristics of its institutional capabilities, not only regarding CL but also public policies in general.

2. It is necessary to pay more attention to the determination of risks and assumptions during the project design stage.
3. The project administration proposal must be adapted to the challenges that geographical, political and institutional characteristics raise in order to achieve results.

Potential good practices

1. Participatory strategic planning exercises with members of governmental and non-governmental organizations, as a point of departure for developing a concerted action plan for the prevention and ECL.
2. Analysis of the involvement of children in the value chain of a productive sector and application of specific measures to prevent and eliminate CL at the different points and with different agents of production along the chain.
3. Development of more accurate instruments for identifying the scope and characteristics of CL, adapted to the local context. Based on internationally-proven models, the project managed to construct a battery of sound instruments to examine CL.
4. Systematic identification of key players that must be taken into account for actions to prevent and eliminate CL.
5. Development of CL inspection protocols that combine specialized technical assistance with the participation of various institutional players.