



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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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: West Africa: primarily Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria

Midterm Evaluation: 08/2012

Administrative Office: ILO/IPEC

Technical Office: ILO/IPEC-DED

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

Donor & Budget: USDOL (US\$ 12,959,000)

Keywords: Child labour; Data collecting

Background & Context

Following the Terms of Reference (TOR) the team would produce a Final Evaluation of the ECOWAS I and ECOWAS II (EI&II) projects, defined as follows:

Final evaluations focus on the outcomes of projects, programmes, strategies or policies and the likelihood that they will achieve impact. Evaluations provide 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 20142, was to support

national efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria. The second aims at mobilizing sub-regional policy makers and improving sub-regional cooperation for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour among all fifteen member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The **purpose of the evaluation**, as stated in the TOR 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 **methodological approach** used to gather and verify information consisted 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.

The **scope and limitations** the team encountered to take into consideration in reviewing the findings, conclusions and recommendations, include the following:

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.

Design

The EI&II project designs reflect the complexity of the objective to contribute to the *elimination* of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL). They consist of the expected elements found in many development project papers: analysis of the problem, presentation of the proposed objectives and underlying objectives, description of the activities to implement and their outputs, identification of the outcomes anticipated and the indicators upon which progress can be measured, and a list of assumptions and risks.

The EI&II project papers are comprehensive, detailed and highly prescriptive. They contain the standard hierarchical logical framework “tree” beginning at highest level with the objective (*to contribute to the elimination of the WFCL in West Africa*) with two *immediate* objectives at the next level down: 1) *By the end of the project, progress on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in [Benin added for ECOWAS II] Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire will be accelerated*, and 2) *By the end of the project, the role played by ECOWAS in combatting the worst forms of child labour in the sub-region will be reinforced*.

Under each *Immediate Objective* are listed the *Outputs* (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc.) such as “technical assistance provided to ...” or “programmes designed and implemented to ...” which if achieved, would logically lead to Outcomes and Impacts desired. Objectives are properly articulated as future desired states viewed retroactively. Accompanying each

Output are listed the *Main Activities* that the ILO is tasked to implement to achieve the Immediate Objectives.

Findings

Overall validity. The design included in-depth analysis of the socio-economic environment in which the WFCL in the four countries occurs. The project objectives were well linked to the analytical findings. Appropriate assumptions were included to address risks, objectives were detailed and explained, and although the project lifespan was short, it was reasonable to predict the objectives could be met. The design respected cross-cutting aspects, for example that awareness-raising as an output (and an intervention mechanism) affected all beneficiaries, from national decision-makers to local entrepreneurs.

Monitoring & Evaluation. The design included indicators to measure progress toward reaching 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 make measurement problematic. The evaluation team noted the difficulties in verifying the data that was collected in the field. Although the M&E proposed in the design, and modified subsequently, was thorough and closely linked to project activities, outputs and higher-level objectives, collecting the data and reporting were cumbersome.

Data. There are two data collection systems being implemented by the project, each with a different purpose: the **Child Labor Monitoring System** (CLMS) managed in-country by communities, and the **Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring Report** (DBMR), intended primarily for donor use and not expected to continue post-project. The first is a well-designed system to collect data on children selected to be withdrawn or prevented in order to increase knowledge about the most important target population and to verify eligibility of the child for EI&II assistance. An anticipated by-product of the CLMS is increased community ownership of the entire process of reducing the WFCL. The other data collection system being used (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.

Unanticipated impact

1. **Informal school:** a one-room school was organized in the market in Ibadan, Nigeria to begin orienting the children withdrawn from the WFCL while awaiting admission.
2. **Community cohesion strengthened:** project interventions at the local level tended to break down barriers between community groups – a critical by-product of EI&II.
3. **Partnering with youth:** in Nigeria, the project partnered with the National Youth Service Corps to raise community awareness of the WFCL.
4. **Police request training:** in Oyo State, Nigeria, the local police force requested training in the WFCL after hearing about the project's activities in Ibadan.

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 these key areas upon which progress to eliminate the WFCL rests: awareness of the problem and the form it takes (WFCL), 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 perhaps set the stage for 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 risk collecting 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 requires different skill-sets, tremendous patience and an intimate understanding of the socio-cultural context in which change has to be induced. In this challenging environment, the breadth of services that the EI&II projects requested delivered by the IAs was in some respects unreasonable: from managing a rescue operation with law enforcement to providing micro-enterprise start-up assistance and counselling.

Lessons learned

1. *Preference for future allocations between awareness-raising, policy development and direct intervention* Among these three thrusts of EI&II, allocating funds for direct withdrawal (*direct intervention*) of children from the WFCL as a strategy to eliminate CL is controversial. Some argue that withdrawing a few thousand children does not accelerate the movement toward ending CL since the number withdrawn is a tiny fraction of the total target population. Others claim that direct action demonstrates how to withdraw children at the community level so that it can be sustained without continuous external support and can be scaled up to other communities. When polled, respondents chose Direct Intervention as their preference for future funding, with Awareness Raising as the second choice, but with more effort at the local level. Policy Development received the lowest allocations, with respondents remarking that the policies were already in place and it is now a question of implementing them.

2. *The limitations of using Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in communities as a sustainable approach to reduce CL*

Although it is too early to determine, the evaluators did not find evidence that the NGOs can continue activities in communities when budget support ends.

3. *Effective direct withdrawal requires a breadth of development actions in resource challenged*

Environments- Prescribing precisely the activities needed to manage withdrawal and prevention of children does not, by itself, lead to effective and sustainable local results.

4. *Scale up of Direct Intervention to other communities not generally evident* - The hope for direct action is that it can be scaled up to reach more beneficiaries by demonstrating to communities how the WFCL can be implemented using their own

resources. But the experience of implementing the EI&II projects revealed that other supporting measures (e.g., support to families, schools and withdrawn children) were necessary, beyond the withdrawal. Implementing these other activities was taxing, positioning EI&II as community development agents affecting change in the health, education, law enforcement and social welfare sectors. Given the complexity of managing this full menu of local services to complement direct action, scale-up will be challenging to communities with similar resource constraints and no IPEC assistance.

5. Targeting regional objectives worked

The EI&II projects called for strengthening ECOWAS in an attempt to leverage any successes from implementing the projects in the four countries to the other 11 member states in West Africa. After a slow start, the ILO/IPEC team and ECOWAS began having an impact which culminated in the Accra meeting, an endorsed Regional Action Plan and the peer review process being launched. Percolating up the experience of reducing the WFCL in the four countries, working through a West African run regional organization was ambitious, whose success was anything but certain. Obtaining ownership by ECOWAS of the projects' purpose and experience, through patient and persistent collaboration managed by the ILO/IPEC team, eventually produced solid results.

Potential Good Practices

1. Support for community-led efforts to ensure quality schools: By partnering with civil society organizations the EI&II projects leveraged their support and built confidence that the community itself could identify solutions to many problems even without external support.

2. Partnering: The project initiated many partnerships with government, the media, private sector and civil society to extend the impact of their achievements.

3. Identifying champions: The EI&II projects enlisted powerful communicators at the national level to spread the message about the WFCL to various audiences.

4. Validating policies proposed with local authorities: In Nigeria, once the national policies regarding the WFCL were approved by the Federal

Government, the EI&II projects designed “zonal” workshops in the six geographic zones of Nigeria to which state representatives were invited to a central location. This approach was highly effective in empowering the states to take action against CL.

Recommendations

For the ILO/IPEC in designing future project

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.