



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
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Progressive Eradication of Child Labor in the Commercial Agriculture Sector in Central America and the Dominican Republic - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Americas Regional – Dominican Republic</i>
Final Evaluation:	<i>10/2005</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Technical Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Project Code:	<i>RLA/00/54/USA</i>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Project of Eradication of Child Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Central America and the Dominican Republic was successful and effective. It obtained most of the anticipated results in the development objective and the immediate objectives. Regarding the quantitative aspect, several results surpassed the forecasts of the design and it also obtained a better quality in effects and products, especially in the programs of education and awareness raising.

2. The Project was implemented between October 2000 and September 2005. It was integrated with a sub-regional project, responsible for the general coordination and some activities at the sub-regional level, and four national projects in Guatemala (Broccoli in Chilascó), Honduras

(Melon in Marcovia), Dominican Republic (Tomato in Azua) and Nicaragua (Crops in Chontales), in charge of direct actions. The budget in the design was USD 5,1 million, of which USD 4, 3 million were a contribution of the Department of Labour of the United States of America (USDOL).

3. The Target Group of the national projects of Guatemala, Honduras and Dominican Republic² was 9.543 working boys, girls, adolescents³ and 1.050 families of these children. The actions of the Project in favor of the Objective Group were concentrated in awareness raising and measures of social protection, in areas of education, health and generation of income. At a sub-regional level, technical studies were carried out about the gravity and dimension of child labour in commercial agriculture, to enable and to raise awareness in Governments, supervisory organizations and workers unions.

4. On the other hand, the sub regional project managed to spot the hidden dimension and seriousness of child labour in commercial agriculture sector in the sub region. To achieve this, studies, pictures and mass communication with multimedia and activities for awareness raising were produced both in the public and private sector in the three countries.

5. The reasons for these satisfactory results were essentially two: the good performance of the coordination of the sub regional project and the

national projects, and a favorable environment, whose elements were the advances made on the Treaty of Free Commerce (DR-CAFTA) and the outstanding increase of social investment in some countries like Guatemala. There were also some unfavorable elements in the environment, like the stagnation of the economy in the sub region and the crisis of the coffee prices.

6. The obtained results are partially sustainable, since only some components of the sustainability were reached: a) The awareness raising mobilization in the areas of intervention has been, without any doubt, one of the best results of the Project. It assures at least that those communities will maintain a vigilant attitude to prevent and eradicate child labor at least as a medium term goal; b) The public and private institutions of the countries were not involved in operational aspects of the Project, which has limited the institutional learning to continue taking care of aspects such as education, health, fight towards poverty and awareness raising in the sector of commercial agriculture; c) The limited success of the programs of income generation has not allowed a significant amount of families to surpass its condition of poverty, which partly originated child labour; d) Three synergies⁴ obtained will assure the continuity of some social action programs in Guatemala, Honduras and Dominican Republic; nevertheless, these did not evolve from a common exit strategy by all the participants, but were the result of the Project coordinators.

7. The efficiency of the Project was low, not only the one anticipated in the design (47%, but also the one in the implementation (40%). The reasons that determined this were three: a) Unfortunate selection of three implementing agencies that did complete their action programs and had to be replaced; b) delays in the approval of action programs that caused delays in their start and the period of implementation for the Project, which was duplicated, instead of the planned 24 to 30 months, to 60 months; and c) The financial contributions from Governments and other associates to the Project, planned in the design, were reduced approximately to half.

8. The Project had strengths and weaknesses regarding the design and implementation that constitute lessons for future projects, for IPEC and the Governments of Central America and Dominican Republic.

Strengths

10. Making child labour visible in the sub region: Child Labour in commercial agriculture in Central America and Dominican Republic was not considered as a problem, because it was hidden, diminished and its existence even neglected. The main reason was that part-time work in family was considered as “instructive work” to transmit the family culture. In addition to this, it was also a way to maximize family income. Nevertheless, several actions of the Project contributed to remarkably raise awareness, mainly through forums and workshops, the involvement of the Project in public media and publications, and the distribution of documents on the risks and negative effects of child labour.

11. Withdrawal and Prevention of child labour: The excellent results on the withdrawal of child labour in the areas of intervention demonstrate that the measures of social protection and awareness raising actions were carried out pertinently. It also demonstrated to the public and private institutions of the countries, that the projects that implement actions in a uniform sector are more efficient to eradicate child labour, compared to national programmes.

12. Relevance of the Extension of the Project: The effects obtained between August 2003 and August 2005 completely justify the extension of the Project, because otherwise it would had not been possible to complete its mission nor to fulfil great part of the objectives. It allows to extract a lesson with respect to the future duration of a project, since the design will have to estimate adequately the required times to produce the desired results, putting special attention to the programs of income generation and education, especially when the latter are oriented to modify education methods.

13. Local Social Mobilization: The actions of awareness raising of the Project gave origin to excellent processes of local social mobilization to eradicate child labour, to enrol children in schools and to support the actions of the Project. These processes also gave origin to committees of parents, mothers and teachers who assumed the monitoring of child labour to detect new children at risk of working. In addition they would detect the children who did not attend school and raise awareness in their families.

14. Participation of Employers and Workers: The withdrawal and the prevention of child labour in Marcovia would not have been possible without the determined participation of the employers in the Honduran Council for Private Enterprises, who had to invest human resources in their offices to raise awareness and to enable parents, contractors, trainers and technicians. In Ázua the evaluation highlights the determined participation of the Dominican Association of Professors and of the Federation that joints small agriculturists, who were decisive in raising awareness amongst their associates. It confirms the usefulness of integrating employers and workers in projects and in management instances.

15. Education Achievements: The Project was able to assure the learning and to reduce the number of working children failing at school which is as much, or more important, than to register them in school. For that reason, the reduction of school failures by means of the introduction of effective education methodologies, like the Active Rural School (Guatemala) and the Homework Rooms (Dominican Republic), points towards a strategic direction for the design of future projects.

16. Coordination of Health and Education: The experience of the Pastoral Agency for Children and Health in Chilascó left a valuable learning to the Project, showing that health activities must be part of education programs, because it facilitates the coordination of the activities, in addition to the efficient delivery of the services.

17. Strategy of Income Generation for families without property: The Project had a promising experience with income generation for families in areas of commercial agriculture with high demand for skilled labor. This experience was in Marcovia, where young people and adults were trained for insertion in the labour market, who immediately obtained a job without the inherent difficulties in the development of micro enterprises, because the jobs were available for those who had the required skills.

18. Synergies and Exit Strategies of the Project: The Project generated synergies with national public and private organizations that will contribute to the continuity of some of the actions after the completion of the project. This is the case of activities of CENET in Marcovia that will be prolonged with resources from the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and there is a possibility that Plan International continues activities in Ázua, thus replicating project activities with own resources, maintaining the ERA methodology and the Scholarships for Peace for students of the Mixed Rural School of Chilascó. In spite of this, this cannot be described as an exit strategy, since they have not been the result of an analysis by all participants nor of a process that would guarantee to be effective.

Weaknesses

19. Design Methodology: The Project was designed in two stages and in different moments. On the one hand, IPEC designed the sub-regional project and the national projects, and later the implementing agencies designed the action programs. This modality was not completely relevant because it conditioned the design of the action programs (budget and timing) and because the role of the implementing agencies was not clear. Where they supposed to be simple implementers of the predefined action programs? Or, where they supposed to contribute with conceptual and methodological inputs to optimize efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability? In practice, some action programs required more resources and time than defined in the design of the national projects, and they did not obtain the results with the quality expected. For this reason,

it is recommended that in the future design of projects IPEC applies consistent criteria that do not cause difficulties in the implementation.

20. **Insufficient Budgetary Allocation to Direct Actions:** In the design, the allocation of resources for Action Programs ascended to 47% of the budgeted total, whereas 7% was assigned to the Monitoring system and the rest of 46% to the national and sub-regional coordinators. This evaluation considers that the budgetary allocation for the coordination of the project should not surpass 30%, whereas the system for monitoring activities and monitoring of child labour should not exceed 4 or 5%. Based on such a breakdown the budgetary allocation for Direct Actions could have increased up to 65% of the total cost.

21. **Insufficient Co-financing by Governments and Employers:** the design previewed that the financing of the Project would be distributed between USDOL (81%), Governments (16%) and Other partners (3%). This distribution is not considered suitable, since the amount by USDOL was a contribution to the countries to help them attain the agreements with the ILO and according to their own legislation. In addition, a significant proportion of the investments of the Project were assigned to activities that constitute the obligation of the Government, such as free and obligatory primary education. Regarding contributions of other partners such as employers organizations, it cannot be omitted that the Project was of evident benefit for them, since it helped them to comply with the national legislation and it also favoured the agro-industrial exports within the regulatory framework of the Free Trade Agreement.

22. For this reason it is considered that during the design, Governments and Employers should have made financial contributions in amounts equivalent to the respective benefits, in addition to agreements and conventions that they will support.

23. **Lack of Country Participation in the Management of the Project:** The design previewed the establishment of steering committees, but did not describe their

composition nor the functions that would correspond to them. On the other hand, the implementation did not give the due importance to these committees and preferred not to integrate them, by putting forward the argument of the institutional mandate of the National Commissions for Child Labour Eradication. These are composed of highest level Government officials that usually are not in the position to effectively participate in the project's operational aspects.

24. For the above reason it would have been more efficient to compose the committees with middle level officials and technical experts on child labour, that could have contributed to the management of the project and who could have been trained to replicate the Project in similar situations. It is worth mentioning that in some countries it was not necessary to create steering committees, since specialized technical units already exist.

25. Therefore, it is recommended to IPEC that in future projects such technical units should be responsible for higher management, or that steering committees are established that are composed of middle level officials or technical people from ministries. Their responsibility should include the technical approval of action programs and annual plans, besides following the implementation of the Project and its evaluations.

26. **Participatory Methodologies:** The methodology proposed in the design to identify the target group was through baselines studies. Nevertheless, these studies only reflected the demographic and socioeconomic situation and identified the working children; but they did not allow assessing the evolution of working children regarding internal migrations that occur in areas of commercial agriculture.

Further details available in the full report