



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Summaries

Combating Forced Labour in Brazil (Original report in Spanish)

Quick Facts

Country(s): Brazil

Mode of Evaluation: Independent final, 2/2008

Technical Area: Norms, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Evaluation Management: Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL)

Evaluation Team: Lisa Wong and Laís Abramo

Project Start: April 2002

Project End: December 2007

Project Code: BRA/01/50M/USA

Donor: US Department of Labour (USDOL) (1,775,498 US\$)

Keywords: Forced Labour

Background & Context

The project's overall objective is contributing to the elimination of forced labour (FL) in Brazil through the management and coordination of the National Commission to Eliminate Slave Labour (CONATRAE), and other key stakeholders.

The project falls under the USDOL/ILO agreement to provide technical assistance to a number of countries, to help them to fulfil the principle of the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work", which includes the ILO fundamental Conventions number 29 and 105, both ratified by Brazil.

The project was articulated around four immediate objectives:

- 1) Increased awareness of the existence of FL and the strategies and actions to combat it.
- 2) Strengthened integration of the CONATRAE and other key partners.
- 3) Improved application of national and international FL standards.
- 4) Implementation of measures to prevent recruitment.

It was implemented by the International Labour Organization's Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL), with financial support being provided by the Government of the United States of America.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to:

- Determine if the project achieved its stated objectives and explain why/why not.
- Assess the impact to date of the project.
- Assess the prospect of sustaining these impacts.
- Provide recommendations on how to improve impact of potential future funding for forced labour projects in Brazil, both in terms of

- sustainability of the efforts and of the project's performance.
- Report on lessons learned and good practices.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation team used a multi-method approach to examine the project. Initially, a documentary review was undertaken, which was completed by additional documentation received during the field mission.

The second method used was direct interviews with key informants. The evaluation team, to ensure consistency in the line of questions used for the interviews, developed an evaluation matrix which was discussed and revised with the ILO and USDOL.

The third method used was observation. The evaluation undertook a total of 32 individual and group interviews in 3 different locations: Brasilia (where all Federal Level key informants are based), in Sao Paulo (media, NGOs, civil society and universities), and Belem in the State of Para, where the FL problem is particularly keen.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The ILO FL project has very satisfactorily achieved its stated objectives. The approach followed by the project was well structured, researched and implemented. It enabled the project to achieve considerable progress on all fronts, despite two different governments and three administrations during the project's five years life cycle.

The project has created durable change in the combat against FL by contributing to the creation of a network of committed FL champions. The capacity both of CONATRAE and other partners was strengthened as a result. Flexible and sound judgement was exercised for the difficult and sometimes delicate issues surrounding forced labour.

In awareness raising activities the project's numerous seminars, workshops and events, coupled with a very well executed publicity campaign (poster, pamphlets, pins, etc.) and a fully developed media strategy (TV, radio and press) undoubtedly contributed to project success. When the project started, FL was mostly under-reported. Today there is much more visibility of the problem and a greater percentage of the populace which is aware of this problem.

Overall the project has been extremely proactive in all its components. The stakeholders interviewed considered the ILO's participation in this project a critical element of success and felt that combating forced labour should be sustained as a government priority.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Important lessons learned:

- A major difficulty in the case of Brazil in recognizing the existence of FL among all ILO constituents, There is sometimes a problem in separating the interpretations of the meanings of "Slave labour", "Forced Labour" and "degrading labour" in national legislation. It is difficult to undertake a project that is using a definition different from that used in ILO Convention terminology. By accepting the widespread national practice of defining FL as "slave labour", the ILO has contributed to polarizing the opponents and proponents around the existence of FL practices in Brazil. It should be preferable for the ILO to systematically stick to its Convention terminology in order for it to avoid confusion when assisting the Government to apply ILO Conventions.
- Governments are encouraged to discourage FL practices and are bound to prosecute those who perpetuate

them. However, there hasn't been to date any government policy to give socio-economic alternatives to those people who have been forced into labour.

- Further research is needed to determine how people fall prey to forced labour. While poverty and illiteracy are widespread amongst rescued FL workers, it is not sufficient to explain why these people did in fact find themselves in a FL situation.

5. Much work went into developing a PMP with the donor, although it did not quite obtain the ownership or support of the project team. Ownership and use of the PMP will only happen if/when the staff feel it responds to their needs and not only as a donor reporting mechanism, particularly if it does not capture the entire range of project achievements.

Main recommendations and follow-up:

1. The project has had the right approach and vision. It should have had a forum where it could present its full strategy, and this sort of complex project should certainly create a Project Steering Committee, to have its strategy endorsed by its tripartite constituents.
2. At national level there is now a critical mass of committed champions in CONATRAE, in Congress, in civil society and in some media and TV dedicated to the combat against FL. There is also now a loose network of champions at the state level, but there needs to be further support at the state level to ensure that all their efforts converge and are mutually supportive through the CONATRAE.
3. The mid-term evaluation recommended a strategy to train media correspondents and editors in order to ensure a proper treatment of information on FL issues. This recommendation was not followed and should be.
4. The concept of sustainability is generally not well understood with regard to project objectives. Beyond establishing future donor support for this effort, there is the question of identifying an exit strategy.. There is a need to plan how to hand-over, what to hand-over, and what sort of overlap is necessary.