



Evaluation Summaries

Sustainable elimination of bonded labour in Nepal (Phase I)

Quick Facts

Countries: *Nepal*

Final Evaluation: *September 2005*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Bonded Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

Evaluation Team: *Keith Jeddere-Fisher*

Project Code: *NEP/00/51/USA*

Donor: *United States*

Keywords: *Bonded labour, child labour, indigenous people*

Executive Summary of the full report

The planned starting date for the project was December 2000 and project approval was obtained in December 2001. It has an extended completion date of August 2005 and aims to contribute to the sustainable elimination of bonded labour in Nepal through the rehabilitation of 14,000 families of ex-Kamaiyas in 5 districts in the Far West and Mid Western regions. It does this through direct action with the adults and children of these families, through capacity building of organisations working for the rehabilitation of former Kamaiyas, awareness raising and research. The project is implemented through the Ministry of Land Reform and Management (MoLRM), trade unions and NGOs.

This report is of the combined impact assessment (IA) and final evaluation of the United States Department of Labor-funded

Sustainable Elimination of Bonded Labour (SEBL) project implemented by International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour and ILO's Declaration Programme. The purpose of this evaluation is to review the project's approach, strategy and implementation, assess the extent that project objectives have been met and the impact on target groups. The evaluation served as a learning tool for the main stakeholders through the facilitation of a participatory process of drawing lessons and identifying potential good practices from project experience. An independent consultant supervised the IA and carried out the evaluation. The IA collected quantitative and qualitative information on the impact of the project and this provided the final evaluation with a lot more objective information than is often available. The IA was able to provide independent verification of many of the project's quantitative indicators. The findings on some of the indicators were different to those reported by the project.

The project design provides a good background to the Kamaiya system but does not review the extent of bonded labour in Nepal. It is sensitive to gender issues in both the need identification and in the implementation strategy. The link between the development objective, immediate objectives, indicators and outputs are not completely clear. The institutional arrangements under the Broad-Based Task Force were effective.

The security situation in the project area deteriorated during the implementation period with mainly negative effects on activities. Monitoring and follow up by project staff was restricted and the field activities of the District Land Reform Office (DLRO) staff were almost completely stopped.

Project approval was delayed by 11 months due to negotiations with His Majesty's Government of Nepal and it then took between 11 and 18 months for the preparation and approval of the main action programmes. Coordination among the project partners was effective and there was some coordination between the many projects working with the ex-Kamaiyas.

The Kamaiya (prohibition) Act was passed in February 2002. The interpretation and the implementation of this Act by the government has been restricted to the Kamaiyas in the 5 project districts. These are the districts where most advocacy work has been targeted. Land distribution has been carried out by the DLROs to 90 to 99% of the target families. Membership of agricultural workers unions within the target families is lower than expected.

According to the IA only 12% of ex-Kamaiya household heads are members. Vigilance committees are well established in a few camps but are generally weak and not well recognised. Although 63% of ex-Kamaiyas receive the minimum wage there is a lot of variation with 81% of category 'A' men and 34% of 'B' category women receiving minimum wages.

The capacity of implementing partners has been strengthened. Despite wide recognition of the need, and decisions by the project and the MoLRM to take action, there has been no attempted intervention to develop the social and institutional capacity of the ex-Kamaiya groups resulting in a high level of dependency. Useful awareness raising materials were produced but the link with the partners using the materials may have been weak. According

to the IA 46% of ex-Kamaiyas are aware of the bonded labour legislation and 32% of the minimum wage legislation. The majority of them have very positive attitudes regarding children's education.

There is a good understanding of the socio-economic condition of the ex-Kamaiyas at the beginning of the project and now. The impact assessment study clearly shows areas of change among the ex-Kamaiyas. The changes identified are the result of many different projects, not just the SEBL. The seed money for the revolving fund was funded separately, not involving the main donor's funds. It has been distributed to Kamaiya groups' bank accounts and 43% of the funds have been accessed. Some groups are using the funds effectively but generally they are not revolving among members of the group, the repayment rate is low, and there is confusion over whether the funds eventually need to be repaid by the group. The security situation severely restricts the ability of DLRO staff to support and monitor the use of the funds. Alternative micro-finance provision is being piloted through an independent institution.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of children working as a result of the education programme, probably in the order of 3,000 to 4,000. The reduction has been mainly in the 6-12 age group, where it has more than halved, and amongst girls.

The DLRO has provided skill training to 3,017 ex-Kamaiyas (33% women). The results of estimates and studies on the level of utilisation of this training vary widely. Some has been used very effectively and it is likely that a lot has gone unused. An alternative approach using local NGOs has recently been piloted. 22% of the income-generating fund has been utilised and monitoring and support for the proper utilisation of this suffers from similar constraints as the revolving fund does.

Many children have been supported for school enrolment. Support has been provided over 3 years and a total of almost 11,000 children

have benefited. Enrolment of 6-12 yr children has increased to 86% and although the attendance rate of boys is still higher than girls the difference has halved. The Out of School Programme together with bridging classes has enabled older children to join school in a class appropriate to their age and ability. As a result of the project approximately 5,000 additional children are attending school. Due to the project impact and other external factors the facilities and staff of many schools are severely overstretched.

644 Kamalaharis have been reunited with their families and are well integrated. Within the project target families the number of children working as domestic labourers away from home has reduced significantly, particularly among girls aged 6-12 and 13-15. There are still a very large number of children in domestic work, many of them from ex-Kamaiya families.

Restrictive conditions controlling access to land have been substantially reduced but not yet eradicated. The number of households borrowing money has increased but the source and the interest rate has changed with a large reduction in the use of the most exploitive rates of interest.

Some impacts of the project are sustainable, but due to the short project period and the lack of capacity development of the ex-Kamaiya communities there is a high feeling of dependency.

Without further support school dropout is expected to be high. Continued effective microfinance provision through the DLRO is subject to changes in the support and monitoring of this activity. The final chapter of the report summarises the lessons learnt through experience, the potential good practices identified and the recommendations that have been made.