



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Prevention and elimination of child labor in small-scale traditional mining in Colombia - Final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Colombia</i>
Final Evaluation:	<i>3/2004</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Technical Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Evaluation team:	<i>María Cristina Torrado Pacheco, Lídice Álvarez Niño, María Consuelo Gaitán Clavijo, Camilo Andrés Guáqueta Rodríguez</i>
Project Code:	<i>COL/01/50/USA</i>
Keywords:	<i>child labour</i>

Excerpt from the main report

Since the mid-1990s, Colombia, with support from the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), has committed itself to the elimination of child labour through the formulation of national policy on the issue, with various institutions working in the areas of children and labour joining forces to address the problem. This policy has taken shape nationwide on three levels, and an inter-institutional committee has been formed for implementation and follow-up.

The ongoing effort has led to significant progress on the issue, especially considering the complexity of the phenomenon and the particular

characteristics of the situation in Colombia, which includes such problems as poverty, violence, social disenfranchisement and armed conflict.

It was in this context that the Project for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Small-Scale Traditional Mining in Colombia was designed and implemented as one of the direct intervention initiatives outlined in the Second National Plan. That project is the subject of this evaluation, which is designed to provide elements for analysis of the direct interventions aimed at withdrawing children from work in mining.

The initiative for addressing the problem of child labour in small-scale traditional mining arose in 1992, when Carbocol decided to take action to protect children working in mining. Later, with IPEC's arrival in Colombia, bonds were established between the co-operation agency and the state mining company to move toward strategies to keep child labour from expanding. They worked together at first, but for reasons related to the availability of funds, the two institutions later began to carry out their interventions independently.

As part of the programme implemented by IPEC, a final evaluation of the work begun by Carbocol and IPEC was done to identify the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of those processes. IPEC approached the UN - Observatory on Children at the National University of Colombia, which, as an independent academic institution, has accumulated a great deal of knowledge about the situation of children in the country, as well as experience in the evaluation of policies, plans, projects and programmes.

Researchers working in the area of child labour in the UN – Observatory on Children designed a participatory methodology that would reflect the various stakeholders' views about the areas addressed by the national Project at the municipal, local and national levels. Because the project was formulated and implemented in a time frame of approximately two years, the researchers felt that using only interviews with the people involved, relying on their memory, could lead to biased results. This was controlled by comparing their comments with documents produced from the time the programme began until the time of the evaluation.

The information gathered was systematically documented and analysed according to categories established in the terms of reference drawn up by ILO/IPEC, with attention to the rights of children, gender and community participation.

The Observatory's role in this type of project consists of developing a well-founded analytical and critical view of the social processes being examined. One of the areas in which it has gone into greatest depth, therefore, is that of child and adolescent labour, an issue that is one of the legacies of María Cristina Salazar, the Observatory's founder and a pioneer in addressing this problem in the country and the region.

Participating in the evaluation of this programme provided an opportunity to continue contributing to the analysis and development of public policy on children's issues in the country from a critical, independent perspective, thanks to the experience and knowledge gained over the years.

2. BACKGROUND CONCEPTS

The evaluation of programmes and projects is a recent practice that is on the rise throughout Colombia because of the need to identify and analyse such elements as the results, progress, achievements, limitations and difficulties of public actions. Nevertheless, *“although the importance and the need for evaluation are recognised, there is a lack of political will to do so, or a lack of methodological tools. There seems to be a framework of socio-political pressure that shapes decisions about the implementation of social programmes and the evaluation techniques and methods that are learned theoretically.”*

There are many definitions of *evaluation*. According to Cohen and Franco (1996), it is *“comparison with a desirable pattern.”* According to Franco, *“to evaluate is to determine the value of something by comparing criteria with a particular pattern.”* The UN has defined evaluation as *“a process designed to systematically and objectively determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of activities in light of their objectives. It is an organisational process that helps improve activities while they are still under way and helps with planning, scheduling and decision-making in the future.”*

One noteworthy definition is that of Roth (2002), who understands evaluation as *“... a serious practice of argumentation based on relevant information that makes it possible to comment specifically on the effects of public actions in a more accurate, less subjective manner.”* The conceptual development of programme evaluation is related to the evaluation of public policy, because projects and programmes are concrete local expressions of policy. For this reason, certain methodological strategies designed for analysing policy can be adapted to the evaluation of projects. One of these is the “cycle analysis” methodology designed by Jones in 1970, which distinguishes five phases of public policy development: identification of the problem, formulation of actions, decision-making, implementation and evaluation.

Based on this methodology, project analysis has some limitations, which have been corrected in this research. The first is that social processes are not sequential; that is, the problem is not necessarily defined at the outset, but is identified gradually, in its nuances and complexity, throughout the cycle, through the process of designing and implementing actions, which become learning moments in which new aspects of the problem, which were not understood at first, are identified.

Another limitation is that research takes into account as many elements of the situation as possible, and the situation is so complex that it is difficult to capture these elements in their entirety. Social phenomena are also dynamic, and the speed at which they advance, compared to the pace of research, is exponential. When the investigation is resumed, therefore, some earlier

elements may not necessarily correspond to the new situation. Cycle analysis, therefore, is limited by the fact that the evaluation always occurs at the end, without knowledge of the day-to-day evaluations and management that have occurred throughout the process. It is common for periodic reports to be done showing the project's progress in achieving the goals that were initially proposed.

The use of the cycle as a methodological strategy has significant advantages, including the possibility of providing a concise, graphic representation of the entire process; establishment of relationships between various events; and diachronic analysis of the entire project, from the earliest factors that influenced the project up to the moment of the evaluation.

When an evaluation is done, therefore, it must be rigorous enough to stand up to argument. Because social dynamics include various stakeholders with multiple interests, however, there is a clear *“technical difficulty in reflecting all these interests without creating feelings of pain, dissatisfaction, irritation and unhappiness among some citizens, institutions and public stakeholders.”*

There are many ways of evaluating policies, programmes and projects. The characteristics of the evaluation depend on the following factors:

- **The moment at which the evaluation is done:** *ex ante*, during the process or *ex post*.
- **The reason for the evaluation:** whether it is endoformative or a summary.
- **The aspects of the policy, project or programme that are to be highlighted:** evaluation of impact, results, means, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and satisfaction.
- **The characteristics of the evaluator:** whether it is an external, mixed or pluralistic evaluation.

In practice, it is difficult to carry out a single type of evaluation that does not include some elements of the others. In general, “pure” evaluations are not designed; rather, they are hybrids that include the aspects that each evaluator wants to observe. For example, a participatory evaluation can include endoformative elements that provide

opportunities for the stakeholders in the programmes to reflect on and analyse their public actions. Likewise, an external evaluation that does not take into account the participation of stakeholders who have had experience with the policy could significantly limit an understanding of the overall process.

The evaluation of the Project for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Small-Scale Traditional Mining in Colombia has been defined as an external reading of the validity of the design, implementation and performance of the National Project which includes the diverse activities undertaken by institutions at the national level⁷, and the Action Programs (AP), that include action by local institutions, working boys and girls, youth and families in each of the municipalities benefitting from the National Project. This includes identifying the achievements, progress, limitations and difficulties that have arisen during the process. To determine this, we began with the various stakeholders' views of the process; because neutrality does not exist in these processes, we considered it necessary to take three cross-cutting approaches in analysing the information. These three approaches are children's rights, participation and gender.