



Evaluation Summary



International
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Preparatory activities for the Time-Bound Programme in the Dominican Republic - Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

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Mid-Term on:	11/2004
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>DWT/CO-Beirut</i>
Technical Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>name</i>
Evaluation Consultant(s):	<i>Violeta Ruiz, team leader - also Sandy Wilcox, Roberto González, and Josette Brawerman.</i>
Project Code:	<i>DOM/02/50/USA</i>
Donor(s):	<i>US DOL</i>
Keywords:	<i>child labour</i>

Executive summary of the full report

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **aim** of this evaluation is to establish criteria in order to determine if the projects are reaching or are about to reach the proposed objectives, and, if there are deviations, to point out the reasons and provide recommendations that would allow for reorienting the project to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.

The **methodological approach** used is qualitative. It incorporates the opinion of all participating actors, including the staff

and managers of IPEC, representatives of the implementing agencies, members of the National Steering Committee, policy decision-makers of the current and former government, technicians, and people responsible for other related areas, in particular the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), parents and children benefited by the project, as well as relevant actors for the implementation. This meant using different techniques and sources to obtain data and compare findings.

After analyzing the relevant information, the evaluation **concludes** the following:

About the project design

The design was made in a context where there were favorable political and institutional conditions and experiences accumulated in the country, which created opportunities that were utilized to formulate the two projects and their respective amendments. The procedures, among which is it worth mentioning SPIF's contribution, allowed for progressing toward the involvement of the actors and the generation of consensus regarding the projects' strategies and objectives.

The product of these design efforts was consistent with the guidelines used by IPEC to promote the implementation of a national time-bound program (TBP). It was relevant because of its appropriateness to the specific characteristics of the Dominican context.

There was coherence among the objectives, outcomes, and various activities scheduled. The indicators and means of verification are adequate to measure or assess the achievement of the immediate objectives, but they were insufficient for evaluating the progress made toward the achievement of the intermediate outcomes. The design included assumptions about the political stability and about government officials that were not realistic in a context such as that of the Dominican Republic.

About the implementation process

The appointment of a highly professional, humanist team imprinted a dynamic pace on the implementation process so as to start the multiple actions that contributed to the strengthening and legitimization of the intervention in diverse scenarios.

It could be noticed that the delays in starting the Direct Action Programs, as well as the problems with the budget delivery, arose from the bottlenecks in the approval processes for the proposals, progress reports, and accountability. Solutions were gradually found; one of them was the progressive delegation of administrative decisions to the office in the Dominican Republic, which permitted more efficiency in the projects' implementation.

The accumulation of previous delays, plus the new activities to be started within the framework of the child trafficking amendment, created a scenario with many responsibilities and a heavy work load for the members of the local team.

About the actions for generating an enabling environment

The actions undertaken by the projects have been effective in terms of generating an enabling environment to eradicate the WFCL, and to collaborate in establishing the basis for the development of a national TBP. The awareness-raising efforts have been successful in terms of providing visibility for the problems, as well as

encouraging the collaboration of SET, SEE, and even CNUS.

Substantial progress has been made in the generation of technically adequate **information** that made it possible to assess the magnitude, location, and characteristics of child labor (CL), especially its worst forms, and adapt the intervention to the needs detected. This information has been useful both as a tool and as input for the awareness-raising actions.

The achievements regarding the commitment assumed by key actors for the treatment of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) have been significant. More intense work with the judges in order to assure effective enforcement of the existing legislation is still pending.

It has been possible to adapt the legislation to the international conventions thus far assumed. It is suitable to undertake an academic discussion in order to clarify the discrepancies between the existing regulations (the Labor Code and the Children Protection Code, mainly) and the gaps that still persist in the legislation.

Regarding the development of national policies, the approval of the national plan against the WFCL is still pending, as well as the specification of commitments assumed by some governmental actors. Despite of the evident link and the explicit and unanimous vision that the TBP is a national project that requires the financial and technical attendance of the IPEC office, in an important number of cases the assumed commitments not yet extend the formal participation in meetings of the NSC or other activities to which invitations are sent.

About the action programs

The three institutions contacted proved to have enough implementation capacity to go ahead with the actions proposed in the respective AP. They know the field and have used strategies to work with working children.

Among their strengths, the following are worth emphasizing: appropriate methodologies to identify, approach, and select beneficiary children and to work with their families, as well as to coordinate local institutional actors, sometimes along with the communities. The weaknesses vary according to the case: in one, there is absence of community commitment to the withdrawal strategies and in another there are difficulties in the implementation of the professional training component for youth.

The programs share the lack of experience to develop the remedial classrooms, a core component not only to keep children in school and away from work, but also to adapt their learning to the school grade they are registered in. Each AP is making its own efforts in this sense, but they should be coordinated in order to take advantage of the implementation of the EI and the results of an in-progress evaluation of other IPEC experiences.

About the sustainability of the actions

Progress has been made in the area of social sustainability in terms of an unquestionable change in the visibility and knowledge of the problems of CL. Certain government agencies have been encouraged to participate, and consultation and joint work initiatives with other organizations of the civil society have been created.

Progress is required in awareness raising and the strengthening of some sectors, such as the business sector where there has been little presence so far. It is also necessary to increase awareness about the role that each actor should play in the eradication of the WFCL, and to ensure that the law be enforced.

The creation of a child-labor monitoring system (CLMS) is a matter which is still pending, and it is urgent to define the modality of its insertion within the governmental apparatus so that it is functioning by the time IPEC leaves.

There is no evidence of tangible outcomes regarding the economic sustainability: SET's few resources make it seem improbable that in the medium term, specific funds will be allotted in the national budget to allocate funds to matters that are currently financed through the project.

Therefore, the evaluating team **recommends:**

About the projects' implementation terms: to request an extension of the original timeframe to at least the term needed to complete the Trafficking Amendment, keeping in mind the magnitude of the tasks undertaken by the two projects evaluated and the activities of the recently approved addenda, as well as its present operational state.

About IPEC's office and the projects' management: it is suggested to reorganize the office with a new distribution of responsibilities and duties among the team members. In addition to the reorganization according to field of expertise, it is necessary that only some members be devoted to following up on the projects, and that other members devote themselves to the inter-institutional relations and the general policies. On the other hand, it is proposed to agree with SET on hiring more personnel paid by the Secretariat which is being trained in the specificities of CL. Besides of supporting the distribution of tasks within the office, this would help to transfer the "know how" to the professionals of the SET, favoring the institutional sustainability and the effective implementation of the national TBP.

Moreover, an operational schedule of actions should be prepared for those activities to be held as of January 2005, this being done by setting priorities and delimiting responsibilities so as to have a clear vision of the tasks to be carried out.

About the projects monitoring: design of a monitoring plan that assesses the performance of the different project components. It should focus on processes, and identify the causes of the problems in order to review the implementation of the project. Dimensions, variables and indicators need to be defined to establish appropriate techniques, sources of information and instruments that allow providing a homogeneous picture. It is recommended to hire a specialist to design the tools and to facilitate or to lead the evaluative process. The complexity of the projects and of the topics of the AP, and the amount of the funds assigned to them, merit that this resource be considered.

About the Action Programs: carry out systematization exercises, beginning with the APs that are more advanced, since it is impossible to systematize what has not yet been done. Related to the recovery of the experience, it is also proposed that exchanges be held among the executing agencies by holding periodic meetings for the technical teams of the AP and IPEC staff members at the sites where the actions are being carried out. On the other hand, regarding the economic alternatives, it is suggested that the resources of this component be used to provide training for youth, and, if possible, for their parents and siblings.

About the Task Rooms (*Salas de Tareas*): standardize the contents and methodologies used in the task rooms beyond the particularities currently used for the development of the teaching-learning cycles.

About the coordination with the EI: take advantage of the input being generated by the EI in the Dominican Republic. To do so, it is necessary to strengthen the relations with Dev-Tech Systems in order to use the capacities being developed in the educational field. This has to be done to coordinate actions in the remedial classrooms, or to use the

produced input to improve the quality of the contents.

About the institutionalization of the issue of CL for sustainability purposes: create work strategies for the national authorities and other relevant actors to turn the commitments thus far assumed into specific policies and actions. Given the tendency towards the fragmentation of policies, it is necessary to generate collaboration that allows bundling the available resources, particularly the National Action Plan against the WFCL, the Plan to Fight Poverty and the Plan for Childhood.

On the other hand, the awareness-raising campaign should be continued with other relevant actors currently absent, in particular the employers' associations and the business sector. To do so, an incentive system should be organized that helps to become aware of the problem and to actively collaborate in the eradication of the WFCL. Involve the municipalities using specific strategies to inform and to invite them to participate, by making use of the coordination entities of municipal policies.

Develop a specific line of action in order to mobilize resources. The actions should include the permanent tracking and updating of a list of national and international organizations that support initiatives which are geared toward children and adolescents, as well as the organization and implementation of activities that allow resources to be mobilized through company and organization donations.

For the implementation of the National CLMS, it is suggested that a specialist in information systems be hired who can link the data from the various sources, who will design an adequate system after consulting with the entities involved, and who will be responsible for the first data collection and realizing the necessary adjustments.