

# Final Report

## Final Evaluation of the Project

### Poverty reduction among communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work in Cameroon

CMR/06/50NET



Mbororo women working in their dairy cooperative in Wum, North-West Cameroon

Carried out on behalf of  
**International Labour Organization, ILO**

by

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and  
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**March 2010**

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| ACADA     | Aghem Cultural and Development Association   |
| AIDS      | Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome  |
| AOS       | Alert and Observation System   |
| BACCCUL   | Bali Central Cooperative Credit Union League   |
| CDP       | Council Development Plan   |
| CSO       | Civil Society Organisation   |
| CTA       | Chief Technical Advisor  |
| DAC       | Development Assistance Committee of the OECD   |
| DWCP      | Decent Work Country Programme  |
| HIV       | Human Immuno Deficiency Virus  |
| ILO       | International Labour Organisation, International Labour Office                           |
| IPEC      | International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour                               |
| KUBWOSCCO | Kumbo Business Women's Saving and Credit Cooperative                                     |
| LCC       | Local Consultative Committee   |
| LDP       | Local Development Plan   |
| LED       | Local Economic Development   |
| LUTRENA   | NGO fighting against child labour in the NWR   |
| MBOSCUA   | Mbororo Socio-Cultural Development Association   |
| MFI       | Micro Finance Institution  |
| MINADER   | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development  |
| NGO       | Non Governmental Organization  |
| NFF       | NKUMU FED FED, NGO fighting against child labour in the NWR                              |
| NICP      | Netherlands/ILO Cooperation Programme 2006 to 2010                                       |
| NSODA     | NSO Development Association  |
| NWR       | North West Region  |
| OVC       | Orphans and vulnerable children  |
| PLWHA     | People Living with HIV/AIDS  |
| PPP       | Public-Private Partnership   |
| PRSP      | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper   |
| PRO 169   | Programme to Promote ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples             |
| SIDA-COOP | Mobilization of cooperatives and grassroots organizations for the fight against HIV/AIDS |
| SRO       | Sub Regional Office  |
| STD       | Sexually Transmitted Disease   |
| SIYB      | Start and Improve Your Business  |
| TC-RAM    | Technical Cooperation Resource Allocation Mechanism                                      |
| ToR       | Terms of Reference   |
| UBA       | Union Bank of Cameroon   |
| UNESCO    | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                         |
| UNICEF    | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund                                   |
| USD       | United States Dollar   |
| WACAP     | West Africa Cocoa/commercial Agriculture Programme                                       |

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## Fact Sheet

### Final Evaluation

on behalf of the

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**

of the

**MULTI-BILATERAL PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| TC code:   | <b>CMR/06/50NET</b>   |
| Project Title:   | Poverty reduction within communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work in Cameroon |
| Period Covered:  | 19 months   |
| Total Budget:  | Initial: USD 2,229,554, reduced to USD 1,730,294 and finally to USD 1,330,420 <sup>1</sup>                            |
| Start Date:  | October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2008  |
| End Date:  | April 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2010   |
| (Evaluation Date):   | March 2010  |
| Implemented by:  | ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa  |
| Donor:   | The Netherlands Government  |
| Place:   | Bamenda, Cameroon   |
| Department responsible for the project at ILO Head Quarters is the LED unit of the Employment Sector |   |
| Key evaluation data:   | Final external evaluation   |
| Overall coordination:  | ILO Regional Office Addis Ababa, Ethiopia   |
| Evaluation period:   | Between March 18 <sup>th</sup> and March 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2010  |
| Evaluators:  | Beatrice Bimé and<br>Thomas Ranz, AGE G Consultants eG  |
| Submission date:   | Draft report on April 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2010   |

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<sup>1</sup> Source: TC-RAM project administration Bamenda, March 4, 2010

## A. Executive Summary

The choice of Cameroon and especially the North-West region as project implementation zone is not fortuitous but is the result of systematic strategic options on the basis of criteria set by the ILO sub-regional office, SRO, for Central Africa based in Yaoundé. The choice was based on the following three key aspects:

- Former involvement of the Cameroon government and social partners in the implementation of many technical cooperation projects initiated by the ILO and other United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, and bilateral cooperation;
- Lessons drawn from these projects, especially in the domains of HIV/AIDS, child labour, social policies, socio-economic promotion of indigenous peoples, gender and the economic marginalisation of women with regards to access to knowledge, technology, land, education, and health.
- In the past years, the social divide in the North-West of Cameroon has gone to the extent that many consider it as an indicator for political, ethnic, and linguistic tension despite efforts taken by the government and its partners.

It is therefore within this context that the project on poverty reduction in communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work has been implemented since October 2008 in the three communities of Bali, Kumbo, and Wum<sup>2</sup>.

The target group of the TC-RAM project were youth, women, and vulnerable groups. Due to their denigration, vulnerability to accessing basic services, and recurrent conflicts with native populations, the Mbororo are an important beneficiary and stakeholder of the project. Women living with HIV/AIDS and children infected or affected by the disease are also given priority, due to their vulnerability to child trafficking. Local councils were targeted as project partners. Thus, the project worked closely with local municipalities to develop their work plans and integrate project objectives into Local Development Plans (LDP). The total number of beneficiaries, direct and indirect ones, and specific beneficiary groups has not been pre-defined and quantified. The number of benefiting target population members has eventually been defined and determined through available financial resources during the process of implementation.

The project, supported through the Netherlands/ILO Cooperation Programme 2006 to 2010, NICP, was scheduled to close at the end of April 2010. For the preparation of the external TC-RAM<sup>3</sup> evaluation, a backstopping mission of an ILO consultant had been carried out from February 26th to March 9th, 2010 (i) to obtain stakeholder participation in the evaluation process so that they could include their concerns in the TOR for the evaluation, (ii) to identify good practices that could later be integrated into the LED knowledge base, and (iii) to recruit the second member of the evaluation team and summarise the financial aspects of the project.

The evaluation mission was supposed to:

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<sup>2</sup> In the initial project design the Far North region was also included but taken out because of financial and logistical constraints.

<sup>3</sup> As the abbreviation indicates, TC-RAM is not the name of the project but refers to the ILO funding mechanism behind this and many other projects. In Cameroon though, the project is commonly referred to as „TC-RAM project“. Using the actual title of the project “Poverty reduction among communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work” would be more precise; however, due to its length, the comprehension of the text would be significantly hindered.

- assess interventions to combat child trafficking and to integrate Mbororos and families affected by HIV/AIDS into the local economy;
- appraise project progress in achieving its immediate objectives and its contribution towards building the capacity of local stakeholders to carry forward the LED process, prevent child trafficking and promote social inclusion of the target groups;
- assess whether the project strategy was adapted to the local context, to national development goals and the priorities of the DWCP, and the national poverty reduction strategy;
- examine the effect of project interventions, both expected and unexpected, on gender relations.

The principal clients for this evaluation have been defined in the ToR and include the Donor, regional representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, Employers' and Workers' organizations, the Mayors and traditional leaders of the three Council areas, the ILO Regional Office in Adis, the Sub-Regional-Office in Yaoundé and ILO technical units.

Adhering to the already existing list of key questions set up by the ILO backstopping consultant during her latest visit (see ToR in annex 1) seemed the most appropriate and viable approach. Principally, these questions had been already grouped along the DAC criteria. However, it must be clearly said at this stage that the high number of a total of 50 formulated evaluation questions can not be considered in detail each in a report limited to a maximum of 20 to 30 pages only.

### Key findings and conclusions

- The project's impact was limited to the three communities of the project implementation zone only. Further going engagements on a regional or even national policy and decision making level such as lobbying, advocacy etc. are however a specific mandate of UN organisations. But, such activities could not be included in the set-up and the confined geographic scope of the project, due to the short period of project implementation.
- The project design appears too ambitious and overloaded for the short implementation period of initially 24, and finally 19 months only. It is composed of a mixture of a wide range of ILO-covered themes, such as child labour and child trafficking, young entrepreneurship, indigenous people, community driven micro projects, micro finance, HIV/AIDS etc. thus hindering a solid and straightforward implementation process.
- The project used to a large extent standardised training modules and manuals in the sectors of LED, micro finance, and child trafficking. Although considered to follow high quality standards, a partially deficient adequacy to the specific context has been lamented by project staff (e.g. "Start Your Business" and "How Microfinance Works".) Particularly, the integration of illiterate groups has not worked successfully on the basis of the standardised ILO materials.
- The project has had a highly motivated project team. Especially the two national experts with distinctive thematic responsibilities in LED and Child Labour did their very best to compensate for a project setting which suffered from two subsequent cuts of the available budget and a delayed start.

- Collaboration with local stakeholders is very close at all implementation sites (Bali, Kumbo and Wum). Nevertheless, the formerly excellent reputation of the project significantly suffered from the abovementioned budget reductions.
- The project has had comparatively accurate monitoring, follow-up, and research components at its disposal. Data and information gained from this setup were efficiently and systematically used for updates and re-adjustments of project management activities.
- All documentation produced by the project meets very high quality standards in terms of systematic accuracy, correctness, and completeness.
- Quantity aspects of project outcomes could not be judged during the evaluation as quantitative indicators were never defined in the logical framework. However, without significant budget cuts, the number of outputs could have been much higher<sup>4</sup>.
- All “young entrepreneurs” trained and supported in the three project districts (altogether 62) were very satisfied with the provided assistance and described the trainings received, including the mentoring by local professionals, as essential key elements for starting their businesses. None of them has had to give up his or her business so far.
- Considered as a whole all budget lines were respected and have been used appropriately. As to the significant exceeding of the scheduled budget for expatriate staff compared to the initial project proposal, this phenomenon could not be explained so far.
- The project’s cost-benefit ratio is highly problematic. Administrative costs amount to nearly 70 % of the available budget. Staff costs alone consume nearly 40 % of the total budget. The entire activity expenditures amount to less than 27 % and still include various trainings abroad, studies, surveys and other meetings. The direct funding to beneficiaries covers not even 10 % of the project’s budget. The inclusion of the pre-deducted 13 % of the total budget as a handling fee for ILO programme support costs would even significantly worsen this ratio<sup>5</sup>.
- The decision to completely abandon the revolving micro loan fund has fundamentally affected the project’s sustainability. Advices to link up “young entrepreneurs” with already existing micro finance structures could not be realised until the end of the project.
- The project raised expectations without having been able to meet them after its end. For example, trafficked children identified by alert groups and brought back to their homesteads, have been sent to school at the expense of the project. However, the work of the alert system is difficult, due to the unresolved issue of the next steps to be undertaken after the identification of a child as well as unclear ownership of the process.

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<sup>4</sup> Detailed quantity indicators to be achieved have not been pre-defined in the logical framework.

<sup>5</sup> The ILO under its Financial Regulations is allowed to accept contributions on the basis that they will not generate a financial liability for the Office. Programme Support Cost (PSC) is an amount charged for each project and calculated at 13 per cent of the project budget; it basically represents a contribution to the indirect costs of the Office.



## Recommendations

1. The TC-RAM project is scheduled to end in April 2010. A succeeding project of the same type and/or an additional funding of the project are not in sight at the moment. However, by now, a second programme phase would be considered as very helpful to complete initiated activities.
2. The project included all pre-defined targeted beneficiaries such as vulnerable households, ethnic minorities, women, people infected by HIV/AIDS adequately in all of its activities. In future a more pragmatic approach focusing on fewer components and to a lesser extent on a strict respect of quota arrangements would be easier to manage.
3. The design of the project's logical framework is set up in a way which requests achievement of the very much data related outcome 1 as a precondition for working on the outcomes 2 and 3. This very specific character of the logframe obliged the project to devote a disproportionate amount of time to "reflection" thus causing a delaying regarding the beginning of the "action". A more action-research based approach could accelerate future project implementation.
4. The existing ILO guidelines, defining minimum requirements for project concepts, should be strictly respected for new concept designs. Concept development should be dominated by cost-benefit and feasibility aspects, including predominantly limits and caps for
  - the percentage per budget of direct expenditures to beneficiaries,
  - the percentage of administrative and transaction costs, and
  - expatriate management and management added costs (e.g. external back-stopping).
5. One constant and pro-active senior staff in HQ, RO or SRO should be the permanent contact person for a project and project staff. Coordination with additional sector experts should be organised, channelled, and moderated by this person, in order to organise clear output-oriented communication and to avoid confusion caused by too many overlaps and crossing lines of responsibility.
6. The motivation of stakeholders and beneficiaries within project interventions in social sector development may be supported by training, sensitisation, and information. However, income generation remains a driving force and should never be neglected. The level of LED activities should even be significantly increased in similar project scenarios.
7. The MFI which originally had been at the very centre of the project should not have been the first choice for a complete cut of funding. Next time it would be recommended that if cuts are going to be made, they should be done and distributed across the board.
8. In a project setting with a narrowly confined target area in only one province out of ten in the country and with very short distances, there was no need for two national coordinators and an additional international CTA. Funds could thus be saved by running a project in similar cases with a national coordinator.
9. Large parts of the project's efforts went into capacity building of LCCs, AOS, micro-entrepreneurs, MFIs and partner NGOs. However, the built up capacity does not seem sufficient to carry forward the LED process and to continue to prevent child trafficking after the project's end. For doing so at least a second

project phase would be necessary.

10. Projects like TC-RAM with a holistic character and approach to alleviate poverty and help to curb child labour and child trafficking at the same time are carried to a large extent by motivated stakeholders and beneficiaries. However, raising people's expectations without subsequently meeting pronounced activities and benefits in a satisfying manner causes irreparable damages and should be avoided.
11. High quality and realistic planning and programming of development projects are a very difficult process. Major challenges might lie in frequent lacks of statistical data, facts, and figures, and in very idiosyncratic, mostly multi-sectoral contexts. Especially, proposals for projects to be funded by a third party represent in general a legally binding service description for the project results to be attended during implementation. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the ILO assign the elaboration and writing of proposals especially for co-funded projects only to one of its most experienced senior staff assisted by a second national specialist in the field. Financial and feasibility aspects should hereby play a crucial role. The interference of particular sector-interests should be restricted as far as possible.
12. In view of a more efficient use of rare and expensive management resources, elements of lean management should be applied such as:
  - Local project manager plus regular coaching through HQ, RO or SRO;
  - Part-time CTA, in charge for several (if possible neighbouring) projects at the same time;
  - Intermittent short term consultancies based on detailed periodical work plans, to be established together with project staff.

#### Lessons learned and good practice

- Chances of the newly established cooperatives to succeed are quite high because of previously conducted detailed market surveys and a consequent investment in the production of strongly demanded products.
- The cooperatives' group members are highly motivated and committed to the continuation of their businesses which constitutes a positive precondition for the survival of the cooperatives after the project's end.
- The majority of the children who were placed in educational and vocational training institutions will probably not be able to continue after the projects end because the LED component of the project was not linked to the child labour component. Thus, the risk of them returning to child labour in its worst forms remains high.
- The participatory discussions and decision making processes towards project identification within the LCCs are considered very positive and fruitful. Their composition represented all relevant parts of the local communities. Representatives of the target groups were not only part of the LCCs in a well balanced manner but, they were able to clearly and openly voice their concerns in the meetings.
- The inclusiveness of the project by making many different segments of society come together and participate in the running of their councils and giving inputs to the five year development plans of these councils will go a long way towards mutual understanding and cooperation in the daily management of these councils and their communities. Unfortunately, the decentralisation process in Cameroon is delayed and community structures are not yet operational for integration of these development potentials.

## **B. Description of the project**

### **B.1 Framework conditions**

The project “Poverty reduction among communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work in Cameroon”, called TC-RAM<sup>6</sup> meets the principles of the United Nations to end economic hardship that leads to the exploitation of children through the promotion of local development that favours job creation for the most vulnerable families. The choice of Cameroon and especially the North-West region as project implementation zone is not fortuitous but is the result of systematic strategic options on the basis of criteria set by the ILO sub-regional office, SRO, for Central Africa based in Yaoundé.

The choice of Cameroon as one of the beneficiary countries of the TC-RAM Initiative was based on the following three key aspects:

- Former involvement of the Cameroon government and social partners in the implementation of many technical cooperation projects initiated by the ILO and other United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, and bilateral cooperation;
- Lessons drawn from these projects, especially in the domains of HIV/AIDS, child labour, social policies, socio-economic promotion of indigenous peoples, gender and the economic marginalisation of women with regards to access to knowledge, technology, land, education, and health.
- In the past years, the social divide in the North-West of Cameroon has gone to the extent that many consider it as an indicator for political, ethnic, and linguistic tension despite efforts taken by the government and its partners.

It is therefore within this context that the project on poverty reduction in communities vulnerable to child trafficking through the promotion of decent work has been implemented since October 2008 in the three communities of Bali, Kumbo, and Wum.

### **B.2 Brief project description**

The project will be described here in a very condensed form by using only the key elements of the initial logical frame work as this is the basic and still valuable definition of targeting.

#### **Development objective:**

**Increase income generating opportunities in communities vulnerable to child trafficking within the framework of the Local Economic Development (LED) approach.**

#### **Strategic Outcome 1:**

**Baseline data which take into account the gender approach to the development of targeted communities are developed and rendered operational.**

**Output 1.1:** The economic, cultural and institutional potentials of targeted communities are analysed and sustainable incomes sources are identified.

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<sup>6</sup> The TC-RAM Initiative (Technical Cooperation Resource Allocation Mechanism) as a whole is under implementation by the International Labour Organisation, ILO in 18 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Output 1.2: A data base on the potentials promising economic sectors and social and organisational dynamics of communities is established and accessible.

### **Strategic Outcome 2:**

**Opportunities for equitable access to productive employment are created for both women and men within the framework of Local Economic Development.**

Output 2.1 The LED approach is adopted by grass root organisations and Councils as a strategy for creating employment in the fight against poverty.

Output 2.2 An institutional and organisation framework for LED is established in the context of social dialogue.

Output 2.3 The operational and management capacities of project governance structures for LED are reinforced.

Output 2.4 Individual or collective micro-projects conceived and elaborated by target beneficiaries are funded for execution.

Output 2.5 A sustainable strategy for the mobilization of local financial resources is developed and executed.

### **Strategic Outcome 3:**

**Girls and boys are protected against trafficking and benefit from equal education, training/professional placement opportunities as well as social protection.**

Output 3.1 Communities integrate the fight against the worst forms of child labour into their local development plans (LDP).

Output 3.2 Conditions of gender inequality that put girls and boys at risk are addressed.

Output 3.3 Boys and girls who are victims of trafficking and their families benefit from all-inclusive measures of withdrawal, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Output 3.4 Girls and boys susceptible to trafficking and their families participate in their integrated prevention, education and employment creation.

In the following, the key components of the TC-RAM project listed above will be discussed from a more practical perspective, in order to provide a complementary view on the project. In order to create a first understanding of the project as a whole, its different components shall be briefly described here without going to much into details on how the work was done and appreciated by different stakeholders and beneficiaries. This will be the content of the chapters on the different DAC criteria.

### **The LED process**

LED includes three major components, (i) the LED approach (i.e. public-private dialogue, partnerships, local ownership, local resources, etc.), (ii) the LED process (referring to phases/steps, ranging from territorial diagnosis, consensus-based planning, towards M&E), and (iii) LED activities (e.g. capacity building of entrepreneurs). The LED process was based on integrating local development plans in the project design and working closely with all key stakeholders in the implementation of the Local Economic Development Plans (LDP). The TC-RAM project did this in a very systematic way by working with local structures (Local Councils, Local Consultative Committees etc.) irrespective of political orientation, in order to help them establish their five years economic development plans. The councils proceeded highly participatory by including to a very large extent the different beneficiary groups on community level in the

planning and execution process. The councils cooperated as well closely with the public private sector, including NGOs, PLWHA, youths, and other groups. The outcome was productive work which everyone contributed to and felt a part of.

### Entrepreneurship development

The project set out to support capacity building of youths and parents of children vulnerable to child trafficking in its efforts to promote development through the ILO's decent work framework. However, this component of the project was only successful to a very limited extent for two reasons: first, the training provided targeted people who could read and write and thus excluded the illiterate parts of the target group, i.e. families of those children most vulnerable to child trafficking. Second, youths who benefited from the training and received grants to carry out business activities stated that the grants were insufficient for their proposals (although they also expressed their basic satisfaction with the training and the opportunity which the grant and their new business provided them with).

A further reason why this component of the project did not succeed consisted in the two financial cuts the project suffered and the short project implementation time frame (see details in chapter E.4).

### Child trafficking

This aspect of the project was supposed to build upon the previous ILO/IPEC projects LUTRENA and WACAP. However, except for two of the target areas, TC-RAM worked in areas which did not form a part of the project sites of the two previous projects. In order to curb this deficit, TC-RAM in collaboration with the local councils set up alert groups whose mission was to sensitize and create awareness in the communities about the ills of child trafficking and child labour. The alert system supported the identification of cases of child trafficking and of children who could not write their primary school exams because they did not have birth certificates. In general, awareness was increased in the various target communities by the members of the alert committees. They repeatedly informed people living in their neighbourhoods about the law against child trafficking and the ILO convention 182 which Cameroon is a signatory to. This law exists but the application text has not yet come into force. The work of the alert system is difficult, due to the unresolved issue of the next steps to be undertaken after the identification of a child as well as unclear ownership of the process. Here, the councils are certainly involved and would try to assume ownership of the process. In some places, such as in Kumbo, the council put in place a work place policy against child labour and ensured that the council itself and those it sub contracted for work do not hire children.

### Persons living with HIV/AIDS

Persons living with HIV/AIDS do not only face discrimination but are most often among the poor in rural areas, and their children are vulnerable to child trafficking. Most women widowed by AIDS found themselves unable to take care of themselves or of their children. Thus, they were included into the beneficiaries of the project, in order to improve their standard of living, increase their ability to take care of their children, and ultimately to reduce the incidence of child trafficking. Most of these beneficiaries were also provided with training and were given small grants to start or increase their businesses, thus fostering better access to a mutual health scheme and receiving treatment and care.

### B.3 Brief description of the target group

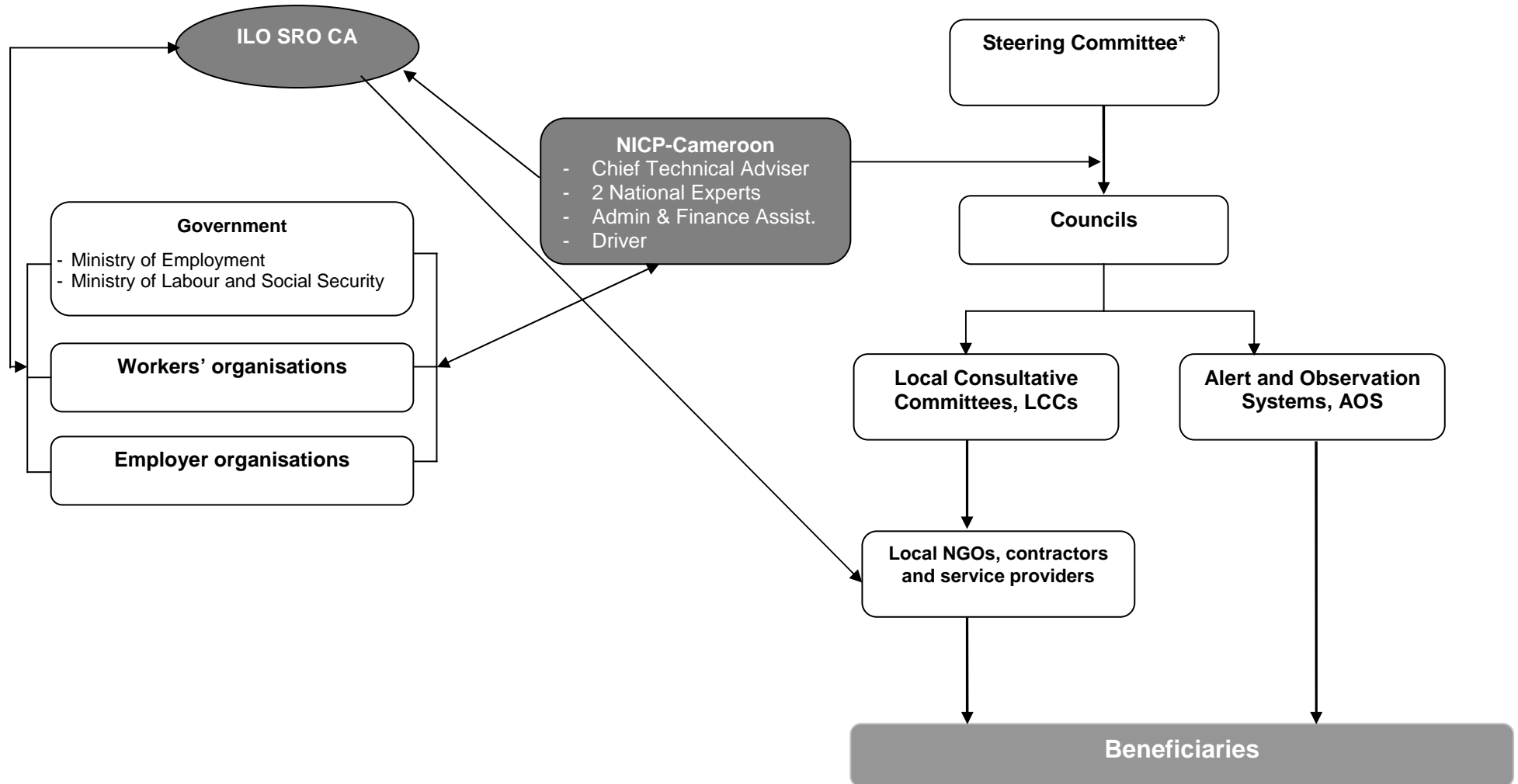
*“The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.”* Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General.

Decent work is central to efforts to reduce poverty, and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. The ILO works to develop decent work-oriented approaches to economic and social policy in partnership with the principal institutions and actors of the multilateral system and the global economy.

The target group of the TC-RAM project were **youth, women, and vulnerable groups**. Due to their denigration, vulnerability to accessing basic services, and recurrent conflicts with **native populations**, the Mbororo are an important beneficiary and stakeholder of the project. Women living with HIV/AIDS and children infected or affected by the disease are also given priority, due to their vulnerability to child trafficking. **Local councils** were targeted as project partners. Thus, the project worked closely with local structures (municipalities, local councils, LCCs, non-public local actors) to develop their work plans and integrate project objectives into Local Development Plans (LDP). The total number of beneficiaries, direct and indirect ones, and specific beneficiary groups has not been pre-defined and quantified. The number of benefiting target population members has eventually been defined and determined through available financial resources during the process of implementation.

Decent work is essential for promoting the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, for achieving universal primary education which requires freedom from child labour so that children can attend school, and for enabling women to participate more fully in economic life. Thus, improving child protection and the status of women plays a crucial role in the fight against poverty, child labour, and child trafficking. Since 2004, the world has seen the feminisation of HIV/AIDS as an epidemic which attacks the most productive workforce and further spreads poverty in already impoverished countries. The target group for the TC-RAM project was therefore identified along the necessity for increasing the employment rate and standards of living, and to curb the phenomenon of child trafficking in the three selected project areas.

## Organisation chart of the TC-Ram Project



\* This chart has been provided by the TC-RAM office upon request and after the end of the evaluation team's field trip. It must be underlined that it was not fully operational as such (e.g. Steering Committee). However, it can serve as a model for a better comprehension of the projects organisational setting.

Source: TC-RAM project, April 2010

## **C. Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation**

### **C.1 Reason and aim of the evaluation**

The project, supported through the Netherlands/ILO Cooperation Programme 2006 to 2010 (NICP), was scheduled to close at the end of April 2010. As required by ILO rules for projects exceeding 500,000 USD, a final evaluation of the project was scheduled to be conducted in March 2010 by an external evaluator assisted by a national consultant. ILO regulations define the purpose of evaluations as follows:

“ILO project evaluations provide an opportunity for the Office and its funding partners to assess the appropriateness of design as it relates to the ILO’s strategic and national policy framework, and consider the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project outcomes. Project evaluations also test underlying assumptions about contribution to a broader development goal.”<sup>7</sup>

For the preparation of the external TC-RAM evaluation, a backstopping mission of an ILO consultant had been carried out from February 26<sup>th</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. This mission was undertaken to set up the itinerary for the external evaluation.

The findings of the external evaluation shall contribute to further improving the methodologies applied and provide lessons learned for the key stakeholders of the project and the ILO in their future efforts to combat child trafficking and social exclusion through a participatory, pro-poor LED process. Therefore, the evaluation covered the different stages of the LED process listed below in the three council areas Bali, Kumbo, and Wum, and also within the North-West region as a whole:

- Supporting consensus building and other start up activities;
- Establishing detailed territorial diagnosis and institutional mapping;
- Setting up of local LCC forums;
- Creating, revising and setting up to a certain extent LDPs;
- Monitoring of the sustainability of LED interventions.

Consequently, the evaluation mission was therefore supposed to:

- assess interventions to combat child trafficking and to integrate Mbororos and families affected by HIV/AIDS into the local economy;
- appraise project progress in achieving its immediate objectives and its contribution towards building the capacity of local stakeholders to carry forward the LED process, prevent child trafficking and promote social inclusion of the target groups;
- assess whether the project strategy was adapted to the local context, to national development goals and the priorities of the DWCP, and the national poverty reduction strategy;
- examine the effect of project interventions, both expected and unexpected, on gender relations.

Considered as a whole, particular attention should be paid to the voice and representation of women, families vulnerable to trafficking and HIV/AIDS, and the Mbororo communities in decision making processes at council level. The validity of the project design and the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of project outcomes

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/eval>



should be considered as well. An impact assessment was not expected at the rather “early stage” of the project. Nevertheless, the project was coming to its end in April 2010.

## **C.2 Clients of the evaluation**

The evaluation addressed management and coordination issues within the project team, and vis-à-vis local stakeholders, the SRO, ILO Geneva and the Turin Training Centre. In particular, it concentrated on the effects which the pressure to reach a high delivery rate and the repeated budget cuts had on the achievement of pre-defined project objectives.

The principal clients for this evaluation have been defined in the ToR and include the Donor, regional representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, Employers' and Workers' organizations, the Mayors and traditional leaders of the three Council areas, the ILO Regional Office in Addis, the Sub-Regional-Office in Yaoundé and ILO technical units.

## **D. Methodology**

### **D.1 Prior remarks**

At the very beginning of this report, the evaluators would like to express their respect to the highly engaged project team for the excellent preparation and planning of the field mission in Cameroon. This mission was carried out in a very professional and trustful atmosphere.

This report follows the standard framework “Structure and content of ILO Evaluation Reports”<sup>8</sup> and thus also constitutes the following evaluation report’s table of contents. The listing of the points as a guideline is derived from the principles for evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee, DAC, of the OECD.

### **D.2 Evaluation process**

The final evaluation in Cameroon was carried out with a very high level of project holder participation and support from March 18<sup>th</sup> to March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Although carried out during the raining season, no heavy rainfalls hindered the scheduled execution of the evaluation. From an agricultural perspective, the evaluation period unfortunately took place during the growing season when most of the beneficiary groups were extremely busy. Nevertheless, the established itinerary for the mission could be realized to a very large extent.

The evaluation process as such had been prepared beforehand through an ILO short term consultant from February 26<sup>th</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

For preparation and execution of the evaluation, the team conducted document reviews and a field visit. Various documents, including the project documents, programme and financial reports etc. were reviewed. A total number of more than 60 interview partners (focus groups, project staff, NGO partners, officials of local administration, ILO HQ staff etc.) were interviewed (see as well annex 3).

Regrettably, no succeeding funding for a follow-up project after April 2010 is in sight. The funding period will thus end in April 2010.

### **D.3 Evaluation methods**

The *Technical Cooperative Resource Allocation Mechanism*, the so called TC-RAM project is marked by the following characteristics:

- The number of existing facts, figures, surveys, and analyses is very high and detailed for this sort of project type with an implementation period of 19 months only and an available total budget of roughly 1.330.422 million USD<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> ILO Planning and Implementation Evaluation for Results, June 2009.

<sup>9</sup> The initially scheduled budget amounted to 2,229,554 USD. Due to the very late start up and after discussions, the budget was reduced to 1.730.294 USD on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008. This was not long after the project had started up its operations. Along with all the projects in the Netherlands/ILO partnership 2006-2010, the delivery rate of the TC-RAM project was monitored by the ILO’s Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department (PARDEV). At the end of July 2009 the CMR/06/50/NET project had very low delivery rate. After discussions with the project and the technical backstopping units it was therefore decided to cut the budget with 399.872 USD to 1.330.422 USD.

- As already mentioned, the field visit had been prepared in detail by an ILO consultant within a two-week mission just before the beginning of the evaluation mission.
- To a very large extent, more or less standardized ILO methods and didactic material were used (*Start Your Business*, so called SIYB-tools, business plans, training tools of the ILO Local Economic Development Approach, LED etc.).

After reviewing the very detailed existing documentation of the project, the evaluation team decided not to gather additional quantity-related data (e.g. by using questionnaires and doing surveys again), but to rather concentrate on a quality-related approach. This was discussed as well during the briefing sessions at SRO in Yaoundé and together with the project team.

It was accordingly agreed to follow a catalogue of key questions which would allow including newly appearing questions and aspects to be considered in-depth during the interviews. Adhering to the already existing list of key questions set up by the ILO consultant during her latest visit (see ToR in annex 1) seemed the most appropriate and viable approach. Principally, these questions had been already grouped along the DAC criteria. The different sections of answers are therefore integrated into the ILO standard structure for evaluation reports in a condensed form attributed to the relevant sub-chapters. In other words, the answers to the evaluation's key questions listed in the attached ToR constitute the framework for the report's structure. However, it must be clearly said at this stage that the high number of a total of 50 formulated evaluation questions can not be considered in detail each in a report limited to a maximum of 20 to 30 pages only.

The methodological limits of an evaluation process are always closely connected with time constraints. On the other hand, an evaluation shall not be a preferably complete accumulation of what has ever been done during the project cycle. An evaluation has to condense insights and to provide relevant real-time information for adequate project steering instead of collating an exhaustive scientific catalogue of all detailed activities. Against this background, the methodological approach chosen for this evaluation avoided wherever possible repetitions in the three implementation zones thus putting emphasis on a deductive proceeding with a focus on newly appearing questions. Furthermore, a summative evaluation was not feasible, due to the lack of pre-definitions during project planning regarding quantifiable objectives and indicators to be achieved.

## **E. Clearly identified findings for the following criteria**

### **E.1 Relevance and strategic fit**

The design of the project is fully consistent with Cameroon's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP. According to the ILO, and most development agents, "in order to be effective, efforts to scale up the development process must be anchored in country-led development strategies".

The project design was guided by the Decent Work Country Programme, DWCP, adopted in 2007, the second priority of which is to create decent employment for youth, women, and vulnerable groups, as well as by the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP, of 2003. The still ongoing decentralisation process which started in 2004 with the passing of a law that stipulates the transfer of powers and resources to local governments provides the national context within which the ILO has facilitated a gender-sensitive LED process in one of the poorest regions of the country. The project itself provided training and work for women, PLWHA, for the Mbororo minorities, and for persons vulnerable to child trafficking. So, per definition, it contributed to DWCP and to the MDGs as well.

The project worked in close collaboration with the other ILO technical cooperation project SIDA-COOP, Women's Entrepreneurship and PRO 169, in organizing joint workshops and training and in identifying target groups and providing the necessary support in each area of competence. The contribution of TC-RAM to sustaining the previous IPEC projects LUTRENA and WACAP could not be assessed because TC-RAM worked in only two sites in which the other projects had been active as well, and none of the cases of the previous projects were targeted or followed up.

The WACAP and LUTRENA projects had identified through studies and field work more than ten thousand children vulnerable to child labour and had returned and re-located 1,350 and 100 children respectively. It would have made more sense and been of more value to have used the data of the previous projects to continue the work the projects had started and even continue to empower those children who were susceptible to returning to child labour and their parents. A study could have been carried out to find out if there were any withdrawn children who had reverted to child labour due to the end of the previous projects.

Collaboration with other UN agencies like UNICEF, UNESCO, and other international organisations working in the same or similar areas is always recommended. However, due to the location of the TC-RAM project office rather far away from Yaoundé where most UN and other international organisations' offices are located, the establishment of collaborations and linkages between these structures was difficult. Plus, the project had very little time and had to concentrate on the implementation process.

### **E.2 Validity of design**

The design of the project was inclusive, participative, and very well appreciated by stakeholders and beneficiaries. It addressed economic and social needs in equal measure. The applied LED approach included genuine social dialogue, mutual learning and sharing, alignment with national and local development frameworks, coherence with development approaches of productive sectors, public-private partnership, and the creation of opportunities for decent employment.

By working with councils and people at grassroots level, the design of the project was based on a detailed needs analysis of the target areas. The composition of the alert

systems and the outputs of the project indicate that gender analysis was done very proficiently and was mainstreamed into all aspects of the project.

The project design was basically logical and coherent. However, it missed the point when it came to using the SIYB training tools by assuming and somewhat enjoining literacy for all participants. This undoubtedly led to the de facto exclusion of the most vulnerable groups who are usually illiterate from this component. The outcomes finally achieved the defined development objectives but did not always fully reach the intended target group.

The LED approach can certainly reduce the incidence of poverty and reduce vulnerability to child trafficking because it targets people at the grassroots and includes them into decision making. The concept empowers them through training and providing them not only with skills but also with the tools to start businesses and improve their lives and standards of living.

The TC-RAM design included some strategies to assure and enhance sustainability. However, the most important strategy – micro-finance – was finally left out, due to insufficient funds to carry out this component. Consequently it must be stated that if the project had been started when it was supposed to be started by implementing all scheduled components according to the initial project document, the sustainability of the project would have been guaranteed. Still, the training measures provided by the project are elements of sustainability, despite the fact that comparatively few people in the various target groups benefited from these trainings.

### **E.3 Project progress and Effectiveness**

Effectiveness means how far the purpose or the specific objective of a project was achieved in terms of the benefits derived from the project results.

The ToR for this evaluation included a total of 29 key questions to be discussed and answered in the sub-chapter on effectiveness. This is not feasible considering the restricted volume of a maximum of 30 pages for an ILO evaluation report. In the following, an effort is made to cluster this catalogue of questions in a very condensed form by focusing on related issues. Some questions will not be answered in detail, due to their lower relevance and/or significance. Some other questions are very much related to impacts and cannot be answered at this early stage (see ToR for this evaluation, page 1: “After duration of only 19 months, the status of the project is very much ‘work in progress’. Hence, the focus of this evaluation is on project outputs and outcomes and not on impact assessment”).

The development objective of the project is to increase the capacity of vulnerable women, men, and youth to earn monetary incomes through local economic development. Although already mentioned earlier, the projects key targeting below shall facilitate the subsequent discussion of the project’s key activities.

The specific objectives are:

- To contribute to a gender-sensitive knowledge base on the economic potential of target communities;
- To create opportunities for equitable access to decent employment for women, men, and youth within the framework of local economic development;
- To protect girls and boys against trafficking and ensure that they benefit from equal education, training/professional placement opportunities, as well as social protection.

The following table was provided by the project and established to briefly summarize in figures the produced outputs before considering subsequently the three pre-defined project outcomes in detail.

| <b>Project achievements in brief</b><br>in the three targeted communities of Bali, Kumbo and Wum                                |
|---|
| • Organisation of <b>1</b> initial start-up workshop  |
| • Organisation of <b>1</b> planning workshop  |
| • Planning and organisation of <b>3</b> workshops for setting up Alert Committees   |
| • Establishment of <b>3</b> operational Local Consultative Committees, LCCs   |
| • Realisation of <b>6</b> baseline studies in different sectors   |
| • Carrying out <b>4</b> identification surveys of vulnerable families   |
| • Identification of <b>1,142</b> vulnerable families  |
| • Elaboration of <b>3</b> strategic community development plans   |
| • Realisation of <b>13</b> capacity building and follow-up sessions in the three targeted communities                           |
| • Training of <b>4</b> partner representatives in the ILO Training Centre in Turin, Italy                                       |
| • Repatriation of 225 school kids and organisation of their school attendance   |
| • Establishment of 1,350 birth certificates to girls and boys   |
| • Socio-economic counselling of 146 women living with VIH/SIDA and their support with small scale business start-up micro-loans |
| • Establishment of 62 micro enterprises   |
| • Establishment of 3 cooperatives of micro entrepreneurs (350 women in total)   |
| • Realisation of <b>11</b> community driven micro projects  |

Source: TC-RAM project, March 2010

Effectiveness shall be considered per expected outcome as mentioned in the project planning document and the logframe.

Outcome 1: Setting up a knowledge base on the capacities and the economic potential of the target communities;

A look at the expected outcome indicates that a knowledge base on the capacities and the economic potential of the target communities was established through two very detailed initial diagnostic studies, and an analysis and listing of potential businesses in the target area. These high quality documents are indeed an excellent base for targeting and implementing project activities. However, it took a rather long time of the already very short period for project implementation, to get this preliminary analytical work done.

The high number of one hundred fact sheets presenting a wider range of income generating activities is impressive as such. The sheets' performance is very good and professional. However, their content is not sufficiently specific and detailed to serve as an instruction manual. The documents first of all present the potential of job

sectors in a pleasant and attractive manner. To what extent these documents have contributed to Outcome 1 of the project remains a matter of debate.

Outcome 2: Creation of equitable access to decent and productive work for women and men;

The three cooperatives in Bali and Wum (dairies and cassava processing) have not yet been operational when visited by the evaluation team – except for the dairy cooperative operated by Mbororo women in Bali (operational for a few weeks). The members of the dairy cooperatives are, without few exceptions, women only. In contrast, cassava processing will be done by a mixed group. Organisational inputs, professional trainings, and equipment received by the cooperative members have all been properly covered by the project. In addition, the demand based orientation of products and their production will support sustainable and self-reliant economic activities after the project's end. Any attempt to give an evidence based assessment of the cooperatives' contribution to women's empowerment at that stage would be speculative and hazardous. This is also the case for any consideration how far Mbororos and HIV affected persons are better integrated into the local economy now. The team could not notify valid indications towards a reduction in discrimination against these groups. Even within an ex-post evaluation it would be difficult to measure the level of the project's direct contribution to reduce discrimination.

Although the process of project implementation can be regarded as participatory at the level of the council areas, it did only succeed to a certain extent in including workers organizations and/or trade unions, mainly for administrative and logistic reasons. Due to the absence of the main organizer of employers in the project intervention zones, the project nevertheless associated government representatives and especially three important trade unions. Their representatives regularly participated in training workshops.

The project provided a lot of training for the target group, albeit sometimes with ill adapted training tools to local realities and the high number of illiterate beneficiaries. Therefore, especially the most vulnerable groups who actually needed the training most were left out to a certain extent.

A total of 69,485 USD has eventually been spent on infrastructural activities (see chart in chapter E 4). Considered in detail, improvements in infrastructure, such as small bridges, a water catchment, a cattle market, and public toilets had undoubtedly an effect on three different levels, (i) on a social and community developing level, (ii) on income generation, and (iii) on improved livelihoods.

Those 62 young entrepreneurs who received training and start up capital from the project reported that their standard of living had improved and were sure to continue improving as their businesses grew. Besides, nearly all of them complained about the very low start-up capital (app. 125,000 FCFA per business, the equivalent of 220 USD) provided by the project. In addition, various obstacles to gaining access to MFI loans were mentioned. The precise future effects of the grouping of new entrepreneurs into associations can not be assessed at present. Any positive effect of these associations in the long run will directly depend on the economic success of the individual entrepreneurs. Only then will they be able and willing to preserve these structures (which are rather artificial and project initiated).

The strategy of linking new entrepreneurs to already existing local micro finance institutions, MFIs, failed to a large extent. MFIs did not develop any products adapted to the needs of the specific target groups of the project. Although the mentoring process

was very fruitful and strongly enhanced the business prospects of new micro enterprises, the mentors did not succeed up to now in linking new entrepreneurs to local MFIs<sup>10</sup>.

The micro-finance fund was the engine of the project, at least with respect to the potential for ongoing activities after its end. The complete cut of this key element in July 2009 caused a high level of frustration among stakeholders, beneficiaries, and project staff. This “external” decision of ILO headquarters led as well to a significant damage of the originally excellent reputation of the project at community level. This can be considered the most important unintended and negative impact of the project as was repeatedly affirmed by numerous interview partners.

The time frame of the project was too short, and, from the evaluators point of view, the number of people reached could have been higher. The project’s impact on the creation of equitable access to decent and productive work for women and men is considered rather low, punctual, and intermediate.

Outcome 3: Establishment of an institutional, social, and economic framework which allows for the inclusion of indigenous people and families affected by HIV/AIDS and reduces vulnerability to child trafficking.

There is also a strong probability that for the same reason, namely the short time frame, the project could not exercise much influence on the inclusion of indigenous people and families affected by HIV/AIDS, or on reducing the incidence of child trafficking. However, also this statement cannot be made on evidence based grounds, as a precise measuring of the number of outputs to be achieved and to other quantity aspects of project outcomes had never been defined in the logical framework. Although project progress reports include figures of achieved results, these figures are absolute and cannot be compared with targeted and pre-defined quantities. For example, project reports mention assistance provided to 225 children but no quantifiable targeting has ever been established. During the evaluation mission, the team was also not able to meet more than ten of these children in the three communities (which was also the result of time constraints in the field).

Considerable progress was made through sensitization and awareness raising on the issue of child trafficking through the creation of the alert systems that were put in place by the project. Thus, people’s perceptions and attitudes towards child trafficking were sharpened. But, on the other hand, activists working with the alert system repeatedly stated the intention to reduce and/or even abandon their activities without receiving at least some small fringe benefits.

An estimation of how far attitudes towards child labour and trafficking have changed thanks to the alert systems cannot be made at this stage. The inclusion of destination areas of child trafficking for surveys does not make sense as the project has up to the time of the final evaluation not even been able to contribute to the consequent application of the Anti-trafficking Act at community level. The project limited its activities to issuing 1,350 birth certificates thus helping children in school to register to write their national exams. As well, the repatriation of 225 school kids and the organisation of their school attendance have been funded.

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<sup>10</sup> One of the objectives of the mentoring process was to liaise micro-entrepreneurs with MFIs. This relationship was to be solidified mainly at two levels, (i) the opening of saving accounts by micro-entrepreneurs and (ii) the possible obtainment of a loan. The first act was accomplished. The fact that no micro-entrepreneur had benefited from a loan till the date of the evaluation is (among others) explained by the need for working relations (bank account including a certain amount of money) of at least three months prior to any proceeding.



On the level of social and community development, the participatory discussions and decision making processes for project identification within the LCCs are considered very positive and fruitful. Implementation was accordingly attributed to local entrepreneurs on the basis of public tenders. Although a certain process of job creation is initiated this way, entrepreneurs – in Europe as well as in Cameroon – avoid submitting bids containing detailed quantifications of their planned investment in man power (e.g. man days); rather, offers are based on services and/or tasks to be rendered and fulfilled. The aspect of income generation can therefore only be based on a certain percentage of the “public investments”, amounting to app. 25,000 USD per target community.

As far as tendering for small community projects is concerned, the most advantageous offers were retained by the target communities. But, the selection of skilled labourers was made by the entrepreneurs only. The Cash for Work instrument has not been applied. New enterprises that were set up by the project did not participate in this project component.

As a whole, the project succeeded in building up structures which increased access to markets and also the standard of living of the target group. But, this must be put into perspective, as not even five percent of the available project budget has been invested into this budget line.

In principle, LCCs provided sufficient space for women, indigenous people, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and their composition seemed to fully represent all relevant parts of the local communities. In these forums, the participatory aspect of the LED approach was clearly evident. Representatives of the target groups were not only part of the LCCs in a well balanced manner, but they were also able to clearly and openly voice their concerns in the meetings. An additional impressive aspect was that LCCs repeatedly decided to carry out small scale projects from which minorities benefited most. (e.g. cattle market in Bali).

The level of attendance in LCC meetings remained high until the project’s end. But, the question remains if and how this level of attendance will be preserved after the project’s end. Three negative factors will certainly affect the sustainability of the LCC structure created by the project: (i) no funding for community driven micro projects will be available any longer, (ii) no incentives (such as minimum reimbursements of travel expenditures etc.) will support regular LCC meetings, and (iii) the delayed process of decentralisation can not yet integrate the existing operational LCC structure. Considering the level of influence of political party affiliations in decision making, it must be stated that occurring problems had far more to do with the individual dispositions of local authorities than with political parties. This is as well the case with the work place policy developed in Kumbo, and adopted in the Bali and Wum as well. This work place policy could just be copied by other communities in the future. But, having accepted a work place policy in a written form does not automatically include its subsequent and full implementation.

Local NGOs were mainly involved in project implementation as “service providers” by carrying out field studies and surveys on behalf of the project. In addition, they were the links between the project management unit and the different target groups. Also here, the end of funding will at least reduce activities. However, it was mentioned that the transfer of knowledge, tools, and work methods will facilitate self-contained acquisition of external project funding in the future.

Basically, it is reasonable to conclude that the project was effective to a certain extent in meeting the project objectives which were not clearly defined in terms of quantities

or key performance indicators from the outset (no SMART planning indicators, completed with a timeframe, a baseline and target values). Unfortunately, five negative factors hindered a successful and synergetic interaction of the theoretically conclusive and holistic project concept:

- The project's "investments" have been too small (in absolute figures but, especially in relation to the total available budget) for being sufficiently effective. From an impact driven perspective the phenomenon of the "gap of attribution" makes the analysis of direct project contribution to changes difficult.
- The project's interventions have been too punctual and on too many different levels simultaneously in order to ensure cohesive and self-contained interaction of the beneficiary groups after its end.
- The high number of purely artificial project initiated structures would have requested more economic "fuel" in terms of income generation of these structures to ensure their economic viability in the long run
- The delayed process of decentralisation in Cameroon has not yet reached the stage and depth for the appropriate incorporation and integration of project initiated structures (e.g. LCCs).
- The short implementation period appears contradictory to the very ambitious conceptual project setting.

It is not wrong per se to consider the hypothesis valid that LED can reduce vulnerability to trafficking and promote social inclusion. But, this could only be achieved within a significantly extended implementation phase in accordance with a budgetary planning reliability. From this perspective, a second phase of this project is suggestive. But, within this evaluation the evaluation team could not find a conclusive relatedness and direct correlation in terms of functional chains between the LED process and preventing child trafficking.

#### **E.4 Adequacy and Efficiency of resource use**

The efficiency criterion addresses "how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results, in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness". A key question it asks is 'were things done right?' and thereby also addresses value-for-money, that is whether similar results could have been achieved more by other means at lower cost in the same time."<sup>11</sup>

The table at the end of this sub-chapter lists the total expenditures of the TC-Ram project between October 2008 and early February 2010. It is composed of two clearly separated parts: costs for activities (in blue) and administrative costs (in yellow and orange). The project implementation period, which is the basis for the following expenditure overview, was reduced from originally 24 months to finally 19 months, from October 2008 to end of April 2010. In terms of conceptual orientation it can be said that for the expectation of "learning" within a project, an implementation period of 19 months is far too short and does not seem realistic for a project design including integral components of behavioural changes among beneficiary groups.

The project concept is based on the extensive participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the three targeted communities. Consequently, the project team was set up in a very condensed form, including two local key sector experts (see position 2 and 3 of the following table) supported by an administrator and a driver. An expatri-

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<sup>11</sup> EC Evaluation Guidelines, Brussels, March 2001

ate chief technical adviser, CTA, was recruited as head of project. Besides financial aspects of this personnel setting (see page 22), the adequate use of human resources shall be regarded here from a functional and organisational perspective.

The decision to install a full time CTA as supervisor of two qualified sector key staff cannot be considered appropriate. The limitation of the CTA position to more or less hierarchical advice, without any integration into a job and task sharing mutual day to day field work, may be to a certain extent – but not only – the result of insufficient language skills in English. Principally, the recruitment of three native French speakers as key staff in an English speaking project implementation zone appears doubtful as such.

Both of the national key staff had strong backgrounds in LED and no experience in child labour. This resulted in time loss due to the necessity for additional learning in a project which already had a late start in comparison to other projects under the NIPC which were also closing down at the end of April 2010.

Without going into detail it can be said that the initially scheduled backstopping missions to be carried out in the different implemented sectors were reduced to finally three short missions of one international backstopping consultant<sup>12</sup>. The latest of these three backstopping missions was scheduled to prepare the final external evaluation of the project in early March 2010, not even two months before the projects end. Expenditures of roughly 10,000 USD for a short term consultant for the preparation of an evaluation and for writing the ToR for the latter – which is arguably the task of a project manager – does not correspond to the generally established criteria of cost efficiency.

During several discussions and interviews it was repeatedly underlined and described as a bottleneck that too many decision makers and advisers had been involved in project implementation, such as the ILO Sub-Regional Office, the backstopping consultant, sector experts of all relevant fields of interventions at ILO headquarters etc. A high number of tuning processes resulting thereof was not only time consuming but absorbed as well remarkable financial resources in proportion to the limited available budget.

Comparing the overview of initially scheduled cost estimations in 2008 and expenditures actually made until early March 2010, all budget lines were respected and used appropriately, except for the CTA and staff costs (see initial project budget in annex 4)<sup>13</sup>. When comparing the expenditures calculated for a CTA in the initial project proposal with the actually realised expenditures, the significant deviation becomes obvious. Instead of the originally defined CTA costs of 304,150 USD for 24 months (12,673 USD per man/month) the expenditure analysis of early March 2010 (see table below) meanwhile includes 332,194 USD for a full time CTA for 17 months (with payments for March and April 2010 still pending), which is the equivalent of 19,541 USD per man/month. This cost increase is highly significant (54 %) and could not be explained during the field mission (for an NGO-agency implementing a co-funded

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<sup>12</sup> One backstopping mission provided by ILO Turin could not visit the project area due to security concerns as a result of political clashes.

<sup>13</sup> Considering the CTA post, the evaluators were informed that at a first stage two identified candidates for the post finally declined the assignment after having it accepted at first. This led to serious time constraints and may have produced high time pressure, as the funding deadline for the project had always been April 2010. Whether or not staff recruitment for this position was made in full respect of ILO regulations can not be assessed by an external evaluator.

project the aforementioned situation would be considered as a breach of contract by donor agencies.)

Expenditures made for the two positions of a fulltime expatriate CTA and an international backstopping consultant in terms of elements for quality assurance consumed nearly 30 % of the project's total budget which is highly in-efficient and far above the ratio for similar projects<sup>14</sup>. Considering the initial budget of 2,229,554 USD, the abovementioned percentage of the CTA and the HQ backstopping positions still amounts to nearly 20 % of the total available budget.

The final decision from ILO HQ in Geneva to completely cancel the scheduled revolving fund of the project (Fonds d'appui aux initiatives locales, 250,000 USD) as a crucial conceptual element finally caused significant negative impacts on several levels<sup>15</sup>:

- The decision strongly frustrated the project team and had a de-motivating impact.
- The project lost at least to a certain extent its positive reputation among NGO partners, community administrations, and beneficiary groups.
- The complete cut of the revolving micro loan fund strongly reduced the sustainability of the project concept. Advices to link up young entrepreneurs with already existing micro finance structures could not be realised until the end of the project.

The evaluation team fully shares the abovementioned arguments repeatedly pointed out by the project's key staff, its stakeholders, and its beneficiaries.

The project's cost-benefit ratio is highly problematic. Administrative and functional costs amount to nearly 70 % of the available budget (see expenditure table below). Staff costs only consume already nearly 40 % of the total budget. In opposite, entire activity expenditures amount to less than 27 %. 17 % hereof were spent on various trainings in Cameroon and abroad, for studies, surveys, and other meetings (see blue parts of the following table, including sub-totals for "activities"). Direct funding of beneficiaries covers 9.82 % of the project's budget. The Inclusion of the pre-deducted 13 % of the total budget as a handling fee for ILO programme support costs would even significantly worsen the above mentioned ratio in this calculation<sup>16</sup>.

This analysis of the use of the major budget lines leads to the straightforward conclusion that the project, even after the latest budget cuts in August 2009, could have achieved the same results with fewer resources. In turn, without the significant budget cuts, the number of outputs could have been consequently much higher. Precise measuring of the number of outputs and other quantity aspects of project out-

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<sup>14</sup> The initial budget in annex 4 mentioned a total of 11 man months (m/m) for international consultants (Consultants internationaux, 5 m/m, consultants internationaux de genre, 4 m/m et support technique du BIT Genève, 2 m/m). The expenditure overview in annex 5 mentions 5 man months (Support technique du BIT Genève 3 m/m, consultants internationaux 1 m/m et consultants internationaux sur le genre 1 m/m).

<sup>15</sup> As already mentioned earlier, the project's funding period definitely had to end in April 2010. In addition to delayed staff recruitment and consequently a delayed project start, the project was at first not able to adequately use all scheduled funds. This included the risk of completely losing unspent funds after April 2010 and was the reason for allocating these funds to other NICP projects.

<sup>16</sup> The ILO under its Financial Regulations is allowed to accept contributions on the basis that they will not generate a financial liability for the Office. Programme Support Cost, PSC, is an amount charged to each project calculated at 13 per cent of the project budget and represents a contribution to the indirect costs of the Office.

comes has been made during the evaluation (see table in chapter E 4) but, the grade of target achievement can not be objectively defined as quantitative indicators had never been defined in the logical framework. Although project progress reports include figures of achieved results, these figures are absolute and cannot be compared with targeted and pre-defined quantities.

The expenditure table on the following page is based on a document which was provided by the international ILO consultant as a result of her preparation mission for the evaluation in early 2010. This document does not include cost estimations per budget line but only expenditures. This is as well the case in the expenditure overview of the SRO in Yaoundé provided upon request by the administration unit at the very end of the evaluation (see annex 5). Cost estimates are included in the budget breakdown which is part of the initial project proposal as of May 2007 (see annex 4). A final investigation which changes of the budget lines have been made when, why, and by whom can not be achieved by an external project evaluation, as this type of evaluation focuses on a project's professional concept and on the DAC criteria and covers financial aspects only in terms of verifying conformity of scheduled and expended funds. Going further into administrative and financial detail would request an audit specialist.

| Overview of project expenditures between October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2008 and March 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2010 (17 months) |                |                |               |                |                  |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Item   | 2008           | 2009           | 2-2010        | 3/4-2010       | Total            | %              |
| <b>Activity Costs</b>  |                |                |               |                |                  |                |
| Territorial diagnosis  |                | 13,478         |               |                | 13,478           |                |
| Surveys of targeted villages   |                | 13,000         |               |                | 13,000           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Data Gathering</b>  |                | <b>26,478</b>  |               | <b>0</b>       | <b>26,478</b>    | <b>1.99 %</b>  |
| Stakeholder consultation   |                | 7,487          |               |                | 7,487            |                |
| LCC meetings   |                | 2,635          |               |                | 2,635            |                |
| Local Development Plans  |                | 7,526          |               |                | 7,526            |                |
| <b>Sub-total Part, Planning</b>  |                | <b>17,647</b>  |               | <b>0</b>       | <b>17,647</b>    | <b>1.33 %</b>  |
| LED Training Turin   |                | 10,600         |               |                | 10,600           |                |
| Child Trafficking Training Turin   |                | 8,020          |               |                | 8,020            |                |
| Micro Finance Training Turin   |                | 5,370          |               |                | 5,370            |                |
| LED training in LCs  |                | 13,779         |               |                | 13,779           |                |
| Child trafficking Training LCs   |                | 8,500          | 2,965         |                | 11,465           |                |
| Micro Finance Training   |                | 0              | 4,628         |                | 4,628            |                |
| Entrepreneurship Training  |                | 21,878         |               |                | 21,878           |                |
| Mentoring of Micro-enterprises   |                | 8,309          | 0             | 8,310          | 16,619           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Capacity Building</b>   | <b>0</b>       | <b>166,714</b> | <b>7,593</b>  | <b>8,310</b>   | <b>182,617</b>   | <b>13.73 %</b> |
| Project launch   |                | 4,049          |               |                | 4,049            |                |
| Policy briefs  |                | 3,000          |               |                | 3,000            |                |
| E-journal  |                |                | 975           | 975            | 1,950            |                |
| <b>Sub-total Awareness Raising</b>   | <b>0</b>       | <b>7,049</b>   | <b>975</b>    | <b>975</b>     | <b>8,999</b>     | <b>0.68 %</b>  |
| Infrastructure Local Council Areas   |                | 66,010         | 0             | 3,475          | 69,485           |                |
| Set up of Cooperatives   |                | 12,462         |               | 6,034          | 18,496           |                |
| Set up of Micro enterprises  |                | 16,619         |               |                | 16,619           |                |
| Rescue of trafficked victims   |                |                |               |                | 0                |                |
| Assistance, vulnerable children  |                | 26,000         |               |                | 26,000           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Local Economy</b>   | <b>0</b>       | <b>121,091</b> |               | <b>9,509</b>   | <b>130,600</b>   | <b>9.82 %</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL ACTIVITIES</b>  | <b>0</b>       | <b>338,979</b> | <b>8,568</b>  | <b>18,794</b>  | <b>366,341</b>   | <b>27.54 %</b> |
| <b>Admin. and Functional Costs</b>   |                |                |               |                |                  |                |
| International staff  | 42,805         | 216,294        | 18,474        | 54,621         | 332,194          |                |
| Technical support HQ   | 0              | 41,235         |               |                | 41,235           |                |
| Local staff  | 12,224         | 103,377        | 19,400        | 19,400         | 154,401          |                |
| <b>Sub-total Salaries and Fees</b>   | <b>55,029</b>  | <b>360,906</b> | <b>37,874</b> | <b>74,021</b>  | <b>527,830</b>   | <b>39.67 %</b> |
| Office set-up  | 22,695         | 3,023          |               | 1,000          | 26,718           |                |
| Vehicle purchase   | 25,667         |                |               |                | 25,667           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Investment</b>  | <b>48,362</b>  | <b>3,023</b>   |               | <b>1,000</b>   | <b>52,385</b>    | <b>3.94 %</b>  |
| International travel   | 4,153          | 13,865         |               |                | 18,019           |                |
| Vehicle maintenance  | 1,491          | 2,027          |               |                | 3,518            |                |
| Fuel   | 789            | 5,861          |               |                | 6,650            |                |
| Other local travel   | 13,940         | 26,955         | 1,570         | 7,430          | 49,895           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Travel</b>  | <b>20,373</b>  | <b>48,708</b>  | <b>1,570</b>  | <b>7,430</b>   | <b>78,082</b>    | <b>5.87 %</b>  |
| Office rent  | 3,698          | 6,408          |               |                | 10,106           |                |
| Security guards  | 711            | 10,780         |               |                | 11,491           |                |
| Office supplies  | 8,356          | 24,483         | 1,625         | 3,375          | 37,839           |                |
| Maintenance, office equipment  | 10,597         | 14,983         | 1,274         | 3,726          | 30,580           |                |
| <b>Sub-total Office expenses</b>   | <b>23,362</b>  | <b>56,653</b>  | <b>2,899</b>  | <b>7,101</b>   | <b>90,016</b>    | <b>6.77 %</b>  |
| Evaluation preparation   |                |                | 9,195         |                | 9,195            |                |
| International evaluator  |                |                |               | 14,866         | 14,866           |                |
| National evaluator   |                |                |               | 2,142          | 2,142            |                |
| <b>Sub-total Evaluation</b>  |                |                | <b>9,195</b>  | <b>17,008</b>  | <b>26,203</b>    | <b>1.97 %</b>  |
| <b>Programme Support Costs</b>   | <b>18,010</b>  | <b>100,548</b> |               | <b>23,648</b>  | <b>142,206</b>   | <b>10.69 %</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>165,137</b> | <b>569,839</b> | <b>51,537</b> | <b>130,209</b> | <b>916,721</b>   | <b>68.90 %</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>165,137</b> | <b>908,818</b> | <b>60,105</b> | <b>149,003</b> | <b>1,283,062</b> | <b>96.44 %</b> |

TC-RAM project, March 2010

## **E.5 Sustainability**

In some ways the project partners now have the capacity to carry forward the LED process as a result of their lessons learned, such as making five year development plans, prioritising, and working with multiple partners in a Public-Private Partnership, PPP. This knowledge will at least partly remain and sustain. The LCCs have become a part of the policy of the municipalities, and the councils plan to continue this work after the project ends. Some of the LCCs have the motivation but lack the financial resources to implement their particular LDPs. Unfortunately, the scheduled process of decentralisation in Cameroon has been strongly delayed and does therefore not yet allow for the integration and pursuit of project results in terms of improved organisational structures of administration, participatory decision making processes, or the self-contained implementation of LDPs.

The initial project plan had included a component which would have enabled MFIs to give credit to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community without asking for too much collateral and at lower interest rates. To this effect, members of MFIs participated in TC-RAM trainings. Thus, MFIs are now sensitive to the needs of the target groups; but this does not directly lead to changes in their policies to favour women or take away their eyes from their main objective of profit making by giving out loans which are not secured.

Another component of the project was to integrate the LED approach into the curricula of selected state professional schools. However, the project neither had the time nor the ability to integrate its approach into the academic and administrative institutions.

223 children benefited from direct project assistance, while some 225 children are currently enrolled in schools. Some of the children who were placed in educational and vocational training institutions will continue with their education because some of their parent's capacities have been built to do so however, the majority of the children may not be able to continue because the LED component of the project was not linked to the child labour component. Thus, the risk of them returning to child labour or its worst forms remains high.

Several cooperatives in the target communities were built up with project support. Although most of them had not been fully operational or just started their production during the evaluation period, chances of these newly established cooperatives to succeed are quite high: first because of a previously conducted detailed market survey and a subsequent and consequent investment in the production of strongly demanded products (e.g. yoghurt, butter and cheese). Second, an additional factor has been that the groups' members are highly motivated and committed to the continuation of their businesses. Therefore, with the backing of all councils, chances of the survival of the cooperatives after the project end are rather high.

## **F. Conclusions**

### **F.1 Project specific conclusions**

- The project's impact was limited to the three communities of the project implementation zone only. Further going engagements on a regional or even national policy and decision making level such as lobbying, advocacy etc. are however a specific mandate of UN organisations. But, such activities could not be included in the set-up and the confined geographic scope of the project, due to the short period of project implementation.
- The project design appears too ambitious and overloaded for the short implementation period of initially 24, and finally 19 months only. It is composed of a mixture of a wide range of ILO-covered themes, such as child labour and child trafficking, young entrepreneurship, indigenous people, community driven micro projects, micro finance, HIV/AIDS etc. thus hindering a solid and straightforward implementation process.
- The project used to a large extent standardised training modules and manuals in the sectors of LED, micro finance, and child trafficking. Although considered to follow high quality standards, a partially deficient adequacy to the specific context has been lamented by project staff (e.g. "Start Your Business" and "How Microfinance Works".) Particularly, the integration of illiterate groups has not worked successfully on the basis of the standardised ILO materials.
- The project has had a highly motivated project team. Especially the two national experts with distinctive thematic responsibilities in LED and Child Labour did their very best to compensate for a project setting which suffered from two subsequent cuts of the available budget and a delayed start.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders is very close at all implementation sites (Bali, Kumbo and Wum). Nevertheless, the formerly excellent reputation of the project significantly suffered from the abovementioned budget reductions.
- The project has had comparatively accurate monitoring, follow-up, and research components at its disposal. Data and information gained from this setup were efficiently and systematically used for updates and re-adjustments of project management activities.
- All documentation produced by the project meets very high quality standards in terms of systematic accuracy, correctness, and completeness.
- Quantity aspects of project outcomes could not be judged during the evaluation as quantitative indicators were never defined in the logical framework. However, without significant budget cuts, the number of outputs could have been much higher.
- All "young entrepreneurs" trained and supported in the three project districts (altogether 62) were very satisfied with the provided assistance and described the trainings received, including the mentoring by local professionals, as essential key elements for starting their businesses. None of them has had to give up his or her business so far.
- Considered as a whole all budget lines were respected and have been used appropriately. As to the significant exceeding of the scheduled budget for expatriate



staff compared to the initial project proposal, this phenomenon could not be explained so far.

- The project's cost-benefit ratio is highly problematic. Administrative costs amount to nearly 70 % of the available budget. Staff costs alone consume nearly 40 % of the total budget. The entire activity expenditures amount to less than 27 % and still include various trainings abroad, studies, surveys and other meetings. The direct funding to beneficiaries covers not even 10 % of the project's budget. The inclusion of the pre-deducted 13 % of the total budget as a handling fee for ILO programme support costs would even significantly worsen this ratio.
- The decision to completely abandon the revolving micro loan fund has fundamentally affected the project's sustainability. Advices to link up "young entrepreneurs" with already existing micro finance structures could not be realised until the end of the project.
- The project raised expectations without having been able to meet them after its end. For example, trafficked children identified by alert groups and brought back to their homesteads, have been sent to school at the expense of the project. However, the work of the alert system is difficult, due to the unresolved issue of the next steps to be undertaken after the identification of a child as well as unclear ownership of the process.

## **F.2 General Conclusions**

- The approach to execute a project with a strong orientation towards learning within an implementation period of 19 months does not seem realistic. Comparable time spans apply to emergency and food safety projects but not for projects including integral components of behavioural changes among beneficiary groups.
- From the management viewpoint, too many decision makers and advisers have been involved in this comparatively "low budget" project (CTA, SRO, backstopping consultant, sector experts of all relevant fields of interventions in the ILO headquarter of Geneva and the Turin training centre). The high number of alteration processes resulting thereof was not only time consuming but has absorbed as well considerable financial resources in proportion to the available budget.
- Considering the expenditures for a full time expatriate chief technical adviser, CTA, and an international backstopping consultant, these two positions as elements of quality assurance consumed nearly 30 % of the project's total budget which is highly in-efficient and far above the ratio for similar projects.

## G. Recommendations

1. The TC-RAM project is scheduled to end in April 2010. A succeeding project of the same type and/or an additional funding of the project are not in sight at the moment. However, by now, a second programme phase would be considered as very helpful.
2. The project included all pre-defined targeted beneficiaries such as vulnerable households, ethnic minorities, women, people infected by HIV/AIDS adequately in all of its activities. In future a more pragmatic approach focusing on fewer components and to a lesser extent on a strict respect of quota arrangements would be easier to manage.
3. The design of the project's logical framework is set up in a way which requests achievement of the very much data related outcome 1 as a precondition for working on the outcomes 2 and 3. This very specific character of the logframe obliged the project to devote a disproportionate amount of time to "reflection" thus causing a delaying regarding the beginning of the "action". A more action-research based approach could accelerate future project implementation.
4. The existing ILO guidelines defining minimum requirements for project concepts should be strictly respected for new concept designs. Concept development should be dominated by cost-benefit and feasibility aspects, including predominantly limits and caps for
  - the percentage per budget of direct expenditures to beneficiaries,
  - the percentage of administrative and transaction costs, and
  - expatriate management and management added costs (e.g. external back-stopping).
5. One constant and pro-active senior staff in HQ, RO or SRO should be the permanent contact person for a project and project staff. Coordination with additional sector experts should be organised, channelled, and moderated by this person, in order to organise clear output-oriented communication and to avoid confusion caused by too many overlaps and crossing lines of responsibility.
6. The motivation of stakeholders and beneficiaries within project interventions in social sector development may be supported by training, sensitisation, and information. However, income generation remains a driving force and should never be neglected. The level of LED activities should even significantly increase in similar project scenarios.
7. The MFI which originally had been at the very centre of the project should not have been the first choice for a complete cut of funding. Next time it would be recommended that if cuts are going to be made, they should be done and distributed across the board.
8. In a project setting with a narrowly confined target area in only one province out of ten in the country and with very short distances, there was no need for two national coordinators and an additional international CTA. Funds could thus be saved by running a project in similar cases with a national coordinator.
9. Large parts of the project's efforts went into capacity building of LCCs, AOS, micro-entrepreneurs, MFIs and partner NGOs. However, the built up capacity does not seem sufficient to carry forward the LED process and to continue to prevent child trafficking after the project's end. For doing so at least a second

project phase would be necessary.

10. Projects like TC-RAM with a holistic character and approach to alleviate poverty and help to curb child labour and child trafficking at the same time are carried to a large extent by motivated stakeholders and beneficiaries. However, raising people's expectations without subsequently meeting pronounced activities and benefits in a satisfying manner causes irreparable damages and should be avoided.
11. High quality and realistic planning and programming of development projects are a very difficult process. Major challenges might lie in frequent lacks of statistical data, facts, and figures, and in very idiosyncratic, mostly multi-sectoral contexts. Especially proposals for projects to be funded by a third party represent in general a legally binding service description for the project results to be attended during implementation. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the ILO assign the elaboration and writing of proposals especially for co-funded projects only to one of its most experienced senior staff assisted by a second national specialist in the field. Financial and feasibility aspects should hereby play a crucial role. The interference of particular sector-interests should be restricted as far as possible.
12. In view of a more efficient use of rare and expensive management resources, elements of lean management should be applied such as:
  - Local project manager plus regular coaching through HQ, RO or SRO;
  - Part-time CTA, in charge for several (if possible neighbouring) projects at the same time;
  - Intermittent short term consultancies based on detailed periodical work plans, to be established together with project staff.

## **H. Lessons learned and good practices**

### **H.1 Important lessons learned**

- Success chances of the newly established cooperatives are quite high because of previously conducted detailed market surveys and a consequent investment in the production of strongly demanded products.
- The cooperatives' group members are highly motivated and committed to the continuation of their businesses which constitutes a positive precondition for the survival of the cooperatives after the project's end.
- The majority of the children who were placed in educational and vocational training institutions will probably not be able to continue after the projects end because the LED component of the project was not linked to the child labour component. Thus, the risk of them returning to child labour in its worst forms remains high.

### **H.2 Positive examples from the project (good practice)**

- The participatory discussions and decision making processes for project identification within the LCCs are considered very positive and fruitful. Their composition represented all relevant parts of the local communities. Representatives of the target groups were not only part of the LCCs in a well balanced manner, but they were able to clearly and openly voice their concerns in the meetings.
- The inclusiveness of the project by making many different segments of society come together and participate in the running of their councils and giving inputs to

the five year development plans of these councils will go a long way towards mutual understanding and cooperation in the daily management of these councils and their communities. Unfortunately, the decentralisation process in Cameroon is delayed and community structures are not yet operational for integration of these development potentials.