



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)



International  
Labour  
Office

# ***IPEC Evaluation Executive Summary***

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**“Contribution to the prevention and elimination of the  
commercial sexual exploitation of girls, boys and adolescents  
in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic”  
(Phase One)**

**RLA 02/P51/USA  
P26008200050**

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**An independent final evaluation by a team of external consultants**

**March 2006**

## **NOTE ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND REPORT**

This independent evaluation was managed by ILO-IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED) following a consultative and participatory approach. DED has ensured that all major stakeholders were consulted and informed throughout the evaluation and that the evaluation was carried out to highest degree of credibility and independence and in line with established evaluation standards.

The evaluation was carried out a team of external consultants<sup>1</sup>. The field mission took place in March 2006. The opinions and recommendations included in this report are those of the authors and as such serve as an important contribution to learning and planning without necessarily constituting the perspective of the ILO or any other organization involved in the project.

*Funding for this project evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor. This report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report is the result of the independent assessment of the project entitled “Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Boys in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic” (RLA 02/P51/USA), implemented from July 2002 to April 2006 in 7 countries by the International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC-ILO), with the financial support of the Government of the United States.

The evaluation, carried out in February and March of 2006, was of a cumulative and participative nature. As its main themes the assessment covered the following aspects: the validity of the project’s design and the appropriateness of the strategy, challenges and achievements, implementation and sustainability.

The project’s general objective was to “contribute to the prevention and elimination of CSE” in the countries chosen, and its immediate goals focused on achieving results in the following 3 areas:

- Achieve greater cooperation and greater shared knowledge between the countries in the region for the prevention and elimination of commercial sexual exploitation in the region;
- Establish national legislation, policies and programmes drawn up to this effect in each of the chosen countries;
- Promote increased community and individual actions to prevent commercial sexual exploitation and care for the victims in the region.

As a general conclusion to the assessment, it may be said that the project’s achievement of its general objective has been very satisfactory and that it has achieved the majority of its specific objectives. The project’s implementation has shown considerable strengths and has, overall, been very efficient.

The project had a very clear understanding of the problem of CSE as a crime to be punished, and the multiple axes of the intervention strategies implemented (legislative reform, public awareness, the articulation and strengthening of institutions, prevention and direct care for the victims of CSE, etc.) constituted an all-encompassing response to the many aspects of the problem. The team that implemented the project showed great commitment, organization, and technical ability and implementation skills, both at the regional and national level. There have been clear and successful efforts at integration regarding the work of other cooperation agencies, thus avoiding duplication.

At the regional level the project has managed to place the issue of CSE firmly within the region’s public agenda, in coordination with the efforts of other international agencies and it has set up an important framework for parallel cooperation between countries, developing a substantial exchange of information at the regional and national level.

The project has promoted important legislative modifications in several countries in the region, by which legal frameworks that make the fight against CSE viable and sustainable can be established, and it has also promoted the setting up of inter-institutional coordination authorities in each country regarding the issue of CSE, which have, in the majority of the countries, generated proposals for national policies/plans of action.

On legitimizing and articulating the activities of a wide range of public and private inter-institutional and international agencies, the project's response to the problem of CSE in the region has been far-reaching, making the spaces for inter-institutional coordination an important element for organizing efforts to combat CSE. Networking has allowed the performance and the sense of ownership of the actions of a broad range of institutional participants to be strengthened.

The project has trained a very large group of technicians and staff from different public and private institutions and from different sectors (i.e. legal workers, the State Prosecutor, the police, migration officers, child protection institutions, journalists, members of NGOs, teachers, health workers, legislators, artists and social communicators) to develop actions against CSE and in favour of the victims.

The project's most significant weaknesses are: the limited and barely sustainable insertion of the care model for the victims of CSE within the work of public institutions which should be strengthened in order that they may take charge of its implementation independently; and the limited effectiveness of the phase-out actions over time, in view of the fact that – according to reports made by the authorities in charge of implementation- only around a third of the victims who had originally been reported by the project as having “withdrawn” remained in that condition at the time this assessment was carried out.

Finally, the assessment report sets out twenty-nine recommendations in relation to the above mentioned issues, including the reduction of certain goals during the project's second phase/Addendum and systematizes ten “lessons learned” of the same, as well as thirteen good practices that could be potentially useful and repeated in other IPEC-ILO projects on this issue.