



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)



International
Labour
Office

IPEC Evaluation

Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict. An Inter-Regional Program PHILIPPINES (INT/03/P52/USA)

**An independent mid-term evaluation by a team of external
consultants**

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This document has not been professionally edited.

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 consultants¹. 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.

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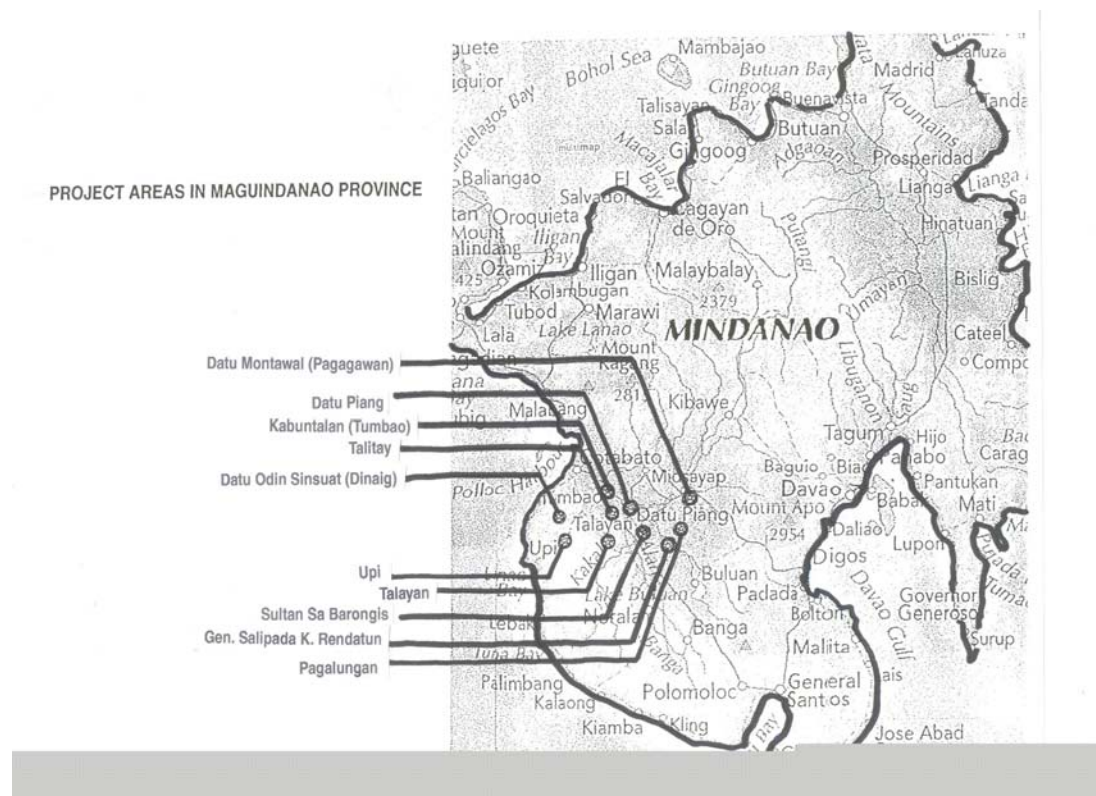
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Abbreviations

ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor
NCLC	National Child Labor Committee
DOLE	Department of Labor
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
ARMM	Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao
TESDA	Technical Education and Science Development Authority
BLE	Bureau of Labor Employment
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
DOH	Department of Health
LGU	Local Government Unit
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
US	United States



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Around the world wars are increasingly fought within the borders of a single country. In these wars, unarmed civilians comprised the greater number of casualties. An equally disturbing fact is that children now have become participants in the armed conflict. The Philippines is no exception to this growing reality.
2. In 2003, the ILO-IPEC initiated a global response to prevent recruitment of child soldiers and support the reintegration in the society of children who have been members of the armed groups. The Philippines is one of the countries chosen for the proposed programme implementation. The ILO-IPEC in the Philippines chose Central Mindanao as the area focus - the location of major camps of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, one of the foremost insurgent groups in the country.
3. To ensure that children are no longer participating in armed conflict, the Philippine programme adopts a set of interventions with the following components: 1) strengthening enabling environment for ensuring that children are not affected by armed conflict, 2) prevention of children's entry into armed conflict, and 3) the reintegration of children withdrawn from and traumatized by armed conflict into the mainstream society. The Philippines carried out a national stakeholders' workshop leading to an in-country strategic plans for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.
4. As part of the accountability to the donor, the United States Department of Labor, and other stakeholders, including the government agencies, social partner, and partner organizations, a mid-term evaluation was required. The evaluation aimed to elicit learnings in implementation and identify areas for improvement or adjustments.
5. At the time of evaluation, the programme had two initiatives: One was the conduct of research to improve the knowledge base for formulation of policies and action addressing the needs of children in armed conflict. The other was the Salaam action programme which provided educational assistance and employment opportunities both for children who are at-risk of getting recruited to work as soldiers and for children withdrawn from being soldiers.
6. The evaluation covered the period from February 2004 to September 2005. The study employed interviews and focused groups discussions among 94 children and youth participants and 29 program implementers, non-government organizations, and local stakeholders. The study also reviewed program documents and a number of existing reference materials on child soldier in the region.

Highlights of the Findings

7. Project design and strategies

- a) There is a high number of part-time child soldiers. Communities living in conflict zones reported 50% of children population participating as child soldiers. Those schools located farther from the camps of armed group reported 20% of children population. The minimum engagement of children is participating in military training which runs for 45 days, and children are also on call for “tours of duty.” The Saalam project does not have extensive profile of children, (i.e., part-time soldier, past or present) and a corresponding specific monitoring mechanism.
- b) Formal education tends to influence children not to join armed groups. But parental influence and living in conflict zones can push children to get involved.
- c) Opportunities to provide income-generating activities like vocational skills training were found to be attractive alternatives for the out-of-school youth from involving with the armed units.
- d) The need for the strategy of awareness-raising among children and youth, in-school and out-of-school is underscored by the rising phenomenon of part-time soldiers. There is a need for information drive on child soldiering as one of the worst forms of child labour and its negative consequences on the well-being of children. Peace education among youth is needed to help them process their experience in growing up in a war-torn environment and to expose them to non-violent means of advocating for change and resolving conflicts.

8. Project Management and Institutional Framework

- a) The focal coordinating body specific to the implementation of the inter-regional project was initially established through the Regional Council for the Welfare of Children by the DOLE-ARMM. But this was not operating for sometime.
- b) The existing inter-agency management of Salaam has yet to establish a regular planning, monitoring and assessment of the action programme. Communication among various agencies needs enhancement. Communicating about the project to other groups needs to be improved.
- c) The implementation of the project suffered delays attributed to several factors namely: recruitment of key staff took time, political instability, special election in the ARMM region, and difficulty in generating common ground for cooperation from various agencies.
- d) The Salaam action programme experience depicted the difficulties in groundworking for an inter-agency approach of responding to child soldier project. This led to the delay in the implementation of the project. Coming to an agreement among agencies required more patience, energy, and time.

9. Project Resources and Fund Management

- a) Salaam project fund was assessed to be inadequate in meeting education and training needs of beneficiaries. Some budgetary assumptions were not able to

factor in realities such as distance of residence and the educational/training center, requirements in school, and price increase.

- b) Salaam project fund releases were delayed for two reasons: 1) The members were not able to fulfill some reporting requirements and 2) were not able to prepare liquidation report before the fund is fully expended.

10. Project Results and Achievements

- a) The Salaam action programme reported initial positive outcome among beneficiaries. One major change in the beneficiaries is the value given to the educational assistance as demonstrated in their diligence in their studies. The college students, particularly, exhibited self-confidence, and were more emotionally secured. This is believed to be brought about by their distance from the environment of conflict. Those in vocational training courses have boosted self-esteem because they have become productive in the use of time and have new- found knowledge and skills. Some were excited to venture in self-employment activities. The beneficiaries have become hopeful about their future.
- b) The organization of an interagency effort is an achievement in spite of the odds that were encountered.

11. Project Sustainability

- a) There is no specific plan for sustainability formulated yet at the level of the Salaam interagency committee as well as ILO-IPEC together with NCLC.
- b) The project faces a big threat of losing the initial gains if there is no funding after this project term. The only aspect that may be sustained are the graduates of vocational training courses which may be followed up by DOLE's existing programs.

Recommendations

12. Project Design and Strategies

- a) ILO-IPEC needs to be more deliberate and purposive in weaving together of several action programmes that would integrate various strategies in the existing area of operation. It needs to sharpen its specific design that addresses the phenomenon of part-time soldiers in contrast with the full-time child soldiers.
- b) Project data management and indicators for success have to be reviewed in the light of specific design to address the part-time soldier phenomenon.
- c) To ensure success in vocational skills training that would generate income, an increase of fund allocation that would include provision of tools and start-up capital should be considered. Specific subjects on bookkeeping and marketing of products and services should be integrated in the vocational courses.
- d) In capacity building strategy, there is a need to specifically prepare the psychosocial component skills training among the service providers most especially when full-time child soldiers start to be mainstreamed. This can be

done by collaborating with DSWD and UNICEF or other agencies that provide this type of training.

- e) There has to be peace education to complement the strategy of providing formal education among in-school children and youth. This will help curb the increase of part-time child soldier phenomenon. Peace education among the out-of-school youth will help them see their situation in a wider perspective with several options to take other than armed struggle.
- f) Muslim religious leaders who have become peace advocates may be tapped to support the programme activities considering that *Jihad* is one motivational factor for youth and adults to join the war. Muslim religious leaders They have participated in inter-faith dialogue, peace seminars by Grassroots Peace Learning Center and Mindanao Peace Institute based in Davao City, Mindanao.
- g) While the advocacy component is intended to operate in national scale, there has to be programmed activities that cater to the existing towns where there are Salaam beneficiaries. This would track down impact at the community level.

13. Project Management and Institutional Framework

- a) The Salaam interagency group has to establish regular meetings, formulate specific plans for the year, and assess their activities. Meetings would update member agencies on project implementation details as well as address operational issues and concerns.
- b) The revival of a focal coordinating body specific to child soldier has to be facilitated soon for collaboration and mobilization among various sectors in stopping the involvement of children in armed conflict. This body need not be limited to government organizations but also groups representing other sectors.

14. Project resources and fund management

The Salaam action programme needs to realign their unutilized fund in literacy to increase the needed fund in vocational skills training courses.

15. Project sustainability

- a) There is a need to draft specific sustainability plan before the project term ends.
- b) The ILO-IPEC has to be more aggressive in networking with other concerned groups to pursue convergence of resources.
- c) There is a need to widen the base of sources of fund for the project to be sustainable.

Introduction

I. Background of the Evaluation

16. The Philippines is one of the countries participating in the ILO-IPEC's global intervention of preventing and reintegrating children in armed conflict. This inter-regional programme was conceived after obtaining information on the causes of the use of child soldier, the mechanism for recruitment, the living conditions while in the armed groups, and the circumstances surrounding their mobilization and their perspective for reintegration.
17. The overall framework that guides each country, entitled Prevention and Reintegration of Children involved in Armed Conflict: an Inter-Regional Programme, was formulated in September 2003. The Philippines correspondingly carried out a national stakeholders' workshop leading to in-country strategic plans for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. The first action programme of ILO-IPEC is located in Central Mindanao where major MILF camps are nestled in Muslim communities.
18. As part of the accountability to the donor, the United States Department of Labor, and other stakeholders, including the government agencies, social partner, and partner organizations, a mid-term evaluation was required. The evaluation aimed to elicit learnings in implementation and identify areas for improvement or adjustments.
19. Specifically, the over-all purposes of the evaluation are:
 - a) to review the implementation of the project in the country and consider any changes in the strategies done on the basis of emerging experiences and recommend adjustments where necessary;
 - b) to examine current proposed activities and make assessment of their potential contribution to the implementation strategy;
 - c) to review the existing institutional set-up and implementation capacity; and
 - d) to assess the existing as well as potential linkages between the project and other initiatives being developed in the target countries.

II. Evaluation Methodologies

20. Data Collection Method. The evaluation study utilized several methods in collecting data:

- a) **Document review.** Relevant documents were examined to gain a better understanding of the project. Researches, studies, and other reference materials related to child soldiers were also reviewed.
- b) **Briefing.** A briefing session with the key staff/implementors of Salaam Action programme was held as part of the preliminary activities of the study. The session served as a venue for clarifying the intentions of the evaluation as well as generating more background information about the action programme to refine some aspects of the evaluation instruments. The evaluator also asked to be briefed on the details about the processes, mechanics, issues, and problems encountered.
- c) **Interviews.** The evaluator conducted interviews with the representatives of national and regional government agencies, local stakeholders (teachers, social worker, media person, local researcher, non-government organizations), and ILO-IPEC Country Programme Coordinator.
- d) **Focused Group Discussions (FGD).** The focused group discussions with children started out with a validation of their understanding on the project. The children were also asked about the benefits received; the adequacy and usefulness of allowances; reaction of family and friends regarding the programme; changes in their personal lives; participation of children in armed conflict; and suggestions to improve the programme. Likewise, the teachers or social worker were asked about their understanding of the project, the changes that occurred in the lives of children and participation of children in armed conflict. Asking the same set of questions to local stakeholders and children on separate occasions served as a test of the consistency in their responses.

Focused group discussion was also conducted among the staff/implementers to know their perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of the action programme.

The table below summarizes the number of participants in the evaluation.

Table 1: Participants of the Evaluation

Municipality	Respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Datu Piang			
▪ Elementary	4	7	11
▪ High school		5	5
▪ Non-beneficiaries	1	11	12
▪ Local stakeholders	5	1	6
Sub-Total	10	24	34
Pagalungan			
▪ Elementary	5	4	9
▪ High School	1	5	6
▪ Non-beneficiaries	7	-	7
▪ Local stakeholders	1	1	2
Sub-Total	14	10	24
Montawan			
▪ Elementary	3	2	5
▪ High School	3	4	7
▪ Graduates of skills training (baking)	-	6	6
▪ Non-beneficiaries	8	-	8
▪ Local stakeholders	1	1	2
Sub-Total	15	13	28
Cotabato City			
▪ College students	1	5	6
▪ Current trainees of skills training (Electronics)	15	1	16
▪ Local stakeholders	5	1	6
Sub-Total	21	7	28
Agency representatives			
DOLE Region 12 & ARMM	3	2	5
TESDA ARMM	2	-	2
DOLE-BLE	2	1	3
ILO-IPEC	1	2	3
NCLC		1	1
Amnesty International	1	-	1
UNICEF	1	-	1
Sub-Total	10	6	16
Sum Total	70	60	130

21. Selection of Respondents. From the list of beneficiaries in each selected town, three groups of children/youth were interviewed - those who are in elementary, high school, and college and vocational students. The evaluator provided guideline that six to eight individuals would participate in the focused group discussion to provide a more meaningful interaction with them. However, the key contacts (teachers) of

each town invited all the beneficiaries. Therefore, there were more participation in the FGD.

22. For the younger children the large number in the discussion group did not affect much on the depth of interaction since the type of questions asked were more on enumerating their benefits, asking on their needs. The high number of participants that affected the quality of interaction was with the vocational skills trainees in Cotabato City. More depth of information could have been elicited if the group was smaller. The evaluator could not split the group into two due to lack of time.
23. For the non-beneficiaries, similar age groupings were represented. Some are in-school while others are out-of-school youth as well as applicants to the vocational training.
24. Constraints and biases. The study would have aimed for the coverage of seven municipalities where the action programme operates but upon consultation with the project implementers, field research for this study was conducted only in three out of seven towns in Maguindanao province, particularly Datu Piang, Datu Montawal, and Pagalungan (See map on p.iv). These sites were selected because the other towns had some recent incidence of infightings and therefore considered not safe for field work. The second consideration was that these are the more accessible areas, which are along the national highway. The field work was done within a week period.
25. Representatives from other towns were drawn in Cotabato City, the center of educational institutions and training centers in the province, where the beneficiary-students are residing while studying. However, during the evaluation, most college students were undertaking examinations, hence, a smaller number of participants participated in the focused group discussions.
26. The evaluator utilized focused group discussions more among children rather than the interviews because of two considerations. One was that Filipino children, most especially in rural areas, are painfully shy. They are not comfortable to be interviewed individually. The evaluator would gather less information compared to group interviews. Second, part of the inquiry was about the children in armed conflict rendering the situation delicate. Conducting individual interview among children and youth would make them feel isolated, more fearful, and suspicious. This was proven right during the inquiry where some youth started to clam up or show a hard facial expression when the question on armed conflict was raised.
27. During the group discussion with children beneficiaries, no adults or authority figures were present except in Datu Piang when an adult, went around the group encouraged the young children to speak up but did not stay with the group. This did not materially affect the result, girl children still hardly spoke. It took along time for the evaluator and the translator to elicit response from children.

Evaluation Findings

28. The “Inter-Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict” Country Annex sets the following objectives
- Development Objective* To contribute to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour through the reduction of children’s entry and participation in armed conflict in the Philippines
- Immediate objective 1* At the end of the program, partners capacities to ensure that children will not be recruited in the armed conflict will have been strengthened.
- Immediate objective 2* At the end of the program, the entry of children into armed conflict will have been prevented.
- Immediate objective 3* At the end of the program, children withdrawn from and traumatized by armed conflict will have been reintegrated into the mainstream of society.
29. At the time of the evaluation, most components of the programme were not yet implemented except three. (Please refer to Table 3). One component is the conduct of research on children in armed conflict which was on going but not yet completed as of September 2005. The other two components are operating under the Salaam action programme - the provision of educational opportunities for children at risk of getting recruited to work as child soldiers and the provision of livelihood opportunities for older children. Most of the findings, therefore, relate to the Salaam activities, though, not necessarily confined to this action programme.

Project Design and Strategies

30. CONTEXT. Mindanao is the second largest island and is located in the southern part of the Philippine archipelago. For many decades, Mindanao has been characterized as an underdeveloped economy. The roots of its underdevelopment can be attributed to four factors 1) its relegation to the role of supplier of raw materials and food for the country 2) neglect of infrastructure needs, 3) the previous bias against agriculture in favor of industry and 4) the peace and order problem.
31. The interplay of these factors resulted in vicious cycle of underdevelopment. The lack of employment and economic opportunities led to declining income. The extreme limited demand resulted in less jobs and greater poverty. High unemployment and poverty incidence fuelled political unrest. The political instability further discouraged investments that create economic opportunities and

jobs for the people in Mindanao. Only in 1990's that strategic interventions from government broke this vicious cycle.

32. Among the profusion of ethnic groups in Mindanao, only the Moro saw the need to assert themselves as Bangsamoro (the Moro nation) as distinct from Filipino nation. The conflict in Mindanao has its roots in centuries-old claim for territory and sovereignty. The conflict has grown complex and multi-faceted as Moro saw themselves as victims of economic dispossession, political insubordination and religious discrimination. The global Islamic resurgence, that gives the Muslims a renewed sense of community and direction, further pushed them left to self-rule. Since the Moro rebellion broke out in the 70's, several Mindanao provinces have never known sustained peace.
33. RELEVANCE. The relevance of the project objectives hinges on the characteristics of target group – the children. The design of the Inter-Regional Project identified two types of children: 1) those who are engaged in soldiering activities and 2) those who are at-risk. Those who have become child soldiers, the basic aim is to demobilize or to withdraw them from participating in armed conflict. On the other hand, children who are at risk should be prevented from joining the armed group.
34. The focused group discussions with children and local stakeholders reveal some characteristics that need consideration for sharpening the strategies of the action programme in the Philippines. Although this profile of children comes from the actual beneficiaries of Salaam action programme in selected towns, this information is consistent with the findings of Rapid Appraisal Assessment of Cagoco-Guiam.
35. a) Living in conflict zones. There are children and youth beneficiaries who actually reside in the campsite of the armed group. Such location makes them not only at risk of losing life and security but also make them vulnerable to participation in armed conflict in various forms. In situation when the infightings between government troops and the rebel groups in the campsite, girl-children become indirectly involved while the boy-children will be engaged in foot patrol or carrying arms. In Montawan, some students shared that they had no choice but be part of it because they are practically residing in the area where the armed group is based. The girls usually evacuate or sometimes carry supply, prepare food, or act as paramedics.
36. Schools located in or within the vicinity of these areas report a higher number of children participation in armed group. Fifty percent (50%) of students are said to be not attending class and nowhere to be found when a conflict breaks out or when a 45-day military training is scheduled. Schools located far from camps have at least 20% of students participating in conflict. This information was estimated by the youth beneficiaries (high school and college) during the focused group discussions. They claim that they do not see half of the number of their classmates (the average size of a class 35 students) when there is incidence of conflict or when there is military training.

37. b) "Part-time Soldiers." Part-time soldiers means children who joined the armed groups do not necessarily stop going to school, unless they are asked to go on "tours of duty" that last anywhere between 10 to 90 days. The tour of duty may mean taking part in activities such as foot patrol, guard or medical team duties, act as spies, and doing chores such as preparing food and carrying supplies. These activities are usually undertaken during times of armed conflict with government forces. When the incidence of conflict quiets down, the children can go back to their daily normal activities such as going to school.
38. Those who have participated in tours of duty, as related by some youth beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, did not receive any form of payment for such services. They said they can stop their involvement without going through stringent procedures. They just inform the leaders of their decision. They are not forced to join or stay with the armed group.
39. Another occasion for "part-time soldiering" is the military training where interested children are called to participate and consequently disrupts their education. This training lasts for weeks. From the MILF perspective, children have to undergo military training and defend themselves in times when the government forces attack their camps. This is deemed most needed in cases where the MILF camps are nestled in Muslim communities. Other children participate in the training because of parental influence or sympathetic to the cause of MILF.
40. According to a story of a high school teacher in Datu Piang, they received a letter from the MILF commander requesting to give consideration to the students' absences. When the students come back from training or fighting, the teachers give special quizzes so the students will not drop out of school. In this sense, children are integrated in usual community activities except during MILF military training or in times of conflict. The children's participation in military training and being on "tour of duty" is common across Datu Piang, Montawan, and Pagalangan. A resident in Cotabato City also affirmed that this phenomenon of "part-time soldier" holds true among students based in the said city.
41. c) Influenced by parents. Youth and adult respondents considered parental influence as a critical factor why children participate in armed conflict. Suffering from poverty, parents join the armed group. With parents being a member of MILF or sympathetic to the armed group, children's participation becomes a natural order of things. But when parents prohibit their children to join the armed group, the children simply obey. In the word of the respondents, "*depende na lang sa mga magulang*" (It all depends on the parents).
42. Given the above-mentioned characteristics of children in armed conflict, the concepts of "*withdrawn*," "*reintegration*" and "*mainstream*" as desired change of the project is hereby challenged. To a certain extent, the children are actually

integrated in community life – living with family and being in school. It is not an absolute case of staying full-time in the camp that they are deprived of education. In fact, there were a few male respondents who thought that going to school and participating in armed group activities could go together. Making the enrollment to a school therefore as an indicator of the project does not guarantee that the child or youth has actually withdrawn from the armed conflict unless they are enrolled far from the vicinity of conflict areas (i.e. Cotabato City, other cities outside the ARMM region). The distance may not guarantee a full withdrawal but this will lessen their vulnerability to join the armed group. This was expressed by college students and vocational skills trainees who were happy in the city studying and learning not only because of the opportunity to learn but also they are far from areas of conflict “*Malayo sa gulo.*”

43. In the case of child soldiers wanting to stop their involvement but with parents who are members of the armed group, reintegration or returning to parents becomes an inappropriate intervention. In the same manner, those living in the vicinity of the campsite of the armed group, if not members of MILF, may have to choose to resettle in safe areas, a move which some families of beneficiaries did. Or, explore the possibility of pursuing that their community be declared as a “peace zone area.”
44. Appropriate project strategies can be designed that are in consonant to major characteristics of children in a given area. Below is an assessment of the initial strategies implemented.

STRATEGIES

45. a) Education – The relevance of this strategy is validated by the experiences of the Salaam Action Programme. As some youth articulated, “*Walang mapala sa giyera*” (There’s nothing to benefit from war.). Even the very young children expressed they do not want to join the war. Many were saying, “*Mag-aral na lang po kami kaysa sumama sa giyera. Nakakatakot po ang giyera*” (We would rather study than join the war. War is scary).
46. The significance of the statement of children reflects on their lack of opportunity of to go to school due to poverty. In the ARMM region, for every 100 children who start elementary school only 34 are able to finish. People in the community see education as a way out of poverty that grips the region. Children beneficiaries, elementary to college, see education as a path to a better future. Based on the interview with Cagoco-Guiam, the baseline study is currently attempting to probe on the interest of child soldiers in the military camp to pursue studies.
47. The poverty situation is one factor which fuels political unrest in the region. Those who have not gone to school and hence unproductive are more vulnerable to recruitment to join the armed group. Studies have shown that children who have

become child soldiers come from impoverished and marginalized rural communities.

48. The value of Salaam education project, therefore, is one way of preventing children from participating in the armed struggle. The teachers in the local areas have witnessed children one batch after another, in-school and have gone out-of-school. One high school teacher who observed his students, he saw that those students doing well in class are the ones who do not want to join the armed group. Sometimes they themselves advised their classmates not to join the war.
49. In a focused group discussion, one head teacher underscores the relevance of education vis-a-vis participation in armed conflict. He shared his experience that being a college graduate made him open-minded and learned to weigh options from a wider perspective. He learned to critically think before making a decision such as joining the armed group. The less educated, he claimed, tend to resort to armed group or violence when they become victim of oppression or experience any negative incidence in their lives.
50. In Montawan, the local social development worker estimated that 50% of those who participated in the armed group did it for lack of alternative. She is convinced that educational assistance is a very attractive alternative for these young people.
51. b) Livelihood/Income-generating Activities – The Salaam Action programme offers vocational-technical training which could lead to microenterprise development and creation of opportunities for livelihood and income generation. This has been offered to young people ages 15 to 21 years old.
52. Interviews with teachers in the three towns revealed that the male out-of-school youth are the most vulnerable to recruitment as soldiers. Given their poverty situation and lack of meaningful activities to get involved in, soldiering becomes a natural course to take. The vocational skills training become a positive alternative for these youth. Enrolling in vocational courses give them hope that they can do something productive in their lives.
53. The Salaam action programme only allocated P1,800/beneficiary enough to shoulder food and accommodation. But there was no allocation for acquisition of tools. The regional programme implementors commented that lack of tools would prevent beneficiaries to practice what they learned after the training. For those who would venture into self-employment, the lack of tools is not the only concern but also the lack of capital to start their own business. These two elements are necessary to ensure that the graduates would have gainful and productive endeavor after the training. Also, bookkeeping and marketing of product or services are not taught but are necessary for those who would prefer self-employment.

54. c) Literacy – The original design of Salaam Action Programme included literacy as a project component. This aimed to prepare the intended beneficiaries to be mainstreamed into formal education or other alternative learning scheme. The local implementers, however, did not carry out the literacy component because all beneficiaries can read and write. If their education is disrupted by the conflict, they usually enroll right away when normalcy is regained. Literacy was not an issue among the children beneficiaries also because they performed well in school but had to stop due to war or due to poverty.
55. d) Counseling/Psychosocial Services – This project component was part of the original design of Salaam action programme intended primarily for demobilized children. Crisis counseling would relate to recent tragedies. Developmental counseling provides focused and positive approach to help the children gain self-confidence. Therapeutic counseling is part of the healing process of children and youth.
56. These counseling sessions, however, were not adopted. The local implementers think that these services only apply for traumatized victims in the evacuation centers and would be conducted by DOH and DSWD. Their project beneficiaries mainly come from communities affected by armed conflict. Besides, the design of the project endorses the DepEd and CHED-ARMM to implement these activities which may not be feasible or may be burdensome on the part of the teachers.
57. But during the focused group discussions among younger children they articulated their fear of war. The young and old alike experienced evacuating and fleeing for their lives. A few beneficiaries lost a parent. These children have not gone to any counseling or processing to help them understand more on what they have gone through.
58. e) Awareness-raising and Advocacy– The need for awareness-raising as a strategy is validated by several factors. First, the conflict situation in Mindanao is quite complex. Cultural prejudice, religious discrimination and experiences of injustices influence individuals to participate in the armed conflict. With such kind of motivations, the sponsorship of formal education as a strategy is not fully sufficient in preventing involvement in armed group.
59. The Salaam action programme design only provides formal education but does not provide venue for discussion on understanding on the causes and effects of conflict in Mindanao and advocating for peaceful resolution to conflict over armed struggle. Salaam action programme does not shed light on the rights of the child, the issue of child labor, specifically the problems and negative consequences of children's involvement in armed group. Without this component, the action programme may be successful in producing graduates and yet remain ignorant on the rights of children and issues of child soldier.

60. Second, in the group discussions with the youth beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, some participants admitted that it is possible to go to school and join in the armed group at the same time. The phenomenon of child soldier means awareness-raising is very much needed. At this point, awareness-raising component, though a part of the project design, is not yet implemented in the child soldier project
61. Third, the participation of children and youth in armed group is fairly known to the community. Interviews with stakeholders and group discussions with the youth disclosed that parents exercise influence over their children to participate or not in the armed group. Usually, when parents are members of the armed group, the children become automatically involved. This situation confirms the need to raise the awareness of parents and youth in the communities about the issues and problems of child soldiers.
62. Fourth, based on the Rapid Appraisal Assessment of Cagoco-Guiam, there is no formal path to recruitment in being a soldier. During the focused group discussions, the youth confirmed that there is no stringent process in joining and quitting the armed group. Since they are volunteers, they are still free to decide to leave. As much as this is still a loose process, there is still a chance for awareness-raising as a strategy to effectively persuade and prevent the increase of child soldiers.
63. Fifth, it can be noted that at this early stage of the implementation, the local government's participation in the action programme is minimal, which is, the identification of potential beneficiaries. With intensive awareness-raising and advocacy, the role of local government units may be expanded like giving counterpart fund to support the vocational skills training, formulating resolutions or measures to solve child soldier issue and to lessen the effects of war.
64. Sixth, study of Cagoco-Guiam revealed that *Jihad*, a call for religious war, is one motivational factor for youth and adults to join the armed group. But there are Muslim religious leaders who are peace advocates. They have participated in inter-faith dialogue, peace seminars by Grassroots Peace Learning Center and Mindanao Peace Institute based in Davao City, Mindanao. They are potential resource in awareness-raising and advocacy against child soldiers.
65. In this context, pursuing an awareness-raising campaign will be a challenging thing to do. The awareness-raising means covering addressing various groups with different slant of messages. Awareness-raising for parents and communities would appeal on the heart for their children's welfare and that they should not be deprived of education and expose them of danger. Awareness-raising among local government units will give emphasis on the legal framework and commitment of the national government to the international laws.
66. f) Capacity-building - The design of the Inter-Regional Project in building capacities of partners emphasizes on the role of information and education as a

stepping stone toward appropriate action programme design, harmonizing legal framework, formulation of advocacy materials, and mobilization. The child soldier project aims to reach national and local authorities, employers, workers, media, parents, children, communities, Muslim and other religious leaders.

67. This is a component of the project that has not yet been undertaken except for the commissioned research. At the time of evaluation, three proposals for action programme were submitted to ILO-IPEC Manila for fund support and about to be deliberated. The two proposals focused on advocacy with one proponent focusing on media campaign for communities and the general public. The other proponent focused on policy advocacy. The third proposal pertains to the provision of vocational-skills training to prevent as well as mainstream youth who would cease their involvement in the armed groups.
68. So far, there is no action programme proposal that consolidates the capacity building of partners in the aspect of counseling and other psychosocial services. This project strategy is very critical especially when it aimed to reach 200 children to withdraw from the armed groups and 50 to prevent children from participating in armed conflict. If the 200 would refer to child combatants and not just the part-time soldiers, these individuals would have undergone indoctrination and hence would need much processing about their experiences and immediate goals in life. Since they would undergo a phase of transition in life, implementers need to be equipped to provide such services.
69. FEASIBILITY. The sequence of project activities is found to be theoretically logical but less realistic given the time frame of three years. There were factors that were not considered in planning the activities but were and, still are, pivotal to the implementation.
70. First is the peace and order situation of the area which slows down if not threaten the very existence of the project. Every time there is incidence of conflict in an area, the field staff cannot simply visit for monitoring. Project activities have to be rescheduled, hence cause the delay. Future action programmes can learn from this by giving allowance in the aspect of setting time frame for the activities.
71. Second, the institutional framework requires coordination between national agencies, regional and down to the local government level. Given the bureaucratic nature of government, it has taken longer time to coordinate with various offices.
72. Third, the topography of project sites has effects on the beneficiaries. Maguindanao, specifically, is traversed by rivers. The beneficiaries have to travel far. College students and vocational trainees come from different towns while the colleges and universities and training centers are in Cotabato City. Those who live far spend their allowance more on transportation instead of school needs. If they could not find any

other sources to meet their school needs, it poses a threat to continuity and quality of their education.

73. Fourth, the ARMM region has been perceived by some government, non-government organizations and funding agencies to have problems with transparency and accountability in governance. Donor agencies and even national agencies have reservation of simply giving fund for programs in the fear of ending up with ghost projects. This general perception was partly reflected between DOLE national and regional offices which became the tension point in deciding about the fund conduit. BLE detailed an officer to provide guidance and ensure smooth implementation of the activities. Furthermore, it is not a common undertaking for regional offices to work together in a project in ARMM. But the current collaboration between DOLE, TESDA, DepED and local government units through Salaam action programme proved the feasibility of an inter-agency effort. Programme implementers claimed extreme difficulty of starting a meaningful action through collaboration in the region.
74. Fifth, since the project is a new initiative, it means that implementers have to grapple with understanding of the local culture, social context of communities, communicating with leaders of armed groups and government, and identifying stakeholders and possible key players. Being a new initiative, capacity building takes more time. It does not simply happen in one or two learning moments. Moreover, given the nature of bureaucratic processes and the time needed to find a partner organization and deliberating and agreeing over the design of project will consume much time and delay the implementation. The objectives of the project could not be reached in three years.
75. Sixth, the Salaam action programme sponsored children in their primary and secondary education and yet the project duration is only three years. No meaningful result will be seen if the children and youth stop going to school after project term. In a three-year time frame, the project could have achieved meaningful achievements if they have given priority to sponsorship of college students who are in their sophomore, junior or senior years and sponsorship for vocational training,
76. YOUTH PARTICIPATION. Children and youth were not given the opportunity to participate in the design stage of the project. The most that was done was conducting interviews with children to understand their needs and situation.

Project Management and Institutional Framework

77. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE. The comprehensive programme for preventing and reintegrating children in armed conflict adopts a collaborative approach among various agencies. Collaboration was put to test through the Salaam action programme. The Salaam programme was spearheaded by the DOLE national office

and the promotion to the regional level turned out to be full of difficulties. Coming into agreement on the scope of responsibilities and the conduit of fund tested the DOLE national agency and the ILO-IPEC to negotiate and facilitate the organization of interagency team. Getting the signatures of heads of regional agencies took months. But this eventually pulled through.

78. Over time, the field staff of TESDA, DepEd, and DOLE claimed that they learned to trust other. They coordinated the activities. Each agency is fulfilling its commitment to the project. They have learned to work as a team, sharing common norms and goals for the project. Cognizant of the one-man staff of DOLE ARMM, the new regional director of DOLE Region 12 articulated her willingness to commit her staff to help DOLE ARMM implement the Salaam programme.
79. The regional offices take pride in their committed staff and management. The young staff are aggressive and have been working long hours. TESDA and DOLE have supportive regional directors that direct the Salaam Project in fulfilling its goals. The field staff expressed their appreciation to the presence and support of the Country Programme Coordinator who provided technical input.
80. Through the Salaam action programme, a networking relationship between the regional offices and local government units and concerned barangays is established. The regional offices shared with the LGUs about the issue of child soldier and the initiatives to be undertaken. In turn, the selected LGUs promoted the project in their communities and helped in identifying prospective beneficiaries. The LGUs through their social worker or other staff helped in monitoring the children beneficiaries. But beyond these efforts, the interagency committee has yet to generate more participation from the LGUs in addressing the issue of child soldier.
81. As a young interagency committee, they recognized the need to meet regularly for planning, monitoring, and internal evaluation. An idea of institutionalizing the inter-agency effort is a direction they hope to work on. They conceded that they have to strengthen the convergence.
82. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. At a wider scale, ILO-IPEC has yet to facilitate for the revival of an interagency collaboration with existing players in the field of soldiers. The DOLE-ARMM was able to establish the Regional Council for Welfare of Children, an inter-agency structure responding to the plight of children. But this structure was not operating for some time. Initially, the Country Programme Coordinator thought of organizing executive committee but retracted due to a learning from UNDP which the said agency adopted the executive committee concept but gathering representatives from various agencies to make decisions slowed down their project.
83. At the national level, the Philippine component of the “Inter-Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict” was

presented during the Stakeholder Consultation and Planning Workshop for the Philippine Time Bound Programme. In doing this, the issue of child soldier was recognized as one of the priority sectors of worst form of child labor. The overall strategic framework of the Philippine Time Bound Programme now includes the strategic goal of ensuring that children are no longer affected by armed conflict.

84. At the program level, there are prospects for ILO-IPEC to work with. Various agencies are responding to the child soldier issue such as Amnesty International-Pilipinas Section, Balay Integrated Rehabilitation Center for Total Human Development, Foundation, Philippine Human Rights Information Center, UP CIDS Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program. These agencies are part of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Children as Soldiers.
85. Other agencies respond more on the plight of children caught in armed conflict, not specific to child soldiers, like UNICEF and Save the Children. Save the Children provides relief services for children during emergency situation. UNICEF provided training for caregivers from non-government organizations on basic psychosocial help to children in situations of armed conflict and sponsored research project on Children Caught in Armed Conflict.
86. The United Nation Country Team created a mechanism called Conflict Prevention and Peace Building which is intended to coordinate similar efforts related to child soldiers. Unfortunately, as revealed in an interview with a UNICEF representative, the mechanism is not functioning that well and that they have yet to pursue coordination with other organizations.
87. With the above-mentioned players, the Country Program Coordinator has not yet actively pursued towards establishing networking relationship with organizations concerned with child soldiers. So far, a contact was made with Save the Children but no exploratory meeting was pursued yet.
88. If networking will be intensively pursued, opportunities to converge resources – fund, personnel, expertise – can go a long way to address the issue of child soldier. Experiences of others can help enrich prospective action programmes and cut short the learning loop. Another advantage of working together, each agency can adopt approaches (demobilization, prevention, withdrawal, rehabilitation) according to their strength. The idea of pursuing peace zones may be facilitated by an inter-agency effort. However, to pursue networking means more meetings to come up with agreements, parameters and mechanism which may slow down the implementation of the project. If ILO-IPEC chooses to operate without the involvement of UN agencies, it has to give focus on specific and limited geographic area and provide support for a long term in order to produce impact.

COMMUNICATION

89. Inter-office Communication. Efforts are made to foster communication between the national and regional offices. On the part of the DOLE Bureau of Labor Employment, though the Salaam action programme is an add-on to their regular load, the new director deployed, for a certain duration, one of its staff to be based in ARMM region to facilitate coordination between the regional and national office. Between the national and the field office, consultation on the specific project strategies and budget formulation was not fully made which affected the execution of the activities.
90. Across agencies, they still need to work on their communication lines. They need to level off in articulating their expectations on project details. This was experienced in communicating a point of criteria and selection process for TESDA's training courses. Miscommunication who will assess the trainees in the electronic course led to the accommodation of non-high school graduates. The instructor had to make extra effort in teaching Math to these non-high school graduates.
91. Also, updating the agencies on some development and progress of the project is an area that should be worked on. When the field staff submit report not in line with the requirement of the national office and ILO-IPEC means that the report have to be rewritten. This means delay of fund release.
92. Communication about the project. Group discussions with the beneficiaries indicate that their understanding of the Salaam action programme is mainly scholarship for the needy children. Only few saw it as educational assistance for those affected by armed conflict. They have not linked the issue of peace and that the education project intended to prevent child participation in armed conflict. Yet, in spite of this lack of explanation children are actually prevented from joining the armed group. Providing educational sponsorship addresses one cause of joining armed group which is poverty.
93. The advantage of not being explicit in communicating about education as a strategy of preventing child soldier is giving protection to the local implementers to the possible reaction of MILF in the decreasing number of their members or manpower. The disadvantage of this lack of information is to regard the project as mere educational project without deep appreciation on the problem and issues of child soldier.
94. Furthermore, interviews with some teachers reveal that they had difficulty explaining to the community about the basis for selection. Community people usually ask why their children could not be part of it and why only educational assistance is available. There is no brochure about the project that would indicate its purpose, the criteria, the process of selecting the beneficiaries, and the benefits or allowances. The staff only verbally explained the project to the local government

units and beneficiaries. Apparently, this approach gives much space for misunderstanding or miscommunication in relaying the information in the community.

95. **SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS.** In selecting the Salaam beneficiaries, the following criteria was established: a) beneficiaries should be within the age range of 9 to 24 years old, 2) the youth must be considered out-of-school at the time of application, 3) the applicant should be resident of war-affected area, and 4) the family could not afford school education.

Table 2 –Profile of beneficiaries, according to Age

Age Category	Number	Percent
7- 10	6	5%
11 – 14	56	47%
15 - 18	30	25%
19 - 21	22	19%
Not indicated	5	4%
Total	119	100%

96. It can be noted that there are youth beneficiaries who are above 18 years old. These are youth who are in their junior and senior years in college. Many beneficiaries are older than their classmates since their schooling was interrupted either because of poverty or conflict situation.
97. This was generally observed except in Datu Piang where the teachers did not pick up out-of-school youth. They picked up those who are indigent, good academic standing, and are currently enrolled.
98. Focused group discussions with beneficiaries of vocational skills training revealed two things which have implication on the selection process. Those who attended the baking course enrolled because of interest in baking but only one out of the eight FGD participants expressed interest in pursuing it for business purposes. Furthermore, non-beneficiaries expressed their interest in one course but are persuaded to enroll in another since the quota of preferred course was already filled up. This may be part of the explanation when the electronics instructor observed that around 40% demonstrated lack of interest in the course which had bearing on their performance.
99. The delays in the drafting and signing of the MOA led to a major constraint on the screening process. On the vocational courses, the training needs assessment was not put to use because TESDA depended much on its partner organization, DOLE, to conduct the screening. In this aspect, they have not communicated to each other their specific criteria.
100. The project staff also needs to review the criteria for selection particularly in the electronics course. The standard criteria of TESDA require – a) a high school graduate, b) interest of the trainee, and c) if possible, should be tested if using prohibited drugs. Some applicants were not high school graduates which resulted to their difficulty in understanding the course. Considering the lack of access to education of beneficiaries, the project may have to offer remedial course before sending the trainees to the course or they simply get high school graduates.
101. Moreover, skills training applicants tend to imitate or gravitate toward a popular course. When such popular course is filled up, the staff tried to make the applicants see other course offerings which the applicants may consider. There is a tendency

for applicants taking up course which was not their primary interest. The staff doing the screening had to probe deeper on the interests of the trainees.

102. At the country-level project, the selection of proponents for the action programme which will implement other components of the project is mainly based on their track record of competence and experience in a specific field.
103. EFFICIENCY. The child soldier project suffered delay due to several factors. (See Table 2) First, the child soldier project did not start as planned because the process of recruitment took time. Finding difficulty in looking for a qualified person, ILO-IPEC was able to hire the Programme Country Coordinator only in the middle of 2004. Also, the consultant to be contracted for research and baseline study was not available at the preferred schedule of the action programme. The research and baseline only started in July 2005, an output critical to the design of other action programmes, the media campaign and policy advocacy. Furthermore, identifying, selecting qualified, prospective action programme implementers and firming up of design of action programme is a long process from the level of Country Programme Coordinator then to the ILO-IPEC office.
104. Second, political instability characterized by infighting in some areas of the ARMM also contributed to the slow implementation.
105. Third, given the special election in the ARMM region last September 2005, ILO-IPEC had to wait for the new set of political leaders before embarking on a regional inter-agency collaboration. However, networking with agencies whose base is in Metro Manila could have been pursued while preparation for the special election was going on. Ground working with various agencies could have been done which would pave way for collaborative effort after the special election.
106. Given such pace, the immediate objectives as indicated in Table 2 could not all be attained in the remaining project term. Specifically, the immediate objective of strengthening capacities of partners will be delayed. More stakeholders and partners are yet to be identified. So far, only government agencies are involved through the salaam action programme. Intensive awareness-raising has to be conducted before active participation has to occur. Specific capacity building activities have to be designed and implemented before stakeholders take action.
107. One action programme that may be implemented during the remainder of project term will be the provision of vocational skills training by TESDA. Consequently, not all of project funds for the period will be utilized.

Table 3 Status of Implementation

Immediate Objectives	Status of Implementation As of September 2005
<i>Immediate objective 1-</i> At the end of the program, partner capacities to ensure that children will not be recruited in the armed conflict will have been strengthened. a. research available for use in designing targeted interventions b. different sectors manifest strong support and active participation to programme activities c. existing legal framework are reviewed and harmonized d. improved local capacity to plan, develop and participate in taking action	a. research on going b. government agencies involved in Salaam project c. no initiatives yet. Proposed action programme still being deliberated d. no initiatives yet.
<i>Immediate objective 2-</i> At the end of the program, the entry of children into armed conflict will have been prevented a. Communities exposed to conflict identified and oriented on the issue of children in armed conflict b. provide educational opportunities for children at risk of getting recruited to work as soldiers c. provide employment/livelihood opportunities for older children and their families	a. some communities identified, given educational opportunities but not oriented on the issue of children in armed conflict b. 120 children provided educational assistance (Salaam action programme) c. 64 youth for vocational training (Salaam programme)
<i>Immediate objective 3-</i> At the end of the program, the children withdrawn from and traumatized by armed conflict will have been reintegrated into the mainstream of society. a. children working as soldiers located and identified b. children provided with education services and employment opportunities to facilitate their reintegration into the mainstream of society c. families of children engaged in armed conflict provided with livelihood and income-generating opportunities d. rescued children monitored and provided with appropriate rehabilitation services	a. partially done, through the research b. no initiatives yet c. no initiatives yet d. no initiatives yet

108. In the case of Salaam action programme, it was conceptualized as early as February 2004 and the proposal was submitted to ILO-IPEC in June 2004. But the drafting of the agreement took time since it had to be revised from the national level then at the ILO-IPEC. Though approved by ILO-IPEC in December 2004, the implementation started only after the agreement was signed in May 2005.

109. The first fund release was in January 2005 with the aim of launching the project and signing of the agreement on February 2005. But this did not materialize because the draft of the agreement had to be passed around to each concerned agency for approval and signing. Given the process, the agreement was signed by the ARMM Governor and the Secretary of DOLE in May 2005. Barely a month away from the start of the school year, the Salaam action programme staff rushed for the enrollment of the beneficiaries.

110. The baseline survey for salaam action programme was not conducted, partly due to upcoming school enrollment and partly due to relying on previous information during the Salaam phase one action programme. Although the enrollees were a bit late, the schools nevertheless admitted them. However, in not doing a baseline of all beneficiaries, the project has no record identifying which beneficiaries previously engaged in part-time soldiering. In the focused group discussions, older beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries mentioned that some of them have to a certain extent had experienced soldiering activities. Not explicitly identifying these beneficiaries hinders tracking whether they have reverted back or totally stopped child soldiering.
111. On the part of the voc-tech, the training needs assessment was not conducted. Usually, TESDA conduct a rapid community assessment to determine the priority skills training, available local materials, demand of the course in the area, and the infrastructure. The project implementers were in a hurry, trying to meet targets defined in specific period of time. This resulted to TESDA's experience of handling trainees who are not fully interested with the course.

Project Resources and Fund Management

112. FUND RELEASE. The project encountered delay in the release of fund. One factor that contributed to the delay was the report submitted from the field did not follow the ILO-IPEC format. So this had to be revised. Implementers submitted financial report only when the fund for the period was fully exhausted. Hence, there is a long waiting time for the release of fund. This affected the release of educational assistance to children and youth. Some college students claimed that the delay caused stress in fulfilling school requirements and not eating meals. (i.e., payment before taking exam, purchase). The negative repercussion was averted by TESDA's willingness to shoulder the initial project costs of the vocational-technical component. Some colleges were also willing to accept the promissory note from DOLE for the college students to be allowed to take exams.
113. PROJECT FUND. The direct educational services provided by Salaam action program vary according to levels. Each child in elementary and high school received monthly allowance worth P500.00/month for tuition fees and P500/year for book allowances. Those in college received P2,000 a month and a book allowance of P500/sem. The education fund is released through the schools.
114. In the case of college students, there were more requirements such as special projects, thesis requirements, photocopying of manual, and transportation costs. Since the colleges/universities are in Cotabato City while they come from the

different towns of Maguindanao province, the allowances for these students and trainees were used for food and transportation. This could have been avoided if there was consultation with local implementers during the writing of the proposal, particularly in the budget preparation.

115. Most of the elementary pupils used the allowance for school supplies, uniform, shoes/slippers. A few of them use their allowance to buy clothes/food for other sibling. Though they say the allowance was sufficient, later they express that there are other expenses/needs unmet. The book allowance was used to meet other school needs instead of buying books. Those living far from schools, transportation took much of their allowance.
116. Focused group discussions with beneficiaries revealed that the fund was not adequate to meet their educational needs. This is most particularly true in college students and voc-tech trainees.
117. For the vocational skills training, the budget was only P 1,800 per trainee. TESDA provided counterpart by shouldering the lodging and providing the cost of trainer. Even this allocation, it was not enough since the beneficiaries come from remote barangays and had to cross rivers, making the transportation cost high.
118. Besides, the Salaam project proposal was drafted in May 2004 so by the time implementation came, the prices increased due to the oil price hike. Hence, the project fund allocation was not adequate. There were no estimates for budget shortfalls. An estimate for contingencies or unexpected expenses could have been made.

Project Results and Achievements

119. Targets vs. Actual. The Salaam action programme targeted 300 children beneficiaries from the depressed barangays of seven towns of Maguindanao province. All these beneficiaries are classified as “prevented.” The actual profile of beneficiaries, as of Sept. 2005, is indicated in the table below.

Table 4 Profile of Beneficiaries, according to educational level

Education level	Target	Actual
Elementary	50	50
High school	50	50
College	20	20
Vocational training		
▪ Baking	180	23
▪ Electronics		22
▪ Food processing (yet to be implemented)		19
▪ Courses yet to be identified		-
Total	300	184

120. Changes among the beneficiaries. When the children were asked about any change in their life because of the Salaam action programme, they all chorused “*Masaya po kami*” (We are happy). Offhand, this seemed a very casual statement. But probing into the response shed light about their plight- living in poverty, there are no educational assistance existing in the area. Having someone sponsored their education meant not to worry anymore where to get money for educational needs. It means they just have to focus on doing well in their studies.
121. Even the parents are said to be happy about the opportunity. The children said their parents encouraged them to study hard because it is a rare opportunity. They should value it by studying very hard. All children claimed that they studied doubly hard so as to maintain the scholarship. These claims were attested by their teachers and the social worker.
122. When they were asked about their suggestions to strengthen the action programme, their responses were only two- a) that the scholarship continues till they graduate in college, and b) that more children would benefit from this educational assistance.
123. The college students and vocational trainees are also happy about the opportunity given them to study. It was noted that the college students, who stayed away from their communities to study in Cotabato City, exhibited self-confidence. They did not hesitate to express their views especially in the topic regarding armed group. Unlike those who are in the towns who became subdued and reserved when the topic on participation to armed group was broached. The college students shared that they felt more secure in the city where it is peaceful compared to their life in the rural area where their life is in constant threat. Being in the city oriented them on the amenities and pace of urban living.
124. Those in vocational training courses are happy because they feel more productive in their time. Sometimes they used to help in the farm. But most of the times they just sit idle. As one described his life before where there was not much to do that he could count the posts and trees in the community. It was also mentioned that being on training meant less time for vices because their hands are full. To some of the trainees their excitement of going back to their community and apply their training was quite visible. Their new found learning was like *eureka* experience, hence, boosted their self-esteem.

Project Sustainability

125. The Philippine component of the inter-regional project conceives sustainability in several aspects. One facet of sustainability is the integration of the children in armed

conflict sector in the Philippine Time-bound Programme which is coordinated by the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC). Consequently, NCLC is committed to monitor and coordinate its implementation in close collaboration with the ILO-IPEC in Manila.

126. Another aspect of sustainability is the stakeholders' commitment on the prevention and reintegration of children involved in armed conflict. On the side of DOLE, since the Salaam action programme was spearheaded by the Secretary is a guarantee that the agency would pursue the issue of child soldier. The DOLE regional staff plans to give follow through services for the graduates of vocational training courses. Through regular DOLE programs, access to capital can be facilitated, organizing of graduates into cooperatives for livelihood or microenterprise could be pursued. Advocacy on children involved in armed conflict can be integrated in their labor education program.
127. Sustaining the educational assistance at a very long time is quite challenging but not impossible. It would mean going into fund raising which the interagency effort may not have a full-time personnel to implement or the structure and mechanics to carry it out.
128. If the fund ceases after two years, the country programme faces the risk of unsustained operation since a large bulk of the resources come from USDOL. This means the children and youth would stop going to school unless their parents are able to generate other source of fund. The vocational-skills training beneficiaries would just have graduated but there is no mechanism yet of following them technically and financially if they pursue self-employment. Any initial gain would be lost.
129. For the past months, the implementers' attention is directed to the operational details such as recruitment of staff, identifying partners to implement action programmes, and learning the ropes in interagency collaboration. The implementers have yet to sit down and come up with specific sustainability plan for the project--how to raise more funds and specifying long-term commitments of various groups to carry out services after the two year fund from US Department of Labor. The action programme implementers need time to explore more how they can converge their resources, identify more stakeholders and supporters to sustain the efforts addressing child soldier issue.

Conclusions

130. The Philippine experience of Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict is still in the early stage of implementation. Mainly undertaking groundwork activities, the project had only implemented the Salaam action programme and the research on children in armed conflict. At the early phase in the implementation, the project has possesses some strengths and weaknesses. The project encountered threats as well as opportunities that influence the project development.

131. The pace of the project was influenced by various external factors – political instability, peace and order situation, special election in the region, and change of leadership. Among the implementing agencies, coming to an agreement about scope of responsibilities and commitments took much time. Meeting the reporting requirement also slowed down the implementation.

132. **Strengths**

- a. The action programme is relevant and well received by the communities.
- b. Educational assistance and vocational-technical training are relevant.
- c. Inter-agency cooperation is effectively sharing its resources and responsibilities in implementing the project
- d. The project is highly supported by DOLE top management, BLE director, regional directors of TESDA, DOLE-ARMM, DOLE region 12, and their staff
- e. There are initial positive outcomes – promoted self-esteem, sense of hope for bright future, increased knowledge and skills in vocational skills - in the early phase of the implementation

133. **Weakness/Challenges**

- a. Program design needs sharpening to address specific characteristics of target groups. The phenomenon of part-time soldiers and children living in conflict zones requires specific strategies to prevent participation in child soldiering activities.
- b. Processing of past and traumatic experiences is needed for the current beneficiaries. But counseling was not provided because the implementers did not warrant that it is needed by the beneficiaries.
- c. One gap of the project is peace education which provides a deeper understanding on the conflict in Mindanao and various ways of resolving it.

There is a need for community sessions to tackle discussion on a common dream and not just focusing on a conflict-ridden life.

- d. In the absence of baseline study for Salaam, not extensive profile of beneficiaries (part-time soldiers (previous or present) is made. This poses difficulty in monitoring or tracking the development of beneficiaries.
- e. Delay in reporting and releasing of fund is a usual occurrence.
- f. There was no sufficient consultation in budget formulation and project design formulation.
- g. Some unrealistic budgetary assumptions lead to inadequacy of fund in some programme components. For vocational-technical courses, no provision was made for tools and capital for self-employment. Geographic factor is not considered in formulating the allowances for children
- h. Inter-office communication and promotion of the project need to be strengthened. To avoid misunderstanding about the project, printing of brochure is needed to clearly communicate the project.
- i. The Salaam action programme needs to review their selection process in the vocational course trainees. The staff doing the screening had to probe deeper on the interests of the trainees. It is a challenge of the staff to balance by helping applicants see the demand of the course and marketability and their interest in pursuing it.

134. ***Threats***

- a. Peace and order situation in the area serves as a constraining factor and a threat to existence of the project.
- b. It is possible for MILF to negatively react to project objectives of curbing children participation in armed group.
- c. The change of leadership in ARMM region might affect the commitment to and direction of the project.
- d. The delay of release of fund caused stress on the beneficiaries to the possibility of missing examinations, not fulfilling requirements, not eating meals.
- e. No regular fund from agencies to support the child soldier project after three years.

135. ***Opportunities***

- a. The cooperation among agencies leads the way of convergence of resources for the project.
- b. There are still other players in the field addressing the issue of child soldier which the ILO-IPEC has not yet tapped.

Lessons Learned

136. *On project design*

- a) The education and vocational skills training are responsive to needs of individuals and therefore easy to sell to communities.
- b) More people should be involved in the conceptualization of the project.
- c) For a more realistic and appropriate activities and budget, consultation between the representatives of national agency and the local implementers are necessary.
- d) It is easy for children to be recruited in armed group but also easy to get out from the group.
- e) The role of parents in following up children in school is important in ensuring success.

137. *On project Implementation*

- a) The project staff realized that familiarity with the culture and needs of the people is a necessary requirement in programme implementation.
- b) One lesson for the implementers to look at was on budget formulation of the Salaam project. The increase in the cost of living was not factored in, hazard pay for the field staff in critical area was not included. In some aspects, it was too detailed that that it lacked flexibility and to a certain degree hindered the project implementation.
- c) Even if confronted with the negative perceptions about the ARMM region's problem of transparency and accountability in governance, the DOLE realized interagency effort in the region is possible and challenges can be hurdled.
- d) DOLE realized that it is capable of handling this type of project.
- e) It would have been easier if the project has been implemented by the regional office rather than the central office.
- f) Acceptance of the project among the local leaders is essential for the project to take off and to become sustainable.

Recommendations

138. Project Design and Strategies

- a) ILO-IPEC has to be more deliberate and purposive in weaving together the several action programmes that would integrate various strategies in the existing area of operation. It needs to sharpen its specific design to address the phenomenon of part-time soldiers in contrast to the fulltime child soldiers.
- b) Project indicators for success have to be reviewed in the light of specific design to address the part-time soldier phenomenon.
- c) To ensure success in vocational skills training that would generate income, an increase of fund allocation that would include provision of tools and start-up capital is necessary. Specific subjects on bookkeeping and marketing of products and services should be integrated in the vocational courses.
- d) In capacity building strategy, there is a need to specifically prepare the psychosocial component skills training among the service providers most especially when full-time child soldiers start to be mainstreamed. This can be done by collaborating with DSWD, UNICEF or other agencies which provided this type of training.
- e) Peace education is important to complement the strategy of providing formal education among in-school children and youth. This may help curb the increase of part-time child soldier phenomenon. Peace education among the out-of-school may help them see their situation in a wider perspective with some options to take other than armed struggle.
- f) Muslim religious leaders who have become peace advocates may be tapped to support the programme activities considering that *Jihad* is one motivational factor for youth and adults to join the war. Muslim religious leaders They have participated in inter-faith dialogue, peace seminars by Grassroots Peace Learning Center and Mindanao Peace Institute based in Davao City, Mindanao.
- g) While the advocacy component is intended to operate in national scale, there has to be programmed activities that cater to the existing towns where there are Salaam beneficiaries. This would track down impact at the community level.

139. Project Management and Institutional Framework

- a) The Salaam inter-agency group has to establish regular meetings, formulate specific plans for the year, and assess their activities. Meetings would update member agencies on project implementation details as well as address operational issues and concerns.
- b) The revival of the focal coordinating body, Regional Council for the Welfare of Children, has to be facilitated soon for collaboration and mobilization among various sectors in stopping the involvement of children in armed conflict. This

body need not be limited to government organizations but also groups representing other sectors.

140. Project resources and fund management

The Salaam action project needs to realign their unutilized fund in literacy for the increase of needed fund in vocational skills training courses.

141. Project sustainability

- a) There is a need to draft specific sustainability plan before the project term ends.
- b) The ILO-IPEC has to be more aggressive in networking with other concerned groups to pursue convergence of resources.
- c) There is a need to widen the base of sources of fund for the project to be sustainable.

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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

(ILO-IPEC)

Terms of Reference

Mid-term Evaluation

Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict: an Inter-Regional Programme

National Assessment: The Philippines

(P340 03 900 052 - INT/03/P52/USA)

I. Background and justification

1. The aim of ILO-IPEC is the progressive elimination of child labour, especially in its worst forms. The political will and commitment of individual governments to address child labour—in cooperation with employers' organizations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and other relevant parties in society—is the basis for ILO-IPEC action. ILO-IPEC's strategy includes raising awareness on the negative consequences of child labour, promoting social mobilization against it, strengthening national capacities to deal with this issue and implementing demonstrative direct action programmes (AP) to prevent children from child labour and remove child labourers from hazardous work and provide them with appropriate alternatives.
2. The Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (N. 182) categorizes "all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict" as worst forms of child labour (Article 3a). Each country ratifying this Convention is committed to implementing programmes of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of priority, in consultation with relevant government institutions and employers' and workers' organizations, and taking into consideration the views of other concerned groups.
3. The inter-regional programme for the prevention and reintegration of children involved in armed conflicts is a global intervention with focused activities in Colombia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Africa (Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda—core countries—, and Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone—non core countries).

All these countries except Sierra Leone have ratified Convention 182. The project has a total budget of USD 7,000,000. The donor is the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). This programme was conceived after a preparatory phase launched in October 2001 by ILO-IPEC in collaboration with the ILO-In focus Programme on Crises Response and Reconstruction (IFP-CRISIS). This phase served the purpose of obtaining information (through rapid assessments) on the causes of the use of child soldiers, the mechanisms for recruitment, the living conditions while in the armed groups and the circumstances surrounding their demobilisation and the perspective for their reintegration.²

4. The programme intends to contribute to the reduction of the incidence of children serving in armies and/or in armed groups (development objective). In order to do so, three immediate objectives have been formulated:
 - ✓ I/O 1: “By the end of the programme, there will be an enabling environment in each country, facilitating the prevention, withdrawal and subsequent reintegration into society of children involved in armed conflict.”
 - ✓ I/O 2: “By the end of the programme, former child soldiers above the minimum working age will be assisted to acquire decent work and achieve a sustainable income.”
 - ✓ I/O 3: “By the end of the programme, fewer children will be recruited in armed conflict in targeted countries.”
5. The overall programme document sets the framework under which each country has made the relevant choices to suit its particular needs, always taking into consideration the specific in-country context. These national choices are reflected in a “country annex” which details the particulars of the intervention strategy and the implementation modality for each country. The country annex corresponding to the Philippines is therefore to be used as the reference document for this mid-term evaluation as it contains the relevant details of the national situation and intervention approach, including indicators and the expected outcomes. In summary, the country annex has been prepared on the basis of: a) the overall IPEC programme on *Prevention and Reintegration of Children involved in Armed Conflict : an Inter-Regional Programme* project document, dated 17 September 2003; and b) an in-country strategic planning process as part of the overall efforts to design a national time bound programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in the Philippines.³
6. According to ILO regular procedures and as agreed with USDOL, the project is due for a mandatory independent mid-term evaluation in the second half of 2005. This evaluation should serve two basic purposes: a) accountability to the main stakeholders, including government agencies and social partners in the targeted countries, partner organizations and

² A total of five reports (unpublished) were prepared: *Rapport national sur la situation des enfants engagés dans les conflits armés au Burundi*, Suzane Nsabimana, December 2002; *Rapport sur l'évaluation rapide de la situation des enfants engagés dans les conflits armés en République du Congo*, Michael Bitemo and Frédéric Nkeoua, December 2002; *Rapport national sur la situation des enfants engagés dans les conflits armés en République Démocratique du Congo*, Modeste Mangola Dukti and Jean-Marie Vianney Mupende Katembo, Kinshasa, October 2002; *Rapport national sur la situation des enfants engagés dans les conflits armés en République Démocratique du Congo (Goma, Est-RDC)*, François-Xavier Baganda N'Simba, Goma, December 2002; *Résultats de l'enquête d'évaluation rapide au Rwanda sur la situations des enfants engagés dans les conflits armés*, Prosper Mutijima Nkaka, March 2003.

³ A national stakeholders' workshop following the SPIF approach was carried out in February 2004. The main outcomes of this workshop as related to the child soldiers problem can be found in the Country Annex. More information concerning the SPIF approach can be found in ILO-IPEC's Guidelines on SPIF of May 2002 (produced by the Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section).

the donor, on what has been done and achieved so far; and b) learning from the experience to analyze how the project is progressing towards achieving its objectives, plan for the future and, where necessary, to recommend appropriate re-designing.

7. IPEC management and the project staff will use the evaluation results to revise the approach and strategy that is being followed in each country, as appropriate. Therefore, the evaluation should provide credible and reliable information in order to suggest how the project could enhance its impact during the remaining time of implementation, ensuring the sustainability of the benefits that have been or will be generated. In order to do so, **specific evaluation methodologies will be used to ensure evidence based recommendations**. The evaluation results will also be used by partners in charge of implementing activities in the field or that support the national efforts against the use of children in armed conflicts in the region.

II. Purposes and phasing of the evaluation process

8. The overall purposes of the evaluation and the tasks to be carried out by the independent national consultant include the following:
 1. To review the implementation of the project so far in the country and consider any changes in strategy on the basis of emerging experiences, recommending adjustments where necessary.
 2. To examine current proposed activities and make an assessment of their potential contribution to the implementation strategy.
 3. To review the existing institutional set up and implementation capacity.
 4. To assess the existing as well as potential linkages between the project and other initiatives being developed in the targeted countries.
9. This national assessment is part of a process which will continue with an independent evaluation of the activities carried out in Africa and the preparation of a final report for the whole project.
10. The national assessment in the Philippines will be conducted by an independent consultant identified locally, under the supervision of an international independent consultant as evaluation team leader, who will also be responsible for the analysis of the activities in Africa and the preparation of the final report. **These Terms of Reference correspond exclusively to the activities to be developed by the national independent consultant in the Philippines.**

III. Main aspects to be addressed by the evaluation

11. The focus of this national assessment will be on learning and improvement. Taking into consideration the corrective and formative nature of mid-term evaluations, this exercise should be articulated around three main questions:
 - 1) What has worked, and why?
 - 2) What needs further improvement, and why?
 - 3) Has the evolution of the situation in any way affected the original design and strategy assumptions, and if so, in what way?
12. The specific issues to be analysed by the national consultant under the above three main questions should at least cover, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

13. Validity of the project design and relevance of objectives: The assessment should analyse the original design of the country annex (in relation with the overall programme document), considering its internal logic and coherence, its inherent quality and the relevance of the proposed objectives and strategies. The following are some of the specific questions to be considered in the analysis:
- a. Does the design of the overall programme document provide an effective framework and appropriate methodologies for the achievement of the objectives at the national level? If not, why? What has been the interaction between the elaboration of the interregional project document and the country specific annex? (Form 3 in annex can be used to summarize this information).
 - b. Are the project objectives for the country clear and realistic (likely to be met during the time frame of the project, with the current resources and following the identified approach and strategy)?
 - c. Are the objectives still valid today or must they be revised and possibly reformulated? If so, how?
 - d. How coherent and relevant was the original project design (and its reformulations, if appropriate) according to the prevailing conditions at the time of its inception? Should changes currently be made to the general project strategy based on newly emerging needs and constraints? If so, why and how?
 - e. Is the project based on adequate research and baseline data?
 - f. Are project indicators and means of verification relevant, clear, realistic and useful in terms of measuring the project's performance and impact? If not, why? How effectively are strategies for monitoring being implemented? Are they the right strategies? (Explain with supporting evidence).
 - g. Did the children and youth targeted as beneficiaries participate in the design stage of the project? If not, what were the difficulties? If they did participate, how so? Were there alternative options identified as substitute to their direct participation in the project design? Were participatory approaches applied in the design of the Action Programmes (AP)? If not, why?
 - h. Are the time frame for project implementation and the sequencing of project activities logical and realistic? If not, what changes are needed? Has the strategy for sustainability of impact been defined clearly at the design stage of the project?
 - i. Assess the relation between the project and other child –focused interventions supported by IPEC or implemented by other organisations in the same country. To what extent were synergies exploited and economies of scale created in designing the project?
 - j. How were local management structures, such as National Child Labour Steering Committees, involved in the project design? To what extent were the objectives of this project incorporated within the mission and objectives of these various structures?
14. Process of implementation, management and achievements: The evaluation should assess how the project activities have been implemented and the effectiveness and efficiency of the management structures in place, with a focus on determining if the project is on course to delivering the expected outputs and achieving its immediate objectives.

Administrative and management related- matters

- a. Are the existing organisational and management structures of the project appropriate for achieving the expected results? Are the technical and administrative guidance and support provided by ILO to the project adequate and helpful?
- b. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of project management? What management improvements, if any, could be suggested to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness? Is there balance and rationality in the use of funds and resources? Is

- there transparency in the project resource management? Are there any problems in this aspect?
- c. What has been the effect of delays in carrying out the project work plan? Is the project advancing at a pace which will allow reaching the project objectives by its date of completion? If not, why and how can problems be solved?
 - d. Please analyze the communication processes between the field office, the regional office, headquarters and the donor.
 - e. What is the financial and management status of the project? What is currently working well and what are the difficulties at that level (concrete examples)? How can these difficulties be addressed based on the existing capacities?
 - f. Were disbursements made according to the project document's planned time-frame, or were there significant changes? If changes occurred, which resources were re-directed to expenses necessary to ensure an efficient service delivery and reaching project objectives? Are there more efficient manners to disburse funds while reaching better results with the same resources?
 - g. How appropriate are the criteria used for selecting Action Programmes (AP) regions and sectors? How efficient is the process by which AP proposal are reviewed and approved and resources ultimately allocated?
 - h. What processes have been used to identify implementing agencies? Was this an effective process? Have the correct agencies been identified to undertake service delivery under this project?
 - i. Was the administrative and technical support given by project staff to the national counterparts adequate?
 - j. How are local management structures participating in programme implementation? How is this participation contributing to progress toward project's objectives? What are the major achievements and/or drawbacks encountered?

Achievements

- k. Are project results so far meeting the needs of the target groups? If not, why? Are there alternative ways to meeting those needs? If so, how?
- l. How effective are Action Programmes to date, and how are they contributing to the project meeting its immediate objectives?
- m. Have the number/type of beneficiaries been reached according to plan? If not explain the rationale for the changes of plans.
- n. Appraise the changing attitude of the beneficiaries towards acquiring of skills for decent work. What are the views of the beneficiaries and stakeholders regarding the usefulness of the outputs of the project? What are the effects of the project on the situation of the target beneficiaries so far? What benefits have the target beneficiaries gained so far?
- o. How effective has the project been in building the capacity of national IPEC and implementing agencies' staff?
- p. Assess the contribution of the project to raising awareness on the need to withdraw children from armed units, including from non-government groups.
- q. Has the commitment and capacity of public and private institutions been strengthened in order to undertake concrete actions to prevent recruitment of children (boys and girls) in armed conflicts and to assist those withdrawn?
- r. How effective has the project been in terms of leveraging resources? What process is being undertaken by the project to identify and coordinate implementation with other initiatives and organisations? Assess the visibility of the contribution of the USDOL funded project.
- s. Assess work opportunities identified by the project, including placements and other supportive inputs in the current country specific context.
- t. Determine the quality of the training offer, including training providers' capacity in the current context. Assess the capacity and the ability of the implementing partners to deliver suitable training for the different age groups.

- u. To what extent are children and youth involved in project implementation? In what ways has the project sought to develop the capacity of young people to contribute to the goal of reducing the incidence of children involved in armed conflict? What has been the impact of such efforts?
 - v. What lessons have been learned and what possibilities are there for effective replication of efforts? To what extent have lessons learned been shared with other targeted countries? How have these lessons been incorporated into other ILO initiatives in targeted countries as well as in IPEC regional efforts?
 - w. Do the anticipated project results justify the costs incurred?
15. Sustainability and anticipated impact: The evaluation should assess the meaning of “sustainability” within the context of the project and the progress made in ensuring continuation and/or further development of the benefits generated by the intervention.
- a. Which actions were taken to promote the sustainability and which actions must be undertaken in the coming months to strengthen the capacity of local actors or related institutions in order to ensure the sustainability and/or scaling up of interventions in the targeted zones?
 - b. How effective has the project been in terms of promoting local ownership of project activities and promoting long-term sustainability? Has the idea of a phase-out strategy for the project been clearly articulated and progress made towards this goal? What are the hand-over plans for the different components of the project?
 - c. What is the long-term commitment and the technical and financial capacity of local/national institutions (including governments) and the target groups to continue delivering goods and services begun under the project once it ends?

IV. Expected outputs and timeline of the evaluation process

16. The timeline for this national assessment and the number of working days for the national consultant are detailed hereunder, up to a total of twenty five working days (the dates included are tentative; final dates will be determined in consultation with the evaluator):
- Five working days (beginning 22 August 2005), covering:
 - 2 working days for an initial desk review of documents (project document and country annex, progress reports, mission reports, plus documentation on other current relevant programmes implemented by ILO and other organizations in the country).
 - 1 working day to review and confirm acceptance of the TOR and to review and provide feedback to the evaluation team leader on methodological instruments (see annex to these terms of reference), which will be used to gather stakeholder information. The independent national evaluator must also review together with IPEC’s Country Project Coordinator (CPC) the methodological instruments and provide adjustments as/if necessary. If the instruments for data collection included in the annex for any reason do not appear to be applicable, the national independent consultant will suggest alternative methodologies in order to obtain the same information and provide a concrete example. Information should be provided to the independent evaluation team-leader latest by August 26, 2005.
 - 2 working days to preparation of an inception report detailing the evaluation time-frame with the specific meetings (specifying with whom and where) and field visits planned. For field visits there should be an indication of the criteria/reasons for choosing the project sites. If possible, a minimum of three project sites (including both successful and problematic action programmes) should be visited to provide evidence and learning examples, although depending on the number of AP and mini-programmes a larger number of project sites could be desirable. Logistical constraints should be

considered in the number of identified project sites, as well as the following issues. Project sites should provide the opportunity of collecting information from : a) local authorities (formal or non-formal), the community (using questionnaire 4 in annex), implementing partners, other actors working on the same issue at field level but outside the IPEC project, the beneficiaries (using questionnaires 1 and 2), employers' organisations and trade unions, if any. For beneficiary interviews, at least one group interview (questionnaire 2) per project site should be undertaken, and if possible one individual beneficiary interview (questionnaire 1) from someone who has not participated in the group interview. For planning purposes it is estimated that the community interview will take up to one hour, the beneficiary group interview some 45 minutes, while individual interviews with beneficiaries should last not longer than 30 minutes. Other interviews with stakeholders (local formal and/or non-formal authorities, armed groups if accessible, other actors implementing similar projects in the area, IPEC implementing partners, employers' organisations, trade unions, etc.), should take one hour per interview. Each stakeholder group should be interviewed separately. In particular beneficiary group interviews should have no one outside the group of beneficiary children assisting, as a question of confidentiality.

- Fifteen working days from 5 September 2005 in order to
 - Undertake the field work to project target sites, interviews with the different stakeholders (primary stakeholders identified, including focus groups and semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and if possible non-beneficiaries for comparison purposes) in the field. Estimated time: eight working days.
 - Hold interview with all stakeholders, including interviews with the National Counterpart and other identified stakeholders at provincial and/or national level, as they appear in the inception report, including: the identified implementing agencies, government institutions and others engaged in the project, employers' organisation and trade unions, service providers (for training), institutional relations. Estimated time: four working days.
 - Analyse notes and code and synthesise the information and data collected as a result of all interviews and of field work. Estimated time: three working days.

As a result the independent national evaluator must produce:

- A map of the country/region detailing where the project activities are taking place.
 - A mapping of all actors in the country and/or project region in the field of withdrawal and prevention of children in armed conflict (using forms 1 and 2).
 - A list of the Action Programmes and mini-programmes included in the country annex, detailing : a) the amount in USD, b) the implementing partner, c) the objectives, d) the start date, e) the (expected) completion date (using the form included in the project's progress report format).
 - A summary of analyzed, coded and processed information (after triangulation).
- Four working days, latest by 26 September 2005, in order to write a **draft evaluation report** to be submitted to the independent evaluation team leader, according to the format and contents described in section V hereunder, including all annexes.
 - One working day, latest by 14 October 2005, to incorporate inputs and comments and any factual corrections from stakeholders to the **edited final evaluation report**. ILO-IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED) together with the evaluation team leader will provide consolidated comments on the draft evaluation report.

V. Methodological considerations

17. For the national assessments, the general ILO-IPEC guidelines on evaluation and a consultative and participatory approach will be followed. Consultation with all stakeholders will be done directly in the field by the national consultant. On the last day of the mission work, a restitution seminar with all stakeholders able to attend should present the tentative conclusions and recommendations.
18. **Each key evaluation finding should be triangulated and documented** (e.g. corroborated by at least two different sources, either documentary or observational or through interviews of various/different stakeholders), in order for findings to be credible and valid. The evaluation judgement will be evidence-based, grounded on the concrete information gathered from the different sources, triangulated and not based on a single unchecked information source. The independent national consultants should indicate the evaluation standards that they will apply to this exercise in their inception report.
19. Evaluation instruments, such as the SWOT analysis matrix and questionnaire interview protocols attached will be reviewed by the national consultants during the inception phase and approved by the independent international consultant. Any comments, changes or suggestions regarding the different evaluation instruments should be sent to the international consultant (team leader) and DED for comments, using the “track change” function of MS Word. If the national consultant, based on discussions with the IPEC Country Project Coordinator, decides that some of these forms and questionnaires are not applicable in the current context, alternative and concrete means of obtaining the necessary information should be designed and provided to the team leader.
20. During the course of the evaluation the national consultants will receive technical support from the international consultant and evaluation team leader, either by e-mail or by phone as necessary. In addition, the assigned evaluation officer in DED will provide further support if and as necessary.
21. A major information source for the purpose of the evaluation will be the beneficiaries themselves, boys and girls, as well as beneficiaries’ communities. The independent national consultant should undertake the beneficiary interviews with the required sensitivity, cultural knowledge and knowing the specific approach to be used in dealing with the different types of interviewees. It is expected that beneficiary and non-beneficiary children (both male and female, including gender specific group interviews where possible) will be interviewed through a combination of formats, namely focus and/or semi-structured groups using questionnaire 2, individual interviews using questionnaire 1, and non-beneficiary group interviews using questionnaire 3. The questionnaires will allow obtaining evidence on key evaluation questions from the primary beneficiaries of the project. At the same time specific questions entailing attitudinal and behavioural change (before and after the intervention) are included in order to obtain qualitative information over and beyond the quantitative data available regarding the numbers of beneficiaries. Questionnaire 4 will allow collecting some feedback on the project from the communities themselves.
22. ILO-IPEC, through DED, will select the independent national consultants in charge of the national studies. The international consultant as team leader will be informed of the candidates before the final selection is made and will have the possibility of expressing his or her opinions to DED.
23. All documents produced during this assignment should be gender sensitive. Wherever possible beneficiary interviews should hold separate gender youth groups (female/male).

VI. Resources needed for the national assessment

24. The national assessment will be carried out by an independent national consultant with extensive experience in evaluation of development, humanitarian or social interventions, preferably including practical experience in conflict situations. Previous in-country experience is compulsory. Previous evaluation experience of child labour or children in armed conflict interventions and is a definite advantage, as well as previous experience in doing evaluations for agencies in the UN system. Experience in using knowledge, attitudes and practices methodologies will be considered. The consultant should have an advanced degree in social sciences, economics or similar and specific training on evaluation theory and methods. Full command of the local language(s) is compulsory to conduct beneficiary and non-beneficiary interviews and focus groups. All interviews conducted at field level, particularly the community and beneficiary interviews, will be undertaken in strict confidentiality, and in an anonymous manner.
25. The resources needed for this exercise are the following:
- ✓ Fees for national consultant for 25 working days
 - ✓ Per diem for field visits outside the consultant's home town
 - ✓ Travel arrangements to be provided locally by the IPEC staff
26. The payment of fees will be made as follows:
- ✓ 20% of fees upon receipt of the inception report
 - ✓ 30% of fees after reception of the draft evaluation report by the team leader and DED
 - ✓ 50% of fees after reception and acceptance of the final evaluation report by the team leader and DED
27. This independent evaluation will be managed by DED, in collaboration with ILO-IPEC's Unit on Vulnerable Groups (responsible for managing and backstopping the programme).

VII. Evaluation Report: format and contents

28. As mentioned before, the primary output of the consultancy will be an **evaluation report**. The report will be written in a straightforward language, in Times New Roman font 12, and will have a maximum of 40 (forty) pages excluding annexes and including an executive summary. Each paragraph should be numbered and the first numbered paragraph shall correspond to the first paragraph of the executive summary.
29. The report structure shall be the following:
- A cover page, indicating the project title, the type of evaluation, the dates of the evaluation, the date of the report, the name of the author(s) and including the mention "This report reflects the views of the author and not necessarily the views of the commissioning agency".
 - Table of contents with page numbers.
 - A map detailing the project location(s) (including all action programmes and mini-programmes).
 - A glossary of the terms used
 - A list of abbreviations

- An executive summary of no more than four pages, synthesising the main findings, conclusions and recommendations. The first page of the report will be the first page of the executive summary.
- A brief introduction of no more than three pages explaining the background to the evaluation, its purpose, scope and objectives, the primary users, as well as a brief description of the evaluation methodology, constraints and biases, and a brief background of the independent national evaluator.
- Evaluation findings organised around the main questions of the evaluation, including all collected information, as well as beneficiary/community assessments results and results of the various SWOT analysis. *It is suggested that the finding be structured thematically around points 1 to 9 of form 2 using each point as section title.*
- A short conclusions section, which must flow from the findings and not contain any new elements which have not previously been covered.
- A section with lessons learned from implementation (positive or negative experiences in executing the activities, that should be considered during the rest of implementation and that could be useful for other countries).
- Recommendations, based on the findings and the conclusions, ranked by order of importance/priority. Recommendations should be divided by type (e.g. design, objectives, strategic, management, resources, etc.) and should refer to specific paragraphs of the main body of the report.
- Annexes : a) TOR, b) bibliography (including documentary review and secondary sources), c) list of people interviewed indicating, if possible, date of the interview, ages, sex, place, function/post (e.g. beneficiary, community leader, government member, NGO member, implementing partner, etc.), d) one unfilled sample questionnaire and SWOT table for each group and / or issue, e) collated material (coded results table) synthesising results of all SWOT forms and questionnaires used, f) CV of the consultant.

ANNEX: FORMS AND QUESTIONNAIRES TO BE USED IN THE EVALUATION

A. SWOT ANALYSIS

The independent national consultant should use a SWOT format for recording the information provided by actors and stakeholders on the different issues to be assessed. It is suggested to use the formats to document outcomes of individual interviews and to prepare later a consolidated SWOT analysis including the opinions of different stakeholders on the issues.

The issues to be considered are the following:

1. Project design and strategy
2. Project management and institutional framework
3. Project resources and fund management
4. Project results and achievements to date
5. Projects perspectives of sustainability

The format to be used is the following:

- For individual interviews

ACTOR / STAKEHOLDER:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

ISSUE: (1 to 5)

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

- For presentation of consolidated results

ISSUE: (1 to 5)

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

- aaa (mentioned by stakeholders 1, 2 and 5)
- bbb (stakeholder 3)
- ccc (stakeholder 4)
- etc.

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

B. FORMS TO PRESENT RELEVANT INFORMATION

Form 1: List of organisations in the country / region in the field of prevention and reintegration of children in armed conflict

ACTORS / ORGANIZATIONS				
Name of organisation	Type of organisation (government agency, international organization, NGO, trade union, employers' organization, other)	Main area of intervention (prevention, rehabilitation, other)	Estimated annual budget (indicate year)	Geographic coverage
1.				
2.				
3.				
Etc...				

Form 2: List of projects in the country / region in the field of prevention and reintegration of children in armed conflict

Name of project	Implementing agency / organization	Budget (in US\$)	Brief description of objectives and support provided	Project start and end date (mm/yy)	Funding / donor agency(ies)	Geographic coverage
1.						
2.						
3.						
Etc...						

Form 3: Comparison between the overall programme document and the country annex (to be completed in consultation with the CPC)

Indicate if what is stated in the overall programme document and the country annex is identical, similar or different. If not identical, please fill the last two columns describing what the differences between the programme document and the country annex.

Area	Comparison (identical, similar, different)	Programme Document	Country annex
1. Objectives			
2. Indicators			
3. Beneficiaries			
4. Implementation modality			
5. Management structure			
6. Institutional framework			
7. Sustainability strategy			
8. Other aspects (specify)			

C. SUGGESTED QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire 1: Individual interview with beneficiary

Age:	Sex : M / F
Beneficiary targeted for:	Withdrawal / Prevention (explain the definition)
Interview site/area/region (according to administrative unit):	
Place of birth of beneficiary:	
Current status: unemployed / apprentice / in school / vocational training / other (specify)	
Living with: direct family / distant relative / alone / friends / school / street / reception home / placement / transit centre / other (specify)	

Introduction to the beneficiary: explain who you are and why you interview her/him. State the following: "These questions will be kept strictly confidential and your anonymity preserved. The objective is to help us improve the project to ensure it can assist you most effectively. Thank you for your precious collaboration and your time."

1. Has the project changed anything in your life? Yes / No / don't know
If yes, what? If not, why not?
2. If there was a change, was it for the better, or was it negative?
Please explain:
3. What did you obtain from the project (including material support and/or services provided, such as information, orientation, training, etc... in beneficiary's own words):
4. Do you feel the support received from the project is useful to you: Yes / No / Don't know - If yes or no, why?
5. Do you still need the same things today as when the project started: Yes / No / Don't know – If not or don't know, what are your new needs?
6. Did you participate in the design or preparation of the project : Yes / No / Don't know
If yes, in which way?
7. Do you participate in the implementation of the project (e.g. in some of the activities): Yes / No / Don't know – if yes, which ones
8. Do you also participate in another project: Yes / No / Don't know
If yes, which one (mention title, implementing organization and benefits)
9. Do you feel a change in the way people treat you since the project started? Yes / No / Don't know – If yes, what is the change?
10. Is your situation in terms of living conditions and finances today better than at the start of the project : Better / Worse / Similar / don't know – Explain in what sense the situation is better or worse.
11. Do you feel the project is bringing you something useful for your professional future? Yes / No / Don't know – If yes, in which way?
12. Do you believe the project is helping you to secure an income? Yes / No / Don't know
13. Is life easier for you today than at the beginning of the project? Yes / No / Don't know
14. Has the project helped you increase your self-esteem? Yes / No / Don't know
15. Could the project be improved? Yes / No / Don't know – If yes, how?
16. How does your environment (family, friends, peers, etc.) perceive your participation in this project? Good / Bad / Indifferent / Don't know – If good or bad, explain why
17. Would you consider joining (if prevented) or going back (if withdrawn) to an armed group? Yes / No / Don't know – If yes or no, why?

Questionnaire 2: Group interview with beneficiaries

This questionnaire should be applied to a group of beneficiaries.

Total number of participants in the group:
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For each participant in the group interview please record the following information:

Age:	Sex: M / F
Beneficiary targeted for:	Withdrawal / Prevention (explain the definition)
Interview site/area/region (according to administrative unit):	
Place of birth of beneficiary:	
Current status: unemployed / apprentice / in school / vocational training / other (specify)	
Living with: direct family / distant relative / alone / friends / school / street / reception home / placement / transit centre / other (specify)	

Introduction to the group: explain who you are and why you are making the group interview. State the following: "These questions will be kept strictly confidential and your anonymity preserved. The objective is to help us improve the project to ensure it can assist you most effectively. Thank you for your precious collaboration and your time."

Make the following questions and record the number of responses in each category, as well as the examples and clarifications provided by the participants (in their own words)

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
1. Has the project changed anything in your life?	Yes No Don't know		
2. If there was a change, was it for the better, or was it negative?	For the better Negative		
3. What did you obtain from the project (multiple answers allowed)	Material support Information Orientation Training Other (specify) Other (specify)		
4. Do you feel the support received from the project is useful to you?	Yes No Don't know		
5. Do you still need the same things today as when the project started?	Yes No Don't know		(Description of new needs)
6. Did you participate in	Yes No		

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
the design or preparation of the project	Don't know		
7. Do you participate in the implementation of the project?	Yes No Don't know		
8. Do you also participate in another project?	Yes No Don't know		(State title, implementing organization and benefits provided)
9. Do you feel a change in the way people treat you since the project started?	Yes No Don't know		
10. Is your situation in terms of living conditions and finances today better than at the start of the project?	Better Worse Don't know		
11. Do you feel the project is bringing you something useful for your professional future?	Yes No Don't know		
12. Do you believe the project is helping you to secure an income?	Yes No Don't know		
13. Is life easier for you today than at the beginning of the project?	Yes No Don't know		
14. Has the project helped you increase your self-esteem?	Yes No Don't know		
15. Could the project be improved?	Yes No Don't know		
16. How does your environment (family, friends, peers, etc.) perceive your participation in this project?	Good Bad Indifferent Don't know		
17. Would you consider joining (if prevented) or going back (if withdrawn) to an	Yes No Don't know		

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
armed group?			

Questionnaire 3: Group interview with children who do not benefit directly from the project

This questionnaire should be applied to a group of children who have not benefited from the project. If such a group cannot be gathered, it is possible to use the following table to aggregate the responses from individual interviews.

Total number of participants in the group / Total number of non beneficiaries interviewed:
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For each participant in the group / interviewee, please record the following information:

Age:	Sex: M / F
Interview site/area/region (according to administrative unit):	
Place of birth of beneficiary:	
Current status: unemployed / apprentice / in school / vocational training / other (specify)	
Living with: direct family / distant relative / alone / friends / school / street / reception home / placement / transit centre / other (specify)	

Introduction to the group / to the beneficiary: explain who you are and the main purposes of the evaluation. State the following: "These questions will be kept strictly confidential and your anonymity preserved. The information will be synthesised from a number of groups and interviews where similar questions are being asked in order to extract lessons to improve the services we provide to children who used to be in armed forces."

Make the following questions and record the number of responses in each category, as well as the examples and clarifications provided by the participants (in their own words).

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
<i>Introducing the children in armed conflict theme</i>			
1. Is it easy for a child to belong to or enrol into an armed group?	Yes No Don't know		
2. Are children joining the armed group(s) seen as a problem for the community, or is it seen as normal in your everyday life, or even as something positive?	Problem Normal Positive Don't know		
3. When a child joins an armed group does it create an example for other children to follow?	Yes No Don't know		
4. Is it possible for a child to leave freely an armed group?	Yes No Don't know Yes		

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
5. When a child leaves an armed group does it also create an example for other children to follow?	Yes No Don't know		
6. Who is more prone to participate in an armed group?	Boys Girls Irrelevant Don't know		
7. Do you see it as positive to belong to armed group(s)?	Yes No Don't know		
<i>Determining needs and support provided outside the IPEC project, if any</i>			
8. Have you received / are you receiving material support from any organization (excluding own family)?	Yes No Don't know		Specify from whom, type of support, dates of start and end and objective of support Skip question 9 Skip question 9
9. Did this support entail a positive change for you?	Yes No Don't know		
10. What are your major needs at this moment?	Money Training Education Employment Other (specify)		
11. Do you feel confident that you are able to take care of yourself in civilian life, outside the armed group?	Yes No Don't know		
12. Do you feel prepared to find a stable source of income?	Yes No Don't know		Explain what would the person need to be prepared

Questionnaire 4: Group interview with members of the community

This questionnaire should be applied to a group of community members. If such a group cannot be gathered, it is possible to use the following table to aggregate the responses from individual interviews.

Total number of participants in the group / Total number people interviewed:
Location and area/region where the community is located (list from smaller to larger administrative units):
Type of beneficiaries in the community: mostly children prevented / mostly children withdrawn (to be completed in consultation with CPC and implementing agency)

For each participant in the group / interviewee, please record the following information:

Age: _____ Sex: M / F _____
Profile: local authority / informal community leader / teacher / religious leader / doctor / other (specify) _____

Introduction to the group / to the interviewee: explain who you are and the main purposes of the evaluation. State the following: “Thank you very much for your precious collaboration and your time. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and your anonymity preserved. The information will be synthesised with other similar surveys that are being undertaken in order to extract lessons to improve our current project. Thank you for your help.”

Determine with the group or the interviewee the community’s type of anthropological and social fabric:

1. Specify how old the community is: (date of creation/recognition of the community if remembered. Alternatively check with local authorities for date of creation of the administrative unit)
2. Ethnic and religious background of inhabitants:
3. Estimated total number of inhabitants in the community :
4. Have there been important population movements in the community since October 2003? Yes / No
5. If yes, did people leave the community: Yes / No – If yes, as a result of what? Did people arrive in the community: Yes / No – If yes, as a result of what?
6. Approximate number of people who left :
7. Approximate number of people who arrived.

Make the following questions and record the number of responses in each category, as well as the examples and clarifications provided by the participants (in their own words)

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants’ own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
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Introduction of the issue (children in armed forces)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Is there awareness about children belonging to armed group(s) in this | Yes
No
Don’t know or no answer |
|--|--------------------------------------|

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
community?			
2. Are children joining the armed group(s) seen as a problem for the community, or is it part of your everyday life?	Problem Normal (everyday life) Don't know / NA		
3. Is the fact that children have joined or are joining armed groups, even as non combatants and for support services only, seen by the community as something rather positive or negative?	Positive Negative Don't know / NA		
4. Does this situation concern more boys or girls (if possible, indicate approximate proportion as ratio)?	Boys Girls Don't know / NA		(Description of new needs)
5. Should children continue to join or belong to armed group(s)?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Why?
<i>Defining the IPEC project: before making the following questions explain briefly the project components which are undertaken in the community</i>			
6. Has the project changed anything in the community?	Yes No Don't know / NA		What? Why not?
7. If there was a change, was it for the better, or was it negative?	For the better Negative Don't know / NA		Explain change Explain change
8. What did beneficiary children in the community obtain from the project?(multiple answers allowed)	Material support Information Orientation Training Other (specify) Other (specify)		
9. Do you feel the support supplied by the project is helping beneficiary children to obtain a source of income?	Yes No Don't know / NA		
10. Do you feel the support supplied by	Better		

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
the project will help the beneficiary children in the future to find a source of income?	Worse Don't know / NA		
11. Does the project contribute to children wanting to avoid belonging to armed group(s)?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Skip question 12 Skip question 12
12. Is this something positive?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Why?
13. Do you feel the support received from the project is useful to the beneficiary children?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Why? Why?
14. Was the selection criteria (e.g. reasons) for the choice of beneficiaries clear to the community?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Why?
15. Were the children selected as beneficiary those who most needed support?	Yes No Don't know / NA		
16. Is there in the community children in similar situations who have not been selected as project beneficiaries?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Why and how many?
17. Are there other projects which also target children in armed group(s) in your community?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Indicate implementing organizations, types of services / support provided and number of beneficiaries, if known
18. Do beneficiary children need the same things today as when the project started?	Yes No Don't know / NA		What would they need today?
19. Did the community participate in the design or preparation	Yes No Don't know / NA		In which way? Why?

Question	Categories	Number of responses	State comments and explanations in the participants' own words, including specifics on the situation of the girl child
of the project			
20. Did or does your community participate in the implementation of the project (e.g. in some of the activities such as dissemination/information campaign)?	Yes No Don't know / NA		Indicate activities
21. Do you feel a change in the way community people talk about or treat children belonging to armed group(s) since the project started?	Yes No Don't know / NA		What is the change?
22. Has the project helped beneficiary children to feel better about them?	Yes No Don't know / NA		
23. Could the project be improved?	Yes No Don't know / NA		How?