



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)



International
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Office

IPEC Evaluation

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

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

Inter Regional Program: Africa, Colombia, Phillipines, Sri lanka

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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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Abbreviations

ADB-	Asian Development Bank
Aus-AID-	Australian Agency for International Development
CBO-	Community Based Organization
CWRD –	Center for Women and Rural Development
CBT-	Community Based Training
CIDA-	Canadian Agency for International Development
DFID-	Development Fund for International Development-UK
GTZ, -	German Technical Cooperation
ICTAD –	Institute for Construction, Training and Development
IPEC-	International Programme for Elimination of Child labor
ODW -	(Norway)-Operation Day Work
LTTE-	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
INSGD-	Institute for Social and Gender development
SCSL-	Save the Children Sri Lanka
SIDA-	Swedish International Development Agency
NORAD-	Norway International S Agency for Development
TVEC-	Training and Vocational Education Canter
SLVTA-	Sri Lanka Vocational Training Authority
VTRP-	Vocational Training Resource Persons
NAITA-	National Authority for Industrial Training
NITESL-	National Institute for technical Education Sri Lanka
PPDRO-	Poraithivu Paththu Development and Rehabilitation organization
USDOL-	United States Department of Labor
UNICEF-	United Nations Children Education Fund
UR -	Underage Recruits
UNEG. -	United nations Evaluation Guidelines
UNDP-	United Nations Development Programme
WUSC-	World University Service of Canada
Sarvodaya-	A large Non Governmental Organization of Sri Lanka
Save the Children-	National NGO for Child welfare
FORUT-UK	based Norwegian NGO. FOR-UT(Ut-Witling) means Organization for development

Glossary and Definitions of the Terms

Action Plan; Action Plan is a national level umbrella programme that has been designed to address various issues related to the children affected by the war (CAW) including child soldiers. There are 10 technical areas identified in the Action Plan and the provision of VT is one of these support areas. ILO –IPEC has given the overall coordination responsibility for the vocational training component. Other areas of technical support for CAW include awareness and education, psychosocial support, income generation, micro credit and health and nutrition. Thus the Action Plan becomes the guideline and principle document for implementation and review of the activities under various projects and programmes for CAW in 8 districts of the Northeast Province.

Action Project/programme: Action Projects or Programmes are programme supported VT courses. There are two types of programmes implemented by the ILO-IPEC through USDOL funds in three districts in the Northeast conflict affected area: Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Action projects are relatively long term VT training courses that accommodate both UR and Vulnerable children for period ranging from 3 to 6 months. Mini Projects is the second type of courses which are mostly orientation programmes that accommodate more number of beneficiaries and provide short term training. The action programmes funded by the Project include VT on Carpentry, Welding, Cement Brick making, sewing, so on.

CAW VT Projects : Under the Action Plan, ILO IPEC targeted technical support for ex-child soldiers and vulnerable children through the project entitled ‘Vocational training and Skills Development for CAW’. This project has several funding sources including the USDOL. Other key donors for the CAW are AusAID and NORAD.

Referral Process: Referral Process is the method of forwarding ex-child soldiers to various psychosocial and career development programmes implemented by the projects. When rebel groups released child soldiers, they were kept in a Transit centre for a while. Under the UNICEF guidance, the Save the Children of Sri Lanka (INGO) provides counselling and involve in identifying suitable reintegration method for each child soldier. Social workers of SCSL supposed to provide such service and then they refer child soldiers for various projects and programmes for rehabilitation and reintegration. ILO-IPEC depend on this process to get UR to recruit for its VT action programmes. Transit Centers became defunct during 2005 in places where it was constructed due to many reasons and it affected the implementation of the project.

Partner Agencies: Partner agencies refer agencies that are responsible for implementing action projects under the USDOL funds. This assessment includes activities of five partner agencies: Patrician Institute (Jaffna) INSGD (Jaffna) Department of Industries (Trincomalee); CWDR (Batticaloa and Trincomalee) and PPDRO (Batticaloa)

Movement- This is the widely used local terms by people and youth of the Tamil community in the North and East to refer the LTTE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1. Purpose and the Background:** Prevention and reintegration of children involved in armed conflict is an inter-regional programme supported by the USDOL under the ILO International Programme for the Elimination of Child labour. Sri Lanka is one of the core countries supported by this program, and a series of reintegration and social support projects have been implemented by the IPEC National Office through a number of partner organizations. This report presents the findings of the mid- term evaluation of the Sri Lanka country program implemented during the past eighteen months (March 2004 to October 2005). The emphasis of this national assessment is learning and improvement. It revolves around three main questions: 1.1) what has worked well and why? 1.2) what needs further improvement? And 1.3) what lessons could be learned from the initial experience?
- 2. The Methodology:** The assessment process included four types of interviews: *individual interviews* with beneficiaries; *group interviews* with beneficiaries; *interviews with non beneficiary* children, and *interviews with parents*. There were several constraints and limitations that delayed the assessment process. Field work in some locations was constrained by political and security uncertainties on several occasions.
- 3. Country Policy:** Sri Lanka is unique in responding to and addressing the issues of Children affected by the War (CAW). Action Plan is a country programme designed to address specific problems related to the children affected by war and their reintegration in to national development. Under the Action Plan, ILO -IPEC skill development and VT programmes are channeled through public and NGO training providers. USDOL is one funding source for IPEC's VT interventions related to the Action Plan
- 4. Comparison between the Overall programme document and the Country annex:** The assessment found that stated objectives and indicators in the Overall Programme document were identical with Country Annex. Also, the target beneficiaries and implementation modalities are more or less similar in both documents. However, a number of differences were identified in areas such as management structure, institutional framework and sustainability strategy.
- 5. Main Constraints for the Project:** The Overall Programme document of the Project includes most of the key elements in the Action Plan for the CAW. Thus it provides an effective framework and modalities to achieve the overall project objective under the Action Plan. However, the smooth implementation of the USDOL action projects (VT) has been disturbed and delayed for two major reasons. First the tsunami that devastated most of the coastal belt of the North and East of the country, and Second, the split in the LTTE movement in the eastern province in 2004. On the other hand, the weaknesses in the referral process in referring URs for VT under the project made it necessary for the project to adopt an alternative strategy by selecting more vulnerable children for the action projects. Thus there was a period (April 2004

to beginning of 2005) which show a slow progress in the achieving targets of the project..

6. **Referral process & Transit centres:** The original project design assumed that relevant where the transit centres were the hub of the whole process. URs were referred to VT training after they had been provided a basic social orientation at the transit centres. Transit centres were established with the hope of providing counselling and guiding child soldiers to find better life options and career development training to reintegrate into the society. But today, no transit center seems to be functioning and agencies have been ineffective in activating the referral process. For these reasons, the re-integration process was very slow during the first year of operation (March 2004 to April 2005). As result, action projects had to focus more on vulnerable children during the first phase.
7. **Validity of the project objectives:** All the stakeholders including ILO-IPEC staff found that the project objectives were valid and realistic even in the context of political and security uncertainties in some districts. But the long term objectives of the project are still not well understood by some partner organizations of IPEC who implement VT projects. Though all the project's partner agencies have been provided with orientation training on project objectives at the beginning, they focused their efforts mostly on providing training and guidance to the beneficiaries. But placement and follow up to find employment or proper income generation livelihood opportunities for trainees are far beyond their capacities. Also the project objectives lead to more field level operations including technical backstopping for partner agencies. But llimited financial and other resources, IPEC field level operations and technical backstopping for partner agencies to support past trainees, were adversely affected.
8. **Project Design:** Field staff and partner agencies found that there is a need for reformulation of the project design considering the continuous return of UR under various circumstances during the first phase. Although the programme supported action projects included a significant number of URs in all of its project areas, it had to focus on individual children and not on their families as the target group, when URs return their homes there is no proper social and economic atmosphere to re-start their life. LTTE also expressed this view and they are critical about the projects that are implemented under the Action Plan.
9. **Project indicators and means of verifications** are relevant and useful in terms of measuring the project performance and progress. But there is little evidence to indicate that they have been used systematically by the project staff and partner organizations.
10. **Centre-based Vs Community -based training:** There are conflicting views among partners and stakeholders on the modality of vocational training. Some stakeholders believe that the Centre- based training is for more disciplined, better organized so that beneficiaries could gain thorough training. Others including small-scale partner

agencies and community members feel that Community- based training is much more effective and beneficial for children from a security and social protection point of view. It is suggested that VT interventions need to have a proper balance of centre-based and community-based training depending on the target group, trades selected and infrastructure availability. At present, only one out of six locations visited has the community based training under the USDOL funds. ILO-IPEC is in the process of identifying the most appropriate type of training for each location. A market analysis contracted to an organization and the results will be incorporated in designing action projects for the second phase. It has been mentioned that USDOL funding for the second half of the project will support more community- based training through partner agencies.

- 11. Selection of Partner Agencies:** At the initial stage, selection of partner organizations was hampered by lack of structured data on CBOs in the post conflict situation. As a result of the decades long civil war, the once strong training network of the north and east was severely weakened. Thus selection of partner agencies was done mostly on the recommendation of other INGOs and review of records of their past experiences.
- 12. Selection of beneficiaries:** This on the other hand is rather haphazard, because the project depended on the slow UR referral process. Although an economic Opportunities survey was done with AusAid funds, the Action Plan recommended that children be placed in vocational training of their own choosing. Thus it was difficult to adopt any participatory process in selecting beneficiaries. It is the view of key stakeholders and the project staff that the time frame for action programmes should be confined mostly to implementation allowing no room for conducting participatory procedures or follow up activities.
- 13. Link with other projects and VT Providers:** At present, several INGOs, including international agencies such as UN are involved in the prevention of child I activity in armed conflict and their reintegration into society. Has maintained good relations with all the child focus VT programmes supported by other donors. IPEC national office actively involved in supporting several children focus orientation, life skill training and counselling programmes which are well integrated with other donor supported and INGO programmes in all three districts the project is in operation.
- 14. Project management Structure:** The existing ILO-IPEC organizational structure at country level includes a three member technical staff including the country coordinator. The programme provides only partial funding for the country coordinator. Compared to the expected results and outcomes of the project, existing management structure is inadequate to carry out the planned activities. One of the key elements in the project management structure is its centralized decision making and the lack of opportunities for field staff micro level decision making. Most of the technical decisions are taken by the PMU in Colombo. Field staffs are much more dependent on PMU and its technical guidance. The fund management of PMU is transparent and partner organizations are aware of fund allocations. Financial

management of ILO-IPEC projects including USDOL funds is systematic and is reviewed periodically by the PC.

- 15. Drop out rates:** There is a 10-20% drop out rate in each action projects implemented so far. Drop outs are due to various reasons. Some beneficiaries selected do not have basic literacy and some others have no conducive family background and support on account of poverty, Some URs have dropped out due to security risks involved in travelling to urban training centres.
- 16. Targeted and Achieved progress:** Overall, in all the three locations, action projects implemented so far have met the target number of 75 even more in each district. The Project was able to reach the target of 342 by October 2005. This was well above the target set for the first half of the project. However, there is a major difference in the plan of action of the project. Though programme document suggested focusing more on former child soldiers or UR in VT provision, most of the project beneficiaries were chosen from vulnerable children and youth. This is mainly because of a weak referral process and the poor performance of agencies involved in referring URs to USDOL VT projects. According to the action plan modality, IPEC has to wait till the agencies responsible for the referral process provide suitable URs for VT.
- 17. Post Training support:** The Project is less effective in identifying work opportunities including placement of passed out trainees. However, during the past few months, a number of supportive inputs and initiatives have been made by field staff in providing post training job placement and technical guidance. Some partner organizations were able to arrange extra career guidance advice and counseling services to the beneficiaries. In addition IPEC has arranged life skill training with the support of AUSAID to develop work abilities and capacities of the individual beneficiary.
- 18. Strengths and Weaknesses:** According to SWOT analysis project has number of strengths and weaknesses. Management and administrative capacity are very strong at the national level. Maintenance of linkages with UN agencies, INGOs and government agencies is commendable. The leadership of the country programme coordinator is a key factor for most of joint and collaborative programmes. The weakest aspect however is the field level management structure, which has still not gained enough recognition and capacity to manage resources and action projects without guidance from the head office. Some of the stakeholders especially government sector agencies are critical of the performance of partner organizations associated with the programme VT projects. Some of the weaknesses identified by the different stakeholders are: a) The VT provided has limited impact as far as providing an additional income for trainees, b) Selection of trainees is done on an ad-hoc basis and not based on proper selection criteria c) Follow-up is weak and most of the trained children are still unemployed d) Trainees have not provided with micro-finance support for a business start up e) No proper methods adopted in selecting partner NGOs for project implementation; f) lack of information and records available to government sector agencies on where and what programs are going on at

district level and g). The training given is not standard and recognized island wide, therefore it is difficult for graduate trainees to find employment in recognised firms

- 19. Toolkit Strategy:** One of the other critical aspects of the action projects funded by the the programme is a lack of comprehensive toolkit strategy at the time of the assessment. Only sewing machine and carpentry trainees received assistance and toolkits to start up self employment and income generating activities. But other trainees such as welders need proper post training support including toolkits or micro-finance packages. However, at the time of assessment, the IPEC Country coordinator was working on a toolkit strategy for all types of trainees assisted by the project.
- 20. Impact on Beneficiaries:** The most successful aspect of the project is the positive improvement it has created in the beneficiary children's personalities, building confidence and better attitudes towards acquiring vocational skills and knowledge. However, most of the trainees find it difficult to engage in decent work and employment soon after the training. Girls who have received non- traditional training such as cement brick making were very enthusiastic to engage in such trades and to break out of the social practices that do not support women in traditional Tamil society.
- 21. Conclusion:** Overall, the project has to a great extent achieved its objectives in reintegrating children into society and supporting them to overcome their problems by providing life skills and vocational training. None of the trainees interviewed wanted to join with armed groups as they now see potential avenues to improve their lives. Though vocational training not found as the sustainable solution to the multi faceted problems faced by ex-child soldiers and vulnerable children, such exposure has given them confidence and hopes to plan their future more productive and useful not only for them but also their families.
- 22. Recommendations:** Based on the above findings, several recommendations are made to improve the quality and effectiveness of the project for the second phase. Capacity of national IPEC should be strengthened with additional human resources and funds to expand its role and functions in the field. Additional baseline data requirements and research on economic opportunities and tracer studies must be carried out to guide the project to suitable strategies and VT needs. Project design should be modified to suit the current field conditions. Capacity-building of selected partners is an essential need of the next phase of the project. Post training assistance process must be streamlined with proper toolkit strategies and linked to micro-credit for income generation and placement with employers.

Map: Project Locations in Sri Lanka



Note: Places indicated by arrows are the locations and names of the local partner organizations

INTRODUCTION

23. Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict is an Inter-Regional Program of ILO-IPEC. This is a UN initiative to eliminate use of child labor in civil wars by armed groups and forces around the world. The programme aimed at implementing specific activities to prevent abuse of children under armed conflict situations and reintegrate vulnerable children into main society in the counties that are experiencing civil wars in Asia and Africa². Sri Lanka is one of the core countries supported by this program and a series of reintegration and social support projects have been implemented by the IPEC local office through a number of partner organizations. This program is financed mainly by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The explicit development objective of the program is ***to contribute to the reduction of the incidence of children serving in armies and/or in armed groups. The program aims at creating an environment that enables prevention, withdrawal and subsequent reintegration of children involved in armed conflict into society.*** Ultimately the program helps former child soldiers above the minimum working age to acquire decent work and achieve a sustainable income so that fewer children will be recruited in armed conflict in future.
24. Sri Lanka country project supported by the programme started in 2004. Compared to other participating countries this was a late start. The first planning mission was in March 2004. However the ILO DED office decided to carry out a mid term evaluation of all USDOL supported projects in participating countries in September 2005. This report presents the findings of the mid term evaluation of the Sri Lanka country program carried out between October to December 2005. The mid-term evaluation aims to achieve two basic purposes: a) accountability to the main stakeholders, including the government agencies and the partner organizations in Sri Lanka and 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, to plan for the future and, where necessary, to recommend appropriate re-designing.

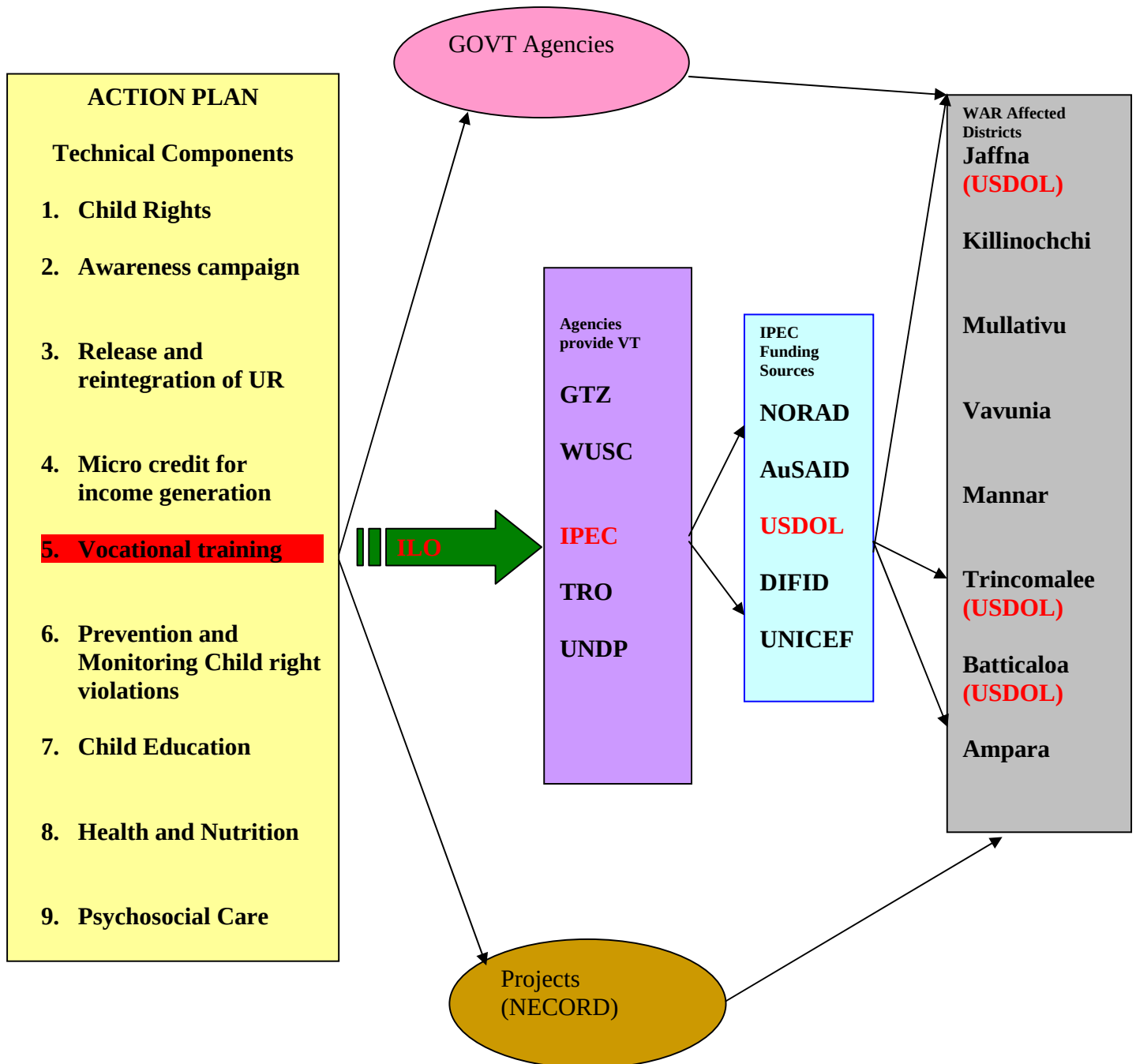
CONTEXT OF THE COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

25. Sri Lanka is unique in responding and addressing the issues of Children affected by the War (CAW). After signing the MoU for a ceasefire to hold armed confrontation between the GoSL and the LTTE, the country has returned to a 'no war situation'. However such a situation does not guarantee a complete halt to of aggression by parties involved in armed conflict nor does it present a sustainable peace situation. Therefore the activities aimed at supporting children from getting involved in armed groups and reintegrating child soldiers into the society in Sri Lanka is not as smooth as in the countries that have stopped war completely and entered into the democratic process. The political and security situation is volatile in certain places during the period and that affected the progress of reconstruction and reintegration activities in the conflict affected areas including the provision of systematic VT.

² **Core countries:** Central Africa, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Colombia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. **Non Core countries:** Uganda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone

26. Action Plan is an umbrella programme that has been designed to address the various issues related to children affected by the war (CAW) including child soldiers. Action Plan for CAW is a holistic approach of the UN, the donors and the INGOs in Sri Lanka. It included all key aspects of child development and care including prevention of children involving in armed conflicts and actions for reintegration of child soldiers into main society through various activities. The Action Plan for CAW is the outcome of the agreement between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka in July 2003. This collaborative effort came into effect since the middle of 2003. UNICEF is the lead and coordinating agency of this Action Plan. Action Plan covers both released underage recruits and vulnerable groups of CAW. There are 10 technical areas identified in the Action Plan and the provision of VT is one these support areas. ILO –IPEC has the mandate for vocational training. Other areas of support for CAW include awareness and education, psychosocial support, income generation, micro credit and health and nutrition. Thus the Action Plan becomes the guideline and principle document for implementation and review of the activities for CAW in 8 districts of the Northeast region.
27. Under the Action Plan, ILO IPEC targeted technical support through the project entitled ‘Vocational training and Skills Development for CAW’ and it aimed at the withdrawal from the armed groups and prevention of entry of children into child labor through employment oriented training programmes. ILO –IPEC is also the coordinating agency for the VT provision for war affected children in the northeast and there are number of key agencies such as WUSC, NORAD and GTZ involved in the VT provision with ILO-IPEC. The skill development and VT programmes channeled through where possible the local public, private and NGO training providers. USDOL is one funding source contributed to IPEC’s interventions related to Action Plan under its overall vocational training and skills development for CAW. Thus review of the progress or achievements of the USDOL supported VT projects of ILO-IPEC inevitably linked with the ‘Action Plan’. It should be also mentioned that the USDOL supported child soldier project in Sri Lanka started much later than some other countries.
28. In brief, Action Plan is a country programme designed to address a specific problem related to children affected by the war and their reintegration to national development. Under Action Plan, different agencies were brought together to orientate their programmes to achieve action plan objectives. USDOL is one funding source contributing to IPEC interventions related to Action Plan.(See figure 1.1)

Figure 1: Project in the Overall Country Context



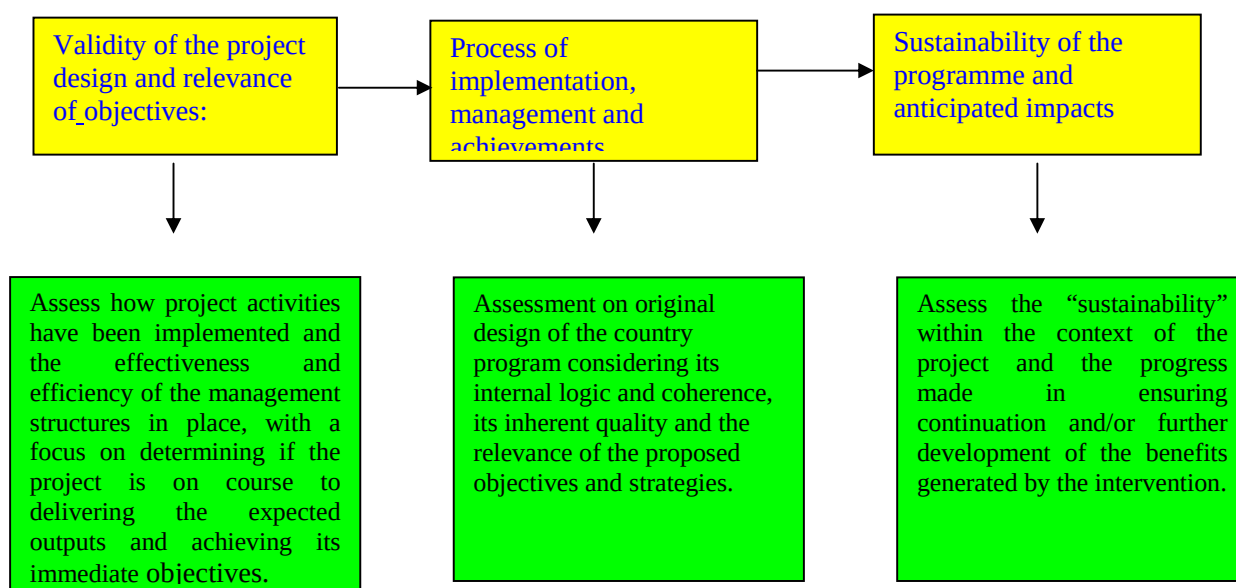
OBJECTIVE AND THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

29. The overall objective of the evaluation includes 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 and 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 locally.

30. The scope of the assessment focuses on three major aspects of the program. The following figure illustrates the key aspects and issues to be addressed in the evaluation.

Figure 2: Scope of the study



APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

31. In carrying out the assessments, the general ILO-IPEC guidelines on evaluation and a consultative and participatory approach have been followed. A series of consultations with stakeholders, project implementation partners and staff of the IPEC have been conducted directly in the field. After completing the field work, the observations and preliminary findings are presented at a restitution seminar to the stakeholders to get their views and comments in order draw tentative conclusions and recommendations.

32. The assessment process included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The key methods adopted for collecting data and to generate information are as follows

Literature/Desk Review

33. The evaluation process began with a desk review of secondary information and data available with IPEC country office. Some of the documents reviewed are the project document and country annex, progress reports, mission reports, documentation on other current relevant programs implemented by other organizations in the country.

Field visits/Stakeholder Meetings

34. This assessment covers USDOL-funded activities under the ILO-IPEC child soldiers' project. The programme supported action projects are operating in only three districts of the war affected region: Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Jaffna. There are two types of projects funded by the USDOL; Action projects and Mini Projects. According to the progress reports some of the action projects are now conducted and some are still in progress. The following table provides information about the selected districts, the partner organizations and the reasons for selection. ***It includes both well executed action projects as well as the ones which are constrained for various reasons.*** In each districts two projects have been selected for the field study. Only action projects have been selected for the assessment. Mini-projects which are relatively small in scale and have limited impacts were not selected for this assessment.

Table 1 Selected field locations and Implementation Partners for the evaluation

Field site/District	Partner Organizations/Stakeholders	Reasons for selection
Jaffna	Institute of Nursery and Gender Studies	• Women centered NGO • A large number of girl children are benefiting by the project. • Initiatives have been made to provide on the job training support and guidance for the trainees. • Considered as an active partner organization
	Patrician Institute	• Focus mainly on boys who have withdrawn and vulnerable • More organized and center based VT provision • Job placement network • Comparatively an urban VT center and less rural beneficiaries • Considered as moderately performing partner organization

Trincomalee	Department of Industries	• Center based Training provider • The only government sector VT that provides training for CAW in the district • Large number of beneficiaries • Implementation of action projects constrained by various factors • Urban centered and offered well designed VT courses
	CWDR	• Pioneer in Community based Training for CAW • Active in Non traditional VT provision • Experiences difficulties in implementing action projects • Focus more on girl child soldiers
Batticaloa	PPDRO	• Rural and Community based training provider • Major focus on Underage recruits • Active in local area development • Managed by Local youth and community
	CWDR	• A less performing partner agency • Faces difficulties in implementation of projects • Heavy focus on UR and vulnerable girl children

c) Interviews

35. The key data collection instrument suggested is the interview. Interview guides and instruments have been prepared before the field work by the team leader and reviewed by the national consultant. The assessment process includes four types of interviews as follows:

Individual interview with beneficiary

36. The individual interviews are aimed at capturing extent to which the life of the beneficiary has changed due to the project interventions. The main objective of this interview is to identify the change of attitudes, knowledge and skills of the beneficiary and his/her overall life aspirations in the context of the conflict situation.

Group interview with beneficiaries

37. Group interviews are aimed at collecting information from youth targeted for prevention and withdrawal from the armed groups. Three (3) group interviews in each district have been conducted. Although there were difficulties in conducting focus group interviews as four separate groups as specified in the TOR an attempt is made to cover the issues related to prevention and withdrawal of boys and girls from armed conflict

Interview with non- beneficiary children

38. Apart from the beneficiaries; children in the project locations who do not benefit directly from the project also have been interviewed. These interviews were conducted only in locations that are conducive to such interviews. These interviews are mainly to understand the conditions that promote or discourage children to join

with armed groups under conflict situations. Especially, such interviews were aimed at getting the views of children about their fellow counterparts who have joined or withdrawn from the armed groups. These group interviews were organized in the afternoons allowing school children to take part in the discussion.

Interview with members of the community

39. These group interviews are aimed at obtaining the views of the community on the impact of the project as well as to ascertain the role of the community in preventing children joining the armed groups. These interviews covered not only the ordinary members of the community but also community leaders such as religion leaders and other socially respected members. Following table summarizes the number persons interviewed through different interviews.

Table 2: Persons interviewed type of interviews and by project locations

Location	Individual Interviews with beneficiary children	Group Interviews with beneficiary Children	Group Interviews with Non beneficiary Children	Interviews with Community Members
Trincomalee	4(Male) 3 (female)	7 (female)	6 (Female)	8 persons
Batticaloa	3 (male) 7 (Female)	16 (Female 6 (Male)	12 (female)	12 persons
Jaffna	4 (male) 6 (Female)	6 (Male) 15 (female)	(Not Conducted)	8 Persons

SWOT Analysis

40. SWOT analysis is an additional method which has been used to gather information from Partner Organizations, IAs and other stakeholders such as the GAs and officials supporting the project. The main objective of the SWOT analysis is to obtain the views of the stakeholders and partner organizations on five main aspects/issues of the project. The issues to be considered in the analysis are the following: a) Project design and strategy b) Project management and institutional framework c) Project resources and fund management d) Project results and achievements to date and e) Projects perspectives of sustainability. SWOT analysis carried out by synthesizing individual stakeholder interviews. Although a stakeholder workshop was arranged to verify findings of the assessment it has been postponed several times and finally the idea has been dropped due to time constrains. Key stakeholders interviewed are UNICEF, Save the Children, WUSC, Ministry of Social Welfare, Department of Industries, LTTE Planning and Developemnt Secretariat, TRO, District Secretaries

(Jaffna, Batticaloa) Divisional Secretreies, Sarvodaya (Batticaloa),and some VT providers at project areas.

Case Studies

41. This is an additional data collection instrument adopted to get more qualitative data to substantiate the data and information collected through interviews and discussions. This is rather an anthropological survey instrument that narrates the real process of reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers into the society. **Three case studies** were conducted with beneficiaries who have reintegrated through training and counseling process by AP and MPs. These case studies illustrate three phases of the life of the former child soldiers: status of the child prior to becoming a child soldier, situation where he/she served in an armed group and former child soldier situation or the condition after the project support for reintegration. Since this is a sensitive area and one need skills to uncover information through participant observations, some trained graduates in social anthropology from each district have been deployed for to stay one week in the locality and collect such information.
42. Overall, in the assessment process a special emphasis has been given to gender sensitivity in conducting the field work and analysis. Wherever possible beneficiary interviews have been conducted for separate gender youth groups. The assessment process has seven steps. Figure 1.1 in the annex a presents each step, specific tasks and expected outputs under each task under the assessment.

DATA ANALYSIS

43. As indicated in the TOR, the evaluation findings were triangulated and documented to ensure their credibility and validity. Basically the findings are compared with at least two different sources. Information gathered from the different sources checked through comparisons and verification discussions. For example, information from beneficiary interviews has been cross checked by interviews with POs and documentary evidence in the project office. It is the view of the consultant that the observations, interviews with the beneficiaries and stakeholders in the field are the most reliable and useful data sources of the assessment. Figure 1.2 annex A explains the triangulation method.

Evaluation Standard

44. In conducting the assessment the consultant has followed the required evaluation standard specified in the UNEG. Particularly the standards such as competencies and ethics (2.1) designing of conducting the evaluation (Standard to 3.1 to 3.16), and preparation of evaluation reports (Standards 4.1 to 4.18) have been strictly followed. Furthermore analysis is based on triangulated data which are compared with at least the two data sources. Finally verification meetings with the key stakeholders and sharing of field observations through emails have been carried out.

Constraints and Limitations

- 45.** There were several constraints and limitations that delayed the assessment process. Field work in the districts were constrained by political and security uncertainties on several occasions. Especially, in Trincomalee which is the center of most of the current problems between the government and the armed forces, field work had to be postponed on the several occasions. Thus consultant was compelled to change the field work schedule and limit the number of discussions and interviews due to inability to organize the necessary field arrangements. Also focus group discussions with different type of beneficiaries were not always possible. Only in Jaffna and Batticaloa the beneficiaries were interviewed as groups. In Trincomalee only individual interviews were conducted.
- 46.** Analysis of field data through triangulation was not possible on certain issues. As some stakeholders were not able to contribute to the assessment because there was a continuous change of the officials as well as lack of understanding on the ILO IPEC activities in the district. Thus the consultant attempted to meet more than one official in some key agencies to obtain the information and it took more time than was expected.
- 47.** SWOT analysis could not be properly conducted due to difficulties on collecting information specific issues of form A. Many stakeholders commented on the project in general. Very few had fair knowledge to assess the SWOT of the project on separate issues.
- 48.** It was not possible to collect information for the form C which aimed at finding out the fund allocation or budget estimates of other projects and donors engage in child soldier reintegration and prevention of children involve in armed conflict. Though an attempt was made to get such information most agencies do not wish to share such detail as they are unable to disclose all funding sources and amount used for different projects. Overall, it was difficult to get information to all of the questions listed under 13 to 15 of the TOR within the time frame allocated for the assignment.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

49. The overall programme document of USDOL supported ILO-IPEC on the elimination of child labour provides a clear guidance and direction for the implementation of country specific activities. Stated objectives and indicators in the overall programme document are very much identical with country annex. Also the target beneficiaries and implementation modalities are more or less similar in both documents. However, a number of differences are identified in areas such as management structure, institutional framework and sustainability strategy. Following table compares the differences and similarities between overall programme document and the country annex of the project.

Table: 3 Comparison between the overall programme document and the country annex

Area	Comparison (identical, similar, different)	Programme Document	Country annex
1. Objectives	<u>Identical</u>		
2. Indicators	<u>Identical</u>		
3. Beneficiaries	<u>Similar</u>	The target is very specific and most of the activities are aimed at reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-child soldiers or UR	Target is larger than what is in the PRODOC. Also overall programme document is heavily focus on UR as the main target group but the country annex emphasises more on the war affected vulnerable children as target beneficiaries.
4. Implementation modality	Similar	A range of activities stated under the menu of options. It includes, advocacy, legal actions, child right protection and reintegration and prevention of children involved in armed conflict	.Specific to the reintegration activities in the menu of options/.
5. Management structure	<u>Different</u>	Programme document provide only very small management unit to implement the project. It support only for CPC partly. Implementation of the project required an elaborate management structure	The project required a much larger field level management structure than was originally envisaged. It is managed as a separate project within IPEC Sri Lanka
6. Institutional framework	<u>Different</u>	Implementation of activities under menu of	The project works within the restrictions

		options required national level institutional structure and country wide actions.	of the Action Plan for Children affected by War, which is only operational in the NE/ no national level activities are undertaken
7. Sustainability strategy	<u>Different</u>	Sustainability strategy assumes a smooth transfer of management and project assets to the local partner organizations and beneficiaries. No clear exit strategy defined considering the country specific constraints.	Very difficult to introduce in the context of the extreme destruction to all infrastructure and services after more than 2 decades of war, and the continuous unstable security situation.

50. The design of the overall programme document provides the basic guidelines for the country strategy thus it provides an effective framework and modalities to achieve the programme objective at national level. Interviews and field observations revealed that implementation of the respective tasks by partners and stakeholders including the VT component were not adhered to as expected or agreed. Especially, implementation of anticipated tasks under country annex has been disturbed, interrupted and delayed due to two major reasons: the Tsunami and the split in the LTTE movement in the east during 2004.

51. Tsunami that stormed Sri Lanka on 26th December 2004 has had tremendous impacts on the implementation of the project. Especially in eastern and northern coastal areas there were thousands of children left orphaned and later sent to welfare camps. Not only the youth affected by war but also the children in general had to be providing with care and psychosocial support. Thus partner agencies of USDOL action projects had to focus their attention to immediate needs of there areas and wait till the situation return to normal to re-start the training. For example the VT of Department of Industries at Trincomalee could not complete as expected due to the poor attendance of the trainees after the tsunami.

52. The second challenge for the project during 2004 was the split within the LTTE. In April 2004, thousands of UR has fled to interior villages with no idea of future. Thus reintegration process was extremely difficult in the eastern district of Baticaloa. Still there are incidences of grass root level confrontation between armed groups. A huge influx of UR after the clash between fractions within the LTTE led the entire referral and reintegration process into a big dilemma. As referral process could not go ahead as planned, selection of beneficiaries for VT programmes under the programme action projects by respective IAs also got delayed. Most of the local NGOs including the partner agencies of IPEC-USDOL had to prepare immediate plans to find temporary measures to provide counseling and psycho social support for URs.

53. The following observations of one of the field staff of the ILO-IPEC clearly explains the ground situation at that time:

“In Batticaloa, the process got disturbed especially, when the UR children came out of the LTTE camps owing to the internal rift within the LTTE. The Agents who were on the job of protection did not know what to do. Yet, the UN focal points for Action Plan implementation were mainly concerned about their roles but did not take a clear look at the ground situation and were trying to cope up with something which they could not cope up because they did not have trained workers who only reacted as how they understood the process. In the case of ILO/IPEC, the main partners were weak in not having trained workers to make proper assessments. Social Workers who were to assess VST requirements of the beneficiaries were very weak because they did not have a good understanding of their duties in making referrals for VST”.

54. In general, the performances of partner agencies in completing the targets were very slow during the first 18 months of operation. The common problem such as procedural delays in referral process, poor attendance of beneficiaries during post tsunami period has also affected the action projects. Since there is no transit center functioning currently, no proper system to identify and select UR who are in need of vocational training. This situation is continuing and agencies responsible are weak in activating the referral process. On the other hand the government too is reluctant get involve in UR referral process and they play only a responsive role rather than taking an initiative role. This is one of the reasons for include more number of vulnerable children in to USDOL action projects by partner agencies.
55. Despite all of the above constraints and challenge, the project was able achieve the targets set for the first half of the project. Number of children reintegrated through VT and other programmes has increased considerably during latter part of the year 2005. UNICEF, the coordinating agency of all the activities of the Action Plan strongly feels that the achievements by the partner agencies including the ILO –IPEC VT projects are commendable.
56. All the stakeholders including ILO-IPEC staff found that the project objectives are valid and realistic even in the context of political and security uncertainties in some districts. There was a training programmes for all partner organizations, with other funds in September 2004 where the IPEC objectives of elimination of child labour was presented. Despite such orientations, some partner organizations of IPEC who implement VT action projects are still not well understood the long term objectives of the project .However one should aware that, given the security context of the project most people would not be comfortable discussing this issue in detail. They are mostly keen to provide training and guidance to the beneficiaries. Job placements and

follow up to find employment or proper income generation livelihood opportunities for trainees sometimes far beyond their capacities.

57. Also the implementation of action projects delayed and some could not meet the time frame. For example, action projects have been delayed and interrupted due to security constraints for UR to attend centre based training at Trincomalee. Thus such action projects had to provide quick and modified training curricula to adjust to the timeframe and beneficiary needs.
58. Implementation of action projects through government agencies and local NGOs is relevant and justified as there were no established VT provision systems in place in the region at the time of commencement of the project. However the need of careful supervision and monitoring by the IPEC is stressed here very much to realize the objectives of the project against the time frame.
59. According to the country annex and the programme document the project objectives lead to more field level operations including technical backstopping for partner agencies. Due to limitations on allocating funds for providing resources for field operations, the expected intensified supervision got affected. IPEC had only 02 field officers and 01 vehicle to cover all 03 districts at the beginning, whereas other agencies had their field presence in each district. The capacities of the field staff are not fully exercised owing to limited resources. However, the field presence was strengthened as other donors came into the project. Also the capacity of field staff has improved over the past few months as they gain experience. In Trincomalee district, the field activities are looked after by a single junior field officer. In short, it is the view of the consultant that increased work motivating facilities could make project more effective. The total expectations of the programme do not correlate with funds provided for the programme. Especially more funds to field staff to involve in participatory planning and implementing the action projects, monitoring and feed back to partner organizations may lead smooth and systematic progress of the project. The phase two of the project should allow adequate time for planning and implementation of VT giving due consideration for specific field conditions in each district.
60. Field staff and partner agencies found that there is a need for reformulation of the project design considering the continuous return of UR under various circumstances during the first phase. Key stakeholders including the LTTE on the other hand feel that reformulation of objectives of the projects under the "Action Plan" through focusing UR childrens' families is required. There are a number of "push" and "pull" factors that affect the reintegration of URs. URs could not fully reintegrate only through VT provision. For example security situation was not conducive for UR children to get the necessary rehabilitation support or employment opportunities in the labor market like the other youths. Also some URs are afraid of re-join their families as they do not see a welcome situation at home level due to poverty and social labeling in the neighborhood. The lifestyle that they have undergone during the period they served in the armed group affects the way that they perceive the future.

61. LTTE is critical about the projects implemented under the Action Plan in general. According to the LTTE only an **insignificant** number of were affected children have been reintegrated by various donor supported projects under the Action Plan. Out of total of 7868 children affected by war (CAW), only around 1692(less than 25%) were supported or some action taken by the agencies involved in providing relief and reintegration activities during 2004. (TRO Progress report 2004). It is also the view of some partner agencies that funds available are insufficient to provide full and complete VT for beneficiaries to become employable after the training. Filed observations revealed that though many URs obtained vocational skill orientation from NGOs including USDOL-CS funded projects, such efforts were not enough to meet the regional standard for such VT requirements.
62. Also for reintegration, the parents of each individual child or the guardian must be considered as a part of the process. It is suggested to reformulate the programme design such a way that the family of UR as a target group and provide additional support to such vulnerable poor through employment opportunity, counselling that will help in the reintegration of children effectively in the longer run. The following response by an ILO-IPEC field staff illustrates the above findings further. ***“The long term development objective of the project can stay as far as it is valid today than during the inception period. But the present ground situation is different to the baseline situation at the time programme was designed; there must be a package in readiness or immediate stock taking, to deviate accordingly for smooth onward journey of the project. On this issue of reintegration the parents of each individual child’s or the guardian must be considered. This was lacking in this design of the programme.”***
63. Though the original project design focuses heavily on reintegration of children with their families and this was considered as coherent and relevant at the time of its inception, the process has been delayed and constrained due to various reasons. According to the interviews with partner agencies of the programme action projects and the IPEC field staff, the systematic approach to IPEC’s VT intervention was seriously affected by the referral process of Action Plan and procedural delays in obtaining approval for action programmes. Most of the VT interventions during the Phase I, was addressing the emergency requirements of released UR. The anticipated method of children being kept at transit centres until proper VT options did not work properly. Since transition centres become defunct at the latter part of the first phase, SCSL had to focus UR on an individual and case basis. It took more time than referral of UR as batches. The original project design was relevant where the transit centre was the hub of the whole process. TRO was responsible to construct the transit centre, which did not materialize as expected. Some transit centres were located in the vicinity of the rebel camps and there was no free and calm environment to children and youth to think and work freely. In Batticaloa the normal process got delayed because of this issue and the SCSL was not prepared with the cadre of trained social workers who should have been on board before the children were released. When

thousands of children came out of armed groups due to the split in the LTTE, social workers were unable to act fast. Lacking in capacity, skills in counselling and referral activities many young social workers of SCSL were not able to link the VT providers and transit centres.

64. There are conflicting views among partners and stakeholders on the modality of vocational training; one group including the LTTE and the Key government agencies believe that the Centre based training is much more disciplined, organized and beneficiaries could gain thorough training. The other group including small scale partner agencies and community members feel that Community based training is much more effective and beneficial for children from a security and social protection point of view. From the project perspective, both types have merits and limits. For example the centre based training has qualified trainers, accredited VT courses and the beneficiaries have greater opportunities to interact to learn from each other. But it is costly and the beneficiaries especially UR faces problems in attending courses due to travel problems through the army barriers. Also there is no community ownership. On the other hand the community based training has social accountability of local partner organizations, easier for the beneficiaries to attend the programmes, with no security restrictions to travel .But most of the VT courses lacked standard, qualified teachers and there was less employability for trainees in town and urban centres.
65. Thus VT interventions need to have a proper balance of centre-based and community-based training depending on the target group, trades selected and infrastructure availability. In emergency situations, maintaining this balance may not be possible. Provided sufficient time, the project may strike the proper balance which is planned for Phase II of the operations. Out of the total six sites visited by the consultant only one (CWDR) conduct community based VT. However, there are number of CBT projects are in pipeline under the other IPEC ILO projects.
66. Also it is suggested that it would be more beneficial and effective if the project design reformulated considering the community socioeconomic conditions and the degree of vulnerability of households in each community targeted. Thus community vulnerability mapping would be appropriate to identify and target for a coherent and sustainable programme for reintegration and prevent children involving in armed conflicts. However it doesn't mean that the project intervention is not aiming livelihood improvement objectives at the end but such focus will improve the household environment of the vulnerable children to reintegrate with confidence.
67. As far as selection of partner organizations for provision of VT under the project is concerned, the number of difficulties was experienced at the initial stage. As a result of the decades long civil of war the once strong training network of the north and east was severely weakened. Since the capacity of local partner organizations in the conflict area is not as improved in the non affected southern, the NGOs are relatively weak and lack maturity. One of the initial preparatory activities of the project was to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the capacities of all formal, non formal and rural vocational training options including apprenticeships in the districts of the north

eastern province of Sri Lanka. Funded by AusAid, a database was created to host all the information obtained. The information collected pertains to 2004 and the CD versions of selected reports were distributed widely to all the project partners to assist in the placement of children referred to vocational training. However there is little evidence in the field to support that the project activities have been planned on proper baseline data. Only a few partners said that they are provided with some idea of what kind of training is needed. According to the stakeholders, the absence of Economic Development Plan for NE was also a major constraint for VT as well as other activities designed for CAWs

68. According to the IPEC coordinator, though IPEC has its own criteria for selection of partner organizations, none of the NGOs(VT providers) in the project area had the required capacity at the beginning. Thus IPEC selected partner organizations on the recommendations from other UN and NGOs in the area. According to the situation prevailed at that time there was no other alternative but implement the project with organizations that have the capacity to provide VT with limited facilities. However, this might be one reason for the poor performance in achieving targets during first phase by some partner organizations. e.g. CWDR
69. . According to government stakeholders some partner NGOs lack social accountability and are more entrepreneurial and profit oriented. One partner organization in Jaffna (Patrician) performed well in terms of completing the action projects as scheduled. This NGO provides center based training. But it lacks social accountability and mostly cater to the urban and affected communities that have access to its facilities. Another partner agency (CWDR) in Batticaloa and Trincomalee performed poorly in terms of management and administration of action projects. However these partner agencies are now provided with technical backstopping and support to correct and strengthen their capacities.
70. Field officials too found difficulties and faced several constraints in adopting a scientific and methodical selection procedure in selecting partners in the phase I. Due to exigencies of providing training to referrals, the partners were selected based on their flexibility to accommodate 14-18 age groups into their courses, possibility to recruit trainees in the middle of programmes, and ability to organize courses on the choice of the beneficiaries.
71. Selection of beneficiaries on the other hand is rather haphazard because the project could not proceed with the slow process adopted in UR referral process. Thus it has to adopt various strategies to get the beneficiaries. The level of literacy and formal education of beneficiaries and parents is very low. Some have dropped out from the school and parents could not contribute much as they are pressed with economic hardships. Thus it was difficult to adopt any participatory process. Sometimes the beneficiaries were selected through personal contacts. In this context personal contacts means not in a negative form such as nepotism or favoritism but some children who are in need of career guidance but unable to find information on VT

opportunities or other prospects in remote villages have been helped by persons known to the partner agencies. Social workers attached NGOs directed few children who are really vulnerable and lack social exposure to get training under the project. Thus it has not created any damage to the project implementation or reputation risk for the ILO-IPEC. However, this situation could have been avoided if project adopted a participatory process form the beginning which was not possible due to various reasons. Number of persons selected through this method is less than 10. For the community based training however most of the beneficiaries were selected through participatory manner involving, parents, community based organizations and local leaders.

72. The project office has identified these drawbacks in the VT process and it has now been able develop a **modular Life- Skills training package** with AusAid funds which includes character building components that will promote the sense of responsibility, motivation and self worth. It is intended to provide them with a set of basic knowledge and skills that will help children from vulnerable situations to become independent and successful. In the context of this project, life skills training are regarded as part of pre-vocational training process. Social workers and social mobilizes from the projects implementing partner organizations were trained in the delivery of the material. The package has been pilot tested and final revisions are currently underway
73. Overall, the phase I (March 2004 to December 2005) had defects in selecting the beneficiaries and partners because there was no choice but to give training for people who have been referred by save the children and selected by partner organizations. It is a learning exercise for the most of the IPEC field staff and partners.
74. Though ILO has completed mapping of existing VT centres in the North East and it will strengthen the database of the Provincial Council of NE, additional baseline data need to be collected for long term sustainability of the project. In this regard ILO has initiated actions by developing the ToR for a capacity building programme for vulnerability research on children affected by human and natural disasters in the NE. Action Plan partners are also planning a resource and vulnerability mapping to be conducted at the end of this year.
75. Project indicators and means of verifications are relevant and useful in terms of measuring the project performance and progress. Although there are child files and information is sent regularly to head office (Colombo) from the field offices to review, there is little evidence to support that such indicators have been used systematically by the project staff and partner organizations. It doesn't mean that project data is not utilized by project staff in an ideal manner but lack exchange of feedback between officials and regular updates by partner agencies. In measuring performance only quantitative aspects are given more emphasis. Most of the evaluation reports contained quantitative data such as the number of participants, number of projects, number of dropouts, number of job placements etc. Project

maintains a database and revises periodically. But qualitative indicators are lacking. For example standards or quality of training, capacity of resources persons, changes in the social outlook and personality of trainees etc.

76. In responding to the above critique an IPEC field officials stated as follows: ***“It is correct that qualitative indicators are lacking but the time frame of the phase 1 projects is so limited that even if qualitative indicators are stressed it would be difficult to measure and justify production on ground when the quantum of the input is below the production need of the project. On the other hand, although the monitoring and evaluation of what is done is satisfactory, the project does not provide support for holistic development of the child when VST is completed.”***
77. Overall project level, regular progress review meetings with all partner organizations take place to appraise the progress, review obstacles and strategies for improvement. Such review meetings helped the project staff to respond to unexpected challenges caused by tsunami and to the weaknesses in the referral process. The progress monitoring of partner activities from Colombo has been done systematically. Jaffna and Batticaloa offices maintained updated information on the performance of partner NGOs. In addition VT expert and the Technical staff of the IPEC conducted continuous monitoring and auditing of the implementation and field missions to the project area including the action projects. The Chief technical advisor IPEC Asia region too has produced some excellent review reports about the performance of IAs and prospects of the action projects in implementing the project.
78. However, monitoring activities at action projects level are not adequately done. Especially, self evaluation following each action project as specified in the programme document has not been carried out. **Self evaluations process has been started at the time of the mid term assessment.** Though each partner organizations maintain a list of trainees passed out, there is no systematic follow up monitoring to track the beneficiaries and the impact at action project level. VT mapping and labour demand analysis by region is still to be incorporated into the programme level.
79. Although overall programme document and country annexes emphasises a participatory project implementation and monitoring, such efforts are not adequately integrated in the activities of the phase one action programmes. Though there are immense potential and varying degrees of individual capacities among the field staff of IPEC, very little effort has been taken to develop synergies across the districts and exchange of experience between field staff of the three sites of the project. Feedback through dialog between field staff is required to develop better strategies.
80. Overall, children and youth participation is very low in the design and planning of the project. Most of the beneficiaries interviewed for this assessment were unable to explain the way that they have been identified and selected for the training. Parents in few locations said that they were invited for a discussion on designing of the training project for children. Action programmes are designed mostly by IPEC and partners

based on the regional experiences. It is mostly a top-down approach and not a participatory approach. However this is not a weakness of the project management but the programme design did not realize the complexity involved in adhering to a participatory approach in the context of “No war –No peace” situation. Thus the project basically attempts to address the needs of Action Plan for the CAW and it is not a participatory process. As far as URs are concerned, a participatory approach was not possible as the beneficiaries were identified through a referral process adhered to by Save the Children and UNICEF. However, vocational guidance was provided to beneficiaries by partner organizations through their VTRPs. In phase 1 however action projects have been designed in a haphazard manner. It was top down planning since there was no possibility to get the UR children expected to be released to participate in the initial stages of the project. Their participation came in only at the referral point.

- 81.** It is the common view of the field staff of IPEC and the stakeholders that this issue does not seem relevant in assessing the project. They believe that it would have been very difficult to design the project if the beneficiary participation was to be in the process.
- 82.** Action Programme was designed by IPEC and Partners assuming who the beneficiaries are in terms of child welfare related universal conventions. Therefore the suggestion of the stakeholders and project staff is to have a middle path approach in planning and designing the action projects rather than a totally participatory project design.
- 83.** For example, POs and IPEC could prepare a menu of action projects and discuss and consult with the targeted beneficiaries to identify their preferences. Overall, all stakeholders agree that there is a need for greater child participation in the design stage of the next phase. UNICEF has initiated a number of activities such as Children as Zones of Peace. Also children’s Peace Poll conducted as part of Action Plan awareness campaign in order to increase children’s participation in the peace process and decisions that affect them.
- 84.** It is the view of key stakeholders and the project staff that the time frame for action programmes is confined mostly to implementation allowing no room for conducting participatory procedures or follow up activities of the action programmes. Even VTRPs found difficult to complete some of the training in a given period. VTRPs are hired only for the provision of technical knowledge and skills to the beneficiaries during the six month training period. Some VT beneficiary required further training to become skilled persons in the vocation. It is necessary to have a participatory planning and the design phase at least one month prior to the vocational training and another follow up career guidance period of two months. The VTRPs should be kept for the follow up period to help the POs to job placement and career guidance. Thus action project should have period of preparation and follow up as well as funds to be apportioned according to the impact expectations

85. On the other hand sustainability of the impact of VT training cannot be assessed at this stage. The beneficiaries who have received training in various vocations are at different stages of the income earning and finding employment. The following statement of an IPEC field official clearly explains the reasons for the difficulty to design a strategy for sustainability for project impacts. ***“The absence of time for a project preparatory period was a critical issue. Sequencing was okay. However, follow up after training could not be continued since the Phase I was implemented as an emergency measure. It is rather a learning process. The importance of the follow up is realized and time and budget are to be allocated in the Phase II for it”***
86. IPEC has maintained good relations between other child focus programmes supported by other donors. IPEC has several child focus orientation, life skill training and counselling programmes which are well integrated with other donor funded VT projects. Partners who are implementing the projects at local level too have child focus mini projects. In Jaffna the local office of IPEC has initiated a number of link projects with local NGOs and INGOs: i.e. Food for Training with the WFP. Further the ILO-IPEC with support of NORAD and other donors supported local NGOs to establish a modern residential VT training centre at Killinochchi. It is an example of coordinated effort to create economies of scale in VT provision in the district.
87. Also IPEC initiated a dialog between other INGOs such as WUSC, GTZ, BAJ involved in VT in NE and planned to sign a letter of intent with them. ILO_IPEC is the agency for the coordination of VT provision under the Action Plan. Under the action plan UNICEF, Department of Industries, Ministry of Social Welfare, Vocational Training Authority are closely working with the ILO-IPEC to carry out the VT projects and follow up support for trainees. It was found that in a few locations UNDP has consented to assist through micro credit facilities to a number of beneficiaries to start self employment. Also under some other projects VT trainees are provided with loans and microfinance support. As a result, there is some confusion among the beneficiaries due to the varying inputs for VT given by VT providers. For example, IPEC does not provide stipends to the trainees but many others pay stipends to the trainees.
88. Today, more than 60 organizations including international agencies such as UN are involved in the field of prevention and reintegration of children in armed conflict. Implementation of child focus programs for prevention is a major activity of local and international agencies while reintegration of child soldiers is a specific task and only a limited number of agencies are involved in it. Following table summarizes the key organizations involved in prevention and reintegration of children in armed conflict after signing of MoU between the GOSL and the LTTE in 2002.

Table 4 List of organisations in the country in the field of prevention and reintegration of children in armed conflict

ACTORS / ORGANIZATIONS				
Name of organisation	Type of organisation	Main area of intervention	Estimated annual budget	Geographic coverage
1.UNICEF	International Organization	Prevention/ Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province ³
2.UNDP	International Organization	Rehabilitation/Reconstruction	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
3.UNHCR	International Organization	Prevention/Rehabilitation	Not Known	Northeast districts and Border districts Puttalam, Polnanaruwa and Anuradhapura
4.Save the Children Sri Lanka (SCSL)	I NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
5.Germen Technical Corporation (GTZ)	I NGO	Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
6World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	I NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
7.FORUT -UK	I NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
8 Ministry of Social Welfare	Government Organization	Prevention/Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	Northeast districts and Border districts Puttalam, Polnanaruwa and Anuradhapura
Oxfam-UK	I NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
9 Sarvodaya	NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation	Not Known	Northeast districts and Border districts Puttalam, Polnanaruwa and Anuradhapura
10Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO)	NGO	Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province
11.BAJ	I NGO	Prevention/Rehabilitation	Not Known	All 8 districts in the

³ Northeast Province consist of eight districts: Jaffna, Mullaithivu, Mannar, Killinochci, Vavunia, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara

				Northeast province
<u>12</u> Department of Industries and Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka	Government Organization	Prevention/Rehabilitation /Training	Not Known	Northeast districts and Border districts Puttalam, Polnanaruwa and Anuradhapura
<u>13</u> Sri Lanka Child Rights Protection Authority	Government Organization	Prevention, Rehabilitation, legal protection and child development	Not Known	All Island including all districts of war affected districts in the Northeast.
REERDO	NGO	Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	Selected districts in the Northeast province
<u>14</u> Other ⁴	NGOs and CBOs	Prevention/Rehabilitation and Reintegration	Not Known	All 8 districts in the Northeast province

89. As far as projects and programs are concerned, the majority of child focus projects are implemented under the Action Plan for CAW. Also most of these projects are supported by UN agencies and International Donor Agencies. Following list is a summary of major projects and programs aimed at providing various assistance for children to prevent them involving in armed conflict and reintegration of children through training and educational activities.

Table 5 List of projects in the country 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
<u>1.</u> Action Plan for Children affected by War	GOSL, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO and SCSL, TRO	UNICEF (8.3 million) UNDP (4 Million) ILO- (3.900.000)	To provide reintegration services to 50,000 children affected by war, including released under-aged recruits.	May 2003 to May 2005	DFID, USDOL, NORAD, AusAID	ALL 8 districts NE Sri Lanka
<u>2.</u> WFP	FAO	Not Known	To provide food items for children and affected families to restart the schooling and vocational	General	UN	ALL 8 districts NE Sri Lanka

⁴ There are more than 20 local NGOs and Community Based Organizations involved in prevention and rehabilitation of youth involved in armed conflict. See annex- for more detail.

			education			
<u>3.NECO RD</u>	<u>NEPC</u>	Not Known	To provide vocational Training and infrastructure facilities to children affected by WAR	<u>2002-2007</u>	<u>ADB</u>	ALL 8 districts NE Sri Lanka
Vocation al Education for Peace and Reconcili ation	PSO and NGOs	USD 2.3 Million	To assist youth to engage in long term development and lasting peace in the country through job oriented education and involved in peace activities	<u>2004-2008</u>	<u>ODW-Norway</u>	Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Killinoch chci, Badulla and Ampara
Other	NGO					

90. Overall, synergies between the various partners were utilised and provided a unique opportunity to collaborate on broader issues relating to children. Some commendable actions and decisions were taken by the key stakeholders of the Action Plan at the review meeting which was held in October 2005 to incorporate the lessons learned in assisting CAW. ILO-IPEC has made a number of new proposals including capacity building of partner organizations and joint actions to undertake community based training focusing war affected families.

91. According to project progress reports and records, IPEC Colombo staff has conducted a series of discussions and workshops on the project design with National Child Protection Authority, UNICEF and Other key stakeholders. Linkages with govt. agencies such as TVEC, SLVTA, NAITA, ICTAD and NITESL were established to receive support on curriculum development, training manual sharing, training of trainers etc. Ministry of Vocational Training is represented at the Programme Steering Committee of CAW project.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION, MANAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

92. The existing organizational and management structure of the ILO-IPEC Colombo office includes a three member technical staff including the country coordinator and the field staff. Country coordinator and field staff in Jaffna and Batticaloa look after the action project management. Trincomalee has only a junior field official at the time of the assessment. As far as expected results and outcomes of the project are concerned organizational management structure is inadequate to carry out planned activities. Since the field staff capacity is limited they are restricted to focus on given tasks. There are limited opportunities for innovations and to develop linkages with other stakeholders and interest groups. Field staff often found difficulties in planning and monitoring of action projects. Direct contacts with beneficiaries and feedback by the project staff is very much restricted and limited due to lack of physical and human resources at field level.
93. One of the key elements in the project management structure is its centralized decision making and lack of opportunities for field staff for micro management decision making. Most of the technical decisions have been taken by the PMU in Colombo. Field staff is much more dependent on PMU and its technical guidance. On the other hand, lack of flexibility in adjusting to field realities and emergency situation has impacted the progress of the project at local level.
94. Overall, out of the 8 districts of conflict affected Northeast region, the project has its field operations only in 3 districts. On the other hand even in these three districts most of the logistical and field facilities were provided only recently. Thus until recently ILO presence in the Northeast region has not been prominent compared to other INGOs and UN agencies that provide assistance for CAW.
95. According to the project staff of the PMU, the technical and administrative guidance provided by ILO to the project is adequate and helpful. However, there are difficulties in adhering to the strict monitoring procedures imposed and technical assessments against indicators. Since PMU obtained funds and assistance from various donors, procedures and methodologies of project performance appraisals vary. Simple and realistic assessment indicators are to be developed. Since there is no uniformity in project planning, implementation and monitoring across donor funded VT projects, the ILO_IPEC staffs has to spend considerable time in reporting and preparing various documents. However the PMU has been so far able to manage the workload and maintain good linkages with all donors, partners and stakeholders. One of the common complaints by government sector officials however is the lack of information sharing and poor feedback from the field site staff on their tasks and activities in relation to reintegration and prevention of children in armed conflict
96. It is the view of most of the stakeholders that the project has gained considerable recognition among INGOs and donor agencies during a short period of time in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of CAW. Especially appreciated is the lead

role played by the project management in VT provision for CAW in the Northeast region. Project management can be divided into two levels broadly. National level (Colombo) and Field level management (at district level). As far as the project management at national level is concerned its technical and administrative capacity is very strong. Maintaining linkages with UN agencies, INGOs and government agencies is commendable. Key officials of stakeholder organizations in Colombo expressed their fullest satisfaction on project management and the leadership of the country programme coordinator. The weakest aspect is however is the field level management structure which has is still not gained enough recognition and capacity to manage resources and action projects without guidance from the head office. Micro level management such as identification of action projects, participation in local development and rehabilitation forums, monitoring and supervision of action projects and partner performance, community level interactions and feed back is inadequate. Following table summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the project management identified by key stakeholders

Table 6 : Strengths and weaknesses of the Project Management

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Well motivated /dedicated field staff • Good communication and understanding between staff • Able to maintain a balance between conflicting parties • Transparency in decision making and fund allocation • Strong leadership and decision making • Strong partnerships network • Good synergies between partners to utilize for the broader benefit of children • Efficient management of limited resources and faculties • Able to manage multi-donor supported VT projects	• Poor linkages between field staff and community • Lack of interaction among field staff in three locations • Lack opportunity to learn and share experiences • Poor relationship between field staff and government sector stakeholders • Weak data base and research on VT impacts • Limited presence in the field and with NGO partners • Weak supervision of partner VT projects • Poor follow-up and post training technical backstopping

97. Fund management of PMU is transparent and partner organizations are aware of fund allocations. However, many key stakeholders at national level are unaware of fund allocations and distribution of funds among various projects and partners. Financial management of the project is systematic and reviewed bi-annually. As far as fund allocation to field sites and action projects is concerned, it has done through review of the progress and performance of each partner organizations. But selection of partner

organizations and government departments to implement VT projects should be done more carefully. It is necessary to do review of past records and social accountability of partner organizations and criteria to be developed to engage VT providers and VTRPs for the action projects

- 98.** Also decision making of project management need to be decentralized allowing more responsibility and power to the micro level management by the site offices. It is also needed to strengthen the capacity of field officials in locations like Trincomalee. Research and database for planning and monitoring at project level should also be improved
- 99.** The supported action projects have two immediate objectives: a) strengthening selected training providers in NE province through infrastructure rehabilitation, institutional capacity building and establishment of two new training centres and b) enabling war affected children and youths to secure decent work as a result of skill upgrading in vocational and business management skills through apprenticeships and job placement services. (This information obtained from the PC office in Colombo: Need Clarification)
- 100.** According to the progress reports and field observations the action programmes of Phase I did not contribute adequately to capacity development of partner organizations due to the exigency of providing training to referrals. Many partner organizations lack the required capacity and training facilities are yet to be provided to improve the quality and technical standards of their VT. Capacity development of partners too needs attention. Therefore Phase II should give sufficient attention to this component.
- 101.** The action programmes are however, able to meet the second immediate objective to the certain extent. Despite the challenges caused by tsunami and rival confrontations between armed groups in the eastern province action programmes have been well executed in all three locations. Through these action programmes the project has provided VT for war affected children and youths to become productive skilled labourers in various vocations. However only less than one third of the beneficiaries found some sort of Income Avenue after training. This is mainly because of lack of follow up support and inadequate standards of some VT.
- 102.** In general, there is around 10-20% drop outs in each action programme implemented so far. Drop outs are due to various reasons. Some beneficiaries selected do not have basic literacy and some other have no conducive family background and support due to poverty, Some UR have dropped out due to security risks involved in travelling to urban training centres.. Community Based VT is relatively effective compared to centre based ones.
- 103.** Follow up was not so effective due to several reasons. Especially lack of time and funds in action programmes, poor microfinance facilities for self employments for youth, weak economic development activities of the government in the region due to

the discontinuation of peace negotiations are key constraints for securing employments by trainees. .

104. Although it is true that the Action Projects contributed to create livelihood opportunities for the children, such efforts are not sufficient to ensure some of the children to refrain from joining armed groups or action. It was reported that some of the trained youths were engaged in tsunami rehabilitation activities of armed rebels in their respective villages⁵. The LTTE also shares the view that the provision of VT is not the only solution to the deeper problems involved in reintegration and prevention of children in armed conflict. It is the view of LTTE that the project including the Action Plan should look into the social and family context of the children and this needs a comprehensive programme that creates a conducive social and family environment for return of UR to their families and also other vulnerable children to find alternative career paths.

105. According to TRO progress reports, the mega project for the CAW implemented in the Northeast have helped only a one fifth of the children to develop their skills or get education and life skills through awareness and VT. There are a large number of children out of the locations supported by the USDOL and other projects who are still to be supported. Thus there is a clear justification for a large scale project for assisting the CAW through VT and other child and youth development programmes (See table).

Table 7. Progress of work under social development work for (CAW) project (2004)

District	Identified effected children	Action taken	Outstanding needs for children in total
Killinochchi	1832	291	1541
Jaffna	1041	275	766
Mannar	812	96	716
Vauniya	608	180	428
Amparai	682	153	529
Batticalao	739	151	588
Mullaitivu	1682	457	1225
Trincomalee	472	89	383
Total	7868	1692	6176

Source: TRO Social Work Progress Report December 2004: Kilinochchi

106. According to the programme document, at the end of the project, a total of 660 URs (former child soldiers) are to be reintegrated and around 100 vulnerable children are to be prevented in involving in armed conflict through provision of VT. It was

⁵ This has been revealed by an ex child soldier in a individual interview. This has to be clarified with better sources. Any way a tracer study is planned for the entire ILOIPEC CAW project with other donor funds which will also cover the USDOL project

expected that the project should reintegrate a half of (330) URs during first half of the project. The records available reveal that the project has reached the expected targets by the middle of this year. Following table summarizes the number and type of beneficiaries covered by the project.

Table 8: Number and Type of beneficiaries received VT under USDOL action projects by end of October 2005

Implementing agency	Category		Gender		Drop out	Completed	Duration	District
	UR	Vul	M	F				
INSGD	16	58	50	24	30	74	26/8/04 30/6/05	Jaffna
Patrician Institute	-	68	52	16	37	68	28/8/04 30/6/05	Jaffna
Department of industries	7	79	38	48	04	86	27/8/04 26/7/05	Trincomalee
CWDR	-	31	31	-	Not Known	31	01/12/04 30/4/05	Trincomalee Batticaloa
PPDRO	29	52	60	21		81	01/12/04 30/10/05	Batticaloa
Grace Care Center	2	-	2	-	Not Known	2	15/06/04 14/12/04	Jaffna
Total	54	288	233	109	91	342		

Source: Progress Reports IPEC, Colombo

107. Overall, in all the three locations action programmes implemented so far have met the target number of 75 in each and even more. Project was able to reach the target of 342 by end of October 2005. The overall programme document indicated a total of 330 to be covered during the first half of the project (18 months from the beginning of 2004 to mid 2005: page 39) It is well above the target set for the first half of the project. It is the view of partner organizations that if more projects are approved the opportunities are there to meet the planned target and the need for VST will be there for years ahead.

108. However, there is a major difference in the plan of action in the programme document and country programme. Though programme document suggested focusing more on former child soldiers or UR in VT provision, most of the project beneficiaries were chosen from vulnerable children and youth. The main reason for this change in the plan is difficulties to get the required number of URs to implement the scheduled action programmes. Since there is no systematic release or referral process in place, the project could not get adequate number of URs at the time of project planning and preparation. Thus action programmes had to go ahead with selecting beneficiaries from vulnerable children category to achieve the targets. This experience suggests that more children from the vulnerable category should get

greater opportunity for project assistance or the geographical coverage of the project should be expanded to the districts that have been reported to have released more child soldiers by the armed groups.

- 109.** Awareness raising at field level is only a part of IPEC in this project, just that much to propagate the importance of VT for livelihood but the major role was for the other agencies that have field officers at village level to raise awareness. At the beginning of the project however, IPEC was very effective in raising awareness. LTTE believes that IPEC should play a central role in bringing all other stakeholders such as UNDP, UNICEF, SCSL to act on implementation of action plan with necessary modifications. Most stakeholders including UNICEF noted that the project has made considerable contribution during a short period of time in preventing of children joining armed groups and re-integrating URs into main society through VT provision. According to interviews with non beneficiary children in all three locations, project was able to raise awareness among youth to engage in productive work and alternative career paths. Thus at least where the projects are in operation and implemented, children are better equipped with knowledge on opportunities available other than joining in armed groups.
- 110.** In terms of leveraging resources, project has undertaken joint actions and involved in coordination of VT process under the action plan. Project activities are linked with other ILO supported projects and agency initiated VT programmes in the Northeast. Recent initiative to provide residential training for UR and other children at Kilinochchi is an example for this endeavour and it shows the ability of ILO-IPEC to implement integrated and planned intervention in VT programmes in conflict affected area. However government partner agencies do not seem to be quite satisfied with coordination and the project's working arrangements mostly with NGOs in VT provision.
- 111.** Project is less effective in identifying work opportunities including placement of passed out trainees. However, Partner NGOs have made some progress in placing the trained persons in various job providing institutions locally. It is also observed that there are some constraints when placing children on the job training. Service providers are not well aware of the children who are from very remote areas. Though training has been provided on occupation in demand, the job providers have to be satisfied with the character of the child and the family background because of the political situation.
- 112.** During past few months a number of supportive inputs and initiatives have been made by field staff in providing post training job placement and technical guidance. In Jaffna a programme has been arranged with WFP to provide basic supports such as food package to vulnerable and poor beneficiary children to participate in training arranged by the IPEC. This step has reduced the drop out and increased the regular attendance of the poorest children in the training courses. This has been now named as 'Food for training' and will be an integral aspect of the second phase of the project.

- 113.** Partner organizations also arranged extra career guidance advice and counseling services to the beneficiaries. Project with Ausaid support arranged life skills training to develop personalities and capacities of the individual beneficiary. But such social skills should be offered prior to the skill development training because most of the children who have been withdrawn or prevented do not have basic skills to manage day to day activities or face challenges in life. According to PMU the main reasons for the delay in offering life skill training is due to unavailability of the 'training package' at the beginning of action projects. However it is necessary to conduct life skill training including work place fir staid and social skills of teamwork etc before the VT.
- 114.** Though UNDP has its own mechanism to support income generation activities to war affected poor households such programmes do no cover the children belonging to age group of 14 to 17. On the other hand its working methodology is through CBOs that registered under the government laws. Since children have no such official institutional entity most places they have been excluded in getting UNDP livelihood support services. Though some places (Jaffna) microfinance has been arranged for a few girls trained on showing machine operations, they have difficulties in repaying the loan because of high interest rates charged by local CBOs in Batticaloa however the field staff arranged a loan scheme through a Children cooperative society.
- 115.** One of the critical aspects of the action programs is the lack of comprehensive toolkit strategy. Only showing machine and carpentry trainee received assistance and toolkits to start up self income activities. But others need proper post training support including toolkits or microfinance programmes arranged by the project to get involved in employment. Thus it is essential to evolve a toolkit strategy to cater to the needs of the passed out trainees. It must be a localized, vocation specific and affordable and useful one. Not all trainees should be considered similar. It is also necessary to find out the level of usage of toolkits by trainees who got such packages.
- 116.** Beneficiaries are quite satisfied with the training they received. However government sector organizations which are responsible for implementing accredited courses found the quality of the VT provided by NGOs not up to the standards. But POs believe that the quality of the VT projects has been improved a lot and the trainees who graduated got various opportunities to involve in self employment and income generation activities locally. However tool kits provided for some training are not properly used for income earning by beneficiaries. In some locations project staff has arrange for additional support for trained children and even microfinance support from other sources to start income generation activities. Some partners however lack internal technical capacity and maturity (CWDR) to manage action projects and some are more entrepreneurial and profit motive NGOs. However there are a number of good partners who have social commitment, moral obligations and responsibility. Partners need good VTRPs. capacity to provide on the job training, post training technical follow-up and so on.

BENEFICIARIES AND THEIR VIEWS ON THE PROJECT IMPACTS

- 117.** The most successful aspect of the project is the positive changes it created among the beneficiary children's personalities in building confidence and attitudes towards acquiring skills and knowledge in various vocations. In all three project locations both parents and beneficiaries evaluated the project as the single and most useful activity during post conflict period that helped the children to get out from the stress and frustration of their life due to war and isolation from state sector services. One of the major changes in the attitude is the feeling of being a productive person in the family and community. However there are differences of opinions among UR and vulnerable children as well as boys and girls on usefulness of the VT. UR found the VT is an opportunity to reintegrate with families and thereby they could support their parents as an income earner of the family. Most of the children who have undergone training and receiving training during the field work were in progress expressed the training is only an entry and guidance to decide the direction of their career. They think more should be done to improve their capacities and skills further in the vocations they trained to find jobs or engage in self income earning activities.
- 118.** According to beneficiaries, skills acquired through VT were founded relevant and provided basic training in various vocations and trades. However most of the trainees find it difficult to engage in decent work and employment soon after the training. According to field observations majority beneficiaries who have obtained skills through VT programmes are unemployed or underemployed still. Only about one third of girls who have received sewing machine training, bakery and food processing skills in Jaffna were able to enter into an income earning self-employment activities. But most of them required advanced and follow- up technical backstopping and guidance to become successful income earners. Majority of the boys who have received carpentry and motor mechanic skill training in Trincomalee are also found unemployed and only about 10% get involved in community level income earning by using the skills gained under the VT with master craftsmen in their respective locality. Girls who have received non-traditional training such as Cement Brick Making face challenges from society. In the traditional Tamil village community, social values and cultural interpretations are not supportive of girls to engage in non traditional jobs. However, the girls who have received such training were very enthusiastic to engage in such trades and want to break the social values that are non supportive for women. However, Cement Brick Making was not thrust on them. It was their choice. Girls who have received such training are optimistic in engaging in such trade and they wanted to start small industrial complex at village level. It is the view of stakeholders too that the success of VT depend on capacity of VT providers to introduce such non traditional VT programmes to the children which have a high demand. One stakeholder has suggested that 40% of VT in future should be given in non-traditional trades as there is a huge demand and as the boys do not appear to be taking interest to train in such vocations.
- 119.** Beneficiary interviews reveal that there are a number of benefits that they have received by the project. Skill training is the direct single benefit they got. In addition, orientation and career guidance from VTRPs, toolkits and life skills, social exposure

and recognition are the major benefits identified by the beneficiaries. Among three USDOL locations Jaffna and Batticaloa performed well in terms of providing various benefits and the beneficiaries expressed their fullest satisfaction. . Beneficiaries in Trincomalee however are not yet fully satisfied with the benefits except skill training (See table .7)

Table 9 Type of benefit of the project: Beneficiaries assessment

Type of benefits	Jaffna	Batticaloa	Trincomalee
Training	100% (Very high)	100%(Very high)	100%(Very high)
Orientation/ career guidance	75% (High)	75% (High)	50% (Moderate)
Life skills	50% (Moderate)	50% (Moderate)	50% (Moderate)
Toolkits/material support	75% (High)	Not yet provided for most trainees	75% (High) Only for some VT
Information	25% (Low)	25% (Low)	25% (Low)
OJT/Placement	50% (Moderate)	Not yet provided for most trainees	25% (Low) Only for some VT

120. In addition to above, there are many indirect benefits to the youth who participated in the projects. They have been exposed to group work, coexistence; compete each other for mastering skills and learning from errors. Individual and group interviews with beneficiaries reveal a tremendous change in the minds and attitudes of the children due to training. Following is a summary of the interview findings in three field locations.

Table 10: Summary of the responses on impacts of the VT by majority of beneficiaries participated in group interviews

Location/ Assessment of Changes	Jaffna	Batticaloa	Trincomalee
Attitudes of beneficiaries	We feel self confident and develop trust on ourselves. Now we are more respected and recognized by our families and community members.	First time we got an opportunity to decide what we want to do in our life. In family or the community we were dependent and no body cared before.	If we had this opportunity before children like us would have been more knowledgeable and independent in making decisions on our future. Lots of children like us want to know what we are doing in this training.
Views on Usefulness of VT	Very useful to get basic skills. But we need some sort of further guidance and	We got skills to do some trades. But we don't know whether we can market our products and services	We learn not only skills but also how to respond to the challenges and problems in our life

	advanced training to become fully professional in the trades we learned	once we start self - employment	
Effects/benefits of the project on target beneficiaries	About one third trainees graduated are involved in self employment through toolkits and machines provided by the project. The group level small shops run by women were found to be more sustainable and encouraging.	Most have just passed out. But confident of getting involved in productive work with local craftsmen. Girls are looking forward to more support from agencies.	Only around 10% got some sort of income to cover their own expenses through the skills they learned. They expect better guidance and job placement from the agencies.

121. As far as stakeholders' opinion on the impacts of the project on children is concerned, project has some weaknesses. Some of the key points raised by different stakeholders are: a) VT provided have limited impact as far as providing decent income for trainees, b) Selection of trainees is done on an ad-hoc basis and not based on proper selection criteria c) Follow-up is weak and most of the trained children are unemployed still d) Trainees need micro finance support to business start up e) project fail to adapt proper methods in select partner NGOs for project implementation; f) lack of information and records available to government sector partners on where and what programs going on at district level and g). Training given is not standard and recognized island wide therefore it is difficult for graduated trainees to find employments in recognised firms.

122. Parents of the beneficiaries however believe the project has helped their children show a positive career path in life. They are quite satisfied with training and they believe children are now ready to face challenges in life with gained skills to engage themselves in productive work.

123. In summary the project has contributed to a great extent in achieving its objectives in reintegrating and supporting children to overcome their problems through giving life skills and vocational training. Following is a view of the UR about the positive impacts of the training on his family and his life.

My mother went abroad to work as a housemaid after we lost our farther during war. I was with the “movement” sometime. Now she came with little money and we are building a small house for us. I received training in carpentry and I am now helping to construct my own house. I never allow my mother to go aboard again or my younger brother to join with the “movement”. Nor I get back to the movement. I will find work somewhere in this community and I am confident that I can look after my family now. (Sudarsan-(17 years old) -Trincomalee).

124. In all three locations youth and children have played an active role in implementing the project. Partner staff, VTRPs and beneficiaries are committed and dedicated in their tasks. All the beneficiaries, non beneficiary children and youth interviewed strongly believe that the project has contributed in enhancing skills of children and youth in preventing them in involved in armed conflict and therefore helped to reduce such incidents reduced such incidences. Prior to the project there were incidences of children joining with armed groups in the localities where action programmes are in progress or completed? Parents too are in the opinion that the project made some visible impacts among children by producing useful youth through vocational training.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

125. The ILO-IPEC Country office has taken number of actions to promote sustainability of the project impacts and to strengthen the capacity of local actors and related institutions scaling up of interventions in the targeted project sites. In October 2005, a comprehensive review of Action Plan was held and number of areas identified by stakeholders to plan and implement coordinated actions on VT, catch up education, psychosocial and social support for war affected children. Some of the key actions taken are develop capacity building programme for implementing partners and community based and holistic child based programmes that include not only children but also the vulnerable and poor families. The UNDP has committed to find alternative options provide micro finance support for VT trainees who need funds so start self employments. WFP agreed to consider providing a “food package” for poorer beneficiaries to avoid dropouts due to poverty.
126. The ongoing community development and social infrastructure development projects in such as NECORD, NEIAP, NEHRP have been contacted to support passed out trainees in three districts where the project in operation.. TRO on the other hand through its partner network has consented to get involved the trained beneficiaries in ongoing construction and development activities in the region. To ensure the sustainability of this activity, a decision has been taken to gift the database to the North East Provincial Council, Trincomalee
127. There is lot to do in terms of promoting local ownership of project activities and promoting long-term sustainability. As far as sustainability is concerned the project has to do a lot in bringing all stakeholder including government agencies and community representatives to work out an exit strategy and sharing of responsibilities during post training period is essential.
128. The idea of a phase-out strategy for the project is yet to be evolved. This is one of the areas of serious concerns in the next phase of the project. Also there is no clear strategy identified to hand-over the different components of the project to local partners. However, prior to develop a hand our plans or exit strategy a comprehensive capacity development and empowerment of partner organizations should be carried out. It is too early to decide what level of government agencies to be involved in (provincial or central or some other mechanism) handing over the project components to various agencies.
129. In most locations the community ownership to the project is lacking. Particularly, local ownership of the project activities is not visible in Trincomalee; some parents

interviewed are unaware of the reasons for providing training for their children and possible long term impacts. It is noted that the most stakeholders have agreed to pay serious attention on this aspect and develop a community centred action programs for child reintegration and rehabilitation activities at grass root level. ILO has given a task of conducting a vulnerability mapping in this regard. Therefore one could expect that some strategy will be worked out in the next phase of the project to enhance the local ownership of the project in future.

CONCLUSION

- 130.** Action plan considered as one of the best steps taken so far to put all stakeholders and interest groups acting on children affected by war to gather at policy level. But Implementation of the respective tasks by partners is rather weak and not adhered as expected. Though the Action Plan activities are officially over by June 2005. Most of the stakeholders agreed to continue the programmes implemented under the plan and review and reformulate it in early next year.
- 131.** For agencies the action plan was a good entry point. . In general, the re-integration process was very slow during the first year of operation and there were number of obstructions that local agencies acting on it. There are problems in the referral process. Mutual trust and exchange of experience and poor communication among agencies also led the poor achievement regarding the action plan during troubled period between April 2004 to beginning of 2005. At present no transit centers seems to be functioning and there is lack of commitment by responsible agencies to activate the process. On the other hand implementation of action projects has been disturbed, interrupted and delayed due to two major reasons: the Tsunami and the split in the LTTE movement in the east during 2004. The government commitment towards action plan is rather in a lower profile. Lack of funds to implement identified activities under the action plan also inhibited the progress.
- 132.** Programme document of USDOL supported ILO-IPEC on the elimination of child labour provides a clear guidance and direction for the implementation of country specific activities. Stated objectives and indicators in the overall programme document are very much identical with country annex except some differences in management structure, institutional framework and sustainability strategy.
- 133.** Additional baseline data is required for proper planning and implementation of VT and action projects in the next phase. ILO has completed a mapping of existing VT centres in the North East and will provide a database to the Provincial Council of NE. ILO has also developed the ToR for a capacity building programme for vulnerability research on children affected by human and natural disasters in the project areas. Action Plan partners are also planning a resource and vulnerability mapping to be conducted prior to the second phase of the project.

134. Current project management structure at national level has centralized decision making structure and lack of opportunities for field staff for micro level management decision making. Most of the technical decisions are taken by the PMU in Colombo. Field staff is much more dependent on PMU and its technical guidance
135. Selection of partners and beneficiaries is not systematic. Due to lack of baseline data and difficult evolve a participatory process in selecting children according referral process led this situation.
136. Despite many constraints and obstacles, the project was able to reach the target of reintegration and prevention of children that expected to achieve by first half of the project period. However the more focus has given to prevention of vulnerable children through providing VT rather than reintegration of ex-child soldiers.
137. Project activities are linked with other ILO supported projects and agency initiated VT programmes in the Northeast. Recent initiative to provide residential training for UR and other children at Kilinochchi is an example for this endeavour and it shows the ability of ILO-IPEC to implement integrated and planned intervention in VT programmes in conflict affected area. However government partner agencies do not seem to be quite satisfied with coordination and the project's working arrangements mostly with NGOs in VT provision.
138. Many partner organizations lack the required capacity and training facilities are yet to be provided to improve the quality and technical standards of their VT. Capacity development of partners needs attention.
139. Skills acquired through VT were founded relevant and provided basic training in various vocations and trades. However most of the trainees find it difficult to engage in decent work and employment soon after the training .But most of them required advanced and follow- up technical backstopping, microfinance support and guidance to become successful income earners
140. The idea of a phase-out strategy for the project is yet to be evolved. This is one of the areas of serious concerns in the next phase of the project. Also there is no clear strategy identified to hand-over the different components of the project to local partners. However, prior to develop a handover plans or exit strategy a comprehensive capacity development and empowerment of partner organizations should be carried out.

LESSONS LEARNED

141. Reintegration of child soldiers and prevention vulnerable children becoming involved in the armed conflict need a holistic approach. Such efforts should not focus only on developing skills among children as specific target groups. Rather children's' needs and aspirations as well as their family environment should be included in the overall programme. Provision of VT alone will not solve the long term objective of the project.

142. Action Plan prepared by the country has many merits. It is the best possible step taken by the agencies involved in assisting vulnerable and war affected children in the northeast region of the country. Such an umbrella policy document has helped various partners to act and work together on a common agenda. But the implementation of the Action Plan required commitment from donors and actors equally to make such efforts successful.
143. **Vocational Training is a process.** It requires systematic planning and implementation. Poor data base for planning and identification of beneficiaries and partner organizations eventually lead to conflicting interest and poor quality impacts of the project. Similarly Follow-up facilitation need carefully thought strategies to provide of micro-finance and toolkits. The lessons learned indicate that the impacts of action projects would have been much more positive if the project design included sufficient funds and other resources for this direction.
144. There is no blue print model for providing training/orientation for children involved in armed conflict. Such orientations should be designed on each situation and should be area specific with room for flexibility for modifications. The design should allow the local agencies and project staff to evolve the programme as a **learning process**. There should be room for adjustment and modification in the process to suit the emergencies and field realities.
145. Participatory planning and project implementation is possible only if agencies and actions coordinated according to time frame. Due to the defects in the referral process beneficiary involvement in the project implementation was not successful. However, complete bottom up planning or complete top down planning will not be successful. There should be a middle path approach for project planning and implementation where beneficiaries and implementing partners could agree and share the responsibilities of project implementation
146. Action programmes should include life skills training before commencing the vocational training. Such initial social skills development will lead to improved participation and making use of vocational training more effectively.
147. Mature and effective public relations skills are essential for implementing projects successfully. Developing a good rapport with all organizations including local government and civil administration agencies is essential for long term sustainability of the project.
148. Quality and impacts of the project greatly depend on local partner organizations. Building the capacities through funds, human resources and technical guidance are essential for them to implement effective action projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for ILO-IPEC

- 149.** VT is a process. It required systematic implementation. If selection is not done properly the entire process will get affected. Also finding good resource persons, placement, follow up technical guidance and backstopping are required for effective VT Provision.
- 150.** Research and database development for the project required more attention. Additional baseline data is required. ILO has completed a mapping of existing VT centres in the North East. It is necessary for a capacity building programme for vulnerability research on children affected by human and natural disasters in the region to plan more realistic action programmes in the second phase. Also tracer studies, economic labour demand surveys, market opportunity analysis for self income generation activities need to be carried out.
- 151.** Reinforcement/capacity-building of selected partners should be the priority for the second phase of the project. Needs assessment for service providers also are necessary. Especially Vocational Training Resource persons attached to partner organizations need to be supported with additional payments should be provided for the use of carrier guidance and technical backstopping for past trainees.
- 152.** Post training assistance process must be well developed with proper toolkit strategy and linked to micro-credit for income generation and placements with employers. Though training has been provided on occupations in demand, the job providers have to be satisfied. Partner Organization should provide additional responsibility and funds to search and find jobs for prospective trainees.
- 153.** Provision of non traditional VT needs careful assessment. Although it is important to provide VT in new trades such projects should be based on proper market analysis. Cultural values and local social structures are not conducive for some non traditional VT for girls.
- 154.** Community centered and vulnerable family focus action programs would be more effective. In this regard initiatives have been made by some stakeholders. ILO –IPEC should give more emphasis on this aspect and find appropriate strategies to involve families of vulnerable children while focusing children as target groups.
- 155.** Need to expand business/industry linked on-the-job and apprenticeship training in the districts to ensure that the type and quality of formal sector training provided also meets the needs of future employers. Some employers are reluctant to recruit ex-child soldiers. Partner organizations should help such trainees to overcome such misunderstandings.

156. Since the slow and ineffective referral process, adequate numbers of URs were not included in the action projects. It is necessary to work out an alternative plan of action to get more URs in phase II with **collaboration** of partners responsible for referral process and prepare **appropriate** action projects accordingly
157. Some Children have insufficient educational qualifications to follow-established courses. Thus need for flexible entry level in providing VT courses

Recommendations for Donors

158. Capacity of national IPEC should be strengthened through further human resources and funds. Partner organizations found they need additional support to keep VTRPs, quality improvement training, facilities for training, follow up backstopping support of trained persons etc Exposure to similar projects to the field staff was not adequate and therefore many actions were part of the learning process for staff. Staff training on project management, VT follows ups, support services, database management and community participatory approach need to be provided.
159. Project design should be modified to the current field conditions. Restrictions on selection of project areas and activities need to be revised in order to accommodate country requirements. More funds to be allocated to expansion of the project.. There are locations outside of these districts where a large number of URs and vulnerable children need assistance.

Recommendations for the CAW projects under the Action Plan

160. It is necessary that UNDP policy on providing micro-finance assistance to vulnerable and poor communities to be changed in favor of children affected by conflict. A policy level mandate to be evolved in the countries under civil war to help a war affected children who have received VT by supporting them to start up income generation activities by their own.
161. Action Plan has to be reviewed and reformulated according to present (Post Tsunami) realities. Since Action Plan become non effective in responding to emergence situation , local NGOs found difficult to support the VT projects. . For example How to increase vocational training opportunities for other categories of vulnerable children
162. It also necessary to strengthen the of district level VT coordination mechanism together with Planning and Development Secretariat ,NGO consortium and Government authorities in the project locations. Key government stakeholders such as District Secretaries lack understanding on how different projects under the Action plan carry out their activities in the districts.. Government stakeholders should be informed about the VT progarmmes and the progress. Coordination of VT needs to happen at two levels: Action Plan linked to the referrals/ broader district level linked to the upgrading of the VT system as a whole
163. Children have different levels of education and needs. VT Projects under the Action Plan should look into children who are out of the present projects and programmes. e.g. Non UR and child headed families.

164. Expansion of community-based training opportunities such as agriculture/animal husbandry, home-enterprises, and micro production/village enterprises is suggested. Also a modular approach to encourage higher level of training will improve the quality of VT
165. Future VT may focus vulnerable girls incorporating females in technical trades that are in demand at local level. In order to avoid social barriers promotion and awareness raising at the community and family level should be carried out
166. Referral Process should be **reviewed** and need to identify ways to streamline the process with stakeholders such **as** SCSL and TRO. The mismatch with identification, long waiting time for appropriate placement, children change their minds on choice.
167. Community based orientation for URs referred to VT package. This should be discussed and finalized by the district level Action Plan VT groups and should include: counseling/psychosocial, basic needs, career guidance, mobile units, females in technical trades, parental support, upgrading basic education, start-up savings for credit, accommodation for protection cases etc.

ANNEXES

Annex: 1

LIST OF THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED

1. Mr. Ranagaraja, Chief Secretary, North East provincial Council, Trincomalee
2. Mr. S Ganesh, District Secretary, Jaffna
3. Mr. Zoysa, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Colombo,
4. Mr. N. Thiyagaraja, Secretary, Political Wing, Planning and Development Secretariat, LTTE, Kilinochchi,
5. Mr. Ireneuss, Director, Secretariat for Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs in the North & east (SIHRN), Kilinochchi
6. Bo Viktor Nylund, Head, Child Protection Section UNICEF Sri Lanka
7. Ms. Gabriellala Elroy, Head of Trincomalee Zone Office, UNICEF
8. Ms. Sanja Sarnovic, Interim Child protection Officer, UNICEF, Batticaloa
9. Mr. Nimalan Selavaraj, Assistant Project officer-Protection. UNICEF, Batticaloa
10. Ms. Carmen Anthony, Partnership Development Manager, Save the Children- Sri Lanka
11. Mr. M Koneswaran, Act. Team Leader (UR) SCSL- Batticaloa
12. Ms. R. Sidharshini, Acting Divisional Secretary. Paddipalai, Batticaloa
13. Mr. S. Viswalingam. Director, Department of Industries, Trincomalee
14. Mr. E.L. A. Careem, District Coordinator, Sarvodaya, Batticaloa
15. Mr. S. Elantaharayan, Social Programme Coordinator, Sarvodaya, Batticaloa
16. Ms. Gowrie Ponnaiah, Country Coordinator, ILO/IPEC Colombo
17. Mr. Sivapragasam, Vocational Training Expert, ILO/IPEC Project Office –Colombo
18. Mr. Handy, Field Coordinator, ILO/IPEC, Batticaloa
19. Mr. C.L.R. Joseph, Field Coordinator, ILO/IPEC, Jaffna
20. Mr. K. Arulthawarajah, Field officer, ILO/IPEC Trincomalee
21. Mr. Dug Graham, Project Director, WUSC, Sri Lanka
22. Ms. Sudrashini, Director CWDR, Kilinochchi
23. Mr. Lorence Thilagar, Director, Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, Kilinochchi
24. Mr. Thansingham, Chairman, Patrician Institute
25. Mr. Jegan, Education and Skill Development Center (ESDC) , Kilinochchi
26. Mr. P. Rajeswaran, INSGD, Moolai, Chulipuram Jaffna
27. Ms. Mangaladevi, INSGD, Araly North, Vaddukodai, Jaffna
28. Mr. Josep Ghanapragasam, Manager, Grace Care Center, Trincomalee
29. Lara Scott, Action Plan Coordination Consultant, UNICEF Sri Lanka
30. Ms. Ummul Zahid, Program Assistant, ILO/IPEC, Colombo

Annex:2

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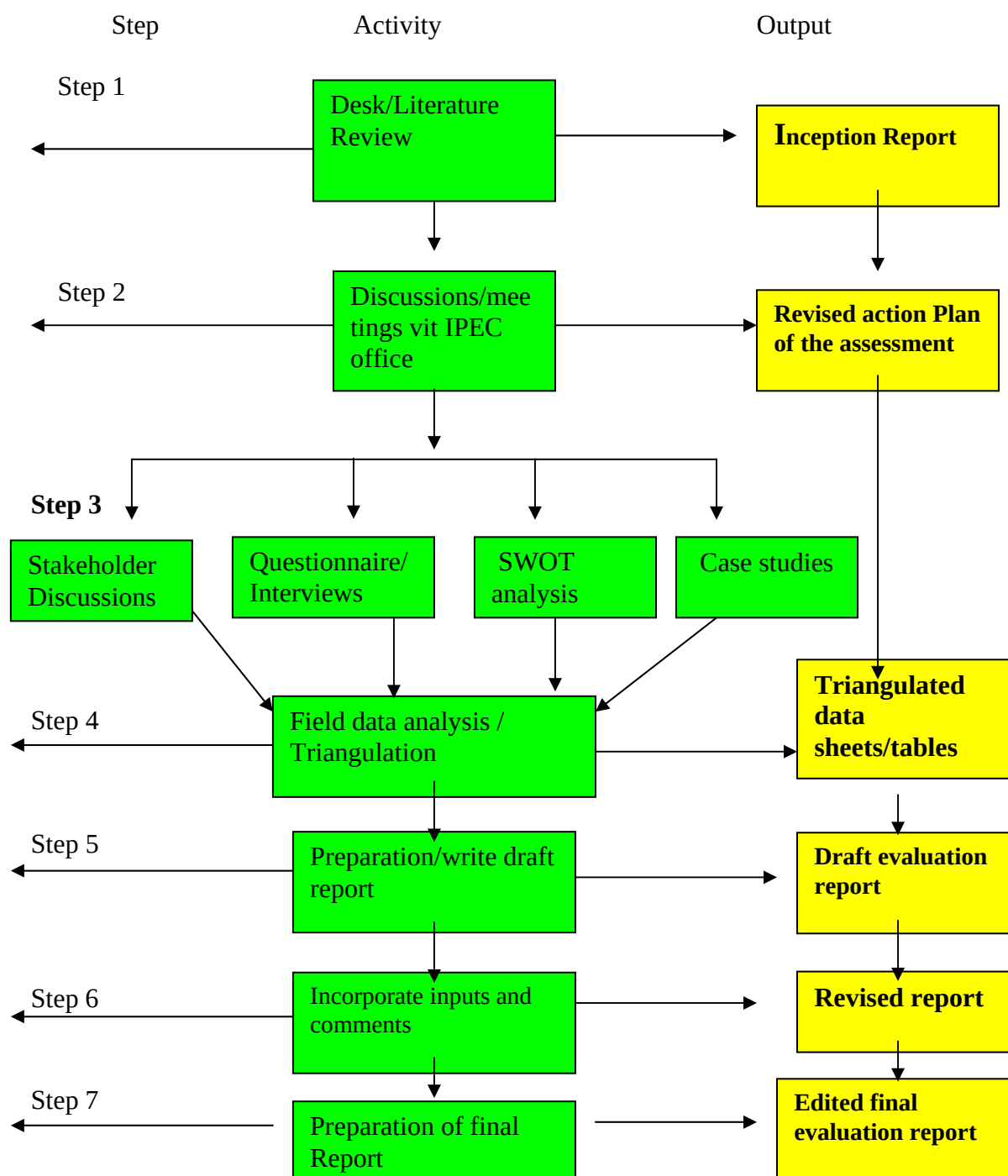
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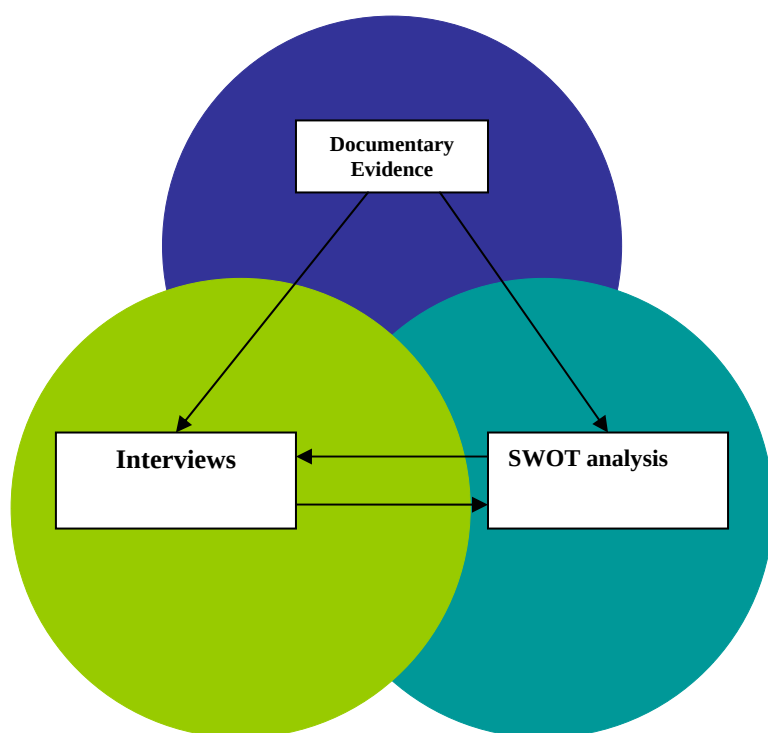
Annex-3

Flow chart of the Assessment Process



Annexes 4

Triangulation of raw data collected from different methods



MODEL CASE STUDY

Name : Seena Malarsoodi

Age : 17 years old (Girl)

Address: Arasaditivu, Batticaloa

Status of the child prior to becoming a child soldier

I am the eldest of the family. I have three sisters and a brother. All were studying at a local school. But most time we were unable to attend the school because of lack of education materials such as writing books and proper meals. My farther is a wage laborer in neighboring farm fields. His earning was seasonal. My mother always felt sick and I stopped my education at the age of 10 with the intention of helping my mother for household chores. I had a dream of becoming a school teacher but I couldn't get proper education. I thought supporting my sisters and brother to continue their education. Even as a child I found some odd jobs in the village and tried to earn some money for the family. In the middle of year 2001, representatives of the **movement** visited our home several times and force my parents to give a child for the freedom fighting of Tamil nation. My parents were refusing and they have threatened to get some one from us by force. After giving a serious thought, I decided to join with the **movement** on behalf of my sisters and brother. I joined the **movement** on 9th August 2001.

The situation where she served in an armed group

I was asked to help in preparing meals and collecting water for trainee soldiers in a jungle camp. I don't know where this place is but I have traveled around two hours from my home. It was a hard job. I have to work from the morning 5 till the sunset. After some time (about three months) I have been given training on how to fight with guns. There were around 20 girls like me. But I am a small built person and always had troubled in performing hard training. I was given punishment because I failed to complete several trainings on time. Some time I was beaten by commanders. All trainee child soldiers including me had to follow strict rules of the commanders. We were given a time table to do everything. To wash, eat, and even for play games in the afternoon. There were lot of books and pictures about the fighting and killing of soldiers at the battlefield. I took part in ground battle twice. I was not so well trained in firing and not confident to fight. However I couldn't get on with fellow girl soldiers. Most time I felt sick and frustrated. I finally took part in the Vakherai (Armed confrontation between Karuna Fraction and the LTTE) battle in 2004. I got injured and my leg has broken. I couldn't move as a normal person. I was kept few days at the camp and then they handed over me to my family on 9th April 2004. My parents took me to Batticaloa hospital for treatments. I was at the hospital for two months. I came home in July 2004 but I am a disable person now.

Condition after project support for reintegration into society

I came to this training (USDOL Sewing machine operation) with lot of hopes. I came to know about this project from social workers of CWDR. After came to this training I have gained confidence and everybody in this center were very helpful and friendly. I found this training not only providing opportunity for personal skill development but lot of psychosocial support for person like me to improve our confidence and the personality. Now I have good understanding on what went wrong in my life and how to get myself corrected to be a productive and useful person to my family. Now I learned to make children cloths and garments. If I have a sewing machine by my own I can earn money. My only hope is helping my brother to get into university education. He is doing well in his studies. He passed all major examination with higher grades. I do not want to stop him continuing his education. He is the only hope of our family. However I must thank the project and the CWDR for changing my life for a better world.

Annex -7 Terms of Reference

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

(ILO-IPEC)

Mid-term Evaluation

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

National Assessment: Sri Lanka

(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.⁶

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 Sri Lanka 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.
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 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

⁶ 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’Evaluation 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.

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:
 5. 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.
 6. To examine current proposed activities and make an assessment of their potential contribution to the implementation strategy.
 7. To review the existing institutional set up and implementation capacity.
 8. 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 Sri Lanka 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 Sri Lanka.**

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 issues and questions included in paragraphs 13 to 15.
13. Validity of the project design and relevance of objectives: The assessment should address 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 are 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.
 - Case study

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
<u>1.</u>				
<u>2.</u>				
<u>3.</u>				
<u>Etc...</u>				

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
<u>1.</u>						
<u>2.</u>						
<u>3.</u>						
<u>Etc...</u>						

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?