



ILO EVALUATION

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Project on " Social Protection for Families of Children at Risk of Exploitative Employment through Strengthening of Supplementary Service Provision in Selected Locations on the Plantations"
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- **Name of consultant(s):** **Sonali Moonesinghe**
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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures and has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Unit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Child Development Centre
CDO	Child Development Officer
DS	District Secretariat
EMA	Estate Medical Assistant
EWHC	Estate Workers' Housing Cooperative
FHW	Family Health Worker (same as PHM)
GN	Grama Niladari
HRO	Human Resource Officer
ILO	International Labour Organization
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PFWO	Plantation Family Welfare Officer
PHDT	Plantation Human Development Trust
PHM	Public Health Midwife (FHW)
RPC	Regional Plantation Companies
RDHS	Regional Director of Health Services
VTA	Vocational Training Authority
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour
WO	Welfare Officer

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 *Project Background:*

The “Social Protection for Families at Risk of Exploitative Employment through Strengthening Supplementary Service Provision,” (“The Social Protection Project”) has aimed at improving social protection coverage provided to families in estates/plantations and surrounding rural village communities in the Ratnapura District, by strengthening supplementary and providing complementary services to those provided by the government, in the areas of i) education; ii) health; iii) better management of financial resources; iv) enhanced skills for accessing improved livelihood opportunities. The strengthening of supplementary service provision in selected locations has been designed to achieve a number of outputs aligned with project objectives as outlined in Table 1 below. The outcome of this project expects that families and their children vulnerable to exploitative employment have better access to social protection in areas of education including vocational training opportunities, health and enjoy a better family environment on the plantations. The project aims at minimizing the risk of children moving into hazardous forms of child labour and ILO’s longer-term goal of providing technical support for the government to reach zero tolerance of WFCL by 2016.

Table 1

The Overall Development Objective	Reduced vulnerability of children at risk through strengthened social protection for plantation communities.
Immediate Objectives I	To increase social protection quality and coverage for plantation Communities vulnerable to child labour;
Expected Outputs:	(i) Capacity of 10 EWHCS to deliver value added social protection to plantation communities strengthened; (ii) Vulnerable plantation girls and boys or their families develop skills and access as alternatives to HFCL.
Immediate Objective II	To advocate the mainstreaming of value added social protection into all child labour prevention programmes;
Expected Outputs:	(i) Public-private- partnerships on 10 estates, primarily with regional plantation companies and subnational administration negotiated to support social protection for 1,000 plantation children and their families; (ii) Document and share project outcomes and lessons learnt with policy makers, stakeholders, UN joint team and ILO decent work teams.

The Project is a two year program funded by Government of Japan and its duration was June 2014 - June 2016 with a Total budget of US\$149,974.

1.2 *District Context:*

A general background of the district and local context is important as it has a bearing on the effective implementation of programs, outreach capacities particularly its continuity and

sustainability unless addressed accordingly. The total population of Ratnapura is 1,082,299 with 81% percent residing in rural areas and 10% on plantations/estates. The district covers a land area of 3275 sq kms and for administrative purposes is divided into 17 divisional secretariat divisions and 575 Grama Niladari divisions. The district's poverty index is 8.5% indicating an unemployment rate of 4.6% which reflect figures higher than the national average, 7.7% and 4.4% respectively¹. Sri Lanka's intra-regional socio-economic indicator disparities are reflected in this district, particularly within the plantation sector and surrounding villages. The district's economy is mainly based around plantations, gem mining industries, manufacturing/apparel and informal sectors and reveals the prevalence of high poverty levels and potential for CL issues.

Ratnapura constitutes a large number of estates of which a majority are small holdings estates, there are 97,000 small holdings in the district.² Labour shortages in the estate sector has increasingly become a major issue, particularly among the small holdings ownership. Discussions with plantation management and district officials note the potential for CL is stronger in these plantations that are now facing acute labor shortages. Tea and rubber estates cover vast areas and typically include several divisions within an estate with each division often spanning wide distances. Distances combined with a lack of proper access roads and transportation facilities have posed limitations on the optimal impact of program benefits. Communities/families residing in difficult access areas who are already lacking services may not receive the full benefit or *quality* supplementary/complementary social protection services supported through this project in the four (education, health, management of financial resources, enhanced livelihood skills) focus areas. The relative isolation of communities in these areas combined with low literacy tends to limit the full impact of awareness raising activities.

Apart from challenges for program benefits to reach all areas of targeted locations, particularly, the ability to distribute project services/conduct activities in difficult access areas, it can also affect the ability of some of the targeted/intended beneficiaries to fully utilize and benefit from project activities and services within short project implementation periods. The likelihood of a demand for equitable and quality social services from the community is low particularly without the benefit of full awareness and understanding of same. Ratnapura district statistics show that more than 8% of the district's children have to travel more than 10 km distance to schools³. In Non Perial Estate it was observed that the geographic location of Nagrek division is remotely situated on a much higher elevation compared to the other divisions with critical access issues. The worker community in the division are facing hardships including a 13 km distance (3 hours

¹ Ratnapura DS, Director of Planning;

² Ibid

³ Ibid

one way) for children to access the local school⁴. It was also evident that Welfare Officers and other TOT officers find access a challenge thus potentially limiting the ability of the community, to fully benefit from awareness and other project activities in this area compared to other divisions. Despite these challenges, the program's implementing partner and program trained workers have put in considerable efforts toward implementing project activities.

1.3 Policy Framework:

ILO supports national policy by providing technical support through its Decent Work Country Program (2013-2017) which recognizes elimination of CL as integral to ensuring rights at the workplace. It is also aligned to broader development policies through this project by acknowledging the need to strengthen and support social protection services. This is supported by relevant national policies which are in place creating an environment supportive of program objectives as reflected in the following:

- The National Policy on Decent Work (NPDW 2006)
- Sri Lanka's 2016 Road Map for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of CL and Action Plan;
- The Ten Year Horizon Development Framework of the Government of Sri Lanka which commits to including a social development agenda within the broader, macro-economic development framework;
- The New Sri Lanka Decent Work ILO Country Program (2013-2017) which includes 'social inclusion and the enhancement of a knowledge base and social partners empowered to work toward establishment of a Social Protection Floor as one of three priorities;
This program also contributes toward the following:
- United National Development Assistant Framework (UNDAF 2013-2017) Pillar 2 and 3. The outcomes of both support "enhanced capacity of national institutions for evidence-based policy development and strengthened provision of, access to and demand for equitable and quality social services delivery;" and "Communities empowered and institutions strengthened to support local governance, access to justice, social integration, gender equality, and monitoring, promotion and protection of human rights in alignment with international treaties and obligations and in alignment to the constitution of Sri Lanka."

1.4 Institutional Framework:

This program has been supported by a wide network of government structures, local organizations and civil society at community, district and national levels and through public/private partnerships. Collaborative efforts and cooperation in the implementation of program activities among different sources were observed. ILO's tripartite constituency has a

⁴ Reported in a discussions with Talaivars, during Stakeholder Consultations.

significant presence in the program which include the Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, The Employers Federation of Ceylon (EFC) and Trade Unions (TUs). It should be noted that TUs could play a more prominent role engaging in future programs at national/provincial/district levels, specifically in facilitating/advocating for provision of basic infrastructural services which will facilitate supplemental services delivered through program activities. In addition, The Ministry of Plantations, the District Secretariat Structure, Provincial Health Authorities, Zonal Education Office, District Child Development Committee (DCDC) and a National Steering Committee provided a supportive environment to promote ILOs program work objectives, in striving to achieve the goal of zero tolerance of child labour in the district.

The institutional framework is in place for implementing The Roadmap at national/NSC, Provincial/Provincial Secretariat for coordinated action and through District levels/DS Officers, DCDCs that coordinate activity related to children and take action against and for prevention of CL. More importantly, the President of Sri Lanka has recently⁵ validated the significance of CL concerns by issuing a directive for DCDCs to incorporate and report on CL issues and steps taken to address same in their regular district level meetings. The Sabaragamuwa Business Chamber of Commerce has provided a forum to encourage and forge public/private partnerships and mobilize, NGOs, Lion's Club, Trade Associations, Welfare Societies etc., to contribute a percentage (25%) of their annual funds toward support for children's schooling and registered businesses to work on CL prevention activities. Regional Plantation Companies (RPCs) representing the private sector, and PHDT a quasi-governmental body with added benefits of its tripartite structure, has enabled a wide network reach. (PHDT board consists of the Ministry of Plantation Industries/government, the employers who are also members of EFC and the major Trade Unions) PHDT through its key coordinating and implementing role including well established working relations with The Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Society, (EWHCS) represented by workers/community and chaired by the RPC, has provided a broad-based institutional supportive framework for facilitating and achieving program objectives.

1.5 Key Implementing Partners:

Implementing partners have been selected from the plantations and sub-national/district level administration to ensure quality and maximum outreach of social protection and education to plantation and surrounding village communities/workers. The Ratnapura District Secretariat, Plantation Human Development Trust and Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce are key implementing partners who have enabled a wide outreach, utilization of social partners, networks and mobilization of officials in delivering this program's services for communities/families at risk of sending children into exploitative forms of CL.

⁵ April 2016 Directive from the Presidential Secretariat

1.6 Strategic Approach:

Key strategies adopted in this program to achieve project objectives are: i) Project focus on an **integrated/inter-sectoral approach** acknowledging the need to address broader socio-economic/social protection issues such as health and nutrition, education, livelihood options, economic/household money management, while emphasizing key ILO priorities of protecting children and preventing CL and exploitative employment ii) Selection and choice of **key implementing partners** who are positioned to influence and maintain close “two tier” (above and below) interactions with 1) national policy/decision making bodies as well as the corporate sector, estate management; 2) worker representative entities/TUs, Community Leaders/Talaivars, Cooperative Societies, fully utilize their networks and build on established, close links to estate workers and rural communities; iii) Supporting **public/private partnerships (PPP)** between the business community and public entities and encouragement of social partners on the estates/plantation companies to provide supplementary social protection, strengthen services through EWHCS and mainstream CL concerns into plantation programs; iv) **Utilize existing structures** and maximize opportunities within plantations and at district/divisional/community levels, by mobilizing platforms and processes to incorporate program activities and create awareness of CL and need for prevention. i.e. tea leaf weighing/collection stations where community/tea pluckers gathers, estate Creches/Pre-school venues, Health Clinics, Factory premises on wage days to conduct awareness programs, disseminate information through and with the cooperation of PFWO, Talaivars, Midwives, CDOs, Pre-school teachers, school principals in some locations, and in other estates volunteer school children, community leader/volunteers and EWHCS members.

1.7 Methodology & Scope

The evaluation methodology involved the following process: (a) desk review of key project documents and other relevant ILO material relating to overall country and program strategies; (b) field visit to Ratnapura district and 5 selected estates in which project activities were implemented. It should be noted that the short time period (6 days) allocated for field work limited discussions with beneficiaries to a large extent. Both time and distances are challenges evidenced for implementation, monitoring as well as for this evaluation. However, this evaluation mission was able to observe some clear findings and challenges in the field.

Field work was carried out in 5 selected plantations in the Ratnapura district, Wellandura, Rilhena, Elston, Cecilton and Non Perial Estates. The selection criteria was based on the community representation of all 3 participating RPCs balanced with estates that helped demonstrate challenges as well as good practices. Informal discussions, were held with ILO Project management and staff. Field visits to project sites involved informal discussions with

PHDT officers, 10 semi-structured interviews with key partners/stakeholders in the district, 1 stakeholder consultation with representatives from all 12 program targeted plantations in which the program was implemented, and 6 Group Discussions (FGDs) with plantation management, EWHCSs, beneficiaries/children and families. Follow up phone discussions were also held to cross reference and verify facts. (see Appendix A – list of people interviewed/consulted; and Appendix B – Evaluation Agenda. (c) De-briefing meeting were held to discuss initial findings with ILO Colombo office program management and staff.

2.0 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1 *Project Validity, Logic, Goals & Targets*

The Project clearly identifies its long-term development objective, and two immediate objectives noted above in Table 1 and supporting output activities. The Project's long-term goal of reducing vulnerability of children at risk of exploitative employment through strengthened social protection for plantation communities are ensured by prioritizing the achievement of the two immediate objectives that focus on increasing quality and coverage of social protection and advocacy for mainstreaming value added social protection into all CL prevention programs on the plantations. Activities to achieve these objectives are logically linked to specific outputs such as the a) strengthened capacity of community structures to deliver social protection, b) skills training provided for young people as alternatives to and prevent HFCL, c) public/private partnerships forged to encourage support for social protection for estate families and children and documentation and d) sharing of project outcomes and lessons learnt with policy makers and wide body of stakeholders. Activities focused on providing awareness, information, training and advocacy on CL issues as a two way process engaging both management above and worker/community beneficiaries below as well as inclusion of service provider/decision makers in the private and public sectors.

The logical framework outlines relevant assumptions and risks in achieving the overall objective and need for behavioral change, however, the framework should clearly identify the need for attitude and behavioral change among the adult community and plantation management not only those of children, which is crucial to reduce children's vulnerability by providing strengthened social protection for plantation communities, to support them to get their children back to school. The assumption of conditions that should exist such as cooperation of all implementing partners and relevant government officials to meet the immediate objectives are clearly identified. The risks however should note the distances, lack of infrastructural/travel facilities that can impede the achievement of immediate objectives and stated outputs, the *quality and coverage* of social protection for instance, by delaying, preventing or limiting quality and/or wider coverage of activities and processes. This was evident in some locations/divisions where access, and low literacy levels reveal that community ability to utilize project provided services/benefits can be a challenge.

Planned project objectives and activities to achieve them are valid and logically linked to the outputs, achievement of stated outputs maybe considered somewhat ambitious from a qualitative standpoint even if the quantitative targets are met, due to ground realities and challenges for limited human resources to cover all locations within the program time frame, particularly as a pilot project. Despite challenges, the program has piloted activities that has galvanized a wide group of entities/officials around the issue of CL prevention/minimization, initiated and set in motion a process that has the potential to be continued further. Project design is inclusive of and maintains a gendered focus targeting both girls and boys as beneficiaries of training and social protection activities. Specific measures to include/actively target more adult men in future programs activities, specifically awareness raising and influencing behavioral change activities will benefit future programs further, through the potential for long-term impact on families.

2.2 Indicators & Means of Verification

Indicators outlined are relevant as they can be used to assess the quantitative achievement of project objectives. Such quantifiable information can also be used as a means to assess general trends and direction towards achieving some of the more intangible aspects of project objectives and goals. The intangible nature of capacity development, increased awareness and increased quality social protection for example are captured through indicated means of verification. Supplementing means of verification of all indicators with project monitoring support will further strengthen the reliability of assessing project achievement progress. Clear statement of primary sources of verification in the log frame design allows for the capture of long-term qualitative impact on beneficiaries. For example, case studies, focus group discussions, client perception surveys and independent evaluations that include field discussions are primary sources of

verification which provides the means to assess qualitative impact, apart from secondary sources such as progress reports, field monitoring reports etc. Although not indicated in the log frame, program output assessments and independent impact assessments have been carried out which were significant sources of verification to determine qualitative impact, combined with observations and discussions with beneficiaries and stakeholders conducted during this evaluation's field visits.

2.3 Target Group/Beneficiaries

The projects final progress report (June 2015) shows that awareness programs have reached 1390 girls and boys exceeding the 1000 intended target and 8323 adults, adolescents and children (male and female) exceeding the intended target of 3000. These activities were aimed at strengthening capacity “to access enhanced social protection as a right rather than welfare.” This evaluation notes that the concept of their rights still needs much more attention, however the idea and information have been introduced, discussions reveal that many in the community have awakened to the idea of the “value of the child,” and the need to protect and ensure children's access to education. Despite the low levels of literacy, it appears that worker families want their children educated and moving into occupations other than in the estate sector. This was confirmed by plantation management and evident among the youth present in discussions, and the several requests made by community leaders for additional and diversified vocational/skills training for young people.

It is important however that parents, particularly community workers/trainers fully understand and emphasize *rights* to social protection and its links to CL minimization, and a child's basic *right* to education, and is not perceived and/or conveyed as a charitable service/exercise or goodwill gesture, contributing to a welfare approach. This tends to get blurred in the enthusiasm among trainers when delivering new ideas and completing activities/trainings in a timely manner. Ensuring that all children are attending/being sent to school is important, but it is also important that the families/parents of the child/children have supplemental social protection support and basic means to encourage their children's school attendance and/or provide nutritious food in order to sustain these practices, which is also the objective of this program. While the initial response and engagement of community worker trainers has been extremely positive, refresher and future trainings can emphasize these crucial aspects for maximum program impact.

Discussions with EWHCS members in 5 estates visited for this evaluation indicates that all members trained through this programs are extremely motivated, have the ability to deliver value added social protection/information, awareness and training in areas of i) education; ii) health; iii) economic development through better management of financial resources, increased savings; iv) enhanced skills for accessing improved livelihood opportunities and CL issues, which

varied depending on the estate, to meet the needs of the specific estate communities. As EWHCS has played a significant role in reaching the community and has potential to support social welfare and protection services for their communities, further strengthening of this structure, to work with PHDT in facilitating services, will provide additional resource support for PHDT and benefit future program activities. EWHCS officers will need additional training, and human resource and monitoring support to ensure quality of supplementary social protection services and inclusion of all divisions, in a targeted estate.

The program has shown extensive efforts at reaching estate communities through project activities targeting specific groups directly. A comprehensive Output Analysis Report⁶ indicates selectively targeted groups that included lactating women/mothers, workers of both sex, youth (12-18 yrs) potential migrant women, parents of dropouts and irregular school attendees, school children. Targeting of community leaders and representatives/EWHCS members as TOTs, as well as estate management of RPCs and district/divisional level government officers have been accomplished through a wide range of soft component activities. For example, awareness and advocacy as an integral part of the program aimed at behavioral change, capacity building trainings, TOTs as well as cascading training were delivered to community level leaders including workshop programs which were conducted to ensure maximum benefits and strengthen supplementary/complementary social protection services for estate workers and their families.

Program activities will benefit more by taking in to account some of the local cultural practices, sensitizing TOT workers to individual family contexts and responding accordingly. For example the practice of keeping young girls who have attained age from attending school tends to lead to school drop outs in some cases, particularly in households headed by women, or families facing extreme impoverishment. Welfare officers implementing program activities can take a softer approach in approaching individual cases and pay closer attention specific contexts while encouraging school attendance.

2.4 Gender Focus

The Project has given priority to gender dimensions in the project design. Acknowledging that a high percentage of women constitute the estate worker population, many women and girls have been included in and appear to have participated in trainings and awareness programs. Progress reports⁷ indicate a much higher percentage of women, 70% (female adults, adolescents and children) participated in project programs compared to men which reveals relatively low participation at 30%. Progress Report notes 2767 female participants compared to 1185 males participating in trainings conducted. Field visits for evaluation discussions also noted few adult

⁶ April 2016

⁷ Progress Report (January – June 2015)

male participants, there were minimal male youth participants available for discussions in the field which is indicative of the trend of young people particularly male youth moving out of plantations. The evaluation notes the importance of inclusion of more male members of the estate community to enhance program impact that goes beyond mere numerical targeting to maintain a programmatic gender balance.

Estate communities reflect traditional male hierarchies within families where men typically do not engage in family/children's health, nutrition and educational matters. However, since awareness and advocacy are an integral part of this program aiming at behavioral change, future programs will do well to work with fathers and other male family members to instill a strong sense of responsibility and participation in the health and social welfare of their family/mothers and children. Active targeting of men/fathers that includes an effective communication strategy in future awareness/training programs, could overcome their indifference and influence behavioral change along with information/knowledge particularly among the younger generation of plantation workers, and achieve maximum impact and sustainability. Pro-active steps to include more men and accommodate them by adjusting training schedules around their working hours maybe helpful to increase their responsiveness and engagement with the welfare of their families as well as program activities. This is likely to lead towards a *balance in gender relations and dynamics* both within estate families/communities and participation in future program activities.

3.0 EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the project in achieving its immediate and longer-term objectives and extent of project impact on beneficiaries at different levels will be considered in the context of this projects implementation over a two year period as a pilot project in the Ratnapura district.

This evaluation will look at quantifiable achievement of targets but will emphasize qualitative achievements in assessing the effectiveness of services, delivery processes and impact on beneficiaries since program objectives focus on a) improving social protection *quality* and coverage and b) advocacy for mainstreaming value added social protection in all CL prevention programs on plantations. Related outputs such as capacity building, awareness raising and advocacy, behavioral change, skills strengthening are not measurable through quantitative indicators.

3.1 Implementing Partnerships:

The Project has paid close attention to the importance and strategic selection of partners and establishment of key implementing partnerships locally which has been significant for the success of conducting project activities. Recognizing critical gaps in education, health, financial resource management, livelihood opportunities as key push factors for plantation children's vulnerability

to exploitative employment, this project aimed at providing supplementary and complementary social protection programmes to those provided by the government. Taking an integrated approach to address these issues has required the strategic selection of implementing partners/social partners both in and outside the plantation, who have outreach capacity, working experience, close links to communities/workers as well as management and are positioned to ensure minimization of risks for families whose children are in danger of moving into hazardous forms of CL as coping mechanisms.

Partnerships with the local administration/DS structure, the Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce and Plantation Human Development Trust their networks and social partners, have facilitated operational strategies of this project. Regional Plantation Companies, (RPCs) worked closely with EWHCS⁸, to strengthen social protection services to plantation and rural families and their children. EWHCS membership comprises of both estate community and RPCs and has as a result, access to and close working relationships with estate families as well as with plantation management. Programs were facilitated, trainings conducted, TOT trainings, and activities were coordinated and monitored through the Plantation Human Development Trust⁹ whose mandate is to carry out human development work for (17) Regional Plantation Companies (RPPCs) operating on the plantations. The PHDT has played an instrumental role in the implementation of this program, interacting closely with district administration, provincial health authorities, zonal education officers, plantation company management as well as EWHCS and estate worker communities.

The importance of partners and partner networks in implementing and monitoring project/field activities and their role in establishing a working relationships with and among estate communities and management, district level administration, plantation companies, encouraging PPPs, facilitating project activities and related service delivery has been significant. Key partnerships, partner networks including PPPs have made important contribution towards the successful implementation of program activities.

3.2 Beneficiary Selection:

The Program has attempted to target vulnerable and marginalized communities mobilizing the support of key stakeholders at district level and plantation administrative structures to identify vulnerable plantation communities. 12 plantation estates were selected based on discussions with PHDT, DS and the Plantation Community Communications Officer (PCCO) linking plantations

⁸ membership constitute workers and RPC representatives

⁹ The PHDT is a tripartite organization that supports and lends itself to maintaining social dialogue across human development programmes under their purview. It's Board consists of the Ministry of Plantation Industries. (Govt) the employers (who are also members of EFC) and the major Trade Unions.

to the DS system. At DS and Divisional levels, the Score Card System has been developed as a strategic tool for the prevention of CL through a process of identification and selection of vulnerable families and children at risk for interventions and follow up action as well as functioning as a crucial monitoring mechanism for the district's CL monitoring and evaluation plan. As a monitoring tool, the score card is being utilized to identify and track the progress of children at risk and their families requiring social protection services. At district level, a database has been set up with information obtained from the score card system which is utilized in the field/divisions by Public Health Midwives (PHMs). Continued progress tracking and updates to the central database can be done at divisional levels with data collected through the score card system. The database is being monitored centrally, at district level. Combined with an M&E Matrix which has been set up, progress reports based on the analysis of data collected are being generated in the district. A sound monitoring and evaluation system is in place in the district indicating the Ratnapura district's commitment toward achieving its goal of zero tolerance of CL.

3.3 Interventions & Delivery Systems:

The effectiveness in piloting this project has been enhanced by the following: i) Integrated/Inter-sectoral approach in addressing the broader socio-economic context of economic poverty and lack of adequate social protection and services and incorporate CL and prevention issues within this framework; ii) Combining multi-sector interventions through program activity focus on four key thematic areas, education; health and nutrition, economic/improving livelihoods and skills trainings, household income management; iii) Program focus on soft components in laying a strong foundation for preventing CL through a) awareness raising, b) advocacy, c) capacity building and training activities; iv) Selection of implementing partners with social networks, strategic linkages to relevant authorities, decision makers and social partners including the outreach capacity to enhance service delivery such as PHDT, who implements activities through EWHCS on estates. The Ratnapura District Secretariat through its divisional structures and officers, focuses activities and lays emphasis on rural villages but includes estates within their work plans. The Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce conducts supportive activities to raise awareness on and prevention of CL through its links to the business community and CSOs.

3.4 Project Components & Activities

The Project focused on four key outputs/results and supporting activities to achieve its project objectives.

Achievement of Objective I – Increase social protection quality and coverage for plantation communities vulnerable to CL.

Key indicative outputs expected to achieve this objective are:

1) Capacity of at least five (5) EWCHS strengthened to deliver value-added social protection to plantation communities;

The ILO identified 12 estates and Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Societies' (EWHCS) with the support of the PHDT and RPCs. This was followed by a training needs assessment (TNA) for members of the EWHCSs, carried out by a consultant selected as per the original project proposal. A half a day project briefing meeting was conducted for managers and the assistant managers of the selected 12 estate to obtain their support and commitment to implement this project.

A 02 day Training on social protection and child labour related issues was conducted for 60 participants, 5 from each estate were selected. Selected participants included Welfare Officers, Child Development Officers and members of Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Societies. Main topics covered through this training included Child Labour, Child Rights, Education, Health & Nutrition, Recreation, HIV & Aids, Gender Base Violence, Safe Migration and Household Cash Management. At the end of the two day training, participants were requested to develop an action plan which was implemented on the estates. This training also provided an opportunity for estate workers to interact with key government officials working on child related issues such as Education Project Officers, Officers from the National Child Protection Authority, the Department of Probation as well as District and Divisional Officers.

After the training on social protection, a 02-day Training of Trainers (TOT) program was held with the participation of at least 2 representatives selected from each of the 12 estates. A total of **25 TOTs** have been trained by ILO. The trained teams in turn with the support of PHDT carried out initial awareness to an identified larger team including Estate Management & field staff, members/staff of the Estate Worker Housing Cooperative (EWHCS), Child Development Officers (CDOs) and volunteer community leaders/members, Talaivars, educated youth, social workers in the communities, etc.

Output reports note that each estate has a group of at least 15 who have received training skills to carry out cascade trainings in each estate. These trained members have shared their knowledge and awareness on the four thematic topics including CL and CR related issues among people at different levels. Participants include parents of children under 5, between 5-16/18, lactating/pregnant mothers, plantation workers, school children, adolescents, trade union leaders, and estate community in general. The final progress report¹⁰ indicates that **3952 persons** in the plantation community have participated in such awareness sessions exceeding the project goal of **3000**. By project end ILO has reached **6718 persons** including **1142 youth** from the 12 selected estates. Field visits showed that TOTs and members of the EWHCS who received training were extremely motivated, enthusiastic and active in contributing to CL prevention and protection activities. From a quantitative perspective, at least 5 EWHCS in selected estates have capacity to deliver value added social protection.

¹⁰ Progress Report, January – June 2015

Some of the value addition contributions noted in review reports and observed in the field were: a) Preparation of action plans and working toward a result/target oriented time plan; b) Acquiring training skills, interactive skills coordination with state officials/institutions, working together with management, staff, volunteers as a team; c) Health and Nutrition reports noted significant inputs in terms of encouragement of the home garden concept/activities and the introduction of nutritious diet, particularly into children's lunches/mid-day meal plans; c) Child rights awareness; d) Education, working closely with school authorities; e) Social protection f) Improving income & savings as well as regular programs by ILO / PHDT to Health & Welfare staff and EWHCS committee members throughout project duration.

Field discussions indicated a lot of emphasis on sending/getting non-attendee children back to school, stopping mothers with young children from going abroad, and increased savings. While this is an important contribution, it should be cautioned that the objective of increasing *quality social protection and coverage* for communities is the priority. Enforcing authoritative measures without a clear or limited understanding of purpose, as well as the inability of communities to exercise some choice, may achieve the target of zero non-attendees, or increased savings, but achievements may not be sustainable long-term. It will be useful for continuing/follow up trainings to emphasize the importance of the broader objective which tends to get lost in the initial enthusiasm of achieving project work plan targets.

2) 50 vulnerable young women and men develop skills to increase their income as an alternative to working in HFCL;

Project review documents indicate that youth have undergone several awareness trainings. Output reports noted approximately 50 girls and boys have developed employable skills. It states that 03 girls from Opatha Estate had training in sewing, some found employment outside plantations, 06 in vehicle tire maintenance and 23 as tea boys in Pelmadulla. 12 attended IT classes, but not all are currently employed. 06 are apprenticing in private auto repair shops, and 2 girls who followed a nursing course at Elston,¹¹ are now employed at a Private Hospital.¹² An Impact Assessment¹³ indicates that youth (girls and boys) participated in vocational training on three estates, Wellandura, Opatha and Pelmadulla. Girls attended sewing classes and boys participated in mobile phone repairing and electrical wiring classes at the VIDATHA Vocational Training Center. The Assessment also references records from District Secretariat Ratnapura stating that employability training was given to 144 non-schooling children (girls and boys) age between 14-18 years, selected from Ratnapura, Kahwattha and Kalawana divisions. Fifty (50)

¹¹ Output Report (April 2016) reported by PFWOs.

¹² PHDT Discussions

¹³ Impact Assessment Report (November 2015)

were selected from the 12 targeted plantations and the balance from vulnerable groups in the surrounding villages.¹⁴

Field visits and discussions with female vocational skills training beneficiaries in sewing emphasized that they would like to expand their current skills but lack capital/material resources such as sewing machines to engage in any form of gainful employment. While this evaluation had limited time to conduct discussions with youth beneficiaries, project review reports indicate skills training benefits were provided to girls and boys. The need to widen the scope of these trainings, provide career guidance and facilitate VTA and other vocational training institutions to visit and conduct information sessions/substantive and procedural, on the plantations was noted and requested during field visits. Although output 2 has been achieved, it should be cautioned that the quality is of importance, future skills training should meet the demand of both youth, local market demands combined with access/linked to resources and opportunities to utilize these training skills to generate an income, to fully benefit from project services and obtain optimal program impact.

Achievement of Objective 2 – To Advocate mainstreaming of value added social protection into all child labor prevention programs.

Key indicative outputs expected to achieve this objective are:

Output 1) Public-private partnerships on at least five (5) estates negotiated to support social protection for 1,000 plantation and rural girls and boys and their families.

Five estates visited during this evaluation field mission indicated their endorsement of the PPP approach in order to balance plantation productivity/profitability by supporting the welfare and services for the estate worker community. Although the concept of CSR appears to be in its infancy and not necessarily based on the awareness of global principles governing CSR,¹⁵ discussions with management indicated strong support for meeting company social responsibilities and most Plantation Companies are adhering to it by taking initiatives to make an impact on social welfare. Through this program, ILO has conducted extensive advocacy programs as background preparation for encouraging the establishment of PPPs. Five advocacy programs were conducted and reached 185 private sector partners. Five 2 day trainings were conducted for 225 field level government officers working on children's issues, to raise awareness on PPPs and strengthen officer capacity to better serve plantation families.

The Kahawatte Plantation Company has an established CSR program through MJF Foundation (Merrill J. Fernando Foundation) which is providing services for workers through PPPs.

¹⁴Confirmed by PHDT

¹⁵ i.e. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and International Labor Organization Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy among other.

Discussions noted the implementation of CL prevention related activities through support for social protection services/value added services by working in partnership with district level entities, collaborative effort between plantation management and public administration. Services such as Loan facilities working with EWHCS and School Equipment provided to Child Development Centers/Creches through CDOs facilitated by PHDT, have been initiated.

Participation in/linkage with Rainforest Alliance Certification program which requires partnerships to ensure the welfare and protection of plantation workers for example is another step in the direction of moving toward working through PPPs. Links have been established with the Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce (SCC) and its members for example the Lions Club has been mobilized to contribute 25% of its annual funds toward supporting children to attend school; during the launch of the Lincoln Poster campaign,¹⁶ SCC was able to engage businessmen who pledged funding toward support/incentives for encouraging school attendance. The establishment of a District Child Development Fund to support children not attending school with funding and support services, is a PPP initiative which has been negotiated through the Chamber of Commerce members and the District Secretariat.

Although specific information on the impact on 1000 plantation/rural girls and boys as a result of PPPs was not available, positive steps have been taken toward establishing partnerships. More importantly, Plantation Company Management has shown progressive thinking in recognizing that estate labour is moving away from plantations due to stigmas attached to their low status, and see the need to improve the living conditions and quality of life of their workforce. Discussions clearly revealed the thinking that initiatives showing genuine concern for the children of the workforce, will result in parents/workers responding positively leading to an increase in productivity. Management endorses support for exploring opportunities to connect CL program concepts to enhance their productivity and profitability and noted the added value of ILO's social protection program, which has been very beneficial to their workers and children.

Output 2) Documentation and sharing of project outcomes and lessons learned with policy makers, stakeholders, UN joint team and ILO decent work teams.

District Child Development Committee (DCDC) quarterly meetings are a forum for discussion of CL and children's issues and program activities. Participants in DCDC meetings include relevant stakeholders, implementing partners, social partners, and beneficiary representatives. The President of Sri Lanka has further endorsed the significance of Child Protection Programs by a directive to conduct once in two month meetings and reporting on district child development planning/follow up action plans to be submitted to the Presidential Secretariat.

¹⁶ A Ratnapura DS fund raising initiative to mobilize PPP resources to support children's school attendance

Stakeholder meetings (Ministry of Labour, Trade Unions, EFC, District Secretaries, and National Steering Committee on Child Labour (NSC-CL) Members) have been held. At district level, the District Child Development Committee (DCDC) meeting was used as a platform to discuss progress and share information on the project. A stakeholder discussion and sharing of findings in the district has taken place in Ratnapura and a national level stakeholder workshop for dissemination of findings and good practices has been scheduled. ILO has also developed a video on the Child Labour Free Zone Model in Ratnapura, which includes good practices and provides an overview of the project to share with other partners including all government institutions, Media, Trade Unions, UN Agencies, INGOS, NGOs and CBOs.

3.5 Institutional Capacity

The program's engagement of a wide range of government administrative bodies, quasi-governmental, private, community level associations/organizations, and worker's unions has contributed to institutional capacity building indicated at multiple levels. Program activities have been geared toward training, capacity building, advocacy and awareness campaigns through knowledge building and dissemination of information on the current realities of CL/CP prevention and related issues, and the relevant, applicable local/international legal frameworks. Activities have focused on strengthening local institutional capacity to provide the necessary supportive environment to achieve the program ultimate objective. Extensive stakeholder involvement in beneficiary selection process, coordination and monitoring role in implementing project activities has contributed to stakeholder (i.e. PHDT, DS administrative bodies, EWHCS) knowledge and capacity development. Integration with, building on and further enhancing development programs in the district and its divisions such as the District and Divisional Child Development Plans, have provided an effective avenue and mechanism for local and national ownership. The primary aim of the District Plan is the achievement of a child labour free zone in Ratnapura district by 2016. It is further supported by the development of divisional level Child Development Plans and its implementation in all 17 divisions of Ratnapura District. This is reflected in the numerous activities and interventions that have taken place in the divisions based on supporting policy and political will, public awareness, prevention, protection and prosecution (guided by ILO's 5P Model¹⁷) to prevent and address CL issues¹⁸.

3.6 Implementation Challenges

External Challenges beyond Program Control:

¹⁷ All of ILO program activities come within the framework of the Five P Model, 1P – Political will, 2P- Public Awareness, 3P-Prevention, 4P-Protection, 5P – Prosecution

¹⁸ ILO and District Secretariat of Ratnapura Workshop - Progress Report on Child Labour Cascading Program Conducted at Divisional Level (February 2016)

The current lack of clear national policy direction on the issue of labour scarcity, indicated a general uncertainty for the future of the Tea Industry which appears to be preventing Plantation Companies from actively engaging in alternatives for labour shortages. The issue of youth moving away from plantations is a major issue which needs to be addressed. Some plantations are currently piloting an outsourcing model/small plots of state owned land leased on agreement and looking at automation practices. However management decisions are not being made regarding taking active steps to address issues due to political uncertainties.

Internal Challenges:

Program activities have been minimal in some divisions, within an estate/plantation due to surrounding environment/jungles, distances, access difficulties, lack of transport facilities and limited time to cover all areas. Typically at least one division appears to have received less awareness programs and program benefits due to remote, geographic location. There appears to have been challenges in covering all divisions within an estate by a limited number of trained officers within the two year period. Plantation officers have to meet their daily work obligations which has to be combined with program activities. Field discussions noted that mobilizing communities/workers is also difficult under poor access conditions, which typically results in reduced activities. Field visits observed the existence of more issues in such divisions i.e. Nagrek division in Non-Perial, Awissawella in Elston, Bopitiya division in Rilhena Estates.

3.7 Monitoring & Evaluation

The Program's Monitoring & Evaluation component indicates a focus on both qualitative and quantitative achievements/outcome in project design. Log frame indicators for tracking progress can be used as an effective monitoring tool however verification mechanisms need to clearly outline primary sources of verification that capture qualitative achievements essential for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This can also be used as a planning tool to guide program activities. The program has both internal and external monitoring components.

External - independent monitoring tools such as Output/Estate Monitoring Reports, SP/CL Impact Assessment and A Final Evaluation.

Internal - reporting mechanisms through field visit reports by PHDT submitted to ILO Program staff and monthly progress reports by program staff. PHDT also conducts review meetings once in three months with EWHCS and communicates with EWHCS officers on a daily basis. PHDT can play a stronger role in monitoring the delivery of program services and implementation of activities at field level, to ensure that broader project objectives of ensuring coverage and quality social protection services, are being met, apart from tracking the completion of targeted activities. Future programs will benefit more with support for and strengthening the monitoring capacity of PHDT which currently lacks human and financial resources to cover extensive program

areas. Including EWHCS officers from the community to support PHDT will contribute toward building a strong community-based monitoring system.

Project documents also note the functions of a project monitoring mechanism through a project steering committee (PSC). The DCDC at district level acts as the Project Advisory Committee which reports to the National Steering Committee on a bi-annual basis.

4.0 EFFICIENCY

4.1 *Local Context*

An optimally efficient and effective response for meeting immediate social protection for plantation families and longer-term issues of reducing the vulnerability of children at risk of CL is linked to the overall political will, local context/operational environment and implementing challenges outside project control. This program has received direct Presidential endorsement by directive that acknowledges DCDCs and Child Protection programs in all districts, regularizing review meetings and mandating direct reporting to the Presidential Secretariat. District level supportive environment is evident through the District's Child Development Plan which has prioritized the following key results: i) Protection; ii) Education and Skills Development iii) Health & Nutrition; iv) Leadership development and v) Correct attitudes, ethics and morals and declaration of Ratnapura as a CLFZ. ILO's program has been received positively and is perceived by district officials as a program that complemented and further enhanced the District Plan and activities for elimination of CL¹⁹. The important role of key implementing partners, their ability to access plantation communities as well as RPCs and management, social partners, ability to access wider networks, outreach capacity to mobilize the private sector/business community as well as motivated TOTs have facilitated/activated support for the implementation of activities in the four core areas. Program activities reflect the efficient use of existing resources by building on and working with existing local structures, venues and processes (tea weighing stations/CDCs/Tea Factories/health clinics) already in place, to expand its core social protection activities and awareness raising on CL prevention issues.

4.2 *Time Efficiency*

Poor infrastructure, lack of transportation, accessibility can cause difficulties in carrying out timely activities, this presents challenges for TOT field visits and monitoring activities by project staff. Poor road conditions, difficult terrain, the length of time required and difficult access to project sites in some estate divisions has been challenging for PHDT as the key implementing partner. Project activities however, have covered all selected estates to maintain timeliness and prevent delays which has meant that some areas/divisions within an estate have received less program attention and communities have received limited awareness and/or program services.

¹⁹ Discussions with Director Planning, Current and former DS's in Ratnapura.

It should be cautioned that the “quality” of social protection services may be compromised for “coverage” in locations covering wide geographic areas within a selected estate/plantation.

4.3 *Collaboration & Coordination of Efforts*

The overall operational strategy of the program through an integrated/multi-sectoral and public, private implementation approach, indicates the emphasis on collaborative efforts, further enhanced by building on/linking up with ongoing district programs, field interventions (MOH services, CDC midday meals) strengthening services provided by community worker organization/EWHCS and working through estate structures. This provided opportunities to utilize available resources and coordinate efforts in the project preparation phase, (baseline assessments) delivery of technical and support services such as training, (TOT and Cascade) and monitoring mechanisms, appear to have been strength to this Program. Close coordination of efforts among stakeholders, key implementing partners and their networks in Ratnapura district, is both an efficient utilization of available resources and an effective means of delivering program services. The inability to collaborate and link up with locally elected bodies such as the Pradeshiya Sabha has been raised in field discussions. Attempts to pursue collaboration in future programs may be useful for facilitating infrastructural/access roads, water sanitation and other basic services to enhance social protection for plantation communities.

4.4 *Efficient Utilization of [Available & Project] Resources*

The selection of key local partners for implementation has played an important role in efficient use of resources. Coordination, facilitation, training and monitoring at district level in several plantations were carried out by local partners providing tremendous support for project staff through their assistance with progress tracking of project activities. Establishment of a good rapport and close coordination with implementing partners, partner networks and stakeholders indicates efficient utilization of available (human) resources.

5.0 RELEVANCE

The relevance of ILO’s ‘Social Protection Project strategy and interventions is determined by its focus on several key themes: Its support for national plans and priorities; cooperation with national, local public and private authorities; the ability of its interventions to contribute toward ILO’s Decent Work Country Program’s long-term of elimination of the worst forms of child labour; and relevance of this intervention approach and strategy to minimize the risk of children living on plantations being sent into exploitative employment through strengthened social protection, to meet Project objectives and goals.

5.1 *National Plans & Priorities*

The Project's adherence to national plans and priorities is evident through its Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2008-2012 which was developed based on the National Policy on Decent Work. (NPDW 2006) and the Ten Year Horizon Development Framework (TYHDF) of the Government of Sri Lanka. The NPDW highlights the Government's commitment to include the social development agenda within the macro-economic development framework, primarily the TYHDF. ILO's new Sri Lanka Decent work country program (2013-2017) reflects 'Social inclusion and the establishment of a Social Protection Floor' as one of three priorities. At district level the Project has been able to build on and integrate project activities with the District's Child Development Plan, indicating alignment with district level priorities, cooperation with local authorities and the ability to facilitate sustainability of interventions.

5.2 Country Strategy Program

The Social Protection Project strategically fits within ILO's DWCP (2013-2017) third priority, "social inclusion and the establishment of a social protection floor." The outcomes for priority three are: (i) Knowledge base enhanced and social partners empowered to work towards establishment of a social protection floor; (ii) Worst forms of child labour reduced; (iii) Policies and programs in place to better govern labour migration particularly for reintegration and prevention of trafficking of persons. The links of the outcomes are clearly linked to and visible in the Project's long- term goal, immediate objectives and supporting activities, with a lesser extent of outcome three. The prevention of labour migration is supported by project activities which target migrating mothers to prevent migration. The relevance of the Project in terms of its commitment to ILO's overall vision "achieve zero tolerance of child labour in Sri Lanka is clearly visible in its operational strategy, intervention modes, prioritized project components and supporting activities that were implemented

5.3 Cooperation with National & Local Authorities

At national level ILO gives priority to and works closely with their tripartite constituency constituting a) Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations; b) Employer's Federation of Ceylon; c) Trade Unions. Close links have been established at DS Administration level as an implementing partner/stakeholder and indicates cooperation with local entities who have a vested interest in the development of the local community. This leads to an increase in the sense of ownership and continuity of the community's access to required services and/or technical support. Delegating partners/PHDT to act as coordinating, monitoring body and SCC to facilitate program encouraged activities i.e. forging PPPs, and mobilize the community at different levels/workers/company management/business community is further evidence of the project's efforts to link up with the national broader economic development framework.

5.4 Programmatic Approach & Project Strategy

The Program's most significant intervention approach has been working primarily with key stakeholders (RPCs, PHDT, DS) to ensure provision of adequate quality and outreach of social protection to plantation and surrounding village communities at risk of sending children into exploitative employment. The Regional Plantation Companies who are members of the Employers Federation of Ceylon, (EFC) worked closely with the established EWHCS units (comprising workers and RPC membership) The PHDT²⁰ is mandated to work on human development issues for 17 Regional Plantation Companies (RPPCs) operating on the plantations. As a tripartite structure, its board consists of the Ministry of Plantation Industries, (government) the employers (who are also members of EFC) and major Trade Unions which has given this project the added advantage of an extensive network body and outreach capacity. PHDT interacted and worked closely with district administration, provincial health authorities, the zonal education officers to ensure that benefit of existing services extend to the remotely positioned and most vulnerable groups and their children.

The project also encouraged and facilitated plantation duty bearers/management to work closely with the subnational administration to secure optimum benefits of all social protection afforded by the State to the marginalized plantation communities.

Key strategies of the Social Protection Project focus on four areas as follows:

- 1) Strengthening EWHC capacity to provide value added social protection services such as savings program, budgeting, cash management, education and health/life skills to plantation families and their children at risk of moving into child labour;
- 2) Enhancing opportunities of young women/men and those out-of-school and vulnerable to HFCL to secure alternative employment to HFCL;
- 3) Mainstreaming social safety nets and social protection to all plantation and rural children (e.g. scholarships; provision of NFE classes, health and temperance programs, life skills, etc) through direct interventions, partnerships and knowledge-sharing with the provincial and district secretariats of private enterprises;
- 4) Providing technical advice to RPCs and other partners including the EFC, to mainstream the prevention of child labour/HFCL and related issues such as violence and intemperance that are key to prevention programs, into corporate business plans, through policies and programs.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY

The potential for sustainability of the project is strong primarily due to its operation/intervention strategies. The expansion and/or continuity of the program is based on the following factors as discussed previously.

²⁰ The PHDT is a tripartite organization that supports and lends itself to maintaining social dialogue across human development programmes under their purview.

- (i) **Strategic Partnerships** - the establishment of strategic partnerships with key local implementing partners and partnership networks of implementing partners such as PHDT and their links to RPCs, and access to estate workers through the EWHCS. The engagement of the Chamber of Commerce, and District Secretariat structure/officers have increased the level of local participation in project implementation activities, project support and sense of ownership, which will contribute to the continuity of program services;
- (ii) **Intervention Strategies and Strategic approach** – the integrated approach, and integration and cooperation of multi-sector partners/actors in the project at state/district, communities within the plantations, management from planning to implementation has involved a participatory approach and extensive engagement of a wide group of people. The mobilization of the community at multiple levels increased the sense of ownership which will contribute toward sustainability of activities. Field discussions confirmed this as stakeholders, partners and community beneficiaries expressed their support and enthusiasm for the continuation of project activities. TOTs and EWHCS representatives noted that with our without ILO support they will carry out their work with the support of the cooperative societies;
- (iii) **Public/Private Partnerships (PPP)** that were formed and encouraged particularly through the role of Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce in engaging the business community, raising awareness of CL prevention and increasing their sense of civic responsibility will sustain interest and support for value added social protection services i.e. scholarship programs/equipment. The establishment of a Child Development Fund through the partnership of the DS and Private Sector has initiated the momentum for continued awareness campaigns on CL issues and funding support for vulnerable children to attend school. PPPs will help to mainstream social protection services into estate programs which has aimed at ensuring sustainability.
- (iv) **Progressive Change in Plantation Management – RPC** Plantation management is responding positively toward the concept of CL prevention and acknowledge the RPC policy in place preventing CL not hiring workers under 18 years. More importantly they recognize that estate labour is moving away from plantations due the stigma attached to the low status of workers and see the need to improve the quality of life of their workforce. They are now looking at ways of connecting the CL program concepts to uplift the worker life through increased social services/support for children which they see as linked to productivity and profitability. The provision of technical advice to regional plantation companies and other partners including the

EFC, to mainstream the prevention of child labour/HFCL and related issues such as violence and intemperance into corporate business plans through plantation policies and programs will have a sustainable impact that contributing to children's risk-mitigation;

- (v) **District Level Engagement** - There appears to be a strong commitment on the part of both the previous DS under whose auspices this project was initiated as well as the current DS to increase social protection services to plantation workers, rural villages and the district as a whole reflected in discussions and as clearly indicated in the district's child development plan. The district structures are implementing various activities aimed at making Ratnapura a child labour free zone. District official noted that the ILO program has supported and further enhanced the plans and activities already in place, to take it further. Engaging the DS structure as a main implementing is a strong sustaining factor in ensuring continuity of program activities and striving to minimize the risk of CL through increased social protection in both plantations as well as other high risk locations;
- (vi) **Strengthened Community Structures** – strengthening community through workers organizations such as EWHCS and the active mobilization of communities, trainings, capacity building, TOT groups, has increased the level of commitment and enthusiasm for project activities. Selection of some of the TOTs from the EWHCS whose members are from the estate, and plantation officers such as CDOs, PFWOs assigned with the responsibility of conducting cascade training, awareness raising activities, monitoring progress and protection of children in their estates, has increased their level of enthusiasm and commitment toward their community. Discussions in all estates indicated there is a vested interest in the development of their community and a sense of ownership, which will assure to a large extent, the continuity of project activities;
- (vii) **Phasing Out Strategy** - Although a clearly articulated strategy is not evident project objective emphasis on local implementing partnerships, extensive training, awareness, capacity building and encouragement of local authority/public, private sector and community participation reveal project focus on strengthening local institutions to function independently. Field discussions and project reports indicate project provision of technical support, advocacy and awareness building particularly for implementing partners to increase their capacity,, knowledge and ability to operate autonomously once ILO phases out.

7.0 FINDINGS

- Geographic locations, difficult terrain, poor access roads and lack of transport facilities is a challenge for attending school and ensuring continued attendance. Often schools accessible to children on estates are limited to grade 5 or 9. Transferring to other schools entails travel, distances and going into town in some cases. Girls are reluctant to travel far, many children find it difficult to cope in bigger schools with higher quality education, and their inability to keep up due to the poor quality education they have received. The general tendency is to drop out of school despite the lack of home environment issues;
- The Leadership skills of community workers has increased, TOTs and those exposed to trainings indicated confidence and enthusiasm in conducting program activities. The ILO project has been able to mobilize a diverse group and engage them in conducting activities and reaching out to the communities. Talaivars, Poosaris,(Hindu Religious Leaders) government officers, Budddhist Monks, law enforcement/police etc., and, as evidenced in the field everyone participated as a collective effort, worked toward a common goal and shared responsibilities. The DS structure has been able to target estate surrounding communities, while PHDT focused on plantation communities;
- Implementing partners, trainers, plantation workers/representatives have got the ability to take this forward, and the community has awakened to the awareness and importance of CL issues and prevention. However at workers/community level more awareness and knowledge is needed in future programs, particularly when dealing with communities with low literacy levels and are facing day to day survival challenges. Program implementing staff in the field may need to take a softer approach and focus on ensuring/facilitating social protection services while encouraging the school attendance of children. This evaluation notes that more emphasis should be given to provision of value added social protection services along with simultaneous *support* for children's school attendance;
- Senior plantation management show positive responses to the concept and understanding of CL, prevention and protection. They appear to recognize the right of a child to education up to the age of 18, have relevant policies in place and note that uplifting their workers' lives means a positive response at work, happy workers equals increase in productivity. Management also pointed out that there has been a lack of strikes and no industrial disputes on the estates;
- There has been a notable increase in government DS Structure/official interaction on plantation/estates. Field discussions revealed that GNs participate in plantation management meetings, on mother migration and other issues relating to children. Law enforcement officers/policy are also participating and coordinating with plantation management when services are required;

- RPC estates are indicating a move toward minimizing CL by policy and in practice. However issues are indicated in Small Holdings Plantations where the likelihood for CL is high. Due to current labour shortages small holders have a need for daily labour and pay higher daily wage rates than on RPC plantations. There are 240 private tea factories 50 of them are located in the South and Sabaragamuwa regions;
- An effective public/private partnership process has been initiated, the program has galvanized various groups into action such as GNs, plantation managers, WOs who have made collective efforts at collecting funds, making contributions toward children's schooling support. The establishment of the District Child Development Fund is a result of a PPP. This program is perceived as providing a good platform for integrated efforts of government and private sector to achieve CL prevention and protection results;
- Incentives for school attendance has increased, i.e. school bags/midday meals for children in schools through links to other programs. After the ILO program was implemented, estate officers/TOTs stated more children are back in schools. The awareness programs have been useful for parents who were previously indifferent to their children's education. Estate worker participation in CL monitoring of out of school children, carrying out vigilant spot checks on them has made a major difference in getting them back to school. It was also noted that the personal commitment, active engagement and collaboration of CDOs and Principals has contributed to this;
- "Good Living – awareness" appears to be assessed by an increase in savings of mothers and children. This is a positive achievement, however it is important that the beneficiaries realize the significance of savings and its link to their ability to strive for a "good life," and they have a clear choice regarding the amount allocated to savings. Enforced savings are ongoing and the evaluation notes increased savings in their pass books. It was noted that there is a reduction in the dependency on private money lenders thereby indebtedness;
- Activities relating to health and nutrition increased through the program's introduction of nutritious diet, home gardening encouraging cultivation of green/gotukola and including these in the children's midday meals/lunches. Women have started growing nutritious food for consumption. However, discussions indicated the need to ensure that parents/mothers understand the significance of nutrition, have the time in their daily work schedules and are not simply doing what they are expected to do, which is unlikely to lead to a sustainable practice;
- Alcohol consumption as well as brewing on plantations visited have decreased after program awareness raising activities. Estates have mobilized the services of police for civil protection and law enforcement to prevent illicit brewing of local "kasippu." It was noted however that people from outside the plantation come in and engage in brewing activities;

8.0 LESSONS LEARNED:

- Relative isolation of communities/families residing in difficult access areas who are already lacking services may not receive the full benefit or *quality* supplementary/complementary social protection services supported through this project. There are supply side challenges in providing information and services to all divisions in a selected estate which should be factored to avoid uneven distribution of services and discontent among groups who have not received information and/or supplementary, value additional services. Overcoming the lack of access to quality, timely and accessible services on tea plantations through the formal government system and estate sector management is a priority when facilitating community access to services, and even more essential to keep in mind when mainstreaming value added social protection into HFCL/CL programs for maximum impact;
- Emphasis and clarity on rights versus charitable or hand out provision of services is important when strengthening the capacity of plantation communities *to access* enhanced social protection as a right rather than welfare. Parents, particularly community workers/trainers, EWHCS in particular should fully understand and emphasize *rights* to social protection and its links to CL minimization, and a child's basic *right* to education. This tends to be side tracked unintentionally or otherwise, in the enthusiasm among trained workers attempting to deliver timely activities and meet program targets. If community capacity is to be strengthened to access services as a basic right, it should not be perceived and/or conveyed as a charitable service, which will contribute to and perpetuate the welfare mentality and approach;
- As awareness and advocacy are an integral part of this program aimed at behavioral change, future programs will do well to work with fathers and other male family members, including elders, to instill a strong sense of responsibility and participation in the health and social welfare of their family/mothers and children. As a pilot intervention model, project activities have carried out significant ground work for replication. Active targeting of men/fathers in future awareness/training programs will overcome their traditional indifference and influence behavioral change through information/knowledge combined with appropriate communication strategies, particularly among the younger generation of plantation workers. Particularly important for achieving maximum program impact and program outcomes of enjoying a *better family environment* on the plantations as well as sustainability;

9.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing the impact of The Social Protection Project piloted in Ratnapura district, this evaluation has paid attention to some key factors such as awareness generated, collaborative mechanisms established and/or strengthened, processes initiated and inherent potential for sustainability, which has determined the successful outcome, immediate impact as well as potential for longer term impact. The evaluation notes both positive and negative impacts on the effectiveness and efficiency of program activities and overall outcome. It also notes the strategic approach and intervention modes and highlighted significant and effective multi-sectoral/integrated approach strategies introduced and used to achieve maximum impact, circumvent the challenges in implementing project activities within a short period and ensure sustainability.

Multi-sectoral, integrated approach for this intervention, collaborative efforts and cooperation among different sources for the implementation of program activities; mobilizing social partners/stakeholders on the plantations and key implementing partners selected from the plantations and sub-national/district level administration has worked well to ensure maximum outreach of social protection and education to plantation and surrounding village communities/workers. In addition, extensive efforts and attention to building capacity at local levels, awareness, trainings and advocacy interventions indicate that laying a solid foundation to promote and gain support for CL concepts further strengthens this program's intervention approach and inherent potential for sustainability.

The evaluation noted the district context, physical locations and local dynamics that have both positive and negative effects on project implementation. Local conditions determined the parameters within which program activities can be accomplished and define operational capacity of local institutions and entities. Significant achievements have been made through this pilot project in contributing to ILO program goals and objectives within the project allocated time frame. This project to the extent possible, has paid close attention to both the end product as well as the processes involved. It has focused on mobilizing significant local involvement, aimed at encouraging a rights-based approach in meeting basic socio-economic needs and social services for vulnerable communities; on enabling and activating networks and partnerships, establishing linkages and strong emphasis on strengthening and developing local capacity.

Although challenges have been noted in this evaluation, the overall impact of the program has been positive with engagement at multiple levels, national, district, divisional, plantation management, business sector, through private/public partnerships, estate officials, worker community structures and beneficiary levels. Field observations and discussion indicated tremendous support, enthusiasm and requests for the continuity of Project activities in the district. Plantation management (specifically Balangoda Plantation Co.) has been emphatic in

requesting that program activities be expanded to cover all plantations that come within their RPC to ensure inclusivity. Both former and current District Secretaries requested that program activities should be expanded to cover all divisions in the Ratnapura district, without leaving gaps. With the robust engagement and cooperation on the part of government and plantation stakeholders, and a heightened level of commitment to continue activities displayed among trained officials/workers and mobilized communities, sustainability of program objectives in addressing CL and its prevention appear to be strong.

Continuation and/or replication of this pilot project model is crucial, to build on the foundations laid by the current program. It should continue to strengthen the established, activated partnerships, networks, alliances and institutional structures both within the government and plantations to increase communication, collaboration and cooperation locally. Stronger local/community institutions and groups can become a source of support and continuity for Child Labour prevention and protection.

In order to support future direction and scope of ILO's program undertakings, this evaluation has noted some of the pitfalls to be avoided in providing access to improved social protection for communities to enjoy a better family environment on the plantations and surrounding villages, and outlines the following recommendations:

Improve Beneficiary Targeting in Challenging Divisions - Develop strategies to target all divisions in selected/plantation, keeping in mind the terrain and access issues. Engage more field level officers/human resources, strengthen EWHCS's, support collaboration with different organizations, public and plantation authorities to develop communication strategies and practical action to ensure that groups of vulnerable communities are not excluded from program benefits. A concerted effort may be needed to ensure those already isolated due to distances, poor infrastructure and transportation issues. PHDT could facilitate stronger links with/between PCCO, DS and divisional administrative structures to increase awareness of existing government support services and provide access to available services such as scholarship programs, formal literacy programs in the education sector as well as other available services. Future programs should also ensure more pro-active targeting of men. Although the workforce on estates constitutes 60-70% women which explains lower participation of males, targeted strategies should be directed to be more inclusive of the male population particularly on awareness raising activities to support behavioral change, overcome indifferent attitudes and increase engagement with the welfare and development of their families and community;

Target Small Holding Plantations for CL Prevention Programs – currently there are many issues in small holder estates due to labour shortages. While CL in RPC has decreased small holdings

are likely to engage CL to fill labour shortages. It must be cautioned that as small holdings are family enterprises, they could be engaging their children. The distinction should be made children who are attending school and providing support for the family enterprise after school and those who are not attending/prevented from attending school to work on the plantations. Small Holder Societies for Tea and Rubber should be targeted for future awareness programs. Link to and support programs that are being implemented through the DS structure;

Mobilize and Engage Additional Institutional Support – Discussions with district level officials indicated the need for engaging additional government entities to lend further support/resources for covering challenging areas and strengthen multi-sectoral/integrated approach by engaging the following: i) Numerous women’s organizations that operate under the Ministry of Women’s Affairs should be engaged in future activities; ii) In the Education Sector, education project officers should be mobilized for conducting awareness raising to support DS structure needs this support; iii) Labour Department officers need to be trained on CL issues, DS officers lack their support as CL is not given priority in their work agenda; iv) local government bodies/Pradeshiya Sabhas should be mobilized, linked with district administrative structure to actively engage in supporting the living standards,(provide/improve basic infrastructural services), and enhance social protection services for families/workers. At the very least, target PS’s through campaigns to increase their awareness/knowledge on the significance of CL issues to encourage gradual engagement (which will take time) in support services for CL prevention; v) TUs can be mobilized to play a stronger role engaging in future programs at national/provincial/district levels, in enabling/advocating for provision of basic infrastructural services which will facilitate supplemental services delivered through program activities;

Identify and Improve Quality of Awareness Programs – emphasis should be on the importance of improving quality as well as coverage of social protection supplemental services. The link between provision of such services to the community/families and motivation/encouragement to send children to school should be highlighted when conducting awareness and information programs. Identify means of improving services through processes that improve quality. Often marginalized communities/groups need to feel heard, understood and cared for and require information that is useful for them, not generic information and/or messages. It should be timely and targeted. It is important that EWHCS and TOTs are not focused on the number of awareness programs conducted in meeting numerical targets, but more on the processes, substantive content and context in which they are operating, keeping in mind the objective of supporting/adding value to social protection and welfare of beneficiaries;

Develop and Adapt Training Strategies and Tools - training tools should be practical not too theoretical in order to engage marginalized and often an uneducated or lesser educated target

population. Training sessions need to include practical exposure and audio-visual tools when targeting less literate populations on plantations. For example a module can be developed on Alcohol consumption and its negative impact through visual tools, and include positive aspects of how wasted income can be used constructively to improve their lives.

Utilize Role of Media - Make Child Labour Prevention more visible through media technology, a prerequisite to getting the attention from all segments of society, that is needed to help solve or address the problem. The media should be mobilized in future program to bring visibility to the issue of Child Labour and Child Protection issues, to increase knowledge and awareness that CL prevention and protection is the responsibility of wider society and the nation at large and highlight actions taken toward reducing CL in the relevant district. It can play a stronger role in influencing/bringing about behavioral change through media production, media campaigns, communications strategies and public outreach for private and public sector;

Increase Retention and Catch Up Programs - Pay more attention to motivating the retention of children in schools, estate community leaders emphasized the lack of quality education, including a dearth of teachers and classes with modern facilities in the local schools and the ability of estate children to compete and maintain required standards once they transfer to other schools for the continuation of their education. Catch up programs for those who have dropped out and would like to continue formal education and/or alternative programs for example increasing the availability of vocational trainings for those looking for employment opportunities. Discussions in the field indicated a greater need for such programs; It was suggested that PHDT could take steps to provide links to training opportunities, facilitate VT authorities and Technical College Representatives to visit the estate sector and provide much needed information/counselling/career guidance to young people;

Strengthen Monitoring Capacity - The role of the PHDT in supervising and monitoring community/worker program activities can be further strengthened and supported through human/financial resources. Facilitate access to obtain available national resources, to play a more effective monitoring role in the districts. In the alternative, establish a separate community/EWHCS based monitoring unit that can actively operate in the different divisions within estates. Community-based monitoring units can play a far more effective role through their community outreach capacity, particularly in remote, rural locations. Strengthening monitoring units formed by beneficiaries who have a vested interest in the continuity and development of their local environment, children and community, encourages ownership and contributes toward sustainability.