



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## Evaluation Name

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Sri Lanka*

**Final Evaluation:** *Final Evaluation*

**Evaluation Mode:** *External Final Evaluation*

**Administrative Office:** *CO-Colombo*

**Technical Office:** *DWT-Bangkok*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Asitha Seneviratne*

**Evaluation Consultant(s):** *Sonali Moonesinghe*

**Project Code:** *SRL/14/50M/JPN*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** *149,947*

**Keywords:** *Child labour*

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

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. 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.

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.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability of ILO's "Social Protection for Families of Children at Risk of Exploitative Employment through Strengthening Supplementary Service Provision..." Project. The evaluation focused on the achievements and impact of its intervention, supporting activities and to what extent they have contributed to the achievement of Project objectives, in the selected locations of plantations in Ratnapura District. Special attention was paid to inclusivity and logical flow/coherence in program design, planning, management and implementation, project alignment to national policies and strategies, gender equality and non-discrimination, and adherence to international labour standards. Within the specified time frame, this evaluation assessed program achievements against stated objectives, intended outputs and activities in key areas of work, in accordance with ILO evaluation policy guidelines and the evaluation criteria as outlined. The evaluation noted lessons learnt, good practices for replication, and provided recommendations to inform the future direction of program planning and implementation.

The evaluation assessed the extent of the projects overall impact on targeted groups, project partners and beneficiary categories at different levels i.e. state, institutions, community, children, in the following areas among other: a) The quality of social protection and extent of its coverage to estate plantation communities, through improved

access/provision of education, health services improved financial management, benefits of enhanced skills; b) Improved capacity of (10) local institutions/EWHCS to deliver value added social protection; c) Usefulness and effectiveness of skills trainings delivered to girls and boys or families, and their ability to access alternatives livelihood options and minimize risks of children moving to Hazardous Forms of Child Labour (HFCL); d) Effectiveness of public/private partnerships in 10 estates (regional plantation companies/sub-national administrative bodies) in supporting social protection in selected plantation communities/1000 children and their families; e) Effective documentation and dissemination of project outcomes and lessons learnt.

Primary clients of this evaluation include ILO Country Office, The Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, ILO's tripartite constituency employers including the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) Trade Unions and main implementation partners of the Project, The Ratnapura District Secretariat, Plantation Human Development Trust and Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

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. 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.

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

i. 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. General tendency is to drop out of school despite the lack of home environment issues;

ii. 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; iii. 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;

iv. 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;

v. 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;

vi. 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;

vii. 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;

viii. 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;

ix. "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;

x. 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;

xii. 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;

### ***Conclusion:***

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 noted strategic approach, 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, mobilizing social partners/stakeholders on the plantations and selection of key implementing partners from 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.

## **Lessons Learnt and Recommendations**

### ***Lessons:***

(i). 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;

(ii). Emphasis and clarity on rights versus charitable or hand out provision of services is important when strengthening plantation communities capacity 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;

(iii.) 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, specifically 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;

### ***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.