



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Prevention and Eradication of Domestic Child Labour and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru

Quick Facts

Countries: Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru

Final Evaluation: September 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: ILO-IPEC Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section

Evaluation Team: Eliana Villar Márquez

Project Start: September 2004

Project End: December 2007

Project Code: RLA/04/P54/USA

Donor: US Department of Labour (USA)
\$5,500,000

Keywords: Child Labour, Domestic worker, Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The regional project – ‘Weaving Networks’ – against the exploitation of children and adolescents in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru worked with financial support from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and through the International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) in order to contribute to the prevention and eradication of domestic child labour (DCL) in homes of third parties and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) during a period of 39 months (between September 2004 and December 2007).

The project established three immediate objectives:

- Collect comparable and reliable information regarding the characteristics and prevalence of DCL and CSEC in the selected countries, which would be available and utilized by key actors.
- Create a legal, institutional and cultural framework which would encourage the implementation of effective action against DCL and CSEC.
- Develop effective pilot models for the prevention and withdrawal of children from DCL and CSEC.

The original language of the evaluation was Spanish.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation set out to:

- a) construct an account of what was realized since the mid-term evaluation for the relevant parties, including government agencies and social interlocutors in various countries, and the donor;
- b) analyze the good practices and lessons learned through the implementation of the project which could contribute to institutional learning on the part of the donor, the ILO, national institutions, and others;
- c) receive and give feedback on the project to interested parties; and
- d) verify aspects of the mid-term evaluation.

The final purpose of the evaluation is the formulation of recommendations which support the work of the IPEC/ILO in order to revise its

strategy and plan of action in order to strengthen its contribution to the prevention and eradication of the worst forms of child labour.

The evaluation is aimed at contributing to the institutional learning of the ILO, and the report is designed to be shared with the executing organs of the project as well as the donor, state representatives, private businesses and unions.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation methodology consisted of revising available documents, coordinating and conducting interviews, and participating in an evaluation workshop, which was conducted as part of a regional forum that was held at the end of the project in Santiago, Chile. The report notes, however, among a set of limitations, that the final evaluation was realized by one person, not by a team of people, and did not include a field visit to any of the countries involved.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Among the most relevant findings of the report are:

a) That the nature of the project is restrictive by its definition, since it refers to horizontal cooperation among the involved countries. In reality these countries are at different levels of institutional development, as well in terms of familiarity with the project's core issues.

b) That the project, despite having at its disposal a team of coordinators who share a clarity of key concepts, did not successfully extend this conceptual clarity or promote conceptual debate to other key actors within the project. Such actors include representatives of the state, of workers, and of businesses. This insufficient homogeneity of conceptual knowledge was aggravated by a lack of focus on gender and on the restitution of children's rights in the project implementation. There was also a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the links between domestic child labour and commercial sexual exploitation, since the latter received much more focus.

c) That among the strongest achievements of the project was the validation of intervention models. This was apparent in positive practices on regional and national levels, as well as in the lessons learned. However, these positive practices were not supported by the strategic institutional articulations needed to assure their sustainability. Weak

connections with the State did not permit either topic to intersect with national political agendas.

d) Several factors – external and internal to the project – have determined the sustainability of the project to a greater or lesser degree, such as: the articulation of a public agenda (at the national and regional level); institutional limitations and political will on the part of the authorities; the adequate selection of key actors and the establishment of strategic alliances; and the weakness of tripartite participation. The final challenge is common to all four of the countries involved; that in spite of the influence and capacity of the ILO to mobilize, a greater commitment will not be achieved on the part of companies and workers without defining concrete targets and providing for the allotment of resources to achieve these targets.

e) The communication strategies, due to the resources available to the project and the time required to complete the investigation, have acted in an innovative manner, but have not achieved a complete articulation of the other components of the project and/or have not taken advantage of the wealth of evidence generated by the studies which constitute one of the most notable achievements of Weaving Networks.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The evaluation recommends developing a strategic view in any intervention, taking into consideration that, the regional character should represent an opportunity for learning between countries and there is a strategic opportunity to commit those institutions with greater influence, decision making capacity, and resources for which the issues (DCL and CSEC) normally do not represent a central priority on the public agenda. The project could gain greater space for the long term in the concerns and agendas of the authorities. Regional spaces such as Mercosur – and more specifically “Child of the South” – to promote the rights of the child, require regular channels that give continuity and regularity to the effort.

2. Dealing with issues that are not well known and rarely debated requires a balance between activism and the creation of spaces for conceptual debate and an approach which establishes a common foundation that offers greater certainty and rigor to

those involved in the project. Both elements will provide greater vision for intervention opportunities.

3. Despite the institutional weakness that characterizes the countries of the region, the states constitute key actors that we should commit to ensuring the sustainability of the interventions. This involvement could be realized at various levels (establishing conventions and institutional alliances) but should take into consideration the strategic actors within the state such as the Ministry of the Economy (Finance or Treasury, as each country designates it) with the power to assign public resources and available budgets that will support the political will of the authorities.

4. Issues that deal with the well being and protection of the child occupy a subaltern place in the public agenda due to the subordination of social issues in developing countries. In this sense, seeking strategic alliances with key actors and establishing links with issues that do occupy a central place on the public agenda could probably promote and sustain accountability on the part of the authorities. For example, linking the fight against DCL and CSEC with the state policy of fighting poverty and fulfilling anti-discrimination laws; place these issues in the framework of existing state commitments to provide quality education and in the context of the “Education for All” campaign.

5. The efficacy of any intervention is partly linked to the capacity of the implementers to rely on an appropriate reading and interpretation of the political context in which they are operating. Knowledge of the political context allows for the identification of windows of opportunity and the visualization of strategic alliances that could broaden the projections of the interventions.

6. The fora and international spaces (regional, supra-national) prove to be strategic when monitoring the fulfilment of commitments and agreements. The evaluation recommends the implementation – in future interventions with regional reach – a monitoring system that registers follow up of the agreements – indicating time frames and targets – in particular when these commit the authorities at the highest level and in international spaces in which it is more feasible to pressure for accountability.

Important lessons learned

1. Proposing an intervention project with regional reach represents a significant effort for ILO-IPEC, as well as for the Regional Office which is responsible for regional coordination. An effort of this magnitude should be sustained by a specific value added due to its regional character, a contribution which would be the result of the possibility to articulate supra-national actions and could resonate in possible learning from that regional action. Said value added would supersede formal advances (such as legal harmonization) and should mean the possibility for a qualitative advance for the regional intervention which should be clearly expressed in the justification of the project.

2. Interventions in issues which elude social policy and programs – usually not priorities in developing countries – that affect the most vulnerable groups of the population – in particular women and children – should be able to rely on a strategy designed by specialists in public policy in order to include an adequate “reading” and include the political context and should involve the actors with the greatest level of competence and influence in the intervention issue.

3. One of the more effective forms of promoting the involvement and commitment of institutional actors as well as promoting opportunities for co-operation, emerges from mutual knowledge for which it is crucial to identify institutional competencies and create mechanisms to stimulate inter-institutional cooperation for the project and beyond.

4. Establishing relationships for exchange and cooperation requires a willingness to create decentralized mechanisms.

5. Accountability is still an incipient practice in Latin America which means that it is indispensable to ensure the creation of a monitoring system for the fulfilment of commitment, especially when these involves state actors. One example of the mechanisms that stimulate advances in the fulfilment of commitments is (at the international level) the reports that the state regularly produces on the fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the United Nations Commission or presentations that the Prime Minister and five other Ministers give to parliament on the progress made on the fulfilment of the National Action Plan for the Child (at the national level).

6. The commitments assumed by the authorities and the political will expressed to support social programs and policies to accompany the corresponding designation of public resources that make fulfilment possible. This process could be favoured by the inclusion of the Ministers of the Economy in the countries so that they may participate in the project design, planning and implementation.

7. There should be a redoubling of efforts to resolve the conceptual inconsistencies between the United Nations organs because these might affect the interventions, and, while this occurs, there should be an internal agreement regarding the most strategic way to manage said discrepancies.

8. Every project requires – as an essential part of its sustainability – permanent debate over the concepts their contexts give that factors such as participation and socialization from a common ground make it possible for those involved to “appropriate” the project and give it continuity beyond the duration of the project.

9. Interventions related to children should take advantage of lessons from the fight for rights for women and use their experiences to inspire strategies, particularly when the intervention issues (such as DCL and CSEC) mostly affect girls. At the strategic level, the policies and programs designed to prevent and detect violence against children can learn lessons from the women’s movement given that the policies and programs work to combat violence against women and have gained a higher profile at the national level than those programs dealing with violence against children.

10. Given the weakness of public institutions, and in particular those in charge of social issues and those in charge of children, it is urgent to jointly explore (consulting with the institutions), the possible foundations on which an inter-sector action could be constructed and oriented toward a greater efficacy for interventions.

11. One way to improve interventions on behalf of vulnerable groups consists of enriching the factors that fuel the very condition of vulnerability and that make it specific: in the case of DCL and CSEC, beyond the condition of poverty, there are factors such as belonging to a minority ethnic group or a group with different sexual orientations.

12. Conceptual approaches should be developed with a concrete link with reality in order to facilitate transmission. For example, the rights approach cannot be elaborated through an abstract discourse.

13. The systematization and analysis of actions opens the door for people and institutions to learn to identify what makes the difference for the success of an intervention.

14. In interventions related to children’s issues, it is recommended to break the isolation that characterizes subaltern issues on the public agenda. There should be a strategic articulation with this issues that will most likely mobilize both the authorities and public opinion. The states with institutional weakness such as those in the region could be favoured – at the technical level as well as with resources and public backing – if their sectors/social ministries (traditionally the weakest, with fewer resources and fewer technical capabilities) could learn from more efficient sectors that are results oriented.

15. Interventions on behalf of children require articulating long term processes (such as strategies to combat poverty) in order to position the authorities for a preventative approach that could have greater sustainability.

16. The follow up actions should be envisioned from the design of the project and should include the monitoring of agreements, establishing time frames, responsible and precise targets (in consensus with the authorities) and create a vigilance among the citizenry. These commitments should be divulged in the media in order to increase the capacity of civil society to exert pressure.

17. Interventions that involve changes to the execution of social programs (such as offering closed accommodations from the state) demand, among others, a justification based on the cost and effectiveness of the new proposed model, including training and the eventual turnover in functionaries.

18. Measuring the impact of interventions should be a substantial part of the design of the intervention and should be developed throughout its implementation. There is a need to position monitoring and evaluation as an indispensable sphere to enrich and give meaning to the action.