



International Labour Organization

IPEC

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

IPEC Evaluation: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fighting the worst forms of child labour in Costa Rica: Support to the Time Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in Costa Rica

Phase I and II:
COS/02/P50/CAN; COS/03/P03/CAN

A final independent evaluation

November 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **purpose** of this final evaluation is to determine if the projects are meeting the proposed objectives, and to explain the reasons for achieved targets or deviations from the targets. The purpose is also to identify aspects and lessons learned that might be of interest for the more general application of the TBP concept, and to formulate recommendations that allow sustaining its achievements.

The **methodological approach** was qualitative and included the perspective of stakeholders, including IPEC staff, executive and technical representatives of governmental entities and institutions and non-governmental organizations which were involved in the issue of CL and in the development of the project and its action programs, parents and children who have benefited from the project as well as other relevant actors. It involves the utilization of diverse techniques and sources to evaluate the aspects of the projects.

After analyzing the information, the evaluation **concludes:**

Regarding the project design

The design has been pertinent and suitable to the characteristics of the political and institutional context of Costa Rica.

It reflects the Costa Rican reality and sets priorities and needs identified by the institutions themselves.

It was relevant from the point of view of the national strategies for poverty reduction, childhood protection, and education.

It is internally coherent from the point of view of integrality and articulation of its components. The first phase of preparatory activities and the TBP support project itself at the national and local levels are clearly interrelated in their strategies and utilization of potential synergies.

The assumptions have been realistic and adequate in terms of the strategies adopted. The national scenario and the accumulated experience allowed identifying the conditions to carry out the TBP: stable political context, possibility to cooperate with national health, education, and protection authorities and involving the relevant actors at the national level. But the premises regarding institutional decentralization, in particular of OATIA, have not been sustained and this is one of the main failures of the design.

Regarding the advances and outcomes reached in the main TBP areas

Effectiveness and efficiency in the performance

The performance has been effective as almost all scheduled actions have been complied with as well as the goals proposed. It has also been effective in the generation of a favorable scenario for the development of a national TBP, and it

contributed to placing the issue of child labor on the public agenda, to promote national legislation on this matter, and to incorporate specific aspects for the eradication of child labor in the public policies.

Regarding its efficiency, the outcomes reached justify the global investment made. At the local level, the strategies adopted allowed generating synergies with national initiatives carried out at the same time as the TBP.

Awareness of key actors and the overall population

It managed to involve all important actors and it has advanced toward the achievement of tangible commitments in terms of resources allocated for the eradication of the WFCL. The issue of CL and its worst forms is seen by all those actors as a national social problem that has to be approached with an integral perspective. The population as a whole is clearly informed about this matter. A very important advance is the training and raising of awareness at the mid-levels of the ministries. Most of them have tenure and will remain in their positions after the government changes.

For the topic not to get lost among the multiple social problems the country is facing, it is necessary to have permanent presence in the media. It is necessary to continue disseminating to educate and create active awareness about the topic, in particular about the differences between CL and the protection of adolescents' work. In addition, it is necessary to continue working with the decision-making levels of governmental organisms that are part of the CDN, in particular to include the topic in the electoral discourse and in the priorities for the new administration.

Development of legislation and policies

Progress was made regarding a proposal for a legislation on the WFCL, which updates the "Rules for Labor Contracts and Occupational Health Conditions of Adolescents", and it is in the complementary agenda of the legislative assembly. The formulation and approval of the Second National Plan is an important achievement which demonstrated the possibility of building inter-sectorial policies as well as involving MIDEPLAN in the monitoring of the allocation of resources for CL eradication actions.

What is still pending is to further disseminate the existing national laws and international commitments in order to increase awareness about the rights and the obligation to enforce them. It is also necessary to implement policies according to the guidelines in the Second National Plan, and to insure their continuity in the next administration.

Strengthening of key actors' capacities

It has been possible to raise the awareness and train officers of many governmental entities at the central and local levels as well as members of trade unions and

employers' organizations. The technical assistance provided by IPEC helped to establish meetings, exchange mechanisms, working tools such as intra and inter-institutional protocols, and to create some monitoring and evaluation entities for realized activities and outcomes. The formulation of the Second Plan contributed to the creation of a Technical Committee of the CDN. Moreover, new protagonists are appearing in the fight against CL, such as PANI, which are starting to assume responsibilities.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to decentralize the actions and institutional resources in the most needed areas. Although OATIA, as the office that specializes in CL, continues to be technically strengthened and leads the inter-institutional actions with the support of IPEC in the areas of the TBP, it is necessary to reinforce the development of activities at the local level.

Action Programs

The intervention model developed in the Brunca Region may be replicated in other regions of the country. The following outlines the lessons learnt and good practices that can be extracted from this experience. Other significant achievements that are important to mention are:

- Raising awareness on the issue of Child Labour and the problem by different local stakeholders.
- The development of inter-sectorial instances that collaborate in the building up of monitoring networks for child workers and the affected families.
- The institutional learning of the implementing agencies.
- The introduction of innovative aspects such as the use of participatory diagnostic methodologies.
- The possibility of linking research and action based on initiatives from the UCR.

An important unexpected outcome of the established collaboration is the recent implementation of the component on professional education, with local contributions from IMAS.

Time has been scarce for the implementation of the APs, and at the time of withdrawal, more time is needed to strengthen inter-institutional linkages, to empower the CL monitoring networks, to consolidate the recently created base committees, to generate new funds, etc.

Lessons learned and good practices

- The participatory approach in the formulation of the Second Plan because of its outcomes regarding the identification of linkages and the need for intersectorial work
- Intersectorial collaboration as a practice among traditionally isolated institutions
- The communication strategy as cross-sectional practice in all actions done by the TBP
- The decision of choosing well known institutions (such as UCR and the Catholic Church) at the national and regional level to implement local projects
- Having set priorities in only one region for the intervention and carrying out all the initiatives there
- The collaborative management model which promoted the cooperation of the implementing agencies, empowered their actions, and contributed to the social recognition of the project as a whole.
- The support role of the AP performed by the local IPEC coordination.
- The utilization of the regional and local inter-institutional decision-making spaces related to the national development and poverty-reduction policies.
- The creation of the basis for a community child-labor monitoring system.

Regarding the sustainability of the actions

From the point of view of **social sustainability**, it may be affirmed that it made it possible for the population and main key actors to recognize CL as a social problem, which the country has to fight against. There are still some sectors that need further awareness and training, especially about the implications of the WFCL and the role that each actor has to play to contribute to their eradication.

From the point of view of **economic sustainability**, the main achievement is the inclusion of actions and funds for the eradication of CL in the AOP of all public institutions. Yet, to guarantee their allocation, the Ministry of Finance should be included in the CDN because it is the entity that ultimately makes the allocation of resources to each entity.

From the point of view of **institutional sustainability**, the consolidation of the interinstitutional coordination role of CDN and, in particular, its Technical Committee and its coordination with MIDEPLAN, implies certain guarantees to continue the policies. At the local level, the activities to promote and strengthen the social network may assure the continuity of the programs once IPEC withdraws, but these networks need to be consolidated and there is little time left in the AP to do so. The central issue is that it is not clear what institution will take charge.

IPEC's strategy to achieve the sustainability has been to relate the issue with poverty and insert it in the Vida Nueva Plan and the Development Plan of this administration.

The arrival of a new government, whose priorities are not yet known, poses new challenges.

Based on all of this, the final evaluation **recommends**:

Regarding awareness-raising activities

To prevent the issue from getting lost among the many social problems the country is facing, it is necessary to keep the dissemination and awareness actions open both to educate on this matter and to raise awareness about the problem.

Regarding policies and legislation

Since the government will change soon, the last tract of the electoral campaign should be taken as an opportunity to position the issue among the candidates and their teams in order to look for their public commitment with this issue and to include it in their campaign. The role of CDN, trade unions, and employers' associations is to lobby as needed to achieve this. On the other hand, the presence that the issue would acquire in the next few months would be useful to raise awareness among other social actors who are not yet well informed.

Regarding institutional strengthening

To try to institutionalize the issue of CL, it is required to continue the training of line officials, to be aware and learn about the problem and transmit the information to all strata of the governmental institutions involved in the eradication of the WFCL.

A specific aspect of the institutional capacities transfer refers to the access and management of diverse financial sources; what is usually referred to as fund raising.

Regarding the direct action programs

At the local level, it is recommended to systematize the experience, especially the reflection and evaluation process that allows identifying the success and failure conditions of the integral attention of withdrawn children.

It is also recommended to carry out a strategic planning exercise that aims at preparing a gradual withdrawal strategy that takes advantage of the existing collaboration, and that aims at empowering the public institutions.

Recommendation for IPEC – how to exit

Taking into account these considerations, the responsible people for the TBP in IPEC should do a strategic planning exercise with the Technical Committee of the CDN to transfer their role of support, technical assistance, and “engine” of activities. They should share the outcomes and recommendations of the evaluation and based on this, they should build together the continuity strategy, thus establishing responsibilities, time frames, and necessary resources.