



Evaluation Summary



International
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Eliminating Child Labour in El Salvador through Economic Empowerment and Social Inclusion – Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>El Salvador</i>
Midterm Evaluation:	<i>04/2013</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>DWT/CO-San Jose</i>
Technical Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>ILO/IPEC-DED (Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section)</i>
Evaluation Consultants:	<i>Emma Lucía Rotondo (leader) & Claudia Solís (national)</i>
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It was implemented in accordance with ILO/IPEC's aim, which is the progressive elimination of child labour (ECL), especially its worst forms.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The programme's design contemplates developing a gradual, multi-sectoral strategy unprecedented in the country, as it implies acting simultaneously on three levels to prevent and eradicate child labour (CL), especially in its worst forms. On a macro level, national capacities of government agencies with competence over child labour, politics and legislation were strengthened, introducing the innovation of working directly with the public sector. On a meso level, 15 municipalities and 75 schools with the greatest concentration of child labourers in determined urban and rural areas were involved. On a micro (family) level, the intention is to intervene directly in 6,500 households (to prevent or withdraw 16,250 children from CL) through the livelihood component. Special attention is drawn to work with women and youth to develop business enterprises in order to generate income and progressively diminish dependence on child labourers' income. The programme is oriented towards all areas and sectors where women work in prioritized areas. Here lies another innovation of the programme's theory of change, as it considers the eradication of child labour as an indirect outcome of income generation on a household level. The programme applies the "Integrated Area-Based Approach" (IABA) with the idea of empowering on a local level for a unified service delivery and creating "geographical or administrative areas free of child labour." Consequently, intervention on a local and municipal level took place in three "waves" or sequential phases.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

This summary sets out the results of the mid-term evaluation of the programme "Eliminating Child Labour in El Salvador through Economic Empowerment and Social Inclusion" implemented by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) with funding from the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) from 31 December 2010 through 30 November 2014.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluating team carried out extensive documentary research, field visits to interview stakeholders and area samples, as well as non-participatory observation at events.

Besides the interviews to obtain a qualitative purpose sample of the stakeholders involved in the programme on a national and local level, documentary information was gathered including texts, photographs and other materials. Also, non-participatory observation regarding local training on Livelihood and Education was carried out.

At the end of the fieldwork phase, over 50 counterpart representatives, previously selected by the evaluating team, were gathered in a multi stakeholder workshop. The workshop had two objectives: to present the findings and preliminary conclusions with the aim to contrast them with the perceptions and opinions of the participants, as well as to construct lessons learned and identify working areas with good practices. Participants worked in teams and elaborated their results. Once the fieldwork phase was finished, the team proceeded to write the report in its preliminary version to be presented to the parties involved.

Even though the Terms of Reference (TOR) affirm the necessity of dealing with all results, the evaluators note that up to the date of the evaluation (February-April 2013) the implementation still continues to be able to have robust evidence on an outcome level (the third wave is on a formalization level, for instance). As such, observations are made at output level but towards effects and impacts.

Main Findings & Conclusions

1. Regarding the design

Validity

1.1 The project design is valid. This has been demonstrated after analysis of the obtained results (as outputs and progress towards effects) on a micro, meso and macro level. The effectiveness of the strategies has been greater on macro and meso levels than at the micro level. Counterpart capacities, at a macro and meso level have been developed and there is evidence suggesting a high level of commitment with the project, as with the appropriation of the discourse in their programmes. At a micro level, the

strategy with more progress has been the educational sector, while in the “Livelihoods” objective there is important progress especially in identifying counterparts and defining processes: the objective has been adapted, based on the challenges found and results are still incipient.

Logic and internal and external consistency

1.2 The project design foresees simultaneous performance on a macro, meso and micro level to prevent and eliminate CL and is found to be logical and coherent – in general terms – on an external and internal level due to the factors that lie beneath the existence and proliferation of CL. However, to achieve desired impact more time is needed to install processes of capacity development and generate results, especially on a level that improves the educational offer and family income. At the programme’s mid-term phase, results are found to be in process and still in an initial stage. On an internal level, it is fundamental to adjust personnel in order to have an ILO/IPEC intermediate team that follows and monitors actions on a municipal level to ensure the consolidation of simultaneous objectives and to establish successful networks that share common methodologies and arguments with new local stakeholders, (families, community and religious leaders, among others). In the same manner, it is fundamental in the short term to articulate actions on a municipal level with the Child and Adolescence Protection System, currently under construction.

2. Regarding effectiveness

Preparatory outputs

2.1 The ECL Project has been relatively effective in attaining the outputs, except those related to the Child Protection System on a local level, which is found to be in its initial stages (due to the country’s institutional set-up) and the livelihood component which has found initial difficulties to assist the target group (especially women) to attend trainings, due to long distances, the fact that they need to ask their husband’s permission to attend workshops and some weaknesses of counterparts as well as the low number of beneficiaries in the communities. The main constraint is time, as it is too short to implement all six, equally complex components. Certainly, ILO/IPEC is short-staffed considering that they perform all activities on a micro, meso and macro level.

Delivery of project outputs

2.2 Even though the ECL project begun in 2011, its implementation commenced in 2012 with a dialogue process and consultations with participating institutions, sensitizing them and adjusting the outputs to existing institutional approaches, all of which was time consuming. The programme is currently concluding its initial phase in which no results can be found on a general outcome level, even less so on an impact level, but processes have been initiated over supported bases with national institutional counterparts.

Unplanned results

2.3 On the initial implementation level in which the project is found, it reports advances as planned and foreseen results are observed. Some adolescents and youth trained by the Livelihoods objective begin to show incipient changes in discourse and attitude due to the sensitization and formation of the programme, which have opened the possibility of a new vision of their own life projects, which could impact in the reduction of CL for future generations and their children.

Positive and negative factors outside of the control of the project

2.4 Positive factors have been commitment and political will expressed by some thirty public institutions, as well as the FUNDAZUCAR Foundation and the Agricultural Suppliers Association which have implemented a successful Social Responsibility experience. The Ministry of Education (MINED) commitment seen on its national directorates, technical and departmental units as with selected schools has been a positive factor. In the case of the “Livelihoods objective” several factors have made adequate reach towards families in the scope and magnitude that was expected difficult due to geographic dispersion, the time that it takes to contact beneficiaries, and machismo which prevents women from participating in training workshops, together with a low educational level that hinders their initiative and directly affects their self-esteem. The reality becomes more complex if one adds to these previous factors, an immediate, short-term environment which does not favour future planning (for instance, a general culture that faces daily emergency situations in terms of obtaining income in a context of low economic development and where

CL is valued over education (for example, over 50 per cent of families of working children in Juayúa declare that attending school is not necessary for their children to succeed in life). There are hopes that with municipal sensitization plans in place, together with other measures, like a common approach on a local level, a favourable culture will offset the social acceptance of CL.

Gender mainstreaming and vulnerable groups

2.5 Those processes initiated on local level implied enquiries to women regarding their concerns and preferences in terms of training. Nonetheless these inquiries and visits to selected homes proved a starting point with many drawbacks for women in terms of submissiveness, low self-esteem and very low educational levels. This is a challenge to overcome in the next phase. In the research objective, information has been gathered by gender and it is possible now to analyse and design more targeted strategies. Activities in both the Education and Livelihood objectives expect to reach vulnerable groups, having developed instruments, studies, and focalization plans.

Contribution to research and policy

2.6 The results in terms of developing capacities for research on CL and introducing the matter in the agenda of public institutions in charge of ECL policies has been effective, and show signs of orientation towards desired outcomes and impacts. Nonetheless, no significant conclusions can be made regarding the scope of reach of the objectives as these are still in process of implementation.

Effectivity to stimulate interest and participation

2.7 In general, the programme has fundamentally been set in institutional capacities and in their commitment, stimulating empowerment and appropriation in the CL agenda. Participating public entities value the ECL programme, and manifest having been empowered in the matter as a result of ECL programmes’ intervention on three levels. The project has inserted the matter of CL in some thirty institutions: this process is found on an implementation level and on an output level. Those processes regarding Education and Poverty Alleviation (through the Technical Secretary of the Presidency, STP) are found to be more advanced than those dealing with promotion of alternative employment, which is still incipient.

2.8 The educational sector, by means of the application of strategies of the model of the full-time inclusive school, has demonstrated commitment to the ECL approach, professional and technical competencies capable of developing educational strategies for retention of children and adolescents in school, proactive synergies with mothers and fathers, (parent schools incorporating CL issues alerting parents about dangerous agricultural practices and motivating them to value education) as well as improving educational services. These experiences are still incipient, and some of these experiences forecast important outcomes for ECL. Nonetheless, for this to happen, a strong and viable inter-institutional articulation must take place in order to follow up with families and achieve the outcome. This aspect remains to be strengthened.

Project leveraged resources

2.9 The adopted strategy implies the appropriation of processes by institutions so that they may sustain them with their own resources. The FUNDAZUCAR experience is an example of beginning activities that complement and leverage funds since ECL project contributed 33 per cent of funds, financing La Noria experience and leveraging resources from the aforementioned Foundation. It is worth noting, for Livelihoods, that the *Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional* (INSAFORP) provides financial resources for vocational training and in general, all public entities, including municipalities, provide resources for the implementation of activities.

Use of planning, monitoring and evaluation tools

2.10 CL indicators are available in the National Information System on CL administered by the Ministry of the Economy (MINEC). CL monitoring and evaluation tools are available since the end of 2012 and are foreseen to be shared and used by the Technical Committee in 2013.

2.11 The main tool for the identification of those districts with the higher population of children has been the 2010 and 2011 School Census. The identification of beneficiaries was based on the baseline. The School Census capacity is positively valued because it reaches all schools, even when child workers who are out of the educational system are omitted. In either case, it allows a closer approach to those areas with more presence of child work. With regard to attracting beneficiaries, the advantage lies in

relying on schools and the commitment of municipalities. The weakness is that efforts are not yet articulated (schools-municipalities-livelihoods) to have a common approach (methodology, arguments, materials, local leadership networks) and be able to reach families that are geographically dispersed and a culture that validates CL.

3. Regarding relevance

3.1 The ECL project continues to be highly relevant in the country's context, considering the high prevalence of CL and the fact that its presence favours the continuity of the cycle of poverty. It is validated that the project strategies pay attention to the factors that are behind CL: improvement of the quality of the school to improve retention, articulation of a protection system at a local and national level, increase in family income, etc. There is a wide institutional network for its inclusion. The problems and needs still exist, especially in a culture in which child work is considered "normal", diminishing the value of school and in which violence plays a "life" alternative for youth. For these reasons, one must consider that the problems that lie beneath CL require a medium- and long-term treatment.

3.2 The experience of levelling children and adolescents who deserted schools and the results of these tests demonstrate a very precarious educational level, confirming that abandoning school prevents children and adolescents' development and severely prevents their performance as citizens and workers. These results could be useful in raising awareness about the negative effects of CL in children and adolescents. (Less than 10 per cent passed all courses).

3.3 The ECL programme's intervention has demonstrated its validity by taking on three levels simultaneously: macro, meso and micro, and is replicable if more time is considered for its execution, detailing goals by phases and considering the articulation of local networks (municipalities, ADESCOS (Community Development Associations), religious leaders) to favour direct follow up of families by their own municipalities and local networks, and integrating these initiatives to local development and childhood protection systems.

4. Regarding sustainability

4.1 The main strategy is the development of public and private capacity to undertake CL prevention and elimination actions: this implies that the matter be installed in their work plans and budgets, with trained staff who are sensitive to the matter, an aspect which the programme has considered since the beginning and which has been clearly defined. The central purpose of this strategy is the appropriation of the CL matter in institutional agendas so that they may be able to undertake these actions on their own, based on each institution's role and with their available resources. This strategy is fundamental for attaining sustainability, understood as the permanence of the intervention over time and the expansion of their impacts. Its great limitation is periodic political changes in the government which could threaten the loss of acquired institutional knowledge and capacities that the programme has contribute to create in matters of CL.

4.2 At midterm, it can be stated that the outputs and changes produced up to date have a tendency towards desired outcomes, particularly in regards to change of knowledge, attitudes and institutional practices. From the beginning of the project, the idea has been to develop public capacities of the country's main institutions with relevance and responsibility over CL and in this manner become part of their agendas and may be developed as part of their routines and work plans. This applies in almost all immediate objectives, except in the "Livelihoods" objective which seeks to install its processes in municipalities and within the Bank of Agricultural Development (BFA) and probably from within the National Council for Micro and Small Enterprises (CONAMYPE).

4.3 The programme has led to a range of innovative processes, programmes, policies and norms regarding CL in some thirty institutions of the public sector, some fifteen local governments and in the private, sugarcane sector, which gathers most CL in its worst forms in rural areas. All institutional stakeholders recognize having significantly increased their capacity as an outcome of the programme.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow up

1. For articulating the Road Map with the National Protection System

1.1 That the National Council of Children and Adolescents (CONNA), MINTRAB and MINEC settle on concrete measures to articulate CL National Information System with the Information System on Childhood and Adolescence that CONNA has been implementing.

2. To accelerate the System for Childhood Protection.

2.1 The ECL programme must generate a meeting between the 15 target municipalities with the CONNA to determine specific functions and identify their needs and plans, encouraging a network of support between municipalities through internships and technical exchanges. Towards the end of 2013, Child Labour Municipal Committees must be articulated with the protection system promoted by CONNA in 2012, identifying target municipalities. Beginning with a group of municipalities, it must be established that toward the end of 2014, all 15 municipalities have protection systems in place.

3. To strengthen the Integrated Strategy of Monitoring and Evaluation (EIME)

3.1 Complement the internal monitoring system with the realization of continuous systematizations with women and youth that are trained and begin new business ventures, with the purpose of capturing their processes and documenting them. It will give qualitative information to the impact evaluation. Likewise, the systematization in the Inclusive Education objective should be enhanced. This systematization may be registered through images (photographs, audios and micro videos).

3.2 Systematize the experience of FUNDAZUCAR in La Noria, editing micro videos with testimonies and publications. The idea is that these materials may prove useful to strengthen the approach with families in schools and communities.

3.3 Follow up CL knowledge management activities and organize a contest between participating entities so that their products are known by the National Committee, CONNA and by the municipalities.

4. To improve strategies with municipalities

- 4.1 ILO/IPEC to hire a technical team which serves as intermediary between the national and local level, especially to articulate the activities of the objectives that are now developed almost in parallel and to provide follow up to families, especially in the Livelihoods objective.
- 4.2 Strengthen the role of municipalities in the programme, through giving them functions in the Livelihoods objectives and their articulations with school's initiatives, in a progressive manner, taking into account municipalities according to their existing capacity and political will.
- 4.3 Oversee if the National Council of Children and Adolescents (COMURES) makes progress in its commitments with the programme and explore with the Salvadoran Institute for Municipal Development (ISDEM) the possibility of opening a specific partnership agreement. COMURES, the corporation of municipalities, may focus on the awareness raising and the recognition of good practices around the ECL.
- 4.4 Accompany the implementation of awareness-raising plans. Continue developing capacities to municipalities in the direct approach to families to convince them, through arguments and counter arguments regarding the elimination and prevention of CL, especially as regards how to adjust materials using testimonies, facilitate meetings, and active methodologies of "learn by doing." Approach leaders of ADESCOS, religious leaders and schools to motivate them about CL and activate these and other local networks (Health ECOS), in the same manner articulate these initiatives to Parent Schools and stimulate exchange of experiences and awards to good practices in sensitization, in alliance with COMURES.

5. For Livelihoods

- 5.1 Motivate differentiated strategies for third wave municipalities that show capacities to work in vocational training processes in synergy with other projects, or from inside their installed capacity and that sustain vocational training processes themselves. In this respect San Francisco Menéndez, Izalco, Santiago de María, Jiquilisco, Apastepeque, Sensuntepeque, Ilobasco, San Luis la Herradura, Aguilares and of

the first wave, Juayúa show progress. In total 10 of 15 municipalities have the potential to advance in this matter (political will, adequate space, teachers and similar projects). Also connect and strengthen training programmes implemented by INSAFORP with labour demand.

6. For Inclusive Education

- 6.1 Stimulate exchange between schools and internships to strengthen good practices with rewards.
- 6.2 Broaden and strengthen flexible educational disciplines for youth and adolescents and carry out a diagnostic to all over aged child workers in comprehensive reading, writing and mathematics. Each child's plan must consider the results obtained in the diagnosis, applying playful or recreational methodologies in each case. Consider Educational Departmental Directorates in all processes, from planning to evaluation.

Important lessons learned

On implementation. The programme is found to be in its initial implementation stages due to its magnitude, complexity and the fact that it has respected institutional timeframes and rhythms to meet sustainability goals. In addition to this is the discovery of a few obstacles to reach the target group (especially women in the livelihoods objective), and the limited number of staff in charge of the project, especially for communicating on a local level. Current ILO/IPEC staff is in charge of everything from a national level to a local level, in most municipalities even approaching the target group, house to house, confronting an uncertain context in terms of security. On a general level nonetheless, it has taken the necessary steps to the fulfilment of the objectives, especially on an output level.

On the sustainability. The best strategy for sustainability has been the development of capacities in the municipal and public sectors. Although this process takes more time than originally expected, there is evidence that this is the path to appropriation and perdurability in the processes.

On the impact. The design of interventions on three levels: macro, meso and micro is valid if there is a follow-up component in municipalities and households that must consider an intermediate team that acts on a local level, especially to strengthen

networks that may allow immediate action in insecure contexts, not originally foreseen.

Among the factors to be taken into account for the achievement of the impact, a changing context in terms of security must be considered. In addition, there is a very low level of local economic development and an enormous depreciation of education as an alternative to the early entry into gangs. There is also a family culture that does not visualize the future and is dichotomous, a family culture where CL is valued versus the entry into gangs considered to be “opportunity” areas competing with education, within a framework of priorities and needs for ensuring the family survival. This is a challenge for the flexibility of the intervention, especially when it comes to approaching the families due to ECL.

External factors. Two external factors exist which have proven to be important in meeting desired impacts, and which were not foreseen in the design. One is incipient local economic development in target municipalities, manifesting in the population’s urge to generate significant income and take on income generating activities. Another external factor is security, which does not present fixed scenarios, but rather changing ones, generated by the direct effect and unexpected events carried out by the government to fight delinquency. Consequently, if territorial limits, sanctions and control mechanisms are in place, criminal organizations move to new regions where they had no previous presence. The main restrictive factor for meeting the outcomes and probably impacts is time, meaning its execution timeframe, due to the fact that for the corresponding stakeholders to duly appropriate the processes and their instilment, institutional times must be respected and there must be assigned personnel in place for articulating at a local level.

In Livelihoods, the approach to women in households with CL must be made by a woman able to influence the entire family as to allow the women of the household to participate in workshops and events. In addition, it has been established that the offer for vocational training must adjust to the characteristics of this target group that presents submissiveness, low self-esteem and high levels of illiteracy, especially in rural areas. In urban areas women participate more and tend to quickly grasp the ideas presented to them in workshops and other initiatives. Current service providers are not sufficiently familiar with the context and target group.

Regarding Inclusive Education, one of the lessons learned is that strengthening teacher competencies and education is an important factor for awareness raising and improvement of inclusive educational practices. Likewise, funding a project with the involvement of different stakeholders of the educational community is a favourable condition for change.

Sufficiency tests have not worked because it was insufficient to only give academic reinforcement in the syllabus, without approaching the competencies that the child had lost in the time in which he or she was absent from school, for instance regarding reading and writing. The process of accompanying over aged child workers must be done as an extracurricular activity, as it implies a personalized process with distinct educational methodologies.

According to MINED’s experience the process to decrease the amount of hours that a child works happens over a period of two years with the following processes: change in families’ cultural patterns, one on one accompaniment with the students, sensitization and constant follow up with the educational community. If the student lives in a remote community and must walk 45 minutes to reach the school, a transport stipend must be provided.

Good Practices

Four good practices have been identified, as follows.

1. Commitment of the private sector exemplified in the case of FUNDAZUCAR.
2. National Information System on Child Labour.
3. The inclusive schools (“*escuelas incluyentes*”) for the elimination and prevention of CL.
4. Vocational training for adolescents from 15 years old and women heads of households with working children.