



Evaluation Summary



International
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Project of Support to the National Action Plan to Reduce Child Labour in Malawi – Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Malawi</i>
Midterm Evaluation:	<i>09/2011</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>DWT/CO-Lusaka</i>
Technical Office:	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>ILO/IPEC/DED</i>
Evaluation Consultants:	<i>Nina Louise Frankel & Archangel Bakolo</i>
Project Code:	<i>MLW/09/50/USA</i>
Donor(s) & Budget:	<i>USDOL (US\$ 2'757'621)</i>
Keywords:	<i>Child labour</i>

Background & Context

The Government of Malawi (GoM) ratified ILO's Convention 138 (minimum work age) and Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour) in 1999. It has since been marshalling resources to reduce child labour (CL), in response to ILO mandates and international demand for sanctions against CL in the national tobacco and tea industries. Over time, the fight against CL has broadened to withdrawing and preventing children from CL across both formal and informal sectors through improved access to education and skills training. ILO/IPEC, present in Malawi for over ten years, has phased multi-sector strategies to progressively eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) by 2016.

Following projects designed to reduce CL in agriculture, and to support a more sector-based approach to eliminating CL, ILO/IPEC, with funding from the US Department of Labour, is currently implementing a project to Support the National Action Plan to Reduce Child Labour in Malawi (SNAP), scheduled from September 2009 until December 2012.

The three immediate objectives are:

- To strengthen the enabling legislative and policy environment for eliminating CL towards global goals ensuring compliance for the elimination of the WFCL;
- To replicate and scale up successful models for withdrawal and prevention of CL and pilot new models for establishing Child Labour-Free Zones (CLFZ) in three districts;
- To strengthen capacity of ILO tripartite partners and other key stakeholders at national, district and community levels to understand the Integrated Area-Based Approach (IABA) and implement it efficiently and effectively.

The SNAP strategy comprises strengthening national capacities to combat CL through legislation harmonization, improvement of the knowledge base, raising awareness on the negative consequences of CL, promoting social mobilization against it, and implementing direct action programmes (AP) to remove children from the work place and protect those at risk of hazardous CL and provide them and their households with education, skills training and income-generating alternatives.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The main purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was to assess project progress to date, make

recommendations for the remainder of its implementation and highlight potential good practices and lessons learned.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology used in the evaluation process involved review of key documents related to the project and CL in Malawi, such as the SNAP Project Document, Action Programme Summary Outlines (APSO), draft MGDS II, the National Action Plan to Reduce Child Labour in Malawi, Technical Progress Reports (TPR) and ILO/IPEC/DED Documents, together with stakeholder interviews and focus-group discussions with implementing partners at national, district and communities levels, and direct and indirect project beneficiaries. At the close of the fieldwork, the MTE team together with SNAP and IPEC-Lusaka staff facilitated a daylong workshop to share and discuss the MTE findings.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Although the project team was slated to start work in January 2010, the project formally got off the ground only in early May 2010, because recruiting and fielding the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) was protracted. A further impediment to the project's initial momentum was that the GoM did not formally launch the National Action Plan to Reduce Child Labour until October 2010. This delayed implementation of the APs which did not gather momentum until the second quarter of 2011. The MTE was carried out as per the project's initial work plan, which was prior to the mid-point of actual project implementation. The findings reflect this truncated purview:

Achievements

- Thanks to the doggedness of the SNAP team, in particular, the CTA, the project is compensating better than expected for time lost to contractual and other delays;
- Introduction of the IABA to replace previous sector-based strategies for reducing CL provides a promising resource mobilization and strategic framework for marshalling multi-stakeholder constituencies at district and community levels, to eliminate the WFCL;
- The SNAP models of extending education and skills training opportunities to working children, and those at risk, through school mainstreaming and skills training and multi-purpose learning centres for functional literacy, Community-Based

Enterprises (CBE) and skills training are helping the government build capacity, particularly at the community level to meet the needs of hard-to-reach populations and offer children alternatives to CL;

- The SNAP project is playing a key technical and advocacy role in advancing relevant legislation and policy to improve the enabling environment for reducing CL in Malawi;
- Judging from the current moment of the APs in the districts, it looks likely that the project, in spite of a nine-month delay in getting off the ground, will be able to achieve its numerical targets of children withdrawn and prevented from CL and reached with project services.

Challenges and Ongoing Issues

- The project is still playing catch up in stewarding completion of unfinished legislative and policy business and consolidating the National Steering Committees (NSC) for Child Labour and Child Protection, among other still pending activities carried over from IPEC's previous Country Programme;
- It could be too optimistic to expect the SNAP project to meet all of its capacity-building and enabling objectives in a sustainable way by the end of December 2012 because the benchmarks achieved to date to reduce CL in Malawi still seem more driven by donor initiatives than by national commitment. The capacity and motivation within the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to take a leading role in the fight against CL remain tenuous;
- The project staffing comprised of three professional staff, a secretary and a driver, is skeletal relative to its breadth of objectives and magnitude of service delivery and human resource development activities under its aegis to implement and monitor;
- Staff turnover, competing priorities and weak human and logistic resources within the MoL are hampering efforts to upgrade the Child Labour Unit (CLU) and establish a Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) to meet international standards for certifying national supply chains to be CL-free;
- Children working in domestic labour are usually hidden from the public eye, work in isolation and are frequently bonded labour. Under such conditions, they are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, have almost no option for legal recourse, and are more difficult to identify and

withdraw from the workplace than children working in other sectors;

- The design of the project made assumptions about the ability and commitment of the GoM to expedite policy initiatives and earmark resources in support of creating CLFZ that were either unrealistic from the start or have thus far proved unduly optimistic;
- The district level APs stand to be more effective implementing income-generating activity (IGA) interventions concurrently rather than sequentially after removing children from CL to compensate for the sudden loss of child wages, and improving the status of women and girls through better access and availability to reproductive health care;
- Stakeholder coordination, especially at the national level, for reducing CL remains inconsistent and haphazard, especially with respect to linking measures to improve reproductive health and gender inequity, and prevent HIV/AIDS/STIs with efforts to reduce CL;
- Based on field observation, it is likely unrealistic that the education system in Malawi, characterized by poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teachers and training materials and low quality of education can retain mainstreamed children in the absence of significant changes and investments in the education sector;
- The project's efforts to marshal community volunteerism are up against the reality of Malawi where the economic fabric of society is tattered and long-term donor support has fostered a culture heavily reliant on incentives to spur initiative;
- Independent of the project delays in getting off the ground, a three-year period is probably insufficient to engender lasting behaviour change in the context of Malawi;
- Fuel shortages, high unemployment, especially among young people, economic turmoil and political tensions in Malawi are taking a toll across the board on efforts to fight CL.

Recommendations

1. ILO, USDOL and other partners should discuss options for a no-cost extension to the SNAP to enable it to compensate for time lost at the beginning and run its full course of 46-50 months as outlined in the

PRODOC. This will provide more opportunity for IABA to take root and sustain gains achieved. Any decision about extending the project beyond this period should be contingent on effective operationalization of the CLU and CLMS. In the meantime, resources should be marshalled through additional partners to extend IABA to the lakeshore districts to reduce risk of displacement of CL to the fishing or growing tourism sector.

2. IPEC/SNAP should revise the work plan for the remainder of the project to reduce the number of new trainings planned in favour of monitoring and refresher training of capacity building already invested, with priority to strengthening the CLMS and upgrading the CLU to function as an effective focal point for coordinating initiatives across sectors to eliminate CL.

Enhancing the Enabling Environment

1. ILO/IPEC, UN and host government tripartite partners must make a more conscientious effort to overcome the disconnection of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, including family planning, and gender equity with interventions to reduce CL. This will require improving coordination and collaboration with the Ministries of Labour, Health, Gender and Youth, and NGOs engaged in the different areas.

2. The SNAP Project should continue advocating with the MoL to expedite the needs assessment required to upgrade the CLU into a fully-staffed department budgeted within the Ministry.

3. The MoL should designate and budget for a focal point within the CLU responsible for liaising across sectors on all matters relevant to reducing CL.

4. The GoM together with ILO tripartite partners must ensure that technical and financial resources are put in place for establishing and maintaining a CLMS that meets international standards for certifying supply chains to be child labour-free, and that the country is able to meet these standards and achieve the status of a child labour-free country.

5. The SNAP Project should support the MoL and other CL stakeholders to bring on board to the CLMS ALL projects operating in Malawi that generate data on CL, regardless of whether this is their central focus. This would require stakeholder consensus to define specific indicators for all sectors to incorporate into their planning and reporting.

6. ILO/IPEC together with national and international tripartite partners and other relevant parties should continue to lobby and advocate for the long overdue passage of pending legislation and policy in Malawi critical to reducing CL. This includes upgrading the status of the Malawi Union for the Informal Sector (MUFIS) so that it can engage in collective bargaining on behalf of its members, standardizing age definitions for children, instituting compulsory education (ideally increase the minimum working age), and translating policy instruments legislating support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) into specific budget lines to support their education.

7. The SNAP Project should more actively facilitate stakeholders on both NSCs concerned with Child Labour/Child Protection (most are the same anyway) to consolidate the two committees into one, jointly responsible for child protection AND CL (or vice versa), and advocate for all NSC members to include support for the committee in their sector plans. This would require developing appropriate normative guidelines and resourcing strategies to ensure that the NSC operates collectively rather than competitively. The Terms of Reference for the combined NSC should stipulate shared or alternating responsibility for chairing the committee among key stakeholders.

Promoting the Integrated Area-Based Approach

1. Revise the project strategy and budget as necessary to support those few students withdrawn or prevented from CL who qualify for secondary school, as well as displaced working children who wish to return to their district of origin for educational mainstreaming or skills training.

2. The MCTU Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) and other tripartite partners should explore options based on the Islamic Zakat or Christian tithing custom of giving a fixed portion of one's wealth to charity to extend efforts to organize domestic workers and the informal sector, and to create scholarship funds for high-performing children withdrawn or prevented from CL to pursue further education, vocational or leadership training.

3. SNAP and the AP implementing partners should expedite implementation of IGA for vulnerable households identified to date, and for the remainder of the SNAP project (as well as for subsequent initiatives of this nature), initiate household IGA and community gardens by providing locally-appropriate inputs (such as seeds, chickens, crafts or skills training, etc.) or coordinating with supplementary food distribution or school feeding programmes (if available) concurrently with removal of children from CL.

4. SNAP and the AP implementing partners should weigh the effectiveness of providing uniforms to children attending schools where they are not mandatory against other options for encouraging school attendance, such as providing other essential school supplies (including means to facilitate students to study at home) and supporting improvements to the classroom environment or building teacher capacity.

5. ILO/IPEC should capitalize more on the technical resources available through other ILO projects in Malawi to support the APs, particularly in the areas of occupational health and safety, workers' rights and HIV/AIDS.

6. AP implementing partners (as well as tripartite partners) should leverage the resources that may be available through their respective boards and community networks to address the paucity of role models and mentors for skills training and enterprise development at the community level.

7. SNAP and AP implementing partners should reach out to the Technical Education and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) for quality control of skills training, including establishing a standardized certification for students upon successful completion of project-supported skills training or CBE.

8. ILO/IPEC should solicit UNICEF and other UN partners to enhance collaboration through better capitalization of independent as well as joint situation analyses, convergence of services in SNAP/IABA target areas, coordination of project handovers and follow up activities and participation in partner events.

9. Community Child Labour Committees (CCLC) (and District Child Labour Committees (DCLC) when feasible) should include male and female representative children withdrawn or prevented from CL and adjust the meeting schedule if necessary to enable children to attend without foregoing project-supported school or skills training activities.

10. CCLCs especially, but also DCLCs, that currently have predominantly male membership should collaborate with the community on support strategies that encourage and enable increased participation and representation from women, particularly from female-headed households where children tend to be most vulnerable to CL.