



Evaluation Summaries

Sustainable Elimination of Child Bonded Labour in Nepal

Quick Facts

Countries: Nepal

Mid-Term Evaluation: April 2009

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Child Labour

Evaluation Management: ILO-IPEC's Design,
Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED)

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Project Start: 15th September 2006

Project End: 15th September 2010

Project Code: NEP/06/P50/USA

Donor: USA (2,000 000 US\$)

Keywords: Child labour, bonded labour

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project design was based on the experience of the first phase and the lessons learnt from the earlier project had been utilized. The assumptions that the achievement of the objectives are based on are generally sound. There has been a greater degree of political change and localized unrest than anticipated. This, along with other factors, has resulted in considerable delays to implementation.

The project strategy has been well prepared and is endorsed by the review. Due to social and economic changes the expected numbers of children in bonded labour have not been identified within the target group and area. A

re-assessment of the potential target numbers is being carried out and changes will be made to the targets for certain services.

The development objective of the programme is the elimination of child bonded labour in Nepal. The programme has the following four immediate objectives:

- **Immediate Objective 1:** By the end of the project, boys and girls and adult members from the targeted families receive appropriate formal and non-formal education.
- **Immediate Objective 2:** By the end of the project, targeted families are gainfully employed.
- **Immediate Objective 3:** At project's end, agricultural workers, especially freed Kamaiyas and Haruwas/Charuwas, in the target districts receive minimum and equal wage rates.
- **Immediate Objective 4:** By the end of the project, enabling environment is created for effective implementation of Kamaiya Labour Prohibition Act-2001 and Child Labour Prohibition Act-1999.

Present situation of project

Delays were experienced at the beginning of the project in obtaining formal approval for the project from the government of Nepal and in the development of the first eight action programmes. The most significant factors contributing to these delays were: the political environment due to the elections for the Constituent Assembly that were postponed twice; frequent changes in the personnel in the

MoLRM; regular strikes and other political disturbances in the Terai region; the decision to collect baseline information by the implementing partners as part of their action programme (AP); and using a competitive bidding process for the award of action programmes.

Activities for objective 1 for education and social mobilization of bonded laborers were delayed by about nine months. Services are being provided and the main challenge is the lower than expected numbers of child bonded laborers to provide services to. With this exception, targets and the objective are expected to be achieved. These APs are also working on awareness raising among community organisations, an output of objective 4, and this is progressing well.

The APs for the activities for objective 2, promoting the gainful employment of (ex)bonded laborers are about to start. Implementation has been delayed by seven months from the planned date. The project management expects to achieve the objective by the end of the project. The limited time between closing the APs and the end of the project may negatively affect the sustainability of the outcomes as there will be limited time available to support the skill-training graduates.

APs to achieve objective 3, relating to unionization and minimum/equal wages were approved in January 2008, 11 months behind the planned date. Although no work has begun in the field, the trade unions are already active there and it is expected that the objectives will be achieved.

The AP for legislative reform (objective 4) was signed in January 2009 and it is important the work starts on this as soon as possible. There may be opportunities to support the government to implement the Kamaiya Act more widely and this should be encouraged. The project team is providing effective support and training to implementing partners and their capacity is being developed.

It is not clear from the planning documents when APs were planned to start and their intended duration. It is recommended that more detail is provided in the timeline for project management functions in the future. It is recommended that a realistic timeframe is established for the preparation period for projects of this kind.

The project management is confident that all expected objectives will be achieved. Other stakeholders are concerned about the quality and sustainability of the outcomes of objective 2 and of the feasibility of the legislative reform in objective 4.

Other implementation challenges identified by the review meeting were the sustainability of impact on children, the lack of project activity to support schools with a high additional intake and the high turnover of AP staff.

The project has a variety of strategies to sustain its impact within communities and IPs are well aware of them. Community child labour monitoring systems are an important and potentially effective process for this.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The project is being implemented with the participation of a number of partners carrying out Action Programmes (APs).

- Eight Non-government organisations (NGOs) are implementing APs on education and social mobilization
- The MoLRM is implementing an AP for employment creation and for the revision of child labour-related legislation
- Two Trade Unions are implementing APs promoting fundamental principles and rights at work and for strengthening agricultural workers organisations
- Two NGOs will shortly start APs for employment and skill development
- The Ministry of Labour and Transport Management (MoLTM) will implement an AP to update the Master Plan on child labour

Methodology of evaluation

A short desk review of documents was carried out prior the main review and a list of the documents reviewed is in annex 3. The participants in the project review were all implementers and decision makers in relation to this specific project. They do not include other stakeholders such as potential beneficiaries or independent observers. An external consultant served as facilitator to guide the project review participants through a discussion of their experiences. It is therefore a project review facilitated by an independent consultant. The diagram on the following page helps to illustrate the methodology of the 'project review' in comparison to a 'project evaluation'.

The review was carried out from the 16th to the 20th February 2009. There were two main days for the review, one an interaction with the project staff and existing IPs on the 18th February, and the other on the 19th, an interaction with representatives from the MoLRM, TUs as well as those present on the 18th. A list of the participants of each meeting is in annex 4, along with a list of those interviewed by the facilitator during the review. A local consultant prepared a record of the discussions and conclusions from both meetings and this is in annex 5. The review meeting was the main tool for the collection and sharing of information and experiences between the participants of the review. In addition the external facilitator carried out a document review and received a detailed briefing from the project staff. The review facilitator did not visit or observe any of the field implementation areas, nor did he meet with any beneficiaries or independent observers of the project. The information collected, conclusions drawn and recommendations made are based on the information provided

Main Findings & Conclusions

The objectives and the strategies of the second phase are very similar to the first phase, the main difference being the inclusion of the other forms of bonded labour in districts in the

central and eastern Terai. Many of the relevant lessons learned and recommendations from the SEBL phase I have been included in the design of phase II and these are:

- An increased level of training to implementing partners in order to develop their understanding and capacity to carry out the required activities. This has become a specific output under objective 4.
- The use of using existing local committees and structures rather than establishing new ones.
- The monitoring of certain important indicators by an organization independent from the organization expected to bring about the desired change. (However in practice this has not yet been implemented and the project is currently considering it).
- A strong linkage with the Education For All programme was developed in order to address the needs of schools with a large additional enrolment.
- The omission of attempting to provide revolving fund and micro finance support within a short-period project. Instead referral to specialist institutions has been proposed.
- The need for social mobilization of the (ex)bonded laborers has been recognized as a need and included in the APs. However the process is not clear.
- Greater attention has been given to the utility and income earning potential of the skill training programme.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. It is recommended that additional indicators be added to the PMP that are able to identify progress towards the ultimate expected impact of each of the immediate objectives and that these are reported on in the regular reports.

2. A specific indicator should be developed to assess the number and area coverage of CLMSs or other similar community-based CL monitoring systems
3. Every effort needs to be made to keep the implementation schedule from any further slippage
4. The project and the IPs promoting gainful employment (objective 2) should identify ways of providing effective support to skill graduates given the limited time between closing the APs and the end of the project.
5. Two activities under output 4.1 of objective 4 are particularly sensitive to delays and it is recommended that action towards these be started as soon as possible. These are: Review of the National Plan of Action against Child Labour; and Preparation of draft revisions to the Kamaiya Prohibition Act and the Child Labour Prohibition Act.
6. Implementing partners will re-assess the number of children that they can realistically withdraw from bonded labour within their target area. One estimate should be the number within the existing category and another should cover other forms of bonded labour. The project, in consultation with ILO/IPEC and USDOL, should then decide on revised categories of bonded laborers and revised target numbers for withdrawal.
7. As the project only provides education, social mobilization and vocational training to (ex)bonded laborers it needs to build/ maintain linkages with other service providers in the area so that there is an integrated approach to the rehabilitation of bonded laborers.
8. Look for ways to provide some support to schools which have a large intake of children due to the project activities
9. Consider increasing the support for family economic development for child withdrawal from Rs. 2,400
10. Review the required frequency and content of recording and reporting required by the partners and if possible reduced to allow greater attention to be given to implementation
11. Implement independent monitoring once a year to support PMT to verify the outputs and impacts
12. Ensure that field implementing partners are supported and monitored by the PMT making a visit to the implementation area at least once/month
13. Contact should be made with the Education Management information System staff in order to explore the possibility of including child labour-related information in their data collection
14. If an impact assessment is carried out at the end of the project a comparison should be made of the impact in Dhanusa, where the ILO Employment and Local Economic Development Project is active, and other districts, in order to see if there has been any significant changes on the rehabilitation of former bonded laborers and their children from the combination of these two projects.
15. **Recommendations for USDOL and project management:** Implement the agreed plan of action regarding the budget shortfall – The USDOL representative will make a request through DOL Washington for information from ILO/IPEC on the availability of any surplus funds for 2006 projects. It is expected that this information will be received by the end of March. The project will work out what changes are needed to the activities and targets if the project has to be implemented within the existing budget. This is to be prepared by the NCTA by 1st April and submitted to USDOL for informal review.
16. **Recommendations for ILO Nepal and project management (16,17,18):** Actively encourage the discussion on the interpretation of the Kamaiya Prohibition Act and find ways to promote its implementation.

17. As the MoLRM acknowledges that the Kamaiya Prohibition Act applies to all forms of bonded labour the project should advocate for its implementation for all forms of bonded labour.

18. Make approaches to the MoLTM as the main government agency concerning labour, about the implementation of the Kamaiya Prohibition Act.

19. **Recommendations for ILO Nepal:** For future projects it may be necessary to review the salary levels provided to AP Coordinators and other senior staff in APs.

20. **Recommendations for IPEC and USDOL:** IPEC and USDOL should review their policy regarding routing all communication through IPEC HQ to see if there would be any advantage to allowing direct communication between the projects and the USDOL representative.

21. **Recommendations for IPEC HQ (21, 22):** IPEC HQ should respond to the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour in Nepal concerning Nepal's request for support to for a comprehensive child labour project.

22. IPEC should consider having a more explicit 'management timeline' in their planning documentation that clearly shows when APs for specific objectives are expected to commence and their expected duration. Preparations for these APs could then commence at an appropriate time.

Important lessons learned

Realistic preparation period for projects

A realistic estimate for the time required to start field implementation for a child labour project in Nepal is at least 12 months. This allows for the time taken to obtain approval from the government and to prepare and obtain approval for APs. If this is included in the project timeline then it is less likely that this time is not taken out of the time planned for implementation.

Preparation of the baseline/intake information by the selected APs

There are clear benefits from using the education implementing partners to collect the baseline and intake information rather than carrying it out as a separate exercise. However, this is likely to result in a delay in the implementation of field activities of about five months. If the baseline information is collected by the education IPs as part of their AP, then this is likely to delay the finalization of other APs that are dependent on the survey findings. (see section 2.4.2 of the main report)

Competitive selection process for IPs

Selection of the IPs through a competitive selection process probably took about four months longer in comparison with direct negotiation with selected organisations. The main advantages were the transparency of the process and the selection of effective partners that were new to ILO/IPEC. The main disadvantages were the time taken and the loss of partners who were familiar with ILO/IPEC objectives and processes. (see section 2.4.2 of the main report)

Action Programmes on legislative reform

As legislative reform activities are not dependent on field-level start-up activities such as baseline studies, they can be scheduled to start early on in a project. This will increase the likelihood of success and if completed quickly are likely to provide an improved legislative environment for the remainder of project implementation.