



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Support to the partnership programme to prevent And eliminate child labour in the Americas – Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, Panama, Peru*

Midterm Evaluation: *March 2014*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

ILO Office Administrative Office: *IPEC*

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: *IPEC*

Evaluation Manager: *IPEC/DED*

Evaluation Consultant: *Gunter Rochow team leader, Claudia Marcondes and Rafael del Cid team members. Capra International Inc.*

Project End: *2017*

Project Code: *RLA/09/53/BRA*

Donor & Project Budget: *Brazil, US\$ 4 million*

Keywords: *Child Labour*

Background & Context

Background

This midterm evaluation was commissioned by the ILO and its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC.) The objective is to assess the Partnership Program “Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in the Americas”, which is an initiative of little more than 9 million dollars (\$9,157,508.00), funded by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC). This is a strategic global program focused on South-South Cooperation (SSC) and horizontal cooperation, for seventy-eight (78) months, from June 2009 to November 2015. Eight sub-regional and national projects have been implemented and carried out in

eleven (11) countries and a sub-regional block. The program started being developed in Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay, was then expanded to the MERCOSUR block (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay), to the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP) - Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, San Tome and Principe - and then to Tanzania (Africa), East Timor (Asia) and Haiti (Caribbean.) Later on, a Ministry of Social Development (MDS) -supported project was approved. It was named “Strategies to Accelerate the Pace of Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour” and supported the elaboration and implementation of the 3rd Global Conference on Child Labour (3rd GCCL) and has been working to disseminate the Conference’s results.

Purpose

Review the program progress and performance, notably the program first immediate objective **“Establish a mechanism of tripartite consultation between Brazil and its partner countries, focused on the development and implementation of South-South cooperation projects to prevent and eliminate child labour”** based on criteria of design quality, relevance, effectiveness, capacity development, sustainability and other specific aspects.

Methodology

The focus is mainly qualitative based on several sources of information, i.e., documents, interviews with key respondents, focus groups and data requested by e-mail. This effort culminated in the review of 65 specific documents, 122 interviews, 5 focal groups and electronic responses.

Findings

Logical design coherent, with some weaknesses related to monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It highlights the simple design adopted by the ABC Program document and national and sub-regional projects. Formulation is coherent, pragmatic (in terms of time, resources and purposes), and innovative, while quality varies from country to country. Several respondents believe the simple design has provided flexibility for countries to negotiate changes with the ABC. The implicit theory of change is that tripartite consultation mechanisms lead to stronger commitment and sounder and more cohesive processes to develop programs and policies to prevent and eradicate child labour. The commitment should lead to changes in policies, enactment of new or amended laws, formalization of changes, i.e., development of capacities and sustainability, among others.

Sustainability is implicit in the design. The ILO has the mandate of promoting sustainability of outcomes of CL-related initiatives, i.e., public policies and national action plans (NAP) resulting from the focus on national initiatives where national partners have participated under the leadership of the government. Sustainability is implicit in projects through the adoption of objectives and actions that coincide with the aforementioned, like the national commissions or similar institutions. Only the PALOP and Tanzania have explicitly considered sustainability.

The program and national project designs include an M&E system, but still miss an integrated electronic system. The ABC Program design shows the following Outcome 1.3: “[Program] M&E system to prevent and eradicate child labour (PETI) elaborated and implemented.” The program performed four activities to reach this outcome, but it failed in implementing an electronic monitoring system, due to lack of funds. Monitoring took place through annual progress reports requested of all national projects. The reports follow an exhaustive standardized format with some indicators. However, most of the progress was recorded based just on a report of actions with no reference to previously agreed indicators. After all, information is more qualitative than quantitative. Relying on an electronic system – even one based on such a simple format as Excel – facilitates monitoring and several kinds of evaluation, besides adding accuracy and reliability to those exercises.

Relevant programs and projects. The Program at global and country levels is virtually viewed unanimous as being highly relevant. Such view is based on the importance of focusing on children’s right to live a CL-free life.

National projects had to cope with several financial and human resources limitations, as well as unawareness about CL. These included limitations such as delayed disbursements (e.g., PALOP, East Timor, and Tanzania). Other obstacles were the late arrival of focal points (MERCOSUR), lack of coordination between ministerial entities of the several countries of the block (MERCOSUR and PALOP), and problems associated with political instability (Guinea Bissau, Paraguay and Ecuador), apart from cultural problems and the overall poverty that hindered the efforts to fight CL.

The program was effective. The program is about to fulfill the activities and outcomes corresponding to intermediary objective 1. Outcome 1.3 corresponds to that objective, and will be fully achieved when the final evaluation is concluded. Meanwhile, the monitoring process is being implemented facing the aforementioned limitations.

Factors that contribute to and restrict the achievement of objectives. Among the favorable factors, three are worth mentioning: i) factors resulting from the nature of the TSSC (coordination with other projects, unique methodology to exchange experience and similar methodologies); (ii) factors related to tripartite consultation procedures; and (iii) the technical-professional performance of ILO. Among the restricting factors at the global level are some problems related to the coordination between the USDOL and ABC programs (PALOP block), while, at the countries level, political-institutional and cultural factors have been identified.

The program was cost-efficient, but with limited leverage. The documentary evidence and the respondents’ perception show that cost, compared to the benefits ensuing from national projects, is acceptable for all cases. At the program level, financial resources leveraging was modest. The ABC extended the program with resources from the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Action, in some cases. At the countries level, the short duration of projects seems to have hindered resources leveraging. The leveraging produced

through USDOL was the most commonly mentioned. Many links with other initiatives on child labour (CL) are reported, but with no resource leveraging. Links to other CL initiatives are common, and most of them are headed by governments.

Specific capacities promoted. National programs have fostered tripartite dialogue mechanisms (committees, commissions, tables) to cope with CL-related issues. To get deeper knowledge about the CL status in the country, the project has supported the development of surveys and studies. When the purpose was to outline and implement national action plans (NAP), the project has provided support and assisted in mobilizing resources, promote policies, organize partners, and lead supporting activities.

Good grounds for sustainability were created, varying from country to country Countries face different sustainability-related challenges. The extreme cases are the MERCOSUR block and Guinea Bissau. The first one is one of the most promising cases, as illustrated by the fact that Argentina will host the next Global Conference on CL in 2017. Respondents informed that the sub-region has developed installed capacities enough to keep on advancing even when project funding is over. Guinea Bissau, in turn, was affected by political instability and precarious governmental institutions. Most of the national projects have achieved relevant empowerment on the CL issue, as disclosed by the changes in policies and legislation. However, these achievements are yet to be translated into implementation and continuing effort. Therefore, it is recommended to adopt additional steps to disseminate the content of such policies and laws, and to build skilled staff (judges, attorneys, police officers, labour inspectors, local authorities, NGO and others).

The effect of the ABC and USDOL CL Projects in common countries funding phasing on the program outcomes. The ABC and USDOL CL programs should be synchronized to achieve synergies that are favorable to their objectives, but the ABC's delay in releasing funds has

hindered this purpose. Projects in the PALOP countries, Haiti and Tanzania have faced coordination-related difficulties. In the first two ones, USDOL support prevented the interruption of scheduled activities.

Stakeholders' capacity of mobilization around CL-related objectives. Projects have succeeded in mobilizing different stakeholders. The achievement of each project's objectives is the best indicator of their sound capacity of mobilizing different stakeholders. The successful incidence on policies, laws and capacity-building depends on the mobilization of several groups like policy-makers, high-level governmental officers, employee and employer organizations, NGOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs.)

The SSC contribution to the program outcomes. The South-South cooperation and the value added by ILO (TSSC) were considered to be the highlights of the program and projects. Brazil stands out for its concrete experiences that show what can be done despite the limitations of a developing country. The ILO systematizes, enriches, provides pertinent competences (social dialogue tools, influence, and technical expertise, for example) that encourage countries to persevere, inspired by the contact with experiences similar to Brazil's. As a result, projects have achieved their objectives at reasonable cost.

Main Findings & Conclusions

1. **Programs and project designs are valid regarding objectives and ABC-ILO agreements,** and they show logical and coherent links to different components, considering the existing initiatives on CL and integrate the SSC concepts and practice in an acceptable fashion. Sustainability, gender and ethnicity are implicit in the outcomes and activities provided for in the designs, but, above all, in implementation. The M&E system lacks organization in an integrated way to facilitate its management in a user-friendly electronic format to enable quicker and more accurate and reliable records and evaluations. Finally, several external factors like the political instability in some countries, and the delayed funding of ABC were not provided for in the projects.
2. High perception on relevance. The relevance of the program and projects was based

on their capacity of responding to the needs identified in a participatory way. CL's visibility was short, mainly due to cultural factors, or because it affected more vulnerable and excluded populations.

3. High level of effectiveness. The program and project effectively achieved their objectives or are about to do so. Efficiency was added to effectiveness, despite the limited leveraging.
4. Projects have improved several capacities. Tripartite dialogue mechanisms, deeper knowledge and awareness about the problem, and advances in policies and laws have increased the countries' possibilities to formalize the changes promoted by the projects.
5. **The ABC and USDOL phasing of funding has affected the projects' performance.** The most remarkable issue was the failure in synchronizing both programs since their early stages.
6. **Projects have demonstrated a capacity to mobilize several stakeholders toward PETI-related objectives.** These objectives, mostly related to the incidence on policies and laws, could hardly be achieved if there were a lack of such mobilization capacity.
7. **The TSSC played a key role throughout the process.** The TSSC modality was crucial to this effort, as it enriched the traditional SSC focus through planning based on prior identification of needs, and continuity of planning through specialized technical support. The awareness about this new cooperation will facilitate new initiatives, and foster sustainability of successful interventions.
8. **Program and projects that considered other CL-related initiatives.** This was the starting point to position and strengthen the incidence processes.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

1. To ABC and ILO. The design of projects should be considered to be a priority activity in future ABC-ILO cooperation programs. To that, the program could keep on assigning to countries or sub-regions the task of identifying and prioritizing their PETI-related needs, but

should demand a minimum level of compliance with a project design guide or handbook. This tool should ensure the project's compliance with minimum quality criteria agreed on by the cooperating community (e.g., relevance, concepts of gender and social inclusion, possibility of evaluation).

2. To ABC and ILO. Define if the program activity 1.3.3 should be concluded, in face of the short time available to conclude the program. That would imply organizing an electronic M&E system, which should start by identifying progress indicators requested in the standardized annual progress report template. Indicators would be used to draft reports on projects under implementation. To ABC. It should keep the regional leadership developing the required national/regional capacities. In addition to that, it should provide continuity to CL-related programs, and go beyond with other overarching programs aimed at the integral development of childhood and youth.
3. To tripartite partners in the participating countries. Identify weaknesses that should be promptly approached to ensure the institutionalization of actions. This should result from the organization of evaluations of the progress achieved regarding the installed capacity among staff and institutions dealing with CL, under the leadership of PETI committees or the leading entity in this effort.
4. To ABC and ILO. Organize a new TSSC program focusing on countries facing more difficulties to develop their own capacity to provide continuity to PETI-related objectives. Whenever possible, invite other South countries with valuable and shareable experiences (e.g., Latin American countries with innovative and successful programs on labour inspection or improvement of employability and working conditions for adolescents), as well as other countries from the North, as donors.
5. To ABC and ILO. Foster the entry of other countries with institutions capable of sharing technical experience in the S-S modality. Countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, MERCOSUR and, beyond the group participating in the program, Chile, Colombia and Peru are advancing in this sense.