



# Evaluation Summary



International  
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## *Impact Assessment Framework: Further Development and Follow-up to Tracer and Tracking Methodologies – Final Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Global</i>
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	<i>07/2011</i>
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
<b>Technical Office:</b>	<i>ILO/IPEC</i>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<i>ILO-IPEC/DED</i>
<b>Evaluation Consultant:</b>	<i>Burt Perrin</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	<i>GLO/06/51/USA</i>
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<i>USDOL (US\$ 2'300'000)</i>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Child Labour monitoring systems</i>

### Background & Context

The IAF Project was entitled: Impact Assessment Framework: Further Developments and Follow up to Tracer Studies and Tracking Methodologies. While a significant component of the project did indeed include a follow up to tracer studies, the project, fortunately, and very positively, went well beyond this. It supported the development of a wide variety of tools as part of a comprehensive framework for assessing a wide range of different types of impacts.

The major achievement of the IAF project was the creation of an Impact Assessment (IA) toolkit, with a variety of tools that can be used, by IPEC and by its partners, to assess the impact of a wide variety of CL interventions, including those aimed at the enabling environment (such as government policy) as well as at

children and families. Work on the project started late, initially due to difficulties in recruiting a technical officer, and subsequently the need to bring implementation of the project more in parallel with the UCW project. While the project appeared to be on track to accomplish its major outputs, the delayed start meant that work on most of these was carried out in a compressed timeframe and was still under way during the course of this final evaluation.

The IA toolkit contains a variety of tools that can be grouped under the following categories:

- Planning for impact;
- Design/planning for IA;
- Expanded Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) to include a component on IA/IE (e.g. Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES), Expanded Final Evaluations (EFE));
- Indirect impact (e.g. identifying policy impact, National Action Plans (NAP));
- Direct impact (e.g. tracer studies, UCW's statistically-robust counter-factual impact evaluation (IE) designs).

The *tracer studies*, using a retrospective approach to trace changes in children over time, represent a major component of the project. Six tracer studies were undertaken, building upon the experiences of earlier pilot approaches supported by IPEC. These studies collectively used a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, including an anthropological life transition study. The approach to the tracer studies, involving long-term follow up of the same individuals, represents an unusual, path-setting approach with the potential to provide very valuable data that cannot readily be obtained through other

means. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in particular can provide a means of understanding the reasons for changes in the life conditions of children.

Changes to various aspects of *the enabling environment*, such as government policies and legislation, are likely to have a far greater influence on the extent of CL than specific projects directed explicitly at children, which invariably can only influence the behaviour and outcomes of a limited number of people. The toolkit includes two tools with respect to the assessment of impact of indirect interventions, including guidelines for impact assessment (IA) of the enabling environment, and a framework for evaluating NAPs. This is a critically important and somewhat neglected area that could warrant even further attention in the future.

The *Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES)* represents an approach for expanding the range of traditional M&E activities. The CMES approach thus far has been used primarily with the UCW project, providing a means of coordination across the two projects and in particular a means of integrating statistically-robust IE with other monitoring and evaluation activities. This provides essential information (in particular about programme activities) that is essential for a meaningful IE, and can serve as a framework and model for an integrated approach to M&E by facilitating the combination of multiple methods and look more specifically at the interaction and impact of multiple interventions happening simultaneously.

The starting date of the project was September 2006, scheduled initially to end March 2011. At the beginning, the project had difficulty in recruiting a satisfactory technical officer. The decision was taken to put recruitment on hold so that implementation of the project could be carried out in parallel with the UCW project. The technical officer eventually came on board in July 2009 and the project subsequently received a no-cost extension to the end of August 2011. A practical effect of this decision was that what was originally conceived as a 4½-year project became in effect a two-year project, and as a result much of the work of the project was still in the process of completion when this evaluation was undertaken.

In August 2009, an internal project review, in lieu of a mid-term evaluation of the project was undertaken. The purpose of the exercise was to “perform a

thorough reorganization and review of the Project and design a plan of action that takes into account both the shorter timeframe but also the synergies that can be tapped as a result of the parallel implementation of the UCW IE project.” This review resulted in a number of new and adjusted outputs for the project, subsequently approved in a project revision.

This reassessment of the project’s strategic focus emphasized IPEC’s role as setting the foundation for supporting governments and other partners in being able to carry out IAs. This envisages a longer-term perspective on the provision of technical know-how, and various forms of assistance and support by IPEC.

This strategic focus led to some adjustments to outputs and activities for the remainder of the project. In particular, it led to increased emphasis on the IA toolkit and development of tools within the toolkit. In addition, the evaluation framework, while forming part of the UCW project, was highlighted as a major part of the toolkit. Thus revised outputs for the IAF project included working jointly with UCW regarding the development of the evaluation framework, and also with respect to the web-based knowledge centre to broaden content.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to be strategic and forward-looking in nature, considering these two projects in combination and identifying implications for follow up.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

This evaluation in essence took the form of an expert review by a senior consultant familiar with the CL area, with ILO/IPEC, and with the impact evaluation areas in general. It made use of three basic means of data gathering:

- Review of relevant documentation;
- Interviews with a range of stakeholders;
- The Expert Meeting and the Stakeholder Meeting.

Triangulation came through cross-checking information from various sources, e.g. various types of documentation and interviews, and also looking for consistency (and/or reasons for different perspectives) among viewpoints of different types of stakeholders. The Expert Meeting also provided opportunities to

consider and to reconcile any variations in viewpoints among different stakeholders.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

The two projects were intended to be complementary, rather than to operate as two fully discrete and separate endeavours. As has already been identified, there are a number of good examples of this taking place, in particular with the CMES that is essential to both projects. Indeed, the UCW Director has expressed concern about how this form of necessary support would continue following the conclusion of the IAF project. There are various examples of how the two projects collectively have been complementary and build upon the respective strengths of both UCW and ILO/IPEC.

The Project Document had indicated that a Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) would be formed, to provide strategic oversight and guidance and specialist input regarding the technical components of the project. To date, however, these mechanisms have not been activated, probably for administrative convenience, although it appears that they are still very much needed and, in retrospect, might have been able to facilitate greater coordination with the IAF project, and perhaps support and provide advice regarding implementation at the country/community level. For example, in order to support its core activity of the project impact evaluations that required more effort than originally anticipated, the project discontinued original plans for the proposed evaluation framework as well as some capacity development activities, both of which were expected to overlap with the IAF project. A formal mechanism could also have provided for fuller discussion and coordination on some other activities.

The two projects collectively have succeeded in arranging with the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) to make modifications to the baselines surveys, at least in El Salvador, so that they can be useful for IE. There may be further opportunities for greater coordination between IPEC's work on evaluation and the research activities undertaken by the Policy and Research Unit. There may also be opportunities for greater coordination between IPEC's work on IA with other parts of ILO. IPEC is recognized as being far ahead of other parts of ILO with respect to IA and

thus much of the joint engagement at the moment would involve taking advantage of IPEC's leadership in this area, as well as perhaps exploring the potential for joint work on IA that might include CL and other programme areas within ILO.

Perhaps most importantly, there appears to be opportunity for IPEC management and staff to become more familiar with the ongoing work on IA, and to consider more explicitly implications of this work for IPEC's policies and implications, and how it can engage and support its partners.

## Recommendations

### *In general for ILO/IPEC*

ILO/IPEC should acknowledge the ground-breaking work represented by the multi-dimensional and multi-method approach to IA developed collectively by these two projects, but at the same time recognize that both projects, by design, have involved just initial steps. ILO/IPEC should seek funding to enable necessary follow-up activities.

ILO/IPEC management should recognize IA as a strategic tool to aid in improving the effectiveness of its own work as well as that of its partners, and should periodically consider implications of IA work undertaken to date.

### *Follow up to the IAF project*

IPEC should continue with the current IA strategy, seeking funding and other forms of support to be able to follow up the initial work undertaken through this project. A priority for follow up should be to engage stakeholders in actively applying the toolkit, providing appropriate guidance and technical support. It should also work together with UCW in expanding the sources of information included in the Knowledge Centre.

IPEC/DED should make greater effort to increase awareness about the value of IA, with IPEC staff (HQ and field), with key partners, and as applicable with other parts of ILO. It should consult with EVAL about how IPEC's experiences with IA approaches might be adapted for other ILO areas, as well as the potential for future joint work.

## Important lessons learned

1. *Continue with the current impact assessment strategy.* The most important finding of this evaluation is that IPEC's overall approach to IA, taking into account the complementarities of the two projects, represents ambitious, leading-edge work, beyond anything similar within the UN system. However, by design, the focus of both projects was limited to *initial* development of a range of tools and approaches. *Thus the most important strategic implication arising from this evaluation concerns the need to continue, and to build upon, the work represented by these two projects.*

2. *Engage and support partners in undertaking IA.* The intention of the IA toolkit is to enable countries and other partners to undertake IA themselves. Thus far, by design, there was limited involvement of the intended users of these tools. Therefore, an essential follow-up step is for ILO/IPEC to engage with its partners to develop support and buy-in to IA.

3. *Facilitate/support use of the tools that have been developed.* The IAF project is resulting in the creation of an impressive number of tools. The next step is for these to be tried out and applied, by IPEC itself as well as by interested partners.

4. *Provide guidance on how to use the evaluation toolkit and its tools.* While the collection of tools in the toolkit represents a useful and necessary first step, there now is a need to provide guidance on the use and application of the various tools. The need for this was recognized by the IAF project and represents the primary objective of the proposed evaluation framework. This represents an essential resource, which upon reflection might be positioned somewhat differently than originally conceived, and led by DED, rather than by UCW.

5. *Keep it simple – but not simplistic.* Feedback from participants attending the Expert Meeting, as well as from others, strongly indicates that guidance and tools for IA should be kept as simple as possible. The dilemma is that while there appears to be a demand for simple tools and simple guidelines without overwhelming people with too many options, the reality is that one size does not fit all. There are a variety of related strategies that perhaps could be incorporated in the guidance that might be able to help address the dilemma of providing simple but not simplistic guidance.

6. *Provide for various forms of capacity development – plus technical support.* If partners in the future are to be expected to undertake and to use IA activities on their own, there will be a need to support the creation of more expertise in this area. Work in this regard can represent an important follow up to both the IAF and the UCW projects.

7. *Review and update the toolkit.* The IA toolkit represents a valuable resource, but the tools that have been developed are still mainly in draft form and will need to be tested, and likely revised at least to some extent. The toolkit should also be viewed as a living resource, and other tools may also be required.

8. *Expand the tracer study methodology.* IPEC's work in this area is ground breaking, with this methodology representing a rare application of a longitudinal (or more technically for tracer studies, a retrospective) approach to follow what actually happens to a cohort of individuals over time. It should now be possible to build upon IPEC's experiences to date to support future tracer studies that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches as well as somewhat simpler approaches that can be applied more easily and more frequently.

9. *Expanding the knowledge base of child labour.* IPEC portrays itself as a facilitator of knowledge on CL. One way of fulfilling this role is to expand upon the work to date on the Knowledge Centre to include knowledge from other sources besides the scientific literature, that for example may include IPEC's evaluations, and also good practices based upon what IPEC has been able to learn from its experiences over the years as well as those of its partners.