



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Evaluation
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Technical Support for Enhancing National Capacity to Prevent and Reduce Child Labour in Vietnam (ENHANCE)

Quick Facts

Countries: *Vietnam*

Mid-Term: *December 1, 2017 – May 15, 2018*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *ILO Country Office for Vietnam*

Technical Office: *ILO's Decent Work Technical Support Team, Bangkok*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *Dr. Una Murray and Ms. Ai-Phuong Ton Nu*

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Project Code: *VIE/14/04/USA*

Donor(s) & Budget: *United States Department of Labor: US\$8,000,000, Government of Vietnam: \$1,200,000*

Keywords: *Child Labour, garments, handicrafts, agriculture, Vietnam, C182, C138*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

There are an estimated 1.75 million children engaged in child labour in Vietnam. ENHANCE was designed to address identified factors which contribute to child labour in Vietnam and has three objectives: i) increased capacity of national institutions and

stakeholders to identify, monitor and respond to child labour; ii) awareness on child labour, associated hazards and legal prohibition raised among all levels of society; and iii) intervention models for preventing and withdrawing children from child labour in selected locations and sectors available. A National Plan of Action (NPA) on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour (2016-2020) had been drafted earlier. With inputs from ENHANCE, the NPA was approved during the ENHANCE project (June 2016), and interventions through ENHANCE project are supporting its' implementation.

The inherent assumption underlying the ENHANCE project is that to build a comprehensive and efficient multi-stakeholder response for the prevention and reduction of child labour in Vietnam, increased capacity of national institutions and stakeholders is required, awareness on child labour must be raised and intervention models for preventing and withdrawing children from child labour are known and tested. The sectors and geographical areas for ENHANCE are; the garment sector of Ho Chi Minh City to develop an 'urban model' to prevent and reduce child labour; handicrafts, in Hanoi city province; and rural livelihoods, a focus in An Giang province. Twelve districts in three provinces have been pre-identified for direct interventions. The project has a target of at least 5,000 children engaged in child labour or at risk to have improved access to education; vocational training; and job oriented services. At least 2,000 households should have improved economic status.

At the national level, the project is providing technical assistance to enhance the national framework of laws and policies, as well as improved capacity to implement laws, policies and associated programmes. At three provincial levels, the focus is on increasing awareness of child labour, capacity development so direct intervention models to reduce and prevent child labour can take place.

Present Situation of the Project

Although ENHANCE was approved by the Prime Minister in December 2014, the project was only officially launched in October 2015. ENHANCE is set to be completed by December 31 2019. Many delays were experienced during the inception phase of the project, resulting in the project behind in implementation by about one year. As of March 2018, only 38 per cent of the budget is spent or committed, with 38 out of 60 months completed. Capacity building and awareness raising activities are on-going, but direct interventions have not yet started in earnest, although training on identifying beneficiaries in An Giang and Hanoi has begun with some beneficiaries identified and supported in An Giang. At present ENHANCE has nine staff: an International CTA; an M&E Officer, a Capacity Building Officer, an Awareness Raising Officer; 2 Provincial Coordinators (located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City); and 3 Administrative staff.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The independent mid-term evaluation team consisting of an international and national evaluation expert worked between December 2017 and May 2018 with the aim of: promoting accountability of stakeholders; enhancing learning; and suggesting project improvements. The MTE focused on the relevance and strategic fit of interventions; validity of interventions design; intervention progress and effectiveness; efficiency of resource use; effectiveness of management arrangements; and likelihood of sustainability. The MTE also assessed gender dimensions and the promotion of international labour standards.

Methodology of evaluation

Approximately 103 stakeholders (44 males and 59 female) were interviewed (MOLISA/DOLISA;

MOET/DOET, VCCI; VGCL; collaborators; ENHANCE service providers; ENHANCE project team; consultants; donor) with visits and validation workshops in each of the three provinces. Multiple data sources were employed to triangulate and verify data. Limitations were that it was not possible to assess how direct interventions models have been implemented as these are only starting; the CMEP indicators had only been in place since mid-2017; and there was limited understanding on gender, making it difficult to assess how gender is being mainstreamed. The number of days allocated for writing up the evaluation results was insufficient.

Main Findings & Conclusions

ENHANCE is contributing to implementing policies on child labour in Vietnam, and is viewed by the Government of Vietnam (GoV) as significant for raising awareness on child labour, building capacities, with high expectations in the government of reducing child labour in certain value chains.

Relevance and strategic fit: ENHANCE's project strategy and approach is consistent and pertinent to the current and long-term development needs of Vietnam. The interventions are aligned and fit with the strategy of ENHANCE partners. The ENHANCE is very well aligned with the Vietnam DWCP for 2017-2021, One UN Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8. The project design and its underlining theory of change are valid. The process of developing the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) has ensured that the key activities that were originally planned through the ENHANCE project are mapping to results.

Validity of project design: The MTE found that the design does not need to be modified in the second half of the project, except for some minor adjustments. The MTE team found it constructive that the ENHANCE project was also able to build on the achievements of a previous ILO/IPEC project, capitalizing on the relationships established with key partners, and utilizing some of the training packages developed.

Intervention progress and effectiveness:

ENHANCE has experienced many delays since the cooperative agreement for the project was signed in December 2014. The definition of child labour; delays in receiving feedback comments from MOLISA so certain activities could move ahead; and bureaucratic process including MOLISA's strong position with regard to who should implement some activities were elements contributing to delays.

Yet, ENHANCE is contributing significantly to discussions on how to define child labour in line with international labour standards with for example a legal review contributing to this process. A working definition of child labour for the project purpose is now agreed upon with a statistical definition on the way. An on-going issue relates to discussions on child labour in the informal sector. It was noted during the MTE that the project's progress has accelerated since the working definition of child labour for the purposes of the project had been agreed; and following a retreat for ENHANCE stakeholders (which helped address some differences and misunderstandings).

Capacity building for sustainable solutions to child labour is at the core of ENHANCE's interventions. The MTE found that the progress of capacity building components progressed slower than planned. The aforementioned lack of an operational agreement on the definition of child labour proved to be an obstacle in finalising some materials. There have however been many positively received capacity building activities including NPA training, exchanges, consultations, a study visit and discussions that have built capacity of key stakeholders in government and partner organisations. For example, MOLISA particularly appreciates technical support for the draft decree on sanctions for violations related to child labour, and ENHANCE support for the revision to Labour Code in 2019. Many viewed the sub-regional workshop in August 2017 with the sharing of experiences from Indonesia, Myanmar, and Philippines as particularly useful.

Regarding awareness raising activities, delays were also experienced. Baseline studies (KAP) that were to inform awareness raising activities and the updating of a training package (SCREAM), were both delayed because of differences of opinion with regard to the

scope and content amongst the Project Management Unit (PMU) in MOLISA and the contractors. On the other hand, two successful national workshops for the World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) took place, with national stakeholders from government, social partners (VCCI, VCA and VGCL), NGO, UN agencies and the general public. For the WDACL, two video and television campaigns obtained quite broad national coverage. ENHANCE will have to quicken the pace considerably to achieve the outputs in the project time period left, disaggregating how a change in attitudes comes about for different groups in Vietnamese society and how knowledge is translated into action. A key message from an ENHANCE funded media assessment was the human-interest stories are the best way to reach the broader public. ENHANCE regional coordinators can help to identify the most appropriate channels to reach migrants.

With regard to direct interventions, models to be put in place encompassing direct service provision to children at risk or engaged in child labour, including age appropriate education, vocational training, counselling and family livelihoods and economic supports have not yet started. Of the three provinces of project focus, direct interventions have only commenced in An Giang province. The MTE team noted an acknowledgement of the urgency to initiate and implement direct interventions amongst all interviewed. At the provincial level, child protection officers are working with 'collaborators' in the communities to identify children/families at risk or children already engaged in child labour. Some collaborators still find it difficult to distinguish and categorise children into the different groups. Although it is likely that the 5000 children and 2000 families will be reached, it is a worry that there will not be adequate time for direct intervention initiatives to make a lasting difference by the end of 2019. All engaged in ENHANCE are aware of the need to expedite interventions at provincial level, whilst sustainable interventions are put in place.

The Know About Business curriculum (KAB) implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOET) has been well received, with some activities moving ahead because of their perceived quality and usefulness. KAB materials are now uploaded on the MOET intranet for use nationally and they are

encouraged in school year guidelines as an option; secondary schools near Hanoi are moving ahead themselves to implement the KAB curriculum.

Collaboration between ENHANCE and the other two USDOL funded projects in Vietnam (NIRF and SafeYouth@Work) is going well so far in the area of child labour and labour inspection, although still at an early stage. The trade union, VGCL has not been adequately involved yet, but plans are underway to raise awareness for workers via an ILO tool (SCREAM). VCCI (the Bureau for employers' activities) is keen to disseminate the planned updated code of conduct to help businesses address child labour. ENHANCE has a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (CMEP). Although the 17 outcome and 32 output indicators, unit of measurement, data sources and responsibilities are clear, the CMEP indicators were planned when 36 months were left, but with subsequent delays there is less time now left to achieve direct intervention indicators.

Although awareness raising materials covered images of both boys and girls, and baseline studies include **gender** differences, the MTE found that ENHANCE and partners are not yet consistent in covering gender. More must be done to analyse how the different roles of boys and girls affect decisions to stay in school or livelihood options including vocational training. Implications of such differences and child labour risks should be included in planning.

The **management** arrangements are unique with a Steering Committee comprised of the PMU, ILO and USDOL, rather than the typical ILO tripartite arrangements. VGCL, VCCI and VCA have less of a role in the Steering of the ENHANCE project than other ILO projects and have only been occasionally involved in project implementation so far. Implementation arrangements and coordination between the PMU and ILO were difficult in the first two and a half years due to differences in bureaucratic procedures and worries about child labour linkages to trade. For some project activities MOLISA felt only government agencies should be commissioned, despite the fact that project funds were never intended to go to the host country government, except in very limited circumstances. Applying the rules of all three agencies can be difficult, but for the most part,

understandings on the rules and regulations of all organizations are now clear, even if negotiations to achieve such understanding took time. The MTE team noted that some protocols and control issues may still need to be sorted, in order to continue to mutually respect different procedures and roles. Many stakeholders working on different components of ENHANCE would like to be more informed on what others are doing, which will be addressed during forthcoming provincial meetings.

The quality of project management amongst the ENHANCE project team was found to be very good; with backup support from MOLISA very important even through there were considerable delays in providing such support. To a certain degree, many of these delays were understandable. Support from USDOL was also very much appreciated. For the most part, the ENHANCE team was seen as doing a good job, flexible, patient and supportive of new ideas.

Efficiency of resource use: The MTE found that resources have been allocated and used strategically to achieve the project objectives. It has been time consuming navigating the financial rules and regulations of three agencies (USDOL, ILO and GoV). There is a concern about the project being able to spend the remaining funds by December 2019.

Sustainability: The MTE team also found it very impressive that the GoV is so keen to address child labour through ENHANCE and it seems likely that the GoV and partners will continue to be committed to continuing work on child labour at the end of the project. Because the project is working closely through the GoV system and procedures, it has excellent conditions for sustainability, for example working through the existing child protection system, working with labour inspectors, and supporting legal revisions to the labour code. How sustainable models implemented at local level will be is unknown.

Lessons learned and good practices: The use of social media can be extremely effective when the content, language, message and format are carefully planned around an event, in this case the World Day against Child Labour. An emerging good practice is how ENHANCE has been laying a foundation for a National Alliance 8.7 as part of an international

coalition to accelerate engagement for the purpose of eradicating forced labour, human trafficking, modern slavery and all form of child labour, in line with the target in UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.

Conclusions

The ENHANCE project is important and relevant for Vietnam, is working well now, and is supporting and has contributed to national discussions on child labour and international labour standards. ENHANCE is about one year behind in implementation. The MTE felt that some delays are understandable, due to the sensitivity around child labour, but that all stakeholders interviewed are determined and committed to speed up project progress. The MTE also found that most obstacles to progress have been overcome. The project only requires minor modifications in design; but there is a concern about being able to spend the remaining budget by the end of 2019. Project management is appropriate, but a stronger emphasis is required on gender issues throughout.

Recommendations

1. Once direct interventions are started in all provinces, they need to move at a steady and fast pace. All stakeholders should commit that they will endorse inputs and project outputs much quicker. Encourage quick completion of all ENHANCE funded studies by contractors, and encourage target audiences to utilise reports carefully to inform child labour interventions. The MTE recommends that ENHANCE receive a non-cost extension.
2. Continue support towards an agreed statistical definition of child labour for the second National Child Labour Survey. More support for the hazardous work list is required.
3. ENHANCE should improve in sharing information on what partners, implementing agencies and service providers are doing centrally and at provincial level.
4. A strong focus on strengthening networks with all stakeholders at provincial level is required so that the range of services for children are known, packaged, and options available for intervention widely shared and implemented. ENHANCE should also track how much it cost per province to set up models of direct intervention, including fixed and variable costs. Referencing the National Hotline for children is also recommended in the package of interventions shared.
5. ENHANCE should appoint a focal point who can help draw attention to how gender roles influence vocational training options, the consequences of the gender division of labour on child labour and the overall relevance of gender for implementing ENHANCE activities.
6. More attention, awareness and prioritisation of migrants are required amongst ENHANCE partners. Adjustments to the Direct Beneficiary Reporting and Monitoring (DBRM) form is required to ensure the particular circumstances of migrants can be documented so that activities can be facilitated.
7. Given that child labourers are concentrated in the 15-17 year age group in Vietnam, and in rural areas, more attention is required on agribusiness skills for those engaged in agriculture. More discussions with regard to vocational training courses on offer for boys and girls aged 14-17 years would be useful, including those who specialise in agribusiness.
8. Vetting of volunteers should be placed on the agenda for discussion.
9. ENHANCE could improve on systematically evaluating capacity development, so all can learn from these processes and understand what works best for different groups of stakeholders.
10. Ensure there are no further delays with the Knowledge Attitudes and Practice (KAP) survey report, to inform the awareness raising campaign. Ensure the recommendations from the media assessment are used in awareness raising activities for government agencies and the public.
11. The approach adopted in the ENHANCE project is ensuring good ownership on the part of government. It is important to document the process and outline what a good practice in addressing child labour can look like in Vietnam.