Evaluation Summary

International Labour Office

Evaluation Office

Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour (CLEAR) Joint Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Paraguay, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Uganda*

Joint Final Evaluation: *31 July 2018*

Evaluation Mode:　　*Independent*

Administrative Office: *Fundamentals*

Technical Office:　　*Fundamentals*

Evaluation Managers: *Janette Murawski (ILO), Dwight Ordonez/Azure Maset (Sistemas Familia y Sociedad)*

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Project Code:　　*GLO/13/22/USA*

Donor(s) & Budget:　　USDOL *(USD 7,950,000)*

Keywords:　　*child labour, labour inspection, child protection*

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Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose and structure

The CLEAR project commenced in November 2013 under a Cooperative Agreement with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The project received two no-cost extensions to enable completion of activities, extending the duration until 31 January, 2019. An independent external mid-term evaluation was conducted in late 2015.

The project supports USDOL's efforts to address the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO's global agenda for the elimination of child labour, focusing on building capacity among national and local governments in host countries. The project arose from USDOL's intention to address country capacity issues identified in the USDOL annual *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*.

Prior to the award of the project Bangladesh, Paraguay, Philippines, Suriname and Uganda were selected as implementation countries. Six more countries were introduced on a rolling basis from April 2015 - Afghanistan, Armenia, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Serbia, and Sri Lanka.

The project Development Objective is increased capacity of target countries to reduce child labour, including its worst forms. Globally, CLEAR's interventions correspond to the following Intermediate Objectives:

IO 1: Legal/Regulatory instruments aligned with international standards on child labour, including its worst forms, formally submitted to appropriate bodies. (Armenia, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Paraguay, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Uganda)

IO 2: Improved enforcement of laws and policies related to child labour, including its worst forms. (Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Paraguay, Philippines, Suriname, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Uganda)

IO 3: Increased implementation of National Action Plans on child labour, including its worst forms. (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Philippines, Suriname, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Uganda)

ILO Evaluation Summaries - Page 1

IO4: Improved implementation/integration of national and local policies and social programs aimed at reduction and prevention of child labour, including its worst forms. (Armenia, Bangladesh, Paraguay, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka)

In each country the interventions were designed according to the specific priority issues contributing to the four intermediate objectives. While the project focuses on interventions in these four thematic areas, not all target countries conducted activities under every component.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The final evaluation was jointly managed by the ILO and Sistemas Familia y Sociedad (SFS) on behalf of the USDOL. It was conducted from April to July 2018 by two independent evaluators contracted separately by USDOL/SFS and the ILO.

The purpose of the final evaluation includes providing USDOL, ILO and stakeholders with an independent assessment to support accountability and organizational learning. It is also intended to inform stakeholders on the design of future child labour elimination projects. The objectives were to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of the project. Additionally, the evaluation is expected to document lessons learned and good practices.

Evaluation Methodology

The primary evidence of the evaluation was based on a triangulation of information based on qualitative interviews and extensive desk review of documentation. Interviews were conducted with project and other staff at ILO Headquarters, country project staff and key stakeholders through visits to four selected countries.

The evaluators conducted field work in Paraguay and Serbia (USDOL evaluator) and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (ILO evaluator), from 16 to 31 May, 2018. Skype calls were held and online survey forms shared with key stakeholders in non-visited countries. A stakeholder workshop was held in Geneva on 15 June, with country stakeholders participating by teleconference, where the preliminary findings were presented and discussed.

Design and Relevance

All of CLEAR's intermediate objectives were important and provided a valid means to build country capacity at national and local levels. The project interventions were highly relevant to stakeholders in most of the countries—and particularly to governments. However, the evaluation concluded that there were some weaknesses in the multi-country design.

Firstly, the four components—in combination and individually—did not give sufficient emphasis to cross-country exchange and global learning. This could have been more explicitly included through the results framework.

Regarding the number of countries and their composition, the main basis for country selection was the country assessment in the USDOL's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.* Various additional criteria were applied, including country interest in receiving support for capacity building activities. The broad selection criteria resulted in a set of countries across the globe with highly divergent needs and maturity on child labour programming. A more focused design, either regionally or thematically, could have provided for deeper impact. The focus solely on the enabling environment was ideal for some countries needing to fill particular capacity gaps, others ideally needed a more comprehensive approach with upstream and downstream interventions.

The number of countries included also meant that the resources were thinly spread. The decision to select half of the countries at pre-award and half during implementation led to short timeframes for those introduced later in the project life and challenges for activity completion.

The project intermediate objectives and sub-objectives were mostly relevant to the needs of the national stakeholders, and continued to be relevant with some exceptions. They were well linked to child labour national plans where these are already available, and to other national priorities and strategies including national social development frameworks. Depending on the context, CLEAR supported poverty reduction strategies, decent work country programs, child protection strategies, and UNDAF programming. CLEAR as a whole is also relevant to global priorities

such as those included in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The project established a **Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP)** following USDOL guidelines. This included an extensive set of indicators covering all levels of the results framework and incorporating the USDOL common indicators for capacity. Globally, the system proved effective in serving accountability and donor reporting needs. At the country level, the CMEP was generally found useful to track performance. However, the system complexity and number of indicators was frequently perceived as burdensome. The system is intended to be flexible, but the users did not consider it amenable to change, limiting its usefulness as a management tool to adjust the project course.

Progress towards objectives

The evaluation found that the project has achieved most of its output targets in the majority of the countries. Achieving outcomes has been much more challenging because many are related to the official adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as enforcement guidelines and other processes. Although the National Project Coordinators/Country Focal Points generally worked hard together with other stakeholders to advocate for adoption of legal amendments, such legislative processes are beyond the control of a technical assistance project.

With regard to **legal reform (IO 1)**, the project supported significant progress towards improved legal hazardous work definitions, legal provisions on domestic work and light work, though mostly stopping short of law adoption.

In terms of **law enforcement (IO 2)**, the capacity of labour inspectorates to identify and respond to child labour has been substantially increased in the countries addressing this component. Complementary local CLMS models have been successfully piloted in Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire and Lebanon, and with some refinements will be ready for scaling-up.

With CLEAR support, the formulation and **implementation of National Action Plans** on child labour (**IO 3**) has been improved across most countries. This included updating of existing plans in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, for example. Substantial progress has also been made to strengthen sub-national coordination structures on child labour in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Innovative cross-sectoral integration of child labour has been extended within poverty alleviation programs in the Philippines and Paraguay, while much remains to be done toward integration in other countries (**IO 4**).

Sustainability

Government commitment to eliminating child labour is the most significant factor toward sustaining the results achieved. In some countries, such commitment was already high at the project start, while across the project CLEAR galvanized increased engagement of tripartite stakeholders to address child labour. This was due in large part to the advocacy efforts of the National Project Coordinators and their strategic selection of partners and individual change agents. As a key indication of sustainability, several governments have set ambitious targets for the elimination of child labour (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Philippines) and have allocated increased national budgets for child labour programming (Bangladesh, Philippines).

The relatively short project duration per country and budget limitations mean that fully sustained outcomes will depend on countries acquiring further resources to achieve their plans of action and goals. Such resources are already being allocated through government in some countries and with support of donors and the private sector in others.

Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The management structure of CLEAR, with key personnel housed in Geneva and country coordinator staff in ILO country offices brought advantages as well as challenges for the efficiency of implementation and achievement of results. Covering eleven countries within the given budget led to thin staffing and implementation budgets per country. Most country stakeholders and some ILO headquarters stakeholders reported that fewer countries with a larger budget would have led to exponentially greater effectiveness and impact. The evaluation observed that HQ project staff and the National Project Coordinators/focal points worked extraordinarily hard to deliver the results, especially as CLEAR was a 'one-person show' in most countries.

The sharing of thematic technical responsibilities among the HQ team was effective in providing support to the countries, and the Labour Inspection Specialist and Programme Officer added value to the ILO's technical support. However, based on ILO stakeholder comments and the evaluators' observations, the project could have drawn more extensively on the ILO's technical infrastructure on child labour globally and regionally.

Emerging Good Practices

Public-Private Funding Partnerships for Child Labour Monitoring in Côte d'Ivoire. Refinements to the existing Child labour Monitoring System were piloted with proven success, linking the cocoa enterprises into the child labour monitoring system. Significantly, a public-private sector framework has been established for sustainable funding of the system.

Integration of child labour in social programs in Paraguay: An innovative collaboration between two social protection programs with links to child labour, Abrazo and Tekopra programs, was developed in a rural district. The two programs developed a set of common operating procedures, and a joint pilot program. This represented a significant step towards addressing the economic roots of child labour.

Coordination at the district level for Child Labour Free Zones, Sri Lanka: Based on an existing model for child labour free zones, CLEAR Sri Lanka is extending the model to districts throughout the country. The project developed a 12-step guideline for integrating child labour in plans of the multi-sectoral District Child Development Committees, extending the coverage through Divisions (within districts) to provide a community level response.

Note: Key Lessons Learned can be found in the full evaluation report.

Recommendations

The global recommendations mostly apply to future multi-country child labour projects. The full report provides the intended implementers, priority, timing and resource implications for each, and also provides a set of country-specific recommendations.

1) **Ensure that the lessons learned and good practices of CLEAR, including those gathered through the outcome-based research case studies** are shared among the participating countries and internationally.

2) **Use common criteria to select countries with similarity in terms of child labour programming experience, regional location and demographics**. Design a regional focus so that support can be well oriented to local conditions. Limit the number of countries per regional project to five or less to ensure higher staff concentration.

3) **Reduce the thematic scope of similar large multi-country projects to one or two main areas**.

4) **Include an inception period in future similar projects.** It is important to conduct a situational analysis in potential participating countries prior to selecting them, in accordance with well-defined criteria. Once selected, a six-month period to adjust the objectives and related actions in the country together with stakeholders is recommended.

5) **Ensure at least three years per country for implementation of similar projects.**

6) **Intensify links and exchanges among countries and their stakeholders to share good practices and lessons learned within a given project**. Cross-country learning was not the focus of this project; it would benefit all countries in any future project. Include cross-country learning as an intermediate project objective to ensure due budget attention and inclusion of achievement indicators.

7) **Decentralize the management of similar projects.** Strengthen the planning, prioritization and related management and allocation of resources across activities at country level.

8) **Future projects addressing similar child labour themes could explore innovative approaches to addressing child labour and the strengthening of cross sectoral policies.** Research topics could include the use of digital technologies for child labour monitoring systems and the use of social media to organize child peers to support each other to fight child labour.