Evaluation Summary

International Labour Office

Evaluation Unit

Towards a child-labour-free Philippines: Building on past gains and addressing challenges – Final Evaluation

Taken from the Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2001, there was an estimated 4 million economically active children in the country, aged 5 to 17 years, which constituted 16.2 per cent of the total population of children within the same age group, according to a survey produced by the Philippine National Statistics Office (NSO). Sixty per cent, or 2.4 million children, were exposed to hazardous working conditions. Of those exposed, 7 out of 10 were male. The proportion of rural working children exposed to physical, chemical or biological hazards was higher (at 62 per cent) than their urban counterparts. After a gap of over a decade, the NSO officially released another study in 2012. They estimated 3.03 million children to be engaged in child labour, including 2.99 million in hazardous occupations and tasks and 35,000 in long hours or at night in non-hazardous occupations.

The numbers of working children exposed to hazardous working conditions in 2011 represents a slight increase of 0.8 per cent over 2001 levels. The phenomenon of child labour is known to occur in the non-formal sector within the Philippines. Whereas businesses have largely concurred with anti-child labour laws, child labour persists within smaller family-owned businesses and the larger non-formal sector. Types of work children engage in include fishing and agriculture, as well as scavenging and gold mining. Government response includes ratification of ILO Convention 182 in year 2000. For legislation against Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) and protection of working children, which the Government put into place, see the full report.

'Towards a Child Labour-Free Philippines: Supporting the 'Philippine Program Against Child Labour' in Building on Past Gains and Addressing Challenges' is a four-year program funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), which began on 30 September 2009 and ended December 2013. The project's overall development objective is to contribute to the PPACL goal to reduce WFCL by 75 per cent by 2015 through the prevention, protection, and reintegration of child workers into a caring society.

The project focuses on knowledge creation and management, partnership and coordination, area-based services, and sustainability at the national and local levels. The project aimed to provide direct services to 9,350 children identified as engaged in child labour or at risk in four provinces, Quezon, Masbate, Northern Samar and Bukidnon. These services were intended to bring about the complete withdrawal of 5,500 children from child labour and successfully prevent 3,350 who are at risk.

Methodology
The evaluation covers the beginning of the project from the end of 2009 to the present. It follows the project's mid-term evaluation, which was completed in July 2012. The evaluation's main purpose is: *to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project interventions and outcomes achieved, particularly in relation to sustained outcomes and their potential to be replicated in other contexts*. The evaluation team focused on three primary areas: assessment of contextual factors and realities; assessment of conceptual analysis and frameworks; and initiative-wide performance.

1. *Assessment of contextual factors and realities*: Contextual information was taken into account related to ILO-IPEC programming objectives, government priorities, and partner agency programming in order to check assumptions and the fit of the initiative's inputs and expected results. Data was collected from stakeholders and supplemented by a desk review.

2. *Assessment of conceptual analysis and frameworks*: Information was gathered to further understand and describe the conceptual basis for the initiative. Data was collected from stakeholders and supplemented by a desk review.

3. *Assessment of initiative-wide performance*: A broader assessment was also undertaken, to assess project outcomes under each of the four project components and their prospects for sustained implementation, to cover all four provinces and national level. Data was collected from stakeholder interviews and supplemented by a desk review.

The expanded final evaluation included two sub-studies conducted by national consultants prior to the evaluation team's field work to assist in understanding the above three primary areas. These focused on the enabling environment in two selected provinces and a quantitative assessment of the Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting (DBMR).

- The *enabling environment sub-study* sought to: 1) describe the current situation of the enabling environment to reduce child labour in two selected provinces; 2) identify changes in the enabling environment to reduce child labour in the two districts over the last three years; 3) identify changes in the enabling environment at the national level that have supported the reduction of child labour at the district level over the last three years; 4) identify possible causal links between the interventions of the project and changes in the enabling environment in the districts; and 5) identify lessons learned in the work that has been done to support change in the enabling environment at the district level for the reduction of child labour that can be used to develop models and inform future work of this nature. Data was collected through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with project stakeholders in Quezon and Bukidnon Provinces and was qualitative in nature.
- An assessment of the impact on project beneficiaries through analysis of the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring Reports (DBMR) was conducted, focused on component three of the project, area-based services. The study involved a quantitative analysis of the project's DBMR data and aimed to assess the impact of the project on diverse groups of beneficiaries and the distribution of benefits among those of particularly vulnerable backgrounds.

The evaluation identified several limitations, some specific to the methodological approach and some related to circumstance. They include: limited access within villages to freely walk about and interview at will due to limited time; language differences in Masbate; natural disaster in the Philippines two to three weeks prior to the arrival of the evaluation team

which caused last minute changes in field visits location and schedule; and delay in finalization of the sub-studies.

Findings
Overall the evaluation found that the project has made a very substantive contribution to the implementation of the PPACL in reaching its overall objective of 75 per cent reduction in child labour by 2014. This contribution is evidenced by increased levels of awareness about child labour among parents, children and community leaders at the barangay level in their efforts to withdraw and prevent child labour; the support to all levels of government in the formulation of ordinances; and the very deliberate focus on sustaining outcomes in supporting the child labour agenda going forward. The following outlines the main findings grouped under thematic areas of project approach, data collection and use:

A. Relevance of the project approach
The evaluation team identified the project approach to be relevant in several ways. First, the project's area based convergence approach is relevant in the Philippine context, yet certain challenges exist, including addressing migrant child labourers and the intent to achieve the desired change and commitment over the life of the project cycle. Second, the project's greater investment in direct service provision, institutional capacity development, and policy over public-private partnerships is sound, based on the greater prevalence of the child labour problem in the informal economy. Third, the project logic is sound overall, yet the overall development objective is based upon the PPACL objective, which is not fully supported with clear objectives and benchmarks to monitor progress.

B. Data: collection, organization and use
Data collection and analysis was an instrumental part of the project, with several examples found of effective use for program and policy development, and for awareness raising. The project's purposeful effort to set up data bases, establish information hubs and exchange mechanisms, and document good practices has made a direct contribution to the cultivation and consolidation of knowledge at both the individual and institutional levels on how to address the problem of child labour. Yet access to data during project implementation was problematic, with issues of capacity and access to technology limiting its use, particularly in remote project sites where connectivity is uneven. In addition, regular monitoring of children's status at the barangay level and analysis of data collected for purposes of knowledge sharing and program planning was ineffective.

C. Effectiveness of partnerships and coordination of services
The project has been successful in achieving its quantitative targets of child labourers withdrawn, prevented and protected. Attribution of the children's staying enrolled in school as linked to the project, however, is difficult to discern due to other programming within the target communities, namely the Conditional Cash Transfer Program, or '4P's'. Yet reinforcement of project objectives between the two programs was found to be positive. Successful coordination at the local level appears to rest on a combination of Local Governance Unit (LGU) leadership, political will, institutional competence, i.e. human resources and systems and collaboration among national government agencies in providing services needed by the child labourers. With regard to private-public partnerships, their success in addressing child labour is dependent upon whether there are clear economic dividends to be gained by the business sector. Where there is a clear win-win situation, the project has showcased multiple positive models for replication.

D. Discussion on sustainability and strategic gaps going forward
The project has strongly focused on policy development as a means to sustain achievements in the child labour movement, as well as deliberately executing activities aimed to sustain gains made by the project. The evaluation finds crucial to sustaining these gains is (1) a well-operating system for detecting cases of child labour (Child Labour Monitoring system (CLM)); and (2) an effective mechanism for delivering services to children according to their needs (Integrated Service Delivery System (ISDS)). These have been institutionalized, yet how well they will continue to operate depends on the leadership of the municipalities and barangays. Continued orientation and capacity building is required. The proposed HELP ME Program is at the first level of decentralization, providing for some prospect for success, yet similar challenges remain in supporting local actors at the front line in dealing with the child labour problem within their communities.

Conclusions

Lessons learned
☐ A lesson learned from the Philippine experience indicates sustainable livelihoods, combined with

awareness raising, is an effective way for children to be assured of proper care and education.

☐ Building the capacity of government agencies within the scope of their mandate and within the context of the convergence program while advocating for continued prioritization for funding bodes better for sustainability as compared to supporting NGOs in the same role, as was done in Masbate and Northern Samar.

☐ In addressing a social phenomenon like child labour, the Philippine experience demonstrates the importance of coordination, collaboration and convergence of development efforts.

☐ Long-term investment and support to the barangay level is needed to ensure achievements 'stick' and are fully realized.

Recommendations

1. Continue strengthening institutional capacities for law enforcement, design and implementation of anti-child labour programs and services. Consolidate the legal basis and functionality of NCLC.

2. Establish an enhanced NCLC oversight mechanism over the RCLCs/PCLCs.

3. Data collection and use: Data collectors should be trained to engage in on-going analysis of data collected on properly encoded Excel sheets for knowledge sharing among project implementers for project planning, including BCPCs. Ensure data collectors are trained and provided with properly encoded Excel sheets with the appropriate codes used.

4. Consolidate existing partnerships and foster more and better ones. Department of Interior and Local Governance (DILG) engagement and oversight relative to child labour mainstreaming in LGUs can and should be much better.

5. The DOLE must issue guidelines for implementation of HELP ME Convergence.

6. Review the tripartite approaches that were explored and piloted vis-à-vis child labour advocacy and involvement in the enforcement of anti-child labour laws and policies.

7. Institutionalize and regularize the Survey on Children to ensure adequate baseline data going forward. Priority must be given to regular surveys completed with Government resources. A more intensive effort to advocate for the regularization of the survey has to take place.

8. Continue building the capacity of those households with child labour through both economic and educational means. The evaluation team notes the importance of increased access to livelihoods and skills development as vital to the reduction of child labour.

9. Interventions aimed at achieving impact at the barangay level should be sustained for the long-term and focused on the DILG's support to BCPCs.

10. Based on the analysis of the DBMR, consider intensify the targeting of boys who are living in a large family with few adults earning in the household, and who are not in school at the time of enrolment.

Recommendations for ILO-IPEC and USDOL

11. To enable greater effectiveness of the DBMR within the project and the data collection and monitoring process overall, the evaluation team suggests articulating a third objective that is learning in nature.

12. Include in the DBMR manuals and modules discussion on the need for a clear protocol on the encoding of data and regular analysis.

13. Regular maintenance of the DBMR and monitoring reports should be done by the project, with occasional high-level analysis of the DBMR conducted by an expert data analysis team.

14. Implement a standardized approach to data collection so as to ensure complete understanding, instead of relying on implementing partners.

15. Include in the DBMR other factors that can influence vulnerability within the local context.

16. Interventions aimed at achieving impact at the barangay level should be sustained for the long-term.

17. For future programming in the Philippines, consider targeting of the most vulnerable of child labourers identified through analysis of the DBMR – those boys who are living in a large family with few adults earning in the household, and who are not in school at the time of enrolment.

For Good Practices, and more detailed Recommendations, please see the full report.