



Evaluation Summaries

Progressive eradication of child labor in firework industries in Guatemala, Phase I

Quick Facts

Countries: *Guatemala*

Final Evaluation: May 2003

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: IPEC

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Project Code: *GUA/99/05/050*

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Executive summary of the main report

The following is the report for the final evaluation of the project "Progressive Eradication of Child Labor in Firework Industries in San Juan Sacatepequez and San Raymundo, Guatemala," IPEC-ILO P. GUA/99/05P.060.00-04, which was carried out at the end of November and in early December, 2002. The information was obtained from documents, open and in-depth interviews, questionnaires and direct observation of situations, attitudes and practices. Informants were personnel in charge of administration and development, project beneficiaries and other interested parties.

The following summary, as well as the body of the report itself, lists both the main achievements this evaluation found and a relatively large number of weaknesses,

which do not necessarily cast a shadow on the achievements but that the evaluators consider deserve special attention.

RELEVANCE

Worth highlighting as achievements, the evaluation found a target population defined in both quantitative and qualitative terms, as well as several public institutions, both national and local, participating in ways and degrees that contributed to the final objectives of the project, under their leadership.

The main weakness found was that not all parties shared a common conceptual framework, which resulted in activities not always leading to the final objective. There were some incongruence in the planning, and the participation of beneficiaries could have been fostered much further. In this sense, more advantage could have been taken from lessons learned in other contexts. The baseline, its updating and the market study entered late. Other specific aspects were incorporated into the project design. Foreseen beneficiaries were not differentiated according to critical conditions. Some public institutions, both national and local, did not participate or did so in ways and degrees that did not contribute as much as expected to the final objectives.

Worth mentioning at this point is that the various implementing agencies demonstrated undeniable types of strength, which were both differential and supplementary (administrative, financial and

technical). Such types of strength have enabled or increased their functions and achievement of objectives in the project. More specifically, it can be said that HABITAT, the first agency in charge of the Education and Health component, demonstrated adequate epidemiological conceptualization and use of tools. ASI, which replaced it and, besides, took charge of the community alternatives for income generation through micro-credit, stood out in terms of administrative management, team work and financial management. Besides, it performed very well in the field, and during its relations with communities, it showed awareness of cultural and linguistic differences and their implication for intervention. The agency in charge of relocation of firework industries, CONMIGUAT, demonstrated capacity for high-level institutional dialogue based on technical strength.

The various implementing agencies also demonstrated some weaknesses, also differential (administrative, financial and technical). These may not have been an obstacle to perform their main functions and achieve their goals, but in some way decreased the splendour of their success. For instance, HABITAT's proposal was not convincing and the agency did not perform well in the field. It did not contribute enough to create group identity and it did not share its database as much as expected. ASI showed passive resistance to central directives and some tendency to "set house apart." On the other hand, CONMIGUAT showed a high level of personnel flow and some degree of internal disagreement, which may have influenced the fact that the number of beneficiaries it organized was not close to the one expected.

Some of the intended synergy was achieved, but it must be said that it was not fostered enough. Institutional culture did not reach a sufficient level of collaboration, but a certain atmosphere of competition prevailed among the agencies and directive instances instead.

One of the best achievements of the entire project is that the agencies could develop important and clear institutional relationships with other relevant actors. They made these actors aware and ready for cooperation in formal aspects, although not always in concrete ones. The project director and the coordination of the national office for IPEC in Guatemala skilfully handled both the relationship with the press and the high-level diplomatic relations with the Government of the Republic.

Although the existing organizational structure was not known sufficiently well beforehand, the initial lack of participation on the part of the beneficiaries was mostly overcome. Likewise, it was possible to moderate the hostile attitude intermediaries developed once their initially active participation did not result in their intended co-opting for the project.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The fact that a baseline as such could not be established cannot be hidden. As a result, monitoring, reporting, follow-up and evaluation as factors to support decision-making had some limitation. It is worth stressing that quantitative indicators supplied a more precise common language, but at the same time it was also verified that feedback was generally only formal, and in some occasions it was also extemporaneous.

The mid-term evaluation supplied a series of observations and results that were potentially useful and that may have even resulted in a quantitative and also qualitative step forward; however, it must be said that their execution was rather variable, apparently due to a generally very long time needed for reaction by management. The meaning and usefulness of indicators for decision-making is not shared. Another aspect to be improved is assignment of responsibilities and procedures to record, analyze and disseminate information, which would result in more complete records, better-defined analyses and sharing information beyond formal standards.

EFFICIENCY

This is another area where remarkable achievements were made. These include higher awareness against child labor by the various actors, better education and more access to it, better support to health, community organization around credit groups, trying out alternative sources of income, and better conditions for organized groups of firework producers. All this was done while following the budget as planned, which was adequate and balanced.

It must also be stated that the achievement of immediate objectives was uneven and did not reach the level expected. About 64% of the target population was reached through awareness raising activities and primary education, as well as health. Half the expected population was reached with micro-credit. Model industries included 15% of the target population. The percentage in technical education was too low.

Education

A certain level of achievement in education can be verified. The pre-school population was reached in educational centers whose good performance contributed to schooling by induction. Some 3000 out of the 4100 school-aged children were reached. According to teachers, the rates for return to school, permanence in school and performance have had a very positive change as a result of the project. No consolidated figures were available, but there is enough evidence to support this assertion.

Among the most outstanding results is the guarantee for Peace Scholarships and the consolidation of the scheme for administration by the community, to which end efforts were correctly made. This achievement meant resources available for school infrastructure, materials and equipment. On the other hand, an important achievement is the change towards a model of Active Rural School, which fosters motivation and permanence in school. A lot has been advanced in this area.

Very clear achievements include school attendance by girls, which has increased in numbers and quality, as well as participation by parents in school services and improvement of quality. Teacher education and training to address the needs of children who are working or at risk was also improved.

Worth highlighting as an achievement in this component are the primary health care campaigns carried out, with participation by the ministries of Health and Education and the corresponding component of the project. However, it is necessary to qualify this assertion by saying that the local health system was not visibly strengthened to improve health services provided to the target population, and neither was any improvement found in the safety and hygiene conditions in which firework production takes place in private homes.

Model industries

Due to the number of obstacles to be overcome, the initiation of the first model industry, run by 13 families that used to make fireworks at home, must be referred to as an outstanding achievement. Technology has been included and risk levels decreased, which were two of the results planned. It was not possible to verify any increase in profitability because not enough time had elapsed since the model workshop opened. This evaluation considers that an important weakness is that the marketing plan has not been stated in detail as a complete document. Another real concern is that transportation of the finished product has not been arranged for yet, and it is clear that the industries still have not eliminated the need for child labor families have.

Almost all partners in the industries are male. Men's role has changed from distributor and controller of domestic child labor to that of member of a group whose work he can only control in relation to the work he personally performs. Women's role has changed from being co-helpers in

domestic production to concentrating on other type of household tasks.

It is necessary to verify in this section that technical assistance to Solidarity groups in the model industries has not led them to enough autonomy. The legal channels for the acquisition of raw materials are in the hands of the army and do not exclude intermediaries. The model workshop is fragile in this context. There is dependency on the chief engineer, hired as a consultant, in relation to marketing the product of the model workshop. The marketing plan is incomplete, weak and little formalized. Marketing channels were not detailed enough.

The model workshop strategy has not proved to be a generator of enough income so as to make child labor unnecessary. Its results do not compare to other income generation alternatives. It is unknown whether or not income rose for families in activities other than firework production, or if their income is enough to cover daily expenses without resorting to child labor, but that does not seem probable.

Micro-credit

Practically all beneficiaries from micro-credit are women, whose role has changed from co-helpers in domestic production controlled by the husband, to helpers in the generation of supplementary income, while still carrying out tasks for the family but with relatively more freedom. Man's role has changed from distributor and controller of domestic family work to that of provider, based on his income generated by another personal activity generally carried out outside the household, such as brickwork. Technical assistance has provided them with elements to handle credit, more than to manage micro-firms.

Awareness raising

Very important achievements are verified in this area: changes in discourse, awareness, perceptions and general attitudes among the various actors, which are all coherent with the progressive elimination of child labor in general. Conditions have been

created for the establishment of a local network to monitor child labor. Specific actors have suggested specific actions as part of a joint effort.

SUSTAINABILITY

Worth highlighting, as a crucial achievement, is the creation of necessary conditions in some actors for the continuation of results. Institutionalization and the development of the legal framework have progressed, thus increasing sustainability, since they have given weight and visibility to the actions undertaken, while at the same time further committing actors, including the general public, to exercise influence and lobbying. Several public institutions have begun to develop strategies, both separately and jointly.

This said, it is however very risky to assert that the factors producing child labor in the firework industries in San Juan and San Raymundo have been eliminated, and it would be even more risky to state that it has been done so permanently. Some causal factors seem to have been addressed, since the symptoms of child labor, the focus of attention, has receded. Pre-schools have infrastructure and equipment. The cost of personnel and others items are not autonomous from external cooperation. In-depth implementation of the methodology for the Active Rural School is on the right track. School Boards are not all together independent. The Peace Scholarship program has greatly increased the visible impact of this fund, guaranteed for a specific agreement.

Still to be solved are relatively minor needs at the technical level. In the administrative-managerial area, there is strong dependence and training has not been completed. In the financial area, the first results are being obtained. Both groups have signed mortgages in favor of the implementing agency.

The family groups organized as part of the community alternatives to firework production take part in the administration

and functioning of their micro-firms. The groups only work as such to obtain, guarantee and pay individual loans. Each individual member handles his own micro-project and the projects handled by a group are not in any way integrated vertically nor horizontally. Micro-firms are designed for a very small local market, and they work as generators of supplementary income within it. New pertinent legislation has been developed. Local appropriation of the program is uneven; it has not been ensured in all aspects.

In summary, sustainability of the results obtained does not seem to be guaranteed if left on their own under the present conditions and, on the other hand, efficiency of results in terms of their contribution to achievement of the final objective seems to have good perspectives, but it has not shown all its potential yet.

On the basis of this view of sustainability, this evaluation strongly recommends an extension of the project that will keep qualified support to several of its activities, mainly those related to income generation and particularly the model workshop for firework production. Such an extension is recommended for a period of at least one year (preferably longer), and it would require the allocation of fresh funds, not necessarily from the same donor.