



Evaluation Summaries

Support for national action to combat child labour and its worst forms in Thailand

Quick Facts

Countries: *Thailand*

Final Evaluation: *October 2010*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC, DWT-Bangkok*

Evaluation Team: *Sandy Wark, Nantaporn Ieumwananonthachai*

Project Start: *September 2006*

Project End: *March 2011*

Project Code: *THA/06/50/USA*

Donor: *United States Department of Labour (USDOL) (US\$3,500,000)*

Keywords: *Child labour*

The development objective of the project is to reduce child labour in Thailand, focusing on the immediate elimination in its worst forms. The project has three immediate objectives, in support of the development objective, which are, that by the end of the project:

- Policy changes are in place to support the elimination of child labour;
- Targeted children are withdrawn and prevented from the WFCL in six selected provinces through the development and implementation of models that can serve as the basis for best practices for replication; and
- Multi-stakeholder responses to combat the WFCL increase public awareness at the provincial and national level.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project, "Support for National Action to Combat Child Labour and its Worst Forms in Thailand," builds on the experience in the country over the last 10 years, and aims to support government and other stakeholders to put policy and laws into practice. The project design was based on research commissioned by ILO-IPEC in six provinces in 2005-06, preceding the funding of the project, which investigated the nature and extent of child labour in selected economic sectors. The project approach is to support policy improvement at a national level and wider engagement to combat child labour, while at a provincial level it develops intervention models for wider replication.

The project aimed to achieve its objectives through a series of outputs and activities at national and provincial levels. Central to these were seven Action Programmes (APs) in six provinces (Chiang Rai, Tak, Udon Thani, Samut Sakhon, and Songkhla and Pattani), and three at the national level, which are intended to withdraw or prevent children from the worst forms of child labour by strengthening mechanisms for policy coordination and delivery, raising public awareness and strengthening advocacy and direct actions such as identifying children at risk and providing them with educational and other services. Project direct action interventions targeted children working primarily in fishing and fish processing, agriculture and agro-processing, and informal sector activities (street vending, begging). Many project direct action interventions focused on addressing the needs of migrant children who make up a large proportion

of the children identified as working or at risk of working in the worst forms of child labour in Thailand. However, poor Thai children and ethnic minority and stateless children were also targeted by project direct action as project research shows that they are also at risk and participate in the worst forms of child labour in Thailand.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation team considered the results and outcomes on all levels of project implementation: impact on policies, knowledge, awareness and social mobilization on child labour and on the availability of effective and replicable models of intervention relevant for withdrawing and preventing children from engaging in the worst forms of child labour.

The evaluation team assessed key aspects of the programme including strategy, implementation, and achievement of objectives. This evaluation report will present and analyze the effect and impact of the work carried out during the implementation phase, using data collected on the indicators of achievement and feedback from key stakeholders. It will also evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, and elements of sustainability of the programme activities used to address child labour and trafficking in Thailand. It will identify lessons learned and good practices in combating child labour, particularly among the migrant, ethnic minority and stateless populations that might inform future child labour projects in Thailand and in other countries as appropriate. Life histories of the beneficiary children and case studies based on evaluation team interviews are also documented. The evaluation team hopes that this report will be useful to key stakeholders and decision makers and aid with policy and programme decisions for future activities in the country.

Methodology of evaluation

The terms of reference for this evaluation were developed by ILO/IPEC's Department of Design, Evaluation and Documentation in consultation with all stakeholders including the donor. In addition, before starting the in-country portion of the evaluation, the evaluation team leader conducted telephone interviews with the IPEC Geneva desk officer and USDOL representatives; interviews identified areas of interest for evaluation assessment from the point of view of these stakeholders as well as their perspective on

the achievements, shortcomings and challenges of the project.

The evaluation was conducted through a desk review of relevant documents and consultations and interviews with key stakeholders and direct beneficiaries. The desk review examined the project document, progress reports, written outputs of the project, selected Royal Thai Government (RTG) policy documents and a small number of relevant materials from sources other than ILO and the RTG.

The final evaluation field visits and stakeholder meetings were conducted by the final evaluation team during the period May 4-19, 2010. In-country consultations consisted of meetings, interviews and presentations by stakeholders including ILO/IPEC project staff, ILO technical specialists, government officials, employers' and civil society organizations representatives, community leaders, action programme implementers and family and child beneficiaries. Due to the unrest in Thailand during the evaluation period, some stakeholder interviews were conducted by phone in the two weeks that followed in-country consultations and the final stakeholder workshop was cancelled and then rescheduled and held on October 6, 2010.

Four provinces and four action programmes were visited by the evaluation team:

- Prevention of Hazardous Child Labour and Child Trafficking Through Education and Social Mobilization among Migrant Communities in Samut Sakhon Province.
- Prevention and elimination of child labour in hazardous work through occupational safety and health services in Songkhla and Pattani Southern border provinces.
- Collaboration for the Prevention and Elimination of Hazardous Child Labour in Samut Sakhon Province.
- Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Chiang Rai Province - Application of Multi-disciplinary approach.

The selection of which action programmes to be visited was made by ILO/IPEC DED in consultation with project management. The selection of action programmes to be visited was

influenced by time and logistics constraints as well as other factors:

Samut Sakhon is a large seaport and has a mix of migrant children of different national origin, many of whom work in shrimp and fish processing. Project interventions focused on improving access by migrant children to Thai formal education.

Songkla/Pattani was not visited by the mid-term evaluation, and has an interesting mixed target group including Thai Muslims and Burmese migrants. It also targeted child labour in fishing and fish processing and intervened primarily through health and occupational safety interventions.

Chiang Rai deserves attention because it is the main action programme targeting ethnic minorities and is the only project targeting children working in the services sector. The action programme in this sector started late due to a change in the implementing organization from the Provincial Office of Labour (POL) to the Provincial Office of Social Protection and Human Security (POSPHS).

Main Findings & Conclusions

1. Although the development of the National Plan and Policy is an important achievement, the Implementation of the National Plan and Policy (NPP) remains an important challenge.
2. There is a persistent gap between Education Policy and practice in regards to access by migrant children and one of the results is that the barriers for their access to free public education remain relatively high.
3. At the provincial level, ILO/IPEC established or reestablished multidisciplinary teams on child labour in all six project-targeted provinces. Based on meetings with these teams in three provinces, they functioned relatively well for project purposes (i.e. to coordinate or oversee project-funded activities). Their continuity in some form may be served by the reconstitution of Ministry of Labour Provincial Women and Child Workers Protection Centres, but only if they are given adequate support from the Ministry of Labour
4. Although project supported intervention models to raise children's awareness on occupational health and safety issues were effective in promoting better understanding of children's rights, labour law and workplace hazards for children, some project beneficiaries were unable to translate their knowledge into better working conditions.
5. The laws that regulate both adult and child migrant labourers have an important impact on the prevalence of the worst forms of child labour in project-targeted communities and in general in Thailand. Laws which render legal registration by migrant workers challenging or place disproportionate power in the hands of employers place adult and child workers in situations where it is difficult for them to defend their basic rights. Because of this, holistic models for protecting migrant children must also include measures to improve the regulation of migration including the legal rights of both adult and child migrant workers.
6. Because of delays in the start-up of action programmes, the average duration of project services to direct beneficiaries was approximately 9 months. Six months of services was determined as the minimum duration before reporting a child as having been prevented or withdrawn from the worst forms of child labour. In any context, it is probably unreasonable to expect big changes in the lives of children after such a short period of time. Likewise, the implementation period was insufficient for strategies to combat child labour to become rooted in most action programme implementers' institutional mechanisms.
7. The direct beneficiary monitoring reporting system (DBMR) implemented by the project had the potential to improve Action Programme implementers' effectiveness and efficiency by establishing common standards to identify children at risk or engaged in WFCL and introducing a systematic approach for case

management and impact monitoring. However, as it was implemented within the project, the DBMR was overly complex and rigid and ill-adapted to some action programmes and target populations.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. (For Ministry of Labor): In order to render the NPP operational, it is recommended that the RTG, led by the Ministry of Labour, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare:
 - Elaborate an operational planning document(s) for NPP implementation that includes *targets* and *indicators*, has a *budget* and identifies *who is responsible* within a given *timeframe*;
 - Develop and implement resource mobilization strategies and in meantime identify *priority* interventions for which there are already resources available;
 - Reinforce strategies and activities that engage other departments within the Ministry of Labour and other relevant Ministries to mainstream or integrate actions for combating child labour in their operational plans and budgets and within existing service delivery structures;
 - Conduct additional capacity building and planning exercises especially for key personal of other relevant Ministries and Departments and for provincial departments of labour, in particular in provinces where the project did not intervene.
2. (For RTG education planners and policy makers): Activities that were piloted by the project identified interventions that are necessary for these barriers to be lowered. In order to effectively realize its commitment to Education for All, including non Thai children as outlined in the 2005 Cabinet resolution, it is recommended that education planners and policy makers in Thailand:
 - Invest in transitional education programs that address non Thai children's language,
- social and cultural related challenges to integration in public school;
- Realign human resources and equipment allocations to schools that accept migrant children so that education quality does not suffer when migrant children are admitted;
- Collaborate with community based organizations and others to conduct awareness raising and other strategies to address community and parent resistance to mixing migrant children with Thai children in the classroom.
- Simplify the process for obtaining the 13-digit identity number. It is understood that social benefits given to Thai children such as the school lunch and milk programme will automatically include migrant children once the identity number is obtained.
- Facilitate accreditation of existing, privately operated learning centres.
3. (For Ministry of Labor): It is recommended that the Ministry of Labour support the provincial multidisciplinary teams in the following ways:
 - Engage them in effective planning processes
 - Allocate funding and other resources for activities designed specifically to address child labour issues,
 - Assure that child labour has been mainstreamed into relevant line Ministries action plans at the central level and directives given to provincial level personnel,
 - Conduct awareness raising on the worst forms of child labour and associated issues in the governor's office.
 - Invite participation on the team by active civil society organizations that work on migrant, labour rights and social equity issues as well as champions from employers and workers organizations.
4. (For various key stakeholders): To be more effective in preventing and withdrawing children from the worst forms of child labour, it is recommended that key stakeholders active in combating child labour in Thailand reinforce their intervention models by considering the following:

- Addressing the root causes of child labour including factors that contribute to children's *vulnerability* to exploitation including their parent or guardian's access to financial services, income enhancement schemes, legal rights protection, health services and social safety nets.
 - Multiplying enforcement mechanisms for assuring employer compliance with labour standards including industry led self policing and community based mechanisms.
 - Conducting community based awareness campaigns and supporting community based child labour monitoring;
 - Introducing appropriate technology in production processes in order to reduce demand for cheap labour;
 - Supporting small producers' associations and/or cooperatives to regulate the employment of children in the informal sector while also improving productivity and revenues of small producers;
 - Organizing financial education and savings oriented self-help groups among vulnerable families
5. (For ILO):The project piloted some effective ways to address the issue of the rights of adult workers including support for research, policy work, advocacy and legal assistance to adult migrant workers. It is recommended that future work by the ILO also engage employer's and worker's organizations to advocate for better regulation of migration. Employers have an interest in policies that simplify their ability to address domestic labour shortages by hiring migrant workers legally. Similarly, workers will have a stronger position to improve their working conditions if all workers including migrant workers have the ability to organize and engage in social dialogue with employers.
6. (For ILO) In future pilot programmes, whether piloted in the context of an ILO supported programme, by the government or another key stakeholder(s) in the context of the NPP, it is important for pilot activities to be implemented over a longer period of time to have greater impact on the lives of children, allow enough time for intervention models to be refined through monitoring and evaluation and enable deeper institutional learning.
7. (For ILO and USDOL) It is recommended to the donor and ILO management that the reporting requirements be more flexible and take into consideration that not every action programme is adapted to monitoring individual children. In some cases, requiring that each child be monitored individually may detract from the action programme implementers' quality of services and lead to monitoring becoming a data collection exercise versus a tool for improving intervention strategies. Other mechanisms for monitoring impact, for example, sampling, may be more cost effective for some types of interventions. For example, treating some short occupational health and safety education programmes as a personal intervention requiring following up with every child is inappropriate given the nature of the service provided whereas monitoring attendance of a child in a more extensive non formal education programme is quite reasonable.
8. (For CLMs implementing agencies) In the implementation of child labour monitoring systems within a large system, like public education or health services, strengthening referral mechanisms is crucial. Investing resources to identify children who have dropped out of school or who have health problems due to work related factors (or other reasons), without a mechanism for referring the identified child to social services is not only a waste of resources but is unethical. It is recommended that future development of the CLMS strengthen referral mechanisms by investing in the following:
- Development of Guidelines and Protocols (the project produced guidelines on trafficking and providing social services to migrant children may be useful tools).
 - Information systems (information about the child in the context of case management but also about existing social services, both public and NGO run, to whom a child may be referred within a geographic area)
 - Capacity building for frontline personnel (teachers, health workers, police officers, child welfare social workers, agricultural extension agents, NGO community development volunteers, etc.)