



# Evaluation Summaries

## Evaluation: Combating Child Labor in Hazardous Work in the Salt Production, Rubber Plantations and Fish/Shrimp Processing Sectors in Cambodia

### Quick Facts

**Country:** Cambodia

**Final Evaluation:** November 2004

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**Technical Area:** Child Labor

**Evaluation Management:** Standards and Rights Sector

**Project Start:** November 2001

**Project End:** December 2004

**Project Code:** CMB/01/51/USA

**Donor:** United States (US\$ 1,000,000)

### Background & Context

**Project Background:** The International Labor Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC) is currently completing the Project to Combat Child Labor in Hazardous Work in Salt Production, Rubber Plantation and Fishing Sectors in Cambodia. The development objective was to contribute to the progressive elimination of child labor in these sectors by removing children from hazardous employment and working conditions and preventing more children from entering workplaces through direct assistance and capacity building programmes.

Ten agencies in four locations implemented the action programs during a period ranging from 20 to 26 months. The agencies were the Child Labor Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Phnom Penh, and the departments for Social Affairs, for Education and three NGOs in each of the three provinces. The

national office of ILO-IPEC with technical back-stopping from ILO Bangkok coordinated the project.

The project was divided into four components: policy development including program planning, research and documentation; capacity building; targeted social protection; community empowerment and community-based child labor monitoring.

The project intended to remove 900 children from hazardous work and prevent 2,600 working children to enter this work. In the course of the project the definition of 'removal' was adjusted to include children whose working hours has been reduced.

796 children have been fully removed from hazardous work and working hours are reduced for 484 children, a total of 1,280 children. 4,245 children were prevented from moving into hazardous work, many more than intended. The project aimed also to heighten the capacity of national, provincial and community level agencies and organizations in Cambodia to plan, initiate, implement and evaluate action to prevent and progressively eliminate child labor, especially those in hazardous work situations.

**Evaluation Context:** The scope of the evaluation includes all project activities including Action Programs. The evaluation will look at the project as a whole. The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess whether the objectives of the project were achieved at policy level, community level and beneficiary level. The evaluation will assess

effectiveness of the project implementation, analyze strategies, document lessons learned and potential good practices, and will provide recommendations on how to integrate these into planning processes and implementation of future IPEC activities in Cambodia. A focus will be on effective models of intervention.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

The project design was sound, recognizing the need for a bridge between the complementary implementation areas policy development, capacity building, social protection and community mobilization. Project implementation was quite smooth overall, with activities being implemented as designed. The overall impression of the Mission was one of commitment and purpose. There are variations among the stakeholders but no one wants to withdraw their involvement. The achievements of the project are more than satisfying.

The project has achieved nearly all of its intended objectives. Although policy development by means of 'Prakas' (Ministerial Order) remains wanting it was never a realistic goal to achieve approval of all legal procedures within a period of 2 years. The fact that the ground-laying *Prakas* has been approved within this period is a feat in itself. Six more *Prakas* were developed but are pending government approval. Also provincial Plans of Action and a National Plan of Action regarding child labor were developed. This demonstrates the capacity at national level that was developed through the project and is a sign of commitment towards elimination of hazardous child labor by the Royal Government of Cambodia. However, all agencies need more capacity building while structural improvements at ministry and provincial level are called for to assure sustainability.

Learning activities and incentives for children and parents were part of a comprehensive package of interventions. The approach to awareness raising and training for education staff at all levels was comprehensive. The project fit well within the education ministry's structure, mandate, and other development

programs. This bodes well for mainstreaming the overall approach.

Employers and families have become more aware of child rights and the dangers of hazardous work conditions for their children. Some employers have voluntarily taken actions to improve working conditions but they remain few. The conditions at the rubber plantations have not much improved mainly because the owners reject to take responsibility for child labor. The project raised awareness about child labor issues at public schools through promotion campaigns. 32933 children received Child Labor sensitizing through community monitors and child peer group education. 3,263 parents and 871 employers attended awareness or sensitizing sessions.

The most successful intervention was the seed money loaned to groups of families. These income generation activities have had a more profound effect on removal of children from hazardous work than monitoring activities. Without the seed money scheme future removal of children from hazardous work will be less effective than during the past project. Many of these Self-Help Groups have begun to save money that has been used to loan seed money to others. Virtually all members of SHGs took their children out of hazardous work and to school or vocational training.

The project has been completed but a last accomplishment has been the development of a national Time-Bound Program (TBP) that includes more sectors of hazardous work but will build further on the results to the project.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

**Recommendations:** Those trained under the project should continue to form part of the education cohort under the national TBP. Also Community Learning Centre (CLC) teachers in the three sectors should continue to receive training.

The national TBP should provide the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) with additional support to integrate child labor issues into the national curriculum and pre- and in- service teacher training programs. It should provide for an assessment of learning

outcomes by utilizing existing testing instruments and providing technical assistance to the MOEYS to analyze the data.

The national TBP should enable all children to leave hazardous work, but should focus especially on children under 16 year, while improving safety and occupational health for all (child) workers. The special problems of at-risk children who are part of migrant populations also need to be addressed in the national TBP.

The national TBP should commission studies to assess which inputs are required to encourage growth of locally based small entrepreneurs. Consequently funds need to be allocated and action taken to realize this growth. It should continue the seed money scheme or introduce alternative income-generating assistance to parents and more opportunities for migrant and marginalized families to participate in income-generation activities should be realized.

The national TBP should put measures in place to follow-up on the progress of the policy development activities and put pressure on policy-making bodies, like Labor Advisory Council and Ministry to proceed with the process of legalization. It should also encourage ministerial and provincial committees (to continue) to develop procedures and to put the proper mechanisms in place for enforcing the Prakas. It may also consider strengthening the capacity of Provincial Labor Departments in guidance and job placement in order to help institutionalize the function within the overall government structure.