



Evaluation Summaries

Combating the exploitation of child domestic workers in Haiti

Quick Facts

Country: *Haiti*

Final Evaluation: *May 2003*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

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

Donor: *USA*

Keywords: *Domestic Worker, Child Labour*

Executive Summary from the Main report

This evaluation report is the outcome of the final independent evaluation of the project “Combating the exploitation of child domestic workers in Haiti” implemented by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and funded by the United States Department of Labor. The evaluation, carried out during May 2003, had an ex-post, summative character and was of a participatory nature. As general topics, the evaluation addressed the following aspects: validity of project design, relevance of the strategy, project implementation and performance (effectiveness, efficiency, unexpected effects) and the perspective of sustainability of its effects.

The project development objective was “to contribute to the prevention and the progressive elimination of child domestic work in Haiti”. The original project document had three immediate objectives (expressed in a similar number of project components). However, given that the project was facing difficulties to achieve its goals,

a revision was approved in December 2001 and the original objectives were modified.

Accordingly to a recent IPEC-UNDP (United Nations Development Program) nation-wide study on the issue, the number of children under the condition of “domesticity” in Haiti is currently estimated within the range of 124,000 to 173,000 children, meaning that between 10% and 13% of Haitian children fall under this situation. Many of them come from the poor rural *départements* of l’Artibonite and la Grand Ans. Around 9% of Haitian families host children under the condition of domesticity.

Child domestic labor (CDL) in Haiti is a multi-dimensional problem. It is a long-dated social practice ingrained in Haitian culture and it is also strongly underpinned in a context of widespread poverty, social and economic exclusion of the rural population and insufficient access to education. The practice is a source to widespread and varied abuse of all sorts towards children. As an overall conclusion of the evaluation of the original project and its revisions it may be said that the project failed to reach most of its objectives and has limited sustainability due to:

- Several flaws in the original design of the project and in its highly “structured” strategy of implementation, which were not adapted to the limitations that characterize Haitian society, government and private institutions; likewise, the design and the strategy were not realistic with regards to different other factors implied in the issue of CDL. For example, while the targets corresponding to child removal were too ambitious (given the limitations of Haitian institutions), the project design lacked a more thorough strategy with regards to labor supply-side factors that are widely perceived at the origin of child domestic labor: i.e., the diminished status of childhood and of children’s rights,

widespread urban and rural poverty and lack of access to education in the rural zone.

- The general context of political and economic instability made the issue of child domestic labor become a “secondary issue” among Haitian government priorities. Given that the project’s awareness-raising strategy was almost put to a stop by project management during the first two years of implementation, the project was not able to rally enough interest on its objectives from other local institutions and Haitian public opinion. In fact, IPEC’s profile and the project’s role remain widely unknown in the country and the issue of CDL is **not** yet considered as a national **problem** outside from some governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- The omission of concrete action from government officials, who by their lack of interest in going ahead with project activities hampered the project effectiveness and lead it to a stagnant situation; however, it should be stated that this may have been a response to the fact that the project, although aimed at involving important government action, was not designed and implemented in a clearly participatory manner with government officials and thus had no off-start mechanism from which “ownership” by governmental institutions could be built-up;

- The lack of a more rapid reaction from the local project management team in proposing alternative strategies and courses of action to counter these difficulties. The first project revision took a lengthy time to be accomplished, while actions in the field became more limited. During the first two years, and despite being a “national” project, scarce, activity was carried out outside Port-au-Prince. Thus, the project was not able to build a wider network of partnerships with local institutions for the effective delivery of outputs and activities. Although the second management team responsible for the project developed a more active approach which translated into a greater number of products (mainly studies) being achieved and established new institutional contacts in order to develop new alternatives for project implementation, the latter was neither able to implement a sustainable awareness strategy on the issue of CDL nor to entice government authorities to become **actively** involved and positively interested in the implementation of the project.

Although the project achieved limited success (given the scope of its original targets) with regards to the removal of children from domestic work, the option of child removal and immediate

elimination of child labor might not be a sustainable, cost-effective strategy given the cultural and socio-economic underpinnings for this activity, the wide extent of the phenomenon (numbered in tens of thousands of children) and the lack of institutional and financial resources that make that this strategy cannot be generalized to the whole country.

Notwithstanding the project limitations in achieving its main objectives, it should be stated that the project developed several sound studies that generated an important bulk of knowledge on the issue of child domestic labor in the country. Although the knowledge gained through the results of these studies on child domestic labor (and agricultural labor), remains still unknown and non disseminated to the general public, this important knowledge could be the basis to gather consensus with regards to the design of a more comprehensive and effective strategy for a new project that may involve a wider number of private and government implementing agencies throughout the country.

The evaluation report formulates 16 recommendations on three general issues in which IPEC’s further action in Haiti should be strengthened, as well as on actions that should be taken with regards to different stakeholders. These refer to the need to: a) carry out a more thorough, participatory and careful process in order to design a new strategy for IPEC, conducive to establish more effective partnerships with local institutions and to ensure a more feasible implementation of activities, a more relevant project impact and a greater degree of sustainability of outcomes; b) invest in increased leverage and advocacy with political authorities and local mass-media in order to galvanize commitment on the fight against child labor and child domestic labor; and c) develop a decentralized management scheme, improve monitoring systems and carry out leaner administrative processes in order to improve implementation capacity.

Likewise, the report suggests possible orientations on how future projects might address the outstanding needs of children, families and communities that were not addressed through the evaluated intervention (see Annex 5). Finally, the evaluation report systematizes several “lessons learned” with regards to project design and strategy, implementation, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, as well as a limited number of potential good practices that may be useful for future projects on this issue.