



# Evaluation Summaries

## National programme for the elimination and prevention of child labour in Mongolia Phase II

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Mongolia*

**Mid Term Evaluation:** *Nov 2004*

**Mode of Evaluation:** *independent*

**Technical Area:** *ex.: Child Labour*

**Evaluation Management:** *IPEC / DED*

**Evaluation Team:** *Alan Taylor*

**Project Code:** *MON/02/50/USA*

**Donor:** *USA*

**Keywords:** *child labour*

### Background & Context

The report is based on a series of field visits and interviews carried out in Mongolia, 21 – 30 June 2004, with managers, field workers, police, teachers and children involved in some aspect of the programme for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Mongolia. Phase II of the programme began 30 September 2002. The evaluation was conceived as a mid-term review, preparatory to the carrying out of a final evaluation prior to its termination, 28 February 2005.

The conduct of the evaluation coincided with the national elections, held 27 June 2004. Both before and immediately after election day senior government officials and representatives of NGOs who had been standing for election were thus occupied, a fact which limited inquiries. Given that the composition of the Government was unknown at the time of the evaluation, it was not possible to come to a firm conclusion concerning the level of political commitment to the eradication of child labour. However, such indicators as were available were not encouraging.

A workshop held with representatives of the Implementing Agencies to validate the findings and begin to think about future actions was well attended and revealed a remarkable degree of enthusiasm and commitment to the cause of eliminating child labour in Mongolia, particularly among the NGO community. The Mongolian Employers Federation was particularly supportive. Some of the strategic issues that will need to be addressed in formulating future actions against child labour in Mongolia can be worked upon during the remaining eight months of the programme; others will necessarily take more time. Movement to a *Time-bound programme* in Mongolia is not yet appropriate. The Government is not presently strong enough and does not appear sufficiently committed to the principles of Convention 182 to ensure the necessary action. Continuation of a national programme would however be possible. This would be worthwhile especially if it embraced the options outlined in the report. Alternatively, consideration could be given to the setting up a one or more thematic country projects to eliminate the worse forms of child labour, for example in gold mining or the sex industry.

The programme design was well suited to the environment in 2002. The programme document was remarkably well researched and was put together with an eye to most of the important strategic issues.

Wisely, at that stage institution building was not placed center stage. Effort concentrated instead on the development of a large number of individual action programmes, each of which was supported by its own project document, budget and implementing agency. However, servicing the

needs of these action programmes proved to be a task disproportionate to the number of professional staff available in the Programme Office. In future advantages may be realized by facilitating active cooperation between the individual implementing agencies. The number of direct beneficiaries is being monitored but a complete picture is not yet to hand. Public awareness raising has been a conspicuous success and is undoubtedly one of the two most significant achievements. The other is the work that has been done to get drop out children back into school using catch-up classes run along child-friendly lines. Success in helping older children – with vocational training and with learning kits to use at home, etc., is less conspicuous.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour has a mandate to monitor, control and prevent child labour. In the area of policy development considerable advances have been made. However, for a variety of reasons it has not yet been possible to translate policy intentions into significant practical action. The National Department for Children, which receives funds and guidance from the Ministry but operates under the auspices of the National Council for Children, is a relatively weak institution that seems unable to provide the leadership necessary for effective action.

The ILO /IPEC programme in Mongolia is a recent initiative. Notwithstanding this fact, substantial progress has been made. A minimum consensus has been achieved within the society that child labour should be eliminated, at least among those institutions and individuals with whom the programme has come into contact. Further work is needed to ensure that effective action does indeed flow from the consensus that has been generated. Although the NGO community can plug some of the gaps, certain services are beyond the capacity of private organizations working without significant government support. It is also clear that government cannot hope to deal alone with prevailing social issues; alliances must be formed between non-governmental organizations and the state and between the public and private sectors.

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

The ILO /IPEC programme has adopted an approach that is aimed at removing individual children from labour and at risk situations. While this brings undoubted benefits to individual

children, the social work approach is quite expensive in terms of its resource inputs. Redressing the underlying economic problems which the families face requires specialist knowledge and an advanced level of organization. Although some non-governmental organizations in Mongolia are moving in this direction, few have reached a level of sophistication that can assure success.

In as much as the present approaches will not be enough on their own to eradicate the practice of child labour, it has now become necessary to frame the additional strategy of campaigning and social lobbying. Concerned organizations must learn to see their role as one of political persuasion and agitation for change, not merely as the providers of succour to the poor. There are many demands on the national exchequer and to ensure that the issue of child labour received its proper due, efforts must be made to bring the issue center stage in the minds of the relevant decision makers. The task of the donor community must be to support and accelerate this process and ensure that the concerned organizations have access to the best professional advice in this well-charted field of social campaigning.

Financing ongoing work to eradicate child labour remains problematic. Organizations such as trade unions and the Employers Federation are better placed to continue working to this end: they derive income from membership subscriptions. A few NGOs have developed an entrepreneurial approach to income generation but the work of most remains dependent on grants from international donors. A concerted effort is recommended, focusing on institution building and the achievement of greater financial independence for those organizations working in the field.

As national institutions arise to address the problems newly recognized, the need for international leadership becomes correspondingly less. It is suggested that the responsibility for any future programme in Mongolia addressing child labour issues be devolved to a competent national body.

Such a body does not yet exist, but the remaining eight months of the Phase II programme could be used to foment such a body based on an association of the existing implementing agencies. In this context, the composition, role and

performance of the National Steering Committee merits review.

Detailed recommendations are included in the report concerning public information and awareness raising; practices relating to getting children back into school; the management of training; the application of low-cost technology for the alleviation of the worst forms of child labour; approaching the elimination of child labour as an aspect of health and safety at work – particularly the importance of strengthening the labour inspection service; and programme management and monitoring. Chapter 5 of the reports contains 24 practices identified that appear to have potential for replication both within and outside of Mongolia.