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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Final Evaluation of the Soy! Project in Ecuador

Catholic Relief Services

Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0005



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMAR	<i>Aprendizajes Musicales Alternativos Recreativos</i> (Recreational Alternative Music Learning—Andean Music)
CAPS	<i>Conocimiento, Actitudes y Prácticas Sexuales</i> (Sexual Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices)
CEE	<i>Conferencia Episcopal Ecuatoriana</i> (Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference)
CONCEPTI	<i>Comité Nacional para la Prevención y Erradicación Progresiva del Trabajo Infantil</i> (National Committee for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor)
CORPEI	<i>Corporación de Promoción de Exportaciones e Inversiones</i> (Corporation for the Promotion of Exports and Investments)
CNNA	<i>Concejo Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia</i> (National Council for Children and Adolescents)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
ELICE	Local Spaces for Inclusion and Educational Quality Project
FSB	<i>Foro Social Bananero</i> (Banana Social Forum)
FSF	<i>Foro Social Florícola</i> (Flower Social Forum)
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
ICLP	International Child Labor Program
IECC	Inter-Institutional Education Coordinating Committee
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
INNFA	<i>Instituto Nacional de la Niñez y la Familia</i> (National Institute for Children and the Family)
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IVM	<i>Integral Vivencial Multisensorial</i> (Multisensory Learning Methodology)
JUCONI	<i>Juntos con los Niños</i> (Together with the Children) Foundation
MEC	<i>Ministerio de Educación y Cultura</i> (Ministry of Education and Culture)
MOETICBG	<i>Mesa Operativa Interinstitucional para la Erradicación de Trabajo de Menores y Responsabilidad Social del Guayas</i> (Inter-Institutional Committee for the Eradication of Underage Labor and Social Responsibility of Guayas)
MTE	<i>Ministerio de Trabajo y Empleo</i> (Ministry of Labor and Employment)
NNAs	<i>Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes</i> (Girls, Boys and Adolescents)
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking

SAT	<i>Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial</i> (Tutorial Learning System)
SGA	Solicitation for Grant Application
SOY	Support Our Youth Project
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) signed a cooperation agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to implement Project Support Our Youth (SOY!) in Ecuador. With a budget of US\$3 million, the project was to be executed over four years. While CRS would be in charge of coordination, the project would be carried out by a consortium of institutions: CARE International, Save the Children-UK, the Wong Foundation, CRS, and the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference (CEE).

The objective of Project SOY! was to help eradicate child labor in Ecuador's banana and flower industries. Its aim was to have child and adolescent workers and those at risk of entering the labor market take advantage of the educational opportunities available in Project SOY!'s intervention areas. Its area of influence spanned 11 municipalities and 5 provinces: Pichincha (Pedro Moncayo and Pichincha), Cotopaxi (Latacunga), Guayas (Milagro and Naranjal), El Oro (Santa Rosa, Pasaje, and El Guabo), and Los Ríos (Buena Fe, Valencia, and Quevedo); each of which was overseen by one of the agencies in the consortium.

The project had the following three expected outcomes:

1. Its key stakeholders would contribute significantly to the educational opportunities available to child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.
2. Municipal governments in the project's intervention areas would implement plans, regulations, and public policies that supported education for child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.
3. Educational centers and programs would offer quality education to children in the project's intervention areas, with quality education being defined as a meaningful, inclusive, interactive, participatory, responsible, and first-rate education, provided in accordance with participatory decisionmaking processes.

The methodology outlined by Project SOY! in its design was—

- Focused on social mobilization in order to influence behavior and decisionmaking.
- Centered on building national, regional, and local alliances and strengthening coordination across sectors.
- Oriented toward offering purposeful, quality education to children in the project's intervention areas based on participatory processes.

This Final Evaluation was prepared in Ecuador in May 2008 and reviews the project's achievements against its goals and objectives, as detailed in the Cooperative Agreement and project documents. It also reviews each activity implemented during the life of the project, taking into account aspects such as project design and execution, lessons learned, the project's reliability, and recommendations for future projects.

The evaluation found that, given the status of the issues surrounding child labor in 2004, the project's design was appropriate.

Project SOY! began its operations with a baseline study that identified the 10,320 children and adolescents with whom it would work over the following four years.

In 2005, USDOL redefined the indicator assessing children and adolescents enrolled in the project in order to emphasize eradication and prevention. It was then found that the project design would not allow for such a change without redirecting operations to increase the number of direct benefits. Following its midterm evaluation, Project SOY! adopted several measures to do just that. Nevertheless, even at the time of final evaluation, discrepancies divide how Project SOY! and USDOL interpret the results indicators; namely, the number of children and adolescents enrolled in the project.

However, despite this problem, Project SOY! has surpassed the goals set for its three expected outcomes and has provided several examples of best practices for other projects related to the issue of child labor. To this end, Project SOY! overcame many challenges: it worked with a consortium of institutions with different backgrounds and technical capacities in Ecuador's unstable political climate (including three Presidents in four years), and it executed a relatively pioneering initiative in the area of child and adolescent labor. The legal framework currently in place in Ecuador did not exist when Project SOY! initiated its operations, and the poverty and cultural factors that are conducive to child and adolescent labor are problems that cannot be resolved with the sole efforts of a short-term project. As such, the comprehensive approach and networked efforts made at both the national and local level have been fundamental in accomplishing the achievements detailed in this report.

The recognition enjoyed by Project SOY! in Ecuador, both nationally and locally, is an indicator of the hard work put forth by all its members. Project SOY! has laid the groundwork for work to continue in its intervention areas on an issue whose solution requires longer-term efforts. CARE's decision to stay on for two more years in Cayambe, and the Wong Foundation's pledge to increase the scope of the Tutorial Learning Systems (SATs), in addition to Save the Children's implementation of its Local Spaces for Inclusion and Educational Quality (ELICE) project, are indicators of the interest shared by the members of the consortium to carry on the efforts initiated by Project SOY!

The project's work approach based on the rights and values of children and adolescents, along with its decision to start with a national, community, family, and school awareness initiative, have set the pace for ensuring the sustainability of its actions. This sustainability, of course, hinges upon successfully ensuring financing for the students' academic scholarships, and how able Project SOY! is to disseminate its experiences and the interventions it performed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Project SOY!

- Continue to seek support from local governments, the National Institute for Children and the Family (INNFA), and other stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the project's actions.
- Finish systematizing the project's methodologies and results, and disseminate them widely.
- Provide El Oro province with greater resources, particularly for its work with children (currently there are 32 schools and only one promoter and one project coordinator). Thus, the work begun in this area could be finished more successfully. In the same vein, prioritize efforts to ensure that the years of study completed by students in the SAT programs that were shut down are recognized.
- Perform an analysis of the potential impact on the work performed by children and adolescents of the following projects: Entrepreneurial Mothers in El Triunfo, and Health and Loan (microcredits) in Cotopaxi. In the latter case, place special emphasis on any potential short-term impact while households must repay the loan in addition to interest.
- Work with National Committee for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor (CONEPTI) and other projects related to the issue of child labor on definitions of eradication and prevention in Ecuador that may be used at the national level for any similar project or program.
- Continue to work on and clean up the project database in an attempt to identify direct beneficiaries and report to USDOL on the indicators, in accordance with the definitions provided by the donor.

For Future USDOL Projects

- Leverage the experiences of Project SOY! by implementing its best practices.
- Ensure the indicators for expected outcomes are fully understood by both parties at the onset of each project.
- Avoid using consultants (intermediaries) for areas as important as defining indicators and/or determining how to report to USDOL. Information should be exchanged directly between the two parties.
- Avoid changing the name of indicators for projects that are already underway as such causes considerable confusion. Experience with Project SOY! has shown that despite the time invested by USDOL in explaining the change, even at the time of the project's final evaluation, it has not been possible to incorporate such into the reports. This is owed to the fact that at the time of the change a database already existed and the project's beneficiaries had already been identified under its original design.

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I EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES

The scope of this Final Evaluation of the Support Our Youth Project (Project SOY!) includes a revision and evaluation of the activities carried out under the Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Department of Labor and Catholic Relief Services (USDOL-CRS). The evaluation reviews the project's achievements against its goals and objectives as detailed in the Cooperative Agreement and project documents. The evaluation also reviews each activity implemented during the life of the project, taking into account aspects such as project design and execution, lessons learned, the project's reliability, and recommendations for future projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to—

- Help individual organizations identify areas of sound performance and areas in which project execution could improve.
- Help the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) become more familiar with what is and is not working concerning the conceptual structure and design of the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI) projects, within the broad framework of OCFT's technical cooperation program.
- Evaluate to what extent objectives relevant to Ecuador's specific situation have been met.
- Evaluate progress in terms of child and adolescent workers and the status of education (i.e., eradication and prevention of the worst forms of child labor; enrollment, retention, and completion of education programs).

In addition to these general objectives, the following questions regarding project-specific objectives were developed by OCFT in consultation with CRS personnel:

- Have the strategies planned for each project (i.e., mobilization and awareness raising among stakeholders; assistance in building and/or strengthening local children's protection systems, implementing public policy that encourages inclusive education, and improving the quality of education) been effective in accomplishing the goals set for the project in terms of preventing and eradicating child and adolescent labor?
- What percentage of the goals and objectives set forth in the logical framework have been accomplished by the project?
- Have the education programs implemented by Project SOY! affected child and adolescent labor in areas dominated by the banana and flower export industries?
- What are the main unexpected outcomes of the project's intervention?

1.2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This evaluation encompasses six stages:

1. *Document analysis and visit planning* includes a review of project documents, planning an in-country visit, and conducting a telephone interview with the point of contact at CRS HQ.
2. *Fieldwork* includes visits to Quito, Pichincha, Cotopaxi, Cayambe, Guayaquil, Guayas, los Rios and El Oro. Unfortunately, the evaluator was unable to visit Los Ríos for health-related reasons. Nevertheless, the Los Ríos technical team reported on its progress and submitted all pertinent documentation at a meeting held on May 5, 2008.
3. *Meeting with key stakeholders* on May 19, 2008, where the main conclusions drawn from the evaluation were presented (see Annex 3 for the agenda and list of attendees).
4. *Presentation of the draft report* on June 3, 2008.
5. *Revision of the draft report* by USDOL, CRS and project stakeholders.
6. *Final report* submitted on June 24, 2008.

1.2.1 Data Collection Techniques

Four data collection techniques were used to conduct the evaluation: document analysis, interviews, field visits, and focus groups.

1. *Document Analysis*

The evaluator reviewed the Cooperative Agreement (May 2005) document, all technical progress reports (March 2005 to March 2008), USDOL comments, and the project's responses to said comments. The project's logical framework, Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), and midterm evaluation were analyzed. A list of all other documents reviewed is found in Annex 2 of this report.

2. *Meetings and Individual/Group Interviews*

The evaluation methodology consisted of various interviews conducted with different Project SOY! stakeholders so that quantitative and qualitative data could be collected on all progress made as of May 2008. For a complete list of the interviews conducted in Ecuador, see Annex 1. Bárbara Pando, the project's point of contact at CRS headquarters in Baltimore, was interviewed by telephone before traveling to Ecuador, as was USDOL project official Ana Aslan.

3. *Field Visits*

The evaluator visited five of the project's six intervention areas: Cotopaxi, El Oro, Guayas, and Pichincha. In each area, the evaluator met briefly with the technical team—

assembled by the organization assigned to the area—to randomly select one to two schools. At these schools, the evaluator would assess how embedded the project and its activities were. In each area, the evaluator also observed the activities and results attributed to the project. The evaluator also met with stakeholders in the project’s activities, including school directors, teachers, students, parents, and representatives of the local government, *inter alia*.

4. *Focus Groups*

Four focus groups were conducted with children and parents in Cotopaxi and Guayas. The participants of the focus groups conducted with children were randomly selected from among children and adolescents (*niños, niñas, y adolescentes* [NNAs]) enrolled in Project SOY!

a. Focus groups with children

The objective of the focus groups conducted with children was to identify the educational and labor-related activities that they engage in and their perception of them. The exercise was performed without the presence of the director, teacher, or any other member of the project.

b. Focus groups with parents

The objective of the focus groups conducted with mothers and fathers was to determine the knowledge they had of the project’s activities and their perception of their children’s education and child labor. The exercise was performed without the presence of the director, teacher, or any other member of the project.

1.2.2 Project Background Information

Project SOY! began in Ecuador in September 2004, with a budget of US\$3 million for four years. The proposal for Project SOY! stated that Ecuador had one of the highest incidences of child labor in all of Latin America (775,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 were working). While the overwhelming majority of child and adolescent laborers work on family farms, many of those employed in the banana and flower industries are exposed to dangerous forms of employment due to their contact with toxic pesticides and fungicides.¹ In terms of education, the project’s initial proposal noted that the children who work in Ecuador had received some basic education, and approximately 92 percent of all workers age 10 to 14 years are functionally literate. Nevertheless, by the time a child reaches age 14, more than a third of his cohort has dropped out of school, and approximately 60 percent of all 17-year-old child laborers have dropped out of school entirely. The largest number of school dropouts in Ecuador is seen in the transition from basic education (seventh grade) to secondary education, with an estimated rate of only 20 percent of basic education graduates going on to pursue secondary studies.²

¹ SOY! A proposal by Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-USCCB SGA 04-08, p. 1

² *Ibid.*, p. 1

Regarding social awareness in Ecuador, the project proposal noted the following:

- A lack of recognition of children's status as full citizens with a right to enjoy rights and freedoms similar to those of adults.
- A lack of understanding among the stakeholders in the issue of child labor as to the rights of children and the risks associated with certain forms of work.
- No widespread approach to designing, planning, and formulating government policies that take into consideration and emphasize a focus on the rights of children.
- A lack of understanding of the links between and the causes and effects of poverty on the access to good quality education and how it interrelates with child labor.
- Poor coordination at the national and local levels among key public and private stakeholders, compounded by poor application and monitoring of compliance with current legislation.
- No clear, objective system in place to monitor child labor.³

It is important to note that the Code on Children and Adolescents was passed and published in Ecuador in January 2003, a few months before Project SOY! began its operations. This represented important legal grounds for Project SOY!'s operations. The Code orders the creation of a decentralized national system for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, comprising representatives of the government and civil society authorized to formulate policies at the following four levels:

1. Municipal and National Councils for Children and Adolescents
2. Municipal Boards on the Protection of Rights, Public Defenders, Community Defenders
3. Public and private networks of project-implementing organizations that provide assistance to NNAs
4. Consultative Children's Committees

³ Ibid., p. 8

II RESULTS

2.1 TOPICS RELATING TO PROGRAM DESIGN

In its initial proposal, Project SOY! identifies the two main causes of child labor in Ecuador as poverty and barriers to the educational system; namely with regard to access and quality of education. The interaction of these two factors creates a vicious cycle in Ecuador, since poverty increases barriers to educational services (primarily access thereto) and the low quality of education prevents families from increasing their income and emerging from poverty. Project SOY! also identified a lack of awareness and priority given to the rights of children (among children and adolescents, parents, government officials, and society), as well as social and cultural norms that give priority to work over education and tolerate not only child labor but also its worst forms.⁴

It is against this backdrop that Project SOY! designed its intervention. The project's *objective* is to help eradicate child labor in Ecuador's banana and flower industries, and its *aim* is to have child and adolescent workers and at-risk children take advantage of educational opportunities available in Project SOY!'s intervention areas. The project had the following three outcomes:

1. Key stakeholders in Project SOY! would contribute significantly to the educational opportunities available to child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.
2. Municipal governments in Project SOY!'s intervention areas would implement plans, regulations, and public policies that support education for child and adolescent workers as well as at-risk children.
3. Educational centers and programs would offer quality education to children in Project SOY!'s intervention areas, with quality education being defined as a meaningful, inclusive, interactive, participatory, responsible, and first-rate education provided in accordance with participatory decision-making processes.

The methodology outlined in the Project SOY! design was as follows:

- Focus on social mobilization in order to influence behavior and decision-making.
- Center on building national, regional, and local alliances and strengthening coordination across sectors.
- Orient toward offering purposeful, quality education to children in Project SOY!'s intervention areas based on participatory processes.

Given the objective, aim, and methodology outlined in Project SOY!'s design, the following activities relating to each outcome were set forth and the budget was prepared accordingly.

⁴ Ibid., p. 5

Activities Planned for Project SOY!

Outcome 1: Groups of key stakeholders in Project SOY! make significant contributions to the educational opportunities available to child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.

- 1.1 Contact and analyze the perceptions of local key stakeholders
- 1.2 Define and execute a strategy to raise awareness
- 1.3 Develop specific training for each partner involved
- 1.4 Provide technical assistance and facilitate the signing of agreements/memoranda of understanding and relationships between stakeholders
- 1.5 Based on an initial local diagnostic, develop a packet of educational products and assistance programs to which the partners involved can make contributions
- 1.6 Provide follow-up to and facilities for the implementation of educational products and assistance programs.

Outcome 2: Municipal governments in Project SOY!'s intervention areas have implemented plans, regulations, and public policies that support education for child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.

- 2.1 Design campaigns to increase awareness, communication, and information at the local and national levels
- 2.2 Strengthen the advocacy skills and capacity of key stakeholders.
- 2.3 Support and advocate the implementation or strengthening of Comprehensive Child Protection Systems.
- 2.4 Support and advocate the participatory design and implementation of local development plans in the municipalities.
- 2.5 Facilitate agreements among public entities, private enterprise, and civil society organizations in order to promote access to services for child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.

Outcome 3: The educational centers and programs offer quality education to children in Project SOY!'s intervention areas.

- 3.1 Conduct activities with educational communities to raise awareness about child rights.
- 3.2 Train parents, teachers, and children to analyze their situation and design "inclusion plans" within the educational community on how to manage/administrate schools, and incorporate the issue of child labor and at-risk children.
- 3.3 Train teachers and technical personnel at provincial education offices in learning methodologies relating to child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.
- 3.4 Provide teaching aids, equipment, and infrastructure using participatory management processes.

- 3.5 Perform a diagnostic of educational needs.
- 3.6 Develop and/or strengthen basic educational and vocational plans and create and/or support strategies for the insertion and permanence of child and adolescent workers and at-risk children in the educational system.

Under this conceptual framework and given the work situation of NNAs in Ecuador in 2004, the project design was logical and coherent. The methodology and the activities outlined were to address the issue of child labor in Ecuador, as well as the objective and aim outlined initially by Project SOY! In addition, the project's design was comprehensive and focused on working from the ground up; for instance, raising awareness at the national, community, and family levels by placing a widespread focus on the rights of NNAs. As stated in the aim of the project, operations centered on eliminating barriers to education, both by improving the quality thereof and by attempting to raise awareness in the community and among families that NNAs' education takes precedence over their work.

Until September 2005, the project indicators and means of verification were the following for the immediate objective and aim of the project:

1. Number of NNAs enrolled in Project SOY!
2. Number of NNAs retained at educational centers and programs supported by Project SOY!
3. Invert NNA graduation trends by increasing the rate of graduation to 80 percent by September 2008.

For Outcome 1: Type and number of key stakeholders that contribute resources to educational opportunities for working NNAs or those at risk of entering the labor market.

For Outcome 2: At least five local governments in the project's intervention areas with work plans or public policy mechanisms that provide educational services for child and adolescent workers and at-risk children.

For Outcome 3: Number of programs and centers that show improvement in the quality of the education offered.

The evaluation considered these indicators, presented by cohort and period, important in measuring the impact of the project against its objective and initial aim. It is important to note that USDOL hired the consulting firm Juárez to provide technical assistance to Project SOY! in Ecuador in relation to the project's performance indicators. This technical assistance was provided at a workshop on defining the project baseline. The definition used consistently by USDOL for "enrolled children" (since the onset of Project SOY!) was "children of school age (5–17) who have been removed from or are at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor and have been matriculated in an education program supported by an EI project."⁵

⁵ See SOY! Technical Report September 2005, p. 21.

Project SOY!, however, had always included every NNA at each school served by the project in the indicator. In addition, at the recommendation of personnel at Juárez, the project distributed its database in such a way that, despite the fact that it had been working with 10,320 children since its inception, the enrollment of 2,905 NNAs by September 2005, of 2,880 NNAs by September 2006, and of 4,535 NNAs by September 2007 was reported gradually to USDOL. This has caused confusion about the indicator of children enrolled in the project since it began.

Nevertheless, in November 2005, USDOL informed Project SOY! of the need to change the name of the indicator of enrolled children in order to reflect eradication and prevention. The initial version considered enrollment as the number of target children enrolled in education programs as a result of DOL-funded Education Initiative projects. And the definition of enrolled was children of school age (5–17) who have been removed from or are at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor and are matriculated in an education program supported by an EI project. The current version of the indicator is withdrawn/prevented: the number of children prevented or withdrawn from exploitive child labor and provided education and/or training opportunities as a result of a USDOL-funded child labor elimination project.

In addition, Project SOY! was asked to set new long-term goals for these indicators for FY2006 FY2009. According to USDOL, only the name of the indicator changed and the definition remained the same. Under the above design, however, Project SOY! had always included the enrollment of NNAs without taking work status into account. Since the definition did not match the original project design (objective, expected outcomes, and activities), the NNAs who were working in the worst forms of child labor should not have been considered *enrolled* until they were removed from work and were matriculated in an education program supported by the project. This goes beyond the original definition. According to USDOL, enrollment in an education program is a means toward eradicating child labor. The aim of the original design of Project SOY!, however, had always been to have child and adolescent *workers* and at-risk children take advantage of educational opportunities available in Project SOY!'s intervention areas. Thus, the evaluation considers it difficult to determine whether the project indicators are relevant. Though the initial indicators for the original design are indeed relevant, the indicators of November 2005 are not in line with the original design, since Project SOY! planned to provide education to child and adolescent workers.

The original design of the project had a logical framework and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, both of which focused on the number of NNAs enrolled in the project. Both instruments were designed in accordance with the project's three expected outcomes and based on the idea that at the start of the project, a baseline study would be performed to determine the number of NNAs with which the project would work. In its work with the consultancy firm Juárez, the project did learn that it would report the NNAs enrolled in the project annually. Nevertheless, as explained above, such does not coincide with the definition of NNAs enrolled, as it is employed by USDOL. First of all, the project has been working with all 10,320 NNAs since the beginning of its field operations (2005), and the enrollment by annual cohorts has only been for purposes of reporting to USDOL. Secondly, the project considers all NNAs in its initial database *enrolled*, whether or not they receive a direct benefit from the project.

Throughout the life of the project, goals were set for the retention of NNAs in education programs (by September 2008, the rate of retention is expected to increase from 80 percent to 84 percent) and for course completion (by September 2008, the rate of graduation is expected to increase by 80 percent). In addition, goals were set for the contribution of stakeholders (US\$208,303), and it was expected that at least five local governments would have work plans or public policy mechanisms in place to provide educational services.

After changing the name of the indicator regarding NNAs enrolled, and based on recommendations from the midterm evaluation, Project SOY!—in conjunction with USDOL—set several goals for prevention and eradication. By September 2008, 619 of the 10,320 NNAs with whom Project SOY! worked are expected to have withdrawn from the labor market, while 9,701 will have been prevented from entering it. These goals are reported in Table III.B (Aggregated Performance Report on USDOL/ICLP Common Indicators).

These indicators are appropriate for observing the project's results and impact. However, as seen later in the report, they do not reflect all of the efforts or achievements made by Project SOY! Given the complexity of the issue of child labor in Ecuador and the factors on which it hinges, a project with a total duration of 4 years will not make any significant strides in eradicating the problem. It will accomplish even less when such was not the aim of the project in its original design.

According to the data collected by the second National Survey on Child and Adolescent Labor (December 2006–January 2007) presented on May 6, 2008 at the “National Forum Eradicating Child Labor in Ecuador,”⁶ some 779,000 NNAs are still working; 87 percent of them are 10 to 17 years old, while 13 percent are 5 to 9 years old. This notwithstanding, it must be pointed out that several factors pertaining to child labor have changed in Ecuador since the original design of the project, as indicated below:

- There is now a more structured legal framework in place to protect NNAs.⁷
- Several projects and programs seeking to prevent and/or eliminate child labor have been implemented.
- A joint effort across projects and programs pertaining to the issue of working NNAs has been designed and implemented at the national and local levels.
- Countries that purchase bananas and flowers now impose more stringent requirements to ensure such products are not produced using child labor.
- Although still insufficient, greater impetus has been given to child labor inspection offices.

⁶ Forum organized by the Ministry of Labor and Employment and CONEPTI, held in Quito on May 6–7, 2008.

⁷ The 10-Year PETI National Plan of Action for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (December 2004); Executive Decree 179 (June 1, 2005); National Agreement on Children and Adolescents (June 1, 2005); an amendment to the Labor Code aligning its content with the Code on Children (passed by Congress in April 2006); provisions on hazardous work added to the Penal Code (2006); and the inclusion of the elimination of child labor on the Social Agenda of the Government (April 2007) and on the National Social Development Plan (Sep. 2007).

- Lists have been made of the worst forms of child labor in some sectors.
- The Technical Secretariat of CONEPTI (*Comité Nacional para la Prevención y Erradicación Progresiva del Trabajo Infantil*) was recently restructured.
- In terms of access to education, the government has eliminated the school enrollment fee, distributes books, and—although still in an early stage—has begun to hand out school uniforms. In addition, following a national referendum, the 10-Year Education Plan became a national policy in Ecuador.
- In regards to poverty, the most important measure is the legislation that will progressively increase the minimum wage to match the value of a basket of staple foods (Constituent Assembly, May 2008).

Given the large number of NNAs who are still working in Ecuador, the original design of the project is still realistic and relevant. However, given the advances mentioned above and the findings of the interviews, emphasis should shift from child labor at companies producing bananas and flowers to family work. Current legislation, the green certification of exported products, and the increased presence of labor inspectors have made it so that large companies no longer hire NNAs. However, the interviews conducted during the evaluation have shown that NNAs have taken over, without any supervision, their parents' household chores and other work. Some of the NNAs interviewed stated that they are still “assisting/helping” their parents in making concrete blocks (Cotopaxi), or folding banana plastic coverings that are washed by their parents but that have been impregnated with toxic insecticides and fungicides (El Oro, Guayas); this was confirmed by the teachers and directors of the schools visited. By 2008, a project at the school level should continue to be designed but should redirect awareness efforts at the national and local levels by placing more emphasis on efforts at the community and family levels; that is, to decrease emphasis on expected outcomes 1 and 2 and emphasize expected Outcome 3.

2.2 TOPICS RELATING TO PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

As noted previously, until its midterm evaluation, Project SOY! focused its activities on the original design aim of having child and adolescent workers and at-risk children take advantage of educational opportunities available in the project's intervention areas. After September 2006, Project SOY! saw the need to redirect its efforts to increase its focus on eradication and prevention. However, this did not include a modification to its budget. At the time of the midterm evaluation, Project SOY! had already met its resource mobilization goal of US\$208,303 with the support of key stakeholders. As of March 2008, the project had successfully collected US\$1,661,344 (or 55.4 percent) of its initial budget of US\$3,000,000, as shown in Table 2. (A list of key stakeholders by area of project intervention is in Annex 6.)

Table 1: Resource Mobilization Among Stakeholders

Period	Amount
Mar. 05–Sep. 05	\$226,400
Oct. 05–Feb. 06	\$254,800
Mar. 06–Aug. 06	\$168,100
Subtotal (as of the midterm evaluation)	\$649,300
Sep. 06–Mar. 07	\$252,953
Apr. 07–Sep. 07	\$446,621
Oct. 07–Mar. 08	\$312,470
Subtotal (since the midterm evaluation)	\$1,012,044
Total (as of May 2008)	\$1,661,344

These resources, in conjunction with the financing received from USDOL, have enabled direct services to increase. The 2,232 NNAs who received academic scholarships or aid as of October 2006 grew to 6,179 by May 2008. This means that Project SOY! granted 3,947 scholarships between October 2006 and May 2008, and it has increased the number of direct beneficiaries. Project SOY! has not only granted academic scholarships during the academic year, but it has also held summer camps to prevent any increases in child labor during summer vacations. As another direct benefit, school placement counseling has been provided to lower-performing children to encourage them to remain in school. Psychoeducation counseling and family counseling have also helped improve school attendance. Moreover, these counseling sessions have helped implement the Entrepreneurial Mothers project, since topics such as self-esteem and the value of women at home have been addressed with the women.

It is impossible, however, to answer the question posed by USDOL about the number of direct beneficiaries since Project SOY!’s database, as explained previously, includes not only NNAs who receive a direct benefit but also those who indirectly benefit by attending a school served by the project. Table 3 shows that according to the data presented by Project SOY! at a May 5, 2008 meeting with the evaluator, the project has surpassed the goals set in terms of beneficiaries. What cannot be determined is how many of these beneficiaries received direct benefits.

Table 2: Beneficiaries

Beneficiary	Goal	As of May 2008
NNAs enrolled (direct + indirect beneficiaries)	10,320	10,538
Families	6,510	7,525
Teachers	225	581

Based on the findings of the midterm evaluation, the project formulated and implemented the following strategies:

- The definitions and indicators requested in the USDOL reports were reviewed with all members of the consortium to find unifying criteria.

- An exhaustive review of the database was conducted to determine the work status of the NNAs enrolled in the project and resolve any report problems found.
- Additional financial resources were sought to increase the number of direct beneficiaries in the database.
- The direct benefits given to the children and families enrolled in the project were increased.
- Efforts were made to provide technical assistance to the El Oro team, its potential reformulation, and change in personnel. Tutorial Learning Systems (SATs) in El Oro were closed.
- The Health and Loan (microcredit) program for families enrolled in Project SOY! in Cotopaxi was launched.
- The Entrepreneurial Mothers project was introduced in El Triunfo as a pilot model for income generation for families with working children.

There are two recommendations that Project SOY! set aside. One is that only NNAs who receive a direct benefit be considered enrolled in the project. This is because the project continues to consider every child in its initial database as enrolled because, according to a meeting held with USDOL following the midterm evaluation, it was agreed that the processes that were already underway would continue to be implemented without any changes to the goals initially set for the project. However, in the two final years of the project's operations, emphasis was placed on the provision of direct educational services.

The other recommendation is to seek out a mechanism (the project does not necessarily have to be directly involved) for families, to assist them with applying for a development bond since, if a family is eligible, it receives an additional income of US\$30 a month that could help withdraw or prevent working NNAs. As a point of reference, at one school it was mentioned that a young girl worked every day watching a nephew, for which she received US\$10 a month. The project notes that this recommendation could not be put into practice since the criteria established by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion to select beneficiary mothers for the program differs from those established by Project SOY! in its baseline study. Project SOY! also notes that given Ecuador's political instability and ongoing turnover in authorities over the past few years, neither agreements nor coordinated efforts could be established with the Ministry of Social Welfare.

2.2.1 Political Factors

One of the greatest challenges for Project SOY! has been working under three different government administrations in four years (Lucio Gutierrez, Alfredo Palacio, and Rafael Correa). These changes in government have been accompanied by changes in government employees, which has often delayed Project SOY!'s actions, since new ties and commitments needed to be made. In its technical reports, the project has noted that it has not always experienced the same openness or welcome from government employees and that repeated changes at the Ministry of Social Welfare, for example, caused it to miss an opportunity to continue to offer 2,000 scholarships to NNAs. It also notes that

the issue of child labor is not a priority for the current Minister of Labor and that, on the contrary, he tends to be unaware of the efforts made by other ministers in relation to this topic. Another challenge has been the long period that CONEPTI has been out of commission. As of the date of final evaluation, CONEPTI had already restructured its technical secretariat; though they have decided to prioritize the eradication of child labor at landfills above child labor in agriculture.

The current challenge faced by Project SOY! and other institutions and programs active in the area of child labor is to ensure that the new Constitution being drafted by the Constituent Assembly incorporates all of the progress that has been made to date in protecting the rights of NNAs. The objective is to ensure that *not a single step backwards* is taken.

2.2.2 Geographical Considerations

Project SOY! reports no difficulties in relation to the geographical scope of the project areas. Certainly, if the schools had been less spread out, the time now spent on transportation would have been spent on other activities. However, communication by cellular telephone has facilitated efforts considerably.

Climatic conditions have also been reported as a problem in the areas, particularly the constant rain. This, coupled with the eruption of volcanoes (Tungurahua, for example), has caused schools and highways to close and has adversely affected the homes of residents.

In addition, working with two different school calendars (for the coast vs. the mountains) has posed a challenge to Project SOY!, as the two academic years do not coincide and the project's interventions must be planned using two different calendars.

2.2.3 Target Sectors

The midterm evaluation mentioned that working with families that value work above education has been a challenge for Project SOY! As explained by Project SOY! in its original design, child labor in Ecuador is influenced by cultural aspects and responds to situations of poverty. In all intervention areas, the project has carried out interventions to raise awareness among parents concerning the rights of NNAs and the significance of education. It is important to note that efforts have not only targeted parents but NNAs as well, whether directly or indirectly (through their teachers). The mechanisms used by the project to this end include—

- Awareness-raising workshops at schools with NNAs, teachers, and parents.
- Theatre activities at parks and group meetings to disseminate the rights of NNAs.
- Psycho-pedagogical counseling at home to promote the rights of children and encourage schooling.
- Broadcasts announcing school registration on Latacunga radio, made by the adolescents; and radio campaigns that were launched in the canton of Cayambe with plugs recorded by the children enrolled in the project.

- Family counseling with members of the Entrepreneurial Mothers project aimed at raising awareness among families and working specifically on the issue of ‘machismo’ and the value of women.
- The parents of NNAs who receive a direct benefit signed a letter of commitment with Project SOY!; for its part, the project follows up on the school attendance and academic performance of the NNAs who are enrolled in the project.
- Support for schools through physical improvements and teaching aids.
- Support for high school programs (SATs, distance-learning, and 8th, through 10th grades).

At the time this report was written, the education quality results could not be measured using the quality index prepared by Project SOY!, since it had not been updated as of May 2008. However, the school directors and teachers mentioned in interviews that the punctuality of NNAs has improved at the schools. Enrollment has also increased but it is important to note that this result has also been influenced by financial incentives in exchange for school attendance granted by the government (payment of enrolment fees, provision of books, and in some cases, uniforms). As noted by Project SOY! in its original proposal, Ecuador’s largest problem is its school dropout rate following the 7th year of schooling, when basic education is completed. It was observed at all of the interviews held at schools during the final evaluation of the project, however, that there is currently a stronger desire to continue studies beyond basic education, which was not evident in the project’s midterm evaluation. This has been stated by both the teachers of the upper grade levels and the children participating in focus groups. It is important to note that the recent introduction of the 10-Year Education Plan as formal public policy is expected to contribute to extended learning as well.

As child labor is a poverty-related problem, the project has attempted to implement two initiatives to help parents increase their income in order to supplement the loss of such when their children stop working. These projects included Entrepreneurial Mothers (El Triunfo), and Health and Loan in Cotopaxi. During focus groups, parents were very pleased with these two initiatives. The Entrepreneurial Mothers project is a low-cost initiative for families that starts from the ground up, using family counseling on machismo and the value of women. The mothers have been technically trained to produce crafts from banana waste and little by little, with the assistance of the Corporación de Promoción de Exportaciones e Inversiones (CORPEI), have been improving the finish of their products. It is important to note that CORPEI’s support has been decisive in the promotion and sale of the products abroad.

The Health and Loan project, in turn, seeks to increase the income of families that already have a productive activity underway in Cotopaxi by providing financing to boost said activity. Both projects are still in their early stages and, although Project SOY! has furnished some data, an analysis of the direct effects of these interventions on the education and work of NNAs is still premature. On the one hand, in its report, the Health and Loan program in Latacunga notes that as of May 2008, all data available was being systematized in order to “monitor the intended impact of the strategy’s implementation.”⁸ On the other hand, the report on the Entrepreneurial Women

⁸ Latacunga Diocese-Health and Loan Program. *Monitoreo Fondos Proyecto SOY! Mayo 2008*. [Monitoring Project SOY! Funds. May 2008], p. 4.

Program⁹ notes that 37 of 63 NNAs from families with entrepreneurial women had been prevented from working, while 17 had been removed from the labor market and 8 continued working. Nevertheless, during the focus group with these mothers, they noted that they were just starting out and that they had sold very few units of their products. It is therefore recommended that Project SOY! perform an impact assessment of these projects as of September 2008. One aspect that should be taken into account in that assessment is whether the 34.11 percent interest rate imposed on principal balances to both cover financial costs and offer scholarships to NNAs enrolled in the project (in the diocese of Tacunga) causes families of very low income in Cotopaxi to increase the work of NNAs in order to cover the payments set for the loan. There is a long-term and short-term effect that must be differentiated and evaluated as of September 2008. This is despite the fact that the active interest rate for microcredit activities in Ecuador has been officially set by the central bank at 41 percent.

As for specific interventions targeting indigenous children, the project has basically addressed these issues in terms of values. As reported in the midterm evaluation, no specific interventions were carried out for girls in Machala or Cotopaxi; and Los Ríos, Pichincha (Cayambe), and Guayas have addressed the topic indirectly through values. In 2007, CARE International performed a *Conocimiento, Actitudes y Prácticas Sexuales* (CAPS) diagnostic on the knowledge of NNAs enrolled in the project regarding issues of sexuality (with a gender focus).

Pichincha has the largest indigenous population of all of the project's intervention areas. CARE has worked with Pichincha's Provincial Office of Intercultural Bilingual Education and the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of bilingual education; fostering a close relationship which has been acknowledged in the interviews conducted. As mentioned in the midterm evaluation, CARE has also designed a guide to Andean nutrition in Cayambe, aiming to incorporate positive eating habits using Andean ingredients and recipes.

The project has considered the specific needs of the children who work in the banana sector by supporting the implementation of an SAT in Los Ríos; this is an appropriate program for the rural communities, as it integrates classes with practical agricultural projects. During the midterm evaluation, it was observed that an SAT was also being implemented in El Oro. However, the SAT program's implementation at the time showed deficiencies that were described in the evaluation. After multiple failed attempts by Project SOY! to restructure the SAT program in El Oro, it was shut down. Although an agreement recognizing and accrediting the SAT format had been signed between the El Oro Office of Education and the Social Pastoral of Machala, as of the date of the final evaluation there were still problems in recognizing the years of study completed by students who had been enrolled in the program in El Oro. This problem has arisen because the current officials at the El Oro Office of Education do not recognize commitments assumed in prior administrations. In the months remaining until the completion of Project SOY!, the technical team in El Oro should continue its efforts aimed at securing recognition thereof, since this may become a barrier for these NNAs to return to school.

⁹ *Informe Final-Proceso de Capacitación y Asistencia Productiva. Mujeres Emprendedoras.* Project SOY! Guayas. El Triunfo. 2007-2008. [Final Report-Training and productive assistance process. Entrepreneurial Women. El Triunfo 2007-2008], p. 3.

In the mountain region, Project SOY! has supported distance-learning courses in which students attend school on the weekend and study during the week through homework. In Cotopaxi, the Monseñor Proaño program has been implemented. Project SOY! has also supported the development of the 8th, 9th, and 10th grade programs.

During the midterm evaluation, it was found that a characteristic of life in the Cotopaxi region is that NNAs help their parents make concrete blocks. This requires NNAs to wake up very early and help their parents before attending school. Project SOY! has worked directly with these families, and although it is reported that the children are less involved in these activities, interviews conducted for the final evaluation have shown that some children still engage in this work.

2.2.4 Education Model

The Wong Foundation has been implementing the SAT for high-school studies in rural areas at Cascada de Agoyán (public) and at Cristóbal Colón (private) schools. At the project stakeholders meeting, the representative of the Wong Foundation announced that an inter-institutional agreement with *Instituto Nacional de la Niñez y la Familia* (INNFA) no longer existed and that the SAT was already being implemented in six communities. A commitment to expand the SAT nationwide is also in place.

As stipulated in the original design of Project SOY!, Annex 5 details the printed copies of the evaluations of the SAT prepared by the National Office of Primary Education and the National Office of Rural Education. Printed copies are being sent to Macro International Inc. with this report. These evaluations note the following:

- The SAT is based on research-action processes coupled with the direct involvement of the community (January 4, 2007).
- Each SAT has agricultural farms that provide a laboratory for students where theory is turned into practice (January 4, 2007).
- The SAT is recognized as having the most technically and pedagogically appropriate strategy for offering a high-school education in marginal rural areas (January 4, 2007).
- The youth who have participated in this educational process are trained at various activities, as the curriculum is interdisciplinary (March 3, 2008).
- The SAT creates a dynamic teaching-learning process, since it facilitates ongoing interaction with the entire educational community (March 3, 2008).
- The Wong Foundation's support is permanent; ensuring that teachers continue to be paid, teaching aids are purchased, and a chemistry laboratory offered (March 3, 2008).

This project has not implemented any other education model. Nevertheless, it has entailed interesting educational interventions, which can be considered best practices. They include the following:

- The most significant intervention relates to the training given to the teachers in each of the project's intervention areas. Topics such as teachers' self-esteem and classroom discipline management, which undermined the quality of the education offered, have been addressed. In addition, the teachers received technical assistance in the classroom that strengthened and improved teaching practices at the schools. In this vein, they have been given training in the areas of language and mathematics. This training has been accompanied by teaching aids for the schools as well. During visits to the schools, this material was being used to teach classes.
- In Cayambe, the learning and awareness-raising project by means of Andean music (*Aprendizajes Musicales Alternativos Recreativos [AMAR]* and *Integral Vivencial Multisensorial [IVM]* Methodology) has been reported as a success in improving the quality of education and as an effective way to instill values.
- In El Triunfo and Naranjal, tutoring and counseling sessions were provided to ensure working NNAs and at-risk children remain in school and that academic performance increased. Approximately 79 NNAs have participated and the result has been positive in 98 percent of all cases.¹⁰
- During the midterm evaluation, the evaluator observed how the Together with the Children (*Juntos con los Niños [JUCONI]*) Foundation engaged in activities with small children to teach them how to play in an organized manner as a way of improving the quality of education.

2.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The project has not stated any problems in collecting data from the schools or municipalities. On the contrary, the project often coordinates the collection of data on NNAs who are direct beneficiaries in the schools. Nevertheless, at some schools, it was observed that teachers were not sure which children were direct beneficiaries of Project SOY!, since the children received scholarships/aid from other institutions such as the municipality or INNFA. Efforts are also coordinated with the municipalities; in El Oro and Guayas, the lists of beneficiaries are shared to prevent any one child from receiving scholarships from two institutions.

Since the midterm evaluation and technical assistance performed by Ana Aslan, Project SOY! has made a considerable effort to revise its database and identify the work status of the 10,320 NNAs enrolled in the project. In addition, in 2006, the project prepared a *Manual for Operating the NNA-Project SOY! Data System*. After revising the manual and holding a meeting on May 8, 2008 with the project's technical team, the evaluator reached the following conclusions:

¹⁰ CORPEI. *Social Responsibility*, July 2007, p. 4.

1. Project SOY! continues to consider the NNAs identified in its baseline study (2005) as child and adolescent workers and at-risk children, whether or not they receive a direct benefit from the project, as enrolled.
2. As explained previously in 2005, at the recommendation of the consulting firm Juárez, it was decided that the 10,320 NNAs would be enrolled into the system gradually by cohort. As of September 2005, 3,005 NNAs were enrolled; in March 2006, 1,700 NNAs; in September 2006, 4,535 NNAs; and in March 2007, the remaining 1,080. However, the project had been working with the 10,320 NNAs since 2006. This means that since the beginning, the project considered NNAs enrolled in the project regardless of the service they were being provided or their work status (whether they worked/did not work). Some of the children enrolled in the project received direct benefits while others benefited indirectly insofar as the entire school did.
3. Project SOY! considers not only the scholarships and aid granted to NNAs with project funds as direct benefits, but also those that are provided with funds from other institutions but that are obtained as a result of actions undertaken by Project SOY!.
4. The manual defines the categories of permanence, graduation, and dropout in the following manner:

Table 3: Description of Project Indicators

Indicator	Educational Status of an NNA
Permanence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails the school year. • Promoted/passes the year. • Re-enrolls (if departure was not reported).
Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes 7th and/or 10th grade of basic education. • Completes an education program supported by Project SOY!
Dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdraws from school. • Migrates. • Switches to a school outside of Project SOY!'s area of intervention and does not receive a direct benefit of any kind.

These definitions coincide with those of USDOL. The problem lies with the definition of an NNA enrolled in the project, as described below.

1. For the construction of indicators of withdrawn and prevented NNAs, the project *in theory* (according to the Manual) considers only NNAs who receive direct benefits. However, in practice, it has been detected that every child in the database is considered enrolled. The concept of withdrawn or prevented is adapted by the project in accordance with Ecuadorian legislation on child labor; for instance, children under the age of 15 may not work and adolescents between 15 and 17 may work only under special conditions. Project SOY! considered an adaptation appropriate because many of its beneficiaries are not employed by a company but rather they work alongside their families. Given that the

project's area of intervention is the agricultural sector, where the support given by children to their parents is of a specific nature, Project SOY! considered the use of the following definitions pertinent:

- a. A child is considered removed from child labor if he/she receives a direct benefit in support of his permanence in and completion of school and no longer works engaging in any activity. This, in accordance with Project SOY!, means that the child works less than three hours. A child is also considered withdrawn if labor conditions improve: Risks are overcome and the child does not perform hazardous activities, and his/her working hours are reduced to a maximum of one hour a day.
 - b. It is important to note that in accordance with Ecuadorian law, an adolescent (15 to 17 years old) is considered working if he/she works more than six hours a day. The project also considers whether or not the adolescent's work prevents him/her from studying and whether or not the adolescent is exposed to hazardous conditions.
 - c. Prevented NNAs are those who, upon being enrolled in the project, did not work, remained in this category, and (in theory) received a direct benefit.
2. If we compare the above definitions to those of USDOL, we will see that Project SOY! not only considers the NNAs who receive a direct benefit as enrolled, but also children who benefit indirectly from the improvement of schools. This shows that the indicator of enrolled NNAs is overestimated based on the USDOL definition.
 3. Since these two categories do not encompass every child in the database, Project SOY! uses another category internally called "NNA *in process*." This category includes children who engage in more than three hours of work and/or those who work in hazardous conditions (domestic activities without any adult supervision or support or dangerous activities that pose a risk to their health or safety) and work in excess of one hour. It also includes adolescents who work for over six hours, who do not study, or who work in hazardous conditions.

Although the USDOL-funded International Labour Organization (ILO) project has shared its definitions with Project SOY!, the target population of this project does not include the NNAs who work at home (household). If a child is under 15 years of age, this type of child labor is only considered eradicated if the child no longer works at all. If a child is over 15 years of age, this instance of child labor is considered eradicated if the child works less than six hours and does so in non-hazardous conditions. Otherwise, the child will remain in the database as working. That is to say, the ILO project directly applies what is stipulated by law on child labor and somewhat differs from the definition used by Project SOY!

As USDOL recommended at the key stakeholders meeting with Project SOY!, this is a topic that should be resolved at the national level and with the input of CONEPTI. Only when every project and program applies the same definitions for the indicators can figures and results be compared. Otherwise, the units of measure for the indicators will all differ and it will be impossible to compare them or compile them into a single indicator (national and not specific to each project).

2.3 TOPICS RELATING TO PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

One of the greatest challenges faced by Project SOY! has been in working with a consortium of institutions, each with its own characteristics and technical experience. Nevertheless, the project has demonstrated its ability to work in a coordinated manner. As noted by its director at the stakeholders meeting, “Project SOY! never comprised six separate projects centered on an administrating organization but rather was one project that effectively worked as a consortium of six organizations with different expertise and skills.” According to Project SOY!’s director, this is a prerequisite for a consortium to work.

It is in this context that the bimonthly meetings of the Technical Committee (comprising the various technical teams), held to exchange ideas and experiences, have been pivotal in the sound development of the project. This is because the project has facilitated the creation of synergy, while respecting the individuality of the institutions.

Another of the largest challenges faced by Project SOY! has been in working with the technical team in the diocese of Machala. As reported in the midterm evaluation, the progress made in El Oro was less than that achieved for the rest of the consortium. In its technical reports, Project SOY! reports having made a considerable effort to improve the development of this intervention area but was unsuccessful. There was a change in personnel and currently El Oro is supported by a technical coordinator and a single promoter. The evaluator was able to observe the excellent technical quality and dedication of these two professionals. Another strategy implemented in the province of El Oro was to strengthen Project SOY!’s actions with those of Project ELICE (Local Spaces for Inclusion and Educational Quality Project). Nevertheless, there are not enough personnel and resources available in this area to work with the 32 schools served by the project. Operations in this area should therefore be strengthened in the time remaining, with priority given to working with NNAs and seeking the Ministry of Education’s recognition of the years of study completed by youth enrolled in the SAT programs that were shut down.

One of Project SOY!’s strengths is that since its beginning, it has acknowledged being a part of more widespread initiatives in Ecuador and has been able to work as a network at the national and local levels. With its networked efforts, Project SOY! has benefited from the complementary support and synergies that evolve from this type of collaboration. It is clear from the interviews conducted that Project SOY! has been part of the national network and has coordinated with national and local government institutions in an ongoing basis. These networked efforts have been important since, despite the diversity of the organizations and programs, they have enabled ‘a single discourse’ to be used in addressing the public. The project has worked closely with the Banana Social Forum, the Flower Social Forum, and the new technical secretariat of CONEPTI; it has also worked in constant coordination with other USDOL-funded projects (Wiñari and ILO/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC]). Project SOY!’s director mentioned at the key stakeholders meeting that its work motto was, “Never alone, always together!”

The following responses were given when asked about the local¹¹ and national recognition enjoyed by Project SOY! in Ecuador:

- It was relatively a pioneering effort; it unlocked doors and left doors open.
- It has helped promote discussion forums, create networks, and design policies.
- It is part of the national child labor eradication agenda (as are other projects).
- It was very active in the Look Me in the Eye (*Mírame a los Ojos*) presidential campaign.
- It gave impetus to and helped the restructuring of CONEPTI.
- Its participation in the Social Contract for Education is well known.
- It greatly contributed to the formation and strengthening of the cantonal councils in its intervention areas.
- It has used innovative educational methodologies that can hopefully be disseminated.

With respect to the relationship of Project SOY! with other institutions and the programs addressing the issue of child labor in Ecuador, it is important to point out that the interviews conducted show that the project derives from the national agenda and enjoys recognition at both the national and local level. As noted previously, the project's work has been performed jointly and in coordination with other projects funded by the U.S. Government (Wiñari Project and ILO-IPEC). Even when difficulties arose concerning the geographical areas of intervention of the different projects, they were resolved through dialogue and a willingness to work together. These projects have also worked together on monitoring efforts. An example of a coordinated effort has been Project SOY!'s integration with Project ELICE in El Oro and the canton of Pasaje. This will not only ensure the continuity of some of Project SOY!'s interventions but it also enabled the ELICE team to assist the recently restructured technical team in El Oro.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito, in turn, worked closely with the project when Vanessa Schultz was its Labor official. In comments on the preliminary draft of this report, Project SOY! noted that James Cohen, an official from the embassy's political section, later visited the schools of Cayambe. It also noted that interviews were conducted with the U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador and that 6-month technical reports were sent to the embassy.

Project SOY! has worked in coordination with the Banana and Flower Social Forums. The fact that Patricia Bedoya is the technical executive secretary of the Banana Forum as well as the Representative of the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference to Project SOY! has fostered greater involvement between the forum and the project. Ms. Bedoya has also been important in the development of Entrepreneurial Mothers; her involvement has been precisely what has allowed CORPEI's considerable involvement in the sale of products and the technical assistance extended to the mothers enrolled in the program.

¹¹ Along the coast, the member agencies of the consortium enjoy greater recognition than Project SOY!. This may be because the agencies are overseeing several projects in the area.

During the interviews for both the midterm and final evaluations, it was made clear that Project SOY! has been a driving force behind the efforts coordinated with the Ministry of Labor, the National Council for Children and Adolescents, CONEPTI, the Forum on Children and Adolescents, and the Social Contract for Education in Ecuador,¹² *inter alia*. Nevertheless, the response received has been varied, depending on who is in charge at each institution. Two of Project SOY!'s interventions have stood out in Ecuador: One was its involvement in the Look Me in the Eye campaign during the last election cycle. The other is its active involvement alongside other NGOs and institutions that made the recent restructuring of CONEPTI's technical secretariat possible. During the interviews, it was requested that in whatever time remains, Project SOY! systematize its experiences and share them with the institutions that will continue to address the issue. In response to this, Project SOY! has already hired Carlos Crespo Burgos to perform the systematization.

At the local level, Project SOY! has worked with the municipalities, INNFA, and the local representatives of the Ministry of Education—*inter alia*. Nevertheless, how closely it has worked with each not only depended on the individual efforts of the technical teams but also on the personalities and attitudes of the local representatives. Compared with the midterm evaluation, in the final evaluation a more coordinated and organized effort was observed in each town visited. However, interest and concern over the continuity of the project's activities have been stated during the interviews. Requests at this level have also been made for Project SOY!'s interventions and experiences to be systematized and disseminated.

Networked efforts have the previously stated advantages, but they also represent a challenge. The constant change in government in Ecuador has posed a challenge. The greatest challenge has been with the Ministry of Social Welfare since, in the project's own words, "the ineffectiveness of the bureaucracy of that ministry and the change in government" conspired to ensure that the agreement under which Project SOY! received resources for NNAs would not be renewed.

Inter-Institutional Education Coordinating Committees (IECC) have been formed in all cantons in which Project SOY! operates. They mainly comprise representatives of municipalities, INNFA, the Ministry of Education, and local NGOs or counterparts. The education community in each town determines its needs—such as improved school, sanitation, or education infrastructure—and sends them to the IECC. The IECC, in turn, forwards such requests to local governments or government institutions in charge of providing such services. In most cases, but not always, the community representatives are actively involved in monitoring or following up on the activities.

The evaluator noted that an education committee in Pasaje currently coordinates with the town's child labor eradication committee, and a provincial committee exists in El Oro. The 115 schools served by the project already have participatory education diagnostics being implemented.

2.4 TOPICS RELATING TO ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

Members of Project SOY! (both at the office in Baltimore and in Ecuador) have stated that their relationship with USDOL official Ana Aslan has been friendly and that they have always received prompt responses to their concerns.

¹² On behalf of Save the Children, CARE, and JUCONI.

The members of Project SOY! disagree with what USDOL considers only a name change in the indicator calculating the *number of enrolled children by eradication/prevention*. Nevertheless, as noted in the midterm evaluation, this name change has meant a shift in emphasis for Project SOY! in relation to its original design.

As for technical assistance, Project SOY! claims that considerable confusion was created when USDOL contracted the consulting firm Juárez to help the project in Ecuador define the indicators and prepare the database, which has been a determining factor in the issues that—to date—stem from the data report. The project notes that the direct presence of USDOL technicians would have yielded better results than the intermediation of the Juárez firm. In this regard, the project recognizes the effort made by Ms. Aslan to provide technical assistance on the indicators immediately following the midterm evaluation.

They agreed with her to continue working with the 10,320 NNAs who were in the original projected database. Nevertheless, the 10,320 NNAs enrolled have not received a direct benefit from the project because of budgetary constraints—despite the project’s enormous effort to collect additional funds. In comments on the preliminary report, Project SOY! noted that its members felt that the original spirit of the project, which considered education a right for all, could not be set aside.

As for the administrative aspects of the project, the only problem that has been reported pertains to the project’s ties to the institutions that belonged to the consortium. Given that the method of operation used by the Project SOY! consortium was not to subcontract and that USDOL lacks the legal authority to grant subcontributions, USDOL recommended that the project replace the cooperative agreement with a cooperative agreement association. Under a cooperative agreement association, associates can legally have contracts between them. While confirmed by internal auditors as well, it has been reported that this has not ceased to represent additional work for CRS at its headquarters in Baltimore.

2.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Given the comprehensive approach of Project SOY!’s initial design, which included addressing an issue from the ground up and raising awareness about the rights of NNAs both nationally and locally, the project has been working on the sustainability of its actions since its inception. In addition, Project SOY! has helped establish municipal comprehensive child protection systems and improve education.

As seen in the final evaluation, Project SOY! had already begun several actions to sustain itself as of May 2008:

- Local governments were already notified about the conclusion of Project SOY! In all of the project’s intervention areas, measures were already being taken to promote sustainability, particularly to ensure the continuity of scholarships. Efforts were being coordinated both at the municipal level and at INNFA.

- At the stakeholders meeting, a representative from the Wong Foundation affirmed that it will continue to support the implementation of the SATs, and CARE stated that its institution had already committed resources to financing activities in Cayambe for two more years.
- There is also a coordinated effort underway with other Save the Children projects, such as ELICE, that will give continuity to other project actions in Guayas and El Oro.
- The work approach and methodologies employed by Project SOY! have been replicated in Ecuador by Project ELICE in their access to education project for child refugees. The aspects replicated include advocacy for the formulation of public policy, networked efforts, community mobilization in support of inclusive education, and local and national inter-institutional coordination.
- Patricia Bedoya, representative of the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference, noted that she is working to have the Children's Pastoral (Episcopal Conference) take over part of the awareness-raising efforts undertaken by Project SOY!
- The *Support Guide for Diagnostics and Education Planning* has already been published (a printed copy is attached).
- Project SOY! has hired consultant Carlos Crespo Burgos to systematize the project's operations.

As for increasing Ecuador's ability to combat child labor, the country overall has made progress, compared to 2004 when Project SOY! began its operations. Project SOY!'s specific contributions in this arena are tied to the expected outcomes of Objective 2, as indicated below:

- Establishment of Cantonal Councils for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents in the 11 cantons specified. These councils have already moved forward in the formulation of public policy that will make actions taken against child labor permanent.
- Cantonal Boards on the Protection of Rights were set up in four cantons.
- Consultative Children's Councils operate in three cantons: Cayambe, Pasaje, and Pedro Moncayo.
- Inter-Institutional Service Networks exist in every province in which Project SOY!, municipalities, NGOs, and government agencies work in coordination with one another. In some cases, databases are exchanged to prevent duplicate scholarships from being granted (El Guabo, El Triunfo, and Pichincha).
- Establishment of *Mesa Operativa Interinstitucional para la Erradicación de Trabajo de Menores y Responsabilidad Social del Guayas* (MOETICBG), which already has a work plan.

- Dialogue roundtables on education in El Triunfo and Pasaje, where the educational inclusion of working NNAs and those at risk is given priority. A provincial committee also exists in Los Ríos.

The technical teams in Project SOY!'s various intervention areas have been participating as observers on labor inspectors' visits to companies. This has been a means to identify NNAs who are working and are not attending school. Once Project SOY! identified them, it worked with these NNAs to ensure that they could access the schools and participate in the project.¹³

Based on the interviews conducted in the four areas visited, it is obvious that Project SOY! has been working actively with the municipalities to support the Comprehensive Children's Protection Systems. The project's intervention has been significant in terms of the level of coordination in which it has engaged with local governments, companies, and civil society to promote the rights of NNAs and improve access to education. At the local level, however, its intervention has been uneven; this is not so much a result of the efforts made by Project SOY! as it is of the fact that the mayors of some towns have not been receptive to the project's actions.

Since its inception, Project SOY! has involved parents in diagnostics and school planning in order to encourage them to become actively involved in the activities and decisions of the educational facilities. Mothers are more involved than fathers, as the latter are usually working. The heavier involvement of mothers has enabled Project SOY! to incorporate topics relating to child rights and proper care, nutrition and health, *inter alia*, more easily. The mothers are involved in matters relating to infrastructure improvements, health campaigns, and school meal preparation. The evaluator observed at various schools that the mothers are in charge of preparing and serving food to the children. This involvement allows for a more varied diet, since the ingredients delivered regularly by the government are exchanged for and/or supplemented by contributions from the parents to those preparing the food. It has also been reported that the children often encourage parents to become involved, since they want their classmates and the school to regard them well. It is important to note that although the involvement of mothers in preparing school meals has taken place for some time, Project SOY! knows how to leverage such an involvement to perform several of its activities.

Percentage of the goals and objectives set in the logical framework that have been met, and unexpected outcomes of Project SOY!

According to the project's logical framework, some goals can only be evaluated as of September 2008 (the school retention rate is expected to increase from 80 percent to 84 percent, while the graduation rate is expected to rise to 80 percent). As Project SOY! had not updated the estimate for the education quality indicator as of May 2008, it could not be evaluated at the time of writing this report. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 4, as of May 2008 for all those indicators that could be evaluated, Project SOY! has already surpassed the goals it set for each indicator, except for prevented NNAs. It is important to note the following two points: First, as explained above, a beneficiary NNA is defined as a child or adolescent who receives a direct benefit or one who indirectly benefits from the project through the improvement of schools. Second, these data

¹³ CORPEI. Social Responsibility, July 2007, p. 3.

differ from those reported in the March 2008 technical report because they were updated as of May 2008 for this evaluation.

Table 4: Project SOY! Achievements—May 2008

Indicator	Goal Set	Achievements as of 2008	Percent Above Goal
Local governments in the project's intervention areas that have work plans or public policy mechanisms that will provide education to working NNAs or those at risk of entering the labor market	5 local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 Cantonal Councils for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents • 4 Cantonal Boards on the Protection of Rights • 3 Consultative Children's Councils • Inter-Institutional Service Networks in all provinces 	n/a
Contribution of stakeholders	\$208,303	\$1,661,344	697.7%
NNAs enrolled	10,320	10,538	2.1%
NNAs who receive scholarships/academic aid	Unavailable	6,179	n/a
Families who benefited	6,510	7,525	15.6%
Teachers who benefited	225	581	158.2%
NNAs withdrawn	619	903	45.9%
NNAs prevented	9,701	6,314	Goal not yet met (34.9% below goal)
NNAs withdrawn + prevented	10,320	7,217	Goal not yet met (30.1% below goal)

n/a = no data available

In relation to the goal of NNAs prevented, Project SOY! noted the reasons why the set goal has not been met in its comments on the preliminary draft of this report. First, it notes the fact that said goal was set after the USDOL added the indicators for NNAs withdrawn and prevented. Second, it notes that Project SOY! only had the financial resources it was itself able to mobilize for the provision of direct education services to meet said goal, since the initial budget allocated by the USDOL was not modified. Project SOY! notes in its comments that the provision of direct services is considered a condition for the prevention and withdrawal of NNAs from dangerous or illegal activities. Nevertheless, the data contained in Table 3 shows that 6,179 NNAs have received direct benefits and that 7,217 NNAs have been withdrawn or prevented from engaging in child labor. Project SOY! should shed light on this discrepancy of 1,038 NNAs who did not receive direct benefits but were withdrawn or prevented from engaging in child labor.

While goals were not established for the following actions, Project SOY! was also successful at improving the quality of education in the following manner:

- There were 581 teachers *trained* in subject matter and methodologies relating to education quality; each teacher attended at least two training events.
- There were 17 *supervisors* trained in subject matter and methodologies relating to education quality.
- There were 40 *schools* either repaired or built; other schools were furnished.
- There were 115 *schools* given teaching aids and texts.
- A total of 6,179 *children* received scholarships and/or academic aid.
- A total of 3,706 *mothers and fathers* received training (families attended at least two training events).

The following notes the support given to complementary education centers or programs:

- Three 8th, 9th, and 10th grades (Pichincha)
- Two SAT centers (Los Ríos)
- Three distance-learning schools (Latacunga)
- In 115 schools, each school is using diagnostics and inclusive plans
- One education network in Cangahua
- One Bilingual Provincial Office (Cayambe-Tabacundo)
- One Provincial Office in Cotopaxi.

The unexpected outcomes of Project SOY! are seen in the achievements outlined in Table 4 and noted in the activities it performed. Another important achievement accomplished by Project SOY! is the indisputable recognition it enjoys at the national and local levels in Ecuador. At the stakeholders meeting, CRS Ecuador Director Alejandra Moncada stated that Project SOY!'s achievements had transcended to projects being implemented in other countries. The best practices identified in the following section of this report also constitute examples of the project's achievements.

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III LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

3.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons learned have been identified by the technical team of Project SOY! They are the following, as presented by Project SOY! Director César Paredes at the stakeholders meeting:

1. Project SOY! has been implemented in Ecuador by five organizations: CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference, the Wong Foundation, and Save the Children-United Kingdom. Although these organizations had different backgrounds and skills, Project SOY! was never a conglomerate of six organizations under a single administrating entity. On the contrary, it has been a standalone project led by CRS, in which each team has shared its specific technical skills and backgrounds. Project SOY! considers this a prerequisite for a consortium to run smoothly.
2. Project SOY! has used *Never Alone, Always Together* as its motto, which shows the importance given to taking part in more widespread initiatives in child labor prevention and eradication in Ecuador. The advantage of working as a network is that it paves the way for complementary support and synergies in the initiatives undertaken in the country, and that it lays the groundwork for ensuring the sustainability of the project.
3. In relation to the design of the project and the approach used, Project SOY! considers it a lesson learned to have viewed education from a children's rights standpoint, as an effective strategy for the prevention and eradication of child labor in Ecuador. The project has centered on the concept of *inclusive education*, which implicitly encompasses the concept of educability, and it believes that the latter must be considered and implemented by the education community. Nevertheless, Project SOY! recognizes that the access of children to education does not automatically prevent or eradicate child labor. A set of aligned complementary strategies is therefore needed to bring pressure to bear on such a complex problem.
4. Project SOY! believes that its strategy of helping build or strengthen local comprehensive child protection systems has effectively contributed to the prevention and withdrawal of NNAs from child labor.
5. In this approach to child labor, the project recognizes that enormous recourses are needed to ensure that each beneficiary NNA has access to direct educational services. Nevertheless, the mobilization of resources is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient in the prevention/eradication of child labor.
6. With respect to its relationship with USDOL, Project SOY! considers the following lessons learned:
 - The technical assistance provided by the donor was insufficient, and several difficulties would have been resolved if technical assistance had been direct, without

the involvement of intermediaries in Ecuador. It is important to note that this statement by Project SOY! coincides with the findings of this evaluation.

- The timeframe within which the goals and results planned were to be achieved was not sufficient, and as such, only some of the processes will carry on once the project concludes, despite the project's efforts.
- As explained in the midterm evaluation, the focus of Project SOY!'s original design changed. As such, Project SOY! considers the difficulty in successfully implementing a project when the donor (USDOL) changes the focus and conditions established in the original design of the project as a lesson learned.

3.2 BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices taken from Project SOY! were presented by the evaluator at the stakeholders meeting:

- Networked inter-institutional efforts at the national and local level.
- SAT as an education model.
- Significant, inclusive, and participatory interventions in education. The most significant activities included—
 - Training workshops on the use of teaching-learning methodologies (language, mathematics, and the first year of primary school)
 - Workshops on self-esteem and classroom management for educators
 - Tutoring offered in El Triunfo and Naranjal in which 79 NNAs participated to ensure they remained in school by improving their academic performance.
- Since many NNAs work while on summer vacation, Project SOY! has been holding summer camps. These camps have not only resulted in preventing child labor but also in keeping children in school and improving their academic performance, since the summer camps were also learning forums. Another advantage of these camps has been family integration.¹⁴
- Family counseling (child labor and that of mothers). To complement the counseling sessions, 120 mothers and fathers in El Triunfo and Naranjal received instruction in a course on nutrition. The course taught participants to make recipes with local products that are beneficial to family health. When interviewed, the parents stressed the importance and the positive impact that this activity had on them. In Cayambe, the issue has been addressed in relation to Andean nutrition.

¹⁴ CORPEI. *Social Responsibility*, July 2007, p. 8.

- Although its impact on NNA labor has yet to be assessed, the Entrepreneurial Mothers project could be considered as one of the best practices of the SOY! Project. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the broad support provided by CORPEI to this project in order for the mothers to learn the techniques and to be able to sell their products.
- The weekly radio spots, with the involvement of trained groups of adolescents. The content of these spots is aimed at socializing the rights of NNAs and the problem of underage labor. They therefore represent a channel for expression, communication, and awareness.
- Vegetable farming at schools to complement school meals in Cotopaxi. This is a very interesting project developed in Cotopaxi by a member of the Peace Corps who collaborated with the project 1 year ago. This project is related to the constant complaints voiced by school directors when interviewing schools concerning the little variety and few inputs provided by the government for school meals.

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IV CONCLUSIONS

Although Project SOY! has experienced a change to its original design, it has accomplished many significant achievements during its four years of operation in Ecuador. Because discrepancies still remain between Project SOY! and USDOL about the interpretation of the results indicators, particularly the number of NNAs enrolled in the project and direct beneficiaries, it is necessary to look at the observed achievements beyond what these indicators represent.

Project SOY! has surpassed the goals set for its three expected outcomes and has provided several examples of best practices for other projects addressing the issue of child labor. To this end, Project SOY! overcame many challenges, including working with a consortium of institutions with different backgrounds and technical capacities in an unstable political climate in Ecuador (three presidents in four years), and executing a relatively pioneering initiative in the area of child and adolescent labor. The legal framework currently in place in Ecuador did not exist when Project SOY! initiated its operations, and the poverty and cultural factors that are conducive to child and adolescent labor are problems that cannot be resolved with a short-term project only. As such, the comprehensive approach and networked efforts made at both the national and local level have been fundamental in accomplishing the achievements detailed in this report.

The recognition enjoyed by Project SOY! in Ecuador, both nationally and locally, is an indicator of the hard work put forth by all its members. Project SOY! has laid the groundwork for work to continue in its intervention areas on an issue for which a solution requires longer-term efforts. CARE's decision to stay on for two more years in Cayambe and the Wong Foundation's pledge to increase the scope of the SATs, in addition to Save the Children's implementation of its Local Spaces for Inclusion and Educational Quality (ELICE) project, are indicators of the interest shared by the members of the consortium to carry on the efforts initiated by Project SOY!

Project SOY!'s work approach focusing on the rights and values of children and adolescents, and the decision to start with a national, community, family, and school awareness initiative, have laid the groundwork for ensuring the sustainability of its actions. This sustainability, of course, hinges upon successfully ensuring financing for the students' academic scholarships, as well as Project SOY!'s ability to disseminate its experiences and the interventions it performed.

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V RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR PROJECT SOY!

- Continue to seek support from local governments, INNFA, and other stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of Project SOY!'s actions.
- Finish systematizing Project SOY!'s methodologies and results, then disseminate them widely.
- Provide El Oro with greater resources, particularly for its work with children (currently there are 32 schools and only one promoter and one project coordinator). The work begun in this area could thus be finished more successfully. Also, prioritize efforts to ensure that the years of study completed by students in the SAT programs that were shut down are recognized.
- Perform an analysis of the potential impact of the following two projects on the work performed by children and adolescents: Entrepreneurial Mothers in El Triunfo and Health and Loan (microcredits) in Cotopaxi. In the latter case, place special emphasis on any potential short term impact, while households must repay the loan in addition to interest.
- Work with CONEPTI and other projects related to the issue of child labor on definitions for eradication and prevention in Ecuador that may be used at the national level for any project or program.
- Continue to work on and clean up the project database to identify direct beneficiaries and report to USDOL on the indicators, in accordance with the definitions provided by the donor.

FOR FUTURE USDOL PROJECTS

- Ensure that the indicators for expected results are fully understood by both parties at the onset of each project.
- Avoid using consultants (intermediaries) for areas as important as defining indicators and/or determining how to report to USDOL. Information should be exchanged directly between the two parties.
- Avoid changing the name of indicators for projects that are already underway, as such causes considerable confusion. Experience with Project SOY! has shown that despite the time invested by USDOL in explaining the change, even at the time of the project's final evaluation, it has not been possible to incorporate such into the reports. This is because at the time of the change, a database already existed and the project's beneficiaries had already been identified under its original design.