



International Labour Organization

IPEC

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

IPEC Evaluation

**Supporting the Time Bound Program
for the Elimination of the Worst Forms
of Child labour in El Salvador**

ELS/01/P50/USA

and

**Combating Child Labour through
Education in the Time Bound Program
of El Salvador**

ELS/02/P02/USA

A Mid-term Evaluation

by

**Lic. Violeta Ruiz, Lic. Carlos Saavedra and
Lic. José R. García**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Asociación Comunitaria Educativa (Community Association for Education)
ANEP	Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada (National Association of Private Companies)
CDE	Consejo Directivo Escolar (Counsel of School Directors)
COMURES	Confederación de Municipios (Confederation of Municipalities)
DIGESTYC	Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (General Bureau of Statistics and Census)
EI	Education Initiative
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSAFORP	Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional – Salvadorian Institute of Vocational Training
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ISNA	Instituto Salvadoreño para el desarrollo integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia (Salvadorian Institute for the Development of Children and Adolescents)
MHS	Multipurpose Household Survey
MINED	Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education)
MINTRAB	Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social (Ministry of Labour and Social Security)
NGO	Non governmental organization
PEI	Proyecto Educativo Institucional (Education Institutional Project)
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil (Civic National Police)
SIBASI	Unidades básicas de salud (Basic Health Units)
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
SNF	Secretaría Nacional de la Familia (National Bureau for the Family)
SPIF	Strategic Program Impact Framework
TBP	Time Bound Program
TOR	Terms of reference
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation's aim is to provide criteria so as to determine if the projects are either achieving or are about to achieve their objectives. In the case that there are deviations, the reasons for them will be identified and recommendations proposed, thus allowing the reorienting of their management in order to make them more effective and efficient.

The methodology used was qualitative and incorporated the opinion of all participating actors, including the technicians and supervisory personnel of IPEC and the implementing agencies, members of the National Committee, political decision makers of the present and former administration, as well as parents and children benefited by the projects' work and other actors relevant for their implementation.

After analyzing a wide range of information, the evaluation **has concluded** the following:

Regarding the projects' design

The efforts undertaken clearly provided a clear direction to the implementation process. It has been relevant to promote the Time-Bound Programs (TBP) framework in the country, as well as to prioritize education as the main strategy for the initiative in order to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Among the design problems are the wish to implement a wide range of activities that have not been properly prioritized, as well as having failed to fully take into account the political turmoil and changes that condition the times needed for implementation.

In light of the progress made and of the changes achieved thus far in the operational context of the projects, this may be the opportune moment to prioritize those action strategies that have proven to be most effective to achieve the proposed objectives.

Regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation process

The projects' management structure has proven to be effective despite the existence of multiple political and administrative problems. The IPEC-El Salvador staff comprises a well-coordinated team of individuals with a great deal of experience. Despite the administrative and operational challenges they had to face, they assumed a dynamic attitude so as to start the various activities. It may be stated that the startup phase for two of the projects has just concluded, and their full execution recently begun, especially the implementation of the direct action programs.

The low efficiency of the implementation process in terms of time and resources used up to now has mainly arisen from the administrative contracting processes of the implementing agencies, which include several officials and multiple levels and decision-making entities. **However, considering the new end dates of both projects, the goals in terms of coverage of the target population seem feasible.**

Regarding the actions to generate an enabling environment

The awareness-raising strategies that have been targeted at the society as a whole and some key actors have been successful both in their goal of giving visibility and relevance to the issue, as well as generating an enabling environment to implement actions that favor the eradication of the worst forms of child labor.

The issue of child labor has been positioned at the decision-making levels in all significant contexts, with the exception of trade unions and municipalities, but this has not yet translated into more operational directives for the intermediary ministerial levels.

The generation of a technically adequate knowledge base to allow for the assessment of the magnitude, location, and characteristics of child labor, especially in its worst forms, has also been successful. This information base provides for an adequate follow up of the action programs; implementing agencies are even entitled to include variables in the system. However, the project monitoring systems lack process indicators and means for analyzing qualitative aspects of the work that is being done.

The establishment of a child labor monitoring system is a pending issue that will require from IPEC officials an additional effort, especially if the intention is for national authorities to implement it in the future. The governmental organization in charge of monitoring has not been identified. The major challenge for this would be the financial resources necessary for monitoring. The exact amount is unknown at this point because there have not been discussions on the scope of the system or its organizational implications.

Progress has been made in several aspects related to adjusting the country's legislation to the commitments assumed with the signing of ILO Conventions, in particular the modifications to the Penal Code. The tasks still pending with regards to the legislation are the discussion and approval of the list of hazardous occupations for children, one of the keys for the definition of child labor elimination policies, and of the National Children's Code. It is also essential to work with judges in order to further advance toward effective application of the new regulations.

In the educational field, which is where most of the projects' resources are concentrated, the advances have been substantial. Together with the head officials of MINED, the following actions have been implemented: awareness-raising and creation of the necessary conditions to specifically work with the target communities of the intervention; development of teacher-training materials, both for initial and ongoing training; development of literacy materials and accelerated courses to complete basic education, thus collaborating with specific programs of MINED; design of the remedial study rooms that have incorporated an innovative teaching methodology which is fundamental to prevent children from dropping out of the school system and to keep them from engaging in labor; and the still rather incipient development of vocational training activities. These actions have permeated the educational community in the areas of intervention of the direct action programs and have transformed it into a strategic ally.

The generation of alternative income for families is a complex issue where there has been little progress so far. However, consultations with key actors have been held and some training courses have already been organized.

Regarding the action programs

The actions taken locally by the action programs, although recently implemented, have already achieved considerable mobilization in the community.

On the one hand, the technical teams of the implementing agencies have been strongly involved in the field actions, and have established a strong presence in the locations where they are involved. Both teachers and parents are satisfied with the actions taken in the schools. The reasons for this support are due to their new understanding of the matter, as well as the support received from the technicians, the instructional training received, and the support for the implementation of the Proyecto Educativo Institucional—PEI (Education Institutional Project).

The operation of the remedial study rooms is the core and most innovative strategy of the Education Initiative (EI) in the action programs. The contribution of these remedial rooms from a pedagogical point of view and the use of novel didactic materials and supplies are important.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to establish mechanisms that would make it possible to evaluate the quality of what children have learned and to monitor any potential improvements in their school performance. Moreover, it is important to start systematizing and disseminating experiences identified as “good practices.”

CIPOTES is an excellent instrument to follow up and monitor the children and adolescents that have joined the action programs. However, there is need for a follow-up and monitoring system of processes at the local level that would make it possible to determine the performance of the implementing agencies and which would provide feedback for programming on a permanent basis.

The provision of job opportunities to adolescents is highly valued by the beneficiaries. There has been little progress, however, in the generation of productive alternatives to families as part of the action programs. The implementation of this component is complex due to the lack of basic literacy skills of the potential beneficiaries and the distance between some of the project sites and the markets and consumption centers.

Regarding the sustainability of the actions undertaken by the TBP and the EI

Beyond an unquestionable change in the visibility and awareness of the child-labor problem that would contribute to social sustainability, there is no evidence as yet of tangible outcomes within the institutional and economic spheres of sustainability. It is necessary to develop strategies that would establish the ministries that will work on the matter, the needed human and budgetary resources for them to do so. The formulation and implementation of a National Plan assumed by the country itself, which is the ultimate objective of the TBP, is also pending.

Thus, the evaluation team **recommends that**:

IPEC-El Salvador office carry out a strategic planning exercise in which all of the members of the staff participate, **using planning tools (for example, SPIF) familiar to the facilitators**. They should discuss and rethink about the axis of their future activities. The purpose is to identify the critical issues both in the socio-political scenario in which the projects are taking place and in the bureaucratic-administrative entities in order to take the action to the expected outcomes; this needs to be done in order to prepare a realistic prioritization, after the corresponding assessment, of the activities to be developed.

The internal administrative systems for approval of IPEC/ILO contracts be modified, amended, or made more flexible.

The educational strategies be evaluated, especially several aspects of the operation of the study rooms in order to determine the quality of the knowledge gained there. The methodology of these rooms should be transferred to the MINED **for incorporation into its regular programs. If this is not possible, it would be necessary to identify other institutions which could at least finance the recurring expenses of the rooms that are currently operational**. It is also necessary to start identifying the public or private institutions or organizations that could assume in stages the distribution of instructional supplies and material in the participating schools. Furthermore, the systematization of the experiences being evaluated should be started immediately, as well as the multiplication of efforts to reinforce the adolescents' vocational training.

The production alternatives require reflecting about the true possibilities available to develop specific undertakings for each of the action programs, and, as a result of this assessment, a decision should be made regarding the investment of efforts and resources.

Monitoring requires the creation of a process-monitoring system to complement CIPOTES.

Child-labor issues should be owned by the national institutions in order to ensure sustainability; the working strategies with national authorities should be revised so that the commitments assumed become concrete governmental policies and actions. It is also important to advocate a change in the vision of the members of the National Committee as to their roles, and to make concrete efforts in order to strengthen the governmental institutional capabilities that would allow for continuing with the project' actions; locally, it is fundamental to involve the municipalities. Another relevant issue is the transfer of capacity to access and to manage diversified financial sources.

1. INTRODUCTION -- METHODOLOGY

The policies and actions for the progressive elimination of child labor, especially its worst forms, involve complex tasks that, to be successful, should be developed in multiple contexts and involve diverse social actors.

Keeping this complexity in mind, ILO/IPEC has developed and promoted a technical cooperation modality called TBP (Time-Bound Programs) that essentially comprise a strategic framework to implement policies and initiatives at different levels in order to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in a given country within a certain time span.

El Salvador has been one of the first countries to implement a TBP, which has initially focused on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in five sectors considered a priority. These are: i. commercial sexual exploitation; ii. the fireworks industry; iii. hazardous work in the sugar cane industry; iv. work in garbage dumps; and v. fishing.

Within the TBP framework, ILO/IPEC has been developing two projects in El Salvador funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). These two projects are “Combating the worst forms of child labor in El Salvador by supporting the Time-Bound Program” and “Combating child labor through education in the TBP,” better known as Education Initiative—EI.

These projects promote the creation of a conducive environment in the country to progressively eliminate child labor by raising awareness among the population as a whole and among the social actors defined as strategic (governmental agencies, employers, workers, and NGOs). This also includes the dissemination of information about the magnitude and characteristics of the problem and to advance toward the modification of existing national legislation in order to adapt it to the commitments assumed with the ratification of Conventions 138 and 182.

The projects also include actions to be carried out in areas identified as the most affected by the problem in order to withdraw children and adolescents at risk and to reinsert them in the educational system. Moreover, the projects intend to generate social and human resources to leave “installed capacities” in the local areas; this would be done in order to allow for the creation of social monitoring networks and safety nets to overcome the problem in the shortest time possible. Finally, the projects try to establish the bases for the future sustainability of the achievements by creating cooperation strategic alliances with governmental and non-governmental actors.

Thus, the evaluation of these projects should gather reliable information not just about financial, administrative, and compliance issues related to the expected goals, but also regarding other dimensions that account for the socio-political processes that should be developed in the country as a whole, in particular locally, during the execution of the projects.

Addressing these points, this document provides information about the implementation of the activities, the use of the available resources, the processes arising from the design and execution of the projects, and the outcomes achieved with regards to the plans, taking into consideration that a good deal of the relevant data in this evaluation would be the input for their potential final evaluation. Other elements are included as they may contribute to the strengthening of the actions undertaken as well as to guiding the reassignment of the resources available and the strategies implemented.

Keeping this in mind, the **purpose** of the midterm evaluation is to provide criteria to determine if the projects are either achieving or are about to achieve their objectives by stating the reasons both for their achievements and their deviations. Recommendations are also presented to reorient their management in order to make it more effective and efficient.

The methodological approach

This is an external evaluation that has analyzed the processes and outcomes from an “outsider” perspective from the implementation process itself, which in this case is fundamental to assess the situations at the implementation phase, and to recommend further actions to be undertaken.

The methodological approach used was qualitative, and it has incorporated the opinion of the actors involved, including the technicians and supervisory personnel of IPEC, **representatives from the donor** and the implementing agencies, members of the National Committee, political decision-makers of the present and former administration, parents and children benefited by the projects’ actions, and other relevant actors for the implementation of the actions. It employed different techniques and sources so as to evaluate all real aspects of the situation under study.

The main data gathering techniques used include an analysis of the available documentation regarding the projects and the actions undertaken, an analysis of the related legislation, onsite observations, a satisfaction survey for parents and children, as well as interviews with key informants and workshops.

The fieldwork, carried out between July 19 and 30, included working with all the professionals and supervisors of the IPEC-El Salvador office and three workshops with different governmental and non-governmental actors, especially at the technical and operational levels. 14 interviews were also held with high-level officials from governmental entities and institutions and with non-governmental organizations involved in the issue of child labor. Four of the six action programs in operation were visited; here interviews were held with the technical teams of the implementing agencies, school principals and teachers, as well as parents, children, and adolescents benefited by these programs. For the latter, an informal survey with no statistical value has been undertaken.

Moreover, to comply with the evaluation TOR, the design of the TBP and EI project documents was analyzed.

The observations and comments derived from this information are presented in the following chapters.

2. RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY OF THE PROJECTS' DESIGN¹

2.1 The formulation process:

The design of the TBP support project was done in a **context** characterized by:

- The existence of political commitment from the Salvadoran government with respect to the problem of child labor, although this commitment was not accompanied by a national policy on the matter.
- **The cultural acceptance of child labor among the population.**
- The scant presence of the child labor problem in the public agenda and mass media.
- The absence of a national institutional framework capable of operating as a space for discussion and planning.
- The inexistence of adequate information, and difficulties in access to available sources by IPEC's technicians.
- The inexistence of established IPEC structure in the country; although some projects had been developed, there was no national office or national program carried out by IPEC; the technicians hired to develop the program had limited knowledge of the local actors that could become interested parties or partners in the interventions.
- A situation of national emergency as a result of the earthquake, which had then modified the government's political priorities.

In other words, it was necessary to design a program and to formulate actions to be carried out under a series of conditions that did not as yet exist. It may be stated that the design process contributed to the creation of these conditions.

The **design process** was conducted by a small group of external consultants hired by IPEC, and had the support of the Costa Rica and Geneva offices. Having MINTRAB as the main interlocutor, with the participation of ISNA, and despite the lack of a policy or program related to the issue, the priority sectors for the intervention were defined.

This was characterized by a series of consultation activities with diverse actors or stakeholders (those being in education, labor, NGOs, trade unions, and employers'

¹This chapter is based on the evaluation of the projects' original documents and on the testimonies gathered in the workshop by IPEC's team regarding the projects' formulation process.

organizations) which had been identified by the technicians by using as a tool the six rapid assessments that were in progress. The purpose was to reach a consensus about the approach strategies for the problems detected in these evaluations, as well as to define together the lines of action to be implemented. This consultation process contributed to the definition of geographic areas for intervention, as well as to involve some national actors, but was carried out without a significant national technical contribution.

The process may be described as an ongoing construction emanating from the TBP conceptual framework to the country's situational reality. For IPEC's consultants, it meant learning by doing and by building a scenario that contributed to establish the conditions for carrying out the proposed actions.

The design of the Education Initiative project was held in a **context** characterized by:

- The peculiar circumstances of its formulation in the framework of a public context: its first formulation stage, carried out in a month, was developed once the TBP was approved.
- A better knowledge of the reality and of the national actors by IPEC's technical team; this allowed for the utilization of the accumulated experience in order to identify technicians with know-how and experience.
- An educational reform process in progress, with a multiplicity of programs either being executed or about to be implemented.

The formulation process of the project's document was done in several stages that tried at every stage, as in the case of a prior project, to involve the government representatives, in particular the Ministry of Education (MINED), as well as non-governmental organizations and independent education experts, both in the analysis of the situation and in the formulation of strategies. The application of a strategic planning methodology (SPIF) particularly contributed to the second phase (once the bid had been awarded). Then a workshop with the stakeholders was added to the consultation process, which in turn allowed for the identification of the problems. Also achieved were organizing the identified problems regarding supply and demand issues, and defining the main strategies to approach these two large issues by stating the nature of the interventions to be carried out.

2.2 Quality of the design and relevance of the TBP support project

This project is considered an essential part of a larger national and international effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in El Salvador.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned conditions under which it was designed, it may be stated that:

- a. The diagnostic basis overall can be considered adequate as an initial approximation to the local reality. Taking into account prior information weaknesses, it used the

outcomes of the MHS (Multipurpose Household Survey) special module to estimate the dimension of the problem at a national level, and in particular, its relation to working-children's educational situation. This has collected and used both the process and the results of the rapid assessments in the selected sectors (fishing, sugarcane work, garbage dumps, fireworks production, sexual exploitation) to understand the main causes, features, and consequences of child labor in these sectors, and to identify their needs. A preliminary estimate of the dimension of the problem² at the national level, in general, and in the areas of intervention, in particular, was also produced. This estimate, more accurate in the intervention areas, is the basis for the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project: 100% of the working children in these areas, and about 40% of all working children in these sectors nationwide with some differences by sector (100% in the case of garbage dumps, 40% in the case of sugarcane, and 30% in the case of fishing). Keeping in mind that the selection of the intervention areas arises from explicit criteria, among them the prevalence of child labor³, the number of beneficiaries is significant in comparison with the magnitude of the problem.

On the other hand, the project identified the main factors associated with the problem of child labor (extreme poverty, especially in rural areas, and issues related to access to education, as well as socio-demographic dimensions and cultural aspects). Based on the analysis of the national and sectoral policies, especially with respect to the educational area, it identified the main gaps that will be the foundation for the project's objectives and strategies.

b. The project is intended to become a coherent part of the national policies geared toward childhood, labor, and education. It should be pointed out that there was not, at the time of the formulation, a comprehensive national plan for poverty reduction. IPEC was aware of this, and planned collaboration with the ministries related to the problem of economic and social development. In addition, the project included comprehensive activities to contribute to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, particularly measures that try to improve working children's access to the educational system and enhance their families' capacities and the opportunities for employment generation.

c. The project is coherent with the main axis of the conceptual and operational framework of the TBP⁴, as it includes prevention strategies geared toward raising awareness, legislation, education, and social and labor protection, together with specific measures at the local and community levels. Included as well are interventions aimed at withdrawing, rehabilitating, and protecting working children over the minimum age. It also includes gender perspective in the proposals.

² In an Annex to the project's document, the sources and methodology used for this purpose are explained. In the case of fireworks production, a baseline study done within the framework of the initiative being implemented by IPEC in this sector was used.

³ In the workshops held during the fieldwork, there was total consensus regarding the relevance of the project in view of the needs of the target groups and the suitability of the sectors and geographic areas selected for intervention.

⁴ ILO/IPEC: Guide Book II: Time-Bound Programmes for Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour: An Introduction.

The project is structured around two basic components aimed at promoting the preparation of a national plan (which was nonexistent at the time) to eradicate the worst forms of child labor: top-down through the creation of favorable conditions and bottom-up through direct interventions focused on the priority sectors. At this level, it developed a comprehensive approach, including the needs identified in the target groups with subcomponents such as education, health, income generation, awareness-raising, and capacity building. The specific objectives are adequately formulated, and there is coherence between objectives, outcomes, and activities.

One of the main aspects of the design was the development of a solid information base. Rapid assessments of the selected worst forms of child labor were carried out. The project incorporated a special module in the MHS to gather information about child labor in children 5 years old and up.

The approach to design has been participatory. It included consultations with relevant actors to identify intervention areas, as well as the joint planning of actions to involve a large variety of potential partners: national and local governmental agencies, ministries, trade unions, business organizations, and NGOs in the different program implementation stages. The project promotes interventions geared to the mass media, and adequately identifies the national and international partners. It tries to create synergies through inter-institutional and multi-sectoral coordination agreements, and considers the need to create a strong social basis with the participation of all local actors and beneficiaries.

The project considers the creation of conditions for national ownership of the program by obtaining the political support at the decision-making levels in several governmental and non-governmental agencies, among them trade unions and employers' organizations.

In summary, it may be affirmed that the project is relevant to promote the TBP framework in the country, and that it clearly establishes its scope in terms of contributing to rather than replacing the existence of a national policy in this matter.

d. Some of the project's design weaknesses are the following: It has not prioritized or coordinated the problems identified in order to link the action over time within an incremental strategy. It takes as point of departure the supposition of the synergy among the actions undertaken in both components (national and local), but it seems that it did not take into account the time factor in the execution of the many activities scheduled. It includes a set of 74 activities, of which 56 should have been started before the end of 2002. This meant a major preparation and organization effort, especially for those activities related to objective 2 (direct action programs). It is worth wondering whether, in this sense, it took into account the time required to create the core team, even when IPEC was already developing some activities in the country, as well as the detection and evaluation of the institutional capacity of related organizations and of the potential implementing agencies. The outcome is an ambitious project in agreement with the TBP conceptual framework that addresses all its identified gaps and all intervention levels (national and local) simultaneously.

Some aspects seem less than fully identified. The gaps are formulated in a very general way, from which somewhat mechanical solution proposals are derived. There seems to be no in-depth analysis of the legislation. The activity of reviewing the legislation is proposed in very general terms in the project, and it does not specify any priorities.

Although the project expected a large number of direct recipients for the national capacity-building initiatives, the medium levels of the governmental agencies have not been fully taken into consideration.

It furthermore expected the development of an information system for monitoring and evaluation responding to the logical framework requirements (with indicators and verification means adequately proposed). One weakness that has been identified in this sense is an orientation mainly based on outcome indicators, as well as the absence of monitoring indicators and instruments for the processes that would permit assessment of the extent to which the project is progressing in the right direction. **It is worth mentioning that the ILO methodology does not require the development of such indicators at the design stage.**

Some political and institutional conditionings and weaknesses have not been well incorporated in the assumptions and external factors, in particular those related to the upcoming change of government and weaknesses of the national technical capacities.

2.3 Quality of the design and relevance of the Education Initiative (EI) project

This project complements the former one, and may be considered as the development and specification of its educational component.

It focuses on the same intervention sectors and areas as well as on the same direct beneficiaries, and it specifies those recipients in the educational area whose capacities need to be strengthened. Thus, it creates the conditions to coordinate at the local level the actions of both projects.

Its immediate objectives are coherent with those of the TBP support project, and as with the former, the objectives are set at two levels: the first related to the creation of national capacities to combat the worst forms of child labor, in this case, in relation to educational issues. The other level is the direct action with the target population at the local level.

In general, it may be stated that its design has similar characteristics from the perspective of its conceptual and operational framework, taking into account the following specific aspects:

- a. From the point of view of its justification, this project is based on the integration of working children within the educational system as an effective strategy to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, thus addressing one of the main causes of the problem in El Salvador.

b. Its approach includes adequate ranking of problems and solutions. It arises from an overall strategy that 1) differentiates between supply problems (inherent to the educational system) and demand problems (the population's access problems); 2) it orders and sequences the proposed solutions; 3) it specifies these solutions by virtue of an analysis of the existing policies and programs at the national level, as well as institutional weaknesses of the educational sector; 4) it identifies the scope and focus of the project's contributions to the proposed solutions. On the other hand, it points out the operational strategies needed to coordinate each of the national programs included in the local level; it also specifies them by intervention sector, and identifies their possible synergy with other actions under way or expected in the TBP support project.

c. The SPIF workshop with key actors has contributed to the creation of this strategic framework out of the consensus reached by those involved regarding the relevance of education as an instrument to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, and it has raised awareness about the fact that the EI is part of the necessary national effort. However, no evidence of its utilization in other phases of the project's cycle has been detected so as to then be able to assess its effectiveness as a comprehensive feedback instrument throughout the implementation process.

d. The project document incorporates the strategic framework described, and establishes several levels of outcomes (for intervention contexts, both national and local) with internal cause-effect logic⁵. It formulates more precisely the scope of the immediate objectives by means of immediate sub-objectives specified in the outputs themselves.⁶ These sub-objectives constitute nothing more than conditions for the achievement of the intermediate objectives. On the other hand, it states the interrelations and synergies between levels, between the outputs, and between the national and local intervention levels.

It specifies the project's management structure that complements the IPEC's team outlined in the TBP support project. In fact, as will be seen below, this team operates as a single unit coordinated at the effort management level of the two large projects.

e. As weaknesses of the design, the following may be mentioned: Despite more precision in the formulation of objectives and outcomes, the project also seems ambitious due to the number of outputs and activities expected. Sixty-five activities were tallied; many of them had to be started by mid 2003 and had to continue throughout the implementation period. It is evident that, although there is some synergy among them, they imply a fine start and coordination effort by the actors.

It has a suggested timetable which is supposed to be based on the information developed from the TBP support project actions, and the specific resource EI evaluation studies themselves, in order to carry out the interventions of the implementing agencies. This

⁵ Cause in the sense of condition. That is, the outcome to be achieved at the lowest level is a condition to produce outcomes in the next level.

⁶ As formulated, the outcomes are lower-level objectives.

sequence is coherent with the logic of a technically viable project, but in practice, it has proven that the time required to produce the baseline information was underestimated. Although, as will be seen later, it resulted from problems in the execution phase, there was also an overestimate of the local technical capacities to undertake these activities that IPEC itself has acknowledged.

It identifies and determines the project's external conditions or suppositions that, at each level, should be verified in order to achieve the outcomes in the following level. In this sense, it should be pointed out that, in view of the current scenario, it is necessary to review these conditions as they did not take into account the political turmoil common in countries such as El Salvador. As in the case of the TBP support project, it is based on a general presupposition of the continuity of State policies beyond the administration in power⁷, as well as based on the stability of officials at the technical and political level, a stability that is not generally common. The current situation reflects this.

As in the case of the TBP support project, the indicators are geared toward the outputs and outcomes in each of the levels identified. The monitoring plan, which includes both projects, mostly has indicators related to the outcomes of the EI, and incorporates quantitative goals scaled in time, which allows for a better follow up of the achievements made throughout the implementation. Most of these indicators have been used in creating the projects' monitoring system, CIPOTES.

However, it does not include the creation of a management monitoring system (with its indicators and techniques) focusing on the process; that is, focusing on how the activities at the national and local levels are performed, being a system that would allow for assessment of the progress of the activities, and to determine if they are the most appropriate in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

This chapter discusses the progress made in the various areas based on the execution of the projects' actions. A preliminary issue to take into account is that a single chapter includes the considerations regarding both implementation and outcomes, since the implementation of both projects is, as detailed below, in its initial stages and, therefore, there are few outcomes to verify.

Another issue is that, although the evaluation includes two projects, this division only exists from an administrative point of view. In reality, both projects are executed as a whole and as such are visualized by the actors interviewed. In fact, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Education Initiative is in reality a specification of the educational component of the TBP, according to the identification of the educational issue as the axis

⁷ Without considering ministerial changes within the same administration

to be used to work on the matter throughout the country. Therefore, it is analyzed as a whole, specifying the progress made by the Education Initiative.

Keeping in mind these issues, the analysis is divided into three parts: a. Effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation process; b. the actions to generate the enabling environment; and c. the action programs.

3.1 Effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation process

It is actually very difficult to look for accurate indicators regarding the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the actions that have been undertaken up to this moment for the implementation of the projects. This is because, despite the fact that the projects' designs were approved almost two years ago, during this time the efforts of the technicians have been mainly focused on starting the projects.

In every project implementation process, three stages with specifics about the type of strategies that need to be used to both comply with the expected actions and achieve its objectives can be identified. These stages are its startup, its implementation, and the exit strategies.

Startup refers to creating the structures without which each project cannot be carried ahead with the substantive purposes for which it was designed. These structures cover a wide range: from the contracting of personnel and/or organizations that will carry out the actions to making the necessary offices and/or equipment suitable, but they also include such things as availability of resources and the time and method to make them effective.

The implementation period includes all fundamental actions geared toward the project's beneficiaries, and it is the stage that occupies most of the work plans. The final stage, the exit, includes the closing of the actions performed, while attempting to ascertain both the lessons learned and effective practices, and to systematize, evaluate, and transfer, in the best of cases, the activities that were being done to the corresponding institutional and local actors.

As it will be stated below, although almost two years have elapsed since the projects' approval, the startup process has been a long and difficult road for the IPEC-El Salvador office, which, according to the information thus far gathered, has just been drawing to a close.

a. IPEC-El Salvador office

The IPEC-El Salvador office was created at practically the same time that the TBP-support project and the EI were approved. In fact, the formulation process for these projects allowed those who were in charge of this task to contact some of the specialists who were later invited to be part of the current office. This introduction has the sole purpose of showing that as it is a relatively new office, it has had to juggle the challenges

of starting its own operations and those of two very ambitious projects that had multiple facets which address a topic that was almost completely new in the country.

The decision to organize the office was made in 2001. At that time, IPEC-El Salvador was represented by the current National Coordinator. Within a few months, during the second semester of 2002, the current Technical Consultant took charge and most of the current staff was hired. This is a technical team of excellent humanist and professional characteristics, persons who are highly committed to the task they have been performing, and who know the issues they are involved in very well.

The division of tasks within the office was done according to the specializations and competencies of the staff, so there are professionals devoted to each issue that needs to be addressed during the execution both of the TBP and the EI. This division of tasks has been successful for carrying out the activities necessary to start the action programs, as well as to deploy the expected awareness-raising actions and produce information.

IPEC's National Coordinator, the Chief Technical Advisor, and the EI Director have been successful in creating an environment of social acceptance for both projects at the national level, where policies are set, as well as at the local level, where the action programs are implemented. This was evident during the visits paid to a number of locations. **The work done by the person in charge of communication and relations with the press has also been essential for ensuring that child labor becomes part of the mass media interests.**

The Director of the Education Initiative and the Education Specialist have had an important and critical role not just in communicating the purpose and the goals of the project at the national level, but they have also worked hard in the preparation of immediate and tangible products for the beneficiaries.

The inputs from the Expert in Statistics have been essential to carry out the baseline studies used for developing the strategies that are being implemented. It is also impressive, considering the short time span, the work done by this Expert together with a Systems Analyst, for the development of CIPOTES, a software used for monitoring the action programs based on baseline information.

The specialist in income generation has completed an exhaustive scoping study on the possibility of generating additional income for families and has collaborated in different aspects related to the design and management of both projects.

The specialist in commercial sexual exploitation of children has also achieved progress in the revision of legislation and promotion of inter-institutional coordination, which will certainly be highly valuable for the execution of the action programs.

b. Issues that made startup difficult

The action programs have been in operation for a period ranging from four to six months, and more than half of the resources for both projects to be implemented in the next 16 months are still available. This situation leads to question the reasons for the delayed implementation of both projects, and whether this delay was the result of bad planning, inefficient coordination, or other factors.

Regarding the planning and execution of both the TBP and the EI, we found that before receiving the funds for both of these programs, IPEC had invested a great amount of resources, including their technicians' work, to create and develop a solid basis on which to start the TBP and the EI project that would follow it. This basis included the identification and implementation of programs, educational topics, and contacts with governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector which were slated to become involved in these two projects.

The decision to manage both projects in a coordinated manner and not to generate parallel management structures to carry out the activities was very important. This entailed the need to make adjustments and establish coordination mechanisms, which took time, thus affecting the startup of the TBP support project. However, this has led to a more efficient and effective management. On the other side, this has helped stakeholders in El Salvador to visualize all the activities undertaken as a single effort.

An important step for the preparation of both Projects was the creation of a National Committee, as a result of the ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding between ILO/IPEC and the Salvadoran government of June 1996. Although it is not very clear which agencies became part of the committee when it first started operations, or who the representatives were, today the National Committee is comprised of nine agencies, among them the ministries of Labor, Education, Health, Agriculture, and Government, as well as by non-governmental and business organizations, and members of a workers' union. The Committee operates under the direction of the Ministry of Labor.

Thus, although the basic role of the National Committee is to prepare strategies and policies that would make possible the integration of the issue of child labor and its worst forms in a National Action Plan to eradicate this problem, the evidence gathered shows that, at the start, the Committee was not clear about this mandate, and had assumed the quasi-administrative role of following up IPEC's plans and projects for the country. Since the beginning, the National Committee seems to have been strongly entrenched in the review and approval process of projects for which IPEC is responsible. This process has included reviewing the quality of the work and experience of the agencies that participated in the bids for the projects and contracts, and the technical quality of the proposals received. This sort of involvement of the Committee in technical matters seems to have been a great obstacle for IPEC to ensure a speedy and efficient review and approval of projects and services. An additional obstacle was the fact that the Committee did not meet on a regular basis mainly due to the many obligations of its members, most of whom are Ministers.

The evaluators understand that the persons who work for IPEC are the first filter in the process to review the bids, their TOR, and proposals, projects, or contracts that pertain. They also understand that these documents are then sent to the Technical Committee, comprised of technical representatives of all the agencies that are part of the National Committee, including IPEC. As its name indicates, this Committee should act as the technical arm of the National Committee. However, in practice its role has been reduced significantly since some of the top members of the National Committee are also part of the technical revision process.

“...I think that at least in those (sessions) in which I participated, the Committee was more executive than strategic; it paid more attention to the details of what it was going to approve, as well as from whom it should get approval, and how it would justify what it was doing. I think that we could be discussing the use of, let’s say, a laughable amount such as 5 dollars... I can’t take three whole hours to get support for 5 dollars, or even 5,000; it’s all the same. Maybe it should have reviewed procedures or discussed, as we did at the trade union meetings or as the government does, a strategic plan of what its role as National Committee was, what it should do as the National Committee; if it should approve up to the last cent or not, whether it should be paying attention to more policies, programs, project, how it should involve the private sector more, and how it should involve the trade unions more, which is another important point..... (Interview)⁸

This was not the only cause of the operational and administrative problems that the IPEC-El Salvador staff has had to overcome.

Even though the EI project document was approved in February 2003, for a relatively extended period, IPEC-El Salvador officials were not informed that the donor had already approved the use of the funds. Not knowing that the funds were available, IPEC’s officials faced the decision of having to stop all the strategies proposed for the Education Initiative, particularly those required for the implementation of the action programs. It was then decided to use the advances achieved in the TBP and any available resources from it to initiate some EI strategies. This decision included the use of the data gathered from the SIMPOC project; the use of the rapid assessments in fishing, sugarcane, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and child labor in scavenging; the development of contacts and collaboration with people in communities where action programs could be implemented. Thus, not knowing that the funds were already available contributed to the late implementation of the Education Initiative, **delaying also the presentation of activities to MINED and other possible partners.**

On the other hand, there are administrative rules and requirements at IPEC/ILO that have hindered, even possibly to the same extent that the aforementioned factors did, the fully effective implementation of both projects. For instance, the evaluators learned that

⁸ The quotations included in the text are extracts of interviews held with key informants, or declarations from people during the field visits and the workshops organized for the evaluation.

projects and contracts over U\$20,000 require the approval not just of the National Committee but also of IPEC/ILO offices in San José and Geneva, and also from the **ILO Procurement Office in Geneva**. These steps, additionally complicated by the distance between these offices, add more time to the long and complex process that starts with the National Committee.

The development of TOR for the bids and contracts, the revision and approval of the corresponding proposals and, finally, the disbursement of funds, is a process that takes several months. And all these bids and contracts were necessary in order to start the projects. The evaluators analyzed documentation which shows that projects or contracts, both for small amount and large amounts, have taken almost the same time to be approved, and that on average the amount of time that it has taken for the local IPEC/ILO office to receive the necessary approvals to disburse the funds and start the actions both for projects and contracts is roughly three months, or even longer in some cases. At the time of the visit, there were approvals pending for action programs that were supposed to have started in February and March 2004.

It is worth mentioning here that, in the evaluators' opinion and as already noted, IPEC-El Salvador's personnel is a well-coordinated team of individuals with a great deal of experience who both complement one other and who are capable of becoming involved in areas that are not those specified for them. It is evident that they work together to try to help achieve the projects' objectives whenever needed.

Despite the difficulties listed so far, the startup phase seems to be reaching its end. And this is so because most of the studies and action programs have already been approved and are either already under way or about to start. It is important, however, to analyze the significant sums that are still available in both projects. The concern expressed initially about the viability of using them before the expected end of both projects seems to have a twofold solution. On the one hand, IPEC-El Salvador office has requested permission to extend the execution periods, and this request has been approved **up to 30 September 2006 for the TBP-support project and 31 March 2007 for the EI**. which would allow for sufficient time to implement the remaining activities. On the other hand, the expense plans proposed by the local office based on the various programs, contracts, and actions yet to be completed indicate appropriate planning for the overall use of the funds. **Both these aspects suggest that the targets in terms of beneficiaries to be reached will be achieved.**

3.2 Actions to generate an enabling environment

Analysis of the progress that has been made to generate an enabling environment, one of the fundamental strategies for the TBP, is presented below. The information gathered was organized with respect to three aspects:

- Awareness of relevant actors and society as a whole
- Advances in legislation
- Productive alternatives

a. Awareness of relevant actors and society as a whole

One of the high-priority aspects for the development of the projects in El Salvador was to raise the awareness of society at large regarding child labor as a problem. In fact, until IPEC started working in the country, nobody seemed to be concerned about this issue, as it was considered natural and even beneficial, especially in rural areas, for children's growth and development. Stories heard during the interviews and visits to the locations illustrate this phenomenon:

"... here it was basically normal, a result of the war and other social phenomena, to see a large number of children in the streets working; that is, children carrying out the tasks of adults..." (interview)

".. the thing is I don't work; my husband and my children go to the sugar-cane fields at harvest time and work; well, not now . . . but I worked when I was a kid. . . I didn't know that it was bad for them to work..." (story of a mother at a school centre)

This invisibility of the topic was a great challenge for IPEC's technicians as, unlike other problems, child labor was not considered as an issue nor was it part of the agenda of the social actors.

The initial efforts were geared toward two areas. On the one hand, the project tried to raise awareness among opinion-shaping leaders for the issue to start becoming visible in the mass media and for it to be placed on the agenda of decision-makers. Thus, several activities were carried out (working breakfast, events, photo gallery, etc.) for journalists from different media to start paying attention to this dimension of children's problems. On the other hand, a similar strategy was developed with the decision-making levels of the ministries of Labor and Education in particular and with the rest of the government, as a whole.

The actions deployed resulted in the positioning of the topic among the different actors and in large sectors worrying about the magnitude of the problem in the country and the implications of the worst forms of child labor. Right now, journalists seek information about the actions being carried out, the sectors in which the projects are being carried out, and they do not hesitate to cover the events to which they are invited.

IPEC's Press and Dissemination Specialist shared with the evaluators a wealth of publications in the written press regarding the worst forms of child labor. The articles appear on a very frequent basis in the national circulation newspapers and others with regional circulation. Television has also been a platform for spreading the message among the population.

Additionally, the high level of information and awareness has been verified at the decision-making levels in different contexts—government, businesses, colleges, and organizations of the civil society—with which the evaluation team had the chance to talk during the interviews and workshops.

In particular, it was very interesting to verify the involvement of the business sector and the implications they perceive of their participation with regard to the issue of child labor.

*... at the end of 2002 we met with IPEC and we asked them to start considering us participants in all their projects; we were weighing the possibility of fully joining the National Committee, but we wanted to learn about the programs, the impact they had had, the investment made, the NGOs that were in charge of each of the programs, and we also wanted our Executive Committee, our Directorate to learn about this..., because there was a misinterpretation; there's the belief that the purpose is to single out the businessman and blame him and sanction him. My intention then as director was for businessmen to see not a sanction, but an interesting, important measure that was in agreement with the new social responsibility program...
... There is already a strong connection between IPEC and ANEP, since the president of ANEP clearly understands that the private sector needs to become involved in this matter. (Interview)*

The recent electoral process was taken by IPEC's technical team as an opportunity to position the issue among the candidates, all of whom assumed it as part of their campaign. Thus, the evaluators corroborated, based on some of the interviews held at different entities of the new administration, that the issue of child labor is a priority in the government's National Plan and in the plans for the next five years of the following entities: National Bureau for the Family (SNF), MINTRAB y MINED.

... Yes, it is part of our priorities. We are sending a report to the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency about the programs and projects dealt with by the First Lady, that is, the Secretariat; that is, the projects that she wants to handle in the area of childhood issues. And among them is the program for the eradication of the worst forms of child labor... moreover, this is how she presented it when she visited the White House (interview)

... Let me reiterate, the issue of child labor is not a topic only of a project; it is a national topic incorporated from an educational point of view in the Ministry, and it was not added because the project requested it; it was incorporated because it is suitable for the system... (interview)

However, it should be mentioned that a significant lack of awareness-raising work and involvement of the workers' trade unions was detected both here, and on the part of the local governments. Both actors are very important at the time of guaranteeing the continuity of the actions developed by the projects.

As part of the strategy to position the issue in society, and aiming mostly at making the problem visible, some work was done to produce and disseminate adequate information. Below is a list of the progress made in this sense:

1) Production of information

Special care was taken to generate information about the magnitude and complexity of child labor. Thus, as of 2001, several studies have been carried out.

First, DYGESTYC was in charge of carrying out the Child Labor survey in El Salvador. This study was done by including a specific module on child labor in the MHS during the **fourth quarter** of 2001. Its results produced accurate information about the magnitude of the problem and the main characteristics of working children, as well as regarding living conditions and socio-economic variables.

On the other hand, and due to the need to have information that would allow for more clearly understanding the characteristics of the population involved in the worst forms of child labor, as well as to outline the main strategies to be used, a series of Rapid assessments were done in each of the priority sectors.

These studies not only completed their objectives earlier than expected, but they became important inputs for defining the terms of reference in the formulation of the action programs.

It was also expected in the original design of the TBP that baseline studies were going to be carried out **in the sectors of fishing, sugar cane, garbage dumps and commercial sexual exploitation of children**. These studies would allow for preparing terms of reference in order to prepare contracts with the implementing agencies in each of the pre-determined areas on a more solid basis. It was also expected that these studies would be used as reference about the situation in each sector. At the time of carrying out this evaluation, the baseline studies had almost been completed, and their results were being used for the organizations to identify the population that they should attend to. The difficulties in having this input on time and in the expected form were related to the same problematic administrative issues mentioned earlier. There was also an inadequate evaluation of the necessary time and capacities to carry out these studies.

Moreover, in the **last quarter** of 2003, it was possible to include the child labor module in the MHS for the second time. The information gathered is being analyzed, and it is expected that the results will be finalized by the end of the year. This would make it possible to have data that could be compared with the first measurement and, to some extent, to establish tendencies that would allow for reorienting the strategies.

Finally, during this year in the School Survey carried out by MINED, it was possible to include a question aimed at fining out the number of school children and adolescents who work. The information is filled out by the teachers, and will be revealed before the end of the school year in October. The director of the area responsible for statistical information

at MINED told the evaluators that the ministry expects that this will not be the only information produced by this entity.

The information gathered so far, and the commitment assumed by DIGESTYC and the General Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring of MINED, are two important elements to establish the bases for a child-labor monitoring system. However, at the time of the evaluation, advances had not yet been made as to defining the governmental area that would be able to take charge of this task, or the characteristics (**variables and indicators to be included**) that the system should have.

2) Dissemination strategy

As part of the dissemination strategy, the results of the aforementioned studies were published and distributed. Among others, the evaluators were able to review:

- Understanding child labor in El Salvador and the Synthesis of the results of the child labor survey in El Salvador —the results of the application of the child labor module included in the MHS present during the second half of 2001
- Rapid assessments of each of the priority sectors available on the Web

Also, and more clearly as a dissemination strategy, the experiences, events, and contests held were disseminated as well. These included:

- *Cuentos sobre una de las formas de trabajo infantil* (Stories about one form of child labor) developed by IPEC as a result of the drawing and story-telling contest related to child labor held in October 2003; this gathered together a series of stories written by children themselves as a result of the awareness-raising activities about the negative effects of child labor.
- **Two national drawing contests “*Los adultos a trabajar y la niñez a estudiar*” (adults should work and children should play), with excellent reception, especially among educators.**
- The book “*Con la pólvora entre las manos*” (With gunpowder in my hands) developed by **the fireworks project of IPEC** in collaboration with MINTRAB **was completed in June 2004, it was published and will be disseminated in the near future.** The work, which is simple and easy to read, informs parents, children, and the general public about the dangers that children working in the fireworks industry face. It is expected that this book will be used as part of the information strategy in the second school term.

All the publications were of limited dissemination, mainly addressed to the members of the National Committee, officials of the governmental areas with which they work, and the implementing agencies that are implementing the action programs.

On the other hand, at this time the first wide dissemination campaign is being organized. It includes television and radio spots, posters to be placed on locations in the streets, and reports in the written press.

b. Advances in legislation

Although El Salvador had ratified and put into effect the commitments assumed with the signing of ILO Conventions N° 138 (in 1994) regarding the minimum age for minors to enter the labor market and N° 182 (in 2001) about the worst forms of child labor, at the beginning of the projects there were great discrepancies about what had been agreed upon when the conventions were signed, as well as about the existing national legislation. In the publication “Understanding child labor in El Salvador,”⁹ the status of the legal framework at that time is described. This gap meant, among other things, the impossibility of effectively applying the needed measures to protect working children’s rights.

Since the onset of the projects’ implementation, attempts were made to correct these discrepancies by working simultaneously on these aspects with the National Committee, the Legislative Assembly, and the National Attorney General’s Office. Thus, several awareness-raising and information events were held and actions carried out with these entities, and collaboration was made available to analyze the legislation and modifications that should be applied and reflected in the Penal Code and in the Penal Procedures Code, especially the measures to be applied when prosecuting cases of commercial sexual exploitation.

At the time of the evaluation, advances were corroborated in these aspects. In November 2003, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a package of laws that included several modifications to the Penal Code, making some crimes and their sanctions more serious. However, there are still some gaps in the legislation on which the members of the Family, Women, and Childhood Commission of the Legislative Assembly are still working. In the interview held with two of the legislators they showed full awareness of the implications that advancing in this sense has for the country, and said that it is a priority for the Commission to fill these gaps and to discuss and approve the National Childhood Code that El Salvador does not yet have.

The situation is such that we had a seminar last year in which we promised a series of reforms of the laws in these areas, and a short while ago there was another seminar where we identified gaps regarding what we had approved in November. And the presentation was so impressive that there is already the intention to process these other reforms. (interview)

“Furthermore, we are trying to create a Childhood Code; it is already drafted and under study. We only need to come to an agreement about this project. We are putting together all the laws under the same instruments for the Salvadoran children...” (interview)

⁹ See Chapter 8, pages 60 to 65.

The reforms, in addition to increasing the sanctions, included the definition of some crimes that had not been criminally sanctioned before.

Moreover, the governmental agencies involved have made progress in their joint effort by creating an interinstitutional commission to review and discuss, for instance, the results of the application of the reforms of the laws and the problems derived from their application; they also propose potential lines of action. A Technical Board has been created, which is permanently reviewing information about the application of the existing legislation, and it provides the various participants with input for their specific tasks. This commission is composed of representatives from the Family, Women, and Childhood Commission of the Legislative Assembly, the General Prosecutor's Office, ISNA, the Civic National Police (PNC) and the governmental offices that are promoting programs or actions related to this issue, among others.

The work with the Attorney General's Office and the PNC had several phases. First, to find out what the difficulties imposed by the law itself were in order to be able to make the arrests and legal processing effective, and then training sessions carried out with the prosecutors and police officers to improve their capacities. The training activities, which are still going on, do not only include learning about the reforms made, but also deal with about related to the reforms, for example, how to handle cross-examinations, especially those of the victims of rape and sexual exploitation.

The head of the San Salvador Attorney General's Office Unit of Crimes Against Children and Women believes that thanks to the advances made in the legislation, today they have more tools, and better ones, to work on the eradication of commercial sexual in particular, but also to act for the prevention of the worst forms of child labor, such as those derived from the inclusion of children in the fireworks industry.

“What we have achieved was to increase the sanctions; that is, we increased the punishment. There are crimes for which there was the problem that because they were only considered offenses, there were alternate ways out, such as a conciliation between the victim and the defendant; we explained that, for instance, we knew that there were children who were being used for public shows and pornography exhibitions, but the sanction was from six months to two years, and this was not a serious crime. When we took the case to the judge, the victim would conciliate with the defendant and that was the end of the process. So, in crimes like this, the sanctions are higher now... The induction, promotion, and favoring of prostitution for which the sanction used to be from six months to 2 years was increased to three to five years. Sexual harassment, which was between one and three years of imprisonment, was increased to three to five years. Then, by increasing the sanction, they are no longer offenses; they are serious crimes in view of the fact that the sanctions are higher than three years. There are no options out any more, such as short legal processes or conciliations. (Interview)

Also related to the legal issues, the progress made at the PNC is important. They are trying to collaborate on the eradication of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking. In this sense, it was interesting for the evaluators to learn that PNC was actually the entity that sought IPEC's support in their efforts to improve the tools to fight against child labor.

c. Productive alternatives

The purpose of eliminating the worst forms of child labor, both in the TBP and the EI, is basically deployed through awareness-raising campaigns and the promotion of the importance of education. However, trying to increase the economic capacity of these families so that they can generate income to replace their children's work is a core issue for removing children from hazardous labor activities and preventing their participation on a long-lasting basis.

Generating alternative production forms for these families to be able to earn a higher income is a great challenge which is both difficult and complicated. To achieve this goal, the projects expect to use three components: creating micro-enterprises, gaining access to the local markets and micro-credits, and supporting the development of the local economy. To do so, they are planning to study the problem and eventually implement technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial training programs, as well as other kinds of training.

To develop this aspect, in 2003 IPEC summoned a group of specialists to exchange ideas about the possible implementation of alternative production programs. A workshop was held with representatives from the Ministry of Labor, Banco de Fomento Agropecuario, Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo, Fondo Solidario para la Familia Microempresaria Salvadoreña, and FOSOFAMILIA, among others. This workshop proved useful for establishing contacts and outlining collaboration ideas with institutions such as INSAFORP, the Ministry of Agriculture, and CENDEPESCA, and its conclusions and recommendations have been incorporated in the design of income generation alternatives that are currently being suggested by IPEC.

d. Opportunities and threats concerning the development of an enabling environment

The following chart summarizes and illustrates the status of the situation at the time of the evaluation regarding the generation of an enabling environment for the implementation of policies to eradicate the worst forms of child labor.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Electoral process that made it possible to get commitments during the campaign from all candidates	Belief that the commitments assumed will translate spontaneously into concrete actions
Possibility of reaching fresh agreements with the newly instated administration	The Minister of Labor expects the National Committee to have the same role it has had so far
Since there is a new government, there is a possibility of having this issue come to be considered as one of the achievements of the administration in the future	The project will end before the governmental term. There is a need to guarantee, in a relatively short period, the sustainability of the actions undertaken
The awareness achieved at decision-making levels and the mass media, which allows for progress toward other areas	There is a lack of information, awareness, and commitment from both the local governments and the technical levels of the ministries, and this hinders long-lasting achievements
Advances in the legislation that make it possible to improve the work in CSEC	Little work has been done with the judges, which can hinder them from issuing sentences according to the new legislation
Involvement of the business sector, especially ANEP	Lack of awareness and participation of the trade unions.

3.3 Strategies of the Education Initiative

The Education Initiative project has two main strategies: one of them consists of supporting the goals and objectives of the TBP, and the other is to offer services to children and their parents and teachers, as well as to the technical staff of governmental and non-governmental agencies. It was clear for the evaluators that, despite the autonomy of the EI, this project does not work in isolation, but rather in coordination with the TBP, and in many ways it has benefited from the b. Thus, it has benefited from the actions taken through the program channels.

The proposal approved by USDOL states in detail that the EI will specifically contribute in the following areas:

- Developing elements of a flexible school curriculum that adapts to the characteristics of working children, especially those involved in the worst forms of child labor
- Providing training and technical assistance to the pertinent actors, in particular teachers and school principals
- Supporting the improvement of the school system administration

- Raising awareness among the families and communities in the intervention areas about the importance and relevance of education
- Supporting the economic capacity of families and reduce the education costs of their children

The comments below reflect to the most significant progress achieved so far.

An area that concentrated considerable effort and financial resources is awareness raising. The interviews held by the evaluators showed that good progress has been made in informing decision makers in the educational area, the community of teachers, and the general public about the importance of education for the eradication of the worst forms of child labor.

To support the awareness raising activities, IPEC prepared materials specially designed to help teachers understand how child labor affects the schools attended by working children. They were provided with suggestions as to how to deal with this problem both at school and in the community. A teacher told one of the evaluators: *"I had never paid attention to the issue of child labor, and I had not thought about how it affected children's performance in school."* Other interviewees showed good understanding of the need to both work closely with these children and to assume a more active role in order to promote their enrollment and prevent their dropping out.

Another strategy has been to train teachers. The evaluators had the chance to examine the module developed in order to introduce the topic of child labor in the initial training of Salvadoran teachers. These modules have been finished, and at the time of the evaluation they were being validated by two of the universities that train teachers in the country. The modules focus on how from the teaching activity it is possible to successfully incorporate working children into the classroom. Given that these modules must be formally presented to the Ministry of Education so as to receive its official authorization in order for them to be used nationwide, it is important that the official responsible for the EI at IPEC-EI Salvador renew the dialogue with MINED and establish a close relationship with the new minister.

In addition, modules and materials are being developed for the continuous education of teachers. These materials focus on the issue of child labor, with the goal of aiding the teachers' work in the classroom. They are also in the process of reproducing the instructional material called SCREAM, prepared by ILO-IPEC. This material offers a large number of ideas for working in different areas, and it will be distributed in the 140 schools where the various EI strategies are being implemented.

Moreover, IPEC has collaborated with training materials to improve the use of the methodology of the Institution Educational Project (PEI), which was designed to adapt the curriculum of each school to the specific needs of each community. **During this year, the issue has been mainstreamed in the PEI of 30 schools. Besides, a service contract was signed with the NGO FEPADE, which should indicate the best possible way of including child labor in the PEI of each school.** This includes the revision of the concepts and

topics included in the PEI, as well as their use. These training sessions relate to MINED's strategies to improve the administration of the school systems.

Although it was not possible to review this material, the evaluators were informed that **workbooks to include child labor in the national curriculum of the Second Cycle of Basic Education are being developed.** These will be used as a tool for the teachers to create a more dynamic learning environment. It will also incorporate child labor topics in every chapter, the purpose of this being the promotion of a better knowledge and understanding of this problem among teachers and students. **IPEC expects that these workbooks will be available before the end of 2004; however, the authorization of MINED is necessary if they are to be used during the school year 2005.**

Furthermore, considerable effort has been devoted to the production of other instructional materials. The evaluators examined some modules that have already been already developed, such as the literacy modules "Cañal en Flor" (Blooming Sugarcane Plantation), developed in 2002 and 2004 to support adult literacy efforts and basic education in reading and math. These modules are now being used, and in many cases with the parents of the children benefited by the action programs. This is an effort supported by Asociación Azucarera, and it has been very well accepted and so far quite successful.

The output "Propuesta Curricular Sobre Salas de Nivelación" (Remedial classroom curriculum proposal) developed in July 2004, provided a quick and global overview of the physical conditions of the Remedial Classrooms, and it is also a guide of educational strategies used in these classrooms and how to apply them so they can complement what teachers do in their regular lessons. This product arrived at a good time, as the remedial classrooms have been opened in all the places where the action programs are operating, and are the main vehicle to complement the educational offer that the implementing agencies are implementing.

An important topic also addressed based on the EI is the achievement of understanding by parents and the community about the importance of education. Based on individual interviews and the workshops held by the evaluators, it is evident that the EI has managed to raise awareness in the public, and most especially among parents, children, and teachers in the geographic areas where the action programs are implemented.

Teachers' collaboration was a crucial factor for the success in the significant increase in the number of children enrolled in schools and their removal from dangerous jobs. Unfortunately, this increase in registration was not accompanied by an increase in the number of teachers in the classrooms. In fact, for the first time in several years, the national budget for education was cut, and this not only affected the appointment of new teachers, but also was detrimental to the activities carried out by the Ministry in other areas. However, the former Minister of Education declared in the interview held with him that he had requested additional funds to respond to the demand for teachers, but he was not successful in the attempt to obtain them. This is an issue that is still pending, and is

one that unless solved, will work against the quality of the learning and effective schooling of the children removed from child labor.

In addition to cultural factors that impact the scanty education in El Salvador (the average number of school years does not reach 4 in rural areas), there are several factors identified as school access barriers for the poor sectors of the population. Among others, one factor is the “voluntary” contribution that has to be paid at the beginning of each school year and which schools have used for supplies and materials not provided by MINED. Another is the cost of school supplies and uniforms that, although not required, “mark” children who do not have them. Finally, another important barrier is the lack of public or school transportation in rural areas to help children who live far from the schools to get to their classes.

The EI has collaborated in order to eliminate some of these barriers. Thus, IPEC, through documents and interviews with MINED’s officials, highlighted the importance of these problems for poorer children. The Ministry implemented a grant for the schools, which will receive US\$10 per child registered who remains in school all year. The success of this initiative that started in 2004 was one of the reasons for the increase in school enrollment. The funds received by the schools also made it possible to purchase materials and supplies needed for school management.

Additionally, and only for the EI intervention schools, IPEC provided materials and supplies. This initiative was valued by teachers, and especially by the principals, since it allowed them to use their low budgets for other needs. One principal told the evaluators that as a result of the savings from the material donated, the school was able to use part of the funds from the bonus to build a multipurpose room where children can eat the daily meal that they receive through the Healthy Schools Program, as well as use the room to play in during recess when it is raining.

Also, only in the schools of the areas in which the projects are working, school supplies were provided for all the registered children. This was welcomed by both the parents and teachers.

IPEC has been working with two inter-ministerial programs: school orchards and healthy schools. Both are managed through the Ministry of Education and SNF. The purpose of the first program is for children to learn to grow vegetables at school, and then in turn use what they produce to complement the meal that the schools provide them through the second program. The intervention of the projects in these programs is restricted to the geographic areas in which they are working. Thus, most of the cost of operating school orchards in about 50 schools has been covered. These costs include the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, and gardening tools, as well as some technical assistance.

The Accelerated Education Program is an initiative that has raised great hope among teachers, children, and their parents. It is intended to provide an alternative for adolescents who have never attended school or, who only did so for a very short time. With special programs, they could take the required courses and complete their basic

education in two or three years. The problem of their being overage is of great concern due to its magnitude. Both teachers and parents acknowledge that this problem is one of the causes for dropping out of school, or even the dropout adolescents' refusal to enroll. IPEC plans to support this program in the intervention areas with materials and technical assistance.

3.4 The Action Programs

The other facet of the TBP's stated purpose is the effective removal of the largest number possible of children from the worst forms of child labor. To do so, programs implemented a series of strategies are executed locally.

At the time of the evaluation six projects were being executed. Most of them started operating at the end of 2003. These projects are: OEF and FUSAL in fishing; FUNDAZUCAR, OEF, and FUSAL in sugarcane; and ASAPROSAR in garbage dumpsites. On the other hand, three projects dealing with commercial sexual exploitation and one at the bus terminal market were either already beginning their actions or were in the final approval stages at the moment of the evaluation.

A brief description of the main strategies to be used by these programs and a synthesis of the degree of progress of the activities, including the opinions of teachers, parents, and children gathered by the evaluators during the onsite visits are presented below. These observations also include the advances verified in the monitoring of the programs, and the generation of production alternatives for the families of the children removed from child labor or prevented from joining this activity.

a. Description of the main strategies of the action programs

All projects focus their actions on the inclusion of children in the formal educational system. A fundamental strategy to achieve their retention in the school system is the implementation of the Remedial Classrooms¹⁰. In some cases, these classrooms operate inside the schools and in others (particularly in the fishing project area) they operate in community centers and/or places provided by community organizations or individuals near the schools.

To include children and adolescents in the school system, all the programs are expected to pay periodic visits to the homes of those identified as workers in every baseline in order to raise awareness among their parents about the importance of having children stop working and start to attend school. The visits are made by promoters of the communities themselves, identified and trained by the implementing agencies of each project. In addition, they have the goal of raising parents' awareness, and providing knowledge, early-education tools, and knowledge about personal and household hygiene, as well as other issues related to basic sanitation.

¹⁰ The characteristics of these remedial classrooms are detailed later.

Moreover, as a strategy to achieve the commitment of teachers and school principals, the programs expect to carry out awareness-raising and training activities in the schools, to be included in each of their action programs. Help for these centers will also be reinforced with teaching materials. In every case, they include interventions coordinated with the health units (SIBASI) in order to collaborate on the control of children's health, and with actions to promote and prevent health for the community as a whole.

Another component is the mobilization of the community itself, which includes awareness-raising workshops for the main social actors in each community and the promotion of and collaboration with organizing local interinstitutional committees to formulate and implement action plans to monitor the eradication and prevention of local child labor.

The programs to be implemented to eliminate commercial sexual exploitation of children expect, in addition to inserting the victims in the formal education system and facilitating their access to non-formal education, some specific strategies related to awareness raising, law enforcement and the promotion to social support networks. **It is clearly more difficult to work in this area than in the others targeted sectors. It is a hidden form of child labor with multiple complexities and even dangers, for which there is no working experience in the country. All this has led to further delays in the startup of the action programs.**

The following table presents the coverage expected for each program:

Total number of children to be removed and/or prevented from engaging in labor and total number of families included in the action programs

BENEFICIARY NGO/ SECTOR	Children to be withdrawn	Children to be prevented	Total number of children	Total number of families
OEF FISHING	1550	2479	4029	517
OEF SUGARCANE	1700	3000	4700	600
FUSAL FISHING	1500	2790	4290	N/D
FUSAL SUGARCANE	1267	2534	3801	400
ASAPROSAR GARBAGE	81	375	456	135
ASAPROSAR BUS TERMINAL MARKET	74	226	290	290
FUNDAZUCAR SUGARCANE	1420	2000	3420	250
ISNA San Miguel *	125	--	--	--
PADECOMSM *	75	--	--	--
CONAMUS *	100	25	--	--
Total	7892	13429	20996	

Source: Own creation using information from action programs

** These are the CSEC programs. At the evaluation time, the action programs were still being revised.*

b. Degree of progress¹¹

The action programs have started deploying simultaneously several strategies that include in all cases awareness-raising activities, training of community teams and actors, and startup of remedial classrooms.

1) Awareness-raising and training

The **awareness-raising and training** processes aimed at achieving some level of ownership of the problem of child labor by different local actors. To bring this about, the implementing agencies have carried out training workshops attended by teachers, local institution representatives, and community representatives. The workshops were held, in most cases, in the target communities themselves. These activities are held about every three months on an ongoing basis. On each occasion, there is a deeper presentation of the topic and more specific commitments are required. These workshops are complemented with monthly meetings with teachers, parents, ACE, and CDE. Training and awareness-raising activities are also held at the meetings of the School for Parents and in the remedial and/or reinforcement classrooms that operate as part of the program activities.

An important factor within the initial strategies has been the inclusion of community members in the technical team that implements the programs. Each team has made a selection of young community leaders hired as field promoters and facilitators in the remedial classrooms. With this goal in mind, the first persons chosen went through an information process dealing with the characteristics of each program and their role in the actions to be undertaken. They were later trained specifically to perform their role.

Thus, the community promoters visit homes on a permanent, on-going basis in order not only to learn the reasons that children in those families are not attending school, as well as to ensure that children do not go back to work, but they also use these visits to talk with the parents, to learn about their problems, and to give guidance about basic hygiene and sanitation, stimulation and control of the development of children under three years old, and if possible, some tools to solve their problems. This strategy has contributed in a significant way to the quick acceptance of the programs in each of the communities.

Furthermore, the facilitators are young women from the community who have completed high school. They are also in charge of the activities in the remedial classrooms. They are trained in instructional techniques and teaching activities, and are given the needed tools to organize recreational and sports activities.

An outcome that evidences the effectiveness of the work in this area is the creation of community committees doing social monitoring for the eradication of child labor. In almost all cases, these committees are comprised of the parents of children withdrawn

¹¹ The information presented in this section comes from progress reports to which we had access, and from the interviews done during the fieldwork.

and/or prevented from child labor, school teachers and principals, and people from the community; sometimes, they include community organization representatives.

Despite the success with parents, teachers, school principals, and the community as a whole, there are other institutional actors at the local level that have not yet been integrated into the process. Although the SIBASI are mentioned in the action programs as important elements for inter-sectoral coordination, most of the directors of the Health Units do not consider child labor one of their institutional priorities. In this case, their scarce participation could be due to the precariousness of these services. They face all kinds of deprivations, such as lack of personnel, lack of materials and supplies, and inadequate physical spaces; all of these lacks cause operation difficulties.

It was also obvious in all programs that there is a lack of local municipal government participation. Despite of the efforts that have been made, in the places visited, several actors said that the child labor is absent from the municipalities' agenda.

2) Remedial Classrooms

The setup and operation of the remedial classrooms is, perhaps, the core strategy of the Education Initiative in the direct action programs.

These classrooms are alternative educational spaces whose main function is to complement the pedagogical function of the school by reinforcing the activities developed by the teachers. In principle, the children who attend should be attending regular school, and then attend the remedial classroom in their spare time.

Thus, children who attend school in the morning go to the remedial classroom in the afternoon and vice versa. Despite this intention, the fact is that some children are only attending the remedial classrooms since the increase in enrollment¹² observed during this school year was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of teachers or classrooms. Therefore, many children were left out of the school system despite their parents' intention to enroll them.

Children's ages range from 7 to 17, as in regular school, and they receive reinforcement from first to ninth grade.

The other objectives are to keep children away from labor activities and to have them remain in school the longest time possible since most remedial classrooms are located inside the schools themselves. This has been verified in the action programs visited in the sugarcane production area. In contrast, the remedial classrooms for the programs in the

¹² This increase in the enrollment was due, according to the actors interviewed, to the elimination by MINED of the "voluntary contribution" (one of the economic barriers) when they implemented the school bonus. On the other hand, in the program intervention areas, this was reinforced by the actions to withdraw the children from labor activities, as well as the elimination of another barrier by providing school supplies to all the schools in the program.

fishing area visited were located in community spaces close to the schools, but outside them. Nevertheless, the intention is to have them be part of the school's facilities.

The action programs have specific funds to equip the classrooms with furniture and other necessary materials, including instructional and game-like materials, as well as reference works in order to create small libraries that will serve to encourage reading.

In general, the remedial classrooms visited worked with reinforcement and complementary activities from Monday to Thursday for about three hours each shift. On Fridays this time is used for recreational and sports activities in which all children participate enthusiastically. It should be mentioned that in many cases, the materials to which children have access in the remedial classroom are completely new for them, as they have never encountered such materials in a school setting before.

As mentioned earlier, the facilitator is the human resource hired to carry out the activities planned in each remedial classroom. The evaluation team quickly noticed the enthusiasm of these young women in their daily work. They produce the learning materials themselves, and plan all the tasks.

In all the remedial classrooms, innovative educational methodologies are being used. These methods promote learning through games and by using a variety of resources. At the beginning, this made many teachers envious because "*children preferred to attend the remedial classrooms; they said they were cooler than regular school.*" This problem has been overcome at the meetings that teachers and the technical team members hold every month. Thanks to these meetings, they have understood that the remedial classrooms are a pedagogical resource that makes their teaching in the regular classes more efficient.

Thus, at present, when the facilitators need help to solve problems with some specific students, they ask the schoolteachers. Moreover, the innovative strategies used are also copied enthusiastically by many teachers, who see them as a way to stimulate performance and get better results from their students.

In some classrooms, a tutor system has been implemented. It consists of having the more advanced children help the facilitator to further advance the educational program.

c. Degree of involvement of school teachers and principals

Schoolteachers and principals are key actors, on the one hand, to achieve the enrollment of working children in school and, on the other, to guarantee their effective removal from work. As such, for this evaluation it was important to incorporate elements that could indicate their degree of commitment with the actions projected that involve them.

Both in the Workshop with Relevant Actors of the educational area, as well as during several interviews held, testimonies were collected that show the teachers' difficulties in

understanding the problem of child labor. A few examples are sufficient to illustrate this point:

“... the teachers have remained foreign to and distanced from this problem; they may agree with the project, but in general they are not committed to it. This is why it is necessary for teachers to be trained to contribute in this sense, and to try to change certain cultural conditions that prevail and which encourage child labor.” (Interview)

“Teachers are difficult; some say ‘I worked when I was a child; nothing happened to me. I do not understand what’s wrong in having children work.’ This makes our work very hard...” (Workshop)

Nevertheless, the interviews held with the schoolteachers and principals where the programs are being developed provided evidence of a great commitment from them to keep children in school and out of work. Among the reasons that seem decisive to support teachers, the following may be mentioned: the permanent presence of the technical team in the workplace, training of teachers to improve their teaching capacity, the support provided for the implementation of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) and the contribution of school supplies and teaching materials which, although they are being used in the remedial classrooms, constitute a fundamental support for the educational work.

“For me, this is very good..., I am now alert to see if one of the children leaves school for several days. Thus, I immediately go to their house to talk to their parents to see what’s happening, what the problem is, and then we bring them back...” (Teacher during field mission)

“At the beginning we did not understand what the project was trying to achieve. Now we are trying to collaborate in every way we can. Enrollment has increased.... the supplies have helped us a lot... there have been enough for all children in the school. We are preparing a space for the remedial classroom to operate right here.” (Teacher during field mission)

Thus, teachers have become strategic allies of the technical team that administers the programs because, despite the generally low appreciation of school on the part of the poorer sectors in El Salvador, both teachers and their opinions are highly valued and respected.

d. Families’ satisfaction

We tried to get direct information about the opinion of the families and children regarding child labor, and their degree of acceptance of the proposal to which they have

access through the action program. Short surveys¹³ were carried out at random with children who were present on the day of the visit to the schools or remedial classrooms, and with the parents present at these places during each visit. Below is a synthesis of the information gathered.

1) Parents' opinions

Thirty-two interviews were held with parents. Some were found in meetings at the School for Parents held at the schools visited. Some mothers had been especially summoned or were carrying out support activities at the remedial classrooms.

In every case, during the conversations with the evaluators, parents expressed their satisfaction with the activities proposed by the different programs. All also agreed on the fact that being at school was better for their children than their working. Some said that children now no longer wanted to continue working, and that they as parents had started to realize that for their children to have better opportunities it was necessary for their offspring to study.

Although some manifested that they themselves needed other job opportunities or income sources, what they were most interested in were the advantages for their children.

All the mothers interviewed participated in the activities proposed by the programs. Although most attended the meetings convened by the NGO and their children's school, others were involved as community leaders and promoters. These activities allowed them to be in contact with the rest of the community, and to have access to specific training, which was highly valued by all of them.

Although, according to the evaluators' experience, satisfaction surveys rarely detect "non satisfaction" and often provide positively biased views (since these views correspond to participants in the projects), the perception of parents in the action programs is still considered to be an important input to identify issues and concerns. In this case, the parent's views were subject to "controls" by comparing them to those expressed by children themselves, which are presented below.

2) Participating children's opinions

Seventy-eight children and adolescents from almost all the visited sites were interviewed. Most (56) of those who responded to the questions were between 13 and 17 years old.

In general, a peaceful and productive working environment was perceived in all the locations visited. Children were involved in the activities that in every case were organized around a problem to be solved. At the recreational activities and the recess

¹³ See instrument used in Appendix 2. It was not intended that the information gathered be representative of the population in each area of the program, only to try to collect some direct information about these points.

periods observed (in which they participated enthusiastically) the children were engaged in playing games.

An issue that called the evaluators' attention was the high degree of overage children observed among those attending the remedial classrooms, and the school in general, which was later corroborated during the interviews. Thus, we talked to children between 12 and 16 years old who still were in only second, third, and fourth grades of elementary school.

The children interviewed were very happy with the activities performed in the remedial classrooms. They said that they were learning "stuff" that they did not know, and that they were being helped a lot with topics they had not been able to understand at school. They especially acknowledged that the activities to "learn addition or multiplication" and "reading," among others, had been very helpful. On the other hand, they also said that they were learning to do things and were using materials they were not familiar with (they meant, for instance, the activities to develop fine motor skills or the use of crayons and paint).

They said they were pleased with their teachers and by the fact of attending school. Most of their learning difficulties, as expected, were in the math area ("operations") and reading.

They all expressed their intention to continue studying the following year. In this sense, it is interesting to reproduce some of the reasons they mentioned for continuing to participate in educational activities, for example, "to learn more," "because it is cool," "because they teach me" or "to play."

Finally, several children and adolescents consulted stated that, although they were attending school and the remedial classrooms, they were still working to help at home. Others also said that they were planning to work "when the sugarcane harvest season arrives," for instance.

It should be mentioned that almost all the programs visited are only just beginning, and that the awareness-raising processes and behavior changes are difficult to achieve. Thus, it is more than important to note the comments of the children interviewed in Camones, the program managed by ASAPROSAR, the one that has been running the longest and that will finish earliest. At this site, the following testimonies were gathered: "because I want to become a professional," "I want to be a biologist," "because this is the best way to improve," "to get a good job when I am older," and it was quite clear that most children had been effectively removed from labor.

e. Monitoring of the action programs

As mentioned, the specialists in information technologies and data gathering and analysis of IPEC have implemented CIPOTES since November 2003. The whole of the IPEC staff

in El Salvador participated in the definition of indicators to be used and in the design of data gathering forms.

This is an information system developed to monitor the action programs based on the indicators used in the baselines carried out in the dumpsites sector, sugar cane, coffee and fishing. CIPOTES not only includes baseline information on working children and their parents, but has also been conceived as a system to be used by the organizations in charge of the action programs, which can integrate additional variables for monitoring their own activities.

As a consequence, this system allows implementing agencies to have the existing information electronically available from the beginning to be updated during the execution of the programs.

IPEC's specialists completed the installation of CIPOTES in the computers at each of the implementing agencies, developed a user manual, and have trained the technicians that will be in charge of updating the information.

The information in this database is fundamentally quantitative, and is aimed at doing follow-up of the children removed from and/or prevented from engaging labor. The indicators are mainly focused on the outcomes of these aspects.

CIPOTES seems to have a greater potential than the minimum requirements that are proposed by the Education Initiative, and could become the means to both track the children's educational achievements and to perform a comparative analysis of the intervention strategies in order to evaluate which were most useful and effective. It could also become the central element of the national child labor monitoring system.

f. The generation of production alternatives

It has already been mentioned that trying to help families generating alternative income to replace what is being earned by their children's work is essential to sustain over time children's removal from hazardous occupations and to prevent others from entering such work.

With this purpose in mind, the direct actions expect to generate production alternatives through development of micro enterprises, access to microcredit and vocational training for young people. Locally, some proposals are being implemented in this sense.

The evaluators had the chance to visit two vocational training programs in automobile mechanics for adolescents benefiting from an action program, as well as the recently initiated micro enterprise in which fruit marmalade and jelly is produced by the children's families. Both experiences are being developed within the sugarcane crop raising area.

During a conversation with the instructors and participants in the mechanics course, they mentioned the need to implement a second course to complete the one that is about to end, in order to strengthen what has been learned as well as to incorporate knowledge in areas not yet addressed. Moreover, the evaluators noticed that the courses had not included issues such as carrying out a job search, preparation for a job interview, preparation of a CV, etc., all of which are aspects that are fundamental when trying to enter the regular work force.

Regarding the marmalade preparation course, the materials provided have created concern upon close examination because of their textual complexity. They are mainly written materials, with formulas and ingredient proportions which are difficult to understand for an audience that has mostly indicated that they can neither read nor write.

On the other hand, in the fishing industry zone, IPEC's specialist said that several alternatives are being explored, but that any of these options would have a structurally complicating factor, which is that the area is located far from the markets and consumption centers.

g. Strengths and weaknesses of action programs

The chart below summarizes the strengths developed in the months of operation of the action programs, and the weaknesses that should be taken into consideration:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Full involvement of the technical teams	Lack of experience regarding the issue and the areas of some technical teams
Good presence of the technical teams in the schools and the various areas	In some cases, few people available to attend vast areas. In almost all cases, deficiencies in their transportation around the work area
Notable commitment of the facilitators at the remedial classrooms	Limitations in facilitators' background experience, with little training having been gotten
Excellent willingness and collaboration of the teaching teams in the schools	Some competition between the school and the remedial classrooms. Children prefer to attend the latter.
Growing involvement of the community organizations in each area.	Little involvement of local governments and other governmental agencies.
Increase in the school enrollment, and a good number of children who attend the remedial classrooms	Existence of children who, despite attending school and the remedial classrooms, continue to work.
Good furnishings and teaching materials in the remedial classrooms.	In many cases, small rooms for the large number of children. In general, poorly ventilated and illuminated.
Enthusiasm if children.	Lack of capacity to evaluate the quality of learning.
A good deal of progress in the raising of awareness of children's families.	Lack of identification of productive alternatives for the families.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 About the design

Based on an accurate assessment of the obstacles presented by the initial national scenario, the two projects were formulated using the logic of strategic and participatory programming. Its design has been relevant in light of the Salvadoran reality, and has taken advantage of prior experiences and studies, trying to set the bases for building the following:

- political viability through the involvement of significant actors in the formulation process itself, this to be done by means of consultations and the search for consensus regarding proposals made, in particular those related to the intervention sectors and geographic areas.
- technical viability by means of the search for an informed approximation to the country's reality, one that tried to determine the magnitude and nature of the problem of child labor, especially its worst forms, through the relevance and suitability of the proposed reforms or changes in the national educational policy, as well as the creation of an ideal team for its execution.
- social viability by taking into account in these proposals the needs of the target groups and the predominant culture that tended to make child labor natural, and by setting priorities in the awareness-raising strategies of the population in general and of the communities where the action programs were expected to be carried out.

The design efforts have given a clear directionality to the implementation process. It is also relevant to promote the TBP framework in the country, as well as to prioritize the educational issue as the main strategy to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

However, some problems in the design should be pointed out; their assessment may then be used to readjust the future programming. These problems include, on the one hand, the ambition of the two projects to comply with a wide range of activities, coherent with the expected outcomes, but barely prioritized, and on the other, insufficient consideration of some aspects of the national situation, particularly the political turmoil or changes that, although not a driving force with respect to the projects, condition their implementation times. There is also a system of indicators that undoubtedly are useful for monitoring and evaluating the quantitative outcomes of the projects, but which are limited to assessing the advancement of the processes and the changes of a more qualitative nature in the capacities that are being installed, as well as in the progress made toward reaching the outcomes.

In light of the progress made and of the changes already achieved in the operational context of the projects, this can be a chance to establish priorities for the strategies that have proven to be more effective to achieve the objectives, **including the educational strategies. The component of productive alternatives should focus in vocational training of adolescents withdrawn from child labor and adults in their families, and not so much in supporting the development of new businesses.**

4.2 About the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation process

The management structure of the projects has shown to be effective despite the existence of multiple problems of both an administrative and operational nature.

The staff of IPEC-El Salvador is a well-coordinated team of individuals with vast experience; they complement each other and are capable of getting involved in areas not specifically related to their duties. It is evident that everyone helps when trying to comply with the projects' objectives.

The division of tasks by specialization and competencies has been successful in order to carry out the activities necessary to start up the action programs, and to deploy the awareness-raising activities and the production of information expected.

Perhaps a measure of success of the projects so far would lie in part in the IPEC-El Salvador office which, despite the administrative and operational challenges it had to face, did not assume an attitude of "wait and see," but rather turned to action and searched for ways to start the main awareness-raising and social communication activities, as well as the production of information about child labor and the creation of other coordination networks to generate an enabling environment.

Furthermore, it was relevant to **create the National Committee** with governmental and non-governmental representatives, this having the mission of preparing strategies and policies that would allow for integrating the issue of child labor and its worst forms into a National Action Plan in order to eradicate this problem. However, it was possible to identify some difficulties in the ownership of this responsibility: on the one hand, there has not been any progress made in the preparation of an action plan, and the actions of the Committee have focused on taking up the administrative role of supervising and approving IPEC's projects, thus turning them into the national policy in this matter. The change of government, which implies a change of the members of the Committee, could become an opportunity to revert this process.

It may be stated that the startup phase has just concluded for the two projects, and that their full implementation has just begun, especially the implementation of the Direct Action programs. If the times and resources scheduled are compared with those used, we could talk about a low **efficiency of the implementation process**.

The sources of this lack of coherence are many, and these are only partially derived from the strategy—included in the design—of conditioning the beginning of the action programs to the availability of the corresponding baselines. From this point of view, although this provision was coherent with assuring the suitability of the programs for the "micro realities", it may be considered that the local technical capacities to undertake these kinds of studies were overestimated. However, this problem was overcome thanks to the intelligent utilization of the already-available information (prior experiences, rapid assessments, onsite visits, contacts with local actors).

In addition to the delay caused by staff not knowing that the funds had been approved, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the most relevant reasons were especially derived from the contracting administrative processes of the implementing agencies.

It has been possible to verify the occurrence of a long and complex revision and approval process for the bids and contracts that start at IPEC's team, being the first filter, then going through an intervention of the Technical Committee, which includes an important participation of the National Committee, which was assuming a more executive and monitoring managerial role rather than one of political and strategic orientation.

To this process are added other links and times inherent to the administrative and control systems of an international organization such as IPEC/ILO with decision-making centers in Costa Rica and Geneva.

The process, which includes several officials and decision-making levels, needs to be reviewed in order to assure that IPEC's technical opinion and that of the Technical Committee are trusted to be able to handle issues that do not have an impact on the political or policy decisions, and that could be solved regardless of the National Committee's ability to meet regularly. In summary, it is necessary to have precise attributions and clearly defined responsibilities.

A last issue to be mentioned in this section refers to the targets to be achieved by the projects in terms of beneficiaries. IPEC's plans and the commitments of the implementing agencies indicate that these targets should be reached. Even though it is impossible to guarantee that the local partners will have the necessary implementation capacities, their institutional background and the activities carried out until the moment of the evaluation point to the conclusion that they will honor their commitments. However, the evaluation team considers that effectively withdrawing children from child labor requires more time than what has been planned by the projects, as well as the implementation of activities beyond the end of the external support.

4.3 Regarding the actions to generate an enabling environment

The awareness-raising strategies that have been geared toward society as a whole, as well as toward some key actors, have been successful both in their intention to make the issue visible and to generate an enabling environment to implement actions that favor the eradication of the worst forms of child labor. However, it is necessary to move forward in several aspects.

The society has been informed about the issue. They know, through the media, that child labor is a problem that has serious proportions in El Salvador. They also know that to a great extent the problem is related to extreme poverty. In a country where the project's work has started from scratch, these advances are undoubtedly amazing. Nevertheless, for the issue not to get lost among the multiple and urgent problems faced by the Salvadoran society, it is necessary to progress even further. The society has not been educated about

means of action in this field. The different sectors do not know what the responsibility of each sector is, nor do they know how to collaborate in the eradication of the worst forms of child labor. Thus said, it is necessary to advance in assuring the rights of the working children and their families, and in the acknowledgement of the responsibility that, whether as private citizens or society as a whole, they have to prevent children from working.

In this sense, it is important to massively disseminate what has been done, including the problems that children involved in the worst forms of child labor suffer from, the progress of the action programs, and the legislative changes that have been approved. It is necessary that this information be broadcast in order to educate the public and to create general awareness about the matter.

At the community level, awareness was raised through the work of the technical teams and the promoters of the direct action programs. The information and actions taken in this sense have had, as analyzed, great success among teachers. It has been possible for many children to be included in the educational activities proposed by the programs; their parents have been made aware of the importance of an education for their children's future. However, the media do not get out to the intervention communities to report on progress there, and the messages are mainly broadcast in the written press for a population that is mainly illiterate. Radio, too, has not been widely exploited, especially those community radio stations which are regularly listened to by majority of people in these areas.

Among the decision-making levels of the key actors, it has been possible to present the issue in such a way that it became part of the discourse of all the presidential candidates in the last elections; it has also become part of the discourse and plans of the new government. It has also been possible to position the issue of child labor in all significant contexts, among them enterprises, with the exception of the trade unions and the municipalities; this gap has persisted in spite of the fact that the involvement of these two social actors is fundamental in order to guarantee the sustainability of the actions undertaken.

Neither are **the intermediary levels of the ministries** informed or involved. Especially of concern is the lack of actions addressed to the technicians and professionals of MINTRAB and MINED. In a region like Latin America, in which the State policies are reduced, in general, to governmental policies that are born and die with each administration, the only guarantee that the actions against child labor and their worst forms would continue being part of the governmental agencies is to generate both a commitment to and experience on the issue among the ministry's officials who have permanent positions. Therefore, it called our attention that in all the workshops held, there was an absence of representatives of the directors of the vertical programs of MINED (such as Accelerated Education, Healthy Schools, and the Monitoring and Evaluation programs, among others) as well as of other significant areas of MINTRAB, (such as those dealing with employment, labor inspection, etc.). The evaluators are aware that this is a difficult task with few immediate results. Yet, it is essential to include them

immediately. This lack of awareness also reaches the ministerial delegations in areas where the action programs operate.

Accordingly, it is important to reflect on the **creation of child-labor offices** at MITRAB and MINED included in the formulation of both projects. The office at MINTRAB is being created and, according to the data gathered, it is the intention of the new minister to make it the technical arm of this ministry and of the National Committee. Thus, it is necessary to be alert to the profile that this office acquires, as the experiences in other countries show that these offices may quickly become agencies to solve specific problems, aside from their most pertinent mission of being the technical arm of the directing body in policies for the eradication of child labor, in this case the National Committee.

Also successful has been the generation of a technically suitable **information** base that allows for learning about the magnitude, location, and features of child labor, especially its worst forms. The information available has two purposes. On the one hand, it is a tool to raise awareness, although what has been produced still has a limited dissemination among actors already involved (ministries, businessmen, implementing agencies, etc.), as already mentioned. On the other hand, it is used as diagnosis and basic input for the management of the projects, as it makes it possible to identify working children, the characteristics of their families and living conditions, as well as the location and characteristics of the worst forms of child labor, thus, permitting staff to adapt the interventions to the needs detected. In this sense, the progress has been notable. CIPOTES is an excellent tool to follow up the action programs. In addition, a great deal of the information it has produced may be used for dissemination purposes. **The existing monitoring system is centered in following up “day to day” management and the technical assistance provided to the implementing agencies’ teams. It includes field visits, interviews with beneficiaries, and workshops with the agencies for discussing operational issues, problems and possible solutions. It also entails the revision of the progress reports. However, the system lacks a comprehensive, tool-oriented focus that would allow for a systematic assessment of the development of activities during the different phases of the projects (start up, implementation, consolidation of processes).**

Several awareness-raising and information dissemination activities were held in diverse contexts related to **the suitability of the country’s legislation** with the commitments assumed along with the signing of ILO Conventions. The modifications to the Penal Code achieved by the end of last year are a reflection of the progress made in this area. The achievements dealing with the involvement of a large number of relevant actors in this field, especially the Attorney General’s Office and the National Civil Police are also important. They have also advanced in the joint work by creating inter-institutional and consultation mechanisms. The tasks which are still pending regarding the legislation are the discussion and approval of **the list of hazardous occupations for children, an essential tool for the definition of a child labor elimination policy, and of the National Childhood Code**, as well as working with the judges to take a step further in the effective enforcement of the new regulations.

Most of the resources of the projects are used for **education**. Contributing to the improvement of the quality of the educational system, facilitating by every means possible the entrance and retention of children in the school system, as well as fostering their performance and achievement, are considered the core strategies for the achievement of the last objective of eradicating child labor, especially in its worst forms. Therefore, the progress made in this component of the TBP and in the EI is fundamental.

The development of a **child labor monitoring system** is still pending, and should be a priority for the future. The TBP foresees the creation of a national child labor monitoring system in El Salvador. Even though activities to gather baseline information have already taken place, the national organization in charge of taking up this responsibility has not yet been identified. The main problem for the establishment of such a system seems to be financial, although a complete discussion on the scope of the system or its implications for the institution that would take the responsibility of coordinating it has not taken place.

4.4 Concerning the educational strategies

The actions have been deployed in several directions. On the one hand, work has been carried out with MINED's top-level officials by **raising their awareness** and creating the necessary conditions for the concrete work in the communities under intervention to take place. On the other hand, they have collaborated in the **development of material** for teacher training, both in its initial stage and their continuous education. Progress has been made even in the preparation of work modules for children, which are a specific collaboration with the work of the teachers in the classroom. They have also collaborated with specific programs of MINED by developing literacy materials and accelerated courses to complete basic education.

These actions, plus the work of the implementing agencies, the collaboration for the development of the PEI, **in particular the curriculum reform and the strategies to adapt to specific contexts**, the operation of the remedial classrooms, as well as the distribution of school supplies and teaching materials, have permeated and transformed the educational community into an ally in the areas of intervention of the action programs.

Moreover, both the conceptualization and design of the **remedial classrooms** have contributed an innovative teaching methodology, one which is undoubtedly fundamental to keep children inside the school system and away from work.

A final strategy developed that, in addition to being part of the educational strategies for young workers, is also an alternative for the generation of income includes the various activities of **vocational training** which, although still incipient, have proven to raise a great deal of interest when they are proposed.

4.5 About the action programs

The actions taken locally by the action programs, although still incipient, have already achieved considerable community mobilization. This is evident in the large number of

children that participate in the activities proposed, in the increasing school enrollment, and in the commitment assumed by the teachers, the school principals, the community promoters, and the facilitators. In addition, they have managed to stimulate active participation of parents in the Schools for Parents and in the community committees of social control that have been created.

Furthermore, the technical teams of **the implementing agencies** have become strongly involved in the field actions, showing a strong presence in the location in which they have participated. It should be remembered that the problem of child labor is completely new in El Salvador, and that despite the fact that the NGOs that are implementing the action programs have been working in poor communities on health and/or education, they almost had no experience in working with child laborers and their families. In this sense, they have also had to be trained and test or “try out” appropriate strategies in order to be able to move ahead. According to the observations made during the visits, this first problem seems to have been overcome. Nevertheless, it was noticed that, although numerous, the technical teams do not seem to have enough members to cover the vast areas that have been assigned to them; this is becoming more serious because, in general, they lack transportation to do so.

These two issues are relevant at least in this first stage, since the constant presence of these technical teams seems a highly valued issue among parents and teachers. Obviously, the technicians and professionals are making a great effort to maintain this presence, but the growing demand of children and their families they care for works against the quality of the services they can provide.

In addition, both teachers and parents show satisfaction with the actions undertaken in the schools, in particular with the distribution of school supplies and teaching materials, the operation of the remedial classrooms, and the distributed equipment. Teachers who have been made aware through the action programs of the issue are strategic allies of the technical teams of the NGOs. The reasons for this support is based on a new understanding of the problem of child labor, and the support of the technicians in their pedagogical training, as well as their support for the implementation of the PEI.

The operation of the **remedial classrooms** is the core strategy of the EI and is its most innovative strategy in the action programs, both because they operate as a fundamental element to keep children in school and away from work, and also because due to the lack of available space in several schools, they have become an option to involve a relatively important number of children in the educational context. The contribution of these remedial classrooms to schools in terms of innovative teaching methodologies, and the use of novel teaching supplies and materials, is important. Nevertheless, it is necessary to create mechanisms that would allow for the evaluation of the quality of what is being learned by the children, as well as for the monitoring of potential improvement in their school achievement.

In this same sense, it is also important to start systematizing and disseminating experiences identified as “**good practices.**” The experiences of some of the projects

implemented by IPEC in the country (for instance, the projects in the coffee and fireworks industries) and the dumpsite project in Camones that is about to finish, certainly have valuable experiences that would be useful to disseminate for two reasons: in order not to make the same mistakes and to take paths that have already proven successful.

It was mentioned that CIPOTES is an excellent instrument to **follow up and monitor** the children involved in the action programs. It could also be used to monitor their educational achievements, and to make a comparative analysis of the intervention strategies in order to assess which were more useful. However, a follow-up and monitoring system for local processes is missing. This system should, in addition to processing the information about children, collaborate in order to learn about the performance of the implementing agencies, provide feedback on an ongoing basis for the programming, make possible the generation of self-evaluation processes for the technical teams, and allow decisions to be made on solid bases.

The **generation of alternative income** for the families is one of the most complicated points and the one where the least progress has been made. A great effort is being made to identify potential alternatives in each intervention area of the action programs. However, the scanty training of the beneficiaries of these actions, the distance from the merchandizing and consumption centers, and the difficulties posed by the non-availability of adequate technology to advance some proposals, are all serious obstacles to carrying out some projects. The **financial** resources assigned to these actions are not sufficient so as to be able to develop several lines of action simultaneously and to get involved effectively in micro enterprises. Thus, it seems more accurate to direct the efforts only to generate the basic conditions for the efforts to become fruitful **and to skills training for adolescents withdrawn from worst forms of child labor and their families.**

4.6 About the sustainability of the actions developed by the TBP and the EI

Sustainability refers to the possibility of rooting and continuity that the projects' actions have beyond the period of subsidized support. This is a multidimensional concept with socio-community significance, a political-institutional significance, and economic significance. That is, from this perspective, it is an outcome to be achieved as a result of the effectiveness of the lines of action deployed by the projects.

Thus, sustainability is complex and is not built on its own. It requires intentional investment that in ideal terms should start in the formulation itself and continue throughout the execution of a project. Based on all this, the strategies to guarantee the sustainability of the topic of child labor should be multifunctional.

Effective strategies should be proposed to try to get an acceptable degree of legitimacy and adhesion that, from the technical point of view, is reflected in the awareness-raising and training processes as well as in the management of the support aimed at building capacities among the key social actors to generate support regarding the problem, and in local scenarios where this works to allow for future autonomous management. In this

sense, the projects are advancing adequately in both directions. However, to guarantee their **social** sustainability (since they deal with this dimension) they should go beyond the mere awareness and training and try to progress by creating changes in behavior and obtaining concrete actions from the actors involved; that is, by changing beliefs, conceptions, and practices among the human resources and the target population.

The goal, in particular for the TBP, is to include in the Salvadoran policies the issue of child labor. To achieve this goal, sustainability should be seen as **the institutional ownership** of the projects' actions; in other words, the changes or innovations incorporated by the projects should become practices or regular modalities of action on the part of the stakeholders and organizations involved, and their costs should be included in the corresponding budgets. When considering the resources to take the actions in charge of the projects ahead, the **economic** dimension of sustainability should be considered. And this aspect includes not only the needed financial resources, but also the human resources, physical resources, and equipment.

Therefore, it is fundamental to involve both MINTRAB and MINED and the related legislative and judicial organisms. This, too, means not just making the issue of child labor become part of the government plans and discourse, but also necessarily identifying the ministerial areas that will work on the issue, their human resources and budgets, and the formulation and implementation of a National Plan assumed by the country, which is the last objective of the TBP.

It was possible to verify that the former administration tried to implement some of these aspects. Beyond an undeniable change in the visibility and knowledge about the problem, which contribute to its social sustainability, there are as yet no tangible outputs. Probably it will be necessary to again take up and resume the efforts with the new government in order to modify the role assumed by the National Committee, to promote the formulation process of a national policy, and to define the institutional and financial arrangements for its implementation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

An evaluation done during the implementation of a program or project has the purpose of introducing corrections, if any are needed, in order to achieve the highest level of effectiveness in the time period prior to the completion of the scheduled actions.

In the current scenarios, both highly uncertain and marked by swift changes, it is probable that between the time of the formulation and that of the execution, or during the implementation period itself, events may take place that introduce important modifications which will need to be kept in mind by those executing the projects.

Thus, the importance of the evaluations carried out during the execution is evident, as they allow for making timely and informed decisions so as to redirect or reprogram the actions, as well as to carry out the appropriate operational programming.

5.1 Regarding IPEC-El Salvador office

Both the TBP and the EI are very ambitious projects, designed with a logic that attempts to include all the factors likely to influence the eradication of the worst forms of child labor. Even when the design of both projects took into account the opinions and experiences of governmental technicians and specialists in each of the aspects included, it is clear that there was no adequate assessment of the weight that the administrative bureaucratic logic and the political logic would have for the execution stage. Both of them are very distant from the technical reasoning with which both projects were designed and the actions implemented.

The period elapsed shows that although IPEC's office has been handling the circumstances that they have had to juggle, the period that is just beginning needs a change of strategy. So far, facing the obstacles have meant that the technical team and supervisors of the office have had to look for ways that would allow all the components projected to be implemented despite the difficulties posed.

At the time this evaluation, the government administration had just changed. This poses a new political scenario that will have to be evaluated adequately. Beyond the fact that all the components projected are being implemented, and that there is already some planning of the activities and use of the funds up to the end of both projects, once again they have not taken into account the changing scenario in which these actions will be developed. In practice, this means assessing the time to establish new alliances, reaching new agreements, and modifying the guidelines set forth by the previous administration, etc.

Moreover, this new stage, which has been defined as the full implementation, introduces both other problems that will have to be faced and other issues to which attention will have to be paid. The follow up of the action programs, for instance, will require much more time because despite the existing experience in monitoring prior programs (coffee and fireworks industries), there has not been such a large number of projects being implemented at the same time and with such a diversity of interventions as those that will be taking place from now on. **The IPEC officials in charge of monitoring the work with implementing agencies do field visits for problem solving and to observe the development of the planned activities. The evaluation team was informed about these monitoring visits and it could verify the commitment of the officials towards the implementation teams; however, this is not enough to assess the quality of the technical assistance that has been offered.**

Technical support is essential especially when the implementation capacity of the partner agencies is unknown and when unexpected difficulties may arise. These issues did not

seem to be clear for any of the interviewees. Moreover, everyone has proposed to continue working along the same lines and using the same strategies.

Therefore, it is suggested that a strategic planning exercise be carried out in which all of the IPEC staff should participate. **An existing planning tool, known to the team in charge of facilitating this exercise, should be used for discussing the future axis of this activity; eventually, this tool could be the SPIF approach developed by the ILO.** This exercise should also include a stakeholders' analysis, which leads to knowing the allies and the adversaries that will have to be faced, the people with whom work is necessary to turn them into partners, and the social actors that are neutral to the implications of the TBP and the EI. This exercise should allow the true opportunities of the context to be identified, and would outline the steps to follow.

Similarly, it is also important, in light of the accumulated experienced, to prioritize and give more relevance to the strategies that are proving to be the most effective for achieving the proposed ends, as well as to place in the background and even discard those considered the least relevant or inadequate. This also makes it possible to reorient the actions by concentrating effort on the sustainability of those strategies considered as the most suitable, and by restricting the effort devoted to others. **The evaluation team considers that, on the one hand, the educational strategies should be continued and reinforced, while, on the other hand, the generation of productive alternatives should be limited to vocational training for adolescents withdrawn from worst forms of child labor and their families and the building of alliances with companies that could offer employment to some of the trained beneficiaries.**

Finally, the purpose is to identify the critical points both of the socio political scenario in which the projects are being implemented, and of the administrative bureaucratic entities for which all the actions should be completed, trying of course to prioritize the activities to be carried out after this assessment.

This same exercise should produce a new distribution of responsibilities and tasks among the team members. Most probably, the division of tasks with which they operate today should be reviewed since, as has just been mentioned, there are new activities to assume but others that will be less relevant.

5.2 Regarding the administrative systems

These conclusions arise from the previous considerations on the role of the National Committee and the complexity of the approval processes of IPEC/ILO, as well as on the effects of these processes on the delays in implementing the projects.

The National Committee is composed mainly of representatives of governmental agencies. Thus, it reflects to a certain extent the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of these bureaucracies. Similarly, IPEC/ILO, as a vast international organization, has many problems derived from having multiple approval centers established to guarantee a reasonable level of accountability, not just to meet the needs of the donor agencies, but

also those of the ILO itself. The issue of the role of the National Committee will be addressed later.

Regarding IPEC/ILO mechanisms, it is acknowledged that the office in El Salvador has received considerable help in this area from San José and Geneva, especially with the creation of a local account to disburse payments. It is then suggested to consider the modification or correction of its internal operational procedures in the aspects listed below.

- Increase the limit of US\$5,000 for approving contracts by IPEC-EL Salvador to a higher amount, since this amount is too low for the costs handled in the country today, given the “dollarization” of its economy.
- Review the procedures to handle authorizations for disbursements and approval both in San José and Geneva to determine the reasons for the delays from the time the order is placed to its effective approval, and analyze possible solutions for these bottlenecks. This issue will especially affect the projects that are being carried out in El Salvador, but it will probably benefit projects in other countries as well.
- In agreement with the consideration of the above items, the possibilities of modifying the requirement of US\$20,000 for projects and contracts that require the approval from Geneva should be analyzed.

The evaluation team is aware that these aspects are difficult to change, since they basically depend on well-established bureaucracies with operational guidelines that respond to a specific logic. However, it is believed important to indicate the path for the necessary modifications.

5.3 Regarding the educational strategies

The wealth of strategies being developed within the EI framework has already been mentioned.

A major issue is to evaluate several aspects of the operation of the remedial classrooms. This is important because this strategy is presented as one of the backbones on which several expected outcomes for the EI and the TBP are based. These classrooms aim at keeping children within the educational system, and have become an instrument to raise awareness in the communities and among teachers. But it is also expected that they would contribute to improve the children’s school performance, and that their methodologies and related recreational and sports activities will help increase their self-esteem. Such a large number of expectations need some corroboration that would allow for adjusting future actions. It is easy to realize that children and their parents value this educational opportunity; however, it is necessary to learn about the quality of the knowledge shared there.

The action programs are in their initial stage and will keep these remedial classrooms open throughout the next year. This is why it is suggested that the following be evaluated before the end of the school year:

- Children’s school performance, not just taking into consideration whether they “pass,” but trying to evaluate, along with the schools’ teachers, whether they have met the minimum requirements to finish the school year.
- The learning that was integrated, including the topics that were best and worst incorporated (for instance, better reading than math), in order to review the methods used.
- The learning methodologies used by comparing the results in the different experiences, and trying to reach an agreement with the implementing agencies about the incorporation of the methodologies that have been most beneficial for children.
- The facilitators’ performance so as to review aspects that need modifications, special training, etc.

This is an evaluation that can be done by IPEC’s specialists themselves, together with the technicians of the organizations that implement the action programs. **It is suggested to carry out a study in a sample of schools, comparing information on students attending the remedial classroom with data on students of the same school that do not benefit from the classrooms. The sample should include at least one school from each action program site, which would allow as well for comparing different methodologies and ways of working in the classrooms, trying to identify good practices for replication later in other programs.**

Similarly, the experiences carried out and completed have accumulated a bank of practical knowledge or “know-how” that should be used by the organizations that have just begun. Systematizing these experiences is a task that should have already been started.

The purpose of the systematization is to produce knowledge that increases the action and understanding frameworks, and that gathers together the learning that always exists behind these accumulated experiences. Its purpose is to promote a process of reflection from their protagonists’ perspectives, and also from that of the technical teams and the target population. This reflection should indicate how the activities were held, how the processes that produced outcomes were developed, how obstacles and difficulties were overcome, and which strategies were implemented.

Both the TPB and the EI are accumulating a series of innovative experiences for the country that in turn deserve to be reinterpreted by the actors themselves, this to be done in order for others to own and use them in other contexts and with different topics. Additionally, disseminating the “how” of the experiences being carried out may be valuable input for those just beginning to help them identify useful strategies to arrive at the expected outcomes.

In principle, it could be suggested that the remedial classrooms, the early stimulation and child development strategies applied by the project managed by ASAPROSAR, all be systematized. In particular, these experiences, which we learned about during the field visit to Camones, could be included as examples of “good practices.” However, it is not only important to systematize successful experiences. Understanding the “why” of the failures and problems also contributes a great deal when deciding what strategies to include in a new project. In this case, it could be useful for the second part of the action programs.

We have already pointed out the efforts made by the EI to collaborate in the elimination of some of the problems considered as barriers for schooling, especially among the poorest sectors. It is necessary to continue with the effort of distributing school supplies at the beginning of the school year, continuing this distribution beyond the duration of the project. Therefore, it is recommended that public or private institutions or organizations be identified that could progressively assume this responsibility.

Similarly, the methodology of the remedial classrooms (once it has been corroborated that they comply with the objectives proposed) should be transferred to MINED for it to be able to incorporate this methodology in its programs. If this proved to not be possible, it would be necessary to identify other institutions that could at least continue financing the recurrent expenses of those remedial classrooms currently operating.

A special point that we would like to stress as an additional educational strategy, which is also related to the generation of economic alternatives, is the vocational training of adolescents. It is strongly recommended that the efforts under way be multiplied because undoubtedly they are the most viable option for children who have become accustomed to working from an early age.

In this sense, it is recommended that training sessions be combined in the areas that correspond with schooling (as has been done), but mainly for those children in the Accelerated Education alternative, once it starts operating. Moreover, it would be necessary to include in the training modules to be given about job searches, preparation for interviews, and CV writing. More than the skill that these young people need to develop in their specific training field, the absence of these other skills could cause serious barriers for them to get a job.

Also related to this issue and in light of the interview held with the person in charge of INSAFORP¹⁴, it is recommended to reexamine contact with this institution to review the possibilities of giving credit for the courses in which the children involved in the action programs, as well their parents, participate.

¹⁴ He said they are studying the possibility of modifying some of the requirements in order to have access to the courses accepted by them, such as completing high school, since this, among others, is a problem that affects a large proportion of the population in El Salvador, leaving many people without any vocational opportunities.

Finally, it is suggested that courses more closely linked to the services being offered in the country today be included. For instance, instruction could be offered for potential workers in hotel housekeeping, waiter and bellboy positions in restaurants and hotels, telephone operators, among others.

5.4 Regarding production alternatives

As already mentioned, this is the component with the most difficulties due to the fact that the problem which needs to be solved transcends the possibilities of the projects managed by IPEC. In this case, more than in any other, it is fundamental to set priorities. Despite the importance that it has for the families to replace children's income, and how crucial this is in order for children to not return to working under hazardous conditions, it is evident that with the remaining time and the financial resources available, it will not be possible to implement the undertakings in all programs, and much less feasible for them to be successful.

This means taking time to reflect about the true options available to develop specific activities for each of the action programs and, as a result of this assessment, to decide how to invest efforts and resources.

A first indispensable step is to work with the stakeholders to develop participation and community organization strategies. These types of micro enterprises should be used with groups that are willing to share the challenge together. This step is in itself difficult; it will demand considerable time, and probably some groups will quit along the way. But only after it is clear that the strategy to be used is to be shared by the group, and that it requires agreement and commitment, will it be possible to continue. Meetings to learn about their motivations may be organized. Others may be used to strengthen self-esteem, share problems, needs, and the importance of organizing themselves in an association to carry out these kinds of projects.

Another issue is that the types of proposals brought to the group that has already decided to start a business must be a close fit to their reality and suitable for the capacities available in the group. A proposal that is otherwise technically feasible but that means a complete change of the people rarely ends well.

Finally, it will be necessary to take into account the economic and organizational considerations that starting any micro enterprise implies.

Finally, as it was already pointed out, the evaluation recommends to invest efforts in vocational training of adolescents and adults of their families and to establish contacts with companies that can offer employment at least to part of the trained young people.

5.5 Regarding the projects' monitoring

The members of IPEC-El Salvador office believe that the CIPOTES program may be utilized as a monitoring tool for the projects. Although the database is very good due to

the quantity and quality of the information it can provide, it is insufficient for use as an evaluation system for the action programs.

The evaluation done during the execution of the programs or projects should focus on the processes, on how the expected activities are carried out, and this means knowing more than the number of children in the program and all the data that can be gathered from CIPOTES. It is not the intention of the evaluators to underestimate this tool, but rather to establish the difference between monitoring the children prevented and/or withdrawn from the worst forms of child labor (even if this is the most important final objective of the projects) and monitoring the actions that are being executed to get there.

This includes knowing if the structures, equipment, and input expected are those required and are sufficient. It also means determining if the work methodologies and proposed activities are adequate and operate as expected. Moreover, it must identify the obstacles and difficulties manifested and that require reorganization along the way.

The issue is that, immersed as they find themselves in the everyday activities, the work teams usually lose sight of the purposes that in turn lead them to the wealth of actions they carry out. Therefore, it is recommended that a process monitoring system be built that takes into account the following points:

- The ways in which the actions are being developed.
- The ways to overcome the difficulties encountered and the changes that have been incorporated.
- The management modes: coordination among the different activities, performance and integration of the technical team, multidisciplinary work, decision-making modes, and leadership styles, among others.
- The degree and nature of the participation of the target population and other social actors in the management.
- The coordination among the different organizations working on the problem and the creation of networks.
- The strategies for the future sustainability and progress in this sense.
- The advances in the systematization of the experiences.
- The changes in the situations, concepts, and behaviors of the target population and in the structure and performance of the organizations involved in the management.

To this end, it is convenient to have general observation guidelines to provide coherence to monitoring visits' reports and to analyze progress reports in a systematic way. These guidelines should also include expectations, opinions and perceptions of the beneficiary population on the development of activities and the outcomes that are produced.

Carried out in this way, monitoring demands that some technicians be devoted to it, as it will be necessary to program the time to carry out "evaluative cuts," develop instruments to gather information of a basically qualitative nature (CIPOTES provides all the quantitative information), and then analyze the data in order to review the strategies and

action courses of each program and of the projects as a whole. In the two years remaining, up to three evaluative cutoff periods could be done before the final evaluation. This means that it would be suitable to have a specialist to develop the tools and facilitate or direct the evaluative process. The complexity of both projects, the challenge of executing them simultaneously, and the amount of resources assigned deserve that this important resource be seriously taken into account.

5.6 Regarding the ownership of the issue of child labor by an institution in the search of sustainability

Again taking up the issue of sustainability, it is fundamental to review the work strategies with the national authorities so that the commitments assumed become concrete governmental policies and actions.

This means first of all advocating a change in the vision of the members of the National Committee about their role, thus setting into motion a reflection process about the commitments assumed by the country and ratified by the new government by its including the issue in its plans. Therefore, it is recommended that IPEC's officials take advantage of the present change of government officials in the Committee as an opportunity to discuss the project vision and mission, and the roles that should be assumed by them to reach the goals. Eventually, it would be necessary to evaluate the possibility of using some participatory planning tools (such as SPIF) for this purpose.

One of the aspects yet to be defined in this space is the necessary differentiation of functions and people that should exist between the National Committee and the Technical Committee. It is understood that the first should become the directorate of policies for the eradication of child labor, especially its worst forms.

On the other hand, an activity attributable to the Technical Committee, with the assistance of IPEC, would be the preparation of proposals to be discussed by the National Committee in their National Plan to eradicate child labor. This Plan should coordinate the initiatives already outlined in the government areas involved in the matter, specifying them in operational terms, as well as the institutional responsibilities and human and financial resources necessary.

To this end, it is necessary to review the proposals of both projects, namely, the creation of offices that specialize in child labor issues at MINTRAB and MINED. In each case, it would be imperative to analyze the need for these offices as there is a risk of duplicating the functions of the Technical Committee, or for them to become parallel bureaucratic structures.

A second point is to focus efforts on strengthening the institutional capacities of the government so as to allow for continuing the projects' actions. In this sense, it is indispensable to generate a commitment to and experience regarding the issue among the ministerial officials who hold a permanent position. This means developing different training strategies to provide them with basic knowledge about the problem, and the role

that should be assumed by each actor. These actions should be geared toward the directors and main technicians of the vertical programs of MINED and the pertinent areas at MINTRAB. A similar strategy should be implemented at the level of Regional Delegations of both ministries, INSA and SNF.

Locally, it is fundamental to involve the municipalities. In this sense, it is recommended that specific strategies be developed to inform them and to invite these levels to participate by using the coordination entities of the municipal policies (COMURES and Instituto de Desarrollo Municipal – Institute for the Development of Municipalities).

A specific aspect of the institutional capacities to be transmitted deals with the access and management of diversified financial sources; namely, what is usually called the fund raising capacity. IPEC has proven it has accumulated know-how in this matter that should be transferred to the corresponding governmental levels. Thus, it is recommended that a specific line of action be developed in order to search for economic aid. The actions would include tracking and permanently updating a list of national and international organizations that support initiatives addressed to children and adolescents as a whole, and in particular, those entities related to the issue of child labor and that provide funding. Moreover, the organization and development of activities that make it possible to raise funds, such as donations from enterprises and organizations, should be included.

It will also be necessary to undertake special efforts in order to involve the members of the National Committee in the development of the child labor monitoring system. At this respect, it is recommended to identify the organization responsible for the system and to calculate the financial resources necessary for its operation. Additionally, the possibility of using CIPOTES as a basis for the system should be explored.

Finally, regarding social sustainability, so far the communication efforts have been addressed from the point of view of their content, so as to transmit information about the magnitude and characteristics of the problem. The awareness-raising campaigns thus far organized now allows for the passing of these communication efforts to another entity that possesses a communication plan capability with specific strategies **including contents and means adapted to different audiences.**

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