

FUNDED BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Final/Midterm Evaluation of the Community-Based Innovations to Reduce Child Labor Through Education Project (CIRCLE): Global Report

Winrock International
Cooperative Agreement Numbers—
CIRCLE I: E-9-K-2-0048
CIRCLE II: E-9-K-4-0005



2007

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Funding for this evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor under Task Order number DOLQ059622437. Points of view or opinions in this evaluation report do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BP	Best Practices
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCLC	Community Child Labor Committee
CLASSE	Child Labor Alternatives Through Sustainable Systems in Education
CLM	Child Labor Monitoring
CTA	Community/Teachers Association
CYCLE	Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education
EFA	Education for All
EI	Education Initiative
FSU	Family Support Unit
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HQ	Headquarters
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LA	Latin America
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
RFP	Request for Proposals
RLM	Regional Launch Meeting
RM	Regional Manager
RSC	Regional Selection Committee
SA	South Asia
SEA	Southeast Asia
SMC	School Management Committee
TIP	Trafficking-in-Person
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report

UAC	Urgent Action Contract
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
W/P	Withdrawn/Prevented
WACAP	West Africa Cocoa Agriculture Project
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
WI	Winrock International

NGO SUBCONTRACTORS

Africa

AJA	Association Jeunesse Actions Mali
ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect
APEGS	Agricultural Production Extension and General Services
CARD	Community Action for Rural Development
CRADA	Children Research for Action & Development Agency
EPAG	Environmental Protection Association of Ghana
PACF	Parent and Child Foundation
RAC	<i>Réseau d'Appui et de Conseils aux Initiatives des Artisans du Mali</i>
RADA	Rehabilitation and Development Agency
SDI	Society for Democratic Initiatives

Latin America

CEBIAE	<i>Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativas (Bolivia)</i>
CENDHEC	<i>Centro Dom Helder Câmara de Estudos e Ação Social (Brazil)</i>
CR	<i>Casa Renascer (Brazil)</i>
OA	<i>Obispo Anaya (Bolivia)</i>

Asia

BASE	Backward Society Education
CSID	Centre for Services and Information on Disability
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
CWISH	Children-Women in Social Service and Human Rights
HOPE	Hope Volunteers Foundation
MUK	Manab Unnayan Kendra
NDS	National Development Society
QK	Quidan-Kaisahan of Negros Occidental
SCM	Share a Child Movement, Inc.
STC	Shree Taram Club

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, Winrock International (WI) signed a four-year Cooperative Agreement worth US\$5 million with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) (CIRCLE I) to implement a global Education Initiative (EI) project aimed at withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor by expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education, thus supporting the four goals of the EI:

1. To raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.
2. To strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.
3. To strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.
4. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

In 2004, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supplied a further US\$500,000 to support anti-trafficking activities in Sierra Leone, and Winrock International (WI) signed a second four-year Cooperative Agreement with USDOL worth US\$3 million (CIRCLE II) for a second phase of the CIRCLE project.

CIRCLE aims to prevent or reduce child labor through education by identifying and promoting innovative, locally developed, and community-based pilot projects and documenting their Best Practices (BPs) and replicable aspects. In addition to contributing directly to the EI's four objectives, the project has two specific purposes:

Purpose 1: Community-based educational innovations aimed at preventing child labor are developed and documented.

Purpose 2: At-risk children are prevented from child labor and educated in programs relevant to communities in which they live.

CIRCLE is implemented through a variety of subcontracts signed with national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which design and implement projects in line with CIRCLE objectives. The evaluation reviewed and assessed the activities carried out under both Cooperative Agreements, particularly the progress of the project toward reaching its stated targets and objectives and the potential for the future. This report brings together the findings from the three regional evaluation reports. The evaluators visited 24 NGO subcontractors in eight countries, and these organizations were responsible for 29 of the total 101 projects that have been funded across the three regions since CIRCLE began. A limited e-mail survey was sent to the NGOs that could not be visited during the evaluation, and their responses were integrated into the regional reports.

In all regions CIRCLE has been enthusiastically received within communities and by subcontractors. Overall, it is meeting its objectives and targets and responding to local realities in creative and innovative ways. Subcontracts are contributing to national EFA policies and are strengthening and encouraging government initiatives to fight child labor/trafficking, mainly through linking with local offices, but with some notable examples at a national level.

A TASTE OF CIRCLE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

CIRCLE has covered a very broad range of initiatives, and while the evaluation reports attempt to convey a flavor of some of these, the forthcoming BP Compendium will cover the “what and how” in much more detail. A number of subcontracts focused on meeting the special educational needs of particular groups of children (i.e., ex-combatants, trafficked children, apprentices, marginalized urban youth) through teacher training, curriculum development, and the provision of counseling and other support services. Others emphasized the involvement of children and young people themselves in developing and advocating solutions to the challenges they face. Such approaches included training and supporting peer educators, setting up kids clubs and organizations, and encouraging parents to understand, foster, and appreciate their children’s potential. Subcontracts enrolled children in both formal and nonformal education initiatives, often developing nonformal provisions where none existed previously. NGOs worked, among others, with employers, parents, administrative personnel, traditional and religious leaders, and teachers. In Latin America (LA) many subcontracts operated in tough urban environments. In Africa, subcontractors in Sierra Leone worked to counteract trafficking along the Liberian border, and to influence and support national policy development. Others in Africa focused on children in traditional gold mining and cocoa producing areas. Some subcontractors in Asia integrated child labor issues into their portfolio of interventions for the first time and also worked with children with physical disabilities.

CONCERNING DESIGN

The principal strength of the project design is that it has enabled subcontracts to respond to local needs and circumstances and has enhanced the capacity and experience of national NGOs. It avoids the “one size fits all” approach of classical subcontracting, enabling national organizations to access funds for projects designed with specific communities in mind, thus creating conditions favorable for empowering both national NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). Such empowerment is the basis for sustainable development and transformative change. Thus, the most exciting aspect of CIRCLE is the model itself and its potential for revolutionizing the relationships between communities, implementing organizations, and funding partners by facilitating a more participatory approach to project design and implementation. In traditional subcontracting and virtually all large-scale development projects, there is a fairly “top down” configuration. Power and control tends to be concentrated at the top of a hierarchical management structure, with national NGOs acting principally as intermediaries between international NGOs and communities. CIRCLE succeeds in showing us how this power structure can be changed, giving people who are closer to the communities concerned more influence and opportunity to ensure that local interests and realities are considered and understood. CIRCLE points the way to how international NGOs can play an

appropriate role as facilitators, capacity builders, and advisors, providing financial, technical, and administrative management support services to enable community-based initiatives to succeed.

EI GOALS AND USDOL COMMON INDICATORS

While CIRCLE has contributed to all four EI goals within the project framework, raising awareness and strengthening education systems (EI goals 1 and 2) are the two goals most widely covered by subcontracts in all three regions. Reporting on USDOL's common indicators has proved universally challenging, but particularly so in LA, where WI personnel have worked under considerable pressure. LA is home to less than 20% of the subcontracts, and has a smaller CIRCLE staff team than the other regions, but due to long traveling distances to monitor and support subcontracts, and the need to translate all key documents to English and Spanish or Portuguese, the regional team has found itself somewhat stretched.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND NETWORKING

It is true that the global spread of CIRCLE has enabled a rich variety of innovative and creative interventions to take place, but it has also been a complex and relatively expensive process to manage. Having established the strengths and potential of the CIRCLE model, the majority view among subcontractors and WI regional personnel is that ongoing future initiatives would be more effectively managed from subregional or national offices. This type of management would enable those working for WI or any other future grantee to devote more time to supporting and building the capacity of subcontractors and promoting and facilitating project networking. Such networking would ideally include greater integration of community-based initiatives with advocacy activities to influence national policy, and the provision of regular opportunities for shared learning through exchange visits and meetings between subcontractors, both within and between countries.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

An important issue emerging from the evaluation is the tension between the project purpose of developing and documenting innovation and the need to foster sustainable community development so that initiatives are more than a one-time occurrence. Evaluators in all three regions found that the duration of subcontracts, most of which lasted less than a year, was too short to enable community-based organizations (CBOs) set up to promote education/ child rights and/or combat child labor/exploitation to become sufficiently well-established to function independently after the end of the subcontract. Another common finding across all three regions was that many interventions failed to help communities generate income or mobilize resources to enable them to support their children in school. Coupled with the loss of family income when a child stops working, this situation constitutes a serious barrier to ending child labor in favor of education.

Also linked to broader sustainability are issues around capacity-building for national NGOs. While WI did a good job of enabling subcontractors to use CIRCLE's administrative and financial tools and processes, wider institutional and technical capacity-building was not identified as a specific project objective. If broader capacity-building is part of future CIRCLE-type initiatives, it has the potential not only to enhance the sustainability of specific subcontract

activities, but also to encourage effective ongoing work to combat child exploitation and promote education in the countries concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

WI developed systems and processes for the dissemination of requests for proposals (RFPs), subcontract selection, training and orientation of NGO subcontractors, project monitoring, reporting and administration, and the identification and documentation of BPs. As with any pioneering model, there are aspects of these systems and processes that could be refined based on experience. The evaluators examined these often creative and original strategies and made some recommendations based on their own observations and the experiences, comments, and suggestions of the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation. Recommendations seen as having the most potential for enhancing the impact of future initiatives are listed below:

Sustainability

- While subcontracts of relatively short duration assisted WI to meet the CIRCLE objective of discovering innovation, any future subcontracts of this sort should be long enough to enable community-development initiatives to become sufficiently well-established so that they benefit more than the children directly affected during the life of the subcontract. A minimum of two years is proposed, although only experience will show if this is long enough.
- Strategies for poverty reduction such as income generation, micro-finance, livelihood development, or community capacity-building should be part of all subcontract proposals unless subcontractors can justify why this is not necessary in a particular situation. Although funding for some of these activities is inadmissible under USDOL cooperative agreements, they could be provided through creative project partnerships. It is essential that this aspect not be ignored because poverty is a root cause of many types of child labor.
- NGO capacity-building should be widened to include both institutional development and more technical aspects of child labor/ trafficking, participatory community development, gender analysis, and fundraising. In addition to Regional Launch Meetings (RLMs) and site visits, shared learning through exchange visits and networking could also be considered. Capacity-building should be identified as a specific project objective, with an appropriate budget to support it.
- A minimum of 10% of subcontract costs should be paid as overhead to support NGOs' administration costs, in recognition of the importance of building the capacity and independence of national NGOs.

Networking

- Grantees should play a greater networking role in any future CIRCLE-type projects to encourage and facilitate collaboration and shared learning among subcontractors, statutory bodies, national and international NGOs, and other practitioners in a given

country or region. This networking would help to value and capitalize on the wealth of experience and knowledge available among NGOs and others at local and national levels and result in a more integrated approach to combating child labor. To reach full potential, networking activities require a budget.

- Subcontractors in the same country should also be encouraged to develop networking mechanisms, share experiences, and work together on advocacy and policy issues at the district/national level, as this will enhance the impact of local initiatives by influencing government and policy structures and thus contribute to systemwide change on education and child labor issues. This initiative also requires a budget.
- Strategies to enable Regional Selection Committee (RSC) members to offer ongoing support to subcontractors and the project as a whole should be investigated.
- USDOL should play a more proactive role in promoting and facilitating cooperation, collaboration, networking, and the sharing of experiences among projects that it funds by providing information about projects active in the same country/region to grantees at the beginning of any new cooperative agreement. As an important funding partner, USDOL also needs to recognize the link between networking and sustainable change and should be prepared to fund associated activities.

Best Practices

- Subcontractors should be more involved in the identification of BPs in each others' projects to increase their ownership of the resulting compendium and the shared learning resulting from CIRCLE, as is increasingly the case during the latter stages of CIRCLE BP identification.
- The BP Compendium should be translated into as many of the project languages as possible, distributed to all subcontractors and appropriate public services and made available online and through any other channels that will ensure that it can help reduce child labor and encourage education.

USDOL Common Indicators

- USDOL could make an enormous contribution to EI projects by providing a standard translation of all basic EI documentation concerning indicators (e.g., definitions, guidance, reporting requirements, etc.) in Spanish, Portuguese, and French in an effort to minimize differences in interpretation and reduce confusion about what is needed. This recommendation cannot be made too strongly.

The Selection Process

- All available information concerning proposals for subcontracts should be made available to RSC members, including information about implementation of previous subcontracts and any advice from regional office staff based on their knowledge gained through working with the NGO.
- Future proposals for subcontracts should be scored for their cooperation, collaboration, and networking components.

Miscellaneous

- Local procurement of items such as school uniforms should be actively promoted alongside instructions as to how to obtain local receipts that meet USDOL requirements.
- A reporting format should be developed that puts more emphasis on process and “how to” aspects of a project and this aspect should be emphasized during RLMS, site visits, and project evaluations.

Finally, WI should strategize and develop its ideas about what “CIRCLE III” might look like—including how to scale-up some of the successful BPs, innovations, and lessons learned under CIRCLE I and II so that the content of the BP Compendium and the recommendations of this evaluation can be tested in practice with NGO partners.

Five subcontracts in Africa and LA failed to complete their activities for one reason or another. Out of the subcontracts in the evaluation, a few provided some cause for concern in both Africa and Asia. The evaluators had questions about the effectiveness of some of the strategies used and the capacity and know-how of the subcontractors. With such a large number of subcontracts, it is hardly surprising that some found themselves in difficulties, but their experiences can be helpful to others and WI is advised to support these partners in analyzing what went wrong. Evaluation visits are short and it can be difficult to access all the available information, so the evaluation poses the question rather than offering a definitive judgment where these subcontractors are concerned.

National NGOs and communities have an important role to play in initiating, testing, and refining creative solutions to identified challenges and CIRCLE has provided them with an opportunity to do this. Many initiatives have proved themselves through their impact on individuals and communities and have the potential to be more widely implemented. This implementation requires support from governments and technical and financial partners, and WI should consider how it can assist subcontractors in attracting such support. As a result of its five years of experience implementing CIRCLE, WI is now at a different level of maturity and knowledge than it was in 2002. It is well-positioned to continue this type of global child labor work in the future and share the CIRCLE methodology with others.

It is hoped that USDOL will consider funding a new CIRCLE-type project that will enable subcontractors to develop some of the innovations and BPs that have been identified. This project might be widened to include several grantees to enable implementation of the CIRCLE model within different regions, thus allowing the refinement of the model and the testing of some of the recommendations made by the evaluation. This possibility is mentioned not because WI is not very capable of implementing future CIRCLE projects, but because it may be detrimental to limit the CIRCLE concept to one organization when others could profit from and contribute to its ongoing evolution.

This report summarizes the regional reports for Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which describe in detail the 2007 evaluation of the CIRCLE project in the three regions. The report was prepared by Macro International Inc., according to guidelines prescribed by USDOL, Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The evaluation was conducted and documented by Sue Upton, Danielle Roziewski, and Keith Jeddere-Fisher, independent international development consultants, in collaboration with USDOL/OCFT staff, members of the project team, and stakeholders across the three regions. Sue Upton has compiled this report.

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I PROJECT BACKGROUND

Since 1995, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has received more than US\$470 million from Congress to address international child labor issues, which has been administered by its Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). Within ILAB, the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) supports U.S. child labor policy principally through the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC), and its own Child Labor Education Initiative (EI).

The Education Initiative nurtures the development, health, safety, and enhanced future employability of children around the world by increasing access to basic education for children removed from child labor or at risk of entering it. Eliminating child labor depends in part on improving access to and quality and relevance of education. Without improving educational quality and relevance, children withdrawn from child labor may not have viable alternatives and may return to work or resort to other hazardous, unhealthy means of subsistence.

In July 2002, Winrock International (WI) signed a four-year Cooperative Agreement worth US\$5 million with USDOL (CIRCLE I) to implement a global EI project aimed at withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor by expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education and supporting the four goals of the Education Initiative, which are as follows:

1. To raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.
2. To strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.
3. To strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.
4. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

An amount of US\$750,000 was set aside for a two-year pilot project in West Africa, Child Labor Alternatives through Sustainable Systems in Education (CLASSE), which has been evaluated elsewhere and is not part of this evaluation. In 2004, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supplied a further US\$500,000 to support anti-trafficking activities in Sierra Leone as part of the President's Initiative to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and WI signed a second four-year Cooperative Agreement with USDOL worth US\$3 million (CIRCLE II) for a second phase of the CIRCLE project.

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II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CIRCLE project aims to prevent or reduce child labor through education¹ by identifying and promoting innovative, locally developed, and community-based pilot projects and documenting their Best Practices (BPs) and replicable aspects. CIRCLE project activities directly contributed to the EI's four objectives and the two specific project purposes identified by WI:

Purpose 1: Community-based educational innovations aimed at preventing child labor are developed and documented.

Purpose 2: At-risk children are prevented from child labor and educated in programs relevant to communities in which they live.

CIRCLE is implemented through a variety of subcontracts signed with national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (and one in Albania), which design and implement projects in line with CIRCLE objectives. The WI office in Arlington coordinates the project through regional field offices on three continents:

Table 1: Regional Offices and Targeted Countries

WI Regional Offices	Countries Managed from Each Office
Africa—Bamako, Mali	Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Albania
South Asia—Kathmandu, Nepal	Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan
Southeast Asia—Manila, Philippines	Cambodia, Philippines, Vietnam
Latin America—Salvador, Brazil	Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru

A total of 1,200 proposals were submitted for funding by NGOs in response to five solicitations (three global and two for Sierra Leone). Regional Selection Committees (RSCs) made up of specialists in relevant fields worked on a voluntary basis to review the proposals and make funding recommendations for small, medium, and large awards. In addition, Commissioned Contracts (CCs) and Urgent Action Contracts (UACs) for small amounts addressing an immediate need were awarded on the basis of WI and USDOL decisions. Individual project funding ranged from US\$9,000 to US\$113,000 and the period of intervention from 6 to 24 months. Regional Launch Meetings (RLMs) on each continent brought successful NGO subcontractors together for orientation and training in CIRCLE systems.

By May 2007, 101 NGO projects had been funded in 23 countries: 42 in Asia, 40 in Africa, 18 in Latin America, and one in Albania. A total of 23,000 children had benefited from educational opportunities as a result of CIRCLE initiatives and thousands of other adults and children had participated in awareness-raising, advocacy, and training activities.

¹ Education, for this purpose, includes both educating the public through information campaigns and targeted instruction, such as traditional classroom education, vocational or alternative education, or teacher training. (CIRCLE I ProDoc.)

As this vast and complex project draws to a close,² the emphasis is increasingly on the identification and documentation of BPs. WI has developed a process of peer reviews of NGO projects on the basis of six criteria: Effectiveness, Replicability, Sustainability, Innovation, Educational Relevance, and Stakeholder Involvement. The BP review process includes 73 outside evaluators and 22 WI staff around the world. Post-evaluation summaries of individual projects will inform the BP document that is due to be completed near the end of 2007.

Other aspects of CIRCLE include networking through the WI website (<http://circle.winrock.org>), spotlight stories from each NGO, and a series of newsletters in several languages. Capacity-building has enabled NGOs to cope with CIRCLE financial and administration systems, proposal development, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements. The development of strategies for the sustainability of project initiatives has been encouraged, and site visits from WI personnel at all levels have supported and monitored project implementation.

² CIRCLE I in December 2007, as a result of a project extension approved by USDOL, and CIRCLE II in April 2008.

III EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

CIRCLE I started in July 2002 and is due for final evaluation in 2007. CIRCLE II started in April 2004 and is due for a midterm evaluation in 2007, so the current evaluation covers both requirements. The evaluation reviews and assesses the activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreements with WI, particularly the progress of the project toward reaching its stated targets and objectives. Taking into consideration all the activities implemented over the life of the project, the evaluation addresses issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability, and recommendations for future projects. The evaluation also aims to—

1. Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved.
2. Assist OCFT to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad OCFT technical cooperation program framework.
3. Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved.
4. Assess progress in terms of children's working and educational status (i.e., withdrawal and prevention from the worst forms of child labor; enrollment, retention, and the completion of educational programs).

The evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations are grouped under the five major headings below. Findings are presented according to the specific questions raised in the USDOL Terms of Reference (TOR, see Annex D).

1. **Overall Project Design/Implementation** covers how the project fits with EI objectives, within the WI portfolio, and within national government child labor and education policies and practice. Initial implementation, monitoring, and sustainability strategies are analyzed in the light of experience and progress toward project objectives assessed. The concepts of innovation and BP—key aspects of CIRCLE—are also reviewed.
2. **Subcontract Design/Implementation** examines NGO subcontractors' progress toward meeting the goals of their individual projects and the degree of satisfaction and ownership of activities in the communities concerned. The measurement of USDOL's common indicators is assessed, as is the effectiveness of the selection process and relevance and innovation of subcontract design.
3. **Partnership and Coordination** looks at how the WI and subcontracting NGOs have met the challenges of working together and networking at national and international levels, particularly in relation to national (and local) child labor and education policies and practice. The functioning of RSCs is examined, as well as any links with other U.S.-funded child labor initiatives in the project zone.

4. **Management and Budget** assesses how WI has administered technical and financial aspects of project implementation by examining the systems and processes that have been put in place and the level of NGO satisfaction with the orientation, training, and support that they have received.
5. **Sustainability and Impact** examines to what degree CIRCLE-initiated education strategies to prevent and reduce child labor are continuing/may continue after the end of each subcontract and their impact in target communities. Potential for replication or scale-up is assessed, as is the possible tradeoff between short-term projects fostering innovation versus longer term projects focusing on sustainability. This section will also examine the future potential of the BPs document.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to learn what is or is not working with the project, which may have implications for the project itself or for the OCFT program as a whole. The evaluation is an objective inquiry that can facilitate any corrective action and encourage the capitalization and reinforcement of successful aspects of the project. Ultimately, the purpose is to assure that children's needs are being met through project interventions and that the best possible use is made of emerging BPs. It is a learning process above all.

IV EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was carried out by three evaluators, one each for Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This document is a global analysis and synthesis of the three regional reports that summarize the regional findings. The key stages of the evaluation methodology are outlined below:

- Prior to fieldwork, a **desk review** of key project documents was carried out (see Annex B).
- **Countries and projects to be visited were selected** with input from WI concerning practical considerations such as location and distance. In Africa, Mali, Ghana and Sierra Leone were selected; in Latin America, Brazil and Bolivia; and in Asia, Nepal, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. The evaluators visited or talked to 82 members of staff from 24 NGOs, which were responsible for 29 of the 101 subcontracts awarded across the world. Visits to 36 project sites took place. Within each country, communities to be visited were selected to include both active and completed projects, CIRCLE I and CIRCLE II projects, and awards of varying amounts (see Annex E for more detail).
- **Interviews in the United States:** Prior to the regional field visits in May, the three evaluators came together in Washington and met with WI Headquarters (HQ) staff and past/present Project Managers at USDOL. They also interviewed the consultant developing the BP document and briefly visited a child labor conference on Capitol Hill.³ The visit also allowed the evaluation team to finalize all data collection instruments and ensure coherence in its approach across regions.
- **Community visits:** In the communities that they visited, the evaluators facilitated semi-structured interviews with groups of boys and girls, parents, local leaders, and teachers, including school management committees, parents' associations, and other relevant community groups, to discuss child labor and education, the activities initiated by the project, and visions of the future. This process enabled the evaluators to assess the degree of community involvement and ownership of project activities, their level of satisfaction concerning project achievements, and approaches and attitudes concerning education and child labor. Whenever possible, project activities were visited in order to observe the gender and general age of participants, the atmosphere and dynamics between staff and young people, the quality and content of the activity they were engaged in, the physical environment, and materials and facilities available (i.e., whether the activity seemed appropriate to meet the objectives for which it was designed). Subcontractor personnel acted as interpreters for community interviews. The following list gives the numbers of boys, girls, men, and women who took part in discussions at the community level during the evaluation:

³ The event brought together former child laborers from Colombia, Ghana, and India with U.S. high school students as part of the Global Campaign for Education's annual week of action.

Table 2: NGO Subcontractors and Projects Visited

Country	NGO/Location	CIRCLE Projects Visited
Mali	AJA Bamako	Supporting Child Apprentices in Bamako - Communes II&VI
	RAC Kenièba, Kayes	Integrated Project To Reduce Child Labor and Increase Education in Kenièba
Sierra Leone	RADA Bo	1. Strengthening Education Systems: Rural child labor 2. Borderline Community Anti-Child Trafficking Awareness Creation and Mobilization Project 3. Trafficking Policy Workshop (with CARD and APEGS)
	CARD Bo	1. Basic education and vocational skills training for marginalized children 2. Community Awareness Raising to Enforce the Child Labor/Anti-Trafficking Act
Ghana	PACF Accra	Strengthening Education Systems: Children at risk of trafficking
	CRADA Kumasi	Strengthening Education Systems: Young Children on and/or of the Street, Orphans & Vulnerable Children
	EPAG Kumasi	Raise Awareness: working children
	ANPPCAN Kumasi	Addressing Child Labor in Four Districts of the Ashanti Region of Ghana
Philippines	HOPE Bacolod	Reducing Child Labor Risk Of Children Of Sugar Farm Workers Through Education
	Quidan Kaiserhan Sipalay	Promoting Community-Driven Initiatives in Combating Child Labor in Sipalay City Through Education
	SCM Cebu	Children and Youth for Child Rights Protection: Creating Partnerships with Communities and Schools
Nepal	CWISH Kathmandu	Education To Reduce Child Labor
	CWIN Kathmandu	From Exploitation to Education
	BASE Banke and Dang	Awareness-Raising of Freed-Bonded Labor, Porter, and Conflict Victims Children
	STC Dang	Pens Instead of Hammers: Education and Community Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Stone Quarries
Bangladesh	CSID Dhaka	Reducing Child Labor Through Promoting Education Opportunities for Working Children with Disabilities
	NDS Dhaka	Integrated Nonformal Functional Literacy, Semi-Skill Training and Self-Employment for Street Children in the Urban Informal Sector in Dhaka and Chittagong Cities
	MUK Meherpur	Nonformal Education for Children
Bolivia	Proceso Servicios Educativos Santa Cruz	Strengthening Education Systems: Curriculum design targets hard-working and abused adolescents to continue primary studies
	Programa Obispo Anaya Cocha-bamba	Strengthening Educational Systems for Child Laborers in Garbage Environments
	CEBIAE Potosí	Prevention and Eradication of CL in the Potosi City Education Program
Brazil	Sociedade Primeiro de Maio Salvador	Strengthening Education Systems: Street Children
	Casa Renascer Natal	Strengthening Strategies To Combat Sexual and Commercial Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Natal
	CENDHEC Recife	From Child Labor to Participation

Table 3: Informants in Community Interviews

Participants in Community Interviews	Africa		Asia		Latin America	
	Boys/ Men	Girls/ Women	Boys/ Men	Girls/ Women	Boys/ Men	Girls/ Women
Children in project	111	68	101	107	35	33
Children not in project	0	1	40	31	4	1
Parents/community members	134	92	73	190	12	65
Teachers	26	6	11	15	11	26
Leaders	40	7	21	48	13	17

- **Interviews with subcontractors:** For each project visited, the evaluators spoke with the NGO staff responsible for the project either individually or in small groups concerning project design, implementation, monitoring and sustainability, the partnership with WI, and the local and national child labor and education context. Any other CIRCLE projects implemented by the same NGO were also discussed.
- **Interviews at the national level:** Representatives of government, UN agencies, USAID, U.S. Embassies, and any international NGOs that had collaborated on the project were interviewed to assess the degree to which CIRCLE activities were embedded in or encouraged a national approach to Education for All (EFA) and reduced child labor; progress made on advocacy and relevant local/regional/national policies; and to what degree CIRCLE had successfully networked and collaborated with others working for similar objectives, particularly those using U.S. funds.
- **Interviews at a regional level:** In-depth interviews were conducted with key WI staff in each regional office concerning all aspects of project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, management, and sustainability. The evaluators also met with members of the RSCs to ask their opinion about the processes involved in selection and BP evaluation.⁴
- **Stakeholders' meetings and debriefs:** The evaluators facilitated stakeholders' meetings in Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Philippines, and Brazil to bring together as broad a range of actors as possible who are or have been involved with CIRCLE and/or education and/or child labor. A similar meeting for implementing partners took place in Nepal. These meetings enabled the evaluators to verify their understanding of CIRCLE projects in each country and to facilitate discussion about the broader issues of education and child labor and the potential for ongoing activities in the country concerned. At the end of visits to subcontractors who did not have the opportunity to attend a stakeholders' meeting, evaluators held a debrief session outlining their general observations during the field visits and asked participants to respond, thus facilitating some discussion about the findings and future possibilities.

⁴ See Annex A for details of people interviewed.

- **E-mail survey:** A limited e-mail survey of the views and perspectives of NGO subcontractors that the evaluators were not able to visit consisted of questions concerning issues such as innovation, capacity-building, project sustainability, the strengths and challenges of the overall experience of working with WI, and suggestions for the future. Seven NGOs in Africa responded, six in Latin America, and eight in Asia. Responses are integrated into the report as they relate to the questions in the TOR and other issues arising during the evaluation. This was a confidential survey to encourage respondents to speak freely and, as such, quotes from the survey are not attributed to specific subcontractors. A separate e-mail survey was sent to nine RSC members and BP reviewers in Latin America to solicit their input on these CIRCLE processes. Responses are integrated into the report.

V FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Details about the individual projects of the CIRCLE subcontractors visited by the regional evaluators can be found either on the WI website or in the regional evaluation reports for Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This section draws together the main issues from those reports highlighting regional similarities and differences under five headings, looking at CIRCLE from a global perspective.

5.1 OVERALL PROJECT DESIGN/IMPLEMENTATION

5.1.1 Findings

Responses to Specific Questions Raised in the TOR

1. *Even though CIRCLE's goals are closely associated with the four EI goals, does the project design seem to be adequately supporting the four EI goals? If not, which ones are not being supported and why not?*

Across all three regions, the picture is broadly similar. Half (50) of all funded proposals identified strengthening formal and transitional education systems (EI Goal 2) as one of the primary EI goals that their project aimed to address. Raising awareness of the importance of education (EI Goal 1) was a goal identified by 41 subcontractors. While only nine projects chose sustainability (EI Goal 4) as their primary aim, this was a cross-cutting objective for the vast majority. The third EI goal of strengthening national institutions and policy was more challenging because efforts were concentrated at the community level, but this did not prevent a number of subcontractors from addressing and having an impact on local policy development in all three regions, and some also contributed at a national level. Most projects, while identifying a primary EI objective, also contributed to others through their activities.

Overall, CIRCLE met the challenge of supporting all four EI goals relatively well. Due to the fact that the first two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) yielded few proposals specifically supporting Goals 3 and 4 (policy and sustainability), WI highlighted these aspects in the third RFP, resulting in a few more subcontracts focused on these areas. In any future CIRCLE-type projects, WI or other grantees could play a greater role in facilitating and encouraging contact between subcontractors, appropriate ministries, and others working on related issues in the same country, which would help local experiences to feed into and influence national policy and networking.

2. *Is the project on track in terms of meeting its stated purpose and outputs in the project documents? If not, what seem to be the factors contributing to delays?*

The project is largely on track in terms of meeting its two stated purposes. First, community-based educational innovations aimed at preventing child labor are being developed and documented through spotlight stories (68 of the predicted 78 are either finished or underway) and the BP document is in progress and due for completion by September 2007. Secondly, at-risk

children are being prevented from child labor and educated in programs relevant to communities in which they live. By March 2007, CIRCLE had reported 23,383 children Withdrawn/Prevented (W/P) from exploitive work and enrolled in education.

Table 4: Target and Actual Progress for Project Indicators

Overall Winrock Indicators	Project Target	Project Total to Date March 2007
1. Existence of a final document detailing replicable community-based educational innovations, or “Best Practices.” (Purpose)	1	In progress
2. Number of Spotlight Stories (Purpose)	CIRCLE 1—39 CIRCLE 2—39	CIRCLE 1—43 CIRCLE 2—17 CIRCLE 2—8 (in progress)
3a. Percent of children (at-risk of child labor) in subcontract-funded activities in target communities, educated.* (Purpose)	n/a	Africa: 107.3% (103.5%) LA 109% (85%) Asia 132.5% SEA 105%
3b. Percent of subcontracted NGOs in subcontracted-funded activities meeting targets for children, educated. (Output)	70%	Africa 78% (75%) LA 100% (81.8%) Asia 85.7% SEA 100%
4. Percent of overall subcontracts that are implemented as planned (inclusive of extensions). (Output)	90%	92%
5. Percent of community-based organizations with increased capacity to manage and report on educational innovations. (Output)	80%	84%
6. Number of subcontracts awarded.	n/a	100

n/a = no data available

* Percentages of targeted children in completed projects who received direct services and were enrolled in education due to project interventions. The lower numbers in parentheses factor in the six subcontracts that failed to finish (3a and 3b).

CIRCLE is also on track with regard to the outputs identified in the project logframe:

1. As of March 2007, 70 of the 76 subcontracts that ended have been implemented as planned (92%), some receiving no-cost extensions to enable them to complete their activities. Six subcontracts did not complete their projects and were suspended, canceled, or incomplete due to financial and/ or communication difficulties or poor implementation. Twenty-four subcontracts are ongoing and the majority is on track for completion, as planned.

2. The March 2007 Technical Progress Report (TPR) reports 84% of community-based organizations (CBOs) having increased capacity to manage and report on educational innovations, against a targeted 80%. It is not clear exactly how this has been calculated, as regional offices did not systematically report on the contributing criteria,⁵ but it is in line with evaluation findings in the field, where most subcontractors said that WI helped them to understand CIRCLE indicators and reporting procedures that had built their overall organizational capacity. It should be pointed out that subcontractors, with a few exceptions in South Asia, are national NGOs and not CBOs, although they initiate community-based projects.

During the evaluation, there was considerable discussion of the design of the CIRCLE logframe itself and its use as a project management tool. Several shortcomings were identified and WI worked to rectify some of these. The problems were technical in nature and are mentioned in an attempt to reduce confusion in the future. They center on the fact that while the logframe covers the two CIRCLE purposes, it covers only one of the four EI objectives, which are an integral part of the CIRCLE project. This means that there are two reporting structures, one being the logframe and the other the USDOL EI format used in the TPR reports. The logframe also has a series of subsidiary indicators that do not appear to be calculated and are hence redundant.

Issues around using the logframe as a management tool include the fact that regional offices do not report against the logframe, and in some cases, even expressed surprise that it existed. While RMs provided information based on logframe indicators, it is WI HQ that processes the figures to report against the logframe. There is no suggestion that Regional Managers (RMs) are not fully aware of CIRCLE purposes and objectives, but it would probably have been helpful if they had worked with the logframe table, thus decentralizing reporting, providing checks that there was a common understanding of the indicators, developing regional data, and giving regional offices more of a sense of the project as a whole.

3. *Were the project purpose and outputs realistic?*

Broadly speaking, the project purposes and outputs were realistic, but in a project such as CIRCLE, they are necessarily fairly general since the details of the subcontracts are not known when the project document is being written. In addition to reporting progress toward CIRCLE's stated purposes and outputs, WI attempts to measure the project's overall contribution to each EI objective by assigning each subcontract's individual indicators to the most appropriate EI objective. Similar objectives from different projects are combined so that overall results from three continents roll up in an attempt to give a meaningful indication of CIRCLE's global contribution to the indicator concerned. So, for example, we get an indicator in the TPR reports that tells us that a total of 65 infrastructure improvements appeared in various subcontract plans across the world and up until March 2007, 101 such improvements had been completed.

⁵ Criteria used for Reporting improved: Timely and complete reporting based on requirements, reports substantiated by documentation, quality outputs based on activities indicated in the work plan, good analysis of challenges and solutions given, can defend any modifications in planned activities, general less need for technical improvements (based on WI comments), correct GPRA reporting.

We have no idea if these improvements represent new schools or new toilet blocks or how, in this case, subcontractors have managed to so greatly exceed the target. This is but one example of 17 such indicators, some of which are considerably more nebulous. While WI has made creative efforts to represent aspects of CIRCLE that are not taken into account through other indicators, perhaps more qualitative reporting would be more informative concerning much of this information.

Table 5: Indicators for Four EI Objectives

EI Objective 2

Indicators	Entire Project Target	Project Period 09/2006–03/2007	Actual Project Total to Date (excluding present documentation period)
1. Number of infrastructure improvements	65	13	88
2. Number of Parent Teacher Associations formed	8	34	32
3. Number of vocational courses offered	42	20	56
4. Number of teachers/school administrators trained in improved teaching methods/school management/child labor	267	541	1,254
5. Improved curriculum modules developed or adapted	33	35	153
6. Monetary value of national resources leveraged or leveraged to improve and expand education infrastructure (estimated monetary value if in-kind)	N/A	US\$0	US\$1,552

EI Objective 1

Indicators	Entire Project Target	Project Period 09/2006–03/2007	Actual Project Total to Date (excluding present documentation period)
1. Number of individuals receiving training or sensitization on child labor and education	17,364	5,232	60,489
2. Number of media or public-awareness materials produced—brochures, radio programs, etc.	29,779	514	52,121
3. Number of people reached through radio or TV programs	1,510	55,450	26,735
4. Number of people reporting an increase in child labor awareness	38,631	9,822	37,760

Indicators	Entire Project Target	Project Period 09/2006–03/2007	Actual Project Total to Date (excluding present documentation period)
5. Number of people reached by public awareness campaigns/theaters/rallies	81,206	51,622	601,760
6. Increased enrollment (withdrawal/prevention) because of awareness (non-direct beneficiaries)	3,861	91	19,032

EI Objective 3

Indicators	Entire Project Target	Project Period 09/2006–03/2007	Actual Project Total to Date (excluding present documentation period)
1. Number of stakeholders meeting to discuss child labor policies and issues affecting child labor/policy makers/school management	5,051	519	3,749
2. Number of individual new birth registrations for school enrollment (withdrawal/prevention)	4,000	287	8,545

EI Objective 4

Indicators	Entire Project Target	Project Period 09/2006–03/2007	Actual Project Total to Date (excluding present documentation period)
1. Number of action plans for project or community	20	64	503
2. Number of civil society and private organizations taking up issues to reduce child labor	3,094	499	2,954
3. Number of blockades removed in policy	14	4	48

One observation is that in nearly all cases, the targets are vastly outstripped by the achievements, which either poses questions about the effectiveness of subcontract planning and budgeting or suggests enormous creativity in the face of need—or a mixture of the two. While exceeding targets may be a great achievement for the project, the degree indicated by CIRCLE reporting suggests that many initial targets were set too low and that more information or planning was needed in the beginning phase of the project to assist subcontractors in designing more realistic targets.

With regard to BP, given the fundamental importance of the final Compendium as a product of CIRCLE, it would have been helpful to incorporate intermediary benchmarks to measure progress over the life of project. Such indicators would have clarified the steps in the production process and

given project staff around the world a better sense of progress along the way, as well as their role within it. WI explained that the methodology was established in June 2006 and progress reported in the TPR thereafter. While the overall process for developing the BP document could have been better thought through at the planning stages, it is evolving over time and there is every indication that the production of the proposed document is realistic and on track.

4. *Is the project able to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL common indicators (withdrawal, prevention, capacity building)? If not, why not?*

When CIRCLE I was initially awarded in 2002, WI was required to report against enrollment, persistence, transition, and completion indicators for the EI goal of direct educational services. In 2005, USDOL instigated reporting against “common indicators” of enrollment, retention, transition and completion under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Early in 2006, USDOL revised the name of its “enrollment” indicator to “withdrawn/prevented” and the concept of “transition” was removed (WI was instructed to include it under completion). CIRCLE adapted its reporting in line with this, instigating separate categories for withdrawn and prevented. Definitions of these indicators are provided below to orient the reader.

Because the change in indicator guidance occurred after Round 2 awards were made in mid-2005, Round 2 subcontractors were not required to set W/P targets. Some did attempt to measure W/P based on the definitions provided, but since they had not received W/P indicator training, their understanding was incomplete. Round 3 subcontractors were thus the only ones to officially set targets and receive RLM guidance on the indicators. The quality of their data and reporting is clearly better as a result.

5.1.2 Definitions of USDOL Common Indicators⁶

Withdrawn

Refers to those children who were found to be working and no longer work as a result of a project intervention. This category also includes those children who were engaged in exploitive/hazardous (see definition) work and as a result of a project intervention, now work shorter hours under safer conditions. In both cases, in order to be considered as beneficiaries of the project/program under this category, children working in exploitive child labor must no longer be working and must benefit or must have benefited from educational or training opportunities, as defined, provided by the project.

Prevented

This refers to children who are either siblings of (ex-) working children or those children not yet working but considered to be at “high-risk” of engaging in exploitive work. In order to be considered as “prevented,” these children must benefit (or have benefited) from educational or training opportunities, as defined, provided by the project.

⁶ Source: U.S. Department of Labor Glossary of Child Labor and Education Terms, included in Winrock Regional Launch Meeting manual.

Retention

The percentage of children withdrawn/prevented through a USDOL-supported educational program(s) who continue in the program (i.e., to subsequent years, periods, and/or levels of the program or who stay in the program even if they are not promoted).

Completion

The percentage of children withdrawn/prevented through a USDOL-supported program that complete the program(s).

A regional breakdown of the consolidated data table presented by WI up to March 2007 is reproduced on the following page. The W/P data for LA differs considerably from that gathered in the field by the regional evaluator, (see table below) primarily because (1) several NGO reporting errors were discovered and resolved during the evaluation, (2) WI staff recently discovered that student data from several NGOs had been double-counted (i.e., the same students were counted under more than one GPRA cohort). It seems that WI over-reported their W/P total by over 1,000, however, it can be noted that their completion data (1,697) is within 1% of the regional evaluator's findings (1,646). In the regional evaluator's opinion, these figures are the most accurate available, so WI will need to revise its report and look at how the errors occurred.

Table 6: Difference Between Reported and Calculated W/P Data

LA Figures	Withdrawn	Prevented	(Cohorts 1+2+3) Completion
WI consolidated table	2,595		(920+446+331) = 1,697
Regional evaluator*	242	670	(0+1595 +51) = 1,646

* W/P figures do not include children who subsequently dropped out of their education programs because the regional evaluator did not count them as permanently W/P. In DOL definitions, W/P figures are based on enrollment, so for a valid comparison with the WI figures, these children need to be added to the regional evaluator's W/P figures. This adjustment affects between 155 and 311 children.

The regional evaluation reports for both Africa and Asia also comment on the complexity of measuring the common indicators. The question-and-answer guide to GPRA indicators that USDOL developed in 2006 is 19 pages long, and for many of the subcontractors, the indicators and their explanations need to be translated into a language that they can understand. While some misunderstanding and misreporting came to light during the evaluation, both these regional evaluators felt that by the time figures have been reviewed and checked by regional WI staff, there is every reason to believe that the reported results are an accurate representation of what is happening on the ground. However, they did not gather such detailed information as the LA evaluator and in the light of her findings, it might be wise to take another look at the reporting of USDOL common indicators across all three regions. In conclusion, it can be said that WI needs to review their data collection strategies in Latin America and it would be advisable to apply any lessons learned across the board to double check on data from Africa and Asia.

Indicator-related issues that were a source of confusion for subcontractors include—

- Retention only factors in children who have been W/P and there is no mechanism to count those who are attending an education program but have not *yet* been W/P.
- Do student beneficiaries still count under the project if they reach age 18 before the subcontract ends?
- How should students who continue to work a few hours outside of school (e.g., on the weekends) be classified?
- There is difficulty in monitoring certain types of child labor (e.g., domestic work and agriculture) and illicit activities (e.g., prostitution) according to the indicator definitions. While they are theoretically clear, the definitions seem not to work as well in the field, as the reality of child labor is dynamic and complex.

Table 7: Regional Breakdown of WI Consolidated Data Table as of March 2007

Withdrawn/Prevented v. Actual

Region		Project Cohort 1			Project Cohort 2			Project Cohort 3			Project Cohort 4		
		Project Start 08/31/04			09/01/04–08/31/05			09/01/05–08/31/06			09/01/06–08/31/07		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Africa	T	n/a	n/a	1202	n/a	n/a	2434	n/a	n/a	4486	n/a	n/a	819
Asia	W	665	334	n/a	1134	1422	n/a	1988	2201	n/a	21	105	n/a
	P	791	779	n/a	581	819	n/a	304	415	n/a	155	133	n/a
	T	1456	1113	2569	1715	2241	3956	2292	2616	4908	176	238	414
Latin America	W	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	269	182	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	P	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	127	167	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	T	n/a	n/a	1080	n/a	n/a	770	396	349	745	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL (23,383)		n/a	n/a	4851	n/a	n/a	7160	n/a	n/a	10139	n/a	n/a	1233

M = Male; F = Female; T = Total, W = Withdrawn; P = Prevented; n/a = no data available

Retention: Percent of Children Retained in Educational Programs

Region	Actual*	Project Cohort 1	Project Cohort 2	Project Cohort 3	Project Cohort 4
Africa	Numerator	0	0	1,113	n/a
	Denominator	0	30	1,209	n/a
	Percent	n/a	0.00%	92.06%	n/a

Region	Actual*	Project Cohort 1	Project Cohort 2	Project Cohort 3	Project Cohort 4
Asia	Numerator	0	21	1,515	n/a
	Denominator	0	442	1,572	n/a
	Percent	n/a	4.75%	96.37%	n/a
Latin America	Numerator	0	191	396	n/a
	Denominator	0	324	414	n/a
	Percent	n/a	58.95%	95.65%	n/a
TOTAL Percent		n/a	26.63%	94.65%	n/a

n/a = no data available

Table 7. Completion: Percent of Children Completing Educational Programs

Region	Actual*	Project Cohort 1	Project Cohort 2	Project Cohort 3	Project Cohort 4
Africa	Numerator	1,188	2,404	3,277	n/a
	Denominator	1,202	2,434	4,486	n/a
	Percent	98.84%	98.77%	73.05%	n/a
Asia	Numerator	2,413	3,514	3,336	72
	Denominator	2,569	3,956	4,908	414
	Percent	93.93%	88.83%	67.97%	17.39%
Latin America	Numerator	920	446	331	n/a
	Denominator	1,080	770	745	n/a
	Percent	85.19%	57.92%	44.43%	n/a
TOTAL Percent		93.20%	88.88%	68.49%	n/a

n/a = no data available

USDOL's Completion definition: "Children are counted as completed when they finish the EI-supported intervention, so when the intervention ends, they will have completed the intervention, even if they are still in school." Of the 22,150 children enrolled in education programs in the first three cohorts, 95.1% (21,065) either remain in or have completed a USDOL intervention.

* Actual signifies *not broken down by gender or withdrawn/prevention*.

With regard to measuring the USDOL national capacity-building indicator, the CIRCLE report format asks subcontractors to report on each element identified by USDOL as an indicator, so the project as a whole is in a good position to accurately report on this common indicator.

5. *Did USDOL technical assistance on project design and monitoring help the project staff enough to warrant its cost and continued implementation in future projects?*

The Management Systems International workshop was appreciated by WI HQ, but as previously stated, the resulting logframe focuses solely on EI Goal 2: "To strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school" without specific reference to the other three EI goals, even though they are given

as project objectives in the project document. This made it difficult to capture certain aspects of project activities within this format and resulted in the need to develop other indicators outside the logframe, which rather defeated its purpose. To some extent, the Juarez & Associates workshop on the USDOL common indicators was superseded as some of the definitions changed during the course of the project. In spite of these issues, the technical assistance workshops provided an opportunity for the staff team to develop and refine important aspects of the project with some outside assistance and those who attended felt they warranted continued implementation for future projects. Unfortunately, CIRCLE regional teams did not participate, probably due to cost and logistics.

6. *Can increased educational quality be measured within the project framework? What has been its impact, if any, on project common indicators (withdrawal and prevention of children from child labor)?*

The only mechanism for measuring educational quality within the overall project framework is the rolled up subcontract indicators mentioned above. These give overall figures for—

- The number of infrastructure improvements.
- The number of Community/Teachers Associations (CTAs) established.
- The number of teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) trained.
- The number of improved curriculum modules developed.

While these indicators reflect some essential elements of improved quality, there is no automatic correlation between such interventions and quality improvements. Trained teachers must apply new methodologies, parents must exercise school leadership, new classrooms must be equipped and staffed, etc. As the roots of poor educational quality are deep, it is not realistic to expect significant sustainable changes over the relatively short periods covered by many subcontracts. That being said, much of the work under CIRCLE has planted the seeds of interventions that *could* impact quality over time, under favorable conditions. Examples include tutoring and academic support services, the introduction of creative methodologies suited to the learning needs of child laborers and at-risk youth, training/sensitization of after-school educators, well-equipped classrooms, teachers trained to meet the special needs of the children they work with, student lodging, daycare for babies and toddlers, food and materials for trainees, and curricula tailored to the needs of the groups concerned.

There is a wide variation in the emphasis given to the quality of education within individual subcontracts visited during the evaluation. Some subcontractors provided resourceful and creative learning environments, but some of the children enrolled in school and vocational training are finding it difficult to survive, as their families no longer benefit from their income and have additional expenses linked to supporting them in education. Some schools find it hard to attract and maintain teachers and have limited teaching or learning materials. Some older children have dropped out of vocational training due to an inability to support themselves and a lack of support from anywhere else. We have seen that many subcontractors exceeded their

targets with regard to the number of children enrolled in education and it is important to ask whether more emphasis on quality and less on access would have been of more help to the children concerned.

The quality of education has a greater impact on retention and completion than on enrollment because once children are in an education program, they are more likely to stay if it is meeting their needs and both they and their parents sense that they are making progress. Withdrawal and prevention are initially more related to access to education because once parents decide they want education for their children, their concern is to find a place and they are often not in a good position to either judge the quality of what is on offer or to have any alternative to choose from. Part of the training that is important for SMCs and CTAs is how to encourage and ensure quality in their educational establishments.

To increase the impact and more effectively assess the quality of education interventions, future CIRCLE-type projects could develop mechanisms that go beyond the use of broad quantitative indicators. Orientation for such projects would include discussion and analysis of educational quality and the development of common project criteria and categories. For example, infrastructure improvements could be subdivided into toilets (particularly important for girls), classrooms, and teacher accommodation/administrative blocks, and then rolled-up indicators would be more informative. The number of *functional* CTAs/SMCs could be measured, with agreed criteria for functionality and the introduction of participatory tools for performance measurement. Common criteria for good teacher performance could be established, alongside standardized observation protocols. The primary purposes of such strategies are to have a greater impact on the quality of education and to enable those concerned to measure their progress for themselves and be able to implement self-correcting strategies when they do not meet their desired objectives (hence contributing to sustainability). The secondary purpose is to enable the project to more effectively assess the quality of its interventions.

7. *How does the project's design fit into overall government programs to combat child labor and provide education for all?*

The CIRCLE design is in line with government programs to combat child labor and provide EFA and has the potential to be still more effective in supporting and encouraging these programs. Many subcontracts support the implementation of national EFA policies through their contribution to education infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum development, support for literacy, and work with SMCs. During the evaluation visits in Africa, links with government programs to combat child labor were less tangible, with the exception of Sierra Leone, where several subcontracts specifically supported recent legislation.⁷ In addition, WI reports that subcontracts in other countries have also developed such links. In Brazil, two of the three subcontractors visited work closely with PETI (Program for the Eradication of Child Labor), the government's flagship child labor program, and in Bolivia, two subcontractors focus primarily on both the formulation of better policies affecting youth (with child laborers as a key target population) and the application and enforcement of existing laws/policies, starting at the local

⁷ The Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2005 and the Child Welfare Act are awaiting final government approval.

level. In all three countries visited in Asia, subcontractors were actively contributing to the implementation of national child labor elimination policies.

While WI did not make connecting with or knowledge of national programs a priority and links with government ministries were limited, some subcontractors successfully integrated their work into government programs through collaboration and cooperation with local administrative and education authorities. There is real potential to expand this aspect of any future project to encourage greater cooperation with national and regional authorities so that subcontractors' local initiatives become more visible and are better connected to ongoing national development programs. This cooperation would improve options for sustainability and develop the capacity of NGOs and governments to share information and cooperate. Any grantee organization in WI's position has an important role to play in encouraging this cooperation at all levels as part of national capacity-building.

8. *What other major design/implementation issues should be brought to the attention of the implementing organization and USDOL? (Emerging issues)*

The duration/budget of subcontracts is one of the most important issues to come out of the evaluation in that it directly affects children and their communities. Due to its objective of identifying innovations, CIRCLE chose to implement a large number of subcontracts of relatively short duration, many being of less than a year. In visit after visit to communities during the evaluation, there were requests for project extensions and additional funding for the continuation of activities. While such requests are, to some extent, inevitable as there is always more to be done, when they are justified with well-reasoned arguments, they deserve to be taken seriously. The most common issue raised was that more training or time was needed to assimilate and disseminate new knowledge and implement activities; for example, it was rare to find CBOs able to implement good advocacy and planning strategies in short-term projects. NGO staff frequently echoed these sentiments, while appreciating the opportunity provided by CIRCLE, at the same time regretting that it only enabled them to go so far. Some were finding it difficult to cope with the raised community expectations that remained after the end of the subcontract.

The validity of these arguments is borne out by the observably greater impact of the few NGOs that implemented several consecutive subcontracts in the same communities or integrated CIRCLE activities into long-term community development programs (RADA in Sierra Leone providing a good example), compared with that of equally competent NGOs who worked in communities for the duration of only one short subcontract. Some such NGOs did make ongoing applications for CIRCLE funding but were unsuccessful—perhaps because RSCs were unaware of their track record (this point is further discussed when looking at selection procedures).

The conclusion to be drawn is that while withdrawing/preventing and enrolling any children in education is of benefit to them as individuals, sustainable change benefiting successive generations involves community development, which is a process of empowerment that takes time. Any future CIRCLE-type projects need to take this into account by supporting subcontracts of longer duration—probably a *minimum* of two years would be wise, with the possibility of extending subcontracts that are working well.

The need to support income generation emerged from many site visits during the evaluation. It is fairly obvious that if children are working and providing family income and they are then withdrawn from work and sent to school—which inevitably involves additional expenditure—there is likely to be a problem. While USDOL does not allow funds to be given directly to communities or fund training for adults, that does not mean that subcontractors cannot work with communities to facilitate an analysis of income and expenditure (which is sometimes enough in itself) and/or develop strategies for income generation and resource mobilization. Some subcontractors did tackle this issue through family savings plans, skills training, changing attitudes regarding child labor and education, and linking other partnerships with CIRCLE activities, with varying degrees of success.

Networking and sharing experiences between subcontractors and others working on similar issues was another issue emerging from the evaluation. The experience of meeting other subcontractors during regional launch meetings was universally seen as important and a useful opportunity for sharing experiences. Some NGOs mentioned the need for CIRCLE to facilitate greater networking between subcontractors and other organizations working on child labor/trafficking issues within the same country to encourage shared learning and collaboration on advocacy issues. It would be worthwhile for any future CIRCLE-type projects to build networking into the project design, not only between subcontractors, but also with other organizations, particularly other USDOL-funded projects.

Capacity-building of subcontracting NGOs took place primarily to facilitate CIRCLE project management as opposed to offering support for organizational strengthening or technical assistance and it was very successful at this level. The Cooperative Agreement gives a mandate to “*promote the capacity development of local NGOs...to respond creatively and effectively to the complex challenges of educating children removed from child labor or at risk of entering it*” (p. 2), and in the future, this could be exploited more widely to include capacity-building in technical aspects such as the quality of education, participatory approaches to community development, issues around child labor/trafficking and child rights, and more opportunities for shared learning. This would contribute not only to more effective project implementation, but also to the development of the capacity of civil society organizations to address these issues on an ongoing basis in the countries concerned.

Language: The complexity of managing all project elements in languages other than English is an issue that is often underestimated in project design, budgeting, and implementation and CIRCLE is no exception. The project operates in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and numerous local languages and specific strategies are required to ensure that language barriers have a minimum impact on implementation. It is also important to attempt to counteract the power usually associated with colonial languages, which implies the inferior value of local languages and cultures and one way of doing this is for USDOL and grantees to be sensitive to language issues, encouraging project staff at all levels to follow this example.

Some of the issues that need to be addressed—

- USDOL produces project documents (e.g., indicators, GPRA information, child labor [CL] definitions, semester report format) in English, and each EI grantee is individually

responsible for translating (or not translating) them. As a result, the subtleties in the original language often get lost and ambiguities are magnified, which makes it even more challenging for NGOs to accurately follow guidance. USDOL could go a long way toward resolving this issue and save EI money by providing official translations of core documents in key languages.

- Despite high translation costs and the staff burden involved (particularly in LA), there was no separate line item in WI's budget for the regional offices. Translation needs to be planned and budgeted for.
- The difficulty of finding good translators who are also knowledgeable about CL issues and CIRCLE content bears out the need for extensive, time-consuming editing of written translations. Translation duties are often carried out by regional staff in addition to their other duties. Again, translation needs to be planned and budgeted for.
- It is challenging for CIRCLE HQ personnel (who do not speak Spanish or Portuguese although other HQ personnel do) and other regional offices to serve as BP reviewers of projects since many key documents (e.g., bimonthly reports) are written in French/Spanish/Portuguese. The other side of the coin is that WI site visit reports must be written in English, which precludes non-English speaking BP reviewers from reading them.

Language has been a major issue in LA, a significant one in Africa, but does not seem to have been a problem in Asia. This is probably because the working or official language in Asia tends to be English as opposed to French, Spanish, or Portuguese in certain countries of the other two regions.

9. *Was the community-based approach successful?*

CIRCLE provides a particularly successful approach to implementing community-based projects because it enables subcontractors to initiate projects specifically tailored to the needs of individual communities. The CIRCLE project document describes potential subcontractors as “community-based organizations,” which is misleading, as subcontractors are national NGOs, usually based either in the capitol city or in regional towns. The common understanding of CBOs is more applicable to the various Community Child Labor Committees (CCLCs), SMCs, and CTAs which subcontractors helped to establish. This question is answered in more detail in the following section as the details concern subcontract implementation.

10. *Did the project result in sufficient innovation?*

“Innovative under CIRCLE means an approach to reducing CL through education that is unique or new in its context, and is of potentially wider interest and application. An intervention does not necessarily need to be brand new or original to be innovative. An innovative intervention might be a change in practice that produced unexpectedly positive results, for example, or an approach grounded in local tradition that reduces the number of children involved in the worst forms of child labor. A potential best practice

may (1) be unique in its context, (2) have reached a new (i.e., previously unserved) target group or geographic area with services to prevent or stop child labor, or (3) had unexpected success or unexpectedly positive results.” –As defined by WI in its BP guidance

In the absence of a standard or definition of “sufficient” innovation, it is impossible for the evaluators to assess whether this was achieved. However, based on the evaluation visits and the BP reviews, it is clear that the CIRCLE strategy of supporting a broad range of fairly small projects resulted in the collection of innovative elements, approaches, activities, methodologies, and strategies to reducing child labor through education in countries around the world. While common themes inevitably resulted in similar strategies in different subcontracts, many different examples of ways to support and encourage the principal objectives emerged. Examples are too numerous to list here and the evaluator will not seek to preempt the BP Compendium, which will provide the definitive response to this question.

Perhaps it is also useful to reflect on elements that prevented CIRCLE from being more innovative, among which can be noted:

- USDOL does not have sub-grant authority⁸ from Congress and while the grant to WI was fairly flexible and enabled them to implement a project that did not have predefined output targets, NGOs were required to enter into subcontracts with strictly defined targets. Innovation was encouraged in the design, but there was little scope to develop the intervention based on experience and to respond to community initiatives. In practice, this does not appear to have been a hindrance, possibly because subgrants were administered in a pragmatic manner that maximized their usefulness in achieving project objectives, rather than demanding strict adherence to guidelines as the auditor might have preferred. (See the Executive Summary.)
- Some of the subcontracts implemented by ‘established’ child labor partner organizations appeared to be continuing previous projects or replicating and possibly refining good practices identified from previous experiences. These are useful interventions contributing to the W/P from child labor, and these practices can be incorporated in the BP document, but the projects are not innovative in themselves.
- The timeframe for subcontracts ranges from 6 to 24 months, with most of them being between 12 and 18 months. Although this may be sufficient time to try an innovative activity, it is very short if the aim is to develop and establish an innovation in a community or in a workplace (e.g., a community watch group or SMC).

⁸ “It is improper for nongovernmental entities that receive grant funds from the [United States Government] USG to sub-grant any of these funds where there is no specific congressional authority to do so. USDOL does not have the specific authority in its congressional appropriation to allow subgrants under its cooperative agreements. Subgranting must not be included in an applicant’s budget, although subcontracting may be.” www.dol.gov/ILAB/faq/faq36.htm

11. *Is there any other foreseeable mechanism for achieving innovation?*

When USDOL/ILAB awarded CIRCLE I in 2002, it was the office's first procurement. Though it would have been ideal to structure NGO projects as grants, as noted above, USDOL does not have subgrant authority. As a result of the requirement to issue subcontracts, WI has had to be more formal and structured about deliverables and other elements of NGO project management—taking away some of the intent and flexibility originally envisioned by ILAB. One strategy for achieving further innovation is to build as much flexibility into subcontracts as the Audit Office will allow, in the knowledge that appropriate control and quality will still be maintained by the regional office. Many possible innovations are only recognized during project implementation and flexibility in implementation is needed in order to be able to try them out.

Other mechanisms might include—

- Ensuring that projects have new or significantly different aspects from any previous initiative that the partner has implemented in the same area.
- Providing longer periods of support to enable innovative community structures to become established.
- Working with organizations that are competent and creative in the field but less focused on administration. (Although as WI points out, administrative procedures are essential and organizations need to be able to report on activities, identify results, and be accountable, thus enabling creativity and innovation to be recognized and recorded.)

A more ambitious strategy would be to take the CIRCLE concept one step further and ask subcontractors to work with CBOs to design and develop projects based on community suggestions. This would require not only experienced and competent subcontractors with a track record of successful community development, but also a highly developed understanding at all levels of the importance of community ownership, empowerment, and the processes necessary for this to emerge, and a funding environment supporting such an initiative.

12. *Assess the compilation of the best practices compendium. How is it progressing and how could it be improved?*

The methodology developed by WI to identify BPs from global CIRCLE projects and distill key information that will be useful for others is summarized in the following activities:

- **Subcontractors identify lessons learned and emerging good practices** in their six-month reports and these are compiled in the regional six-month reports, often with additional analysis by regional staff, thus initiating the process of sifting out important lessons and identifying BPs.
- **Subcontractors provide spotlight stories**, usually illustrating positive change in the life of an individual or a group. While these point to potential BPs, they often contain limited information on the context or on the “how” of the change illustrated and lack followup on the evolution of the situation over time. Complementary use of case studies to illustrate

the points that partners identify as “lessons learned and emerging good practices” is an idea worth considering for the future.

- **Teams of BP reviewers** drawn from over 80 volunteers, including WI staff, academics, representatives of national and international NGOs, and other agencies and specialists in child labor and education evaluate BPs as subcontracts conclude. Reviewers receive a pack of documents including bimonthly progress reports, spotlight stories, and site visit reports for each project. Through desk reviews, they identify elements of the project that they consider to be BPs and score them against six criteria: effectiveness, innovation, educational/vocational relevance, stakeholder involvement, replicability, and sustainability. The reviews of five or six reviewers are summarized by the RMs and used as the basis to identify BPs to include in the BP compendium.
- **A BP WI retreat** in November 2006 developed the strategy for producing the Compendium. A BP was defined as “an aspect of a project that has been effective in preventing or reducing child labor and is an inspiration to others.” It was decided that the Compendium will primarily be aimed at national NGOs and CBOs, with international NGOs and other organizations as secondary targets. The document will focus on practicality and hence be divided into a number of themes, including cross-cutting aspects such as Sustainability, Challenges, Gender, Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), and Creating Synergy. Frameworks and presentations were discussed, together with a potential timeline and process for completing the final document.
- **An external consultant** was hired in early 2007 to compile an initial draft of the BP Compendium, including a report of the CIRCLE project itself as a BP. Subsequently, he and members of WI staff developed the introduction and longer and shorter versions of a sample chapter on Peer Education.
- **The draft version of the BP Compendium** is due to be completed by the end of September 2007 to enable translation, printing, and delivery to USDOL by the end of the year.
- **The launch of the document** is planned at meetings of subcontractors in each region early in 2008, which could also serve as an opportunity for subcontractors to discuss ongoing work to combat child labor/trafficking and encourage education in their respective countries and regions.
- **Dissemination of the document** needs to be completed before the end of CIRCLE II in April 2008.

While the publication of spotlight stories is the only process indicator for the development of the BP Compendium identified in the logframe, a process has evolved that has enabled a wide range of people to look at the project and be involved in highlighting a number of specific potential good practices. WI decided to keep the term, “Best Practices,” because it appears in the original CIRCLE proposal and cooperative agreement. The BP Compendium is actually providing

examples of models that have worked in a particular environment and with a particular group and while they represent good practices, there is a question about who defines what is “best.”

Although the review process is described by WI as a ‘peer’ review, one missing element is the participation of subcontractors amongst the reviewers. One of the reasons Winrock didn’t ask local NGOs to do peer reviews of each other’s projects is because they compete for funding in the same technical areas and there might have been an issue of proprietary information and sharing of documents. The potential for increasing the insights on the BPs and for shared learning through NGO involvement has now been recognized and WI is involving some of them in visits to other CIRCLE projects. At the time of the evaluation, it was not clear how or if these visits will feed into the peer review process. Limited field visits by BP reviewers are also being discussed as part of a more intensive review and knowledge-sharing process.

Feedback from BP reviewers was generally positive. They found the experience an interesting one that contributed to their range of experience. The process was clear and they had no problem with the volunteer aspect of the work. Among challenges, reviewers noted the significant time commitment, extensive documentation to review, unclear/unsubstantiated reporting and indicator data from NGOs, weak documentation of the action-result correlation, difficulty in scoring certain evaluation criteria (e.g., sustainability), and lack of personal contact with NGO stakeholders through site visits or phone interviews.

Considering the volume of work and the current state of evolution of the document, it seems unnecessarily ambitious to attempt to complete the draft version by the end of September. As both CIRCLE I and CIRCLE II BPs will be included, it is necessary to allow as many CIRCLE II projects as possible to be assessed before defining the final content of the Compendium to ensure representation of both parts of the project. Finalizing the content too soon could lead to elements from CIRCLE II being “slotted in” wherever they fit rather than helping define the overall structure. While dissemination of the document needs to be completed before the end of CIRCLE II in April 2008, extending the time available for the writing process by a further two months (until the end of November) would contribute to the quality of the final document and still leave time for translation and dissemination before the end of the project.

Discussions about the value of the CIRCLE Compendium throughout the evaluation provided valuable feedback and advice from stakeholders for both WI and USDOL:

- Translate the Compendium into a minimum of French, Spanish, and Portuguese (and ideally into appropriate local and national languages in the three regions).
- Show/illustrate how to do things with concrete cases and examples. Make it practical and not too long, with pictures.
- Include the elements of what made things work in context and clarify the beliefs, principles, and concepts *behind* the context.
- Do not forget about public-sector officials when disseminating the Compendium.

- Get ownership from NGOs so they will use the Compendium; for example, return the draft to subcontractors to get more detail and feedback.
- Provide space for community participants to express themselves in their own way, to say how the project mattered to them.
- Include statements from the target audience and their own evaluation of the process in the Compendium, thus promoting their own reflection about what was achieved or not.
- Involve the subcontractors now in narrowing down the BP themes—which are the ones they are most interested in and would find most useful?

And a cautionary note from the BP consultant:

“There’s a plethora of these things out there, but to what extent do people really read them? There are only a few documents that I’ve seen that are really useful.”

5.1.3 Conclusions

The CIRCLE project design emerges as an exciting new approach to subcontracting that is relevant not only to future USDOL EI projects, but also worthy of the attention of other U.S. development agencies. If it is possible to refine the model in the light of experience while maintaining the basic concept of supporting national NGOs in developing and implementing projects tailored to the needs of local communities, it will be an enormous step toward encouraging sustainable development initiatives and facilitating access to U.S. development assistance by national organizations. CIRCLE avoids the “one size fits all” approach of more classical subcontracting and is moving toward a model of project design that values difference and innovation and passes greater responsibility to national organizations working at the community level.

One important aspect that CIRCLE fails to address systematically is the low level of economic resources available to the families of child laborers, which influences options for their W/P and enrollment in education. Given limited time and funding, it was not feasible to address factors tied to structural inequities; however, it is noteworthy that several CIRCLE subcontractors addressed aspects of poverty reduction in creative ways. RLMs tackled the issue as part of their sustainability training, which encouraged resource mobilization and skills training.

The majority of the subcontracts addressed the EI goals of strengthening education systems and raising awareness on education. Sustainability was a cross-cutting objective. Successful attempts were made to work more on influencing institutions and policy, largely at the community and district levels, but greater networking by WI regional offices could have enhanced the flow of information between national and local levels, creating potential for greater influence on national policy.

Broadly speaking, CIRCLE is on track to achieve its purposes and outputs and while a number of weaknesses were identified in the project logframe, these have not had a negative impact on implementation. The logframe and WI indicators were viewed more as an HQ exercise, with

relatively little ownership from regional offices, which remained more involved with tracking NGOs.

The USDOL common indicators have been a source of uncertainty and confusion in all three regions and in a project working with so many subcontractors this is almost inevitable. Evidence from Latin America suggests that WI should review data collected across the board to be sure that the final figures accurately reflect what is happening, although reporting appears to be more accurate in Africa and Asia. This is just one aspect of managing project activities in multiple languages, which, overall, presented a level of complexity that was underestimated by WI in its budget planning and design.

A high degree of innovation is in evidence across the range of subcontractors visited during the evaluation and the BP Compendium will go further in documenting these. A dynamic and creative process has evolved for BP documentation, which can only be enhanced by greater involvement of subcontractors as it continues.

5.1.5 Recommendations

- While subcontracts of relatively short duration assisted WI to meet the CIRCLE objective of discovering innovation, any future subcontracts of this sort should be long enough to enable community development initiatives to become sufficiently well-established so they benefit more than the children directly affected during the life of the subcontract. A minimum of two years is proposed, with possibilities for justified extensions.
- Strategies for poverty reduction such as income generation, micro-finance, livelihood development, or community capacity-building should be part of all subcontract proposals unless subcontractors can justify why this is not necessary in a particular situation. Although funding for some of these activities is inadmissible under USDOL cooperative agreements, they could be provided through creative project partnerships. It is essential that this aspect not be ignored because poverty is a root cause of many types of child labor.
- Grantees should have a greater networking role in any future CIRCLE-type projects to encourage and facilitate collaboration and shared learning between subcontractors, statutory bodies, national and international NGOs, and other practitioners in a given country or region.
- Future projects should report against the same framework or hierarchy of objectives that was used to develop and present the project in the project document (subject to revisions).
- In future CIRCLE-type projects, grantees might want to make sustainability a cross-cutting theme that all subcontractors are required to address (e.g., through partnerships, sustainability plans/indicators) rather than a goal per se.

Concerning BPs

- Subcontractors should be more involved in the identification of BPs in each others' projects to increase their ownership of the resulting compendium and the shared learning resulting from CIRCLE, as is increasingly the case during the latter stages of CIRCLE BP identification.
- Once the BP review process has yielded a comprehensive list of successful interventions—only a fraction of which will be included in the Handbook—WI should involve its CIRCLE partners in the process of identifying those of most interest to NGOs for their future programming. Subcontractors should also be included in a validation/constructive criticism of the BP draft, especially since they have not been directly involved in the process to date.
- The deadline for completing the writing phase of the BP Compendium should be extended by one or two months to avoid an unnecessary rush in producing the document that is the principal deliverable of more than five years' work around the world.
- The BP Compendium should be translated into as many of the project languages as possible, distributed to all subcontractors and appropriate public services, and made available online and through any other channels that will ensure that it can be of use in reducing child labor and encouraging education.
- WI should consider replacing “Best Practices” with “Good Practices” in the title of the Compendium because it is more accurate and sounds more modest.

For USDOL

- USDOL could make an enormous contribution to EI projects by providing a standard translation of all basic EI documentation concerning indicators (e.g., definitions, guidance, reporting requirements) in Spanish, Portuguese, and French in an effort to minimize differences in interpretation, and reduce confusion about what is needed. This recommendation cannot be made too strongly.

5.2 SUBCONTRACT DESIGN/IMPLEMENTATION

5.2.1 Findings

Responses to Specific Questions Raised in the TOR

1. *Are the projects in the regions on track in terms of meeting stated outputs in their proposals? If not, what seem to be the factors contributing to delays?*

Evaluation field visits verified reports that most subcontractors in all three regions have met or are on track to meet the stated outputs in their proposals and found that there is a general tendency to exceed targets for the number of children participating in education programs. There are, however, a limited number of subcontractors that are having some difficulties in this respect.

In LA, one subcontractor underestimated the time and effort involved in creating and consolidating an inter-institutional network, so advocacy for new public policies and work with teachers to validate redesigned curricula will continue after the end of the subcontract. One African subcontractor exceeded the number of children it planned to enroll (175 as opposed to a target of 100), but is not succeeding in supporting and maintaining the predicted 95% in education or in supporting livelihood enhancement for families of child laborers as planned. The Asia evaluator mentions one subcontractor with apparently limited technical capacity and three ongoing subcontracts with ambitious targets which, while they are performing well and doing valuable work, they may find difficult to meet.

A number of NGOs have had short, no-cost extensions to enable them to complete activities. Delays were principally due to communication constraints, over-ambitious targets and planning, banking system limitations and, in some cases, late reporting and poor communication on the part of the subcontractor.

2. *Were subcontract purpose and outputs realistic?*

While the majority of subcontract purposes and outputs were realistic within the CIRCLE framework, the need to respect CIRCLE selection parameters meant that subcontracts were often awarded with much reduced budgets. In addition, the maximum budget for the category of small subcontracts was initially only US\$10,000 (although this was subsequently changed to US\$25,000) and a number of subcontracts were implemented on budgets that were too small for activities to have long-term impact. Subcontractors had to decide whether it was best to work intensively with a few children or to try to meet more of the enormous demand for educational support and infrastructure with the limited funds available. The fact that many subcontractors exceeded their targeted number of children suggests that they did the best they could, but the risk is that they spread themselves too thinly, resulting in reduced or negative impact.

Project designers need to be aware of the potential side effects of strategies designed to achieve a specific objective such as innovation. Above all, subcontract designers need to be realistic in the commitments they make to communities and do everything possible to ensure that they do not set children or adults up to fail, with all the physical and psychological distress that failure may entail. The most effective way to avoid this is to empower communities to make their own decisions based on accurate and reliable information, including the attendant risks of any proposed initiative. Ultimately communities are responsible for their own development and for the well-being of their children and no agency should take on that responsibility in their place. Effective NGOs facilitate, enable, and empower; they do not assume responsibilities that do not belong to them and that they cannot fulfill.

Although both USDOL and WI provide good sample logframes on their websites⁹ and WI includes logframe training in the RLMs, many subcontractors developed fairly complex instruments that confuse process indicators, impact indicators, and outputs. They also tended to measure everything rather than identifying a more limited number of meaningful indicators. This confusion reflected the fact that many NGOs were unfamiliar with the use of logframes,

⁹ Logframes available at: www.dol.gov/ILAB/grants/newlogframe.pdf and <http://circle.winrock.org>.

believing the more detail, the better, resulting in time used on recording and reporting that could otherwise have been better spent. In retrospect, perhaps more in-depth training and support by WI was needed. Notwithstanding some confusion between outputs, activities, and indicators, NGOs by and large accomplished what they had set out to do in their proposals (with the exception of the six subcontractors that did not complete their activities).

3. *Are subcontractors able to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL indicators?*

This information has largely been addressed in the previous section but the opportunity is taken here to look in more detail at aspects of the measurement of the common indicators that proved particularly challenging for subcontractors.

One subcontractor in LA erroneously believed that because street children (i.e., those exposed to drugs, crime, and other forms of violence) are often worse off than those who are working, they should be counted as withdrawn and not prevented when enrolled in education.

Retention/completion: Children should only be recorded as ‘retained’ if they are still in an education program and have satisfied the conditions for W/P. There are many children in current projects in the Philippines who are enrolled in part-time nonformal education (NFE) and whose working hours have not been reduced, who have been reported as ‘retained’ but not as ‘withdrawn.’ WI was in the process of correcting this prior to the evaluation. One of the problems from the partners’ perspective is that there is nowhere else in the reporting format to record the significant achievement of enrollment, which they are expecting will lead to withdrawal in the future. Initially, ‘completion’ was used to count students who completed a course of education, but once GPRA was introduced, it was modified to include students still in education at the end of the subcontract period.

Monitoring children’s work status: The definition of ‘withdrawn’ is dependent on a change in a child’s working situation and it was only in Round 2 that CIRCLE started to record children’s work status. A CIRCLE survey of child labor monitoring systems from Round 1 and 2 projects found that although many subcontractors were tracking education status, it was relatively rare to find the child’s work situation being tracked. In Round 3, the student tracker form was introduced, which enabled the recording of some information on the work situation, but it did not include the number of hours worked. Monitoring work status was considerably more difficult than monitoring education because obtaining access to children in their workplace was often difficult and the workplaces are geographically dispersed. In addition, students can be very secretive about their activities when they know they should not be working and community stakeholders are often more interested in putting effort and resources into education improvements than investing in monitoring children’s work. As subcontractors’ monitoring of the work status of children is still generally weak, the reasoning behind the figures for children withdrawn assumes that enrollment in an education program leads to a sufficient improvement in working conditions.

Community-based child labor monitoring: One subcontractor in the Philippines is supporting the development of a community-based child labor monitoring (CLM) system run by the local council. This is a significant achievement with the council taking responsibility of monitoring the education and work situation of children, prioritizing those who are out of formal school. The subcontractor's monitoring reports are based on the information supplied by the Council's Monitoring Committee and during evaluation interviews, it was clear that they possessed quality information on school dropouts and what was happening to them and were beginning to use this data to initiate a response. They were, in fact, applying stricter criteria than those defined in national legislation, which means that the partners' monitoring reports are flawed and, consequently, the figures for the common indicators are inaccurate. However, in terms of sustainable W/P of CL, this is an acceptable stage to go through. It is more important that the local committee take this responsibility than having accurate data controlled by the project. Similarly, in Africa, child labor monitoring is in its early stages in many communities and student tracking has been integrated into the regular activities of CBOs and/or schools. Support for refining understanding of the concepts and the capacity to develop and implement effective strategies is crucial if sustainable community monitoring is to be achieved.

Children under the minimum age for work: A number of subcontractors in Asia are enrolling children aged 7 to 12 in NFE, and despite still being engaged in some form of work, they are recorded as 'withdrawn' on the basis of a reduction in working hours. The GPRA guidelines state, "Children under the minimum age must be completely removed from all forms of work before they may be counted in GPRA." The minimum working age is country-specific, so subcontractors in different countries need to ensure that they are aware of the appropriate legislation.

An issue arose in Africa where older apprentices (14–18) in basic education classes were reported as "prevented" because the subcontractor thought that they did not fit the description of "withdrawn." Discussion revealed that they were in fact working shorter hours under safer conditions (the project provided safety instruction and materials to the apprentices and their employers) so it was decided that they would be reported as "withdrawn" rather than not showing up at all in the projects results. In retrospect, this is probably not correct, as there is no long-term intention that they will stop working as apprentices.

The above examples demonstrate that definitions and instructions for reporting on the USDOL common indicators are far from straightforward and even those subcontractors that seem to have reported on them correctly indicated that they find them challenging. The situation was not helped by the changes in the definitions during the course of the project and the fact remains that explanations and definitions have to be transferred via a chain of people and several translations to reach the communities where they will ideally be applied.

Technical aspects of child labor require detailed knowledge of ILO international conventions, national legislation, and a number of definitions that vary according to the institutions using them. Some of the WI staff and some of the subcontracting organizations were not previously working on children's issues and few were involved in child labor before the CIRCLE project. Standard monitoring profiles have been developed globally in order to capture initial child profiles and to track students. Reporting formats were improved in Round 3 to facilitate easier

recording of periodic and cumulative outputs. Additionally, the regularity of reporting on the common indicators has been increased to every two months.

A final point worth mentioning is that the lack of any “official” recognition of children W/P from child labor through “indirect interventions” risks discouraging implementing partners from concentrating on what are sometimes more sustainable interventions. For example, rather than providing packages of school materials so that enrolled children are counted as “direct beneficiaries,” the same money might be used to help establish a canteen so children can eat at school. In, for example, agricultural communities where the majority of children are at risk, such an initiative would be broadly beneficial and generally encourage parents to send their children to school.

In conclusion, it is probably true to say that the reliability of the indicator data provided by subcontractors ranges from excellent to questionable, with every effort being made at all levels to correct errors and rectify misunderstandings.

4. *Was the community-based approach successful in the regions? How did projects meet challenges through community participation, ownership, and child labor monitoring interventions?*

“Community-based” needs to be understood according to the different contexts of the three regions. In Latin America, six of the subcontractors implement their activities in the urban setting of capital cities where communities are often diversified and less cohesive than in rural areas. Some of these NGOs had strong community links, while others worked with somewhat looser ties to the community. It is important to note that NGOs working in cities target the neediest zones where poverty, child labor, crime, violence, drugs, prostitution, and other socioeconomic ills run rampant. While these are not “grassroots” organizations per se, they are doing community-based work where it is urgently needed. The regional evaluator had some exposure to more grassroots CBOs during her visits, and it was clear that they did not have the level of experience, control, capacity, maturity, or technical experience that is required of CIRCLE subcontractors.

Similarly in Asia and Africa, CIRCLE selection requirements meant that all of the subcontractors were NGOs and not CBOs. In Asia, some operated at the national level and some were locally based. One partner in the Philippines was a network organization of CBOs with no salaried staff and was able to achieve effectively its objectives. In some instances, locally based subcontractors struggled with financial and reporting requirements, but all were successful in achieving their outputs. There was considerable variation in the degree to which NGOs were effective in working with and developing capacity in the community. The establishment of community-based CLM by one partner in the Philippines was described in the previous section and a subcontractor in Nepal managed to more than double its school enrollment target through mobilizing additional resources from both local and government sources.

“The strongest example of integral community participation is Primeiro de Maio. When its first CIRCLE proposal was rejected in 2004, the larger community—not just the NGO staff—met to see how the proposal could be improved. In this and other CIRCLE

communities visited, there seems to be a good understanding of the importance of education and the negative effects of exploitive CL as a result of NGOs' work.” (From the LA regional report)

From Africa, the response to this question is an unequivocal “yes,” in spite of the fact that project duration was often too short for community ownership, confidence, and competence to be sufficiently developed to ensure sustainable change. While some subcontracts were implemented in cities, most took place in rural communities where subcontractors supported the setting up or strengthening of a range of CBOs, including groups to advocate for education and discourage and monitor child labor, school management committees, community/teacher associations, parents associations, and a variety of clubs for children. Peer education concerning child labor and trafficking was a successful approach used with both adults and children. Some subcontractors worked with local religious and traditional leaders, while others concentrated on employers' groups and the media.

“RADA-Sierra Leone set up numerous CBOs: kids clubs, parents clubs, SMC/CTA, an advocacy committee, and a task force and developed community monitoring of border-crossing points and communal areas to protect children from trafficking. Peer education, child rights training, and support for vulnerable children in school were strategies developed to reduce child labor. The evaluator saw community ownership developing in front of her during a meeting bringing together members of the various CBOs at the school. The discussion turned to the future of the school, which was built during the first CIRCLE subcontract. When the current subcontract finishes, RADA will no longer be responsible for the school. When the question was first raised, people talked about “not abandoning a baby when it had only just learned to walk” but by the end of the meeting, the “baby” had become “a young girl that everybody wants” as the group realized that they had a school to be proud of and did not need to hand over responsibility for supporting it to just anyone, because they had power to negotiate and bargain to get the best management support available.” (From the Africa regional report)

On the whole, subcontractors who hired experienced community development fieldworkers who worked closely with communities were more successful than those who visited less frequently and relied on training local authority staff and community members to do the bulk of the work. The work was possibly more than either of them was ready or able to cope with, judging from their requests for help during the evaluation. One African subcontractor described behavior change as a process starting with information and knowledge that can lead to a change in attitude, which finally has an impact on practice. A sustainable project is one that is long enough for these three stages to take place.

5. *Assess the strategy used to publicize funding opportunities and to reach out to local NGOs in target countries. Did RFPs truly reach remote, local NGOs capable of implementing project activities? Were the RFP dissemination techniques appropriate?*

Strategies used to publicize funding opportunities were broadly similar across the three regions. RFPs appeared on the WI website and were disseminated to WI's database of NGOs as well as to

various listserves, the Global March Against Child Labor, and to ILO networks. The LA office publicized RFPs through radio, newspaper ads, word-of-mouth, and a notice in the ILO regional newsletter. In Asia, publicity occurred through electronic means utilizing e-mail lists of other organizations and NGO networks, and some newspaper advertising in order to increase the response from certain areas. Despite advertising in Thailand for all three rounds, there was limited response and none of the proposals were selected. In Africa, RFPs generated a lot of proposals in Mali, where the regional office is based, but dissemination in other countries depended on personal contacts with knowledge of appropriate web sites and NGO networks in the country concerned. Dissemination tended to rely on the Internet because use of the press is costly in many countries and regional staff did not know which publications would be most effective. Some countries remained underrepresented in spite of special efforts to generate proposals. Better knowledge of appropriate outlets and more funds would have enabled wider, more effective dissemination across most African countries. Sierra Leone was an exception in that “everyone knew,” as RFPs were distributed through NGO networks, the press, and a special workshop.

“We disseminated more each successive round, which corresponded with our maturity and expanded network. We now know more professionals and have contact with many more people.” (From LA regional staff)

In Africa, it is questionable whether really remote NGOs were reached and if they had been, whether they would have been capable of implementing project activities, as Internet access was essential for reporting and receiving funds on time and this is still limited to urban centers in most countries. Reaching truly grassroots NGOs was not the LA office’s primary intention, given the need for organizations to have a minimum standard of institutional capacity and experience to qualify for CIRCLE. In Asia, organizations in remote locations had received information, even some that had no Internet access. WI stated that the strategy was the same across all regions, the outreach was similar, and all the NGOs needed to have some access to the Internet to participate.

Dissemination of RFPs was generally used with the networks of child-focused organizations, but one subcontractor in the Philippines specializes in the capacity-building of local institutions and by integrating child labor issues into their longer term development work, they have created a potentially sustainable child labor elimination program. This program illustrates the importance of advertising beyond the circle of organizations already active in children’s issues as a strategy for achieving innovation in combating child labor. This program is also a way of expanding interest in the issues, as there is a good chance child labor themes will be incorporated into programs supported by new donors.

There was some question about the appropriateness of advertising so widely when the number of awards was relatively limited, prompting the suggestion that each round could cover a more specific geographic area. The cost-effectiveness for NGOs in terms of time spent on proposal preparation was low (1,200 proposals submitted and 101 subcontracts signed – an 8.4% acceptance rate). An alternative suggestion is to base the selection process on concept notes so that only selected partners would develop a full proposal. This process would enable greater community participation in proposal development, particularly if some initial funding was

provided to support this. A further advantage would be that after completion of the competitive stage, WI staff could be more involved with supporting the development of proposals, offering the potential for increasing innovation and avoiding common pitfalls if the details were developed through dialogue.

6. *Do the communities benefiting from the project feel that CIRCLE is meeting a previously unmet need in a new way?*

In all of the sites visited across the three regions, community members—including parents, teachers, and project partners—recognized the contribution of CIRCLE in meeting important needs. In LA, community members appreciated the improved formal and NFE services offered under CIRCLE—including teaching methodologies, redesigned curricula, and new educational materials that were more responsive to the needs and challenges of child laborers and at-risk youth. As one parent said, “Everything is based on *their* reality now.” Community appreciation was particularly pronounced since this segment of the youth population usually “falls through the cracks” of governmental programs and communities often feel they are left alone to fend for themselves.

“A woman member of the CCLC was asked how she addressed parents with working children to convince them to send their children to school. She stood up and assumed a hunched position, as if carrying a heavy load. She said that she explained that as a child, she could remember carrying a very heavy burden on her back and then someone had come and removed it. As she said this, she straightened up and threw her arms wide. A broad smile creased her face. She said that the training about child labor had made her remember the enormous relief she had felt, and she tries to evoke the same memories in other parents so that they understand what their children are experiencing. This story is her starting point and is an example of a successful training initiative that enabled and empowered a woman to work within her community on the basis of her own experience in light of new knowledge and understanding.” (From the Africa region report)

In Africa, many communities said that CIRCLE approaches and ideas were new to them. The most common reaction to this question was along the lines of, “We never knew that children had rights or the importance of education. Through the training, we now understand this and we are committed to protecting children in our community from labor and trafficking and X NGO is helping us to do this—but we are poor and it isn’t easy. Where/how will we find the resources?” Communities spoke of how they are mobilizing and cooperating with local administrative and law enforcement authorities to monitor and protect their children, and still others spoke of their pride that their children have the opportunity to go to school, which they never had themselves, and the hope for the future that this has given them.

In Asia, satisfaction was also expressed concerning the work of subcontractors in all interactions with community members. In almost all situations, a previously unmet need was being addressed. Community members were most thankful for the provision of accessible and free education and often requested that the project be supported for a longer period.

This latter point was echoed across the regions. One of the downsides to effectively meeting community needs under CIRCLE's short-term projects is the creation of expectations and momentum that often cannot be maintained once funding ends. Some community members in LA expressed frustration that so much work had gone into improving the situation, and now they would be left without support when the conditions were finally favorable to effect real change.

7. *How satisfied are the community members with the design and quality of the CIRCLE project's intervention?*

Most of the communities visited in Africa expressed satisfaction with the design and quality of CIRCLE interventions, with two notable exceptions. A common complaint was, "...but the project ends too soon. If a baby is just learning to walk, you don't just turn away and leave him," and secondly, "We don't have the resources—if the project could help us to establish an ongoing source of income, we could do a lot more..." Similarly, in Asia, communities were very happy with the work of subcontractors but the need for improved livelihood alternatives for both older children and their parents was an issue that was constantly raised.

Two communities visited in Ghana were less satisfied with the subcontractor, due to broken promises and failed commitments, which serves as a reminder that community development is a skilled operation requiring more than good will and commitment, and that interventions need to be tailored to the resources available. It might be possible to refine the subcontractor selection process to find a way of assessing community development expertise and avoid such experiences.

From Brazil: A project partner in Salvador: "Society recognizes the work of Iro de Maio; they are very respected and there is 24-hour involvement in the community."

A school director in Natal noted: "I really wanted to find a way to reach families/parents in our school because of all the problems with violence, drugs, prostitution, etc...and Casa Renascer's help was right on target."

From Bolivia: "Everyone living near the garbage dump in Kara Kara was profuse in their praise of CIRCLE's and OA's help in transforming a poor-quality, multigrade school serving 60 students to a good-quality graded school serving 220. Despite this expansion, they noted huge unmet demand in the community and a lack of educational supplies from 6th grade on up." (From the LA regional report)

Based on interviews in LA, community members were quite satisfied both with the formal and nonformal educational services provided, as well as the myriad of support services offered to students and families through subcontractor activities. This complementary support included student leadership training, parents'/mothers' groups, health care, environmental training, psychological support and counseling, legal defense and protection services, legalization of identity (i.e., through birth certificates/ identity papers), and vocational skills training for parents. Many of these support services were provided by governmental and NGO project partners rather than funded by CIRCLE—thus expanding the radius of impact well beyond subcontract resources.

8. *What are the capacity-building elements of the project for subcontractors?*

Principal areas where subcontractors felt their capacity had been enhanced included reporting, financial procedures, and proposal development. CIRCLE capacity-building focused on enabling subcontractors to implement project administrative procedures and the added value was that organizations will continue to benefit from this in their future work. Although capacity-building was not a specific goal of CIRCLE as designed, WI has worked to strengthen NGO subcontractors in a variety of areas covering—

- Technical reporting
- Financial reporting and administrative systems
- Project design
- Monitoring and evaluation (e.g., creation of an M&E plan, student tracking and child labor monitoring systems, indicator reporting)
- Identification of Lessons Learned, Spotlight Stories, and Emerging Good Practices
- Child labor monitoring and child labor profiling
- Sustainability strategies.

This multifaceted capacity-building occurred primarily through (1) the process of finalizing proposals between selection and subcontract award; (2) the RLMs providing guidance on reporting, procedures, and project management (subcontractors received a comprehensive manual containing training materials and sample formats); (3) feedback by WI staff on bimonthly and semiannual reports (reports were frequently returned with guidance and requests for clarification/improvements); (4) phone and e-mail contact with NGOs; and (5) periodic site visits—ideally a minimum of two to each project, but resource constraints sometimes made this impossible.

Subcontractors were keen to express how useful they found field visits from regional staff, as these not only contributed to their understanding of formats and procedures, but also enabled them to see their various projects in a more objective fashion, sometimes making them aware of aspects that they had not noticed previously or analyzed in-depth. This objectivity helped them to appreciate their own work and the achievements of the communities where they were active. RLMs, training materials, and field visits enhanced knowledge and understanding of child trafficking and child labor issues that were new to many subcontractors.

The fact that CIRCLE funded and trained project accountants was important not only for the smooth running of the project, but also for ongoing organizational capacity-building. Without exception, members of the WI regional team were praised by subcontractors during the evaluation, principally for their patience, persistence, and nonhierarchical approach.

Apart from the issue around whether CIRCLE should or could have been designed to offer organizational capacity-building and more technical support for operational aspects of

subcontracts, the two principal challenges to capacity-building were the distance and geographic distribution of subcontractors throughout the regions, and the limitations of human and financial resources at the disposal of the WI CIRCLE team.

5.2.2 Additional Findings

Revisions to Budgets and Timeframes of Proposals

The budgets for some of the accepted proposals were cut significantly in all three rounds because proposals within a budget range were submitted at the very top of the range. Also, the budgets for some good proposals were reduced so they could fit into a lower category due to high competition for the ‘large’ category. Some proposals also had their timeframes significantly reduced in Round 3. For example, the STC proposal in Asia was reduced from 16 months to 9 months (and later extended to 10 months). The RFP stated, “subprojects may range in duration from 9–15 months.” This happened because the STC project was funded under CIRCLE I and therefore had to be completely finished by July 2007. One of the main planned outputs of the STC project was a significant policy decision by the town council. By the close of the project, this decision was agreed upon, though not formalized, and is dependent on the ongoing advocacy of STC working from its own resources.

RSC members said that their recommendations were based on the budgets and timeframes contained in their proposals and if these were significantly adjusted, their technical recommendations may become invalid.

The National Policy Conference in Sierra Leone

It is impossible to complete the section on subcontract design and implementation without giving special mention to the outstanding work being carried out in Sierra Leone, which culminated in subcontractors coming together to organize a two-day national policy conference that took place during the evaluation period. The conference focused on the theme, “*Child trafficking and exploitive labor: The need for a coordinated approach within the context of the National Plan of Action*” and built on subcontractors’ experiences of developing strategies and raising awareness to implement the 2005 Anti-Human Trafficking Act at the community level. The act defines human trafficking as an offense and criminalizes all forms of human trafficking. The conference was chaired by the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children’s Affairs, assisted by Dr. Fofana, the chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights. It was opened by the U.S. Ambassador and attended by about 80 representatives of the police, the judiciary, the military, local education authorities, national and international NGOs, traditional chiefs, trafficked children and young people, and community advocacy groups. After a range of statements condemning child trafficking and child labor and presentations describing current initiatives to combat them, participants worked in groups to discuss various aspects of the National Plan of Action prepared by the Trafficking-in-Person (TIP) Task Force responsible for the implementation of the Act. Recommendations for improving and implementing the plan came out of these discussions, which will be available in the conference report.

The conference was organized with the support and participation of task force members and provided an opportunity for them to deepen their consultation and discussion of the issues

concerned. The conference also provided an opportunity for members of civil society organizations to express their frustration at the slow progress being made toward full implementation of the Act, and to offer some practical suggestions as to how to speed things up. Overall, the event complemented the apparently limited public consultation that took place before the signing of the Act. The policy workshop took place under a commissioned contract and was, as such, a capacity-building initiative by WI that encouraged and enabled NGO subcontractors in Sierra Leone to link up to conduct policy activities.¹⁰

As the President's Initiative to Combat Trafficking in Persons provided CIRCLE with funding for its activities in Sierra Leone, it is appropriate that such funds be used at both the community and national level to raise awareness and develop and implement strategies to encourage the implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. Moreover, CIRCLE activities have been coordinated with local government initiatives to combat child trafficking and have complemented the government's efforts to promote basic education and reintegrate ex-combatants. Subcontractors have a clear understanding of trafficking, forced labor, and child labor and are doing an effective job of communicating these concepts to the communities where they are working. A particularly impressive aspect of the work in Sierra Leone is cooperation between subcontractors and the police force, particularly the Family Support Unit (FSU) that has officers based in many communities. One such officer on the Liberian border described his handling of a current child abuse case, where he seemed to be playing the role of law enforcement, social worker, and community liaison all at once. Several FSU officers are members of local CBOs set up to combat child labor and trafficking and offer invaluable support and enhanced credibility to such groups.

Gender

In Africa, there was a general lack of evidence of gender-awareness and policy among the NGO subcontractors visited. While there was a good gender balance among the children enrolled in education, project personnel at the community level were overwhelmingly male and it was rare to hear that this was considered a challenge to be overcome. On occasion, field staff failed to include women in community discussions and, in one case, an NGO worker even facilitated the meeting with his back to the women who were attending. The table summarizing the NGO personnel who took part in the evaluation (Annex A) suggests that this difficulty is accentuated in Africa (23 out of the 26 NGO personnel encountered were men) and South Asia (17 out of 19 NGO workers were men in Nepal and Bangladesh). In the Philippines (2 out of 11 were men) and in LA (9 out of 28 NGO personnel were men), the situation was reversed.

While gender is a complex cultural issue, NGOs have an important role to play in ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups influence their policy and practice, and in providing useful role models in the communities where they work. One approach to this is for NGOs to make every attempt to employ both men and women at all levels, hence going some way to ensuring that the organization as a whole reflects the interests and perspectives of both groups. This inclusion is particularly important at the community level where having project staff of both

¹⁰ NB: Another policy workshop was held under a commissioned contract by Laura Vicuna in the Philippines addressing child labor in the sugar cane sector.

sexes not only sends a message to community members that they are included, but also helps women in particular to have opportunities to speak freely. Both men and women can see that they both have the opportunity for public speaking and leadership. A developed understanding of gender issues will result in the analysis being applied not only to men and women, but also to other marginalized groups experiencing power inequity. Grantees can play a role in flagging gender as an important issue by including discussion around the issues in project orientation and training.

5.2.3 Conclusions

Most of the CIRCLE subcontractors have met or are on track to meet their stated outputs and completion targets. Reductions in the budgets and timeframes of a number of project proposals have affected both the target numbers and the viability of some of the planned outputs. Common challenges in withdrawing and preventing children from work are a lack of both formal and NFE provision, particularly for older children, and insufficient economic resources to sustain children in education in a significant number of communities. Subcontracts were often too short to empower communities with sustainable strategies to combat child labor/trafficking and enroll more children than those covered by the project in school. However, many NGOs did an excellent job of providing holistic support services under CIRCLE, often through partnering with various governmental and nongovernmental entities to expand the impact of subcontract resources. Given the particular needs and difficult life circumstances of child laborers and at-risk youth, creative and active teaching and learning methodologies and psychological support and therapy/counseling have played important roles in educational interventions.

The subcontractors visited during the evaluation manifested varying degrees of confusion and frustration with the USDOL common indicators, particularly in LA. A number of issues have resulted (in most situations) in over-reporting due to errors in categorizing students. While many of these errors are ironed out before they reach USDOL, some serious mistakes were made in LA, which underline the need for clearer guidance and standardized translations of all key EI documentation.

Communities were largely satisfied with the interventions that subcontractors provided and, in most cases, these were addressing previously unmet needs. Partnering with NGOs who have previously not been involved in child labor has emerged as an effective way of integrating child labor into the NGOs' longer term and broader development agenda with their target communities.

While capacity-building of partners has centered on project management to enable partners to fulfill CIRCLE administrative requirements, a degree of technical capacity-building has been offered by regional staff during site visits, in accordance with their degree of knowledge and skill. This capacity-building could be further expanded to improve gender sensitivity, particularly in Africa, so that subcontractors made more attempts to employ both men and women in their fieldwork teams.

The subcontractors visited in Sierra Leone deserve special mention because they understood both the potential and the constraints of CIRCLE and worked to get the very best out of the

opportunity it presented. Working in the difficult post-conflict environment of the Liberian border region, they were empowering damaged communities and traumatized young people through highly participatory and innovative approaches. These partners successfully worked together to tackle policy-level issues through the National Policy Conference described above—hence fulfilling objectives linked to all four EI goals. The CIRCLE model can be expanded and developed through partnership with such organizations, which know where they are going and have sufficient self-confidence to offer constructive advice about how grantees can work effectively with them and in their areas.

5.2.4 Recommendations

For Grantees

- Future subcontracts need to be of long enough duration to enable community ownership and CBO competence to develop and take root. A minimum of two years is suggested, with the possibility of justified extensions.
- More developed mention of the importance of gender/gender analysis when working with communities should be part of the capacity-building offered to subcontractors during project orientation.

For Subcontractors

- Subcontractors need to take full responsibility for their project proposal, tailoring their initiatives to the resources available and avoiding overstressing themselves. They should have the courage and professionalism not to continue with a subcontract if they believe that the budget awarded is insufficient. (One NGO awarded CIRCLE funding in Senegal did, in fact, withdraw for this reason).
- Subcontractors need to think about how communities will face the challenge of loss of family income and increased expenditure when child laborers are enrolled in education and include strategies to tackle this issue in their proposals.
- Subcontractors in the same country should be encouraged to develop networking mechanisms, share experiences, and work together on advocacy and policy issues at the regional/national level, as this will enhance the impact of local initiatives.
- Subcontractors should make every attempt to employ both men and women in their field work teams if they understand how this will enhance their work.

For USDOL

- As recommended in other sections, it is critical for USDOL to provide standard translations of guidance, reporting formats, and key documents for grantees working in LA and francophone countries. The language should be very clear and understandable to avoid confusion and to foster better quality reporting.

- OCFT should consider compiling the training and capacity-building materials produced by various EI grantees and posting them on its website so that future grantees are not required to ‘reinvent the wheel.’
- It would help if there was a system to estimate and recognize children W/P from child labor through indirect interventions in order to encourage more sustainable interventions.

5.3 PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

5.3.1 Findings

Responses to Specific Questions Raised in the TOR

1. *What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating partnerships in support of the project at local, national, and/or regional levels?*

For the Africa regional office, the principal challenge in initiating and maintaining partnerships at local and national levels has been communication, which is hardly surprising, as many subcontractors do not have reliable high speed Internet connections. Poor connection has resulted in delays in receiving reports and difficulties in some maintaining contact, but over the course of the project, WI has succeeded in streamlining its administrative systems, thus eliminating some of the blockages.

The location of the LA regional office in Salvador was a constraint to developing national networking and advocacy since government and policy action is concentrated in Brasilia, the capital city. However, it did promote project partnerships, since all three CIRCLE projects are located in the Northeast. Given Brazil’s high level of decentralization, it is often more effective to foster partnerships with state and municipal bodies. The relative isolation of the LA office was exacerbated by limited staffing and high transportation costs, but WI staff did their best to counteract this by participating in the National Forum of Child Labor and including national participants in RLMs and RSCs. WI has had considerable success in initiating partnerships with members of the RSC and BP reviewers across all the regions, using personal contacts and national specialists to complement WI personnel.

There is a noticeable absence of linkages between CIRCLE regional offices and relevant government departments and other agencies, particularly outside the regional hub countries, and efforts to foster such partnerships focused on strengthening contacts during field visits. In LA, a concerted effort was made to build relationships with ILO national representatives and the regional office worked to expand its database of relevant organizations across the region. The difficulty of establishing connections in countries where there is no official organizational presence was demonstrated during the evaluation when the U.S. Embassy in Ghana revealed that it had no knowledge of CIRCLE. Although the project Director had visited Accra and met with U.S. embassy officials in December 2005, and later corresponded with the trafficking officer, the contact was not maintained and the institutional memory lost. Consequently, a meeting was organized to meet the evaluator and the RM. Several points of common interest were revealed—better late than never!

The strongest partnerships in support of the project have been developed directly by subcontractors at the local level as a result of their particular interests, commitments, and skills. In LA, governmental partners included such entities as PETI monitors (Brazil), municipal and departmental officials from various Ministries, mayors' offices, and Commissions for Children and Adolescents (Bolivia). Nongovernmental partners included a variety of NGOs and CBOs, foundations, universities, health facilities, and schools. Partnerships with private-sector institutions were still relatively limited in the region. Examples of local partnerships in Asia included subcontractors' membership in a Regional Child Labor Committee and the development of a City Technical Working Group in the Philippines. The regional evaluator noted that links with other NGOs tended to be stronger than those with government agencies, but WI reported that several subcontractors that were not visited do in fact work closely with government bodies. In Africa, subcontractors were frequently found working in cooperation with local government to complement the activities of other NGOs working in the same communities. There were a few examples of partnerships with the private sector, but this was a newer area of work.

Although RLMs and the CIRCLE newsletter sought to encourage networking between subcontractors, there were only isolated instances of interactions and sharing in any of the three regions. One constraint has been the lack of any budget to support meetings or exchanges at either the country or regional level. While regional networking is time consuming and expensive, possibilities to develop the idea at a national level have not been sufficiently exploited. Closer networking and sharing requires a more proactive role from WI either by organizing interactions at the national or regional level, or by encouraging partners to include networking within their proposals and budgets. Ideally, such networking would include not only subcontractors, but also others working toward the same objectives in a given country or region.

- 2. What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with ILO-IPEC, other international organizations, and national governments (if applicable)?*

There has been virtually no coordination with ILO-IPEC or other EI activities in any of the three regions, with the exception of the Philippines where three grantees work on the same national committee to support the national Time Bound Education agenda. However, some CIRCLE subcontractors were also partners in IPEC and/or other EI national programs. Across the regions, several ILO personnel served as RSC members and BP reviewers and the LA CIRCLE office developed a particularly strong relationship with the ILO, both at the regional and national level in several of the countries where it worked.

While members of relevant government ministries and departments have been invited to key CIRCLE events, more developed partnerships with government-initiated child labor activities are limited. In the Philippines, WI is a member of the Education Subcommittee to the National Child Labor Steering Committee under the Department of Labor and Employment and in Cambodia, it has contributed to the ILO and government-organized Committee on Child Labor Prevention. Governmental partnerships in LA and Africa have largely been initiated by subcontractors at a local level as indicated in the previous question. Links with national government have been limited as a result of the emphasis of the project design on community-based initiatives and the constraints to developing such links inherent in the regional administration of the project.

WI suggests that the principal constraint to exploiting opportunities for networking and coordination with ILO-IPEC, other EI activities, governments, and other organizations with an interest in child labor/trafficking is that this was not a stated objective of CIRCLE and, hence, there were limited resources. The evaluator would argue that few additional resources are needed to initiate contact and share information and that a perspective focused primarily on CIRCLE largely to the exclusion of other related initiatives was the real constraint. While this issue is completely understandable, it is important to encourage grantees to see their activities as part of a bigger picture and not to limit their initiatives to the indicators in their project document. USDOL could contribute to this by informing grantees about related projects that they are funding in their regions. It is only fair to add that WI is increasingly active on the international child labor scene and has initiated an important developing partnership with the World Cocoa Foundation in Africa.

A number of subcontractors have developed partnerships with a range of other international organizations that provide funding to complement CIRCLE activities and details can be found in the regional reports.

3. How well have the Regional Selection Committees functioned?

Regional selection committees functioned well within the parameters that they were given. WI developed a clear and transparent process for selecting subcontractors and RSCs overcame challenges such as subjectivity in scoring, handling many proposals within a limited time and assessing/identifying innovative proposals at the selection stage. Round 2 was particularly difficult because there were too many proposals for the large category, so numerous NGOs had to reduce their budgets from US\$100,000 or more to only US\$10,000, which caused considerable frustration.

Volunteer RSC members included a broad range of education and child labor specialists and involving them in the selection process created connections with governmental and nongovernmental entities across all three regions. Those interviewed were happy to donate their services and said that they benefited from the experience.

There were clear disparities in the number of proposals coming from different countries and CIRCLE made ongoing attempts to minimize these and encourage proposals from underrepresented countries, with varying degrees of success. Several adjustments and midcourse corrections were made to RFPs based on experience. These included—

- Changing the list of eligible countries
- Adding a logframe example and emphasizing the need for an M&E plan
- Reordering the list of EI objectives to emphasize work on policies/institutions
- Explaining and emphasizing the common indicators for direct assistance

- Emphasizing the importance of meeting all minimum eligibility criteria, particularly the fact that the Executive Summary, Budget and financial questionnaire must be submitted in English
- Further clarifying and elaborating on the concept of innovation
- Highlighting the worldwide competition for large awards.

Despite the general effectiveness and success of the selection process, there are perhaps some aspects that might be improved. In order to maintain their anonymity and impartiality, committee members had no ongoing connection with the projects that they helped to select, whereas they could have played a monitoring role, providing useful advice and guidance and hence gained valuable insights to help them in future selection rounds.

By design, WI regional staff exerted no influence and offered no advice to RSCs. They preselected projects that complied with basic selection criteria before the RSCs met and added their comments to the results that were sent to WI HQ. While practice appears to have varied from one region to another, when considering new proposals from existing subcontractors, RSC members often had no information about their performance during the first subcontract. While NGOs were encouraged to reapply for funding, the RFP was clear that a second proposal needed to be distinct and new and different from activities carried out under the first. As NGOs often submitted proposals that were a continuation of their former projects, few received new CIRCLE funds. The notable exception to this was RADA in Sierra Leone, where the results of carrying out successive subcontracts in the same communities were very impressive.

There are several issues connected with the selection of existing subcontractors for ongoing funding. The first is that if RSC members do not have access to information about NGOs' performance while implementing their first subcontract (as was the case), the evaluator would argue that they are not in possession of all the available information to enable them to make the best decision. The second issue is that if ongoing funding is only given for significantly different activities, it fails to take into account that NGOs that carry out small but successful subcontracts inevitably raise expectations in their communities and would find it difficult to justify abandoning these activities to test something else that is new. Once again, CIRCLE appears to have been a bit too focused on its own objective of discovering innovation without giving adequate consideration to the needs of communities where the project was already working.

It is also questionable how useful it is to emphasize the aspect of competition between NGOs applying for subcontracts. These are organizations in countries that need to develop dynamic and effective civil societies and it might be more useful to encourage cooperation and collaboration between them. One way that this could be done is by giving points for aspects of proposals that concern collaboration, partnership, and networking.

4. *How did regional launch meetings and best practice peer review teams contribute to project networking?*

RLMs brought together subcontractors from the region and a range of other participants interested in child labor issues from the regional hub country. Subcontractors appreciated the opportunity of meeting NGOs from other countries and obtaining a broader perspective of CIRCLE activities. The orientation and training offered were very important in the successful implementation of activities, but some participants would have liked more time devoted to sharing experience and developing networking between subcontractors, both at the national level and across borders. Although one of the objectives of the RLMs was to initiate such networking, it has not proved very successful, as there have been only limited instances of subsequent interactions and sharing, usually between NGOs who already knew each other. While the RLMs provided a good start, the lack of any budget for subsequent meetings or exchange visits at either the national or the regional level has meant that potential for synergy, networking, and cross-project learning among NGOs in the three regions has not been fully realized.

BP peer review teams did not greatly contribute to project networking as they worked largely in isolation on the documents that they were sent, with the results being compiled by the regional office. However, the fact that such a large number of people took part no doubt widened knowledge of CIRCLE within the development community. Subcontractors who are now being asked to visit other projects will have a greater opportunity to directly contribute to project networking and capitalize on their combined experience during the project.

WI made steps toward encouraging networking by establishing the CIRCLE web site and periodic newsletters, which have fostered information-sharing but have not stimulated much concrete action in terms of promoting networking among partners.

5. *What have been some of the challenges and issues in working with local NGOs and other local organizations?*

The varying capacity of NGOs meant that some needed more support than others. Distance made communication difficult, particularly if an NGO was not responding to messages. Staff changes also created problems, particularly when they concerned accountants who had been trained during RLMs, who did not pass on their expertise to their replacement. In some cases, reports did not conform to the requested format and some subcontractors wrote long and rambling accounts of their activities that were difficult to understand and assimilate. A significant factor in NGO performance was whether the appropriate staff attended the RLM. As this involved a 'foreign trip' for most participants, it sometimes attracted NGO members or 'consultants' who were not directly involved in project management. In the third RLM, clearer direction on who should attend was given and all projects were required to send two staff, including an accountant, which resolved some of these problems.

It is difficult to assess the level of technical competence in the field of an organization that may only be visited once during the course of the subcontract. Despite the fact that references were checked on a number of occasions, a few subcontractors with questionable technical capacity slipped through the net and received funding.

It is important for grantees to remember the challenges that implementing organizations are facing on a daily basis and to develop strategies to support and encourage them. On the whole, WI did this successfully through field visits, and the more of these that can take place, the more support that can be offered, particularly to less competent subcontractors. Another strategy mentioned in the previous section is to use RSC members to support subcontracts in their home countries. Covering their costs or paying a consultancy fee would often be cheaper than the travel costs of a field visit from the regional office.

“One main challenge that we are facing is that there are expectations that the target group holds for the implementing agency which are beyond its scope. This makes the implementing agency feel powerless and over-whelmed by the arising issues which need to be addressed either directly or indirectly. The suggestion here is that working with other organisations and stakeholders eases the burden as it is shared. The other suggestion is that the need for interventions will always be there and whatever effort, however small, that seeks to address such needs always makes a difference in the society and therefore organisations should never give up.” (Subcontractor remark from e-mail survey)

Other challenges in working with local organizations noted during the evaluation include—

- Security concerns (particularly in LA where many NGOs have targeted the most insecure, crime-ridden, and dangerous neighborhoods to work in).
- Donor “competition” with other projects that provide various material resources to beneficiaries—which can result in their conditioning their participation on the expectation of receiving something tangible in return (noted in both LA and Africa).
- Donor “fatigue” as certain groups (community leaders and teachers, for example) end up participating in a host of trainings and other extra work usually without remuneration. Their commitment and availability has its limits, as does the contribution of voluntary work.

5.3.2 Conclusions

Most of the partnerships between WI and CIRCLE subcontractors were very successful, helped by the tools and processes set up to facilitate this aspect of the project. There were a limited number of not-so-effective relationships, which could be analyzed further to try to avoid similar difficulties in the future. RSCs provided an effective way of selecting good partners and projects, but there is room for the process to evolve and develop.

RSC members and peer reviewers made valuable contributions to the CIRCLE project, but limited strategic networking with governments and other organizations meant that the potential to enhance sustainability and opportunities for advocacy were lost. Out of the three regions, LA probably made the best attempts with a few good examples in Asia and Africa. Coordination with the ILO-IPEC and with other EI grantees was very limited, with only one reported example from Asia.

Principal responsibility for local networking lay with subcontractors and many of them did a creditable job. In Asia and LA, this networking tended to be with other NGOs, whereas in Africa, there were more links with local government. The majority of subcontractors were less proactive where sharing experiences between themselves was concerned.

A greater emphasis on networking and partnership would help future CIRCLE-type projects contribute to broad-based capacity-building within the countries where they work and efforts should be made to keep the bigger picture in view, or better still, ensure that such networking is an integral part of future projects. There was a clear evolution in the RFPs, selection processes, and RLMs between the three global rounds—evidence that WI was attuned to learning lessons and making midcourse corrections to strengthen CIRCLE processes.

5.3.3 Recommendations

- USDOL and its grantees should play a more proactive role in promoting and facilitating cooperation, collaboration, networking, and sharing of experiences between USDOL-funded projects and other partners with similar objectives in the same countries and regions. USDOL should initiate this networking by providing information about projects active in the same country/region to grantees at the beginning of any new cooperative agreement. Grantees need to budget for this in their proposals. This networking would help to value and capitalize on the wealth of experience and knowledge available among NGOs and others at a local level and result in a more integrated approach to combating child labor.
- All available information concerning proposals for subcontracts should be made available to RSC members, including information about implementation of previous subcontracts and any advice from regional office staff based on their knowledge gained through working with the NGO.
- Strategies to enable RSC members who are available to offer ongoing support to the project should be investigated.
- Future proposals for subcontracts should be scored for cooperation, collaboration, and networking.

5.4 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

5.4.1 Findings

Responses to Specific Questions Raised in the TOR

1. *What are the management strengths of this project (both at the global and regional level)?*

WI has developed and refined efficient management systems that enable a wide-reaching and complex project such as CIRCLE to operate relatively smoothly. Initial use of expensive courier

services has been reduced and subcontractors are generally satisfied with the administrative practicalities of financial reporting and disbursement of funds. WI's greatest strength with regard to management is its capacity to develop appropriate and flexible systems and its openness and responsiveness to suggestions for improvement. A midterm evaluation recommendation resulted in increased field visits from both global and regional WI personnel, which have supported subcontractors and improved project monitoring. The change from monthly to bimonthly reporting was clearly a step in the right direction, although some subcontractors still find that they are repeating the same information in subsequent reports.

Another of the management strengths of the project is its dedicated and well-qualified staff members in key positions—many of whom have been in place for all or most of CIRCLE I and II. Of particular note is the CIRCLE Director in HQ who has served since the beginning. According to the USDOL officials interviewed, she has been “superb,” provided good leadership, and helped to ensure productive relationships between USDOL and WI. Moreover, she has been the de facto institutional memory for the project, as six different USDOL program managers have come and gone since 2002. The CIRCLE Project Manager provides important financial and technical support across the three regions and is especially adept at managing USDOL indicators. The language skills of regional staff in Africa and LA have been essential to the smooth running of the project and they deserve special mention for the translations of USDOL indicator information that they provided for subcontractors. NGO personnel have consistently found the regional staff to be very cooperative, providing good support and responding quickly to all communications.

While the role and contributions of volunteer professionals are detailed in other sections of this report, it should be noted that CIRCLE could not have accomplished all that it has without their in-kind support to selection, orientation, and evaluation. In addition to successfully coordinating these processes, WI's staff has also dedicated considerable extra time to serving as BP reviewers across regions. Systems for selecting, orienting, and documenting BPs have also been discussed elsewhere, often with suggestions for improvements, but the processes developed by WI were generally original and creative and provide a solid basis for ongoing learning in light of experience.

2. *Assess the quality and nature of the communication and coordination between headquarters and field offices.*

Given the size and complexity of CIRCLE, it has been a challenge to systematize project information and stay on top of subcontract developments. Both HQ and regional office staff members have made valiant efforts to do so. Communication mechanisms include biweekly field reports from RMs to HQ regarding current events in the region as well as frequent phone calls and daily e-mails. The flow of information seems to be more from the regions up to HQ, reflecting the focus on implementation in the field.

The relationship between headquarters and the regional offices worked well with no apparent blockages or serious difficulties, which enabled the head office to coordinate the project effectively. RMs have been given responsibility and a clear framework for reporting and have been trusted to implement the work in their regions with appropriate support being provided by

HQ. WI used a fairly centralized management style, with all major decisions being made in Washington. There is probably room for more autonomy to be given to regional offices within overall CIRCLE parameters. If the role of the regional office in any future CIRCLE-type projects was developed to include supporting national and regional networking, this would strengthen the impact of project activities. Thus, regional staff could be more than a midway point for collecting and disseminating information and could be encouraged to develop a regional database and regional statistics that would support advocacy initiatives.

LA regional office staff members felt that HQ staff members have interacted with them less than with other regions, which probably reflects the fact that LA constitutes less than 18% of the overall CIRCLE portfolio, as well as the language issues and barriers that precluded the CIRCLE HQ staff from reading source materials, interacting with NGOs and partners, and gaining a deeper understanding of LA issues. Regional staff in Asia mentioned that communication relating to the spotlight stories tended to be slow and the web site was sometimes not updated as regularly as they would have liked.

Worldwide staff members have met three times: in Mali early in the project, and at HQ for BP retreats in 2005 and 2006. These meetings were invaluable in terms of sharing experiences and information across regions and developing uniformly appropriate approaches.

3. *What are management areas, including technical and financial, that could be improved?*

As already mentioned, WI's technical and financial management is generally very strong but it is inevitable—and desirable—that the experience of nearly five years should yield some lessons and ideas for ongoing refinements.

Concerning Reporting

The six-month reporting format used by CIRCLE subcontractors was based on the standard USDOL TPR template, which enabled information to be transferred to WI reports with little difficulty. However, this format focuses primarily on data concerning project impact and less on the details of project activities: how they were implemented and factors contributing to their success or otherwise. In a project looking to highlight and document BP and innovation, it is the processes and the “how to” aspect that are crucial and more of this practical and useful information would enhance subcontractors' reports. In retrospect, WI should have added another section to bimonthly report forms to capture more detail on project content.

Early in the project, partners were required to submit monthly technical and financial reports to WI in addition to semiannual reporting. This level of reporting presented quite a burden, diverted NGO staff time from implementation, and created constant bottlenecks in the process. After the midterm evaluation, the requirement was changed to bimonthly reporting, which a number of subcontractors in all three regions believe is still too often. There also does not seem to be a strong link between the bimonthly and semester reports, as they have different purposes and formats. However, in spite of these issues, NGO staff members interviewed generally felt they were able to capture their project achievements in one of the two reports, and felt more comfortable doing so with practice.

Concerning the Budget

One area that could have been better was a more realistic estimation of the translation demands related to work in LA and, to a lesser extent, in Africa, and the provision of a separate budget line item to adequately cover the human and financial resources required.

Project networking and information exchange would have been enhanced by budgeting for items such as the CIRCLE web site and regional newsletters, as well as meetings of NGO subcontractors at either national, subregional, or regional levels, to focus more on midcourse implementation issues and lessons learned. Intra-CIRCLE learning and communication might have been enhanced by periodic conference calls between HQ and all regional offices.

Concerning Financial Procedures

NGOs were initially permitted to make changes in their budgets of up to 5% without formal justification. However, since Round 3, they need a justification and subcontract amendment for any budget changes whatsoever. Although there is usually no impediment to approval from HQ, this requirement seems rather burdensome.

There is some debate about the most efficient means of disbursing payments to subcontractors. The present system of doing this directly from WI headquarters enables central financial control to be maintained, but disadvantages relative to disbursement from the regional offices include high minimum bank charges whatever the size of the transfer and less control for regional offices, which were not always aware of the current disbursement situation. One possible solution is to transfer funds to the regional office so they are able to make the smaller individual disbursements, but subregional transfers may face difficulties, particularly in regions with less-developed banking systems. Winrock analyzed the options and determined that the system used to wire from HQ is the most effective, as it is more direct, avoids a second bank fee, and is faster, for example, in Africa. The RMs track and report on all of the NGO financials and initiate the wire requests. Similar projects in the future might think about a mixture of the two systems based on what works best for different countries or regions.

Concerning Project Timeframes

Due to the fact that WI could not know in advance how many small, medium, and large subcontract proposals would be received, there had to be some juggling of projects and funds in order to respect the categories defined in the cooperative agreement. As previously mentioned, this juggling resulted in sizeable reductions in a number of subcontract budgets, which inevitably affected the scope of the projects concerned. In recognition of the problem, some changes were made to the categories of the subcontract, increasing the budgets for small projects from a maximum of US\$10,000 to US\$25,000, but the majority of subcontracts were awarded less than US\$50,000, which limited their scope and their potential to be sustainable and cost-effective.

Concerning NGO Administration Costs

CIRCLE subcontract budgets included varying components of NGO administrative costs or overhead but, overall, this component is under-budgeted in that it is not a realistic representation

of the actual overhead costs of NGOs. This situation is a reflection of generally low budgets for the work undertaken, but it effectively means that CIRCLE is being implemented on the backs of subcontractors' other funding partners, who are supporting more than their share of overheads. Organizations that want to build the long-term capacity of national NGOs beyond that of their ability to implement the project concerned should be prepared to pay a minimum of 10% of project costs as a contribution to the subcontractors' overheads. National NGOs cannot exist and develop as professional organizations if funding partners are not prepared to cover these costs, which provide the basis for building capacity and independence.

Concerning Local Procurement

One subcontractor said that it would have liked to procure items such as school uniforms from within communities, hence putting money into the local economies where they were working. However, they were under the impression that WI requirements for official receipts could not be met, as local artisans do not possess headed paper or official stamps. When asked about this, WI staff thought that it would not have been an insurmountable obstacle and it is clearly a desirable strategy for strengthening local economies, which should probably be actively promoted and encouraged in future projects.

4. *If the implementing organization did not have legal presence in the country prior to award, what impact did that have on project implementation? And if they were legally present?*

In the regional hub countries, WI communication with local subcontractors was easier and staff tended to have more in-depth knowledge of national policies and other child labor/trafficking initiatives in the country concerned. Asia was the only region where, in addition to offices in the two subregional hub countries, WI also had a legal presence in some of the other CIRCLE countries. Where a country office existed, there was easier access to information on NGO networks for the distribution of the RFPs and some logistical support was available when CIRCLE staff visited subcontractors.

In countries where WI was not present, subcontractors had less support and the possibilities for national networking were reduced, but this is not in any way meant to imply that regional staff did not make concerted efforts to establish close connections with all subcontractors. The regional organizational structure of CIRCLE did present a myriad of challenges related to managing project implementation in several languages. With the high transportation costs of traveling within regions, at least in Africa, most subcontractors and the regional office personnel felt that, in the future, it would probably be better to concentrate on fewer countries with either national or subregional offices.

5. *Was the management structure (U.S. headquarters and three regional offices) able to provide sufficient oversight (site monitoring) and capacity-building of local organizations?*

The CIRCLE Director felt that the management structure was functional and sufficient support and capacity-building have been achieved through delegation to RMs and their presence in the field. She has stated that WI did not consider CIRCLE to be “a capacity-building or technical

assistance project by purpose,” but the existing management structure has succeeded in offering a good deal of useful capacity-building to enable subcontractors to apply project administrative procedures. One of the recommendations drawn from the regional evaluation reports is that the concept of capacity-building should be broader in any future CIRCLE type projects, as previously discussed under project design issues.

Site monitoring was improved by the increase in the frequency of visits recommended by the midterm evaluation, which was popular with subcontractors, the majority of whom implemented their projects well with the level of support they received. In LA, while WI support, monitoring, and capacity building has enabled NGOs to effectively implement their activities, there has been an associated strain on regional staff. Since August 2005, there has been the equivalent of only one full-time post to handle all project-related duties,¹¹ thus staffing and budget constraints did not allow the target of two site visits for every subcontractor to be reached.

The Asia region has had, in effect, two regional offices—one in Kathmandu covering South Asia (SA) and, since May 2004, a subregional office in Manila covering Southeast Asia (SEA). For Rounds 2 and 3, the SEA office has functioned virtually as a full regional office, reporting to HQ for a period via Kathmandu, but returning to direct reporting when little added value was evident. CIRCLE staff members in Asia are succeeding in making at least two site visits per subcontractor and, for those working in the country of the RM, there are also a number of informal discussions in the regional office. While field visits are generally appreciated, subcontractors would like them to be more regular with the possible addition of a review meeting with the RM midway through the subcontract. The SA RM felt that child monitoring was stronger where there was more interaction between partners.

There is a separate question concerning the selection procedure, which allocates either US\$10,000 or US\$100,000 with the same levels of knowledge and documentation, where the latter carries a much greater degree of risk. The possibility of a site visit before awarding large amounts of money might be worth considering. There is a further question concerning the degree of supervision and support that it is reasonable to aim to provide to subcontractors who do not perform as expected. While site visits are expensive, they are more revealing and can yield much more information than e-mail and telephone exchanges. National or subregional offices and fewer subcontracts with larger budgets would facilitate both oversight and capacity-building. Another strategy might be to use a limited number of consultants to support subcontractors in countries where the grantee does not have an office, on either a regular or troubleshooting basis.

6. *How satisfied are the NGOs with the orientation, training, and support received by CIRCLE project staff?*

The NGO staff members interviewed during the evaluation provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about WI’s support and orientation under CIRCLE. They greatly appreciated the assistance and guidance provided by WI staff members via site visits, e-mail and phone, and the nonhierarchical and supportive relationships that they established.

¹¹ The Deputy RM worked on CIRCLE alone from August 2005 to July 2006. Since then, 70% of her time and 30% of the Project Assistant’s time is devoted to CIRCLE, with the remainder going to BASTA, another child labor project.

Input about the RLMs was also positive, with a few varying opinions. NGOs thought the training was very good, understandable, and well-organized. They appreciated the opportunity to interact with government representatives and others active in the child labor field. However, several people remarked that the RLMs were more focused on systems, processes, and documentation and less on developing the themes and concepts related to child labor or building links and the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

Capacity development in the area of child labor elimination would have contributed to subcontract implementation but, more importantly, would have significantly contributed to the ongoing work of the subcontractors after the end of the project. Many of the CIRCLE NGOs, including those not previously active in child labor, are continuing their involvement through other projects. The second point about shared learning is linked to the under-exploited potential for networking, which has already been discussed.

One lesson learned is the importance of inviting two representatives—a technical manager/director and an administrative financial officer—from each subcontractor to the RLM. When only project directors attended, there were ramifications in their ability to understand the financial training, as well as their ability to transmit the technical knowledge to financial staff. This situation was further complicated by the fact that wire requests and financial reports were in English. The situation was remedied by having two people from each NGO attend the third RLM, regardless of the amount of their subcontract. In addition to improved reporting, the NGOs appreciated having the finance people there, since they are normally uninvolved in the technical area and greatly benefited from this knowledge.

“The CIRCLE orientation process is holistic in that it covers the monitoring, evaluation, reporting guidelines, and financial aspects of the programme. It generally takes the organization through what is expected of them and provides a platform for the implementing organizations to share and discuss. Another notable strength is the timeliness in the disbursement of funds. Implementing organizations are also kept up-to-date with what others are implementing in the programme through the e-newsletter. A post-implementation review meeting, which brings together all the implementing partners in the project, would greatly open new opportunities for further strategies toward elimination of child labour.”

“The CIRCLE orientation was a good process because the launch meetings brought together different organizations who originally did not know each other. By discovering each other, they could combine their different strengths to address the issues of child labour, which requires collective effort.” (From African Subcontractors' remarks; e-mail survey)

Many of the partners were disappointed that there were very few opportunities to develop their understanding and skill in the area of child labor elimination. Some CIRCLE partners were already experienced in child labor interventions, but for many, this was a new area. These comments came from both groups. Suggestions for specific topics included (1) Concept of child labor; (2) International and national legislation on child

labor; (3) Education and the consequences of child labor; (4) Interventions for the elimination of child labor; (5) Child rights. (From the Asia report)

Overall, subcontractors were very satisfied with the orientation, training, and support that they received, and the more experienced among them were quick to see the potential for developing the opportunities further along the lines described above. The comments below serve to give a flavor of the type of comments that were common during the evaluation.

“They (WI staff) answer us very quickly. Being in another city isn’t an impediment. They are very patient with us and give us 100% support. They clarify our doubts and send us feedback on reports.”

Subcontractors said they left RLM training “with an idea of how to do things, but not certitude ...only practice allows you to perfect these systems in daily life since they are very complex.” (From the LA report)

5.4.2 Additional Findings

Project Cost-Effectiveness

One of the questions that WI asked the evaluators to look at was the overall cost-effectiveness of CIRCLE. While any detailed analysis is beyond the scope of the current evaluation, some general comments can be made on the basis of conversations with WI and USDOL.

WI calculated the cost per child W/P: CIRCLE I and II = US\$8.5 million; 23,500 W/P = US\$362. This compares favorably with USDOL’s current target for new EI projects, which is US\$600–\$700/beneficiary.

However if we factor in the time element, a rough estimate of the average time that each child is actively involved with a project is one year for CIRCLE and around three years for standard country EI programs. This factoring gives us comparative costs of CIRCLE’s US\$362 per child per year and a USDOL target of US\$200–\$233 per child per year. In addition, all the evidence suggests that impact will be more sustainable in longer interventions.

However, too much importance should not be placed on this as CIRCLE was designed as a knowledge-generation project and USDOL saw the related costs as worthwhile in relation to the expected results.

5.4.3 Conclusions

The fact that CIRCLE I was extended into CIRCLE II and has completed three rounds of RFPs and subsequent subcontract implementation attests to its effective and efficient management, so recommendations made in this report should be seen in the light of learning through experience, to refine a system that already works well. As CIRCLE is drawing to a close, points concerning its management are now largely redundant, but possibilities for improvement are mentioned in the hope that the CIRCLE model will be adopted for future projects.

A main point being discussed in this section is whether a regional project structure was able to provide sufficient oversight (site monitoring) and capacity-building of the implementing partners. In respect of achieving the specific project outputs, the answer is ‘yes,’ but there are clear calls from the implementing partners for the following:

- More frequent monitoring/review/support visits
- Interactions with other partners to discuss progress and share experiences and learning
- Support to develop their knowledge and abilities in child labor elimination.

Probably the main constraint to providing these areas of support was the national and regional disbursement of the subcontracts. The costs (in time and money) for site visits and for calling partners together were high. The negative consequences of a regional management structure were—

- High cost of the initial RLM for each round
- Costly, and therefore limited, monitoring and support by CIRCLE staff
- The absence of further regional or national meetings/workshops
- Limited networking/interaction among partners.

It can be argued that for a knowledge-generation project like CIRCLE, the benefits obtained from the wide geographical spread justified the regional strategy. Looking ahead, it is recommended that any scaling up and replication be done at the national level.

Overall, WI staff has done an admirable job of managing a broad and complex set of activities with relatively few human resources. NGOs are quite satisfied with the level of training, support, and capacity-building they have received under CIRCLE and appreciate the relationships of trust and confidence that have developed with WI.

5.4.4 Recommendations

- WI should facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices among its subcontractors and other organizations with shared objectives through national (possibly regional) interactions. The objective should be both refining and disseminating good practices.
- A reporting format should be developed that puts more emphasis on process and “how to” aspects of a project and this aspect should be emphasized during RLMs, site visits, and project evaluations.
- A minimum of 10% of project costs should be paid as overhead to support subcontractors’ administration costs, in recognition of their importance in building the capacity of sustainable national NGOs.

- Local procurement of items such as school uniforms should be actively promoted alongside instructions on how to obtain local receipts that meet USDOL requirements.
- Grantee regional offices should support a limited number of subcontracts to maintain the quality of their input and leave time for national networking. Consideration of national or subregional offices and/or the use of consultants should contribute to the design of future CIRCLE-type projects.
- Future RLM training should include full case studies of illustrative project scenarios with real-life technical and financial issues, so that NGOs could walk through thorny issues together.
- Future subcontracts should be awarded for longer periods to allow NGOs adequate time to build community trust and ownership and to address more of the root causes of child labor problems. (As previously mentioned, a two-year minimum is suggested).
- Future projects implementing child labor elimination strategies through national NGOs should include technical capacity development of these partners as one of their intended outcomes.
- USDOL should create a dedicated web site (or portion of the current site) to enable EI implementers to share relevant materials and documentation.

5.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

5.5.1 Findings

Responses to Specific Questions Raised in the TOR

1. *What steps have been taken so far to promote sustainability and continuation of education strategies for combating child labor beyond the life of the project?*

Subcontractors were asked to think about the sustainability of their projects from the beginning. The steps taken by WI are the provision of sustainability training during RLMs, the requirement for NGOs to include sustainability strategies in their subcontract proposals and implementation, the provision of capacity-building assistance, the development of the BP publication, and informal sharing of information on funding opportunities during site visits.

“We will use the basic definition that sustainability means lasting and durable, and that achievements remain after the funding has ended. In the context of your projects, it means that systems are in place so that the benefits of the project can continue after the end of a specific intervention, or after your CIRCLE subcontract ends. Sustainability does not only involve money, but implies investing in the human capital resource base for future generations. Sustainability does not mean that the whole project must just continue, but that the objectives, impacts, or benefits of the project are met by other

means and, ideally, are adopted and carried on through ownership by the community.”
(From training material on sustainability for RLM)

Principal strategies for sustainability adopted by various subcontractors are as follows:

- Training and raising community awareness concerning the dangers linked to child trafficking and child labor and the importance of education.
 - Working in collaboration with CBOs, local administration, religious leaders, teachers, education authorities, and traditional leaders throughout CIRCLE implementation in the hope that these individuals and structures will be sufficiently motivated and able to continue activities after the end of the project.
 - Investing in human capital and resources through teacher training and curriculum development.
 - Looking for funding from other financial partners to continue NFE initiatives started by the project and support income generation to enable communities to continue to enroll their children in school.
 - Engaging in local fundraising to encourage community members/organizations, government bodies, and /or the private sector to contribute to the costs of education and other child labor withdrawal interventions.
2. *Was the project’s initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate?*

While the strategies outlined above are all proving effective to some degree, the overriding message coming out of each of the regional evaluations and the midterm evaluation is that *the length of subcontracts needs to be significantly increased to enable community ownership of initiatives to have time to become established*. If we do not take such a consistent and clear message seriously, it calls into question the value of the investment in EI evaluations.

From the Asia report: “.... specific services to children do not bring about lasting change in parents, teachers, employers, the wider community, and local government. It is developments in these groups and local institutions that are going to create more significant changes in the longer term.”

“A 10-month project was only enough time to test an innovation (incentives for regular attendance) and develop some of the local institutions (PTA, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, and teachers). These local institutions were not developed enough to expect them to take on the responsibility. And it is unrealistic to expect a system/method to be sustainable when it has only been tested for one school year. The capacity of schools and teachers cannot be developed sufficiently in 10 months to expect them to be sustainable.” (From Julio Labayen, HOPE Volunteers Foundation, Executive Director, Philippines)

From the LA report: “Given the relatively short timeframes (all subcontracts except two were less than two years) and small amounts of funding (all subcontracts were US\$100,000 or less), it is important to have realistic expectations about project sustainability and to recognize that most NGOs accomplished a great deal within the given constraints.”

And from Africa:

“We were excited to mobilize, strengthen, and create structures to address child labor, but the biggest weakness was that the project put a lot of emphasis on members instead of the process. The strategies included withdrawing children from child labor and supporting them in school and vocational training. This happened for 1 year and the children were abandoned because the project was short (1 year). This was an abuse to children. For projects to succeed, they need to be owned by communities, but the process of ownership takes time, definitely more than a year.” (From subcontractor remark from an e-mail survey)

The midterm evaluation synthesis report said, “All of the evaluations concluded that Winrock could not realistically be held responsible for the accomplishment of sustainability of a project that is a short-lived endeavor with a life cycle of one or two years.” However, WI, future grantees, and USDOL can be held responsible if they fail to hear this message coming from countless communities and NGOs.

The second message coming consistently from African communities, but also mentioned by those in LA and Asia, is that strategies and support for income generation/resource mobilization need to be an integral part of initiatives to combat child labor and promote education if they are to be sustainable. The consistency with which this reaction was heard in African communities is probably a reflection of the extreme poverty of many families in sub-Saharan Africa.

3. *What appears to be the project’s impact to date, if any, on (a) individual beneficiaries (children, parents, teachers, etc.), (b) partner organizations (local NGOs, community groups, schools, etc.), and (c) government and policy structures in terms of systemwide change on education and child labor issues?*

Because CIRCLE is a project about children, communities, and their futures, this section quotes extensively from the regional reports in order to hear voices from a range of participating communities and understand the project’s impact on people’s lives to the greatest possible extent.

CIRCLE has had a significant impact on the lives of children who have had the opportunity to be W/P and enrolled in education in Africa:

“For many, it has changed the course of their lives, opening up choices that they would probably never have had if it was not for the project. For some, this has not been an easy experience, as the loss of family income has made it difficult to get adequate food and to study, and for those who have dropped out of school, the impact has been less positive. For a few, it has shaped their future and put them on a path to fighting child labor and trafficking as young activists from whom we will almost certainly hear more in the future.”

In LA:

“Children themselves noted the dangerous conditions surrounding them—including drug trafficking, prostitution, crime, guns, death, discrimination, racism, and poverty—and the lack of safe, healthy options such as parks where they can play and spend their free time. Many kids participating in CIRCLE field trips literally left these communities for the first time in their lives and caught a glimpse of other possibilities. Children were unanimous in their praise of educational activities based on active, playful (lúdico) methodologies and were excited to participate in sports, art, theatre, music, dance, etc. Finally, most expressed great hope and ambition for the future, including university studies and a professional life.”

In the words of CIRCLE students:

“We learn to be independent.”

“We learn things we don’t know, like you can be someone in life.”

“I used to be in the street a lot, now I’m obedient and a good person.”

“Before I used to fight a lot and I was a rebel; now I’m calm and I respect my parents.”

“If we weren’t here, we would be in the street learning to steal; here we learn to develop ourselves.”

“I learned you should always listen.”

And from their mothers:

“Our children are happier now that the school is better. They have learned much more, and the tutoring/pedagogic support is very helpful.”

“My son wants to study now; before, he didn’t do anything and the teacher would call us all the time.”

“He doesn’t fight anymore; he’s not in the street causing trouble.”

“My daughter was very nervous and shy before, but she has changed.”

“When my kid gets older, s/he wants to be a doctor...police officer...teacher...lawyer ...soccer teacher...in the military...dentist.”

“We have to support our children in whatever they want to do.”

Illustrations of children’s awareness of child rights: (CSID, Bangladesh)

“Disabled children have written to the Police Commissioner requesting that traffic police assist them in crossing busy road junctions. This responsibility has now been included in the training of traffic police.”

“At the end of a discussion with a group of disabled children, a 17-year-old boy asked the evaluator, ‘What are you going to do with the information that you have collected from us?’”

And from Asia:

Much information was obtained on the impact on children, both from the implementing partners, from the children themselves, and from their parents. There is a consensus among stakeholders that there have been significant changes in the attitudes and behavior of most of the children who have been direct beneficiaries. The changes listed below are not isolated examples, but points that were repeatedly made.

- Studying (never been to school before).
- Helping other family members and other children value education.
- Learning discipline and respect.
- Using more gentle language.
- Having a good understanding of child rights.
- Having the ability to avoid exploitation and resist cheating.
- Having a realistic understanding of what appropriate work is.
- Speaking with confidence.
- Exhibiting improved personal cleanliness and wearing cleaner clothes.
- Assisting other child laborers in need.

Parents and teachers who have become members of CBOs to combat child labor and trafficking in Africa have realized that they can make a difference to their children’s future and influence life in their communities. For many, this experience has been a time of personal growth and development and some have become teachers or developed leadership skills beyond their previous imaginings. Others are still on the way to such achievements and rest for the moment in a more dependent state, believing that they can do little without outside assistance and unaware of their own power and potential.

Many people in LA highlighted the value of increased parental involvement and the new things they had learned about how to support their children in school and at home. Comments from mothers signal improved parenting skills, self-esteem, and empowerment: “Before, I used to spank my son; now I talk to him more... It’s not just hit, hit – you have to converse and talk.” “We realized that our children are talented.” “We learned about the rights of women, although there are many people who ignore them—I learned more here [in the Mothers’ Group] than in school.” “I learned not to stay quiet—we have to protect ourselves.” Teachers noted the value of training on how to deal with the issues faced by child laborers and at-risk youth; how to adapt the curriculum to make it more responsive to their needs; how to work more productively with parents; and how to identify/monitor situations of CL, violence, and exploitation. One teacher said, “The project allows reflection regarding social conditions and the role of education in transforming lives.”

In Asia, parents have been an important focus of many of the awareness-raising activities. They are strongly committed to their children’s education and express the desire to withdraw their children from child labor with varying degrees of strength. The fact that their children are or have until recently been contributing to the family income is a significant challenge for them. The motivation to withdraw their children from work is mainly due to the need for education rather than the need to protect them from work hazards. Parents are making sacrifices in order to educate their children and additional workloads for both the father and mother were often a direct consequence of enrolling their children in school. Another consequence was that withdrawing their children from work often led to an increase in the debt burden carried by the family. Raising the awareness and skills of teachers and SMCs has also been an important project output. Progress has mainly been made in education improvements, with limited awareness on the hazards or legislation regarding child labor.

Many partner organizations including subcontractors, schools, and CBOs are now better equipped as organizations with more rigorous systems, and have learned more about issues around child labor and trafficking, all of which will continue to influence their future work. However, CBOs established to support NFE centers, improve the capacity and awareness of schools, and combat child labor/trafficking have varying degrees of understanding of what work is appropriate for children of different ages and the significance of child rights and national legislation. Many are extremely dependent on ongoing support from NGO partners and some ceased to operate effectively soon after the subcontract was completed.

Sometimes awareness-raising has resulted in increased enrollment beyond the capacity available, highlighting the enormous need for educational infrastructure, materials and equipment, teachers, and other learning resources in most of the African countries where CIRCLE operates. However, CIRCLE has also helped to meet these needs by supporting classroom construction, teacher training, and curriculum development, in addition to providing NFE opportunities for vocational training and basic education for older children. CIRCLE’s biggest impact in this sense is that it has highlighted potentialities, which now need to be further developed and expanded.

While there are about a dozen examples from across the three regions of CIRCLE’s impact on **government and policy structures** in terms of systemwide change in education and child labor

issues, such a project has much greater potential to influence these issues through collaboration and networking with others working for the same objectives in the countries concerned.

4. *Are local organizations able to secure resources to sustain activities?*

There are some good examples from all three regions of subcontractors that have been able to secure resources to sustain activities or ensure that project activities are taken over by government or other organizations. However, the likelihood is that most of the CBOs established through subcontracts do not have the capacity to secure resources as yet, or to sustain their activities. In a number of cases, there are no resources for ongoing support for CIRCLE-initiated activities and it seems optimistic to hope that activities will be sustainable even in the short term. Local fundraising has been attempted in both Asia and Africa, but with limited success.

The fact that the most competent subcontractors are often the ones that successfully mobilize ongoing resources suggests that this is a skill that can be developed. It takes time, know-how, networking, and confidence to successfully mobilize funds. Fundraising know-how and networking are aspects that could be included in the capacity-building of future CIRCLE-type programs. Contributing to NGO administrative costs helps to ensure that they can pay sufficient personnel to have the necessary time, and success breeds confidence (which breeds success). This process demonstrates how a holistic approach to development on the part of financial and technical partners, (as opposed to the more usual project-limited perspective), directly contributes to sustainability.

5. *What lessons could be learned to date in terms of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?*

Lessons in terms of sustainability from CIRCLE's accomplishments:

- NGOs that implemented successive subcontracts in the same communities produced sustainable results through training and empowering CBOs to combat child labor and encourage education.
- NGO subcontractors have an enormous capacity to initiate and develop creative solutions and innovations within the communities where they work. The commitment, imagination, and energy of their workers empower local people to believe in themselves and develop their potential, which is ultimately what makes projects sustainable.
- Involving young people in resolving issues that directly affect them and their peers is a powerful and effective approach to combating child labor/ trafficking, which directly benefits the young people themselves and indirectly benefits those with whom they work.
- The projects that demonstrated the most likelihood of having a sustainable impact were not necessarily implemented by partners that had previously worked in education or child labor. It is expertise and experience in broader community development and an ability to match community need with funding opportunities that resulted in the integration of education and child labor into existing development programs.

- One of the strengths of the subcontractors (and a success of the selection process) was that many of them had a long-term relationship with the community and a sense of local accountability. Few had the intention of closing their office upon project completion. They were accountable to the community, at least to search for alternative funding for the children who had been supported in school. The focus of effective sustainability has not been on the interventions, but rather on the partners selected to carry out the subcontracts that they designed.

Lessons in terms of sustainability from CIRCLE's weaknesses:

- Short project duration makes it difficult for new community groups to become sufficiently confident and competent in their roles and responsibilities. Without exception, the partners raised the issue of the subcontract timeframe within the context of sustainability, indicating that it was too short to expect any sustainable change to have taken place.
- Income-replacement strategies to promote income generation or resource mobilization are essential if communities are to be able to consistently support ex-child laborers in education, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia and, to some extent, in LA.
- Some CIRCLE subcontracts have had a relatively narrow focus, for example, reducing drop out from school, improving school quality, helping out-of-school youth, re-enrolling children in school, and focusing on recognition of hazardous work. Focusing on just one of these issues is unlikely to make a significant difference to the number of children in labor and not in school if there is no holistic program to deal with both preventive and curative measures.

Lessons in terms of sustainability from CIRCLE's overall implementation:

- Awareness-raising concerning education needs to be accompanied by support for increased availability of quality education (infrastructure, teachers and teacher training, materials, and equipment) because of the gap between supply and demand for education in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Significant achievements for individuals can be made with small sums of money over relatively short periods, but sustainable community change takes longer and costs more.
- Any extended capacity-building in future CIRCLE-type projects would need to be developed within the different regional contexts. The relative level of development of community and national organizations is significantly different in the three regions, hence the needs are not the same and there may be exciting opportunities for creative learning across regions.

6. *Could projects funded be scaled up for funding by the government or another donor?*

Many subcontracts could be scaled up for funding by the government or another financial partner. These projects tend to be the ones that were implemented on a scale appropriate to the project period and the available budget and that can demonstrate an impact. Whether existing projects will be scaled up is related to the capacity and commitment of the subcontractor and the prevalence of an enabling environment.

One of the dangers of ‘scaling up’ projects is that the partner will be distanced from the community to which they are accountable. Taking many of these systems and practices to scale is dependent on the availability of local partners with appropriate programs with which to integrate. Scaling up may involve a larger number of carefully selected partners rather than larger projects.

WI could have worked more with subcontractors to support them in securing ongoing resources, perhaps through a workshop or training pack on fundraising, or by contacting or researching potential partners. As previously mentioned, fundraising would be a useful addition to CIRCLE capacity-building and could help to secure ongoing funding for project activities.

The experience under CIRCLE has been invaluable in demonstrating the successful elements of these projects and enabling NGOs and communities to explore what is possible to achieve in a relatively short period of time, with small amounts of money. Many projects are ripe for replication.

7. *How effective has the project been in documenting and communicating good practices? Could this and other materials be used in the wider community?*

The reporting format for six-month technical reports encourages identification of good practices at the subcontract, regional, and central levels. This format has collected a wealth of ideas and reports that feed into the BP reviews and thus contribute to the identification and scoring of BPs. It is difficult to respond definitively to this question until the BP Compendium is finished and disseminated, but it does provide an opportunity to look at the website, the spotlight stories, and the newsletters, as well as the materials developed by different subcontractors during the course of the project.

Comparatively little communication exists between partners, and less with other organizations, concerning the good practices, lessons learned, and other experiences obtained from implementing the CIRCLE project. Subcontractors expressed a strong interest in opportunities to meet regularly at a national level to review progress of their subcontracts and to share their experiences. There are a few examples of subcontractors informally passing on some of their identified good practices to other organizations (BASE in Nepal and CARD and RADA in Sierra Leone, NGOs that belong to local networks).

The CIRCLE website carries a lot of information and is easy to navigate—if you speak English. While it makes sporadic attempts at translation into different languages, it could have gone much further in enabling non-English speakers to access information. The site does not exploit its potential for networking, as there are no links to other organizations or resources concerned with child labor/trafficking or to subcontractors’ websites. While subcontract descriptions are

available, it would have been interesting to have some updates on each initiative. The spotlight stories and newsletters provide some insight into different subcontracts and are informative and useful, but as they tend to focus on successes, we do not hear much about the more problematic aspects of the work or how/if challenges are being overcome.

The newsletters were useful as a means of sharing information and experience, and it would have been beneficial if subcontractors had contributed more articles, as WI requested. Sharing the publicity and training materials developed by different subcontractors via the website would encourage cross-fertilization and mutual inspiration.

WI is investing significant thought, time, and resources in the BP Compendium, so it will be important that this document be made widely available among subcontractors on the Internet and to other stakeholders combating child labor/trafficking. The document will be shared with subcontractors in meetings that bring them together on each continent, and these meetings will serve as dynamic opportunities for experience sharing, particularly regarding the sustainability of initiatives and plans for ongoing work and future networking. Even if CIRCLE is coming to an end, the issues and challenges remain.

5.5.2 Conclusions

CIRCLE's initial strategies for sustainability can be expanded in the light of experience. NGO subcontractors have done a good job of fostering local involvement/ownership of activities, working effectively with various governmental and nongovernmental partners, and increasing community awareness of the hazards of child labor and the value of education. However, the limited duration of subcontracts has led to a limited impact on the capacity of local groups and organizations to act independently on child labor issues. Greater local ownership and autonomy of CBOs was observed where several successive subcontracts were implemented in the same communities.

There have been significant positive changes in the attitude and behavior of parents, teachers, community leaders, and W/P children enrolled in education during the project period. Child organizations and clubs have reinforced the changes in children's personal development and some of these clubs are beginning to develop some institutional capacity.

In some cases, NGOs are providing services that *should* be the purview of government but are not being covered because of budget constraints, poor/nonexistent policies, and/or weak public institutional capacity. In these cases, NGOs need to combine service delivery with public pressure and advocacy efforts to try to address the underlying systemic weaknesses.

National NGOs and communities have an important role to play in initiating, testing, and refining creative solutions to identified challenges and CIRCLE has provided them with an opportunity to do this. Many initiatives have proved themselves through their impact on individuals and communities and now have the potential to be more widely implemented. This process requires support from governments and technical and financial partners, and WI should consider how it can assist subcontractors in attracting such support. Because of its five years of experience implementing CIRCLE, WI is now at a different level of maturity and knowledge

than it was in 2002. It is well-positioned to continue this type of global child labor work in the future and share the CIRCLE methodology with others.

5.5.3 Recommendations

- The length of subcontracts needs to be significantly increased to enable community ownership of initiatives to become established. A minimum of two years is suggested.
- Strategies and support for income generation/resource mobilization need to be an integral part of sustainable initiatives to combat child labor and promote education.
- The common responsibility of grantees, RSCs, and subcontractors to ensure that project proposals are feasible within the time and budget available should be recognized and emphasized.
- CIRCLE-type projects should do more to influence government and policy structures in terms of systemwide change on education and child labor issues by encouraging and promoting collaboration and networking with others working for the same objectives in the countries concerned.
- Materials developed by CIRCLE partners should be reviewed for their usefulness and the potential demand for them with a view to printing and disseminating them more widely. Some form of peer review could be used during a partners' workshop if one was held.
- NGO capacity-building needs to be widened to include both institutional development and more technical aspects of child labor/trafficking, participatory community development, and fundraising.
- WI should seek funding to continue its work with certain NGO partners in selected countries or support subcontractors in their search for funds. Potential opportunities include ILAB's upcoming solicitation for applications to address exploitive child labor internationally.¹² Since Bolivia, Cambodia, and the Philippines are among the 10 target countries, WI is well-positioned to continue its work with appropriate subcontractors in these countries. In addition, the World Bank's Development Marketplace¹³ is a competitive grant program that identifies and supports emerging development ideas at both the global and country level.
- Finally, WI should strategize and develop its ideas about what a future CIRCLE-type project might look like—including how to scale up some of the successful BPs, innovations, and lessons learned under CIRCLE I and II so that the content of the BP Compendium can be used in practice with NGO partners combating child labor.

¹² See the April 26, 2007 Notice of Intent at www.dol.gov/_sec/regs/fedreg/notices/2007007962.htm.

¹³ DM awards range from US\$50,000 to US\$200,000. For more information, please see <http://go.worldbank.org/PPLLZDYU70>.

VI LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The good practices part of this section can better be left to the BP Compendium because with so many subcontracts, it is difficult to cover all the many good practices that CIRCLE represents. However, it is worth identifying some that are common to a number of subcontracts and mentioning the CIRCLE model itself because it has found a way to fund projects tailored to the needs of specific communities and to support national NGOs in implementing them. Based on clearly stated overall objectives, NGOs created strategies and targets resulting in subcontracts linked to the specific needs, opportunities, and context of their area. This tailoring has resulted in innovations, a sense of ownership of the subcontract, and a strong sense of responsibility to the community on the part of local NGOs.

Examples of common good practices observed during the evaluation included strategies and activities that—

- Empower young people so that they develop the self-confidence to express their ideas and formulate plans and strategies for advocacy and action—this is inspiring every time.
- Identify, train, and support community members who become leaders and educators.
- Invest in and value individuals and groups so they begin to value and believe in themselves.
- Present information in a way that is accessible and interesting for the target group—often through starting from their own experiences and knowledge.
- Are holistic in their approach, taking into account the overall context, needs, and expectations of the group concerned.
- Are based on making communities responsible for their own choices.

Among CIRCLE systems and practices, we can also mention the following:

The Partner selection process: The output of the selection process, particularly in terms of the commitment and capability of subcontractors, has been generally high. This commitment must reflect the process used, which was well-advertised, transparent, included clear instructions, had well-thought out and clear criteria, used a clear system to assess proposals against the criteria, involved independent technical experts covering all the regions, and was well-supported by the WI staff. While the evaluation has recommended some refinements, the CIRCLE selection process was clearly successful.

Regional launch meetings (RLMs): RLMs were held at the beginning of each implementation round and provided an orientation and training to implementing partners regarding management requirements of the CIRCLE project, explanations of monitoring requirements, including clarification on the meaning of important terms, and an opportunity to finalize details of the proposed subcontract. They provided a useful means to develop a working relationship and establish working norms and expectations. It is recommended that the RLM be used to provide

some technical capacity–building, as well. It may be more appropriate to hold the RLMs at the national level in the future.

Partnering with NGOs experienced in wider development issues: Partnering with NGOs previously uninvolved in child labor has been an effective way of integrating child labor into the NGOs’ broader development agenda within their target communities. There are opportunities for greater sustainability when child labor elimination is seen in the context of other development issues such as health, local government capacity development, and livelihood enhancement.

Partnering with NGOs with a long-term commitment to work in the locality: NGO partners who have ‘grown up’ locally or have made a commitment to work in a locality over a period of time are accountable to their communities in a way that traditional subcontractors implementing large-scale projects often are not. This locality means that they are likely to have well-developed relationships with local authorities and will strive to maintain support to community groups and beneficiary children in the longer term.

The holistic approach used by many NGOs (particularly in LA and Africa) closely involving four key stakeholder groups—students, parents, schools, and communities—in coordinated efforts to mitigate child labor through education has proven very effective. Ownership and participation by all four groups is vital, although earning their trust and building confidence is not an overnight proposition.

Some of the many lessons learned are the following:

- With limited resources, more impact can be achieved by working intensively with fewer people in a smaller area than through spreading resources more thinly.
- When one group of children is removed from exploitive labor, vigilance is needed to ensure that another vulnerable group does not take their place.
- It is important to complement community-based actions with advocacy in order to influence overall policy—only in this way will the enabling environment become more positive over time.
- The significance of different cultural contexts—particularly where children are viewed as key contributors to family income and survival or migration patterns are historical—is a factor in combating child labor and requires appropriate approaches.
- Public awareness-raising about the hazards of child labor is a necessary, but not sufficient, part of the solution in the face of dire poverty and serious socioeconomic challenges. Efforts must be made to provide complementary support addressing the root causes—not just the symptoms—of why children work. These include a lack of opportunities for parents, often stemming from their own limited education, and a lack of viable personal and professional options for youth.

- Investing the time in developing comprehensive partnerships and networking with a variety of entities can exponentially increase the radius of impact of a project and more effectively address the needs of beneficiaries. Such partnerships also foster the longer term sustainability of efforts.

The lead evaluator would like to express her appreciation of the work done by the regional evaluators for Asia and LA. She has made every attempt to represent faithfully and incorporate the information they gathered and their points of view and ideas in this synthesis report, but inevitably some aspects of the regional findings may have been left out, emphasized differently, or expressed as common to all regions, in an attempt to provide a global perspective.

It is fitting that this report should end by congratulating WI for piloting and coordinating this exciting initiative. It is hoped that the evaluation has succeeded in capturing the important issues and that the ideas and suggestions expressed will be taken in the spirit in which they are offered—in support of stakeholders’ common objective of making life a better experience for more children, increasing their choices and opportunities through education, and putting an end to suffering through exploitation.