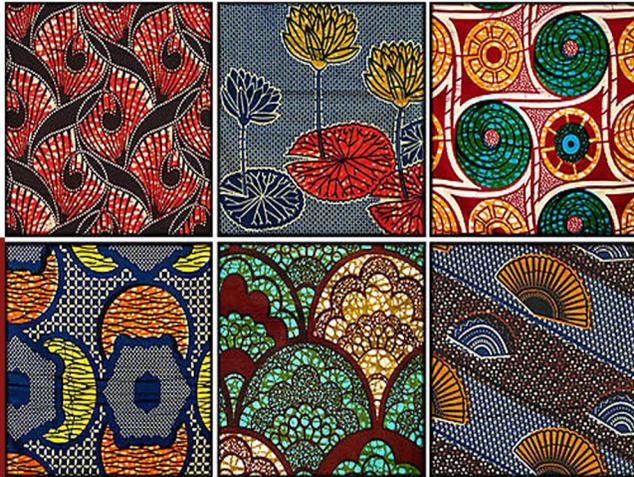


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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Final Evaluation of the Alternatives to Combating Child Labor Through Education and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa Region (ACCESS-MENA) Project

CHF International

Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0049



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Appreciation is due to the Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) and the Coordinators of the project in the three governorates for their technical input and logistical support during my field visits to the governorates. A particular acknowledgment is due to Mr. Ali Ghallab of CSSW who accompanied me during my field visits to the three governorates. His experience and knowledge of the project's sites made my visits efficient and time saving. I would like also to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Mohamed Alnood (Sana'a University) in the collection and analysis of some of the data and documents relevant to the ACCESS MENA project in Yemen.

The report is the sole responsibility of the evaluator. Any potential mistakes, omissions, misquotations, or otherwise will be either an oversight or a reflection of understanding of the information provided by the various informants.

The evaluator observed utmost confidentiality related to information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. In order to ensure freedom of expression and to mitigate any bias during the data collection process, implementing partner staff was not present during stakeholder interviews.

I wish to state here that I, as independent consultant, have no personal stake in ACCESS MENA, the ministries and offices in Yemen, or any of the organizations I contacted during the evaluation process. Elements of objectivity and transparency were observed to the best of my professional and personal ability.

Best wishes to all.

Abdul Karim Alaug
Independent Evaluator
Sociology Department
Sana'a University
Yemen

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCESS-MENA	Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services—Middle East and North Africa
AMIDEAST	America-Mideast Educational and Training Services
AVT	Accelerated Vocational Training
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation International
CLMS	Child Labor Monitoring System
CSSW	Charitable Society for Social Welfare
CLU	Child Labor Unit
CRC	Convention of Child Rights
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
EFA	Education for All
EI	Education Initiative
ETF	Education Task Force
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i> (Germany Society for Technical Cooperation)
HCMC	Higher Council for Motherhood & Childhood
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
KOL	KidzOnline
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoP	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MOSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor
MOTEVT	Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training
MSI	Management Systems International, Inc.
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NLC	National Literacy Committee
NYCS	National Youth and Children Strategy
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking

PD	Program Director
PM	Program Manager
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SCLM	Student-Centered Learning Methodology
TO	Task Order
TOT	Training-of-Trainers
TPR	Technical Progress Reports
TTI	Teacher Training Institute (of the Ministry of Education)
UNESCO	United Nations International Children's Fund
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final evaluation report of the activities carried out in the Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services—Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA) project in Yemen under the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) cooperative agreement with Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) International.

The ACCESS-MENA project in Yemen was implemented as part of a regional project initiated on August 16, 2004 when CHF International received a four-year cooperative agreement worth US\$8 million from USDOL to implement an education initiative (EI) project in Lebanon and Yemen. The project was aimed at withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor by expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education, supporting the four goals of the USDOL's Child Labor EI. The project was implemented by CHF International in association with the Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW), considered to be the largest non-governmental organization (NGO) in Yemen, with networks countrywide.

In August 2007, based on the recommendation of the midterm evaluation, CHF was awarded a cost increase of US\$400,000 to support child anti-trafficking activities in Yemen. The goal was to increase beneficiary targets by 1,200 and expand project activities into five new districts in the Hajja Governorate, with increased attention on children who have been trafficked or are at risk of trafficking in Yemen. The cost increase agreement suggested several additional activities such as providing trauma counseling for trafficked children, assistance to families with alternative income generation, and technical assistance to CSSW to adequately monitor and evaluate the interventions and deliver an impact/lessons learned study.

This final evaluation of the ACCESS-MENA Yemen project was conducted in June 2008 by Macro International. The main purpose of this evaluation was to review and assess all activities carried out under the USDOL cooperative agreement with CHF International. The evaluation assessed the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The evaluation took into consideration all activities that were implemented in Yemen over the life of the project, addressing issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability, and recommendations for future projects. The process of collecting and analyzing data was accomplished in three stages, described in detail in the evaluation report.

Program Design: With regard to the compatibility of the ACCESS-MENA project in Yemen to overall national policies and plans, the evaluation found that the project design fits within existing government policies and programs; to include the third Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan for Poverty Reduction (2006–2010), and the National Youth and Children Strategy (NYCS).

Project Design: ACCESS Yemen adopted a top-bottom approach in the project design process. The task of developing the logframe and work plan was given to a consultant firm, and the participation of the CSSW and CHF Yemen was limited to reviewing and finalizing these frameworks. The Baseline Data Study was carried out after the first year of implementing the project. The selection of the three governorates was appropriate, as they represent three different

geographical zones with three predominant types of child labor: Ibb (agriculture), Hajja (child trafficking), and Abyan (fishery). The selection of the sites avoided the replication of another USDOL-funded IPEC project. However, the selection of the target schools was biased in the sense that most of them were located in the urban centers of the three governorates. The hasty preparation of the project's logframe resulted in the inclusion of many activities that the budget did not allow for implementation (e.g., the provision of nutritional support and the medical services).

In a sharp contrast to the weak assessment of the child labor project, there was a comprehensive needs assessment for the child trafficking component. Two observations can be made regarding the assessment of the Child Labor project:

1. **The log frame and work plan were developed by a consultant firm in Beirut and the contribution of Yemeni stakeholders was limited.** Two officials were brought to Beirut to make modifications to the already-developed documents. Other stakeholders and beneficiaries were excluded from the process.
2. **The delay in implementation of the Baseline Survey for almost a year and a half.** The implementation of the project activities preceded the implementation of the Baseline Survey. In contrast, the process of consultation covered important national stakeholders in the national and local levels, which resulted in the identification of priority interventions from the viewpoint of the stakeholders.

The *development objective* of the project was to reduce the level of exploitive child labor. This development objective was translated into four overall project objectives. The following pages present a brief discussion of each of the project's goals:

Goal 1: Awareness-Raising Activities

The awareness-raising campaign was distinguished by three features: (1) its sensitivity to the sociocultural context where the campaign was implemented; (2) the utilization of complementary approaches in which professional expertise was combined with the mobilization of a wide array of actors, most of them in a voluntary basis, and community-based initiatives; and (3) the use of diverse forms of message formats and presentation methods to accommodate the diverse targeted audiences.

Approval of the Child Trafficking component gave a boost to the awareness-raising activities. This manifested in the use of the local radio station in Hajja, and the involvement of mosque preachers to convey messages and programs on the negative consequences of Child Trafficking. More attention was paid to formulate awareness-raising campaigns within the framework of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child. The campaign focused on the local level, where most of the project's activities took place. Therefore, there was a lack of a concerted and organized communication with the media at the national level.

Goal 2: Strengthening Formal and Transitional Education Systems

2-1: Selection of Beneficiaries

ACCESS Yemen made a remarkable achievement in exceeding the target numbers of students in most of the subcategories. The project identified three categories of target children according to their age. The first category was that of working children age 6 to 14. The objective of interventions was to withdraw 2,700 children from work, enroll them in formal education, and provide them some social and educational support during the program. The project exceeded the target number by more than 160. The second category was the children at risk (prevented) who were enrolled in Remedial Education and other social and educational support. The target was 3,965 students, whereas the actual number of students benefitting in this category was 4,901. The third category was working children in the 14 to 16 age bracket, enrolled in nonformal project programs; mainly literacy and vocational/skills training programs (withdrawn). In this category, the project enrolled 531 children, while the target number in the project was 500 children.

2-2: Remedial Education

Remedial education was one of the innovative methods that contributed to the improvement of quality education in the participating schools. To encourage a teamwork approach, the project established in-school committees for remedial education, consisting of classroom teachers, resource teachers, headmasters, and social counselors. This was complemented by the establishment of resource rooms in each of the targeted schools. To ensure its sustainability, the project coordinated with the Offices of Education in the three governorates and with the General Directorate of Inclusive Education in the Ministry to supervise the resource rooms and remedial education.

Despite its success, remedial education faced a number of challenges, including the inability to release remedial teachers for duties of other classes. This was due to the chronic shortages of teachers—particularly in Mathematics. In addition, tension emerged in the school because of the project's monthly payment made to remedial teachers. Other teachers expressed their bitterness at being excluded from the program and quietly accused the school administration and the office of the Ministry of Education of favoritism.

2-3: Vocational and Literacy Programs

In the implementation of the Vocational and Literacy Programs, ACCESS Yemen established close coordination with the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training. Male students attended various training programs, including electrical wiring, auto mechanics, carpentry, computer skills, and cell phone repair. Coiffure, tailoring, and computer programs (only one type of computer program) were organized for female students. In spite of the achievements in this intervention, two observations should be highlighted. First, the duration of the Vocational Training programs was relatively short—lasting six to nine months. Second, for the success of this intervention it was vital to add entrepreneurial skill development and marketing skills. A comprehensive monitoring and tracking system to assess the impact of the Vocational Training Program on the students was also desired.

2-4: Child-Centered Learning Methodology

The improvement of equality education was enhanced by the incorporation of the child-centered learning methodology into the project's main interventions. This intervention was implemented with the technical assistance of the Ministry of Education's Teacher Training Institute (TTI). Training programs were organized for teachers, headmasters, and school inspectors/supervisors. The involvement of school inspectors contributes to the sustainability of this component even after the end of the project. A performance monitoring system was also designed by the project.

2-5: Psychosocial Training

Psychosocial training programs were carried out in the three governorates, which covered topics such as identification of students' psychological problems, and methods of behavior modification. Coordination between the project and the GTZ was achieved regarding the capitalization of the GTZ, which is a similar program, and the avoidance of duplication.

2-6: Improvement of School Physical Infrastructure

Eleven schools benefited from the infrastructure component. More extensive infrastructure repair was completed in the child trafficking areas, where nine schools in the five districts of Hajja benefited. The improvement to the physical structure of the nine schools included the installment of water tanks, classroom fans, metal doors for latrines, electrical wiring, floor tiles, sport facilities, and the repair of classroom ceilings, the school fence, windows and doors, and roofs. In addition, Social Centers were established in the nine schools. Each was provided with four computers, a table, chairs, and a small library. Schools were also provided with school broadcasting systems and data projectors. All stakeholders valued the contributions the project has made to the enhancement of the physical structure of these schools, making them safer and more attractive to children. The most appreciated improvement was the provision of electrical generators.

Goal 3: Strengthen National Institutions and Policies on Education and Child Labor

Two outputs were identified for this goal: (1) to reduce financial barriers to education for poor families, and (2) to advocate for the budget allocation by the government for remedial education. To achieve this goal, ACCESS Yemen worked on two levels. For the first output, work was focused on the national level, to mobilize national institutions to adopt the policy of school-fee abolition. The second output was limited to the local level; specifically, evaluating the commitment of the targeted schools to support remedial education.

With regard to the first output, the evaluation found that the decision of the Yemeni Government to abolish school fees for female students in first to sixth grade, and for male students in first to third grade, resulted from the concerted efforts of several national and international institutions in a process started prior to the actual start of the ACCESS Yemen project. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the actual contribution of ACCESS Yemen to this process. Regarding the second output, "allocation of budget by the government for remedial education" was interpreted as an objective that would be achieved at the local level rather than at the national level. The hours that teachers spent in the remedial classrooms was calculated in

monetary terms, and was considered a financial allocation by the schools to remedial education. In the view of the evaluation, the budget allocations by schools for remedial education through the calculation of remedial class hours is not equivalent to advocating budget allocation for the program at the national level.

Goal 4: Ensure Long-Term Sustainability

Charitable Society for Social Welfare: The capacity of national and local CSSW staff working with the project has improved through their involvement in the planning and implementation of the ACCESS Yemen activities. Their capacity was improved in the fields of management, finance, report writing, communication skills, and time management. Furthermore, the project has contributed to the ongoing shift from the hitherto welfare/charity modality of operation of CSSW education activities, into a development one. The shift has been recently manifested in the CSSW decision to establish a full-fledged “Children and Youth Development Sector.”

The Ministry of Education (MoE): Despite the constant communication with the MoE and the expressed interest from the General Directorate of Inclusive Education to adopt the Resource Room and Remedial Education for a wider geographical area, these efforts have not yet been translated into official adoption and incorporation of the project’s activities in the national education system. Furthermore, the Ministry has not allocated a budget to support the implementation of these programs. Therefore, the current position of the Ministry of Education is not expected in the short term to significantly contribute to sustainability of the project’s interventions.

Local Community Committees: Community mobilization in support of the ACCESS Yemen project has been achieved at three levels: the governorate, the community, and the school. These committees played an important role in community mobilization for the support of the project as well as easing the resistance to the project in its initial stage. The establishment of these local community committees has created a sense of ownership, and the success of the project and its sustainability became one of their concerns. A strong commitment has been expressed to the evaluator by the leadership in the three governorates. They expressed their willingness to allocate a budget to continue the implementation of the project’s activities and requested the governorate coordinators to submit a proposal to be included in the 2009 budget.

Management and Budget Issues: CHF’s Project Director in Beirut provided close supervision through field visits to Yemen as well as almost daily contact by phone and e-mail. This was complemented by regular visits to Yemen, intensified after the midterm evaluation and the implementation of the Child Trafficking component. In addition, the CHF office in Sana’a provided managerial and technical support to the partner organization. The Program Manager also conducted numerous field visits, particularly during implementation of major activities.

With regard to the project’s budget, ACCESS Yemen suffered from chronic financial constraints throughout its lifetime. *The work plan was exceptionally ambitious, apparent when the planned activities were compared with the allocated budget. The limited budget allocated for the ACCESS Yemen project was inconsistent with the magnitude of the Child Labor phenomenon and the optimistic outputs of the project.* No additional allowance was allocated for emerging

needs. The project worked within the limited budget for the first three years, exacerbated by the late delivery of operating funds to the CSSW.

Interestingly, the persistent financial limitation was reversed with the approval of the additional fund for the Child Trafficking component in the last year of the program. The project then faced the dilemma of having abundant funds that should be spent in less than nine months. This put great pressure on the management of ACCESS Yemen to accomplish the objectives of both the child labor and child trafficking components in the remaining time of the project.

Monitoring and Evaluation: CHF and CSSW applied an extensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system over the implementation of its activities. A monitoring system was also in place to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the database system with regard to the status of target children. The activities of the project in Yemen are reported by CSSW to CHF Regional Office in a number of reports including monthly Progress Reports, Monthly Financial Reports, and Biannual Technical Progress Reports. CHF's Program Manager in Sana'a was concurrently performing the duties of the education specialist and the M&E officer.

A Monitoring Plan was developed to monitor the impact of the training programs. One notable example of this was in monitoring the impact of the remedial education and child-centered methodology. Similarly, a monitoring system measuring the impact of awareness-raising activities on the attitudes of parents was also developed. However, the project did not develop an M&E plan for many of its components, particularly mass awareness-raising activities.

Partnership and Coordination: ACCESS Yemen staff exerted great effort to establish communication channels with the relevant ministries, particularly the MoE and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL), and to enter into dialogue with them through membership in several national committees. The project attempted to improve coordination with these ministries and efforts were intensified in the last year of the project. The cooperation took several forms, such as inclusion of some staff into the training programs—particularly remedial education and psychosocial training, and in facilitating the participation of a number of senior officials in the ACCESS-MENA conference in Cairo in 2008. However, the limited budget of the project prevented ACCESS-MENA from initiating joint activities with the national stakeholders. There was limited coordination with national NGOs and international organizations. The limited success of the partnership and coordination at the national level was substituted by a strong level of coordination at the local level. It is the view of the evaluation that one of the factors contributing to the successful implementation of the project's activities was the close coordination at the local level.

Recommendations

- A comprehensive *needs assessment* should be carried out prior to the development of the second ACCESS-MENA project document and its logframe and work plans. It should be complemented by conducting a *Baseline Data Study* at the beginning of the project and repeated at the end of the project's lifetime. These preparations would enhance the project's ability to assess the impact of its interventions on the target communities. One important source of information that the project should be consulting is the first National

Child Labor Survey, planned to be carried out by the Central Statistics Organization in September 2008.

- The new ACCESS Yemen project should not be developed in isolation from other national policies and strategies focused on child labor and education.
- It is vital for the success of the next ACCESS Yemen project to establish *coordination and cooperation* mechanisms between the project and relevant government institutions from the beginning of the project's development and implementation. At least three important government partners can be identified: (1) the Child Labor Unit at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, (2) the General Directorate of Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Education, and (3) the Technical Committee for Combating Child Trafficking.
- Partnership and coordination should also be extended to *nongovernmental organizations* working on the issues of child labor, child trafficking, and education.
- The *expansion* of the project should take two tracks. First, the project should target new governorates where child labor and child trafficking is widespread. The second track of expansion should be the inclusion of rural areas to rectify the biased selection of urban centers made in the first project.
- The new project should make the support of research and the collection of *reliable data* as one of its primary objectives. Cooperation should be established with three major academic and research institutions: Sana'a University, Aden University, and the Center for Social and Labor Studies established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.
- The project should develop an adequate and efficient *Performance and Monitoring Plan* based on two principles. First, the PMP should be based on a realistic identification of achievable project objectives in order to avoid unattainable outputs in the lifetime of the project. Second, the PMP should also outline specific and transparent indicators to measure the achievements of the objectives, whether it is at the national or local level.
- *Technical assistance* to partner organizations to adequately monitor and evaluate the interventions and deliver an impact/lessons learned study is very crucial for the success of the project. It should be designed based on a needs assessment of the field of technical assistance needed by the partners prior to the implementation of the project.
- The new ACCESS Yemen project should put more emphasis on the child trafficking and child labor *prevention measures*.
- There is a need to create a national ACCESS *Advisory Committee* of 7 to 10 members representing relevant government institutions, NGOs, and international organization. The Advisory Council is consultative in nature, contributes to the harmonization of the project with national policies and strategies, and ensures the project's sustainability.

- The introduction of a modified and easier Task Order system and the reduction of the number of required *financial and management* reports is another important factor in facilitating the speedy and on-time implementation of the project's interventions and activities.
- The new ACCESS Yemen should continue supporting *Local Community Committees* and providing technical assistance and capacity-building training programs, particularly on issues of coordination, networking, and community mobilization.
- The new project's objectives would be greatly enhanced if *income-generating activities and micro-finance mechanisms* were included in its activities.
- It is highly recommended that the *monthly payment* made in the first project to remedial teachers be abolished in the next project. Instead, efforts should be directed towards advocating the release of the teachers from other school duties, so as to be exclusively assigned to working with the students in the Resource rooms.
- A sustainability and exit strategy should be clearly outlined in the project document.

I INTRODUCTION

The objective of this final evaluation report is to review and assess all activities carried out in the Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services-Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA) project in Yemen under the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) cooperative agreement with Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) International.

The project is a USDOL Education Initiative (EI) project that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor through the provision of education to child laborers and those at risk of working. The project was designed to support the EI's four goals: (1) raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures; (2) strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school; (3) strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor; and (4) ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The ACCESS-MENA project in Yemen was implemented as part of a regional project initiated on August 16, 2004 when CHF International received a four-year cooperative agreement worth US\$8 million from USDOL to implement an EI project in Lebanon and Yemen. The project was 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 USDOL Child Labor EI.

The project was implemented in association with the Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW), which is considered the biggest non-governmental organization (NGO) in Yemen, with networks countrywide.

The objective of ACCESS Yemen project was to reduce the level of exploitive child labor through the provision of education, skills training, and alternative income generating opportunities and building the capacity of civil society, education institutions and communities to provide education alternatives for target groups.

On August 22, 2007, based on the recommendation of the midterm evaluation, CHF was awarded a cost increase of US\$400,000 to support child anti-trafficking activities in Yemen. The goal was to increase beneficiary targets by 1,200 and expand project activities into five new districts in the Hajja Governorate, with increased attention on children who have been trafficked or are at risk of trafficking in Yemen.

The cost increase agreement suggested several additional activities such as providing trauma counseling for trafficked children, assistance to families through alternative income generation, and technical assistance to CSSW to adequately monitor and evaluate the interventions and deliver an impact/lessons learned study.

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II EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This final evaluation of the ACCESS-MENA Yemen project was conducted in June 2008 by Macro International. The main purpose of this evaluation is to review and assess all activities carried out under the USDOL cooperative agreement with CHF International. The evaluation assessed the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The evaluation took into consideration all activities that were implemented in Yemen over the life of the project, addressing issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability, and recommendations for future projects.

The objectives of the evaluation process are the following:

1. Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved.
2. Assist the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (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 specific to Yemen's situation 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 completion of educational programs).

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III EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology was developed by Macro International and was applied in evaluating both Yemen and Lebanon projects. The evaluation framework of the Yemen project covers five project categories: program design, project implementation, partnership and coordination, management and budget, and sustainability and impact. Each category was assessed by applying diverse data collection methods.

The evaluation focused on the assessment of various stakeholder groups including Children (within and outside the projects), Families (within and outside the projects), Community (including schools and school staff), Project Workers, Project Managers, and National/Local Policymakers.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The process of collecting and analyzing data was accomplished in three stages. First, a comprehensive review of relevant project documents was accomplished. Many of the relevant project documents were provided by Macro International. Others were collected by the evaluator from various sources including the ACCESS-MENA Project Director, CHF-Yemen Program Manager in Sana'a, and the office of the subcontractor CSSW. These documents include the project's document, the project's logframe, CHF Technical Progress Reports, USDOL comments, CSSW Master Contract Williams, Adley, and Company, LLP Report, Midterm Evaluation Report, and the CHF ACCESS-MENA Project Document (2007). In addition, available periodical reports, published school newsletters, and several "Codes of Conduct" developed and signed by community leaders were reviewed.

Second, field visits to the project sites were carried out. The evaluator visited the governorates of Hajja, Ibb, and Abyan. In Hajja, the ACCESS-MENA schools sites and communities were visited, including those targeted in the added Child Trafficking components. In the governorates of Ibb and Abyan, old and newly added schools and communities were visited. During the field visits, the evaluator interviewed the staff of CSSW in the governorate offices, as well as school headmasters, remedial teachers, psychosocial consultants, community leaders, and the office directors of several ministries at the governorate level. The evaluator was able to meet with the Governor of Hajja, the Deputy Governor of Ibb, and the head of the Social Affairs Department in the Abyan Governorate Local Council. The evaluator was able to attend the "Sustainability of ACCESS-MENA Project" workshop in Hajja. In addition, focus group discussions were organized with parents (male and female), members of Community Committees, volunteers, teachers who directly benefited from the project and those who did not benefit, and members of the Fathers and Mothers Councils. Observation was conducted during the visits, focusing on assessing the general health and wellbeing of the children, actual or potential exclusion of certain children, the relationship between the school and project, and the social context of the targeted schools. Efforts to improve the schools' infrastructure were also assessed, as was the establishment of the Resource Rooms.

Third, upon the completion of and during the field visits, extensive interviews were made with stakeholders. A wide range of stakeholders were interviewed, including the staff of CSSW, CHF Yemen Program Manager, the Director of the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC)-Yemen, and senior officials in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, and the Higher Council for Childhood and Motherhood. At the end of the evaluation, a stakeholders workshop was organized in Sana'a to present the evaluation's preliminary findings. The management of the CHF and CSSW, project coordinators in the three governorates, representatives of target communities, NGOs, and government institutions attended the workshop.

IV FINDINGS

4.1 PROGRAM DESIGN

The focus of the program design assessment is the compatibility of the ACCESS-MENA project in Yemen with overall national policies and plans. The evaluation found that the project design fits within existing governmental policies and programs.

Yemen has ratified 29 International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, including the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), and Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No. 182). The project supports the Yemeni Government's commitments to the two conventions. In addition, Yemen has identified the elimination of child labor as a national priority. The national Policy and Program Framework for the Elimination of Child Labor was adopted by the Government and was launched officially in September 2007. The Yemeni Government, with the cooperation of the ILO, has developed the Decent Work Country Program that is expected to be signed in the last week of July 2008.

In addition, child labor concerns were included in several major national policies and plans, including the third Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan for Poverty Reduction (2006–2010), and the National Youth and Children Strategy (NYCS). The Yemeni Government has established a Supreme Committee for Youth and Children, presided by the Vice President of the Republic and the membership of several ministers, with the responsibility of supervising and coordinating the implementation of the Strategy.

Furthermore, a number of initiatives aimed at combating child labor and child trafficking have been initiated by the Yemeni Government in the last few years. In 2004, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor issued a ministerial decree to validate the list of Hazardous work. In 2007, the decree of the Worst Forms of Child Labor was given the ministerial number 56 to mark the official adoption of the list by the Yemeni Government.

The Government is in the process of presenting a punitive law against child traffickers to Parliament. The law addresses different levels of punishments pertaining to the kind of harm caused to the trafficked child. The law also takes action against the parents who give up their children for trafficking. The High Council for Childhood and Motherhood has submitted to the Parliament a comprehensive proposal to amend several laws pertaining to the children, including the Child Rights Law. In early July 2008, the Parliament organized a workshop to discuss the proposed amendments and approval of the amendments is expected in the next few months.

The Government also established the Technical Committee for Combating Child Trafficking. Recently, the Committee was expanded to include NGOs and projects working on the issues of Child Trafficking. ACCESS Yemen has been appointed a member of the Technical Committee.

A number of government institutions have included in their policies and plans a number of interventions aimed at combating Child Labor. Many of them have focused on the implementation of awareness-raising activities. The Ministry of Human Rights organized awareness campaigns in three governorates and targeted local officials, students and teachers,

and community leaders. With the assistance of UNICEF, the Ministry has set up a “Child Trafficking Hotline.” The Ministry of Interior also targeted police officers in its awareness-raising programs. The Ministry of Endowment has developed a manual for Mosque Preachers focusing on children’s rights and the child trafficking problem.

In conclusion, the project’s strategic framework fits into these government policies and programs, and contributes to the fulfillment of the Yemeni Government’s commitment to combating child labor and providing education for all. The fundamental theme of the main national policies and program in Yemen is poverty alleviation and devising pro-poor policies to include policies aimed at combating child labor and providing education for all. Thus, the ACCESS Yemen project contributed to the Yemeni Government’s commitment to the reduction of poverty and combating child labor and providing education for all. It consolidated its activities and outputs to contribute to the elimination of child labor and child trafficking through a multilayer programming strategy. This strategy seeks to enhance the capacity of national and particularly local-level institutions to implement policies and programs aimed at combating the worst form of child labor and child trafficking; encouraging community participation and increasing awareness on the negative consequences of child labor and child trafficking among national and local stakeholders.

4.2 PROJECT DESIGN/IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.2.1 Project Design

The development of the project design was initiated when CHF sent a mission to Yemen to assess child labor and education in response to a solicitation for grant applications announced by USDOL. The mission was able to meet a wide array of national stakeholders. Subsequently, CHF submitted a detailed Project Proposal, which outlined the general objectives of the project, the target areas of the project, and the categories of target children. When the USDOL Grant Officer, through a competitive process, awarded CHF and its partner organizations the Cooperative Agreement, Management Systems International (MSI) was contracted to develop the Logframe, Work Plan, and Performance Monitoring Plan. The Yemeni stakeholders’ participation was limited to the CHF Program Director in Yemen and the CSSW Project Director. They were brought to Beirut to review and finalize the Logframe and its work plans. In addition, they planned to carry out a Baseline Data Study, which was expected to provide valuable data that could be used in the revision of the project’s objectives and activities.

The Baseline Data Study was supposed to be “conducted at the beginning of the project and the study would be repeated at the end of second and fourth years of the project.”¹ However, the execution of the Baseline Data Study was delayed and the implementation of the project activities started well before the completion of the Survey. The Project’s Document envisioned that a team of experts from Lebanon would be recruited to develop the methodology, procedures, implementation plans, data processing, and data analysis of the baseline survey in Yemen. However, the provision of this technical support from Lebanon was delayed for more than a

¹ Project Document, page 30.

year. In addition, the process of recruiting Yemeni experts was slow, resulting in the late implementation of the Survey. Consequently, the objective of using “the Baseline Survey to serve the purpose of documenting the situation as it was before the implementation of this project” was not achieved. Thus, the expected repetition of the study at the end of second and fourth year of the project has not been accomplished.

In a sharp contrast to the weak assessment of the child labor project, there was a comprehensive need assessment for the child trafficking component. From the assessment of the Child Labor Project, two observations can be made: (1) the log frame and work plan were developed by a consultant firm in Beirut and the contribution of Yemeni stakeholders was limited. Two officials were brought to Beirut to make modifications to the already developed documents. Other stakeholders and beneficiaries were excluded from the process. (2) Implementation of the Baseline Survey was delayed for almost a year and a half. The implementation of the project activities preceded the implementation of the Baseline Survey. In contrast, for the Child Trafficking Project more than 30 meetings were organized with various stakeholders such as community leaders, local officials, teachers, and headmasters, as well as parental councils. The process of consultation covered important national stakeholders such the Technical Committee for Combating Child Trafficking and relevant members of the Parliament and Shura Council. CSSW and CHF jointly carried out the community needs assessment with field visits to all possible sites of the project. This comprehensive consultation resulted in the identification of priority interventions from the viewpoint of the stakeholders.

Several *observations* regarding the project design can be made:

- The hasty preparation of the project’s logframe manifested itself in the inclusion of many activities for which the budget did not allow for implementation (e.g., the provision of nutritional support and medical services). The provision of *nutritional support* to the targeted children was included in the logframe as Output 0 and Activities 3.14. CSSW estimated the cost of this activity to be around US\$700,000 and consequently sent a request to CHF to increase the project’s budget to cover the cost. The request was denied and the activity was excluded from the actual work plan of the project. The second activity was the provision of “*Medical examination for children.*” It stated that the project provide “Treatment of children with health problems” and the performance of “Routine laboratory testing” (Work Plan: Activities 3.9; 3.10; and 3.11). The project was also unable to implement these activities due to its high cost and the budget shortage. Instead, the project conducted a “First Aid Workshop” in seven schools in the three governorates in which a number of teachers and students were trained. This was also supported by the provision of First Aid Boxes to 20 schools of the project.
- The selection of the three governorates was appropriate since they represent three different geographical zones with different types of child labor: Ibb (agriculture), Hajja (child trafficking), and Abyan (fishery). The selection of these sites avoided the replication of another USDOL-funded IPEC project. However, the selection of the target schools was biased in the sense that most of them were located in the urban centers of the three governorates.

- The original list of the project's sites was substantially changed. Most of the remote rural districts identified in the original project document—Ibb: Alqafr and Fara Al-Udin; Abyan: Modyah; Hajja: Almahabesha—were replaced by districts within the urban areas.
- Until the last year of the project, there was a clear absence of a fishing community from the targeted communities. This situation was rectified after the midterm evaluation when a school in a fishing community was included in the project.
- The enrollment capacity of some schools was not efficiently assessed by the project. The target schools were not able to enroll more new (withdrawn/dropout) students. Because of this, the targeted numbers of the project had not been achieved when the project was completing its third year. To meet the target numbers, the project had to select four new schools in Ibb and Abyan. The newly added schools and the targeted students did not benefit from the cumulative three- to four-year package of interventions implemented in the original schools.

4.2.2 Project Implementation

The focus of this section is to evaluate the project's progress towards meeting its purpose, outputs, and EI goals, as well as the assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the project's monitoring system.

The Development Objective of the project was *to reduce the level of exploitive child labor*. This development objective was translated into four overall project objectives:

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

In evaluating the achievement of these goals, the report will also highlight the achievements of the Child Trafficking component, which was added to the project in its fourth year: 2007–2008.

Goal 1: Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.

The log frame of the project divided this goal into two outputs: (1) families of working children who are aware of the importance of education, and (2) families of working children and at risk children who are aware of income generating or social support mechanisms as a means of supporting their working children to attend school. According to the Logical Framework, the verifiable indicator of the first output was the number of families who are willing to send

children to school. Whereas, the second output's indicator was of the number of families who fill applications for income generating or social support mechanisms.

The awareness-raising campaign was distinguished by three features:

1. Its sensitivity to the sociocultural context where the campaign was implemented.
2. The utilization of complementary approaches in which professional expertise was combined with the mobilization of a wide array of actors—most of them on a voluntary basis—and community-based initiatives.
3. The use of diverse forms of message formats and presentation methods (printed materials, mobile theatre, radio programs, modern songs, plays, religious chanting, and mosque sermons) to accommodate the diverse targeted audiences.

At the beginning of the project, an awareness campaign specialist was contracted to develop a media campaign strategy for the lifetime of the project, from which yearly plans for each of the three governorates were also determined.

The campaign started with organizing numerous preparatory meetings with government officials in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Ministry of Vocational Training, and officials at the local level. The objective of these meetings was to introduce the project to them and mobilize their support to issues related to child labor, child rights, and the importance of education for all children. Although the campaign strategies began by targeting national policymakers at the macro level, most of the awareness activities were implemented at the local level.

The awareness campaign was initiated by the mobilization of volunteers from targeted communities to perform a number of tasks, including the implementation of awareness creation activities. The CSSW utilized its already established networks in the three governorates to mobilize the volunteers—most of whom worked in the education sector. In each governorate, a team of 30 volunteers was established, with equal representation of women and men. They attended a series of training programs focused on communication skills and awareness raising techniques. Six workshops were organized in the three governorates of Ibb, Abyan, and Hajja; lasting two days each. Several topics were covered, including the negative consequences of child labor and the importance of education for all children. After training, volunteers adopted two concurrent approaches to carry out the campaign. On the one hand, they conducted home visits to talk one-on-one to parents of working children as well the working children themselves. On the other hand, they organized group activities with fathers and mothers, with the support of community leaders and local officials.

This was associated with the organization of public festivals in which people in the targeted areas were mobilized to attend. A mobile theater was used to convey the objectives of the program in a simple language using culturally approved methods, including religious songs and plays. Some of the beneficiary children were invited to these festivals to give testimony on the positive impact of school reenrollment on their lives, and make appeals to all parents with working children to follow suit.

In addition, awareness-creation activities were organized for a wide array of groups, including local councils and community leaders, headmasters and teachers, mosque preachers, government officials in the governorate and district levels, and the councils of parents. At least nine awareness campaigns were completed in the first three years of the project. They were distributed evenly: three campaigns in 2005, three campaigns in 2006, and three campaigns in 2007. An additional awareness campaign targeting child trafficking was accomplished in 2008 in the governorate of Hajja.

Focus group discussions with volunteers and project staff revealed that domestic work had not been included in the child labor issues covered in the campaign. According to the staff, targeting domestic work as one of the manifestations of child labor would create strong resistance to the project. Domestic labor is considered the child's contribution to the chores of the family. Furthermore, some parents expressed a sense of pride in teaching their children the "family profession" from an early age. The campaign organizers avoided the issue of domestic labor as long as it did not prevent the child from attending school.

The awareness campaign was intensified with the initiation of the Child Trafficking component, implemented in the last year of the project. First, a contract with Hajja Radio Station was signed, in which a weekly program on child trafficking and education was broadcast. Using the local radio station to reach the widest possible audience was based upon a well-thought assessment of the effectiveness of the locally available media. Due to the lack of electricity, the high level of illiteracy, and widespread poverty in Hajja, radio is more affordable to the public than TV and printed media materials.

Second, the project coordinated with the Office of Endowment to involve religious leaders in the campaign based on the convention that religious messages are more effective in a traditional society. Consequently, five awareness workshops for 125 mosque preachers were organized. Instead of imposing already-made sermons by the project, drafting groups were established in the five districts with the responsibility of developing sample sermons to be delivered during the Friday prayer. Two were selected, and copies were made and distributed to all participants. The sermon was delivered in about 200 mosques in the five districts in Hajja. On the same day, a radio program discussed issues of child trafficking, child labor, and education. A number of key stakeholders—including ACCESS staff, a representative of the Office of Endowment, and an academician—were invited to participate.

Focused group discussion revealed that two very positive and unintended outcomes of the involvement of religious leaders in the awareness program was its increasing public trust of the project and declining the suspicion of a "hidden agenda" on the part of the funding government. The level of trust was also increased by the reputation of CSSW as an organization, which was dominated by well-known religious leaders who would reject any program that might undermine the social and cultural fabric of Yemeni society.

One of the observations made by the midterm evaluation was that "CSSW does not use a child rights approach in explaining the worst forms of child labor." CSSW agreed with this assessment. However, they emphasized that this was rectified in the subsequent awareness-creation activities. All activities were presented within the framework of a child rights approach

and references were made to international conventions relevant to children, particularly the Convention of Child Rights (CRC).

It was expected that the regional component of the project, implemented by America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST), would contribute directly to strengthening ACCESS Yemen awareness-raising activities. However, the impact was minimal, particularly in the first two years of the project.

In early 2008, AMIDEAST organized a workshop in Cairo in which a good number of Yemeni government officials and representatives of NGOs participated. Interviews with some participants have confirmed that, even though they complained about poor logistical arrangements, the workshop was an important event for the exchange of ideas with decisionmakers from the region and—more importantly—in facilitating regional networking and coordination. Another significant outcome of the workshop was the announcement made by the ACCESS-MENA project that it was searching for an organization willing to continue to maintain and sustain the ACCESS-MENA website. CSSW expressed interest, and details of the agreement are currently being discussed between the two parties.

With regard to the biannual newsletter, 800 copies of each of the six issues were received and distributed to stakeholders. The number of Yemeni stakeholders included in the mailing list of the e-newsletter was 84 contacts.

In conclusion, CSSW had implemented a wide range of awareness-creation activities in the three governorates despite the limited budget allocated for these activities and the project in general. The awareness campaign was intensified upon the approval of the Child Trafficking budget. Interviews with numerous stakeholders in the visited field sites confirmed the great impact of the campaign on the perception of parents and community leaders regarding child trafficking. There was a common agreement among all stakeholders that education is necessary for their children and that only poverty compelled some parents to send their children for work in neighboring country. It was repeatedly requested that this evaluation should strongly recommend the incorporation of income-generating activities in any future programs.

Observations:

- The project showed a great level of sensitivity to the sociocultural context in the target communities. This was manifested in several actions: First, to encourage the participation of females in its activities, the project covered the major expenses of the relative's male escort, including transportation, housing, and other living expenses. Second, in the awareness-raising campaigns the project encouraged the participation of mosque preachers who were able to deliver easily comprehended messages by the largely illiterate parents and community leaders. Finally, the project mobilized a high number of volunteers who were originally from the target communities. Their familiarity with the target communities increased their effectiveness and gained the trust of the communities.
- The project lacked a permanent awareness specialist in the CSSW project staff because of the limited budget allocated for the Yemen project. The specialist would undertake

quality control of all awareness-creation activities, in coordination with other project activities. The effect of not recruiting the awareness specialist on a long-term basis was reflected in the exclusion of the child rights-based approach from the early awareness-creation activities.

- There was a need for a concerted and organized communication with the media at the national level. Per discussion with the CSSW management, it was confirmed that mobilizing media at the national level was not a priority and that the focus was on the local level where most of the project's activities took place. The national media interest on child labor and education and child trafficking was not the result of direct efforts of the ACCESS Yemen project, but rather was initiated by other relevant stakeholders. A workshop is planned to take place during the last month of the project (July 2008) where representatives of the media at the national level will be invited. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the project and its accomplishments and to discuss future collaboration between ACCESS Yemen and the mobilization of the media at the national level in support of efforts to combat child labor and child trafficking.
- Awareness-raising activities targeting women were limited, particularly in rural areas where women become the decision-makers as a result of the migration of men either internally or internationally.
- The regional component, implemented by AMIDEAST, had a limited impact on the ACCESS MENA project in Yemen.
- More technical assistance from CHF International to ACCESS Yemen was needed in the designing and implementing of their awareness raising campaign. This was clearly illustrated by the lack of a pre- and post-evaluation exercise to determine what changes occurred in the knowledge and attitudes of targeted groups involved in the mass awareness-creation activities. Furthermore, no plans were made to carry out a survey at the end of the project to evaluate the changes in the attitudes of local stakeholders, as was planned in Lebanon project.
- There was a lack of coordination with government institutions and NGOs who have been conducting awareness-raising activities such as the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Endowment, and Shwthab.

Goal 2: Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.

Improvement of Quality Education: Selection of Beneficiaries

The project identified three categories of targeted children according to their age. The first category was that of working children age 6 to 14. The objective of intervention was to withdraw 2,700 children from work, enroll them in formal education, and provide them some social and educational support during the program. The second category was the children at risk (prevented) who were enrolled in Remedial Education and other social and educational support. The third

category was working children age 14 to 16, enrolled in nonformal project programs; mainly literacy and vocational/skills training programs (withdrawn).

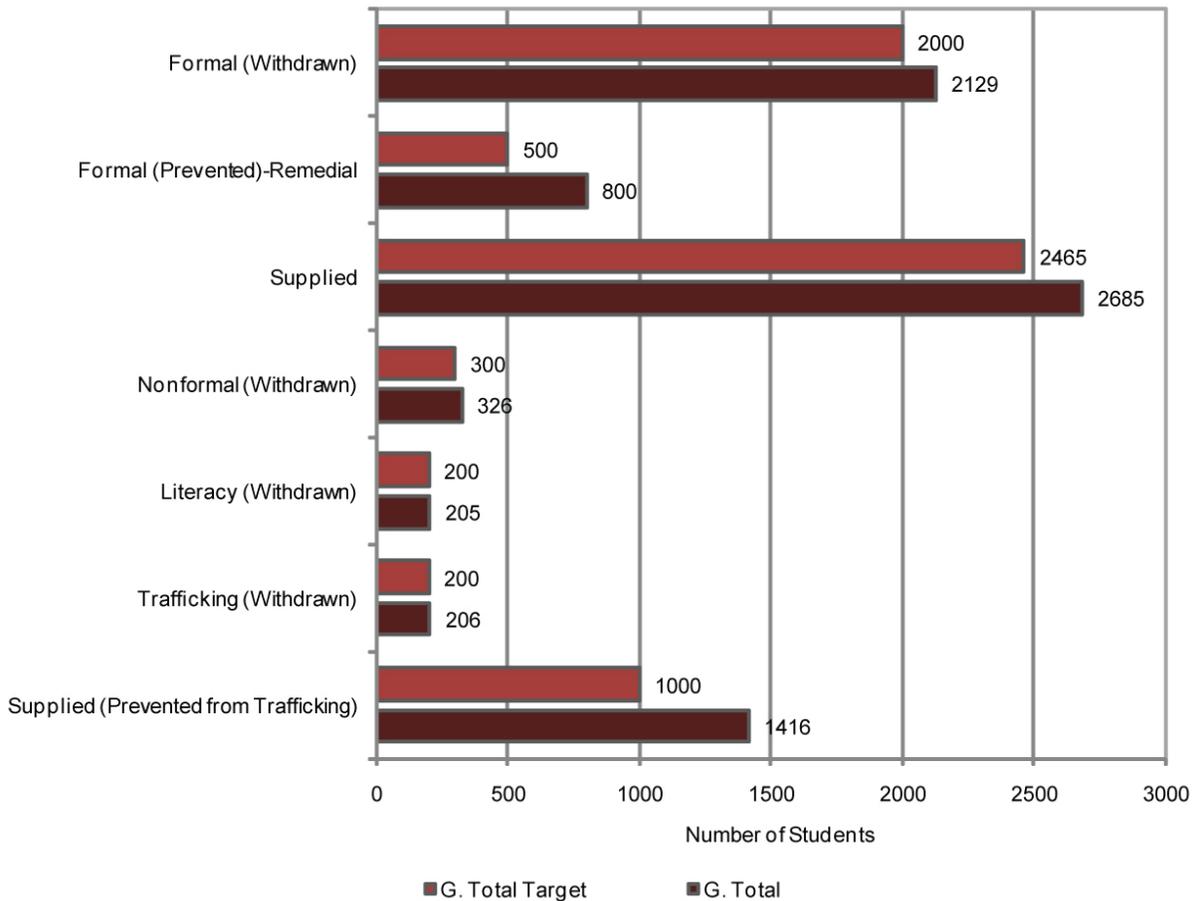
The project designed a plan to identify target children, reintegrate them into schools or nonformal programs, and implement a follow-up system. This process started with the establishment of “community teams” composed of volunteers, most of whom work in education. The teams received several awareness-raising techniques and communication-skills training programs. The teams made repeated visits to the sites of child labor and the family residence to identify working children and dropouts. A form was also developed to register all information about the child, his last school grade, and the consent of his parents to support the withdrawal of their child from work and rejoining school. Upon their enrollment in schools, a follow-up form was also designed to keep track of the child’s progress and status in the program. The form includes information regarding the child’s school performance, and their status as a partial or complete withdrawal from work. In addition, enhancement classes were organized for target students prior to the beginning of the school year or before the examination period. This was complemented with regular visits to the parents and community leaders advocating the support of the program and its interventions.

ACCESS Yemen made remarkable achievement in exceeding the target numbers of students in most of the subcategories. In the first category (withdrawn), the intervention objective was to withdraw 2,700 children from work, enroll them in formal education, and provide them some social and educational support during the program. The project exceeded the target number by more than 160. The second category was the children at risk (prevented) who were enrolled in the Remedial Education and other social and educational support. The target was 3,965 students, whereas the actual number of beneficiary students in this category was 4,901. The third category was working children age 14 to 16 enrolled in nonformal project programs; mainly literacy and vocational/skills training programs (withdrawn). In this category, the project enrolled 531, while the project’s target number was 500 children.

Table 1: Beneficiary Targets and Totals Achieved

Category	Male	Female	Total (Achieved)	Target
Formal (withdrawn)	1,307	822	2,129	2,000
Formal Prevented (remedial)	501	299	800	500
Child Trafficking (prevented)	1,580	1,105	2,685	2465
Nonformal (withdrawn)	186	140	326	300
Literacy (withdrawn)	0	205	205	200
Child Trafficking (withdrawn)	206	0	206	200
Child Trafficking (prevented)	1,156	260	1416	1,000
Total	4,936	2,831	7,767	6,665

Figure 1: Achieved Numbers vs. Targeted Numbers



Remedial Education

Remedial education was one of the innovative methods that were considered to contribute to the improvement of quality education in the targeted areas. This activity was initiated by organizing a workshop in Sana'a in 2005. It was implemented through an Agreement with Princess Tharwat College in Amman, Jordan, which is considered the National Center for Remedial Education. Twenty-one teachers from the three governorates attended the workshop. There was a relatively balanced representation of female teachers in this workshop (12 male teachers and 9 female). The focus of the workshop was to familiarize the participants with the concept of remedial education and its techniques in dealing with children's learning difficulties. This was followed by organizing three workshops in the three governorates in which more than 120 teachers were trained on remedial education. There was a gender bias in the participation of these workshops. Only one third of the participants were female teachers. To enhance the capacity of remedial teachers another workshop was organized in Sana'a for 46 teachers including 18 female teachers. With the distribution of computers to the resource rooms, the project organized three training programs in the three governorates on computer applications for remedial education. Female representation in these workshops varied in the three governorates, which might reflect the sociocultural context from which participants were selected. In Hajja, a gender-balanced participation was achieved in

which three female and three male teachers were trained. In Hajja more female (four female and two male) were trained; whereas in Ibb, a male-biased representation occurred (all six participants were male). The success of the remedial education program is dependent on the cooperation of other actors inside and outside the school. Classroom teachers were orientated in risk identification within the framework of the referral system established for remedial education. To enforce a teamwork approach and to evaluate the students' overall progress in remedial education, in-school committees for remedial education consisting of classroom teachers, resource teachers, headmasters, and social counselors were established.

This was complemented by the establishment of resource rooms in each of the targeted schools. They were equipped with a computer, printer, a projector, table, and chairs. In the resource room, a library was established which includes about 200 volumes of colorful and well-illustrated children's books and text books for teachers and older students. Most of the schools visited by the evaluator had not used the projector; and although most had used the computers and printers in their remedial classes, some had not. This was due either to the lack of electricity, as in one of Abyan schools, technical problems that the project has not yet been able to resolve, or to the lack of basic knowledge on how to make use of the computer in remedial education. The project had installed internet connections and paid for the service in some of the schools. However, the evaluator observed that some schools did not get the internet connection despite the availability of a telephone line.

Remedial education targeted students in the first through third grades, regardless of whether or not those students identified with learning difficulties; these were among the project's beneficiaries (withdrawn or prevented). Focus group discussion with remedial teachers and headmasters confirmed that there was a greater demand for remedial education than what the teachers and available capacity could accommodate.

The process of enrolling a student in remedial education begins in the classroom, where the teachers identify children with learning difficulties. The student is sent to the remedial teacher and the social counselor who applies appropriate testing methods and consequently designs a program to overcome learning difficulties for implementation. The focus of the resource rooms is on two subjects: Arabic and mathematics.

Based on the project's evaluation, the name of this program was changed inside schools from "remedial education" to "resource room." Students exhibited initial resistance to attend "remedial education," which had the connotation of suffering from "illness." Resource rooms became a preferable environment for students to learn, due to its different learning materials and more pleasant atmosphere—in sharp contrast to the overcrowded classes with very limited learning materials. This has resulted in increased demand on the program, as some students expressed resentment at being excluded from these rooms.

To ensure its sustainability, the project has coordinated with the Offices of Education in the three governorates and with the General Directorate of Inclusive Education in the Ministry to supervise the resource rooms and remedial education. The Directors of the Inclusive Education in the three governorates have expressed their willingness to continue the supervision of resource rooms after the project ends.

Observations:

- A limited capacity of the resource rooms to accommodate the great demands exhibited by the students and the sheer number of cases diagnosed to have learning difficulties. The capacity of most of the resource rooms did not exceed 40 students a year. Students prefer to be in the resource rooms because of the available learning materials and more pleasant atmosphere, in sharp contrast to the overcrowded classes with very limited learning materials.
- An inability to release remedial teachers for other classes duties. This was due to the chronic shortages of teachers, particularly in Mathematics.
- Tension and sometimes animosity arising in the school because of the project's monthly payment made to remedial teachers. Other teachers expressed their bitterness at being excluded from the program and quietly accused the school administration and the office of the Ministry of Education of favoritism. To ease the tension, some schools—particularly in Hajja—gave the remedial teachers a full load in the morning and asked them to come back in the afternoon to work in the resource room. The effectiveness of exhausted teachers is doubtful. Students resented the long hours they were asked to spend in the school attending regular classes in the morning and coming back to the school in the afternoon for the remedial classes.
- Lack of follow-up training programs for remedial teachers in which new developments in the field are acquired. Most of them attended only one workshop and they did not have the opportunity to update and expand their knowledge. This was exacerbated by the lack of coordinated efforts to organize regular meetings with teachers from other schools in the same governorate (or with teachers from the other governorates) to share experiences and exchange ideas.
- There was limited academic supervision by the project during the lifetime of the project. Furthermore, the field visits of the project technical staff were sporadic.

Vocational and Literacy Programs

The project, in coordination with the MoE's Illiteracy Combating Directorate (ILD), organized several literacy programs in the three governorates. Only girls within the ages of 14 to 17 were enrolled in the literacy programs. The total number of girls enrolled in these programs reached 205 (the target was 200). It applied the Functional Literacy curriculum developed by the MoE, which lasts for three years. In the project, classes were organized for nine months for each group. To prevent the possibility of drop-out from this program, the project organized some extra activities including trips to nearby locations with the participation of the student and one of her female relatives. When the funding of this activity ended, the Illiteracy Combating Directorate at MoE continued to recruit teachers for these classes. The commitment of the ILD to continue its support for the illiteracy classes was expressed by the Director of the ILD in Hajja during the sustainability workshop. The project initiative has encouraged local community committees to organize similar

literacy programs targeting other groups. In the Ibb governorate, for example, the Parent's Council organized a literacy program targeting mothers in one of the participating schools.

For the vocational training, both male and female students were enrolled. The program began with the identification of working children within the ages of 14 to 17, who had been out of school for at least several years, and were usually in exploitive types of working conditions. This was accompanied by field visits to the parents to get approval for their child's enrollment in the program. Subsequently, students attended one of the training programs, which included electrical wiring, auto mechanics, carpentry, computer skills, cell phone repair, and (for girls) coiffure and tailoring.

In the vocational training program, the project established a good partnership with the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training. The good partnership was demonstrated in several areas. First, the Ministry agreed to exempt the project's students from the requirements, particularly the completion of basic education. Second, the Ministry staff developed, reviewed, and officially approved the tailored-made curriculum to suit the target students. Third, most of the programs for male students were conducted in the Ministry's training facilities. Finally, students received official certificates from the Ministry, which increased their likelihood of employment after graduation.

Literacy improvement classes were provided to some vocational trainees as a supplement to their technical training. Due to the low level of literacy among participants in the Accelerated Vocational Training (AVT), the focus of the program was in providing technical skills through practice rather than theoretical learning. The project provided transportation to the students.

Female student programs were conducted in the CSSW centers in the governorates, with the exception of the computer program conducted in Abs. The evaluator realized that the technical and infrastructure capacity differed from one center to another. In Ibb, the center was fully equipped with new tailoring and coiffeur equipment, whereas in Hajja coiffeur equipment was limited. The project also carried out regular evaluations of these programs and modified their structure to overcome identifiable constraints. In the coiffeur program, for example, it was realized that the trainers needed additional training, and consequently the project organized an intensive training program in a specialized training center in Sana'a.

With the aim of increasing the employment possibility in the local job market, to some of the distinguished students (40 students) the CSSW headquarters provided them basic equipment such as sewing machines, electrical wiring, and auto mechanics equipment. This initiative encouraged ACCESS Yemen to provide more than 200 students with similar equipment. It is important to note that provision of this equipment was not included in the logframe nor in the original budget of the project.

This was complemented by some initiatives to increase the possibility of employment after the program. In Abyan, for example, the project coordinated with the Women's Union to provide the students with collective small grants to buy sewing equipment. In Ibb, the project coordinator contacted a group of possible employers to encourage the recruitment of the program's graduates.

Observations:

- The duration of the Vocational Training programs was relatively short, lasting six to nine months; in comparison with the multi-year vocational training programs implemented by the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training.
- It is vital for the success of this intervention to add entrepreneurial skill development and marketing skills.
- A monitoring and tracking system to assess the impact of the Vocational Training Program on the students should be executed as part of the program.
- There is a need to expand vocational training programs to go beyond stereotypical professions for women (tailoring and coiffeur), taking into consideration the economic condition of the communities.

Child-Centered Learning Methodology

The incorporation of the child-centered learning methodology into the project's main interventions to improve equality education was one of the more valuable achievements of the project. It was implemented with the technical assistance of the Ministry of Education's Teacher Training Institute (TTI). TTI was responsible for the development of the manual and the execution of the Training-of-Trainers (TOT). The training program covered a wide range of teaching concepts and methodologies, such as child-teacher interaction, child development and psychology, group work, and task-assignment methods. The skills obtained in the TOT were transferred to the project schools. Child-Centered Methodology Training programs were organized for the teachers and headmasters of the target schools in the three governorates. The original design of this training component did not include school inspectors/supervisors as part of the target groups. This created some tension due to the unfamiliarity of the inspectors of these new methodologies. The project acted promptly to rectify the situation and designed training program specifically for the inspectors. The involvement of school inspectors contributes to the sustainability of this component after the end of the project.

A performance monitoring system was also designed by the project. The TOT teachers made regular visits to the classes to evaluate the impact of the new methods on the performance of the teachers. An evaluation form was developed and applied during the evaluation. It includes the evaluation of the appearance and structure of the class, the personal characteristics of the teacher, preparation for the class, and teaching activities. The outcomes of the evaluation were shared by the teachers, headmasters, and project staff.

Psychosocial Training

The child-centered learning methodology was complemented by another training program: a psychosocial training program. It was evident that the success of the above-mentioned interventions (remedial education and child-centered learning methodology) could not be realized without the provision of psychosocial counseling for the target children and their families. A training program was developed which covers topics such as identification of

students' psychological problems and methods of behavior modification. Training programs were carried out in the three governorates. The psychosocial counseling program was comprehensive in dealing with the various psychological and social difficulties facing the target students. In Abyan, for example, children from marginalized groups exhibited signs of exclusion and avoidance of active participation in school activities. Social counselors exerted great effort to encourage active participation of marginalized students. Conversely, in Hajja, teachers expressed concerns over the bad behavior and bad language exhibited by the newly enrolled students. Signs of rejection among other students were identified. They feared the negative impact of these students on the other regular students. Social counselors were effective in using behavior modification techniques to reduce the rejection among teachers and students to the newly enrolled students. Coordination between the project and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (Germany Society for Technical Cooperation, or GTZ) was achieved—particularly regarding the avoidance of duplicating the GTZ's similar psychosocial training program.

Life-Skills Training

The life-skills training program was exclusively implemented in the governorate of Hajja as part of the Child Trafficking component. The project adopted a similar approach to the implementation of this intervention. It started with organizing a Training-of-Trainers and then expanded it to a larger number of teachers and other stakeholders. The project recruited an international expert on life-skills training to conduct the TOT for 20 teachers and social counselors. Subsequently, participants in the TOT in turn trained about 170 teachers and other stakeholders. Among those trained was the staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) Child-Trafficking Rehabilitation Center in Harad, and officials from the Ministry of Education.

The TOT program covered a number of activities including team-building exercises, empowerment through mathematics, teaching life skills through drama, games, sports, stories, art (painting, collage, and drawing), and behavior management.

Improvement of School Physical Infrastructure

The child labor project identified only three schools in which rehabilitation of their infrastructure—particularly the girls' latrines—would be repaired. However, 11 schools actually benefited from the infrastructure component. More extensive infrastructure repair was completed in the child trafficking areas where nine schools in the five districts of Hajja benefited. The improvement of the physical structure of the nine schools included the installment of water tanks, classroom fans, air conditioning in the "Social Centers," metal doors for latrines, repair of the classroom ceilings, the school fence, windows and doors, electrical wiring, floor tiles, sport facilities, and roof repair. The school administration of three of the four new schools in Ibb and Abyan repaired the latrines for the girls and put in a water supply for the latrines. The fourth school in Abyan has not been able to connect with the electricity or public water systems. In addition, Social Centers were established in the nine schools. Each was provided with four computers, a table, chairs, and a small library. Schools were also provided with school

broadcasting systems and data projectors; however, no school had used them in its activities when the evaluation was conducted.

A good monitoring system of the implementation of the physical infrastructure was put in place. An engineer was contracted to supervise the process of implementation. The engineer made three visits to the sites of the project. In addition, local monitoring was performed by not only the governorate's coordinator but also by the headmasters and Parent's Councils. In several occasions, the contractor was compelled to redo some of the services as a result of the observations made by the headmasters or the parental councils.

During the focus group discussion, the schools' administration and the Parent's Councils expressed a great admiration for the project and confirmed that improvement of school physical structure has made schools more attractive to children. The most appreciated improvement was the provision of electricity generators to all schools, except one which was given a generator by UNICEF.

Goal 3: Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.

The Project Logframe identified two outputs for the goal of "Strengthening National Institutions and Policies on Education and Child Labor." The first output was to reduce financial barriers to education for poor families. The indicator of this output was to lobby the *Government to adopt a policy to drop school fees for poor families*. It was envisioned that the project would work towards the development of a draft law in the first year, to be debated by the Parliament in the second year and gain approval in the third year of the project. The second output of this goal was to advocate for the *allocation of budget by the Government for remedial education*. To achieve this goal, ACCESS Yemen worked on two levels: For the first output, the work was on the national level to mobilize national institutions to adopt the policy of school fee abolition. The second output was limited to the local level; specifically, evaluating the commitment of the targeted schools to support remedial education.

With regard to the first output, the evaluation found that the decision of the Yemeni Government to abolish school fees for female students in first through sixth grades and for male students in grades first through third was the result of concerted efforts by several national and international institutions in a process started prior to the actual start of the ACCESS Yemen project. ACCESS Yemen was one of the players advocating for adoption of the policy which went into effect in September 2006 in public schools nationwide. The contribution of ACCESS Yemen took several forms. One of the important contributions was the implementation of a survey aimed at identifying the actual cost that families pay for their children's education. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation requested ACCESS Yemen to carry out the survey. The data were collected from 30 schools in the governorates of Ibb, Abyan, and Hajja; with the participation of various stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, headmasters, and community leaders. The survey results were given to the Deputy Minister to be used in the advocacy within the Council of Ministers to adopt the policy of school fee abolition.

In addition, ACCESS Yemen, particularly the CHF Program Manager, engaged in dialogue with different organizations at the central level. The Program Manager was a member of the

Education Task Force (ETF), which was comprised of several international organizations including GTZ, World Bank, USAID, and the Ministry of Education. Through its membership in the ETF, the ACCESS project actively contributed to the technical issues and reflected on the experiences of the ACCESS Yemen project. However, CHF did not sign the Partnership Declaration developed in the ETF and neither did it sign an agreement with the MoE, which definitely compromised ACCESS Yemen's position. In these meetings, representatives of the project advocated the integration of Child Labor issues into these plans.

In addition, ACCESS Yemen was keen to keep national policymakers informed on the development of the project and advocate the adoption of some of the project's innovative interventions into the national education system. Meetings were held, particularly in the first year of the project, with government officials and representatives of international organizations.² They organized meetings with officials in the MoE, MOSAL, MOT EVT (Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training), Netherlands Embassy Education program, GTZ British-Yemeni Relief and Education Organization, and IPEC.

The AMIDEAST component of ACCESS-MENA also contributed to the realization of this goal through the organization of workshops and conferences to which government officials and representatives of NGOs were invited. Two workshops were held in Sana'a in 2007 and in Cairo in 2008. In the first ACCESS MENA national stakeholders' workshop, only 19 participants attended. Interestingly, the workshop was not attended by even one national or local NGO, with the exception of the project's subcontractor CSSW. This is in a sharp contrast to the efforts made in ACCESS Lebanon where a national conference was organized with a wide range of participation. Among the participants were ministers, parliamentarians, Higher Council for Childhood, as well as the representatives of the parliamentary committee on education and the parliamentary committee on the rights of women and children. The workshop issued recommendations, which were adopted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and disseminated to relevant Ministries as well as to all the members of the corresponding parliamentary committees.³ In the second workshop in Cairo, a large number of policymakers were invited. The workshop was considered to be one of the few opportunities which enabled policymakers and NGOs to exchange ideas and facilitate national and regional networking.

With regard to these efforts, three observations should be made: First, the focus on strengthening national institutions and policy on education and child labor occurred more on the local level than the national level. This is manifested in the project's ability to keep sustained contacts with local institutions (the Governor's Office; Offices of Education, Social Affairs, and Labor; Social Welfare Office; Technical Training Institutes; and Local Councils) through the lifetime of the project. The project succeeded in creating a consensus on the importance of coordination amongst all local-level stakeholders to tackle issues of child labor, child trafficking, and education. Coordination with the national institutions did not take a priority in the agenda of the project. In contrast to the grass-roots level, the project had limited impact on national institutions. This was due to (1) capacity building of national institutions across the board was

² Technical Report No. 2, Reporting Period March 1, 2005–August 31, 2005.

³ Technical Report No. 3, Reporting Period September 1, 2005–February 28, 2006, page 14.

beyond the mandate of the project; and (2) the limited budget allocated for ACCESS Yemen prevented the project from entering into partnership with national stakeholders.

Coordination with international organizations and funding agencies was also inadequate. This was reflected in the inability of the project to leverage outside resources for the project. There were many areas in which outside resources could generate funds for activities that go beyond the project's mandates—particularly income-generation activities for the families of working children.

With regard to the second output, “allocation of budget by the government for remedial education,” it was interpreted as an objective that would be achieved at the local level rather than in the national level. Instead of encouraging national institutions, especially the Ministry of Education, to budget for the adoption of remedial education nationwide, it resulted in target school administrations supporting remedial education. Consequently, the output was measured by considering the hours spent by remedial teachers as the contribution of the school to the implementation of remedial education. Teachers' hours spent in the remedial classes was calculated in monetary terms and considered a financial allocation of the schools to remedial education. The accumulative hours of remedial classes in the target schools were valued at US\$31,000 for the last three years of the project. It remains unclear to the evaluator the basis of calculating the financial contribution of schools for the adoption of remedial education. Furthermore, it is not clear how the funding agency accepted the replacement of the national-level indicator (government budget allocation) with the local-level indicator to measure the achievement of the output.

Observations:

- The hasty drafting of the project's logframe and work plan were not based on a comprehensive and realistic assessment of which policies and laws needed to be changed, and thus a strategy designed to obtain the changes. This led to the identification of unrealistic objectives. The objective of advocating the “Government to adopt a policy to drop school fees for poor families” was a process in which national and international actors contributed. It is extremely difficult to evaluate the role played by ACCESS Yemen.
- Similarly, the second output of advocating the “allocation of budget by the Government for remedial education” was hard to realize at the national level. The adoption of remedial education by the Ministry of Education requires multi-layer interventions. They include a strong advocacy campaign in support of the adoption of remedial education at the national level. This should be enhanced by seeking objectives and academic evaluation of the program's positive impact on the education system, and that it deserves to be given a priority in the national plans and policies. In addition, it requires the mobilization of additional financial resources needed for the recruitment and training of remedial teachers, the cost of equipment, and the establishment of resource rooms. This requires either increasing the budget of the Ministry or reallocating its budget to accommodate the implementation of remedial education nationwide. It is the view of the evaluation that the budget allocated by schools for remedial education through the

calculation of remedial class hours is not equivalent to advocating the budget allocation for the program at the national level.

Goal 4: Ensure long-term sustainability.

The evaluation of the project's ability to ensure the long-term sustainability can be approached by evaluating three major players: the partner organization CSSW, the Ministry of Education, and Local Community Committees.

Charitable Society for Social Welfare

The capacity of CSSW staff working with the project has been improved through numerous workshops and training programs organized by ACCESS-MENA. Their capacity was improved in the fields of management, finance, report writing, communication skills, and time management. The CSSW staff in the governorates has the capacity to manage the project and is capable of addressing child labor in its different dimensions with various stakeholders.

The project has contributed to the ongoing shift, from the hitherto welfare/charity modality of operation of CSSW education activities, into a development one. The shift has been recently manifested in the CSSW decision to establish a full-fledged "Children and Youth Development Sector" which consists of several departments including the "Child Labor and Education Department."

The commitment of CSSW to the sustainability of the project was also reflected in its financial and in-kind contribution to the project. The strong base and the structure nationwide of the CSSW have enabled it to use its funds and different social welfare programs to ensure long-term sustainability beyond the life of the project. In the ACCESS project, CSSW enrolled a good number of children at its cost, beyond the project target, and provided them with school supplies. In addition, CSSW has included some of the withdrawn and prevented students and their parents in its existing programs; e.g., the Orphan Care Program. CSSW has declared its plan to provide school supplies and fees for the project's students after the project ends, with the hope that USDOL will approve a larger project budget in the near future. In the vocational training programs, CSSW provided working tools to the students such as basic electricity, equipment, and sewing machines. The aim of this contribution was to increase the likelihood of employment after graduation. As stated earlier, the success of this initiative encouraged ACCESS-MENA to allocate funds to provide similar equipment to more than 200 students of the vocational training program.

CSSW has established training centers, particularly for sewing and coiffeur, in many governorates including Ibb and Hajja, and has recruited qualified trainers. These training centers will be used to implement some of the project's activities after it ends.

The Ministry of Education

The project's document stipulates that transferring the experiences into the policy framework of the Ministry of Education would contribute to the project's sustainability. In this regard, communication was initiated with officials in the MoE, particularly the National Strategy for

Education Technical Committee and the General Directorate of Inclusive Education. Manuals of Remedial Education and Child-Centered Learning Methodology were delivered to the Ministry with the aim of incorporating these programs into the national plans of the Ministry. The General Directorate of Inclusive Education expressed interest in expanding the notion of the resource room and remedial education to a wider geographical area. Directors of Inclusive Education in the three governorates have assumed the responsibility of supervising remedial teachers after the end of the project.

However, these efforts have not translated into official adoption and incorporation of the project's activities in the national education system. Furthermore, the Ministry has not allocated a budget to support the implementation of these programs. Therefore, the current position of the Ministry of Education is not expected, in the short term, to significantly contribute to sustainability of the project's interventions.

Local Community Committees

Community mobilization in support of the ACCESS Yemen project has been achieved at three levels: the governorate, the community, and the school.

In the governorate level, a community committee was established in each of the three governorates. The Community Committee was chaired by a senior official (assistant deputy governor) and the membership of local officials, NGOs, businessmen, and community leaders.

This committee has been instrumental in several dimensions: (1) assessing the needs of the targeted communities; (2) facilitating the implementation of the project's activities; (3) promoting community mobilization; and (4) coordinating efforts to ensure the sustainability of the project.

A similar structure was created on the district level with similar representation of stakeholders. The District Committees were created specifically in the five districts where the child trafficking component was implemented. They played an important role in community mobilization for the support of the project, as well easing the resistance to the project in its initial stage.

At the school level, the project actively worked to mobilize the community through the Parent Councils. First, it worked to activate the already established Fathers Councils, or establish new ones if they did not exist. Second, the project succeeded in establishing a number of Mothers Councils, based on the belief that mothers could play an important role in combating child trafficking. Parental councils have become the channels through which issues and concerns in the schools are transmitted to the communities at large.

Observations:

- The establishment of these local community committees has created a sense of ownership, and the success of the project and its sustainability became one of their concerns. A strong commitment has been expressed to the evaluator by the Governor of Hajja and Deputy Governor of Ibb to continue supporting the project. They expressed their willingness to allocate a budget to continue the implementation of the project's

activities and requested the governorate coordinators to submit a proposal to be included in the 2009 budget.

- Gender balance in these committees has been largely satisfactory except in one governorate (Ibb) where only one woman was included.
- Although the issue of sustainability has been advocated by the ACCESS Yemen staff from an early stage of the project, practical steps have not been taken to ensure the long-term sustainability. Two sustainability workshops were implemented during the time of the final evaluation. The third workshop in Abyan has been delayed several times due to unfavorable local conditions. Based on the evaluator's observation when he had the opportunity to attend the Sustainability Workshop in Hajja, actual steps to ensure the sustainability of the project had not been taken.
- The work of at least two Government Community Committees was ad hoc and on an as-needed basis. They lack a clear agenda or a work plan. Sometimes, even the minutes of the meetings were not properly maintained and the institutional memory of these committees is missing.
- In a number of cases, the Governorates' Community Committees were unable to coordinate efforts to overcome some of the constraints faced by target schools, which affect the overall outcome of the project's interventions. In Abyan, for example, the committee failed to secure funds to connect the electricity and water to one of the newly added schools. CSSW headquarter donated 60% of the total cost, but at the time of the evaluation the Committee had not secured the remaining 40%. The inability to make the water and electricity connections undermined the efficient utilization of the resource room and other facilities provided by the project.

4.3 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ISSUES

Two levels of managerial and financial supervision were applied in the ACCESS project in Yemen. CHF office in Beirut administered all management and budget activities of the project. A close supervision was applied by the CHF Project Director through field visits to Yemen as well as almost daily contact by phone and e-mail with the Program Manager at CSSW staff and the head of CHF office in Sana'a. The Project Director made regular visits to Yemen, intensified after the midterm evaluation and the implementation of the Child Trafficking component. About sixteen visits to Yemen were made during the lifetime of the project. In many of these visits, the CHF Project Director was keen in making field visits to the project's sites to have first-hand insight of the actual interventions on the ground. Two other officers in CHF Beirut office also performed financial and managerial supervision of ACCESS Yemen project. The Financial Officer was responsible for the disbursement of the budget, review of Task Orders, invoices, and follow-up of the wire transfers. The Contracts Administrator was also responsible for assessing the deliverables of the task orders and reviewing periodical reports.

In addition, the Program Manager of the CHF office in Sana'a provided managerial and technical support to the partner organization. Weekly meetings between the CHF Program Manager and

CSSW were held to review the content of Task Orders, prepare for the implementation of activities, evaluate their outcome, and review the monthly progress reports and the biannual Technical Progress Report. The Program Manager also conducted numerous field visits, particularly during the implementation of major activities.

ACCESS MENA has contributed to the capacity building of the project's staff in Yemen. At the beginning of the project, CHF organized a number of training programs for the staff of CSSW, particularly in the project's management, budgetary system, and reporting on the progress of the project.

Throughout its lifetime, ACCESS Yemen suffered from chronic financial constraints. The budget was used to achieve an exceptionally optimistic work plan in which every activity had been predetermined and budgeted in advance. No additional allowance was allocated for emerging needs. The impact of the limited budget was manifested in the inadequate structure of several components of the project. The literacy program, for example, was designed for only nine months, whereas the duration of the Government's Functional Literacy program was three years. The Accelerated Vocational Training is another example. Most of the AVT programs were designed to last for a few months, ranging from four months to a maximum nine months.

The impact of the financial shortage in ACCESS Yemen was not limited to the duration of the AVT programs but, more importantly, the nature of the programs. In Yemen, AVT programs were confined to electrical wiring, auto mechanics, carpentry (for male), and coiffure and tailoring (for female students). One computer program was offered for females in Abs and never repeated. In Lebanon, diverse training programs were offered in jewelry design, secretarial work, early childhood education, catering, and computer maintenance.

This was exacerbated by the late delivery of operating funds to the CSSW, which was partially caused by the complicated and labor-intensive system of drawing down and invoicing procedures.

Interestingly, the persistent financial limitation was reversed with the approval of the additional funds for the Child Trafficking component in the last year of the program. The project faced the dilemma of having abundant funds that needed to be spent in less than nine months. This put great pressure on the management of ACCESS Yemen to accomplish the objectives of both the child labor and child trafficking components in the remaining time of the project. Despite the pressure, the sufficient budget allowed the project to implement interventions in a comprehensive and complementary framework. Awareness-generating activities were carried out in tandem with the improvement of school physical infrastructure as well as the organization of training programs in remedial education and psychosocial counseling. The application of the integrated framework in the child trafficking component resulted in the mobilization of target communities in support of the project.

4.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

CSSW and CHF applied an extensive monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of its activities. The activities of the CSSW project in Yemen are reported to CHF Regional Office in a number of reports, such as the following:

1. Monthly Progress Reports that include qualitative and quantitative data on the progress achieved in the implementation of the project's activities.
2. Monthly Financial Reports that describe the Task Order, budget, invoices, and deliverables.
3. Financial Reports for every Task Order.
4. Quarterly Community Contribution Reports.
5. Biannual Technical Progress Reports (TPR), prepared for the CHF Beirut office which prepares a complete TPR on the overall activities of the ACCESS-MENA project in general. The biannual TPR is submitted to USDOL for review.

CSSW assumed the responsibility of gathering performance data pertinent to the identification of students, enrollment, and registration with disaggregated data including sex, age, grade, and follow-up data on the students (enrollment, persistence, and completion of the program). Special attention was given to the data that reflect the status of children with regard to work: withdrawn, partially withdrawn, and prevented.

CHF's Program Manager in Sana'a was also performing the duties of the education specialist and the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. She was providing overall management, administrative oversight, technical guidance, and capacity building for the partner organizations, and data compilation, as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their activities. Regular meetings between CHF and CSSW management were organized in which every Task Order, its deliverable activities, and the arrangements for implementation were discussed. The original design did not spell out that the Program Manager (PM) would perform the M&E duties. A monitoring and evaluation specialist was never recruited and the Program Manager had to step in and fulfill the duties of the M&E specialist in addition to her duties as PM and Education Specialist. This weakened the monitoring and evaluation output in the project. Regarding the HQ/Lebanon support with regard to M&E, the support took several forms: The CHF Project Director (PD) made numerous field visits to Yemen, intensified after the midterm evaluation emphasized the importance of these field visits. In the average of making four visits each year, this totaled about sixteen visits made to Yemen by the CHF PD during the lifetime of the project. In many of these visits, the CHF Project Director was keen in making field visits to the project's sites so as to have first-hand insight on the actual interventions on the ground. In addition, the CHF PD was in almost daily contact by phone and e-mail with the Program Manager at CSSW staff and the head of CHF's office in Sana'a. The CHF support to the M&E of Yemen Project was not limited to the role of the CHF PD, but was also extended to two other officers in CHF's Beirut office also performed financial and managerial supervision for the ACCESS Yemen

project. The Financial Officer was responsible for the disbursement of the budget, review of Task Orders, invoices, and follow-up of wire transfers. The Contracts Administrator was also responsible for assessing the deliverables of the task orders and reviewing periodical reports.

At the local level, a similar monitoring system for the project's activities was established. Special attention was given to the collection of data regarding the withdrawn and prevented children. The monitoring mechanism consists of various levels through the contribution of several actors:

- The Action Team collects data on the personal and social background of the targeted student.
- The collected data are approved by the parents and reviewed by the headmaster.
- School data are reviewed and approved by the school coordinator to ensure its accuracy.
- All data are entered into a local database and submitted to the CSSW database specialist in Sana'a.
- Data received from the governorates are compiled into one national database system. The accuracy of the local data was validated through regular field visits of the database specialist to the governorate offices, as well as to the project's field sites.
- Two follow-up reports on the withdrawn and prevented students are prepared by the Social Councilor and submitted to the governorate's office. To achieve a close follow-up system, the project decided in 2007 to increase the number of reports from two to four. The follow-up data is used to update the central database in Sana'a.

Observations:

- The CSSW management team was small, considering the wide range of project activities implemented and the vast geographical sites it covers. The project did not recruit an M&E specialist, or awareness and recreational officers and psychologists. The task of monitoring and evaluation of the project activities was given to the Assistant Administrator who conducted a number of field visits.
- A Monitoring Plan was developed to monitor the impact of the training programs. One notable example was the monitoring of the impact of remedial education and child centered methodology, where regular observation visits were made to classrooms, and reports of this reflected the progress made and suggestions for improvement. A specialist from Prince Tharwat College, Jordan visited all resource rooms and evaluated the progress made in the remedial education.
- Similarly, a monitoring system on the impact of the awareness raising activities was also developed. The changes in the attitudes of the parents towards child labor, as well as child trafficking and education were assessed.

- However, the project did not develop a monitoring and evaluation for many of its activities, particularly mass awareness-raising activities.

4.5 PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

The evaluation of the ability of the project to establish partnership and coordination can be performed by looking at its cooperation with three types of institutions: government ministries, NGOs, and relevant international organizations.

The relevant government institutions with which the project could establish partnership are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood.

One of the early steps that could ensure the cooperation of relevant institutions was to involve them in the process of formulating the project and the signing of its document.

Another of the early steps that could ensure the cooperation of relevant institutions, particularly at the central level, was to involve them in the process of identifying target schools and communities, as well as facilitating the implementation of the project interventions. To the contrary, the MoE and MOSAL were excluded from the early steps of project development. Instead, the governors of the three selected governorates, with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation were involved in the signing of the document. This was justified by the fact that the implementation modality of the project is at the local level. However, the management hierarchy in the government institutions is extremely centralized and the decisionmaking process is very much controlled by the central government. The lack of initial involvement of these ministries and the lack of the sense of ownership set the tone for partnership and coordination with the project, and its ramifications continued until the later stages of the project. The project faced a strong initial resistance from senior officials in the two ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education.

However, ACCESS Yemen staff exerted great effort to enter into dialogue with these and other ministries through membership in several national committees, including the Education Task Force, Combating Violence against Children Network, the National Forum for NGOs working on Children Issues, and the Drafting Committee of Yemen Report on the implementation of international human rights conventions (CRC and others). However, attempts to establish a strong partnership with the ministries were hindered by the lack of a budget for joint activities.

The partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor at the central level was extremely limited. One of the key offices that partnership could be established with was the Child Labor Unit (CLU). Coordination with MOSAL was at the personal level, between the CSSW Project Manager and the head of CLU.

The project attempted to improve coordination with the Ministry, especially in the last year of the project. The cooperation took several forms, such as inclusion of some Ministry staff in the training programs, particularly Remedial Education, and facilitating the participation of a number of senior officials in the ACCESS-MENA conference in Cairo in 2008.

The project's partnership with the office of MOSAL on the local level was outstanding. The Director of MOSAL in Hajja was one of the key players in the implementation of the project. Coordination was intensified in the last year of the project, when the child trafficking component was implemented. MOSAL office facilitated the use of the database of the Child Trafficking Rehabilitation Center in Haradh to identify targeted children. The project started implementation on September 2007 when the school year had already started. The Director of MOSAL's office in Hajja kept the Minister and other senior officials informed of all activities of the project. The office has advocated the inclusion of the children's families to the Social Welfare program, which is more likely to be achieved in the next few months.

With regard to the High Council for Motherhood and Childhood (HCMC), the partnership was limited to regular visits by CHF Regional Program Director and the staff in Yemen to update HCMC on the development of the project. No joint activities were implemented. One of the very few occasions of coordination was when ACCESS-MENA invited the Secretary General of the Council to participate in the Cairo meeting in 2008.

The limited budget of the project also dictated the relationship between CSSW and other national NGOs. CSSW was able to implement activities with a high level of efficiency in terms of time and money. Partnership with national NGOs requires sufficient budget to compensate the lack of presence in the field sites of the project.

The ACCESS Yemen's self-declared commitment to "fully cooperate with the ILO/IPEC program in Yemen to improve the country capacity to address child labor issues" was not fulfilled. Furthermore, coordination with GTZ was also limited to sporadic exchange of ideas with its office in the MoE to avoid duplication of activities. GTZ is one of the international organizations which focuses on improvement of educational systems in Yemen. GTZ has implemented a number of activities, including the organization of psychosocial training programs, the provision of technical support to girls' education, and the advocacy for societal involvement in the improvement of educational institutions. It has been working in several governorates, including the three ACCESS Yemen targeted governorates in Hajja, Ibb, and Abyan.

The governorate of Hajja witnessed successful coordination efforts between GTZ and ACCESS Yemen. When ACCESS Yemen began the implementation of the Child Trafficking component in Hajja, it realized that some of its activities had been implemented by GTZ. GTZ has conducted a training program on psychosocial counseling for a good number of teachers and schools' headmasters, developed a psychosocial training manual, established a governorate's Community Committee to support girls' education, and provided support for the improvement of some schools' infrastructure. The coordination resulted in the selection of targeted groups and schools different from those already targeted by GTZ, the use of the training manuals in the psychosocial program, and the participation of its representative in the GTZ-facilitated Community Committee to advocate for girls' education. The outcome of the coordination was the avoidance of duplication as well as the expansion of ACCESS Yemen outreach in its training programs.

V RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive *needs assessment* should be carried out prior to the development of the project's document and its logframe and work plans. A wide range of stakeholders to include the relevant ministries and governmental institutions, national NGOs, local officials and local councils, and possibly beneficiaries should contribute to the development of the project's objectives, interventions, and identification of target communities. The comprehensive assessment should be complemented by conducting a *Baseline Data Study* at the beginning of the project, and repeating it at the end of the project's lifetime. These preparations would enhance the project's ability to assess the impact of its interventions on the target communities. Furthermore, IPEC/SIMPOC, in collaboration with UNICEF, the Central Statistics Organization, and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is conducting the first *National Child Labor Survey*. The survey is expected to be carried out in September 2008. Therefore, the project should make use of the data produced by the Survey in the process of designing the new project.

The new ACCESS Yemen project should not be developed in isolation from other national efforts focused on child labor and education. It should be developed in harmonization with the framework of existing *national policies and strategies*, particularly:

- The Basic Education Strategy
- The Executive Plan for Combating Child Trafficking
- The National Strategy for Combating Child Labor
- The National Youth and Children Strategy

ILO and the Government of Yemen have agreed to sign in August 2008 the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), which is considered a strategic and operational framework for ILO interventions during the period 2008–2010. It was developed to respond to current national priorities and to support the existing policy framework. Combating child labor is given special attention in the DWCP. Therefore, it is crucial that the new project should be coordinated with DWCP to avoid duplication and seek complementarity.

The successful implementation of the next ACCESS Yemen project is largely dependent on its ability to establish close *coordination and partnership* with two types of national stakeholders: government institutions and non-governmental organizations. It is vital to establish coordination and cooperation mechanisms between the project and relevant government institutions from the beginning of the project's development and implementation. The coordination with national institutions can take at least three forms:

- Coordination should be established during the development of the project document in which national institutions contribute to the identification of the project's objectives, interventions, and target communities.

- National institutions, particularly the MoE and MOSAL, should also be involved with the development of the project's documents and objectives to generate the sense of ownership, as well as to ensure the commitment of these institutions to exert national efforts aimed at achieving the project's objectives and sustainability.
- The new project should include the implementation of joint activities aimed at combating child labor and education, and sufficient budget should be allocated to these activities.

At least, three important government partners can be identified. These are (1) the Child Labor Unit at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor; (2) the General Directorate of Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Education; and (3) the Technical Committee for Combating Child Trafficking, which is under the supervision of the Higher Council of Motherhood and Childhood.

1. The MOSAL has established the *Child Labor Unit*, with the main responsibility of coordinating government and international efforts aimed at combating child labor. ILO, through a USDOL-funded project (IPEC), provided technical assistance to the CLU and funded the implementation of several activities; including the establishment of three rehabilitation centers for working children in Sana'a, Aden, and Seyon. The IPEC project has been extended only to the end of August 2008. Therefore, the new project should consider the provision of technical support to the CLU. There are at least three possible fields of cooperation between ACCESS Yemen and CLU. These are (a) enhancing the CLU's institutional capacities to mainstream child labor issues into national policies and programs; (b) completing and updating the existing database on child labor and checking it for accuracy; and (c) mobilizing social partners in the informal and agricultural sectors where most of child labor is concentrated. In addition, the three rehabilitation centers can be added to the target schools (and centers). They represent the three categories of target communities identified in the first project of ACCESS Yemen: Aden (fishery), Sana'a (street children), and Seyon (agriculture).
2. In the Ministry of Education, cooperation can be established with the *Department of Inclusive Education*. A relative coordination between ACCESS Yemen and the Department was achieved, particularly in the realm of Remedial Education. The directors of the Inclusive Education in the three governorates have been involved in the training and supervision of the Remedial Education program implemented in the three governorates. Therefore, future cooperation should be achieved by the new ACCESS project in Yemen.
3. The third possible partner is the *Technical Committee for Combating Child Trafficking*. In 2006, the Committee was established and supervised by the Higher Council of Motherhood and Childhood. It is distinguished by its composition which includes representatives of government institutions, NGOs, and international organizations. One of its achievements was the development of the National Work Plan to Combat Child Trafficking in Yemen. Technical assistance on advocating and mobilizing relevant institutions to adopt and implement the National Work Plan is a possible area of cooperation between the Committee and ACCESS Yemen.

Partnership and coordination should also be extended to *nongovernmental organizations* working on the issues of child labor, child trafficking, and education. In fact, most of these NGOs suffer from a low level of institutional capacity to implement activities at the national level. Therefore, the implementation of several capacity-building programs should be one of the objectives of the new ACCESS Yemen project.

The *expansion* of the project should take two tracks: First, the project should target new governorates where child labor and child trafficking is widespread. The focus on child trafficking has been on the Hajja governorate, despite the fact that the majority of children are coming from other governorates. According to the General Director of Social Affairs and Labor⁴ in the Hajja office, at least 70% of child trafficking is coming from other governorates, particularly Hodiedah and Mahweet; and he emphasized the importance of including at least these two governorates in the second project. The second track of expansion should be the inclusion of rural areas to rectify the biased selection of urban centers made in the first project. The first phase of the project favored urban centers for logistical reasons and financial constraints. However, child labor and child trafficking are more prevalent in rural areas, and girls are most affected by the lack of appropriate educational facilities and the heavy workload they bear inside the house and in the agricultural sector.

One of the major difficulties facing national policymakers is the *lack of reliable data and research* on child labor and child trafficking. Therefore, the new project should identify support of research and the collection of reliable data as one of its primary objectives. Cooperation can be established with two major academic institutions: Sana'a University and Aden University. In the last few years, with the support of UNICEF, the two universities established two Social Work Departments; with qualified staff to conduct empirical research and analysis on various social issues including child labor, child trafficking, and education. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor established the Center for Social and Labor Studies. In fact, the first empirical study on child trafficking was accomplished as a result of the cooperation between the three institutions: the Social Work Department at Sana'a University, the MOSAL Center for Social and Labor Studies, and UNICEF. The new project should capitalize on the success of such cooperation by carrying out several research projects on child trafficking and its ramifications on the future of children. Furthermore, the availability of the raw data collected by the ACCESS Yemen project can be utilized—in cooperation between these three institutions and the project—to shed light on the phenomenon and assist national policymakers

The project should develop an adequate and efficient *Performance and Monitoring Plan* based on two principles: First, the PMP should be based on a realistic identification of achievable project objectives in order to avoid unattainable outputs in the lifetime of the project, such as “the allocation of government budget for remedial education” or outputs that have already been under the process of approval, such as “school fee abolition.” Second, the PMP should also outline specific and transparent indicators to measure the achievement of these objectives, whether it is at the national or local level. Technical assistance to partner organizations to

⁴ His presentation in the ACCESS Yemen Stakeholders' Workshop, held on July 12–13, 2008.

adequately monitor and evaluate the interventions and deliver an impact/lessons learned study is very crucial for the success of the project.

- The new ACCESS Yemen project should put more emphasis on the child trafficking and child labor *prevention measures*.
- There is a need to create a national ACCESS *Advisory Committee* of 7 to 10 members representing relevant government institutions, NGOs, and international organizations. The Advisory Council is consultative in nature and contributes to the harmonization of the project with national policies and strategies concerning child labor and education. It will also play a key role in mobilizing national support for the project and ensuring its sustainability. Possible members are MoE, MOSAL, MOPIC, the HCMC, Shawthab (NGO), UNICEF, and the World Bank.
- Assign a sufficient number of technically qualified and experienced *personnel* on a long-term basis to perform the tasks outlined in the work plans. Particular attention should be made to the inclusion of an M&E Specialist and an awareness-raising specialist.
- The introduction of a modified and easier Task Order system and the reduction of the number of required *financial and management* reports is another important factor in facilitating the speedy and on-time implementation of the project's interventions and activities.
- One of the best lessons of the old project was the effective mobilization of local communities through the establishment of Governorate's *Community Committees*. In Hajja, participants in the Sustainability Workshop recommended the expansion of the Community Committee to include in its membership additional key players such as the offices of the Ministry of Endowment and the Ministry of Information, and the Center for Rehabilitation of Trafficked Children in Harad. The new ACCESS Yemen should provide technical assistance and capacity-building training programs to these Committees, particularly on issues of coordination, networking, and community mobilization.
- All stakeholders repeatedly stated that the project's objectives would be greatly enhanced if *income-generation activities and micro-finance mechanisms* were included in the project's activities. This objective can be achieved through both the implementation of some income-generating activities and the coordination with other agencies, particularly within the Social Safety Net, to provide direct micro-finance mechanisms to the target groups. The provision of assistance should be contingent upon the children's school attendance.
- Before deciding to provide monthly payments to one of the stakeholders, a thoughtful assessment of the reaction of other stakeholders should be made. The allocation of monthly payment to remedial education teachers created friction not only within the school but also with the office of the Ministry of Education in the governorates. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the monthly payment should be abolished in the

next project. Instead, efforts should be directed towards advocating within the Ministry of Education to release the teachers from other school duties and to be exclusively assigned to working with the students in the resource rooms.