

FUNDED BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Midterm Evaluation of Training and Education Against Trafficking in Burkina Faso (TREAT)

Save the Children Canada

Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-3-0064



2006

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DPEBA	Provincial Director of Education
EI	Education Initiative
ICLP	International Child Labor Program
IEP	<i>Institute d'Education Populaire</i>
ILO-IPEC	International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
MASSN	Ministry for Social Welfare and National Solidarity
MEBA	Ministry of Literacy and Basic Education
NFPTC	Nonformal Professional Training Center
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NFBEC	Nonformal Basic Education Center
PACTE	West African Program Against Child Trafficking
PDDEB	10-Year Strategic Plan for Basic Education
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
SS	Satellite School
STS	Student Tracking System
TOR	Terms of Reference
traDE	Training for Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, Save the Children Canada signed a four-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to implement the project entitled TREAT—Training and Education Against Trafficking. The project aims to reduce child migration and trafficking in four regions of Burkina Faso by improving the access to and quality of formal and nonformal education. Save the Children Canada and their partner Training for Development (traDE) implement the project using a range of strategies designed to achieve the following 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
4. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The project is designed as the first phase of a 15-year plan to create and test professional development programs to build practical skills and prepare children for productive livelihoods in their home areas, thereby, reducing the numbers at risk of becoming victims of child trafficking. The project focuses on three main areas of activity. The first is the creation of seven Satellite Schools (SSs) and 13 Nonformal Basic Education Centers (NFBEC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Literacy and Basic Education (MEBA) and local communities. MEBA and the communities identified the land where the schools were built. MEBA is responsible for recruiting and paying the teachers, while Save the Children Canada coordinates construction and assists the communities with setting up School Management Committees and Parents' Associations. TraDE takes the lead on the second activity, the development of a more practical and active curricula for basic education, which includes teacher training and is also carried out in collaboration with MEBA. The third area of activity is the creation and support of local awareness-raising committees to increase knowledge about child trafficking. Each community has two such committees (one for adults and one for children), and project fieldworkers provide support and training to build capacity so that these committees can develop and fulfill their roles.

The midterm evaluation looked at the impact of the project in relation to its objectives, with the aim of ensuring that children's needs are being met through current interventions and that the remaining period of the project is performed to maximum effect.

The evaluation found that 18 school buildings have been successfully completed and all 20 schools are operational, although two are functioning under straw shelters because of contractual difficulties that have prevented their buildings from being completed. Forty teachers are teaching the 1,459 children who are currently enrolled in grades 1 and 2. Curriculum development and teacher training is progressing as planned. Teachers are using active learning methodologies and bilingual education, which means that national languages are used as the medium of instruction with the gradual introduction of French into the curriculum. Each school

is supported by several community organizations—a School Management Committee, a Parents’ Association, and a Mothers’ Association—which ensures that there is local ownership and input into the running of the school. These organizations are made up of committed community leaders and are, in general, functioning well. They will benefit from ongoing support and further training to build their capacity to advocate for their schools and oversee school management procedures and practice before the end of the project.

There is some confusion within communities concerning the curriculum offered by NFBEs created by the project. Young people who want to learn practical skills are not entirely convinced of the necessity for a foundation in basic education, and this is effecting enrollment. The project is taking steps to clarify and explain how the curriculum serves to meet longer-term objectives, but it may prove useful to develop short-term strategies to take into account community concerns, which could operate until results can speak for themselves. Such strategies could include work experience placements or school-based income-generating projects integrated into the curriculum.

The adult and child Child Trafficking Prevention Committees established in each community benefit from training on child trafficking and labor issues, protection strategies, and their roles and responsibilities. Though they are clearly motivated and have carried out some awareness-raising activities, they do not as yet give the impression that they are running independently of project support, and they seem to rely on direction from the project concerning what they should do and how they should do it. Though this is inevitable during the early stages of development, the project needs to build capacity and develop strategies to enable these committees to function independently if they are to continue to operate successfully after the end of the project.

The project also disseminates and shares information about child trafficking and labor issues as part of the training that orientates teachers to the project and through work with a range of local and national partners. It works in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Welfare and National Solidarity (MASSN), which is responsible for implementing the national action plan to combat child trafficking, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the West African Program Against Child Trafficking (PACTE), a Canadian-funded program also implemented by Save the Children Canada, which promotes child protection from child trafficking in several West African countries.

TREAT is succeeding in meeting many of its targets, but there is a series of issues involving management and budgeting that prevent it registering total success. An audit carried out by USDOL in 2005 identified a number of significant findings regarding financial and administrative systems. The original project budget underestimated several budget lines and completely omitted to budget for the provision of latrines, water points, and canteens for the 20 schools. This serious omission is gradually being rectified through negotiations with government and other development partners, but it has meant that time and energy that would have been better used on other issues has had to be diverted to resolve the problem, and it seems unlikely that all schools will have the necessary provision to meet MEBA standards before the end of the project.

With regards to the unfinished school buildings, the project cannot be held accountable for the fact that a contractor decided to stop building and has as yet failed to repay the unspent money. Overall, TREAT's negotiations with building contractors were extremely effective. When a problem became clear, the project initiated legal action, but this has yet to yield concrete results, which leaves the communities in the villages concerned with no clear idea of when their school buildings might be completed.

This report describes in detail the midterm evaluation of the project conducted during March 2006. The report was prepared by Macro International Inc., according to guidelines prescribed by the USDOL International Child Labor Program (ICLP). The evaluation was conducted and documented by Sue Upton, an independent development consultant in collaboration with USDOL/ICLP staff, members of the project team, and stakeholders in Burkina Faso.

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I **CONTEXT**

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funds international labor projects through its Bureau of International Labor Affairs, one part of which is the International Child Labor Program (ICLP). In 2001, ICLP began funding the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), which seeks to improve the access to and quality of basic education for children who either have been involved in the worst forms of child labor or who are at risk of becoming involved. The EI has the following four main 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
4. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

In September 2003, Save the Children Canada signed a four-year cooperative agreement with USDOL to implement the EI project TREAT—Training and Education Against Trafficking in four regions of Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso is among the world's poorest countries, where economic opportunities are limited. The majority of the population lives in rural areas and survives through agricultural and herding activities typical of the Sahelian zone, but because of precarious climatic conditions, it is virtually impossible for families to live solely from these. All available hands are required to work the soil during the short rainy season of two to four months, but during the longer dry season, youth and young adults tend to seek additional income from other sources outside their communities. Burkina Faso, which borders on Niger, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, has migration to and from many of these countries.

About 53 percent of the country's population is under 18 years of age, but the school enrollment rate is very low, particularly for girls.¹ There are currently not enough opportunities to productively occupy much of the population and the traditional migration during the dry season attracts young people seeking a better future. There is increasing evidence that significant numbers of children have been sold to work in agricultural activities, such as on cocoa plantations in Cote d'Ivoire where cocoa producers, who are subject to unstable cocoa prices, seek cheap labor to make their activities viable. Within Burkina Faso itself, cotton and sugar producers face a similar position. Thus, for several generations, Burkina Faso has been the source of migrant labor for coastal regions as well as experiencing much internal migration of labor. Migration from northern villages, where earning a livelihood is increasingly difficult, to areas with greater agricultural or economic potential has become a sort of rite of passage for many young Burkinabés.

¹ UNICEF. *La Situation des Enfants dans le Monde*. 2001.

These factors have come together to create the phenomenon of child trafficking. The traditional village exodus has been exploited by unscrupulous traffickers who appear to facilitate the adventure by offering transport and guaranteeing employment. From the point of view of parents who see little future for their children in the local environment, this can seem irresistible.

The modern alternative to agricultural work is school, which has never attracted even half the children in the rural areas because of difficulties related to access and the quality and relevance of the education offered. The Ministry of Literacy and Basic Education (MEBA) recognized the problems in primary education in its 10-Year Strategic Plan for Basic Education (PDDEB 2000–2009), which proposes a variety of strategies to improve the situation.

In 2005, Burkina was one of nine countries that signed a multilateral cooperative agreement to fight child trafficking, a noteworthy achievement encouraging collective initiatives. It covered monitoring and evaluation of activities conducted by the members in the implementing countries, proposals for solutions to issues concerning the fight against child trafficking and exchange of experiences of support, reinsertion and repatriation, identification of victims and traffickers, and the punishment of traffickers.

II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is conducted on the basis of the premise that the root causes of child trafficking lie in ignorance on the part of communities in the providing, transit, and receiving zones, and limited educational or vocational opportunities for children in these areas. The project operates with the belief that if populations were more aware of the dangers of child trafficking and if children had more opportunities to learn, grow up, and make a living in their own villages and towns, the number of victims could be reduced. The project works to prevent children from finding themselves in situations where they can be exploited and sees this aspect as equally if not more important than stopping traffickers and recovering children, because it tackles the root of the problem. Project interventions promote changes in attitudes and increased opportunities for education, which combine to reduce the number of children at risk of being trafficked and exploited.

The project aims to reduce the risks of child trafficking through enrolling and retaining children in both formal and nonformal education in 17 communities in four regions of Burkina Faso, while raising knowledge and awareness of issues concerning child trafficking within these communities and within the wider project zones. The program is jointly implemented by Save the Children Canada, the grantee, and Training for Development (traDE), in collaboration with MEBA and the Ministry for Social Welfare and National Solidarity (MASSN). TraDE is a Burkinabé organization founded in 1996 by a team of experienced trainers and managers with the idea of offering accessible, up-to-date, and effective management and language training in Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

The project aims to work with a total of 2,400 boys and girls age 7 to 15 to achieve its two stated objectives, which are the following:

1. Introduce innovative educational improvements by July 2007 to the four project regions of intervention: Cascades, Hauts Bassins, Sahel, and Sud Ouest.
2. Increase awareness of child trafficking issues and the importance of school enrollment among children and their communities within the project zones.

Table 1: Location of Communities Where the Project Works

REGION Main town	Province	Satellite Schools (Formal education years 1–3)	Nonformal Education Centers
SAHEL Dori	Seno	Dori* Hooga	Dori WouroBangabé Bani* Gangaol*
HAUTS BASSINS Bobo	Houet	Fô	Fô Dafra*

REGION Main town	Province	Satellite Schools (Formal education years 1–3)	Nonformal Education Centers
CASCADES Banfora	Comoé	Larabin*	Banfora Soubaka Ouo Mangodara* Yendéré
	Leraba	Dakoro*	Dakoro* Sindou
SOUTHWEST Gaoua	Poni	Tobruora Bodana*	

* Schools and centers visited during the evaluation

The implementing agencies work with children, parents, teachers, local education and administrative authorities, national and international organizations, and Burkinabé Government, using a range of strategies and approaches to achieve the four EI goals. The project operates within MEBA’s PDDEB 2000–2009, and MEBA officials at all levels support and enable many aspects of project implementation.

TREAT is the first phase of an exciting 15-year plan to create and test effective professional development programs and contribute to the improvement of primary education to build practical skills and prepare children for productive livelihoods, thereby reducing the numbers of children at risk of becoming victims of child trafficking. To see the project in context, it is important to understand the long-term plan outlined in the box below. It has the potential to develop quality nonformal education that is not a second-class option for those who fail or miss enrollment in the formal system, but a valid education in its own right for business development by entrepreneurs in a range of rural and urban enterprises.

Table 2: The 15-Year Plan

Phase 1: 2003–2007 Strengthening the Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on awareness raising in various sectors in providing, receiving, and transit zones as well as advocacy at a national and regional level • Develop relevant, practical, and effective curricula for at-risk children to enable them to make a living in or near their homes and families • Build and expand on the nonformal education centers created by MEBA • Train teachers and develop training capacity of National Primary Teacher Training colleges in the new curricula and in more effective methodologies.

Phase 2: 2007–2013 Moving to a Higher Level of Educational Programming and Expansion of First Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last year of four-year program in first phase • First group of students enter practical apprenticeship and training/work experience placements • Continue the focus on awareness raising in providing, receiving, and transit zones as well as at the national and regional levels • Using lessons learned from the first phase, expand the nonformal education programs to other regions of Burkina Faso • Apply higher level of educational programming in centers, including entrepreneurial and management courses for graduates of Phase 1 programs • Develop curricula for more advanced technical and business training for graduates for application in Phase 3.
Phase 3: 2012–2017 Expanding Locally and Nationally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize and apply curricula for more advanced technical and business training for graduates of Phase 2 programs • Help rural enterprises expand • Use lessons learned from educational experiences to improve general primary education.

Since the start of the program, the long-term vision of the nonformal educational system and the phases of execution of the program have been further defined as detailed in the following table:

Table 3: Long-Term Vision of the Nonformal Education System

The Vision of the Three Cycles of Nonformal Education	The Phases of Implementation of These Cycles
<p>Cycle 1: NFBECC</p> <p>Four years of basic education with the goal of allowing children to make an informed choice of profession that is based upon the potential of their regions. The major characteristics of this cycle—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is pre-professional • National language is the medium of instruction • Curricula include basic education as well as life skills • Program integrates the community and the social and economic potential of the region into the curricula 	<p>Phase 1: 2003–2007 TREAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TREAT is the first phase of the implementation of this 15-year program, which has the objectives of developing an innovative curricula for NFBECC • Training teachers • Partnering with MEBA in the development of the new nonformal education approach

The Vision of the Three Cycles of Nonformal Education	The Phases of Implementation of These Cycles
<p>Cycle 2: Nonformal Professional Training Center (NFPTC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of four to five sectors defined by the potential of the regions • National language is the medium of instruction • Each sector offers training in aspects from production, to transformation, to marketing/commerce and management 	<p>Phase 2: 2007–2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand upon the TREAT experience by developing NFBECC in Moore • Create four professional training centers that can attract graduates from NFBECCs (as of 2008) • Develop technical curricula in national languages • Develop language academies to ensure the development of each of the national languages used as media of instruction • Create lobbying groups to help create an enabling environment for the graduates of the NFPTC to succeed
<p>Cycle 3: Continuing Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term courses designed to update graduates of Cycle 2 • Courses led by professionals focused on practical skills • Focus will be on entrepreneurship 	<p>Phase 3: Starting 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create NFPTC in Moore • Develop curricula for continuing education • Offer practical and accessible continuing education programs • Provide assistance to rural enterprises • Work with MEBA and other appropriate ministries to apply lessons learned to general education

The principal project approach is to prevent child trafficking and exploitation by addressing the lack of awareness of the underlying causes of the problem within communities and the lack of local educational opportunities for children. The project has the following three major areas of activity:

1. The creation of 7 new Satellite Schools and 13 Nonformal Basic Education Centers

Satellite Schools (SSs) represent a relatively recent strategy of MEBA to improve access to primary education. They provide grades 1–3 in villages with no access to a primary school. Children who finish these three grades have to overcome the obstacle of distance to attend schools with higher grades, but because they are that much older, they are, in theory, more able to do so.

In 1995, MEBA and UNICEF created Nonformal Basic Education Centers (NFBECCs) to help children who have never been in school, or who have dropped out, to access basic education concerning civic responsibilities and rural economic activities, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and environmental issues. They are placed in areas of low-school enrollment and target children age 12 to 15 who are too old to attend a primary or SS. Because of the effectiveness of these schools, Save the Children Canada subsequently increased the number of centers in two provinces (Comoé and Kéné Dougou). The TREAT NFBECCs had the opportunity

to learn from the experience of the early centers and offer a different, more ambitious curriculum.

The project has built 7 SSs and 13 NFBECs. Parents and communities decided where the schools and centers should be located in collaboration with MEBA personnel and local administrative authorities who provided the land or facilitated negotiations to obtain it. School Management Committees were set up to monitor the construction process and then to manage the activities of the schools and centers. Parents' Associations and Mothers' Associations later joined these committees to ensure and promote community participation in children's education.

This construction activity is of particular interest because TREAT is the only USDOL-funded project of its type that uses 30 percent of its budget for construction compared with a 10 percent maximum in other countries.

2. The development of more practical and active curricula for basic education

The new curricula are based upon the Ministry's policy to go "beyond basic reading/writing/arithmetic skills and develop reasoning, initiative, and life-long learning skills." Where nonformal education is concerned, the aim is to build a link between the local economy and learning to help students develop pertinent skills that can provide a livelihood and contribute to local development.

In addition to curricula development, TREAT is improving the quality of education through the introduction of child-centered teaching methodologies and teacher-training programs. The participating teachers are also involved in developing curricula in local languages that are adapted to their particular zones of intervention. They are trained in participatory teaching methods that focus on skill development rather than information dissemination. As the teaching approach and content are significantly different from traditional programs and methods, TREAT provides followup and technical support to teachers through observation, meetings, and skill-building workshops.

SSs use mother tongue teaching and the gradual introduction of the French language as opposed to the current use of French as the language of instruction from grade 1 in the majority of primary schools. This approach has recently been adopted as national education policy in Burkina, so the TREAT schools and teachers provide a valuable resource for the forthcoming implementation of the policy on a nationwide basis.

3. The creation of local awareness-raising committees to increase knowledge about child trafficking

Local awareness raising is based on the establishment of local Child Trafficking Prevention Committees composed of members of Parents' Associations, individual mothers and fathers, the transport and chauffeurs' syndicate, and other local leaders, groups, and individuals. The committees were formed after an initial awareness-raising campaign, and they receive ongoing training to develop their knowledge of the problem and skills in mobilizing others. These committees are responsible for finding local solutions to combating child trafficking.

Children at risk of trafficking are integrally involved in the campaign. Children's committees have been established to enable children to learn about their rights, how to protect themselves and others from exploitation and abuse, and how to become child rights promoters. Girls and boys are being trained to pass on messages to their peers (child-to-child methodology) and they provide input into the project assessment, research, and evaluation processes. The project uses a variety of media that appeal to children such as radio, video, and theater productions. Children are involved in developing materials, such as sketches and drawings, for the benefit of other children.

III EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation looks at the project as a whole and its effect in relation to its stated objectives. The activities carried out during the first 30 months of the cooperative agreement are reviewed and assessed with regard to their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation aims to—

- Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved
- Assist ICLP to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad ICLP technical cooperation program framework
- Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved.

To achieve these objectives, the various aspects of the project are divided into the following five categories:

Project Design

The evaluation assesses the validity, cost efficiency, and sustainability of the project's strategy to construct schools. It looks at the validity of the project's design theory that child trafficking will be reduced or prevented by improving access to and the quality of education, and it identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and strategy.

Project Implementation

In this section, the evaluation examines the effect of the construction aspect of the project on implementation and the ability of the project to meet non-construction-related targets and objectives. It assesses the effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation tools and systems and the degree to which the project is able to measure USDOL's common indicators and identify and track direct beneficiaries using USDOL's criteria. It also looks at the effects of implementing the project in two widely distant areas of the country and the degree to which the project has been able to stimulate interest and participation among the different actors concerned.

Partnership and Coordination

The evaluation analyses different aspects of the various partnerships that exist in implementing the project to identify elements that have enhanced or hindered project activities and coordination.

Management and Budget

The evaluation identifies areas of possible improvement in technical and financial management and assesses the effectiveness of communications between Save the Children Canada and USDOL. It looks particularly at the budget and lessons that might be learned to help similar projects in the future.

Sustainability and Impact

The final section assesses project strategy for sustainability and the steps that have been taken to date to promote the continuation of anti-child-trafficking and education initiatives beyond the life of the project. The evaluation looks at the impact of activities to combat child trafficking at the community level and that of the new curricula and teaching methodologies on teaching and learning within project schools and centers. The project impact on individual beneficiaries, partner organizations, government, and policy is also assessed in terms of system-wide changes to education and child-trafficking/labor issues.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to learn what is and is not working with the project at its midterm point, which may have implications for the project itself or for the ICLP program in general. The evaluation is an objective inquiry that will enable any necessary corrective action to be taken and successful aspects of the project to be reinforced. Ultimately, the purpose is to ensure that children's needs are being met through project interventions. It is above all a learning process.

IV EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation consisted of three main phases. Initially there was a desk review of relevant documents including the project document, progress and technical reports, the performance monitoring plan (PMP), work plans, and the baseline study. Because the lead evaluator was based in Mali, interviews with stakeholders in the United States were conducted by e-mail and telephone. A conference call with USDOL-ICLP staff provided a clear understanding of the terms of reference (TOR) and particular concerns and expectations for the evaluation to be established.

The second phase consisted of interviews with stakeholders at all levels. A list of questions was sent to USDOL and the Toronto offices of Save the Children Canada to facilitate their input into the evaluation process. The evaluator spent 15 days in Burkina Faso, where she visited selected communities in both the project intervention zones and talked to stakeholders in Ouagadougou. During this phase, there were meetings with representatives of MEBA, including the Minister, but it proved impossible to carry out most of the planned interviews because of the fact that many Ministry personnel were out of town attending a seminar. Though this was unfortunate, the evaluator caught up with most of these people at the stakeholders meeting at the end of the field trip, including representatives of MASSN, the Ministry responsible for protecting children from child trafficking in Burkina Faso. The evaluator, accompanied by Save the Children Canada project staff, visited four SSs and five NFBECs, covering each of the five provinces where the project operates. At each location, discussions with representatives took place.

The evaluator spoke to the following groups and individuals:

- Children from the community, including members and nonmembers of the children's Child Trafficking Prevention Committees, children in a project school or center, and those out of school (21 girls and 29 boys)
- Representatives of the School/Center Management Committee (14), Parents' Association (14), Mothers' Association (8), and Adult Child Trafficking Prevention Committees (14)
- Teachers from SSs and NFBECs (11)
- Local resource people, partners, and administrators (3)
- Children in class (observation/questions and answers) (1 SS class and 1 NFBEC class)
- Save the Children Canada's fieldworkers (5) and headquarter-based staff (3)
- Director and program officer for traDE
- Provincial staff from MEBA and MASSN.

The evaluator covered long distances between and within the two sites, one of which is in the north-east and the other in the south-west of the country. She was able to make a short visit to one of the gold digging sites near the village of Gangaol in Seno in the north of the country.

The final phase of the evaluation was the presentation of the findings to a meeting of stakeholders that took place in Bobo Dioulasso. Twenty-eight people attended the meeting, representing all key stakeholder organizations plus several independent resource people familiar with the issues and the zones of intervention. The first half of the meeting was used to present and discuss the findings and the second half was taken up by small group discussions and feedback about the future of the project. The input from this meeting contributed to the content of the evaluation report.

V FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluator took the opportunity to visit one of the gold digging sites near project schools in Seno in the north of Burkina, having seen lines of women coming and going from the sites while visiting local communities. This is clearly a daily activity for many women and children. It consists of walking several kilometers from the village carrying hoes, water, and sieves. On arrival, an area is selected and earth dug, sieved, and the remains washed in the hope of discovering the glint of gold. On a good day, it is possible to find small grains worth 1,000 to 1,500 FCFA (US\$2 or US\$3), but on some days nothing at all is found. It is hot and dirty work with no water other than that which is carried from the village. There are also nearby mines that consist of circular wells dug into the soil where people descend to dig out fresh earth—this work is much more dangerous, and the children we spoke with said they do not go down into these pits.

This section examines how the project is responding to this situation, the strategies it has developed, and the activities it is implementing. These findings, conclusions, and recommendations are grouped in the five categories identified under the evaluation objectives—

- Project Design
- Project Implementation
- Partnership and Coordination
- Budget and Management
- Sustainability and Impact

The findings of the evaluation are organized around the questions posed by USDOL in the TOR, taking the opportunity to not only respond to each question but to expand on the issues concerned as appropriate. Any additional findings are covered after the responses to the questions. Conclusions and recommendations complete the evaluation of the relevant issues.

5.1 PROJECT DESIGN ISSUES

5.1.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

1. *Assess the validity, cost efficiency, and sustainability of the project's strategy to construct schools, as opposed to working with local communities to identify existing structures that could have been used for nonformal education programming.*

The project has completed the construction of 11 NFBECs and 7 SSs, which represent 18 out of the 20 projects undertaken. Matters concerning the two unfinished buildings are discussed in the following section under Implementation Issues. Save the Children Canada selected different contractors to build schools in each geographical area on the basis of a competitive tendering

process. Each SS or NFBECC consists of a block of three classrooms. The classrooms, built to MEBA specifications, have high ceilings, are light and airy, have two built-in blackboards and two built-in cupboards, and are attractively painted. They are equipped with well-constructed desks and benches and a teacher's table and chair. The schools give the appearance of being well-built and solid and should continue to serve as educational facilities for many years. The fact that the average cost of each of block of three classrooms was 20 million FCFA as opposed to 25 million FCFA, or more for similar schools built by the state, bears witness to the skilled negotiation carried out by Save the Children Canada and signals to MEBA the fact that they are spending more than necessary on school buildings.

In line with MEBA policy, the project built three teacher's houses for each of the SSs (at an average cost of 20 million FCFA per school), but no similar provision was made for teachers in NFBECCs. The majority of project teachers come from outside the communities where they teach, so it would have been preferable to offer them all similar conditions of service.

Save the Children Canada personnel said that in the future they might proceed on a case-by-case basis when deciding whether to construct a school in a community or adapt an existing facility. This reflects the significant investment of time and money required to successfully complete a building when project resources are limited. It may also have been more feasible to find and adapt existing structures in urban settings. For example, it proved difficult to obtain land within the residential area to build the Dafra NFBECC on the outskirts of Bobo, so the center is some distance from students' homes, across barren and undeveloped land. Students and teachers said that this presents a barrier to regular attendance. Though in time the town will probably spread toward the center, and the problem will resolve itself. However, in many communities building is necessary, particularly in more remote rural regions such as Seno, where, in Wouro-Bangabé, for example, the building represents the only school the community has ever seen and the first time that anyone from the community has had the chance to learn to read and write.

It was the opportunity to build a significant number of new schools spread across several provinces that made it feasible to instigate the foundations of systematic changes in the education system. Project personnel felt that it would have been much more difficult to introduce the changes to approach and curriculum in already existing schools and it probably would not have been possible to embark on the 15-year plan. They said that providing a good quality building as the basis of an effective learning environment makes a statement about the importance of education and that having new buildings for a new approach contributes to its chances of success.

MEBA personal at the national and local levels have no doubt that school building is necessary and desirable and that it is making an important contribution to education in Burkina Faso.

- 2. To what extent does the project's design theory that child trafficking will be reduced or prevented by improving the access to (through school construction) and quality of education (both formal and nonformal) hold true?*

Five of the seven SSs are at full enrollment and some have even had to turn children away because of a limit of around 40 children in each class imposed by the project to maintain the

quality of the teaching and learning environment. This means that already, in the second year of the schools' existence, 530 children who would otherwise not have had access to primary education are enrolled in grades 1 and 2. These children and their families are making a choice for education in the hope and belief that it offers more opportunities for the future than traditional activities. These children will be less vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation because not only do they have a greater chance of continuing their education, they will also be more self confident and aware of their rights and how to protect themselves from situations where they are at risk. The project is clearly meeting a demand for access to primary education, and the improved curriculum and participatory learning are enhancing the quality and the effectiveness of the product offered, thereby reducing the risk of child trafficking and exploitation.

The same is largely true for the NFBECS, but the students enrolled there are several years older and many of them have already become involved in activities somewhere on the continuum of child labor and exploitation, particularly in the northern region of Seno. In discussions with students at the Bani and Gangaol NFBECS, it was evident that virtually all of them spend time at the gold-digging sites near their villages and some have traveled farther to more developed mining sites. However, all of them said that since they enrolled in the center, they only engaged in gold digging outside of school hours, so the time spent in this activity was considerably reduced. The discussions revealed no evidence that they were working under duress or on anything other than a voluntary basis, but as one of the members of the adult committee working to combat trafficking explained, "Yes, there is a company that exploits children—it's called 'Hunger.'" This draws attention to the general level of poverty in the area. One female student stated that, because she would have other options available, she had enrolled in the center, so that she would not have to continue working in the gold-digging sites in the future.

- 3. What are the strengths and weaknesses overall of the project approach and strategy? Has the project encountered any major obstacles or barriers (cultural or traditional practices, centuries-old migratory patterns, etc.) related to the design, strategy or approach? Are there any critical assumptions that have not been factored into this design? (Was the design realistic?)*

Strengths

- The fact that the project is part of a longer-term vision for the development of nonformal education in Burkina is one of its strengths. Sustainable development is a process that takes time, particularly when it involves changing attitudes and behavior, and developing the structures and systems for a new approach. Putting this vision into practice has the potential to revolutionize opportunities for the rural youth of Burkina Faso and to have an impact on the economy of the country. The four years of USDOL funding has enabled the start of this process, which will encourage other partners to become involved so that the second phase can build on what has already been achieved.
- The project carried out a broad-based study of the various natural, human, social, cultural, and economic resources in the five provinces where it is working. An analysis of the findings shows the potential and constraints that need to be considered when

developing these resources to enable the provinces to move toward a more solid economic base offering greater opportunities to the young people who live there. This analysis will be the basis for developing the curricula that will make up the second stage of the nonformal education strategy. Therefore, nonformal education will lead into professional training for young entrepreneurs, which will equip them to play a pioneering role in developing the economies of their communities. This has the potential to reduce vulnerability and exposure to child trafficking and exploitation.

- The project has already succeeded in introducing bilingual education in its SSs, adding to similar experiments that have contributed to the recent decision that this should become national policy. The fact that children are learning in national languages not only increases their understanding of the subject matter, it also values their social and cultural heritage and encourages their parents to support and appreciate their education in school.
- The introduction of participatory learning methodologies, provision of teacher training opportunities, and the involvement of teachers in curriculum development has resulted in a committed and enthusiastic group of teachers that is investing considerable time and energy in its work and overcoming the constraints of teaching in often remote locations with limited facilities. Teachers are the key component in improving the quality of education, and the project is demonstrating that valuing their contribution and involving them in new initiatives increases their commitment and investment in their work.
- The provision of office space for the five project fieldworkers in the offices of the Provincial Directors of Education (DPEBAs) in the five provinces where the project intervenes contributes to the extremely good relationship that exists between the project and MEBA.
- The active involvement of children and young people in project activities is an important strategy that encourages young people to become active citizens capable of advocating for change.

Weaknesses

- There appears to be a weakness in the project design in that the enrollment age for the NFBECs is from age 12 to 15. This policy is the result of the 2001 MEBA National Workshop on NFBEC in Koudougou, which decided that only children from age 12 to 15 can be registered in NFBECs. However, because of the different curricula and the longer period of education offered by the project-initiated NFBECs, this may not be entirely appropriate. The evaluator met a child of 10 who had been turned away from a NFBEC even when a position was available, leaving him exposed to the risk of exploitation. TREAT offered examples of other children under 12 who have been enrolled in project schools at the particular request of the DPEBA or their parents, so there has clearly been some flexibility and recognition of the needs of younger children. The project's NFBECs offer an initial four years of classroom-based education before moving on to training in more work-based settings, whereas the original centers move into practical aspects after an initial three years in the classroom. This means that a child enrolling in a project

center at the age of 15 will continue in basic education until he or she is 19, before moving on to develop more practical work-related skills. This is a somewhat daunting prospect for many young people, and with the project's model, it may be better to encourage children to enroll as early as possible (age 9) rather than making them wait until they are 12. If this means bringing down the upper age limit for enrollment, because it would be difficult to have children from age 9 to 15 within one class, then this may be a preferable option.

- The government's original NFBECs offer three years education and have three classrooms. TREAT's NFBECs offer four years education and have three classrooms. Currently the project's NFBECs have reached the second year intake. This discrepancy in the number of classrooms and the number of year's education is apparently an oversight made because of a lack of clarity about the differences between the project model and the original model for NFBECs. During the evaluation visits several teachers mentioned their concerns about where the fourth year would be taught once the centers reach year four (after the end of the TREAT project). This is not an insurmountable problem, but it is one of several examples of a lack of adequate advance planning and thinking through of different aspects of the project as a whole.
 - A major weakness of the project, with ongoing implications, is the failure to include a budget for building school latrines, canteens, and water points in the original project conception. This is discussed in the following section, which looks at implementation issues.
4. *Were targets set at project inception realistic in terms of project achievements to date and target projections for the life of the project?*

Some of the projects targets may be over ambitious, but others are proving to be broadly realistic in terms of project achievements to date. Targets linked to curriculum development and teacher training are on track. Some elements of the project are slightly different than originally envisioned. For example, in place of the planned 14 NFBECs and 6 SSs, the project has in fact built 13 NFBECs and 7 SSs. This change came about after consultation with MEBA involving the needs and priorities of the communities concerned. It is unlikely that many of the schools will meet MEBA criteria regarding water points, latrines, and canteens, and this is discussed in the following section under Implementation Issues.

The 20 planned child trafficking prevention committees were reduced to 17 because it made more sense to have one committee covering both the SS and NFBEC when they cater to children from the same community. This is the case in Dakoro, Fo, and Dori where the same committee covers both institutions. However, as each community has both a committee of adults and a committee of children, it is more accurate to say that there are 34 committees in place of the 20 that were initially planned.

The indicators measuring the degree of satisfaction or active participation of various actors are more difficult to gage, and they are measured less frequently, so it is less clear if the targets are realistic or not. The PMP suggests that the midterm evaluation will report on performance

indicator 1.3.3 “Percentage of local education and administrative authorities very satisfied with the content of the educational material.” However, this is outside the TOR of the evaluation and difficult to quantify within the time available and without visiting all the sites and authorities concerned, yet all those consulted during the evaluation expressed their satisfaction and no complaints were registered.

The number of children currently attending is 1,459, which is less than the projected target of 1,600 for this stage of the project. Some of the reasons for this are discussed in other parts of the report.

5.1.2 Conclusions

Building good-quality schools has been a valid and cost-effective strategy in areas where access to education is a serious problem. The only qualification to this is that in the future it would maximize the use of available resources to make the decision to build on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of each community and any other options available for the proposed school. The important factor in the school-creation process is that both the education authorities and the community are involved from the beginning, as was the case with this project.

The project’s design theory that child trafficking would be reduced or prevented by improving the access to and quality of both formal and nonformal education is borne out by project experience to date. The project’s design is creative with an innovative vision of nonformal education. However, there has sometimes been a lack of forethought and attention to practical detail, preventing the different aspects of the project from existing in a coherent fashion.

5.1.3 Recommendations

- School buildings should always include access to water, latrines for boys and girls, and a canteen/kitchen.
- TREAT should discuss reducing the enrollment age for children going to NFBECs with MEBA, the communities, and school-management organizations. It may be appropriate to change from enrolling children age 12 to 15 to enrolling children age 9 to 12, or a compromise somewhere between the two. This recommendation was reinforced by discussions with *Institute d’Education Populaire* (IEP), the Malian organization that worked with traDE to develop the NFBEC curriculum.

5.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

5.2.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

5. *What impact has the construction aspect of the project had on overall project implementation and the ability of the project to meet non-construction related targets and objectives to date?*

As mentioned in the previous section, 18 out of 20 school buildings were completed before or during the 2004/2005 school year, following some relatively minor delays, thus enabling activities to continue as planned. The two incomplete NFBEC buildings are in the northern region of Seno in Bani and Gangaol. In these villages, the communities have built straw shelters, so classes are taking place as planned, but the working conditions under these shelters leave much to be desired. In Bani, the shelter is exposed to the wind, which has resulted in respiratory problems for both teachers and students. In Gangaol, the shelter has walls that serve as a windbreak, but they are frequently knocked down by sheep and goats during the night and have to be rebuilt before school can start in the morning. The DPEBA, teachers, parents, and children in the two communities have made enormous efforts to avoid any disruption of activities resulting from the building problem, but the situation needs to be resolved because school activities are not sustainable under the current conditions. The communities have been assured by TREAT that the project is working to resolve the problem and the buildings will be completed soon, but no date has been given and an enormous amount of trust will be lost if this promise is not kept.

The Problem of the Unfinished Buildings

The unfinished buildings have walls (not yet plastered) but no roofs, and the NFBEC in Ganguol is slightly more advanced than the one in Bani in that the doors and windows have been fitted. The same builder (GESCO) was contracted to construct both centers. The building contractor failed to keep numerous appointments with Save the Children Canada to discuss the lack of progress and refused to answer phone calls, so when it became clear that they did not intend to finish the work, his contract was terminated on October 24, 2005. The termination letter was delivered again by a court official in November on the advice of the lawyer retained by the project to deal with the matter, and to establish the basis for any legal proceedings that followed. An alternative contractor (ESONA) has been identified, but as yet no new contract has been signed. ESONA has successfully completed other project schools in the region and was singled out for praise by the auditors who visited in 2005.

The table below gives an account of the financial situation regarding the two unfinished schools. The budgeted cost for the two schools was 40 million FCFA. GESCO, the contractor, received a total of 30 million FCFA. The first two payments were in accordance with the contract and the third was a special payment, a result of delays in tax exoneration and increases in the cost of materials linked to the political disturbances in Cote d'Ivoire. A similar payment was also awarded to some of the other contractors. Just more than 1 million FCFA were retained by TREAT and paid directly to the appropriate recipients as part of the normal building and tax procedures.

Table 4: Summary of the Financial Situation Regarding Bani and Gangaol NFBECS

Dates	Type of Payment	Description	Amount FCFA
Total value of the market for the two NFBECS			40,000,000
Funds received by GESCO:			30,000,000
03/06/04	Bank transfer	Advance payment 30% as per contract	12,000,000
05/08/04	Bank transfer	First Payment to 30% as per contract, based on work carried out	12,000,000
04/10/04	Bank transfer	Second Payment to 15% Special request because of difficulties obtaining tax exoneration (Common to several contractors)	6,000,000
Funds retained and paid by TREAT linked to normal tax and exoneration procedures:			1,313,510
24/03/05	Cheque No 4170396 dated 02/03/05	BIC (Industrial and Commercial Benefit) 1% of the market value Paid to tax authorities—part of normal Burkina regulations	400,000
16/09/04	Bank transfer of 8,478,370	Hage Matériaux (The builders merchant where all contractors obtained their materials) 8,478,370 covered material for all contractors 913,510 is the proportion for GESCO	913,510
Evaluation of the work completed by GESCO, given under oath by qualified assessors (ATEF):			15,395,737
		Gangaol	8,363,592
		Bani	7,032,145
Total amount owed by GESCO:			17,642,314
		Remainder of funds received	15,917,773
07/02/06	Cheque No 4197053	Costs of evaluation of work carried out (ATEF)	674,550
07/02/06	Cheque No 4197054	Costs of the lawyer to date (Cabinet Abdoul OUEDRAOGO)	49,991
		Predicted costs of the lawyer in the legal proceedings underway (Cabinet Abdoul OUEDRAOGO)	1,000,000
Cost of the work that remains to complete the two schools based on current market prices (sum accepted by the new contractor)			24,604,263
Funds currently available under the TREAT construction budget			6,961,949
The amount needed to complete the two schools			17,642,314
Cost of the remaining work according to ATEF			37,436,028
		Gangaol	17,433,578
		Bani	20,002,450

A sworn assessment of the value of the completed building work was obtained from a qualified company (ATEF). Current project expenditures related to the building of the two NFBECs total 31,313,510 FCFA, but the contractor has only carried out work assessed as being worth 15,395,737 FCFA. GESCO, therefore, needs to reimburse the difference of 15,917,773 FCFA plus legal costs and the costs of the assessment, a total of 17,642,314 FCFA.

The rather large difference between the cost of the remaining work negotiated with the new contractor (24,604,263 FCFA) and the ATEF estimate (37,436,028 FCFA) is an example of the strong negotiating skills demonstrated by the project. The project negotiator explained to the contractor that he had already benefited from the market for three other schools and that he needed to reduce his profit because this was a social and not a commercial contract. Because of this argument, the contractor reduced his original demand that was closer to the ATEF estimate, which is based on construction charges for commercial building.

There is no indication or any suggestion that Save the Children Canada's staff, local building inspectors, or anyone other than the construction firm is implicated in the failure to repay the money owed. The construction firm received an advance on the strength of work already completed and then failed to continue to build the schools. Save the Children Canada has taken legal advice in an attempt to recover the money. One possibility is that the contractor can be served with an injunction requiring him to repay the money he owes. This process is predicted to take between one to three months, and Save the Children Canada has been advised that this would be quicker than taking the contractor to court. This information has been sent to Save the Children Canada headquarters in Toronto, who then informed USDOL and sought their opinion concerning the legal injunction during the annual conference in April 2006.

Save the Children Canada headquarters has been kept informed of the situation through regular status reports, e-mails, and phone calls. In June 2005, the project director, supported by the regional director, started legal consultations concerning the legal recourse available. The monitoring of school construction was carried out in partnership with the DPEBA in the areas concerned. The DPEBA visited the sites personally from time to time and delegated responsibility to their building technicians to monitor progress regularly alongside the local TREAT fieldworkers and the community school-management committees. This means that the local education authorities were aware at all times of the situation in Bani and Gangaol. At the national level, TREAT verbally informed the former Education Minister during meetings with him and expected the provincial building technicians to pass the information through their normal reporting channels.

Save the Children Canada wants to use the injunction process to recover the funds to complete the two unfinished buildings. The field office and headquarters are also discussing alternative fundraising strategies and ways to solicit support from the government in Burkina Faso. While completing the report, the evaluator was informed that Save the Children Canada and traDE are both raising funds to finish the two schools.

The Current Situation Regarding Latrines, Canteens, and Water Points

The TREAT project team is working to resolve the problem of the lack of budget to provide latrines, canteens, and water points. They have carried out a series of negotiations with government and other development partners, and some solutions have been found.

Concerning Water Points

- Both the NFBEC and the SS in Fô now have water pumps that were installed by the provincial department of the Ministry for Agriculture, Water, and Fisheries in March 2006.
- This program of installation is expected to reach other schools in the southern provinces. To be eligible for this program, school communities have to collect 200,000 FCFA to cover the future costs of pump repairs and maintenance. The evaluator was shown the savings account book recording the 200,000 FCFA deposited by the community in Dakoro.
- In the northern province of Seno, the NFBEC in Wouro-Bangabé and the SS in Hooga have a firm commitment from the DPEBA to provide them with pumps in the near future as part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Fisheries' school pumps initiative.

Two schools now have their own pumps and at least four others await pump installation in the near future, and negotiations with the Ministry for Agriculture, Water, and Fisheries continue for the remaining 14 schools. The cost of installing a pump depends on the level of the water table at the installation site, but estimates range from 6,500,000 to 8,500,000 FCFA.

Concerning Latrines

- The DPEBA in Dori has arranged for latrines to be built in the SS (funded by the Health Ministry) and the NFBEC (funded by the project for heavily indebted poor countries). The pit has already been dug next to the SS.
- The NFBEC in Dafra has a firm commitment from the National Office for Water and Cleansing as part of their strategic plan to provide latrines for schools in Bobo and Ougadougou. The school's management committee is also considering digging a pit if this does not materialize soon.
- The community is digging the pit for the latrines for the NFBEC in Wouro-Bangabé.

Four schools are on the way to a solution, but there is apparently nothing resolved for the other 16. The cost of building seven latrines (three for girls, three for boys, and one for teachers) is estimated by the builders consulted by TREAT to be 2,000,000 FCFA.

Concerning Canteens

- Five out of the six schools in the Northern Province of Seno receive regular supplies from the World Food Program and the sixth school (Bani) is eligible to be part of the program and should soon start receiving supplies. The communities around these six schools have all started to build canteens/kitchens from local materials, where food will be stored and prepared. These buildings are at various stages of construction, but most of them should be complete by the end of the 2005/2006 school year.
- Tobruora and Dakoro SSs have functioning canteens located in one of the teacher's houses that is as yet unoccupied (house for grade 3 teacher).
- The community collects supplies to provide meals for the Larabin schools.
- The Parents' Association is growing sesame and grain to provide supplies for school meals at the Soubaka NFBE.
- The Parents' Association and Mothers' Association in Dakoro have started a garden to provide for school meals.
- At the NFBE in Sindou and the SS in Bodana, the communities are contributing to collections of food to provide school meals.

The six northern schools have the beginnings of community-built canteens, leaving the 14 schools in the south, which have as yet no such provision. The average cost of building a canteen/kitchen from local materials is 200,000 FCFA, or using cement bricks 450,000 FCFA.

A description of each school's situation is found in Annex A of this report. The difficulties related to construction have almost certainly had some effect on the ability of the project to meet enrollment and attendance targets, and if they are not resolved, they are likely to affect the long-term effect of the project.

6. Has the project developed tools and systems to monitor and evaluate project performance? How effective are these tools and systems?

The project has a detailed and clear PMP describing 20 specific indicators, which were revised and finalized in August 2004. A range of classroom observation tools have been developed to facilitate the assessment of teachers' application of newly introduced methodologies and curricula. Initially there was some confusion about who should carry out such assessment—project staff or MEBA supervisors—but this has been resolved through mutual agreement. There was a feeling among project staff that there are more indicators than necessary to effectively track project progress. Some of the qualitative indicators concerning the degree of satisfaction of different stakeholders are quite difficult to measure, and there was a proposal that indicator 1.5.1 “Number of children participating actively in the daily classes” be dropped, because there is a slight discrepancy in meaning resulting from the translation, so that the French version of this indicator in the PMP actually means “Number of children participating actively in classes every day,” which is slightly different. After some initial difficulties, teachers are now keeping

classroom registers up to date and TREAT fieldworkers regularly collect information about enrollment, attendance, and dropout rates.

Though there is every indication that all the necessary information does eventually get collected and collated, there does not seem to be a standard system for maintaining an up-to-date table of enrollment, attendance, and dropout information for all schools that can quickly incorporate new information whenever it reaches the project office from the field. As this information is extremely useful in identifying areas of concern or success, it might be helpful to establish such a system.

The DPEBAs were involved in developing project indicators concerning education, which is another indication of their involvement in the project, contributing to their commitment to its success.

7. *USDOL considers direct beneficiaries those children that are withdrawn or prevented from exploitive child labor and provided with direct educational services through the project. Has the project been able to accurately collect data on its direct beneficiaries and report on USDOL common indicators (withdrawal, prevention, retention, and completion) thus far?*

Using the Student Tracking System (STS) software, the project collects detailed information about all children attending SSs and NFBECs. These children qualify as direct beneficiaries in that they fit the criteria as either being prevented or withdrawn, and they benefit from materials worth 200,000 FCFA that the project gives to each school on an annual basis. These materials include items such as exercise books and footballs, which supplement those provided by MEBA.

It has been difficult for TREAT to understand and measure the USDOL common indicators of the prevention or withdrawal of children from exploitive child labor. The project works to prevent children from finding themselves at risk of exploitation, particularly by child traffickers, while operating in an environment where it is accepted as normal that children will assist their parents or contribute to the family income. Children continue to work in various occupations outside school hours to assist their families, but the number of working hours has been reduced.

8. *USDOL requires grantees to track the working status of each direct beneficiary. Please assess how the project has been doing this thus far.*

TREAT tracks the working status of all direct beneficiaries through regular interviews with the children in school. The field supervisors, with assistance from the teachers, carry out these interviews. The information is recorded using the STS. Project staff said that it is quite difficult to establish the hours that children are working, as they tend to assist their parents in a nonformal setting and do not have a developed sense of standardized timekeeping. Children's names have sometimes changed from one year to the next, which adds to the difficulty of ongoing monitoring.

9. How has the project's choice of target areas impacted project implementation? Has the project encountered any major problems or challenges due to the geographical locations or distance between sites?

Having two project sites 600 kilometers apart means that considerable resources, in terms of money, time, and energy, have been spent traveling between the two. Supervising construction in the Seno was particularly demanding, and monitoring and supervision of other project activities has been more difficult in areas far away from the TREAT head office in Bob Dioulassou. However, the project team has met the challenge and there is no evidence that project implementation has suffered because of the distances involved. Save the Children Canada's Regional Director said that in any similar future project she might think twice about implementing activities simultaneously in areas so far apart and that it might have been easier to work in stages, completing some activities in one area before moving on to the next.

10. How effective has the project been at stimulating interest and participation in the project at the level of children and parents? Teachers and administrators and other local actors? Please seek the viewpoints of parents, teachers, students, community members, and education officials.

The project has been extremely successful in stimulating the interest and participation of all the actors concerned. All the schools and centers have a School Management Committee, a Parents' Association, and a Mothers' Association made up of members of the community who have come forward to support the schools and their activities. Inevitably, some communities are more active than others, and some of the community organizations have been established fairly recently so they need time and support to develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have benefited from some initial training but will need more, particularly concerning advocacy.

Local authorities, education officials, and teachers are also clearly engaged and committed to the success of project activities. Beyond some issues concerning teachers' conditions of service that can only be resolved by MEBA, the evaluator came across only praise and enthusiasm for the project, and certain education officials (particularly the DPEBAs in Dori and Banfora) are personally committed beyond the call of duty to making the new initiatives a success. The teachers are central to the success of the project, and though they are committed to their work, they have a demanding and challenging role to play, so TREAT and MEBA would do well to develop further support strategies to encourage them and ensure their continued professional development. This might include more opportunities to meet and share their experiences and consult over common difficulties and successes.

An issue that needs to be addressed, which has already been identified by the project team, concerns communities' understanding of the intended development of the NFBECS and the curriculum they offer. There are indications that some young people, supported by their parents, are reluctant to enroll or continue in school because they anticipated learning practical skills linked to a trade much earlier in the curriculum. As already mentioned, the project-sponsored NFBECS are offering four years of basic education before moving on to practical skills and general business training. It is extremely important that communities are given the opportunity to

understand and buy into this vision. They need the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns, and the project needs to remain open to the possibility that it may be necessary to make some compromises to the planned curriculum, at least in the short term, to take these into account.

Additional Findings Concerning Project Implementation

Enrollment and Attendance

There are currently 272 children attending grade 1 and 258 children attending grade 2 in SSs. The projected number is 40 children in each class, so for the 7 schools to meet their target, one would need to find 280 children in each grade. Recruitment numbers were on target, but there have been a number of dropouts, particularly from the second grade. This is particularly true in Hooga and Dori. However, overall numbers are only short of the target by 30, which is not a cause for too much concern considering that access to education is a new experience in many of these communities.

In the NFBECs, 423 children currently attend grade 1 and 506 children attend grade 2 (compared with the target of 520 in each grade). There have been 28 dropouts from the 447 children recruited into grade 1 and 68 dropouts from the 581 children who enrolled in grade 2.

Though it is concerning to see that enrollment figures are significantly down for the second grade-1 intake in the NFBECs, there are several explanations for this. As previously mentioned, parents and children are eager for the practical skills that they associate with nonformal education to become evident and do not understand the curriculum that is offered. Another possible factor is that in the first intake there was a greater number of eligible children, and once those who were interested had been enrolled, the pool of out-of-school children was reduced, so the second intake was more limited. The third factor is the effect of the lack of latrines, water pumps, and canteens on rendering the learning environment less attractive. The traditional early marriage of young women has also led to some girls being withdrawn, but some have continued to attend school even after their marriage. The NFBECs are currently 111 children below the projected target attendance of 1,040 (see Annex E for the complete enrollment/attendance figures).

Textbooks

Some schools that were visited reported a lack of textbooks, particularly reading books for grade 2. These have been produced as part of the new curriculum in national languages, but there is apparently a blockage in the printing and distribution process, which is coordinated by MEBA.

5.2.2 Conclusions

Although issues concerning construction dominate this section of the report, one needs to remember that the schools are all functioning reasonably well despite these difficulties. Though the problems need to be resolved, they should not be allowed to diminish the achievements of the TREAT project. Twenty new schools are operating using appropriate curricula, national languages, and active learning methods, which is no small achievement. Project activities have

resulted in 1,459 children receiving education and are helping communities to become more aware of how they can protect their children and the benefits of a school-based education.

5.2.3 Recommendations

- USDOL, TREAT, and MEBA need to make sure that the two unfinished NFBECs are completed as soon as possible to fulfill the commitment made to the communities in Bani and Gangaol.
- TREAT needs to continue active negotiations to provide the maximum number of schools with pumps, latrines, and canteens before the end of the project.
- The translation of indicator 1.5.1 in the French version of the PMP should be corrected and TREAT can then decide either to eliminate it or to define what is meant by “participating actively” for the purposes of measuring the indicator. (The translation giving the correct meaning is “*Nombre d’enfants participant activement dans les classes.*”)
- TREAT needs to make sure that the communities served by NFBECs and all key project stakeholders have a common understanding of the NFBEC curriculum. The project should take time to consider and respond to any concerns expressed by students, their parents, or other members of the community. This might include developing new strategies that take account of these concerns.
- TREAT should follow up the lack of textbooks with MEBA so that books developed through the project are available in the classrooms as soon as possible.
- The project should establish a more efficient system for updating information concerning enrollment, attendance, and dropout rates so that the current situation is available to all project stakeholders as they have need of it.
- The project could develop more strategies to support teachers in recognition of the key role that they play in project implementation.

5.3 PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION ISSUES

5.3.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

11. What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating partnerships in support of the project?

It is only relatively recently that child trafficking has become an issue of concern in Burkina Faso, so awareness and understanding of the phenomenon are in their early stages. In parts of the country, school-based education has not been perceived as a useful experience by local communities, because it has often lacked relevance and been delivered in French, making it inaccessible to many of those it was supposed to benefit. For the project to initiate sustainable

activities and introduce the concepts developed in the 15-year plan, it was essential that MEBA personnel at the national and local level played a central role in shaping project strategies and implementing project activities. Equally, the project could not succeed without successful partnerships with community leaders and organizations. The project has succeeded in creating the necessary partnerships with both communities and government.

12. How has the strategy of constructing schools affected the level and nature of government involvement and commitment to the project?

The strategy of constructing schools has had a strong positive influence on government involvement and commitment to the project. During the evaluation, many government representatives expressed their appreciation for TREAT's assistance in developing Burkina's education infrastructure within an integrated framework involving communities, MEBA, and other local and national resources.

13. Assess the overall effectiveness of the partnership with traDE.

Save the Children Canada sub contracts the coordination of project activities concerning teacher training and curriculum development to traDE. The roles and responsibilities of the two organizations are defined in a Memorandum of Understanding agreed by both parties to facilitate their work together to achieve the project objectives. As an organization traDE aims to facilitate the creation of a generation of Burkinabé girls and boys capable of developing the economic potential of their home regions, while remaining anchored in their sociocultural environment, in the belief that any sustainable alternative that will prevent children being vulnerable to child traffickers and exploitation has to be based on economic development and opportunities in the regions.

TraDE personnel are successfully carrying out the activities assigned to them in the project document in collaboration with Save the Children Canada, MEBA, and IEP, a Malian nongovernmental organization (NGO) working with similar ideas and objectives. Participatory teaching methodologies have been developed and introduced into project schools. New curricula are being developed and introduced with each annual intake of students, and teachers are participating in this process so that they fully understand it and can use national languages as the teaching medium. TraDE has embarked on the preparation of the second phase of the 15-year plan by identifying four out of nine projected areas of specialization adapted to the potential of the different project regions. These areas include animal farming, fishing/aquaculture, agriculture/agro-forestry, and traditional medicine/medicinal plants. The other five areas will soon be identified, and Years 3 and 4 will be used to prepare NFBEC students to make an informed choice regarding their preferred area of specialization for the second phase of the program.

Different aspects of project implementation are divided between Save the Children Canada and traDE. Unfortunately, the working relationship between the two organizations has deteriorated since the start of the project, which risks having a negative effect on overall project implementation. The two streams of the project (teacher training/curriculum development and work in the field) have a tendency to run independently of each other, and the fact that there is

only one formal meeting every three months between Save the Children Canada and traDE contributes to a lack of effective communication and shared vision. Both organizations are concerned about this situation, but seem unable to resolve it despite efforts on both sides.

While both organizations subscribe to the project objectives, the focus of each partner is slightly different in that Save the Children Canada is concentrating on day-to-day project management and the pressures that that brings with it, while traDE has a vision of systematic change within the education system and is looking more to the long term. These two perspectives would ideally complement each other, but in this case, they seem to aggravate the situation. A series of happenings have resulted in a backlog of resentment and bad feeling between senior personnel on both sides, but it is not useful to attempt to apportion blame or revisit past events at this stage. Fortunately, other partners do not seem to have been affected by or to be aware of this poor relationship.

14. In 2003, Save the Children, Canada launched a CAD 3.8 million project funded by CIDA to combat child trafficking in Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Togo. To what extent have the USDOL-funded SCC project and the CIDA-funded project been able to create synergies on reducing child trafficking in Burkina Faso? Please be specific.

TREAT is developing collaborative activities with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-funded West African Program Against Child Trafficking (PACTE) program. PACTE has several national partners in Burkina, one of which is Munyu, a women's association operating in three provinces in the south of the country. Munyu has more than 10,000 members and several areas of activity, including education/literacy, environment/reforestation, and health. Munyu works with PACTE to protect children who have migrated from other areas and to raise public awareness of the risks that children face when they leave their home communities. TREAT and Munyu fieldworkers are active in the same communities and have started to implement a series of joint activities. These include showing films, organizing discussions on child trafficking and child labor in NFBECS, and preparing radio broadcasts to alert people to the issues concerned. The first session took place in February with a second year NFBECS class. The session introduced PACTE and issues concerning child labor, and the next session will go on to discuss causes and consequences. The sessions are jointly facilitated by TREAT and Munyu fieldworkers. If the initial sessions go well, there is hope that the collaboration will be extended to reach out-of-school children and that the initiative can be replicated in other areas. PACTE and TREAT have also designed tools using the ILO model Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts, and the Media. There is also a plan to produce a toolkit (including tools and games focusing on children) to use with the communities.

15. What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the host country government, particularly Ministers of Education and Labor, as well as other government agencies active in addressing relating children's issues?

One of the projects greatest achievements is the strong relationship with MEBA at national, provincial, and local levels, and the universal support of MEBA personnel for project initiatives. The recently appointed Minister of Basic Education expressed her interest in the project and her

intention to visit and work with the project team to fully understand their work and maximize its impact.

When TREAT was being conceived, the then Education Minister supported the proposal because he saw the potential for bringing about some of the changes identified in the country's 10-year education development plan. His support got the project off to a good start with regard to its relationship with the government.

This relationship has been developed and strengthened by working closely with Ministry personnel at all levels and involving them in the evolution and implementation of project strategies and activities. MEBA recruits and pays the teachers involved in the project. These teachers have basic teacher training, followed by further training that orientates them to the TREAT approach. The idea is to gradually incorporate this approach into the state's basic teacher training program. MEBA personnel are central to project activities because TREAT recognizes that the Ministry is the only institution capable of making systematic changes to the education system and this will only be possible if they are active participants in developing innovations. The project set up a technical consultative committee made up of people from the Ministry, retired Ministry personnel, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), NGOs working in education, and various resource people. This committee meets to discuss key stages of project development. It is made up of people from different generations who have different points of view, so meetings are often lively and play an important role in finding the right evolutionary path for project initiatives and keeping key stakeholders on board. This committee plays an important and valuable role in keeping key actors informed about the project and enabling project activities to benefit from the wealth of experience among its members.

TREAT also works closely with MASSN, the government agency responsible for protecting children from exploitation, including child trafficking, and for implementing the national anti-child-trafficking strategy. This partnership concerns advocacy and discussions at the national level and common activities in the field, including dissemination of information through training and radio broadcasts. The project also works with the Ministry of Employment and Youth and, as already mentioned, negotiations to install pumps are underway with The Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Fisheries.

16. Describe the types of "community partnerships" created under the project. For example, the project document mentions the establishment of "Child Trafficking Prevention Committees" composed of members of parents' associations, individual parents, the transport and chauffeur's union, and other groups and individuals. What stage of development are these partnerships in and what is the likelihood that these will endure in the long term?

Adult and child committees to combat child trafficking have been put in place in all project communities, and they are eager to take part in protecting local children. Adult committees are made up of community leaders, representatives of different religious groups, hunters, parents, and transport workers, among others. The committees have received training concerning child trafficking and related issues and some of the children's committees have developed and performed sketches to pass the message to other children and the wider community. Though

these committees exist, many of them do not yet have a strong sense of identity. The evaluator got the impression that they were waiting to be told what to do, and that they lack a degree of clarity about their roles and responsibilities and the sort of activities they could initiate and pursue. Many of them are not holding regular meetings and do not have an action plan to help them achieve their objectives, which are stated in very general terms. Committee representatives talked about awareness raising of child trafficking and related issues but had difficulty responding to questions about how in practice this was done.

It is understandable that much of the first half of the project has been occupied with building schools and making them operational, but there now needs to be more emphasis on working with these committees so that they understand the sort of activities they can develop, and so they become active and self sufficient before the end of the project.

17. Assess the importance of the role of local awareness-raising committees in preventing children from trafficking and encouraging children to enroll in target area schools.

The committees set up to support and manage the schools and raise awareness about child exploitation include School Management Committees, Parents' Associations, Mothers' Associations, and Child Trafficking Prevention Committees. These committees are having a combined and cumulative effect of making education and child trafficking subjects of general debate within their communities. The existence of four or five different committees means that there is a core group of 30 or 40 people actively involved in encouraging school enrollment and protecting children from child trafficking. This core group is made up of those who are already convinced of the importance of schooling, and they are essential if the message is to reach all sections of the community. Those who are less sure will be convinced by access to information, the possibility of discussing their questions and concerns, and, above all, by results—seeing children attending school becoming successful and contributing to the life of the community.

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

The project is working successfully with local organizations in the different areas of intervention.

In Seno—

- *L'Association pour le Développements de la Région du Nord* will open literacy centers in some communities where project schools are situated, so that members of the various committees can learn to read and write, which will enhance their capacity to manage and support the school.
- *Association pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Enfant au Burkina Faso* provides information and document exchange and collaboration to carry out activities of common interest such as radio broadcasts on education, child trafficking, and labor.
- *Radio Sahel* broadcasts information and discussions about child trafficking and children's rights.

In Houet—

- *Association TIE*, an association that has intensive experience in working with street children and works closely with PACTE and TREAT.
- *Bobo office for national television and radio* broadcasts information and discussions about child trafficking and children's rights.

In Comoe—

- *Association Munyu* (see question 22 re PACTE)
- *Association Ton* collects and shares information concerning child trafficking.

In Poni—

- *Fonds Enfants*—Negotiations are underway to establish support for income-generating activities and school canteens in Tobourora and Bodana. TREAT participated in the launch of the *Fonds Enfant* national campaign against child trafficking in Poni.

In Leraba—

- *Association Jeunesse Espoir* helps some vulnerable children attending project schools with lunch and school books, and the organization and TREAT exchange experiences.
- *Projet d'Appui au Micro Entreprise Rurale* is a member of the adult Child Trafficking Prevention Committee and helps community organizations to become established through advice and support and management training.
- *Association Féminine* is a member of the adult Child Trafficking Prevention Committee.
- *Association Chasseurs* is a member of the adult Child Trafficking Prevention Committee and carries out awareness-raising activities. These hunters know the forest very well and are aware of routes taken by child traffickers, making them important allies in this sense.

19. *What have been some of the challenges and issues of working with USDOL under this cooperative agreement?*

The project team finds that USDOL is quite a demanding partner, but they made it clear that they do not see this as negative because it indicates the degree of interest and investment that USDOL has in the project. However, the amount of feedback and information requested, sometimes at short notice, is time consuming and puts the team under pressure because it is not always easy to contact the different project sites and gather the requested details. USDOL's systems are often unfamiliar and have taken some time to understand. However, the team felt that USDOL has been helpful in supporting them to get to know various procedures.

5.3.2 Conclusions

The project has succeeded in creating a web of partnerships to facilitate its implementation. The majority of these partnerships work well, particularly those with MEBA. More work is required to strengthen community organizations so that they can effectively manage the schools and develop activities to protect children from trafficking and exploitation. If communication and common understanding between Save the Children Canada and traDE can be improved, it will only contribute to the success of the project, as both organizations have important contributions to make.

5.3.3 Recommendations

- Particular emphasis should be placed on working with the community organizations established around the schools, particularly the Child Trafficking Prevention Committees, to ensure that they are confident in their ability to continue their activities after the end of the project. Such work might include helping them to set clear objectives, decide on strategies to achieve these objectives, and develop action plans. It might also be useful to offer advocacy training and establish formal links with local administrative authorities and other groups with the same objectives at provincial, regional, and national levels (other Child Trafficking Prevention Committees supported by PACTE, UNICEF, Munyu, and others). In this way, village committees will be linked to networks that can offer them ongoing support and encouragement after the end of the project.
- UNICEF suggested that an evaluation of the curricula while taking into account the bilingual approach would be useful and the evaluator supports this idea. It is recommended that MEBA or an external specialist should carry out an evaluation of the curricula toward the end of the project when it has had the maximum amount of time to become established. This would enable the findings to be taken into account in the second phase of the project.

5.4 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ISSUES

5.4.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

20. What management areas, including technical and financial, could be improved?

Unfortunately, time constraints did not permit an in-depth look at the degree to which the recommendations made by the audit in 2005 have been implemented. The areas most in need of improvement during the evaluation included time management and communication. The project management team has only four members, plus administrative support, which is a relatively small team for a project of this size. Workers seem to be continually engaged in multiple activities, to the extent that it is affecting their health and effectiveness. Some information is centered on individuals, which makes it difficult to access in their absence. The most distant project fieldworker in Seno does not have a computer or Internet connection to facilitate communication with the project office, which makes sharing information a slow process.

The management structure laid out in the project document is full of contradictions and it is difficult to see how it would be workable even in the best of circumstances. For example, the project document states that traDE will be responsible for the daily management of the project, but this is not and never has been the case, as Save the Children Canada employs the Project Director. In terms of lessons for the future, while a sound management structure that facilitates and enables the smooth implementation of the project is not a guarantee that everything will go well, it does at least offer a reference point if problems arise.

Within Save the Children Canada, there has been considerable turnover among the senior management at headquarters, which has required that the project and/or the project officer and/or manager provide a thorough briefing to each Director upon his/her arrival to the organization. However, this has apparently had very little impact on project progress.

21. Has USDOL technical assistance in understanding federal reporting requirements (e.g., GPRA, feedback on Technical Progress Reports, and overall communications between grantee and USDOL) been adequate?

The project management team appreciates the feedback and general communication from USDOL. The GPRA requirements are quite difficult to understand even for a native English speaker and much more so for people in francophone countries. Language combined with the difficulty of applying some of the concepts to the realities in the field make the application of the document quite challenging.

The system whereby communication between USDOL and the project team in the field passes via Save the Children Canada headquarter staff in Toronto was set up to enable clear, organized, participatory, and focused communication and relations. However, it has also resulted in delays because of the time difference and technological challenges and occasional confusion in responses. Perhaps this lack of direct communication between USDOL and the project team in the field hinders the exchange of information and it might be worth investigating the possibility of having direct responses to specific questions with all communication copied to Toronto. Feedback on technical progress reports is seen as helpful, and communication from USDOL seems adequate.

There is conflicting information concerning the stage at which USDOL became aware of the nature of the problems concerning construction of the two unfinished school buildings in Seno province. Save the Children Canada in Toronto say that they kept USDOL regularly informed of the situation, whereas it appeared to the evaluator that USDOL was unaware of important project developments, which contributed to the delay in formulating an acceptable response strategy. Months after it was clear that the contractor had no intention of fulfilling his contract and his contract was terminated, there is still no clearly defined strategy for the completion of the buildings.

22. What is the explanation for why the project did not factor in the cost of constructing wells, latrines, and canteens in its original proposed budget? How has the lack of school wells, latrines, and canteens affected the project and beneficiaries thus far?

It is difficult to find an answer to the first part of this question, as many of those who were involved in developing the project budget are no longer available. One DPEBA said that he thought that at the moment of designing the project everyone was focused on the priority, which was the schools themselves, with the idea that other elements would come later. Others suggested that the failure to budget for wells, latrines, and canteens was simply an oversight or that there was an assumption that these would be provided by government or local communities. Save the Children Canada told the evaluator that in Burkina Faso, communities are always encouraged to take up the responsibility to provide for the canteens as a solid gesture of community participation.

This omission affects the teachers and students working in the schools. Many schools are a long way from the nearest water source, so water has to be carried to school. This limits practical activities, such as gardening or tree planting, which could enhance the school environment and provision. The lack of latrines makes life in school especially difficult for girls and female teachers, particularly in barren areas such as Dafra, where there are no nearby trees and bushes. In communities where latrines are not a common feature in children's home environment, their existence in school would provide an opportunity for children to become familiar with their use. The lack of a canteen building means that there is nowhere to store and prepare food, making it that much harder to provide a midday meal for students. Many children attending project schools come from families where it is not always possible to eat even two meals a day, so the opportunity to eat at school is a strong incentive to attend. Children who travel several kilometers to school have to carry their lunch with them, which is less than ideal in a hot climate without refrigeration. Children who are unable to bring food with them are obliged to go all day without eating, which hinders their ability to concentrate, or schools reduce their working hours to allow children to go home and eat. The lack of these three important features in project schools inevitably has an impact on enrollment and attendance, particularly for girls.

23. What lessons could be learned in terms of budgeting for this type of project in the future?

The original project budget drastically underestimated many of the costs and completely omitted important items. This has resulted in ongoing negotiations and a complete reworking of the budget, causing delays to project implementation. The lesson is that it is better to establish an accurate and realistic budget at the beginning of a project and then to make decisions about what is and what is not feasible based on accurate information, than to be continually faced with budget inadequacies that could easily have been foreseen.

5.4.2 Conclusions

Since the beginning of the project, inadequate budgeting has been the source of many problems. It is difficult to see how the management structure laid out in the project document could have been feasible and this lack of clarity at the beginning of the project probably contributed to the poor relationship that has developed between Save the Children Canada and traDE.

5.4.3 Recommendations

- Save the Children Canada management should actively look for strategies to avoid project staff habitually working excessive hours, including weekends.
- The GPRA guidelines should be translated into French to assist projects in francophone countries to understand and apply them correctly.
- Strategies for communication between USDOL and Save the Children Canada should be reviewed to ensure maximum efficiency.

5.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT ISSUES

5.5.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

24. *Was the project's initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate?*

The project document outlines a series of measures that have subsequently been used to encourage sustainability—

“The TREAT project works deliberately within a very Burkinabé setting. The partnership with the Ministry of Education and the project's clear insertion within the national 10 year plan ensure that this project will not be seen as an add-on. Instead the project will enable the Ministry to pilot innovations within the existing framework to achieve agreed goals. The MEBA participation will be direct and at several levels:

- *The Minister and his advisors will be involved in the initial planning for the curriculum development in order to define the overall goal and new directions.*
- *The Teacher Training Schools will be trained in the new curricula and will be responsible for training all the project teachers.*
- *The Provincial Directorates will provide office space for the field agents enabling TREAT to have daily contact with the Ministry representatives.*
- *The DPEBA will be directly involved in decisions such as : identification of type of school to be built, the recruitment of teachers, the selection of*

site for schools, the supervision of the construction, the management of the teachers (hiring, supervision, evaluation and payment of teachers,)

The project is also based on strong local ownership through active parent, child and community involvement.”

Evidence to date suggests that these measures are adequate and appropriate and contribute to the project’s overall strategy for sustainability, the 15-year plan, which envisions the development and restructuring of the country’s nonformal education system. As long as ongoing funding is forthcoming, this is viable strategy, particularly considering the support from the government. As far as innovations to the formal education system are concerned, Burkina has decided to adopt bilingual education (the use of national languages as the initial medium of instruction with a gradual introduction of the French language) as national policy, thereby ensuring continuity.

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

TraDE has developed a document describing the next stage in the 15-year plan and has had some favorable responses from potential sources of funding, including the Swiss, who have a history of supporting literacy and nonformal education initiatives in Burkina, and the Danes, who organized a meeting and invited Austrian, Dutch, and Canadian organizations and the World Bank to discuss the proposal. The Austrians showed particular interest and negotiations are continuing. Therefore, 18 months before the end of the project, there are positive signs that there will be additional funding to support the long-term plan.

MEBA is contemplating the different possibilities for the future of the SSs, considering the new national bilingual education policy and the concerns of parents who do not wish their children to travel to another village to go to school. Though nothing concrete has been decided, there is a possibility that MEBA will “normalize” some of these schools and add the remaining three grades so that they become standard primary schools. This would be the ideal solution, as traveling to neighboring village schools involves a number of disadvantages.

26. What has been the impact to date of the project on the role of community members in combating child trafficking? Assess the capacity and motivation of community members to continue their involvement with the issue once the project has ended.

The project has played a significant role in informing communities about child trafficking issues and facilitating the setting up of local Child Trafficking Prevention Committees. If the remaining months are used to support the development of these committees, communities should be able to continue and develop their involvement with the issue once the project has ended. It has to be said that this is probably a weaker area for the project to date, possibly because the building and establishment of the schools has taken up a lot of time and energy during the first half of the project. However, there is no doubt that people are concerned about the issues and motivated to protect their children, so it is principally a question of building capacity, self confidence, and links with broader networks.

27. What has been the impact of the project on teaching and learning in terms of (a) the quality of teaching (according to the teachers trained); (b) the quality of learning (according to children, parents, and teachers); and (c) the overall quality of new curricula and teaching methodologies?

Teachers, parents, and children are all pleased with the new teaching methodologies and feel that they have resulted in a better-quality education. Many parents are pleased that they can now follow what their children are learning in school and that national languages are being recognized and valued. Teachers enjoy seeing children actively involved in and excited by what they are learning. Although some teachers were initially uncertain about the new methodologies, they have seen how well children respond and are therefore experiencing more job satisfaction. Children are happy to be in school and have the opportunity to learn. Although many of them find it difficult to express exactly what they like about it, they know that school is giving them more choices and opportunities for the future.

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

The 1,459 children in project schools would be unlikely to be in school without the arrival of the project, so the impact has been considerable in that it has changed the pattern of children's daily lives. Teachers have had the opportunity to receive training, which puts them in advance of other teachers with regard to bilingual education and participatory teaching methodologies. They are benefiting from ongoing training and support and the opportunity to be at the forefront of innovation in their field. This has resulted in a high level of commitment and motivation, which contributes to their enthusiasm and energy in the classroom. Parents are actively involved in a range of committees set up to support their school and protect their children from exploitation. This is enabling them to develop their organizational capacity and influence the life of their communities.

The project has supported already existing partner organizations by extending knowledge of child trafficking issues and reinforcing other initiatives in this area. Where government and policy is concerned, the project has contributed both to supporting the national plan to combat child trafficking and the development of more adapted education programs and policies.

29. Among the project's interventions, (school construction, improved quality of curriculum, teacher training, parental involvement against child trafficking, awareness raising campaigns, and national/regional level advocacy), which intervention has had the greatest impact on reducing child labor and increasing school enrollments thus far? Which has had the least? Please seek the opinions of a range of interviewees.

Assorted stakeholders were asked this question during the meeting at the end of the evaluation and they were extremely reluctant to answer it. Everyone found it difficult to say which activity had more or less impact because they thought the impact was cumulative and that it was the

whole strategy and package of interventions that was producing results, rather than any one activity. However, under a degree of pressure the following opinions were elicited:

Table 5: Stakeholders' Opinions on Impact by Activity

Activity	Building Schools	New Curricula	Teacher Training	Anti-Child-Trafficking Committees
Most impact on reducing child trafficking and labor	14	6	1	8
Most impact on the rate of school enrollment	15		4	
Least impact on reducing child trafficking and labor		1	4	1
Least impact on the rate of school enrollment		2	1	2

What emerges, despite of some discrepancies in the number of responses, is that building schools is seen as having the greatest impact on both reducing child trafficking and labor and increasing school enrollment.

30. If the project will not meet its end of project goals, what corrective measures could be taken to achieve them?

The most pressing issues are the provision of latrines, water points, and canteens, and the completion of the two unfinished NFBECS. Project fieldworkers in each province could investigate all possible options in consultation with local communities, DPEBAs, the project management team, and any appropriate resource person to create an action plan for each school. The project management team can then take this to a national level to continue negotiations not only with the appropriate ministries but also with other development partners and projects with the aim of seeing all schools with the necessary provision before the end of the project.

The other issue concerns developing a common understanding and agreement concerning the curriculum offered by NFBECS so that the available places are filled and the curricula meet the long- and short-term needs and expectations of communities to the greatest extent possible.

5.5.2 Conclusions

If the project can succeed in completing all 20 schools and centers to MEBA standards it will have secured a lasting impact on the educational infrastructure in Burkina that will provide a reference point for future buildings. Innovations to curricula and teaching methods will continue to contribute to the evolution of education policy and practice after the end of the project even if the second phase does not materialize. However, the impact will be that much greater if the long-term plan has the opportunity to be put into practice. As long as Child Trafficking Prevention Committees receive enough capacity building and support between now and the end of the project, they will be able to continue to contribute to local and national initiatives for child protection and reducing child trafficking.

5.5.3 Recommendations

- The project should pursue negotiations for funding for Phase 2 of the 15-year plan.
- The project should pursue discussions with MEBA and local communities so that there is clear strategy and plan for the future of each of the SSs after the end of the project.
- The project should produce an action plan for each school to achieve MEBA standards by having latrines, a water point, and a canteen by the end of the project.

VI LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

6.1 INVOLVING TEACHERS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The evaluator was impressed by the motivation and degree of commitment shown by the teachers in project-supported schools. One of the reasons for this is probably a result of the fact that they are implicated in developing the work that they are doing and hence have a vested interest in seeing it succeed. It also seems logical to involve practitioners in developing curricula in that they are well placed to see if new ideas are effective in the classroom and to try out solutions to any problems that arise. One difficulty that often arises when introducing new teaching methods is that it is not easy for teachers who are used to teaching in one way to put what they know aside and fully embrace a new approach. The project has succeeded in convincing teachers already established in the use of traditional teaching methodologies of the advantages of active child-centered learning, which is no small achievement. The opportunity for teachers to meet and share experiences as a group and give feedback about the process they are involved in is also an important aspect of the project design.

6.2 INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHILD TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COMMITTEES

Although these committees are newly formed, it is already clear that they are providing opportunities for leadership and initiative among the young people concerned. In Gangaol, the president of the committee explained how members had designed and produced a piece of theater about the dangers of child trafficking. They each contributed 500 FCFA (US\$1) and hired loudspeaker equipment and performed the skit on market day in the village. It is important to involve young people as actors in their own protection, and, in a country where a high proportion of the population is under 20, any opportunity to develop leadership and initiative is important for the future.

6.3 DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EDUCATION MINISTRY AT ALL LEVELS

This is a particularly impressive aspect of the project that could serve as a model for future education interventions. NGOs cannot take on responsibility for delivering education or the operation of national education systems, and it is not their role to do so. However, they can play an important role in developing and testing innovations that can then be incorporated into the system. This is inevitably more efficient and effective if Ministry personnel contribute their knowledge and experience to the development stage, which creates a feeling of ownership of the process and a belief in its value.

6.4 NEGOTIATION WITH BUILDING CONTRACTORS

The project succeeded in building schools at considerably less cost than what the state normally accrues. The schools were built using government designs and specifications, so the only difference was more effective negotiation with the contractors. The project worked hard to convince these people that they too had a role to play in developing the education infrastructure of the country and that customary kickbacks and payoffs would not be part of this negotiation in order to use the limited funds as effectively as possible. A significant saving of several million FCFA was made on each school.

VII STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

On March 13, 2006, following the visits to project schools and interviews with project stakeholders, a meeting took place in Bobo Dioulasso. It was attended by 28 representatives of key stakeholders and provided the opportunity for the evaluator to present and get feedback on her findings in the field. These were presented in a short PowerPoint presentation, which was followed by reactions of the participants and discussion of the various issues. These issues principally concerned clarifications and further information on points raised in the presentation that contributed to this report. The discussion also enabled resource people from UNICEF and other organizations to express their appreciation for particular aspects of the project, particularly its pertinence in the current Burkina environment. After lunch, the assembly split into small groups to answer questions designed to facilitate reflection about the future of the project.

The first task was a short brainstorming exercise around the question “What are the strengths that we bring to the project?” This highlighted the range and depth of experience, knowledge, and resources that the project has brought together (see Annex D).

The second exercise asked participants to choose the questions that they found the most interesting from the following list and to make some concrete proposals.

- How can the Child Trafficking Prevention Committees be strengthened?
- What are the possible future strategies for the satellite schools?
- How could the project promote ownership and commitment of young people and their parents in NFBEC communities to the 15-year plan?
- How can the achievements of the teachers be reinforced?
- Any other questions that you think are important

The groups produced the following suggestions:

How can the Child Trafficking Prevention Committees be strengthened?

- Literacy training
- Training to meet specific identified needs (child trafficking/children’s rights)
- Networking, including exchange of experience between project and other committees with similar objectives
- Material and financial help for networking and the development of action plans
- Support for the reintegration into their communities of victims of child trafficking

What are the possible future strategies for the satellite schools?

- Children could transfer to their “mother school” for grades 4, 5, and 6
- Satellite schools could be “normalized” through the addition of an additional three grades and, ideally, become bilingual schools (*Ecoles bilingues de proximité*)

How could the project promote ownership and commitment of young people and their parents in NFBECC communities to the 15-year plan?

- Introduce a UNICEF model known as *Centres amis de jeunes* to promote a user-friendly environment
- Create skills training workshops
- Social mobilization and awareness raising—a campaign to share information about the program and explain the difference between classical NFBECCs and the TREAT vision
- Support access to small community projects/income-generating projects
- Offer training in project planning
- Involve the community in decisionmaking and give them the opportunity to express themselves and explain their priorities because schools need to meet the expectations of the parents

How can the achievements of the teachers be reinforced?

- Elaborate a plan for ongoing in-service training including exchange visits, networking, and conferences
- Organize monitoring/support visits from TREAT trainers to teachers in the field
- Develop knowledge management (resource centers) with manuals for participatory/active learning approaches, document exchange, e-mail contact, and video resources

Any other questions that you think are important

- An annual project review meeting would enable discussion between key stakeholders and enable the project to be flexible and responsive to emerging issues
- Diversification of funding sources—look for more financial partners
- Clarification of terms and conventions between the project and the government

After some discussion of the above points, the participants evaluated the usefulness of the meeting. Half said that they had found it extremely useful and the other half found it to be quite useful. This brought the midterm evaluation in the field to a close.