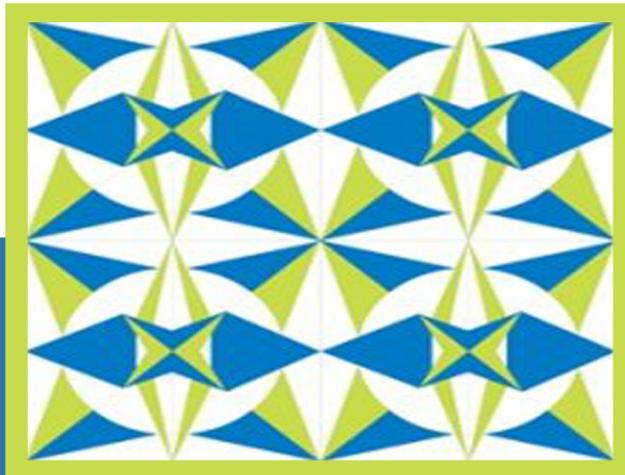


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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Final Evaluation of the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) Project: Lesotho Country Report

American Institutes for Research
Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0046



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report describes in detail the final evaluation of the project conducted during May 2008. The report was prepared by Macro International Inc., according to guidelines prescribed by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The evaluation of Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) activities in Lesotho was conducted and documented by Sue Upton, an independent development consultant in collaboration with USDOL/OCFT staff, the RECLISA project team, and stakeholders in Lesotho. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document do not represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The evaluator would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who made the time and space to contribute to the evaluation, particularly the people from the Lesotho Association of Nonformal Education who coordinated, supported, and enabled field visits in Lesotho. Special thanks also to the American Institutes for Research regional team who spared no effort to ensure that the evaluator had access to the necessary information. Last, but by no means least, we thank the herd boys and other learners, their animators, parents, employers, and community leaders, who in many cases walked considerable distances to meet with the evaluator and talk about their experiences.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
APEC	Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour
EFA	Education for All
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
IEMS	Institute of Extra Mural Studies
ILAB	Bureau of International Labour Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme to on the Elimination of Child Labour
LANFE	Lesotho Association of Nonformal Education
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Center
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MPG	Management Procedures and Guidelines
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGOC	Nongovernmental Organization Coalition on the Rights of a Child
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NUL	National University of Lesotho
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PACC	Program Advisory Committee on Child Labour
RECLISA	Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa
STS	Student Tracking System
TECL	Towards the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its initiatives to reduce child labor by providing educational opportunities for working and at-risk children, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) signed a cooperative agreement worth US\$9 million with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to implement the project known as Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA). The project aims to reduce exploitive child labor in five countries of Southern Africa. It was implemented from 2004 to 2008 and in collaboration with national or international organizations based in each of the countries concerned, with the following objectives:

- Objective 1:** Increased public awareness of the importance of children's education, children's rights, and the worst forms of child labor (WFCL).
- Objective 2:** Improved educational opportunities for working children and children at risk.
- Objective 3:** Improved social services for working children, children at risk, and their families or caregivers.
- Objective 4:** Strengthened integration of government policies, laws, and regulations to promote the entry of working children into the formal education system and prevent children at risk from dropping out.

This final evaluation report describes RECLISA's activities in Lesotho and assesses project design, implementation, impact, and sustainability; it also looks at the effectiveness and efficiency of the regional model. The evaluation aims to assess the degree to which USDOL's goals, project objectives, and country-specific outputs have been achieved and to help the organizations concerned to identify areas of good performance and those with potential for improvement. It assesses progress in terms of children's working and educational status and provides feedback to enable the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of its projects.

Lesotho has extremely challenging physical, cultural and political environments, in addition to the third highest HIV prevalence rate in the world. Its mountainous terrain and extreme weather conditions make it difficult to work in remote communities. Herding is deeply engrained in the culture of the Basotho, who are caught in a dilemma between the herding tradition whereby boys earn *lobola* for marriage and their desire to obtain basic education for herd boys' without forfeiting their valuable contribution to the subsistence economy of their households. While Lesotho has both an Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labor (APEC) and an Education Sector Strategy to achieve Education for All, there is still some considerable way to go as far as legislation and implementation are concerned.

RECLISA has successfully operated in tandem with the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour timebound project: Towards the Elimination of Child Labour. The timebound project has specifically worked to develop the national APEC. AIR worked with two national organizations to implement the project.

The Nongovernmental Organization Coalition on the Rights of a Child (NGOC) was subcontracted to manage RECLISA in Lesotho and to work on national awareness-raising and policy-related issues. The tasks proved to be beyond their financial and administrative capacity; the project's relationship with the organization was suspended in 2007 as a result of an audit finding that they were unable to account for US\$12,000. The Lesotho Association of Nonformal Education (LANFE) was contracted by NGOC to implement the direct intervention component of the project in three of Lesotho's 10 districts. NGOC's inability to manage the project contributed to delays in implementation; so in 2007, LANFE became a direct AIR subcontractor, subsequently also taking on the policy component of the project.

LANFE used the nationally approved Nonformal Education curriculum to provide basic education and vocational skills training to herd boys and other orphans and vulnerable children who were working or at risk of working in districts where the state offers no such provision. Local animators and learners were identified during community meetings; local leaders found space for learning centers to be established; and LANFE provided training for the animators, materials, and workbooks. Between 2006 and 2008, 58 centers became operational. Five roving animators support remote learning centers and visit learners when they are living at distant cattle posts. The project has enrolled a total of 2,247 learners, the vast majority being herd boys (2,032 boys and 215 girls). Of these enrollees, 280 have finished the course and received a nationally recognized graduation certificate at a public ceremony to mark International Literacy Day in Maseru. Four have died, 133 dropped out for various reasons, and 83 have transferred to formal schools.

The evaluation found that learning centers are changing the quality of life for many children by providing an opportunity for them to access basic education, to develop their self-confidence, and to value their achievements. Children demonstrated basic literacy and numeracy skills, high levels of creativity, the ability to express their opinions, and awareness of HIV/AIDS. Animators, parents, employers, chiefs, and councilors said that the children are better able to look after themselves, are more respectful, have learned to cooperate and work together, and that there is less petty crime since the centers opened. Communities consistently described the education provided by the centers as relevant and adapting to their way of life; they often saw it as more useful than formal schooling.

The project's educational provision is succeeding in demonstrating and raising awareness of the importance and relevance of education, but it needs to be recognized that this is the very beginning of a process of change. Discussions with parents, employers, and local leaders showed that there is as yet little understanding of the concept of child labor; while the education that children are receiving is widening their horizons and offering them more choices for the future, it is not, for the majority, reducing the hours that they work, and constraints linked to herding limit regular attendance. Vocational training is widely seen as a promising path toward income generation, but it needs ongoing support and development if it is going to be truly viable.

In addition to Lesotho's' challenging environment, implementation has been affected by a number of project-related constraints, among which are—

- Initial delays due to late disbursement of funds and other administrative issues.

- Insufficient project staff/time to adequately administer, support, and monitor the 58 centers (increased from a planned 30 to meet the project's target number of learners).
- Unforeseen costs (transport and subsistence costs for roving animators).
- The unanticipated requirement (and accompanying challenges) to track the work status of learners.
- Difficulties in administering the questionnaire designed to measure changes in local awareness of child labor issues and the importance of education.
- Student Tracking System software that didn't work as well as it might have.
- Complex administrative reporting requirements, many of which were new to the organizations concerned.

Despite these constraints, LANFE's only project monitoring officer, with the help of an intrepid driver, traveled through rain, wind, sun, and snow to achieve the daunting task of keeping in touch with 58 centers and taking a personal interest in each of the communities and their issues and concerns. LANFE's director during the first half of the project was in poor health and passed away; he was replaced by the organization's general secretary, who has supported her team through the ups and downs of the project and has kept it more or less on track. Regional project personnel from AIR and Khulisa (the South African nongovernmental organization subcontracted to support project monitoring) have spared no effort to implement USDOL's Management Procedures and Guidelines and to build the capacity of national staff to implement these, through frequent visits, phone calls, and e-mail support.

Regional activities, such as six monthly partner meetings, child labor conferences, the Making Cents micro-enterprise training, and evaluation summary meetings have offered opportunities for shared learning and networking, which were much appreciated by national project staff and helped them feel that they were part of a regional initiative. However, because of the environments previously described and the specific child labor issues in Lesotho, the country probably would have benefitted more from an intensive national program than from a regional initiative.

The most challenging and concerning aspect of RECLISA in Lesotho is the lack of provision for sustainability. Project design envisaged that the Ministry of Education and Training would take on supporting the learning centers at the end of the project, but this has not proven to be the case, beyond the provision of learners' workbooks. The evaluation found widespread concern once regional, national, and local stakeholders became aware of this situation. It makes little sense to invest in two complementary programs to tackle child labor if, at the end of four years, there is no continuity either to encourage the implementation of the national APEC or to ensure the ongoing development of popular educational provision and community-based strategies to tackle child labor where it continues to affect the lives of Basotho children.

The following recommendations are made as a result of the findings of the final evaluation:

USDOL

- The most important recommendation of this evaluation is that USDOL ensure ongoing provision to support and develop the learning centers, alongside additional components to encourage and facilitate community awareness raising and the implementation of the national APEC. If this does not happen, it is difficult to see how the centers will continue to operate and how the process of changing the perceptions and lifestyle of communities where children are working in WFCL will continue. Ideally, such funding would include capacity building for LANFE and the Lesotho Herd Boys Association to enable them to develop and expand the work that they are doing with this target group; funding should also include developing skills for networking and the use of participatory approaches.
- USDOL should count Lesotho's learners among the project's direct beneficiaries, in recognition of the work that has been done and the changes in reporting requirements during the project, even though the majority of these learners have not been withdrawn from child labor.
- In countries such as Lesotho where a specific form of child labor is deeply engrained in culture and tradition, USDOL would be well-advised to go for a national rather than a regional program.
- USDOL should reflect on the effect of overemphasizing the importance of target numbers of withdrawn/prevented children on the sustainability of project initiatives and tailor its Solicitations for Cooperative Agreement Applications accordingly.

AIR

- Three-tiered project management structures should be avoided because they are complex to operate and rarely provide added value.
- Institutional assessments of potential subcontracting organizations should always be carried out in order to ascertain that they have the necessary governance mechanisms to ensure accountability and the financial, management, and technical capacity required.
- Grantees should develop a project-specific procedures manual to guide project management.
- Projects with many subcontractors should bring the contractors together for an initial workshop to introduce financial, administrative, and monitoring requirements. Subsequent training can be offered as needed.
- National and regional child labor conferences should be accompanied by a budget for follow-up networking and publicity to capitalize on interest generated by the events.

AIR AND LANFE

- Where appropriate, work status monitoring should be tailored to the specific type of work concerned and serve to increase national and local knowledge of how that type of work affects children. Communities need to be actively involved not only in data gathering, but in data interpretation. This can be more than a tool for project monitoring and can be part of a process of developing local child labor monitoring systems.
- Participatory approaches should be used to ensure active community involvement in debates concerning children's rights and child labor. To result in local ownership, awareness raising needs to involve more than telling communities what they should or should not be doing, as determined by international accords.
- If the project's strategy for sustainability depends on the government taking over support for service provision, a concrete commitment from the government should be obtained at the start of the project. Also, a plan for how state services will be involved in project implementation and how the takeover will happen should be developed in collaboration with the ministry concerned. If this is not possible, an alternative sustainability strategy needs to be developed.
- Any alternative strategy should involve the following stages:
 - An assessment of what resources and conditions are needed to ensure sustainability at least two years before the end of the project.
 - Consultation with stakeholders at all levels (community, district, national) to assess the degree of interest and potential allies, resources, and strategies.
 - The development of a concrete plan of action detailing activities, those responsible for carrying them out, and a timescale.
 - Regular monitoring/realignment of the plan, keeping all stakeholders informed of progress.

LANFE

- Implementing organizations need to assess accurately the number of staff and other resources they need to do the best job possible and negotiate to ensure that this is what they get.
- If LANFE succeeds in attracting resources to enable them to continue to support the learning centers, a priority should be to provide training for the local committees so they can actively contribute to center management, child labor monitoring, and awareness raising.

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I **CONTEXT**

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funds international labor projects through its Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is the office within ILAB that administers grants and contracts to organizations engaged in efforts to eliminate child labor and raise awareness about child labor issues. Since 1995, Congress has appropriated more than US\$595 million for USDOL, which has been used to combat child labor in more than 75 countries around the world.

USDOL-funded projects seek to achieve the following five major goals:

1. Withdrawing or preventing children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of direct educational services.
2. Strengthening policies on child labor and education, the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, and formal and transitional education systems that encourage children engaged in or at risk of engaging in exploitive labor to attend school.
3. Raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.
4. Supporting research and the collection of reliable data on child labor.
5. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

USDOL supports the two following specific programs, in addition to some smaller initiatives:

- **The International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC).** Since 1995, ILO-IPEC has received US\$330 million from the U.S. Government, the leading donor to the program. Most ILO-IPEC projects include “direct action” components that are interventions to remove or prevent children from involvement in exploitive and hazardous work. One major strategy is to increase children’s access to and participation in formal and nonformal education (NFE). Most projects also have a capacity-building component to assist in building a sustainable base for long-term elimination of exploitive child labor.
- **The Child Labor Education Initiative (EI).** EI projects are designed to ensure that children in areas with a high incidence of child labor are withdrawn and integrated into educational settings, and that they persist in their education once enrolled. In parallel, the program seeks to prevent at-risk children from leaving school and entering child labor. The EI is based on the notion that the elimination of exploitive child labor depends, to a large extent, on improving access to (and the quality and relevance of) education. Funds under the EI are competitively bid; they support cooperative agreements with international nonprofit, for-profit, and faith-based entities.

In addition to these two initiatives, in 2007, USDOL allocated US\$60 million for other child labor elimination projects and provided US\$2.5 million for additional awareness-raising and research activities.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT: EDUCATION, CHILD LABOR, AND HERDING IN LESOTHO

Lesotho is a small mountainous kingdom in the heart of South Africa. The majority of its 2 million people practice subsistence agriculture. It is common for men to seek employment in South Africa, where the ongoing decline in opportunities in the mining sector has had a negative impact on the country's economy. In remote rural areas, more than 80 percent of the population is classified as poor. The country has an adult HIV prevalence rate of 23.2 percent,¹ the third highest in the world.

EDUCATION

Lesotho introduced free primary education in 2000, and the number of children enrolled has increased from 51 percent in 1999² to 86 percent in 2006.³ Uniquely in Sub-Saharan Africa, the country has a higher level of primary enrollment for girls than for boys, because many boys traditionally herd livestock before migrating to work in the South African mining industry. The Ministry of Education and Training's (MOET's) Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005–2012 aims "to implement policies which ensure acquisition of functional literacy among all Basotho and development of a productive, quality human resource base through education and training." The document acknowledges the challenge of meeting the needs of children from disadvantaged social groups, particularly in rural areas, and the academic nature of the curriculum that provides the minimal practical skills needed to access the employment market. Legislation currently before the Lesotho Parliament is expected to result in compulsory primary education, perhaps by 2009. However, this will necessitate strategies to enable orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) to benefit, including work with herding communities to develop flexible alternatives for looking after their livestock.

NFE is principally provided by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Lesotho Association of Nonformal Education (LANFE) and is seen as a vehicle for improving literacy, an important goal in attaining Education for All (EFA). MOET, through the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC), plays a supervisory and coordinating role; it develops training modules and distributes materials in addition to offering NFE in some of the country's 10 districts.

¹ Lesotho UNGASS Country Report 2008.

² Available at <http://www.undp.org.ls/millennium/default.php>.

³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>.

CHILD LABOR

The Constitution of Lesotho makes provision for freedom from slavery and forced labor and for the protection of children from social and economic exploitation. Employment of children under 15 is prohibited except in the immediate family or where a family establishment engages five or fewer people. Children between 13 and 15 may perform light work in a home-based environment, technical school, or other government-approved institution. The Labor Code also prohibits work that would be injurious or dangerous to a child's health and development; it restricts their engaging in commercial or industrial undertakings at night and their working in mines and quarries. Lesotho ratified ILO conventions 138 and 182 in 2001 and is developing a list of the hazardous labor tasks likely to jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of children, in accordance with its international commitments. Twenty-eight percent of children aged 5 to 14 were estimated to be working in 2005: boys worked as livestock herders, load bearers, car washers, and taxi fare collectors; girls worked as domestic servants and, to some extent, in commercial sex work.⁴ Lesotho's comprehensive Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour (APEC) is imminently due to be adopted. It was developed as part of ILO-IPEC's Towards the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (TECL) timebound project, which ran concurrently with Reducing Exploitive Child Labour in Southern Africa (RECLISA) from 2004 to 2008.

Government representatives are well aware that child labor exists in Lesotho, including the worst forms such as sexual exploitation, domestic work, herding, and work on the streets. However, at the community level, there is little concept of work that is appropriate or inappropriate for children, apart from ideas concerning sex or age-appropriate tasks linked to children's socialization.

HERDING

A study of herd boys carried out by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the University of Lesotho in 1999 serves to provide some understanding of the climate within which the project works. The major finding was that basic education is highly valued among parents of herd boys and other disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, the Basotho people value their herds, and herding remains an important economic activity customarily reserved for boys. Thus, the two are competing for the time available to the herder and people are caught in a dilemma of traditional versus modern values. Traditionally, herding is a rite of passage that also accords opportunity for boys to earn *lobola*⁵ for marriage, when the time comes. Parents are eager to provide for basic education of herd boys without having to forfeit their valuable contribution to the subsistence economy of their households. They believe that basic education provides not only literacy skills, but also life survival and practical skills for herd boys. The herd boys expressed that they would rather go to school than herd. Poverty was the most frequently

⁴ USDOL's 2006 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

⁵ *Lobolo* or *lobola* is sometimes translated as bride price. It is a traditional Southern African dowry custom whereby the man pays the family of his fiancée for her hand in marriage. The custom is aimed at bringing the two families together, fostering mutual respect, and indicating that the man is capable of supporting his wife financially and emotionally. Traditionally, the *lobola* payment was in cattle, as cattle were the primary source of wealth in African society. However, most modern urban couples have switched to using cash (see the Wikipedia entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobola>).

mentioned reason provided for why the boys herd. Because parents could not afford to send their children to school, children are hired out as a way of earning money or stock; employment of herd boys is seen as a way of alleviating poverty. Participants believed that parents with large families give their children up for employment in herding as a way of sharing some of the reasonability of taking care of them with the employers. For as long as a boy is in someone's employ, the parents do not have to worry about his basic needs and about keeping him out of mischief and bad company.

Herding is deeply engrained in the culture and traditions of the Basotho and, in many cases, is seen as a rite of passage that is part of becoming a man. While this makes for a challenging environment for the withdrawal and prevention of children from child labor, widespread agreement about the importance of education provides an entry point, particularly when the education under consideration is seen as appropriate and relevant.

II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In July 2004, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) signed a Cooperative Agreement worth US\$9 million to implement an EI project in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland to support the goals of the EI and improve access to quality education as a means to combat exploitive child labor in Southern Africa. To achieve these goals, AIR identified the following objectives:

- Objective 1:** Increased public awareness of the importance of children's education, children's rights, and the worst forms of child labor (WFCL).
- Objective 2:** Improved educational opportunities for working children and children at risk.
- Objective 3:** Improved social services for working children, children at risk, and their families or caregivers.
- Objective 4:** Strengthened integration of government policies, laws, and regulations to promote the entry of working children into the formal education system and prevent children at risk from dropping out.

The Project Document states that RECLISA will withdraw or prevent at least 10,000 children in Southern Africa from involvement in WFCL by improving their access to educational opportunities and reaching out to parents, community members, school administrators, and policymakers. RECLISA's regional headquarters is located in Pretoria, South Africa and AIR works with organizations in each of the five countries concerned to implement project activities.

RECLISA's goal in Lesotho was to reduce the number of children engaged in exploitive herding and other WFCL through providing literacy, numeracy, and vocational education to herd boys and other OVC in the three districts of Mofale Hoek, Quthing, and Mokhotlong. Three specific project outputs were identified as follows:

1. Increased awareness among herd children and OVC, parents, communities, and employers of children's rights in view of exploitive child labor and the importance of children's education.
2. Increased opportunities for herd children and OVC to participate in literacy, numeracy, and vocational training.
3. Increased government support for education for herd children and OVC.

At the beginning of the project AIR subcontracted NGOC to coordinate project implementation in Lesotho. NGOC worked on national awareness-raising and policy-related issues and signed an agreement with LANFE to implement work with communities in the three districts concerned. This three-tiered project management system proved difficult to operate and resulted in delays to project implementation; so in January 2007, AIR started to subcontract directly with LANFE, bypassing NGOC, for the implementation of direct action interventions. Subsequently financial irregularities

lead to AIR suspending their agreement with NGOC in the last quarter of 2007; so LANFE took on responsibility for implementing both policy and direct action initiatives in Lesotho.

RECLISA and TECL were designed to run in parallel and to complement each other across the subregion. In Lesotho, as in other countries, TECL set up a Programme Advisory Committee on Child Labour (PACC), chaired by the labor commissioner, as a forum where government and other stakeholders could discuss related issues. As this committee became established, it largely replicated the role of the RECLISA steering committee, which became increasingly redundant. Because personnel of the Nongovernmental Organization Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGOC) had changed and the organization was no longer a RECLISA subcontractor at the time of the final evaluation, it was not possible to get any detailed firsthand account of their activities.

Founded in 1979, LANFE is a well-established organization that is the reference for literacy, nonformal, and adult education in Lesotho. It is a network bringing together more than 100 grassroots organizations and individual members from across the country, and it is managed from its office in Maseru by two experienced and skilled NFE specialists and a small administrative team. During the project, the executive director was in poor health and she sadly passed away in 2006 and was replaced by the then General Secretary, one of the founding members of the organization. Also, LANFE's long-term financial support from DVV International came to an end, leaving RECLISA as the organization's only source of funding besides member contributions.

At the start of the project, LANFE held community meetings in Mokhotlong, Quthing, and Mhales Hoek to introduce and discuss the project. Once communities indicated their desire to be part of the project, 63 animators were identified and trained, initially to teach literacy and numeracy and, later, vocational skills and small business management. Fifty-eight learning centers for herd boys and other OVC were established. The vast majority of students were herd boys, but a small number of other OVC who were not attending school and were seen to be at risk also enrolled. Centers teaching literacy and numeracy and some life skills, including HIV/AIDS awareness, became operational at the end of 2005. Vocational skills were introduced in 2007, followed by entrepreneurial training for animators in the final year of the project. A total of 58 animators teach in the centers and roving animators offer support and visit enrolled herd boys at distant cattle posts. LANFE provides training, supervision, and support.

Local committees were put in place to develop community management and ownership of the centers. However, they are not functioning as planned since it has not been possible to train members and they do not as yet understand their role. Children work at their own pace to complete the six workbooks that make up the LDTC curriculum; a limited number of older children (102) concentrate solely on vocational skills.

Of the 2,247 (2,023 boys and 215 girls) who have enrolled—

- Two-hundred eighty (280) have completed the course and graduated.
- Eighty-three (83) have transferred to formal schools.
- One-thousand seven-hundred forty-seven (1,747) continue to attend the centers.

- Four (4) have died.
- One-hundred thirty-three (133) dropped out, many to look for work in South Africa.

While these learning centers are successfully offering new, popular, and relevant opportunities to herd boys and other OVC, their sustainability after the end of the project is a major challenge. At the time of the final evaluation, just a month before the end of the project, there was no existing plan for the government or any other body to offer ongoing support to enable the centers to continue to operate, so this currently depends on the commitment and enthusiasm of the animators.

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III EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The final evaluation looked at the project as a whole and its overall impact in relation to its stated targets and objectives. The activities carried out during the four years 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 OCFT to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad OCFT technical cooperation program framework.
- Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved.
- Assess progress in terms of children’s working and educational status (i.e., withdrawal and prevention from WFCL; enrollment, retention, completion of educational programs).

The evaluation addresses issues of project design and implementation, sustainability, and impact. It will provide an opportunity for AIR, USDOL, and national stakeholders to identify key achievements and shortfalls, and factors that may have affected project progress. It will help to identify lessons learned, good practices, and effective strategies and models of intervention for the future. It will also assess the efficiency of project management at both country and regional levels, and it will assess how recommendations from the midterm evaluation were implemented and to what effect.

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

1. **Project Design and Implementation.** This section looks at the degree to which the project has supported the EI goals and to what extent it has met its stated purpose and outputs. It particularly looks at how the design has worked out in practice and how beneficiaries were identified and their progress and work status monitored. It analyzes the degree to which direct education interventions have resulted in increased access to relevant quality education. It also examines any challenges in working with national organizations and the degree and effect of the implementation of the recommendations of the midterm evaluation.
2. **Regional Aspects of Management, Capacity Building, and Awareness Raising.** This section examines the advantages and disadvantages of a regional project, based on the experience of project implementation in Lesotho. It analyzes project management and looks at the extent to which the project has built local and national capacity and raised awareness of child labor issues and the importance of education.

- 3. Sustainability and Impact.** This section looks at RECLISA's strategies for sustainability and project impact to date on the various groups concerned.

The evaluation is an objective inquiry that can facilitate any corrective action and encourage the development and replication of successful aspects of the project. Ultimately, the purpose is to ensure that vulnerable children's needs are being met through project interventions and that the best possible use is made of emerging good practice. It is, above all, a learning process.

IV EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was carried out by three evaluators, one covering South Africa and Botswana, another visiting Namibia and Swaziland, and the team leader who covered Lesotho and regional aspects of the project. Evaluators provided a report for each of the countries they visited, which then served to create an analysis and synthesis of findings across the region.

Before arriving in Southern Africa, many preliminary activities enabled the evaluators to gain an initial understanding of the project and helped AIR and its subcontractors to make the necessary preparations. These included—

- Desk reviews
- Selection of sites to be visited
- Conference calls with USDOL and AIR
- Interviews at a regional level
- Interviews at national, district, and community levels
- Stakeholder meetings/debriefs

DESK REVIEW

After an analysis of the purpose and scope of the evaluation and the specific questions in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the evaluators reviewed key project documents provided by USDOL and AIR. During the field visits, further documents became available at both regional and national levels and these also contributed to the evaluators' understanding of the project and specificities relative to individual countries. Broadly speaking, the documents referred to during the evaluation are listed below, and a more detailed list can be found in Annex B at the end of this report.

- The RECLISA Cooperative Agreement
- RECLISA Project Document
- Country Needs Assessments
- Project Performance Management Plans
- Various RECLISA Factsheets
- Technical Progress Reports
- The Midterm Evaluation Reports and Project Responses to Recommendations

- Documents related to national child labor and education policy and practice
- The USDOL RECLISA Audit
- Various documents concerning monitoring of the progress and work status of beneficiaries

SELECTION OF SITES TO BE VISITED

The sites for field visits in Lesotho were selected before arriving in Southern Africa, in consultation with LANFE. They covered a cross section of stakeholders and activities, including those that have been both more and less successful and some of the less accessible project sites.

CONFERENCE CALLS WITH USDOL AND AIR

The evaluators spoke to the USDOL project manager, who clarified and explained aspects of the TOR and outlined some expectations concerning the evaluation. They also spoke to AIR personnel in both the United States and South Africa. This call was particularly important in order to begin establishing a climate of mutual understanding because the midterm evaluation had been a very difficult experience for all concerned.

The evaluators traveled to Southern Africa at the beginning of May 2008. The following is an outline of the various stakeholders that they spoke to. More detail can be found in Annex A, which lists the names and organizations represented.

INTERVIEWS AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

The evaluators spent five days at the beginning of the evaluation working together and working with AIR personnel. This enabled them to develop the evaluation instruments and a common approach; this also allowed them to gain an understanding of the successes and challenges of RECLISA from the regional perspective. Toward the end of the evaluation, the team leader worked with AIR personnel specifically to look at how the regional approach has functioned as well as its advantages and disadvantages. She was joined by the evaluator for Botswana and South Africa, who contributed to some general feedback and discussion with AIR in this regard.

Regional-level visits also included TECL, Khulisa (the South African NGO with the responsibility for assisting RECLISA's monitoring in all five countries), and the U.S. labor officer who has taken a keen interest in the project since it began.

INTERVIEWS AT NATIONAL, DISTRICT, AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

During her 10 days in Lesotho, the evaluator talked to stakeholders in Maseru, the capital, and in two of the three districts where the project works. In Maseru, discussion took place with representatives of both Labor and Education ministries, LANFE, NGOC, UNICEF, and Monna ka Khomo (Lesotho Herd Boys Association). The evaluator interviewed local authority representatives and, on one occasion, the principal chief, in the districts visited; she traveled to six communities to meet with center animators, several hundred herd boys, and other OVC and

to talk to some of them in small focus groups. These were children and their teachers who had walked considerable distances from surrounding villages to the center where the evaluator was visiting. Community visits included conversations with parents, employers, and local councilors and chiefs. Details can be found in Annex A, but overall the evaluator talked to—

- Learners (59 boys and 7 girls).
- Animators (32 women and 4 men).
- Parents (49 mothers and 11 fathers).
- Employers (8 women and 3 men).
- Councilors and chiefs (10 men and 4 women).

Field visits in Lesotho were challenging because of long distances and mountainous terrain. They were also the subject of considerable local interest; large numbers of people assembled at most locations. The original plan included visits to communities in Quthing, the third district where the project works, but unfortunately these had to be abandoned because of time constraints. One group of herd boys drew pictures of different aspects of their lives, such as the one featured on the cover of this report.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS/DEBRIEFS

Before leaving Lesotho, the evaluator presented her initial findings to a group of 10 national stakeholders (see Annex C), and the subsequent discussions contributed to this report. LANFE representatives traveled to Pretoria to take part in a final summary meeting with AIR and RECLISA subcontractors at the end of the evaluation.

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V FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section examines how the project is responding to the national education and child labor environment, the strategies it has developed, the activities it is implementing, and how sustainable these activities are likely to be. These findings, conclusions, and recommendations are grouped in the following three categories:

- Project Design and Implementation.
- Regional Aspects of Management, Capacity Building, and Awareness Raising.
- 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. Conclusions and recommendations complete the evaluation of the relevant issues.

5.1 PROJECT DESIGN/IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

5.1.1 RECLISA Implementation

Broadly speaking, RECLISA in Lesotho has been implemented according to plan. The basic approach of working with local partners to develop learning centers for 2,000 herd boys and OVC in communities with no such state provision did not change. The project director explained that project design had focused on providing educational services and didn't make a distinction between this and withdrawal and prevention from child labor. The intention was to improve the working conditions of herd boys, develop and demonstrate alternatives, and gradually encourage a change in lifestyle, rather than to stop them working immediately, as this was acknowledged as a social and economic impossibility. When USDOL informed AIR that they were required to report children as withdrawn or prevented (in addition to enrolled, retained, or completed) this posed a problem, as did the further requirement to track work status, as this had never been part of project design. However, USDOL explained that when the enrollment indicator was replaced by withdrawn and/or prevented in November 2005, the definition of the new indicator did not differ significantly from the definition of enrollment, and work status monitoring was required to enable reporting for both the new and the old indicators. USDOL's Management Procedures and Guidelines (MPG) 2004–2008 and standard Technical Progress Reports stated that children should not be counted under the common indicators if they were working in exploitive conditions. For example, the 2004 MPG (quoted below) makes it clear that enrollment defines children who have been withdrawn or prevented from WFCL and, according to USDOL, the work status requirement was an inherent component of the project from the design stage forward.

Definition of enrollment: Children of school age (6–18) who have been removed from or at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor and are matriculated in an educational program supported by an Education Initiative project in a given year. (MPG, 2004)

These two different perspectives reveal a lack of common understanding of the Lesotho RECLISA initiative from the start of the project. They also show how difficult it is to develop common indicators that fit every set of circumstances because, while it would have been possible (and useful) to track the work status of children from the start of the project, it would have been extremely difficult to implement an intervention based on withdrawing children from herding within the Basotho context. One approach might have been to work with communities to define different types of herding and encourage a reduction of severity of herding practice, thus improving working conditions and measuring this through tracking work status.

A further observation on the part of the evaluator is that the project document envisaged that the children would come mainly from the younger age range, but in fact most of them fall within the 15–17 age group, followed by those in the 10–14 group, with a minority from six to nine years old. This suggests a tendency for younger children to be enrolled in primary school and demonstrates that demand is more pronounced among older children, for whom no alternative is available. Project design anticipated working in 30 communities spread equally across the three districts, but 58 centers were opened, with a higher proportion in Mokhotlong. The significant increase in the number of centers was attributed to the need to make provision for 2,000 learners in the communities where they lived. This, combined with the shift toward working more in Mokhotlong (the most demanding district because of its mountainous terrain and seasonal weather conditions), resulted in a heavier-than-planned workload for the project's monitoring officer. The project was designed to accommodate a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:60, but this ratio was changed to 1:20–25, which is a much more appropriate number for animators to manage in class.

The project's success can be largely attributed to the commitment and experience of the individuals concerned, which have played an important part in working to overcome a number of specific challenges:

1. *The extent to which herding is embedded in the culture and practice of the communities where the project works.*

This has meant that awareness raising concerning child labor has been an uphill task. There is still extremely limited understanding at community level that herding might be detrimental to a child's development. It is seen as obvious that as children get older they will progressively take on more demanding herding activities as they develop the necessary capabilities and responsibility. This begins when boys of five or six years old accompany slightly older siblings looking after animals close to home, and it progresses until older boys are spending sometimes weeks at a time in remote cattle posts exposed to extreme weather conditions and risk of attack from wild animals and armed cattle rustlers. This perception has meant that, while parents are keen for their children to attend the learning centers because the education offered is seen as beneficial and relevant, they see little need to reduce the hours a child is working, and this is also the case where employers are concerned. Many of them allow their herders to attend the centers and

support the initiative in theory, but reasons for non-attendance or late arrival are most commonly linked to work obligations.

2. *NGOC did not meet expectations regarding its capacity to manage the project.*

This led to delays in implementation; the first learning centers did not become operational until the end of 2005, several months later than planned. LANFE was under considerable pressure to enroll the target number of children, in an environment where seasonal weather conditions limit access to many of the communities concerned. Delays in disbursement of funds mean that learning centers will have been offering literacy and numeracy for 2.5 of the four years of the project. Vocational training was introduced later than anticipated as a result of delays in project implementation, thus limiting the time available to offer follow-up and support the development of new skills.

3. *The level of funding available to deliver basic education to the target number of children and raise awareness of child labor issues in their communities.*

One salaried project officer is responsible for monitoring and supporting all 58 learning centers across three districts. This is not only extremely demanding considering the distances and terrain involved, but also makes it physically impossible for her to visit each center with the regularity that would be desirable (a minimum of once a month). Fortunately, she is supported in her work by five roving animators, including a district monitoring officer in Mokhotlong, who provide both technical support and onsite monitoring. They are locally recruited volunteers and receive a monthly stipend and travel costs. Until the beginning of 2008, RECLISA covered the driver's salary for only eight days a month, when he was regularly traveling with the project officer for considerably longer than this. LANFE personnel mentioned that until 2008 the director, accountant, and secretary were also only paid for eight days of work per month, although they put in many more hours to complete project work. While it is normal for organizational staff with multiple responsibilities to be billed part-time to a specific project, it is also normal for the project to cover the proportion of time that is dedicated to project business; this was certainly not the case for LANFE's driver and is questionable concerning the administrative staff.

Considering that the project is introducing new NFE provision in communities where children traditionally work, it would have been beneficial to have salaried community development workers based in the districts concerned. Such fieldworkers would have been able to do more to raise awareness of child labor issues and to support the development of the learning centers and their management committees. The center animators are doing a good job as teachers, while trying to raise awareness concerning child labor and fulfill the project's monitoring requirements. However, they are not trained community workers and are volunteers paid a stipend worth about US\$35 a month,⁶ which reflects their level of training and the hours that they work. Salaried fieldworkers would have been able to not only support the centers but also to assist

⁶ For comparison and information purposes, a primary school teacher earns around US\$200.

animators in the supplementary work that they undertake in addition to teaching in the centers.

In an attempt to understand why LANFE had so few staff to carry out the work, a crude budget analysis was carried out. Lesotho’s initial budget shows that NGOC was allocated US\$455,000 for the four years of the project and, of this, US\$275,892 went to LANFE to fund direct intervention.

Table 1: RECLISA Funding for Lesotho by Organization

Organization and Budget	Funding/target number of 2,000 enrolled children	Budgeted cost per child
AIR —total budget less contractual costs, divided between five countries (US\$9,000,000–US\$4,599,715)/5	US\$880,057/\$2,000 = US\$440 less regional activities budget US\$298,800/ 5 countries/US\$2,000 = US\$30	US\$410
Khulisa —approximate estimate of costs for Lesotho*	US\$296,651/US\$2,000	US\$148.30
NGOC —total Lesotho budget less contractual cost	US\$179,108/US\$2,000	US\$89.60
LANFE —total budget	US\$275,892/US\$2,000	US\$137.90
Total	N/A	US\$780.80

* It is difficult to make a precise assessment of the cost of Khulisa’s contribution to work in Lesotho because not all budget lines make clear how the organization’s costs are shared between countries. This is a conservative estimate.

If this estimate of US\$781 per child is compared with an estimate of US\$870 based on the total budget of US\$9 million less, the regional activity budget divided by the 10,000 target number of beneficiaries, it suggests that Lesotho did not get its fair share of funding on a strictly pro rata basis. This analysis also illustrates the relative proportion of funds going to management, monitoring, and supervision/support costs in comparison with the allocation for direct work.

5.1.2 RECLISA Design

The RECLISA project documents states—

Herders and OVC will be taught literacy and numeracy together with basic life skills in areas that will help them earn a living as they get older (for example, in carpentry, masonry, sewing, knitting, etc.). Our expectation is that opportunities for sustainability will increase because people will not only become literate, but make a better living, which will encourage others to enroll their own children who may be vulnerable or involved in herding.⁷

⁷ Page 34 of RECLISA Final Project Document, January 2005.

This expectation proved to be somewhat ambitious within the timescale of the project. People are certainly becoming literate, and life skills have proven extremely popular; however, they are not yet sufficiently developed to make a significant contribution to people's income. During the evaluation, parents, herd boys, and animators talked about plans to sell their products, but few could give concrete examples of actual sales and little discussion had taken place concerning whether any income would belong to the producer, his family, or the center. Micro-enterprise training for animators and herd boys will take place during the final weeks of the project, but this laudable initiative comes too late to enable any follow-up or ongoing support.

One lesson to be drawn from this is the importance of ensuring that the human and financial resources are sufficient to maintain the pace of project implementation. There are enormous advantages to working through local animators, but they should not be used as an inexpensive substitute for project staff. LANFE's model was designed to support traditional literacy and numeracy classes and would have benefitted from some modification to account for RECLISA's more extensive provision and demands. There is a need to ask at the design stage, "Will this really work as planned? Is it feasible in the existing conditions? Where are the points where something might go wrong?" and to take into account the responses.

The following excerpts from an assessment of RECLISA's progress carried out by LANFE's then General Secretary in May 2006 serve to highlight some of the pressures that the project operated under.

Summary of problems and challenges expressed by various respondents (LANFE, NGOC, Animators, Roving Animators, Learners):

- Most of the groundwork in the districts is done by roving animators, yet they have not been fully engaged because of lack of any transport and subsistence allowance. In all districts, roving animators cover areas where transport costs are high and it can take up to three days to travel to the centers, do the work, and return home (quoted return travel costs range from US\$2 to US\$10).
- The budget only covers 30 animators in total. More are needed to cover widely spread centers, adhere to NFE principal of 20 to 25 learners per animator, and make the goal of 2,000 learners by 2008.
- Some learners have to walk some distance to reach a center, which is undesirable and unsafe, particularly in winter when it is dark and cold—but winter is the time when herd boys are home from the cattle posts and the optimum time to teach.
- Most animators in rural areas are not able to fill in forms without making mistakes that roving animators have to correct.
- Roving animators have to travel to fetch forms or wait until someone from their home is coming into town, so blank forms can take time to reach the roving animators and even longer to reach the animators.

- Learners' books are difficult to transport to distant centers. They have to be carried a few at a time, either by walking, by horseback, or by rare public transport.
- Other survival needs take preference over the literacy session for some learners, parents, and employers. Some organizations offer food and clothing, creating an expectation that these should be part of the package.
- Movement of learners to other employers confuses the animator's records and it is not always known where they have gone to.
- In principle, employers agree to release children for literacy sessions, but instruct herders not to lock up animals before sunset, which makes them too late for classes.
- Animators lack the skills to serve children with disabilities, especially speech and hearing impediments.
- Reports are not on time.
- Funds are not released on time.
- Arrangements and activities are made and carried out in a hurry.
- Monitoring visits from different organizations (AIR, LANFE, NGOC) that follow one another closely make it difficult to make arrangements and actually do the monitoring.

This assessment was instrumental in identifying solutions to many of these difficulties, but the fact that the project worked in such challenging physical conditions remained.

This section should not end without emphasizing the importance of the economic component in RECLISA's design. The project's assumption that vocational training leading to income-generating opportunities would make NFE provision popular and relevant in herding communities is undoubtedly correct.

5.1.3 Design's Fit into Existing Efforts

Apart from research projects, RECLISA and TECL are the first two child labor initiatives to be implemented in Lesotho. Through the PACC, which brings together representatives from a range of ministries,⁸ UNICEF, social partners (workers and employers), and NGOs such as NGOC and LANFE, it has been possible to focus attention on the issues and support and encourage legislation to promote children's rights.

The labor commissioner, who chairs the PACC, is responsible for enforcing labor standards, initiating dialogue with social partners, and ensuring that there is no child labor in the workplace. She explained that, while child labor exists in the rural areas and in the domestic sector, none is visible in the formal sector and it is difficult to say to what extent children are involved in

⁸ Ministries of Employment and Labor, Education and Training, Health and Social Welfare, Justice and Human Rights.

commercial sex work. Lesotho is in the process of developing a list of hazardous child labor, and forms of herding and domestic work are among the areas that will be included, having been identified during the TECL project. She said that domestic work is difficult to regulate because the Constitution gives the right to privacy in homes and inspection requires a court order. Monitoring of herd boys is also complex because of the element of cultural initiation that requires boys to learn to take on their traditional responsibilities. Herding has varying degrees of severity, which will be defined and categorized as part of the forthcoming list. The commissioner also explained that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is making it more complex to eradicate child labor, as many orphans have to work to survive. While there is some provision for orphans, the country has no comprehensive social security system.

Given the situation, the commissioner saw RECLISA as a realistic, appropriate, and relevant initiative in the process of bringing child labor to an end. She saw provision of basic education and greater contact with the wider world as a way of reducing dependence on the herding lifestyle. However, she acknowledged that it is extremely challenging to change the mindset of whole communities and had little to propose in terms of continuity of project provision.

EFA Goals 3 and 4

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015—especially for women—and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The Education Bill of 2006 is a review of the Education Act that aims to ensure that the act is in alignment with EFA and various other conventions and international commitments. It is expected to be adopted by or in 2009 and includes provision for compulsory primary education. Where NFE is concerned, the government sees its role as primarily to coordinate and facilitate provision; but it also offers some courses through the LDTC. NFE policies are based on EFA Goals 3 and 4.

LDTC offers courses for herd boys and young people who are out of school in some districts of the country, and RECLISA decided to avoid duplicating existing provision and to offer services in other districts. The NFE coordinator saw the project's learning centers as a very welcome and relevant addition that is fully aligned with government policy. However, she explained that it will not be possible to absorb RECLISA animators into government service precisely because they work in districts where the government does not currently have any provision. The NFE coordinator explained that she envisaged developing a scheme by which animators can be accredited and paid for their services; but this will require a basic level of education higher than that of the majority of RECLISA's animators.

It became clear from discussion with representatives of the Labor and Education ministries that there is no argument about the existence of child labor, the rights of the children concerned, and the importance of providing them with opportunities for education; but the government works slowly. The individuals concerned expressed their frustration concerning the state's limited capacity to fulfill its obligations, which is exacerbated by high staff turnover, poor continuity of action, and long and complex procedures for the adoption of policies and legislation.

5.1.4 USDOL Goals

Goal 1

The degree to which the project withdrew or prevented children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of its direct educational services is worthy of some analysis. A total of 83 children transferred to formal school, so they were clearly withdrawn. A small number of OVC who enrolled were not working, so could be counted as prevented if they continue not to work. The following is an argument put forward by AIR concerning the majority of herd boys who attend classes after working hours.

Everyone agrees on the goal of having all Basotho children stop full-time livestock herding, and RECLISA encourages the government and communities to work toward this. However, given the deep-seated cultural issues combined with the poverty that drives families to exploit their children in this way, this goal cannot realistically be accomplished within the limits of a single project, so we must look at what is feasible within the timeframe available and within USDOL guidelines. RECLISA has improved the herd boys' situation through access to NFE and beginning the process of withdrawal from herding. Working conditions have begun to improve because of vocational and entrepreneurial training, the project's provision of blankets and gum boots, and community-level awareness raising.

The selection of this target group, and strategies for serving them, were all discussed with and approved by USDOL. AIR's technical proposal spoke only of delivering educational services. During the February 2005 "Task One" workshop, the USDOL representative said that what was really wanted was that children should be enrolled. AIR immediately revised its plans to ensure that beneficiaries would be enrolled in an educational program. In March 2005, when guidance about standards of the Government Performance Results Act of 1993 for counting children as enrolled was received from USDOL, project definitions were reviewed and submitted, and USDOL accepted that the following criteria would be used to monitor the project:

- Children working in WFCL or working in violation of national child labor laws must be fully removed to be counted in the common indicators.
- Children who meet the project's eligibility criteria may be counted as enrolled if they continue to work around their enrollment in a RECLISA-sponsored education project as long as they are not engaged in WFCL and are not working in violation of local child labor laws.

When USDOL changed the common-indicator categories (November 2005) from "enrolled" to "withdrawn" or "prevented," it was difficult to find a category for the majority of beneficiaries in Lesotho. However, the majority of our beneficiaries are enrolled, moving toward eventual cessation of herding, but still working as herd boys at this point.

AIR continues to believe that these beneficiaries should be counted under the common indicators because—

- They meet all of the requirements originally agreed with USDOL.

- They are not engaged in a currently illegal form of labor or in currently recognized WFCL.
- They are enrolled in RECLISA-sponsored education.
- Tangible efforts have been made to improve their working conditions, even if their hours have not always been reduced.

AIR believes, therefore, that they are in compliance with the MPG guideline: “The process of withdrawing a child from exploitive child labor may take some time. Children should only be counted as withdrawn at the point at which the child is no longer working in exploitive child labor (this includes no longer working at all or working under improved working conditions such as shorter hours and/or safer conditions) and is benefiting from education program(s) provided by the USDOL-funded project.”

Of course, this is not an ideal situation. Had AIR designed the project around current USDOL requirements and categories, design could have included greater emphasis on improving working conditions more rapidly. But AIR would still have wanted to serve this target population by providing the NFE services that LANFE offers and would still not have been able to stop all herding work immediately. AIR has met all agreed-upon deliverables for Lesotho beneficiaries and has done everything possible to comply with new or clarified requirements within the limits of the budgeted project design. RECLISA has improved the child labor situation for these herd boys and has tangibly improved their lives through education and other services, and the MPG statement seems to offer scope for including these beneficiaries under the common indicators.

The evaluator emphatically agrees that RECLISA has provided extremely valuable educational services and improved the lives of herd boys, as it said it would do and as agreed with USDOL. It seems unreasonable if this cannot be recognized by the inclusion of these children as direct project beneficiaries. The difficulty arises because most herd boys continue to work the same number of hours, except for the 83 children who have transferred to formal school and some anecdotal cases of reduced hours. It is true that Lesotho has yet to define the type of herding that constitutes hazardous labor, but there can be no argument that some herding falls under the category of “work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children”⁹ and is thus a worst form of child labor. RECLISA has not attempted to categorize different types of herding, and if all learners are said to be “withdrawn,” this risks sending out a signal that two hours education per day is sufficient to meet international obligations; this is not the case. The project has improved working conditions by providing a blanket and a pair of gum boots to all the children it works with. Quality of life and future prospects through the provision of learning centers, but the lack of work status tracking, means that it is not meaningful to talk about having withdrawn children from herding.

Goal 2

While the TECL project was principally responsible for assisting the development of Lesotho’s child labor policy, RECLISA personnel attended PACC meetings, reviewed and contributed to

⁹ ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), Article 3(d).

relevant documents, and advocated for change. NGOC's director played an active networking role that was taken on by LANFE when NGOC left the project. RECLISA's activities have drawn attention to the plight of the herd boys and developed accessible educational provision adapted to their needs; thus, the project has actively supported this goal.

Goal 3

The project succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of education in the communities where it worked; it mobilized local leaders, parents, employers, and animators to put in place new provisions. Classes mainly took place either in animators' houses or in a house volunteered in the service of the community. Some parents drew attention to the lack of a "neutral" location for their learning center; experience in the few villages where public buildings were available suggests that this was a better option. The project served to highlight the importance of educational services for herd boys and this is the first step in developing more appropriate infrastructure.

Goal 4

One of RECLISA's achievements is that it has helped subcontractors to develop new techniques for monitoring and recording the progress of beneficiaries. LANFE had never before worked with a similar database and, while it was challenging, it demonstrated its potential. The data collected enabled LANFE to record and analyze the results of its intervention and this will serve as the basis for future project proposals, in addition to fulfilling RECLISA's reporting requirements.

Goal 5

While the project has adequately supported most of the first four USDOL goals, it has serious problems concerning the fifth goal of ensuring long-term sustainability. To date, there is no strategy in place for learning centers to continue when the project ends. While the center animators are committed and enthusiastic and say that they will continue to work, it is debatable to what extent they will be able to do this without the motivation offered by their small stipend and LANFE's active support. This issue is further discussed in the section on sustainability.

5.1.5 Direct Educational Interventions

LANFE is offering literacy, numeracy, and some life skills training in 58 learning centers. The centers use the LDTC's curriculum, which is set out in six learners' workbooks. Life skills include HIV/AIDS awareness and basic hygiene and are complemented by vocational skills, with a view to providing opportunities for income generation. Animators received two weeks of basic training to teach literacy and numeracy, followed by another two weeks of training in vocational skills. Finally, they attended a workshop based on the "Making Cents" program, designed to help people without advanced literacy skills manage small enterprise initiatives.

The animators come from the communities where they work and do not have an advanced educational level. They are delivering their classes in a professional manner, effectively applying the training that they received. An entry group helps beginners to become accustomed to using a writing implement, and learners then move through three groups as they progress through the

workbooks. A total of 2,032 boys and 215 girls have enrolled, none of whom were previously attending any form of educational provision, although some were primary school dropouts. Nearly all of them are herd boys and the others are OVC, some of whom were employed as domestic workers. Vocational training was introduced relatively late in the program, so there has not really been enough time to follow up and develop the different skills. In spite of this, it has proven extremely popular and was the focus of enthusiastic discussion during the evaluation. Both parents and children can see the potential it holds for income generation and also for helping children to make and repair their clothes and small household items.

Children told the evaluator that learning is important to them and that they want the classes to continue. They demonstrated basic literacy and numeracy skills and other creative and potentially income-generating abilities. Animators, parents, employers, chiefs, and councilors said that the children are better able to look after themselves, are more respectful, have learned to cooperate and work together, and that there is less petty crime since the centers opened. Communities consistently described the education provided by the centers as relevant and adapted to their way of life and often saw it as more useful than formal schooling. The evaluator observed that the centers provide an opportunity for children to express and share their creativity and receive appreciation from those around them, thus helping them to develop self-confidence and value their achievements. Children were able to express their opinions and are aware of HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves, though some of the older boys said that they practice abstinence. A total of 133 children (6 percent) have dropped out of classes, mainly to find work in South Africa; a number of others attend with varying regularity because of their working obligations and because they spend periods far away from their villages living on remote cattle posts.

RECLISA's new educational provision is serving to demonstrate and raise awareness of the importance and relevance of education, but it is the very beginning of a process of change. Communities are starting to consider alternative ways of caring for their livestock; discussions showed that, while there is little concept of child labor, there is the potential flexibility to reduce working hours and increase hours of learning because of the perceived importance of education. Women in particular expressed willingness to take on some herding duties to enable their children to attend classes or, with the advent of compulsory primary education, to attend school. The education that children are receiving is widening their horizons and offering them more choices for the future, but it needs to continue to reach its full potential.

5.1.6 Services to Herd Boys and Other Vulnerable Children

In addition to the two hours of basic education a day described above, the project provided each learner with a blanket and a pair of gum boots. When learners walk from their center to a central meeting point to attend a project event, or visited Maseru for Literacy Day, they are provided with food and accommodation as appropriate.

RECLISA's strategy to improve working conditions for herders consisted of the provision of vocational and entrepreneurial training, community-level awareness raising, and the provision of a blanket and a pair of gum boots for each learner. The strategy was effective in that parents and employers agreed to allow children to attend learning centers after working hours and, on occasion, released them for a whole day to attend special events (such as the evaluator's visit), or for several days to attend National Literacy Day celebrations in Maseru. Vocational

training taught the herd boys how to mend and decorate their clothing and has the potential to offer alternative ways of making a living. These may seem like very small improvements, but they are the beginning of a process of change that is encouraging community members to look on the herd boys in a different light and to recognize that they have the potential to live a different kind of life. The quality of life of learners also improved as a result of communal learning activities, the possibility of traveling to cattle posts with learning materials, and the positive attention and encouragement they received from static and roving animators, other community members, and project staff. What the project has not been able to achieve on any widespread basis (there are some isolated examples) is any general reduction in working hours or recognition that some of the extreme conditions that children are working in are inappropriate and damaging to their development.

5.1.7 Identification of Beneficiaries

LANFE and NGOC discussed RECLISA's objectives with local leaders in the districts where they planned to work. Leaders who were interested in the project called meetings known as *pitso* (plural, *lipitso*) to introduce the idea to their communities. A *pitso* is a gathering led by traditional or political leaders to communicate, consult, and negotiate with community members. LANFE and NGOC presented the project at the *lipitso* and responded to questions during the discussions that followed. These meetings were also the forum where animators were selected and where children were registered. Learners were put forward by their parents or their employers or they themselves asked to enroll, and a local leader signed their enrollment to verify that they fitted the criteria. The provision was open to children under 17 who were not in school. In Mophale Hoek, children who enrolled tended to be younger than in the other districts and, in some centers, up to 50 percent of the learners are orphans. The process of identifying beneficiaries was transparent and appropriate, and all those who fit the criteria were able to enroll.

5.1.8 Student Tracking System (STS)

With RECLISA, as with other EI projects, the STS caused considerable difficulties because of various shortcomings in the way the software operates, particularly its inability to produce the required reports. This was especially unfortunate in Lesotho because it was the first time that LANFE had worked with such a database, and the fact that it was not fully functional did not help their learning process. It increased the amount of time taken up with monitoring, as errors in calculations had to be discovered and rectified, and reports were compiled by counting individual entries. A different system would have been easier to use, but by the time the shortcomings of the STS were discovered it was too late for Khulisa to train people to use another system. At the time of the evaluation, LANFE was successfully recording data on learners using the STS and were up-to-date with this process.

5.1.9 Monitoring Working Status

After the midterm evaluation, AIR developed a multiple choice questionnaire to monitor children's work status in the five countries where it worked. This has proven to be time-consuming to administer and constitutes a considerable burden for LANFE's animators, who are simply not able to keep up with tracking work status on a monthly basis, as originally intended. The questionnaire consists of (1) four questions on school attendance, achievement, and

behavior, to be answered by the animator; and (2) nine questions on work, to be answered by the learner. The latter covers whether a child is working, the type of work, its hours and frequency, whether the work is paid, whether the child gets sick often, why he attends or misses classes, and what activities he engages in when not working. The questionnaire does *not* establish whether the work takes place within or outside the community (which would have been very relevant in terms of herding), who benefits from any payment, or how the child feels about working.

5.1.10 Roving Animators

LANFE works through five volunteer roving animators (including a district monitor in Mokhotlong) who visit remote centers and learners working in cattle posts away from their centers. Roving animators assist in data collection and monitor progress in remote locations. LANFE's monitoring officer visits each district on a monthly basis to visit a number of learning centers, meet with the roving animators, and collect data. Roving animators are provided with a form that they use to monitor activities in the centers they visit. The form asks them to look at the condition and origin of the physical infrastructure, the teaching and learning materials in use, the animator's preparation for lessons, and the teaching methodology; it also asks them to observe a class and answer questions based on their observations. The responses then feed into future training and support for animators and enable LANFE to keep track of how learners are progressing through the workbooks.

5.1.11 Awareness-Raising Activities

At the government level, ministry representatives are fully aware that child labor is an issue in Lesotho and that the national APEC is a comprehensive document detailing a range of initiatives designed to lead to its elimination. The combined effect of TECL and RECLISA has focused attention through the development of the national plan and national publicity about the situation of herd boys. The national conference on child labor organized by RECLISA in 2005 undoubtedly contributed to knowledge and awareness at the national level; also, NGOC and LANFE's membership of a number of national forums provides opportunities to raise child labor as part of more general discussion of OVC policy and other development issues. National celebrations of Literacy Day on September 8 are prominent events; in 2007, more than 400 herd boys arrived in Maseru to participate in sporting competitions and traditional music and dance. A number of RECLISA students (280) received their graduation certificates alongside other NFE learners. Both RECLISA and LANFE directors addressed the public gathering and the celebrations received considerable media coverage. The presence of so many herd boys in town, prominent because of their grey blankets and wooden staffs, served to bring issues concerning them to the public's attention. They left a lasting impression in the minds of the people of Maseru, because virtually every respondent during the evaluation alluded to this event. Likewise, there is no dispute about the importance of education; the government had embarked on a process of review and reform before RECLISA.

At the district level, local government officials' levels of awareness concerning child labor ranged from those who appeared to have never really thought about it to others who expressed concern, but had little hope of changing the situation. While district administrators and education officers were all aware of and in support of the LANFE learning centers, they saw them as a way of offering basic education to herders rather than an attempt to reduce child labor. What came across

most clearly is the hierarchical nature of the government system and a number of respondents were wary of saying anything without direct instruction from their superiors, many of whom were unavailable for comment. However, the notable exception was the concern expressed by the principal chief in Mokhotlong, one of the participants in the 2005 national conference. He not only stated that child labor is an issue for Lesotho, but went on to give a succinct description of how and why this was so. The principal chief is a highly respected and influential member of the royal family who sits in the Senate. He offers material support to LANFE centers, provides a room that project animators use for meetings and training events, and has supported a range of literacy and other development initiatives in recent years. He was very concerned to hear that there was no ongoing plan to support the learning centers and committed himself to doing whatever he could to assist in finding a solution. After the field visits, the evaluator discovered that District Child Protection Teams are chaired by the district administrator and provide a platform where issues affecting children are discussed. Unfortunately, no discussion concerning these teams took place at the district level during the evaluation.

At community level, the evaluator found relatively little awareness of child labor as an issue for concern. NGOC and LANFE have spoken about it at the *lipitso* and animator training covered the concepts of child rights and exploitive child labor. However, animators face an uphill battle in convincing other members of their communities that herding could be detrimental to their children; since education is seen as increasingly important by virtually everyone, this probably provides the most promising entry point for change.

To measure the increase of awareness of issues around child labor and the importance of education at community level, AIR developed a tool consisting of 12 multiple-choice questions. They advised subcontractors to use pre- and posttests to measure changes in awareness. LANFE animators administered the questionnaire to 286 members of communities where they worked, mainly by going door to door. Having studied the questionnaire and talked to LANFE animators and staff, it is clear that the questionnaire is not a very appropriate instrument for use in largely non-literate communities. It requires one-on-one attention, as each multiple choice question needs to be explained and scored, so pre- and posttests at community meetings are not a feasible option. The questions are not tailored to the specific situations in each country. The questions test an understanding of quite sophisticated concepts, such as child labor, child work, and the right to be a child, as opposed to looking at more basic ideas, such as the types of activities that are seen as acceptable or potentially harmful for children and the degree of understanding of children's rights and responsibilities. The questions make a number of assumptions that are open to various interpretations, and translation poses further challenges.

It is never easy to measure changes in ideas, but there is a range of more appropriate tools and techniques that might have been exploited to do this. One approach is to look for any changes in behavior resulting from greater awareness. Participatory rural appraisal methodologies enable non-literate communities to analyze and discuss issues that concern and interest them, and these can be adapted both to develop and to measure awareness. For example, a facilitator can help a community group to create and score a matrix constructed on the ground, using locally available materials as symbols for the different elements. Such a matrix might look as follows:

Table 2: Sample Matrix

Child's age	Fetching water/wood	Domestic chores	Herding close to home	Herding on a cattle post
5–7	***	***	**	n/a
8–10	*****	***	***	n/a
11–13	***	**	*****	n/a
14–16	*	n/a	***	***
17–18	n/a	n/a	**	****

n/a = not applicable

Once the range of tasks carried out by children (ideally, the exercise would differentiate between girls and boys) has been listed in as much detail as possible, the group agrees on a scoring system and scores the degree to which each task is carried out by each age group. As a second part of the exercise, they could also score to what extent they think that the task might be harmful or beneficial for each age group. The facilitator then has the opportunity to ask a number of questions that encourage debate and discussion, and new ideas and concepts can also be introduced as part of this process. A tree is another tool to facilitate such analysis: It's constructed on the ground in the same way, the trunk represents herding, the roots the causes of herding, and the branches its consequences.

While this sort of community awareness-raising activity certainly takes time and requires some training for local facilitators to guide the process, it does lead to dynamic and participatory debate that actively involves members of the communities concerned. As such, it is likely to be more effective than simply giving information to a relatively passive audience concerning definitions of child labor/child work and what is and is not permissible according to national law and international agreements. For communities to take ownership of a process of change, they need to be involved in discussion, analysis, and decision-making based on their own understanding of the implications of their children's rights, needs, and potential. The community committees set up to support the learning centers might have played a major role in this process, if the project had been able to train and support them.

5.1.12 Midterm Recommendations

The project took the recommendations of the midterm evaluation very seriously and has worked hard to implement those that are seen as feasible within the context of the RECLISA project. Of the 17 recommendations addressed to Lesotho, AIR reports that four have been implemented, nine are ongoing, and four have not been acted on and no action is planned. A summary follows.

Implemented

- 1. Develop formal system for monitoring of work status that subsumes animator knowledge.*

This recommendation was stated in the midterm report as follows: "Animators know the work status of the children, but they are not formally tracking it. A system to monitor the work status

of the children should build on their informal ways of doing this—this will assist in convincing people about the extent to which children are being exploited.” A footnote further explains:

The animators have their own ways of finding out and monitoring the work status of children. This is done by utilizing the social capital of the community (i.e., the connectedness among communities enables them to find out where children are, what their work conditions are, and how are they doing). The formal system should therefore tap into how animators are tracking work status presently, which will in turn provide rich information about work status. If the formal system acknowledges the knowledge that animators have built up, they will become the main activists and educators about the causes and effects of the exploitation of children because they will then take ownership of the results and findings long after the project has stopped.

As previously described, AIR developed a questionnaire worksheet that is used by animators to formally track work status of learners, but it does not entirely fulfill the requirements of the recommendation. It is a uniform multiple-choice questionnaire used across all five countries. It enables the project to report on work status and an analysis of the work, hours, and school performance of learners. However, it does not use the social capital of communities or contribute to increasing local knowledge and awareness of the effect of child labor. It does not help an understanding of the different types and degrees of herding, which might have contributed to the definitions of hazardous labor that will be developed as part of the APEC. The requirement to track work status was one of those added by USDOL after the start of the project; so the midterm evaluation recommended that USDOL provide more resources to subcontractors for this purpose and that Juarez revise the STS. Neither of these recommendations was implemented; AIR found that they lacked the resources to develop or validate country-specific instruments.

2. *LANFE and NGOC should report separately to AIR to speed up direct disbursements of funds.*

This started to happen in January 2007, when LANFE became a direct AIR subcontractor.

3. *Review budget to ensure target beneficiaries receive basic resources for quality education.*

The midterm evaluation found that the project does not provide pencils, books, seats, tables, and blackboards. The project director reports that a budget realignment enabled all LANFE's requirements in this sense to be met, including registers, workbooks, pencils, erasers, chalk, chalkboards, and dusters. Exercise books were donated by the principal chief in Mokhotlong and originated with Prince Harry's Fund.¹⁰ Furniture was never in the budget. In 2008, LANFE received an additional US\$39,586 to fund a range of vocational training initiatives.

4. *Recruit male animators to provide training in cattle posts and create opportunities for herd boys to continue learning at traditional (initiation) schools.*

¹⁰ The Red Cross Lesotho Fund.

RECLISA reported that it wasn't culturally acceptable for animators to teach during periods of initiation. However, additional roving animators were recruited to visit cattle posts to offer some continuity for learners. This is proving to be a valid strategy, even if it is not possible to visit all the cattle posts on a frequent basis.

Ongoing

1. *Consider whether it is the project's intention to shift attitudes and behaviors toward herders.*

RECLISA responded to this recommendation by stating that shifting attitudes and behaviors is implicit in the project's purpose and is ongoing, in collaboration with TECL. The evaluator would concur with this.

2. *Select and develop practical strategies to ensure that targeted legislations are passed.*

In a document dated February 2008, RECLISA responded as follows:

[P]artners in Lesotho are attempting to influence legislation through collaboration with TECL, but to "ensure" the passage of such legislation is beyond their power and influence. Partners hope to execute a memorandum of understanding or intent with the Government of Lesotho before the end of the project. NGOC plans to complete a comprehensive policy matrix of all bills, policies, and laws affecting herd boys by the end of August. The policy matrix will serve to highlight the progress of each policy. Wherever NGOC believes it can make a sustainable impact, it will tailor its approach accordingly. Part of the planned activities include intensifying PACC's involvement to lobby for certain policies in the second half of 2007, forming an exit strategy team with a LANFE representative, and influencing government units that LANFE feeds into. AIR will assist NGOC to influence relevant ministries to strengthen their commitment in terms of better implementation of policies, budget allocation, and absorption of the animators at the end of the project.

The policy matrix has been completed as planned, but other initiatives were probably affected by the end of the partnership with NGOC. Perhaps project strategy was not significantly amended to take this into account, as there is little evidence of such concerted lobbying or practical strategies during the latter months of the project.

3. *More effectively describe project results and achievements.*

Project personnel have made efforts to reflect results and achievements in their reports and documentation, including the identification of good practices and lessons learned.

4. *Project should use its lessons learned and influence PACC to shift policies.*

RECLISA responded that it aims to do this through active participation in PACC meetings. However, these meetings do not occur on a regular basis and participation has not been helped by the subsequent breakdown of the partnership with NGOC. The evaluator also observed that the wheels of government turn extremely slowly.

- 5. Enhance strategies to influence local communities to create the “tipping point” regarding the value of education and issues related to exploitive child labor.*

RECLISA responded that sustainability efforts are underway to encourage a “tipping point.” While the evaluator found that the value of education was widely acknowledged, there was much less evidence of understanding child labor issues or sustainability efforts having achieved any concrete results.

- 6. Develop strategies to formally harness partners’ contributions introduce accountability and celebrate achievements.*

RECLISA responded that the reconfiguration of AIR’s relationship with NGOC and LANFE is enabling this process, and the evaluator concurs that this was an important step. During the evaluation, the morale of LANFE personnel was summed up by the director: “We feel like we’re never doing it right.” It was a comment that mirrored similar sentiments from other members of staff, despite the enormous achievement of establishing and supporting 58 learning centers in remote communities, with limited financial and human resources. However, it is important to add that LANFE’s director also said that the team appreciated the moral support they received from AIR, both via phone calls and through visits from individual staff members, so project staff didn’t always feel so despondent. AIR worked hard to help LANFE comply with USDOL’s reporting requirements, to build LANFE’s capacity in this regard, and to encourage them about their progress. Indeed, in AIR’s opinion, LANFE made the most progress in financial and contractual management of any of RECLISA’s partners.

- 7. Influence MOET to absorb the three project districts.*

Despite a series of meetings with MOET, this hasn’t proven possible.

- 8. Develop strategies to furnish the learning centers with basic needs for teaching and learning.*

AIR/LANFE provided basic teaching aids to animators and learning aids for beneficiaries in early 2008. The items provided were sets of laminated letters and numbers in Ziploc® bags for each of the beneficiaries, as well as enlarged sets of numbers and letters for each of the teachers.

- 9. To ensure sustainability, projects that generate self-sufficiency using starter-packs should be created to deal with the socioeconomic needs of the learning centers and the animators.*

RECLISA responded by making reference to the garden initiative and micro-enterprise training offered to increase the self-sufficiency of both animators and learning centers and LANFE’s intention to offer continued support to the centers after the project ends.

Two activities occurred with respect to gardening. In 2006, the Lesotho Herd Boy’s Association received funds via NGOC for gardening tools and potato seeds; the seeds were subsequently planted, but some of the crop was stolen. In April 2007, LANFE provided vocational education workshops for the animators, which included instruction on gardening. The animators in turn provided training to project beneficiaries in the local settings; many of them have started to

produce various artifacts that they plan to sell to generate income. There will be ongoing training in this area before the end of the project; also, micro-enterprise training is being transferred to animators to support these activities.

The Lesotho Herd Boys gardening initiative has no direct bearing on the LANFE learning centers, as the two organizations do not work in the same communities. AIR's original proposal included money for small grants to community-based and other organizations working against child labor. Since USDOL is not permitted to authorize sub-grants, this strategy became difficult to implement. After having involved the Herd Boys Association in the Lesotho conference, NGOC supported them through direct purchases or payments on their behalf, some of which tested the potential of agriculture and vocational training as alternatives to livestock herding. The vocational training has proven extremely popular among animators, learners, and their families, and there is the potential to develop income generation as a result, even if this is not as yet much in evidence. While reference is made to LANFE's ongoing support for the centers after the end of the project, it is difficult to see how this will be possible in practice without the necessary financial resources.

No Action Planned

- 1. Management and administration of evaluations should be done by in-country staff and they should contribute to the evaluation framework and questions.*

RECLISA responded to this by saying that partners have no resources for management and administration of evaluations. The current final evaluation did not suffer from the constraints experienced by the midterm evaluator. A worker employed by LANFE and paid by Macro International Inc. specifically to coordinate and plan for field visits was very successful in doing so. This recommendation is valid in its entirety, in that national (as opposed to regional) personnel are the best placed to identify a feasible field visit schedule and can benefit most from the evaluation experience if they are active participants involved throughout the process.

- 2. Engage partners at the design stage to ensure that the assumptions and the causal links that inform the change theory are reflected between and across the elements of the program.*

This was identified as a recommendation for USDOL; the evaluator would again like to reinforce it. People with local knowledge and experience are invaluable in designing a practical and effective project. One of the disadvantages of a regional approach is that less attention tends to be given to the specificities of each country. In addition, a local organization that has been part of project research and design is better placed to hit the ground running as far as implementation is concerned. One way of actually putting this into practice is to fund a research and design phase before the project itself gets underway.

- 3. A skills and capacity audit should be conducted at the outset to inform the design stage.*

This was identified as a recommendation for USDOL, but it is addressed to future grantees, and has been echoed by the project director. Ideally, this would be part of the design stage, but it

could also be an initial activity of the implementation phase to inform capacity-building activities and promote accountability. In any case, it is an important recommendation that came too late to be useful to RECLISA.

4. Learn to work within results-based framework.

RECLISA responded that it works within results-based framework approved by USDOL.

5.1.13 Local NGOs and Organizations

The major challenges have been linked to capacity and partnership agreements. As has already been mentioned, AIR would have done well to have carried out an institutional assessment covering financial systems and management capacity before definitively selecting their NGO subcontractors. Three-tiered management proved difficult to operate and was exacerbated by NGOC's lack of accounting and organizational capacity. It was a good decision to sign a direct agreement with LANFE to rectify the problems, but the probable failure of NGOC to reimburse US\$12,000 that it cannot account for will prove an expensive lesson for AIR. NGOC has a new director, who was extremely frank during her interview with the evaluator. She and the organization's chairperson fully acknowledge that their procedures were inadequate and that their accountant did not fulfill his role, but they do not have the money to repay the funds. They also did not seem to think that the organization should be held responsible, as the offending personnel were no longer employed there.

LANFE was previously unaccustomed to such rigorous monitoring of individual beneficiaries and found it difficult to cope with the level of recording, reporting, and form filling required. These difficulties were attributed principally to the challenging working environment in mountainous herding communities, the relatively low level of education of animators, staffing levels, and the time required to physically carry out the work. The situation was exacerbated by an STS that did not work as well as it might. Nonetheless, LANFE personnel saw the process as very useful in terms of developing a database that they will be able to use in their future work, and they described this as an added value of RECLISA.

AIR on their part spent considerable time and effort in explaining financial, monitoring and recording systems, and training project staff to operate them. They consistently made themselves available and were ready to repeat and elaborate on different aspects of the work, during visits or by phone or e-mail, as required.

5.1.14 Conclusions

The project design did not change in substance, but the establishment of more centers than planned and more extensive monitoring requirements than predicted meant that the project personnel were stretched to the limits. This, along with management difficulties, led to delays in implementation, which left less than optimal time for the development of vocational skills and their potential for income generation.

The project was welcomed by the government, and its design complemented existing efforts to combat child labor and filled a gap in educational services for children, thus contributing to the

provision of EFA. However, since MOET is unable to take over support for the centers at the end of the project, this contribution is probably of limited duration. Collaboration with TECL worked well, but the relationship between the two projects could have been more widely exploited to enable field experience to feed into advocacy and policy work.

Working through local organizations has proven both essential and challenging and provided some important lessons. Institutional and capacity assessment is essential and three-tier management structures are complicated to operate effectively and best avoided. Local knowledge and credibility is invaluable; thus, capacity building to enable new and complex administrative and monitoring requirements to be understood and implemented needs to be built into project design. It is also very important to ensure sufficient resources to operate the project to optimal effect so that it can reach its potential within the project period.

The project has made every effort to support the first four USDOL goals. While it is difficult to define RECLISA's learners as "withdrawn," it is illogical if AIR cannot claim them as direct beneficiaries of the project, since all activities were agreed upon with USDOL and the project's provision undoubtedly improved the present and potential quality of life of its learners. The sustainability of the centers is of real concern and, in the opinion of the evaluator, RECLISA probably relied too much on the government taking over at the end of the project without sufficient evidence that they were going to do so.

The project provided a range of relevant and appropriate services to working children and successfully trained local animators to teach and manage local learning centers. It was challenging to collect data, monitor progress, and support animators because of the difficult terrain, extreme weather conditions, and the limited number of project staff. The project responded by increasing the number of volunteer roving animators and LANFE personnel worked on RECLISA-related tasks above and beyond the hours for which they were paid by the project. While monitoring software did not perform as planned, it was still regarded as a useful tool and enabled the project to track its achievements.

Raising awareness of child labor is inevitably very challenging in herding communities, even though it is increasingly acknowledged at district and national levels. The project attempted to increase awareness and monitor any change, but did not use participatory methodologies that might have resulted in a more effective and dynamic process. In contrast, awareness of the importance of education was widespread and has clearly been enhanced by the presence of learning centers at the heart of herding communities.

RECLISA has worked hard to implement recommendations of the midterm evaluation, within the limits of resources available. Although a stressful experience, RECLISA's work is credited with improving project delivery. In conclusion, RECLISA has spared no effort to meet all its challenges; it can be proud of some very significant and life-changing achievements in Lesotho.

5.1.15 Recommendations

For USDOL

- USDOL should count Lesotho learners among the project's direct beneficiaries, in recognition of the work that has been done and the changes in USDOL's requirements during the project, and despite the fact that, strictly speaking, the majority of these learners have not been withdrawn or prevented from child labor.

For AIR and LANFE

- Where relevant, work status monitoring should be tailored to the specific type of work concerned and serve to increase national and local knowledge of how that type of work affects children. Communities should be actively involved not only in data gathering, but in data interpretation. This is more than a tool for project monitoring; it should be part of the process of developing local and national child labor monitoring systems.
- Participatory approaches should be used to ensure the active community involvement in debates concerning children's rights and child labor. To be effective, awareness-raising needs to involve more than telling communities what they should or should not do.

For LANFE

- Implementing organizations need to accurately assess the number of staff and other resources they need to do the best job possible and negotiate hard to ensure that this is what they get. Grantees should also ensure that the job they are asking subcontractors to do is feasible with the resources provided.
- If LANFE succeeds in attracting resources to enable them to continue to support the learning centers, a priority should be training for the local committees so they can actively contribute to center management, child labor monitoring, and awareness raising.

5.2 REGIONAL ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND AWARENESS RAISING

5.2.1 RECLISA's Regional Approach

LANFE's perspective on this question was that it might be better to have the grantee to support them at national level because services would be more adapted to local realities and would avoid any tendency to assume that one size fits all. However, LANFE also said that their staff had learned a lot from meeting other subcontractors at regional meetings and by sharing experiences and information.

Within the context of Lesotho, where RECLISA tackled a specific type of child labor engrained in the local culture, a country program would have enabled a more intensive and focused initiative and avoided the dissipation of energy caused by management difficulties. It would also have ensured that instruments for measuring work status and awareness were more adapted to the

communities where they were used, because the designer would have been able to visit the communities and test the tools, which was not the case with RECLISA. Capacity building for local partners would have been more accessible as the need arose, and it might have been possible to support in-country networking between organizations working with herd boys. A country program would also provide greater opportunity for advocacy and policy work, through both formal and informal channels; this would have been a great advantage in Lesotho, where legislative change needs constant follow-up because of the nature of the policy environment.

AIR would rightly contend that while this is no doubt ideal, it would certainly be more expensive to operate five grantee offices instead of one. It would also not provide the same potential for shared learning across a region, although this would be possible to facilitate through networking with other initiatives if funding for this was built into a country program budget.

Because of the specific child labor issues in Lesotho, the country merits an intensive national program instead of a regional approach. Because the country is small and the framework now exists to move forward on both the policy and direct intervention fronts, it would be beneficial if such an initiative took place before the impetus generated by TECL and RECLISA fades away.

5.2.2 Building Management Capacity of LANFE

RECLISA's overall capacity building had a number of components. These included site visits by both AIR and Khulisa personnel, regional partner meetings, and specific training events. Partner meetings took place on a six month basis and the "Making Cents" micro-enterprise training in December 2007 was attended by five people from Lesotho. In addition, partners received information compiled by the regional office via a series of CDs. Technical assistance took place as needed. Lesotho required more site visits than the other countries, receiving 18 of the 45 site visits undertaken by AIR staff since December 2006, broken down as follows:

- Project director—four visits, principally for policy work and advocacy.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)/education specialist—no visits.
- Child Labor/Education associate—seven visits.
- Finance/Administrative manager—seven visits.
- Visits from Khulisa M&E person—"frequent," but number unknown.

This high number of visits was a result of the extra work required to help LANFE understand and operate the requirements of a direct subcontract.

Capacity building focused on enabling subcontractors to implement the project's administrative and monitoring requirements, with a lesser emphasis on helping with technical implementation linked to awareness raising and education. This considerably increased LANFE's capacity to record and monitor the progress of the learners in their centers; they are the first to recognize how useful this has been and how this experience and knowledge will continue to be useful.

Project management was complex and, unfortunately, AIR did not succeed in building NGOC's capacity to enable them to fulfill their obligations effectively; but this was not caused by any lack of effort. AIR considered that it provided more assistance and more direct hands-on help to NGOC than to any other partner, particularly in the financial and contract management areas. AIR also spared no effort in assisting LANFE to understand the project's management requirements, as demonstrated by their frequent field visits; but from LANFE's perspective this proved confusing and time-consuming. From the beginning, LANFE experienced a lack of clarity concerning the implications and demands of the project. The association's non-involvement in many discussions between AIR and NGOC made it a confusing experience to work on the project; it left their staff somewhat bewildered as to what was being requested and how to respond to demands. The association mentioned receiving different instructions from the Pretoria and Washington, DC offices, uncertainty about which AIR officer was responsible for making decisions in different management areas, and unexplained changes in administrative and reporting procedures.

AIR regrets the lack of an initial assessment of subcontractors' management, financial, and organizational capacity; such an assessment would have provided the basis on which to develop the project's capacity-building initiatives. AIR moved to make LANFE a direct subcontractor once it became clear that NGOC were not able to manage the project as anticipated, but it took until more than halfway through the project for this to take place. LANFE personnel received a lot of help and support to meet the project's management requirements; it made considerable progress in this sense. While AIR certainly worked hard to build local partners' management capacity in Lesotho, the overall effectiveness of the association's efforts could have been greater. Difficulties may have been caused by the number of people involved in the process, the lack of a project manual outlining management procedures, changes in USDOL's requirements, or a combination of these and other elements.

Any future project would be well advised to start out with a partner workshop to initiate financial, management, and technical staff and inform them of administrative and monitoring requirements; such a project should also introduce a project-specific procedures manual with templates for timesheets and other common forms and reporting tools. In addition, partner assessments would enable an evaluation of strengths and areas needing improvement; there is also the potential for partners to learn from each other, through an organized process that would value and utilize existing capacity and experience.

5.2.3 The National Child Labor Conference as a Strategy to Increase Awareness

The conference in Lesotho was the first of the national conferences. It took place in 2005. Many respondents mentioned it as a valuable event that generated interest in the issues and attracted high-level participants and useful media coverage. Conference documentation is available on the website, but the evaluator found little evidence of the project actively monitoring national interest or building on the momentum created by the event beyond the ongoing policy work already described; it seems that this was not envisaged, judging by the lack of any budget for such activities. Project staff found the regional conference very useful and informative, but the evaluator was not able to speak to any other national representatives who attended.

5.2.4 Conclusions

Overall, a country program facilitates more intensive and locally adapted activities and can respond more quickly to any issues arising; thus, it is likely to be more effective and have a greater impact over a limited period. However, it does not offer the same opportunities for cross-pollination through shared learning that a regional program offers and is likely to be proportionally more expensive.

Although AIR experienced some difficulties regarding project management in Lesotho, it spared no effort in trying to resolve the issues. It is possible that more formalized lines of communication and a procedures manual might have made the association's work easier, but AIR was learning how to operate as a USDOL grantee and had to contend with unexpected changes in USDOL's procedural guidelines during the project.

National and regional conferences contributed to raising awareness at the national level in Lesotho. It is possible that the project could have done more to follow up these initiatives through national networking and ongoing publicity, but there was no budget for such activities after the year of the conference.

5.2.5 Recommendations

For USDOL

- In countries such as Lesotho, where a specific form of child labor is deeply engrained in culture and tradition, USDOL should implement a national rather than a regional program.

For AIR

- Three-tiered project management structures should be avoided because they are complex to operate and rarely provide any added value.
- Grantees should carry out an institutional assessment of potential subcontracting organizations to verify that they have the necessary governance to ensure accountability and the financial, management, and technical capacity required.
- Grantees should develop a project-specific procedures manual to guide project management.
- Projects with a number of subcontractors should bring them together for an initial workshop to introduce financial, administrative, and monitoring requirements. Subsequent training can be offered as needed.
- National and regional child labor conferences should be accompanied by a budget for follow-up networking and publicity to capitalize on interest generated by the events.

5.3 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

5.3.1 Exit Strategy

The project's principal strategy for the continued operation of the learning centers was based on the takeover of support for the centers by MOET. The director of NGOC and the director of RECLISA made a number of visits to the ministry to discuss this, but there was no formal agreement at the start of the project and there has never been any direct commitment from the ministry, so the strategy seems to be based mainly on wishful thinking. During the evaluation, the NFE coordinator for MOET explained that, for a number of reasons, there was no possibility of any imminent government support for animators, but that LDTC was able to produce as many learners' workbooks as needed.

RECLISA developed a sustainability matrix for Lesotho in September 2007 as part of its exit strategy. The matrix identifies the necessary conditions for sustainability as follows:

- Financial resources for animators, supplies and transport.
- Human resources—(animators are available and trained).
- Technical support available—(LANFE).
- Political will and policies in place.
- Community awareness and support.
- Learners see a future (jobs, education).

The matrix goes on to identify the actions necessary to ensure that these conditions are met, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Identify and recruit champions (LTDC, MOET, Parliament, the media, NUL/IEMS).
2. Lobby government to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.
3. Follow up key policies: Child protection Bill, NFE policy, Education Bill, OVC action plan, APEC.
4. Collaboration with TECL to promote government action.
5. Explore options for psychosocial support through RECLISA.

According to the evaluator, these actions—although important—were rather too nebulous to provide the desired result within the time frame available; there was no evidence that any of them had borne any fruit at the time of the final evaluation. In addition, the conditions identified in the matrix seem to assume that LANFE will be able to offer technical support at the end of the project without any financial resources; it is difficult to see how this might happen.

During the evaluation, the evaluator became increasingly concerned by the lack of any tangible provision for sustainability and started to advocate for this as part of her ongoing interviews. It rapidly transpired that a number of stakeholders were not only unaware that the project was about to end, but were extremely concerned that there was little provision for the centers continuing to operate, other than the goodwill of the animators. These included UNICEF, the Principal Chief of Mokhotlong District, District education and administrative authorities, local chiefs and councilors, animators, parents, and learners. The U.S. Regional Labor Officer and the TECL coordinator also expressed their concern that no USDOL or ILO project follow-up was envisaged in Lesotho and that the learning centers were unlikely to receive any ongoing support.

It is surprising that, with so much concern and various offers and suggestions for support, the project has not so far been able to coordinate a more effective exit strategy and mobilize stakeholders to put in place, at a minimum, a plan to enable RECLISA's learners to finish the course and graduate.

Since the evaluator was not able to have any discussion with NGOC project personnel, who carried a large part of the responsibility for negotiating with the government, it is useful to have AIR's perspective concerning RECLISA's exit strategy and provision for sustainability. AIR felt, and the evaluator agrees, that given (a) NGOC's strong relationships with government, (b) the government's implicit acceptance of responsibility for NFE (through its funding of LDTC to work in six districts), and (c) the greater reliability of governmental versus donor funding, the decision to seek government takeover of NFE in the three districts where the project worked made good sense. AIR said it had no evidence that this was *not* feasible and assumed that LANFE's long-term external funding would continue while lobbying the government to finance LANFE directly, so they fully expected that LANFE would have the financial resources to continue. LANFE's ongoing funding changed for the worse in 2007, undercutting this part of the sustainability strategy. The loss of NGOC's participation in 2007, when AIR and NGOC were trying to finalize arrangements with the government made it difficult to coordinate an effective exit strategy to complete the tangible progress that had been made since 2005 with the NGOC policy-tracking matrix and culminating in 2007 with consultations between the RECLISA and senior government officials. Therefore, AIR attributed the failure of the government takeover strategy to this combination of circumstances rather than any lack of awareness of the MOET's intentions. It seems that RECLISA was on track to put in place an effective exit strategy, but the unfortunate series of events in 2007 led to the disintegration of the plans. AIR was also frustrated by USDOL's consistent signals that there was no real chance of follow-on support for RECLISA and then by discovering that additional TECL funding had been approved for some countries but not for Lesotho.

5.3.2 Impact

The project has provided learners with basic education as a starting point for expanding the choices and opportunities open to them. It has meant that herd boys are becoming literate and numerate, are better able to look after themselves, have greater self-confidence and social skills, and are seen in a better light in their communities. The project has enabled parents to enroll their children in an educational provision that they see as relevant and accessible, and the quality of the provision has served to enhance parents' perception of the benefits of education. Animators have been able to build on their basic education to offer a service that is respected and valued in

their villages. This has increased their status and resulted in a group of highly committed and energetic teachers who intend to do their best to continue to operate their centers, with or without external support. The combined effect of the project in the communities where it works can be seen as the beginning of a process that could encourage more flexible alternatives for looking after livestock; parents, employers, and community leaders increasingly recognize that herd boys have a right to education and that they have the potential to contribute to their communities in ways other than herding.

For the project partners, NGOC and LANFE, the project has also had considerable impact. NGOC's management committee has been forced to face up to the fact that the organization has some serious shortcomings, although they seem unwilling to take responsibility and make reparation for what has happened. Through RECLISA, LANFE has learned new skills and, as the project draws to a close, they have learned the need to build on their undoubted expertise in delivering NFE to improve their capacity to market themselves and attract new financial and technical partners.

5.3.3 Capacity and Motivation of Community Members to Advocate Against Exploitive Child Labor

Community members have very little capacity to advocate against exploitive child labor after the end of the project because the vast majority does not have any developed understanding of what it is. Animators are the only community members to have received any training in this sense and it is optimistic to think that, in addition to their work as voluntary teachers, they would be able to actively work to challenge entrenched opinions in their communities. Animators are themselves products of these same communities; thus, they are at varying stages in the evolution of their own ideas. There is little evidence that the project has been able to facilitate community discussion and analysis concerning appropriate and inappropriate work for children. There has been no classification, even for project purposes, of degrees of herding or what might be considered acceptable for children of different ages. Ideally, such a debate would have taken place within the communities concerned, leading to their own classification and monitoring of children and their work, but this has not played any part in project activities.

5.3.4 Impact on National or State Policies

Combined with TECL, RECLISA has contributed to developing awareness of child labor at the national level and to national plans and policies to tackle it. However, these plans and policies are not sufficiently advanced to identify any specific examples linked to beneficiaries. It is for this reason that it is important that ILO and/or USDOL look at continued input to support policy implementation in Lesotho, so that the efforts of the last four years have produced results for working children in the long term. Based on the length of time taken for education legislation to become law and the evaluator's (albeit limited) observation of the functioning of the government in Lesotho, it could take some time for a list of hazardous labor to be agreed upon and adopted without additional support and encouragement.

5.3.5 Government Willingness to Carry On Project Implementation

One of the anticipated outputs identified by RECLISA in Lesotho was increased government support for herd children and OVC, an indicator of this being the absorption of project animators into government service. The project worked to encourage the ministry to take on support of the project through a series of visits to discuss the matter with MOET officials; unfortunately, MOET is quite clear that it is unable to do this, principally because the project operates in districts where LDTC does not. Despite this lack of concrete government support, the work being done by the centers is respected and valued within MOET, and LANFE is seen as the appropriate and competent organization to do this work.

5.3.6 Greatest and Least Impact

Literacy and vocational skills are both seen as relevant and useful skills for children to learn. Community members are excited by the potential for income generation that vocational skills training offers; the project strategy of building on existing skills and introducing new ideas has also been appreciated. The fact that most of the skills use locally available materials has added to their attraction; the only difficulty that was commonly mentioned was in obtaining tools for working with animal horn, which are apparently only available in South Africa. To have a real impact on reducing child labor, the learning centers need to continue to operate for a longer period to allow the potential inherent in vocational skills and micro-enterprise training to develop. The centers have already convinced parents and employers of the benefits they offer to their learners. The challenge now is to generate greater debate around child labor issues and child rights to encourage communities to look for alternative ways of caring for their livestock, consider increasing the hours that children can use for education, and expand the topics that are covered. During the evaluation, several local leaders suggested the possibility of a centrally located vocational training center that could meet the needs of several neighboring villages. This seems like a fanciful dream in the current environment, but it is this sort of initiative that needs to be supported if herding is actually going to be replaced by another way of life within the foreseeable future.

5.3.7 Lessons Learned in Terms of Sustainability

The principal lesson, when a completely new provision is being established, is the importance of having a formal agreement with the government at the start of the project. If this is not forthcoming, then it is necessary to develop an alternative strategy and actively work to ensure that it kicks in before the end of the project. The fact that this has not happened is attributed to a combination of several factors as follows:

- LANFE does not have enough staff capacity to cover all the angles: project administration, operational aspects, and advocacy.
- The regional nature of the project contributed to AIR being unaware that MOET would not be able to take over the centers at the time of the evaluation.
- The sustainability matrix seems to have been principally an exercise in form filling rather than an aid to developing and carrying out an action plan.

Another lesson is the importance of having the human and financial resources to implement an effective, creative, and holistic plan of action tailored to the needs and realities of the communities concerned. The evaluator gained the distinct impression that the driving force behind project implementation was achieving target numbers and successfully applying USDOL's MPG, rather than the best interests of working children and their families. While grantees have an obligation to USDOL to respect and implement these guidelines, they also have a responsibility toward the group the project aims to serve; part of their role is to manage any tensions between the two and balance the relative power of the donor and the beneficiaries through advocacy and explanation. It is important to counterbalance donor led initiatives, because the entire history of development shows that sustainability and local ownership depends on local participation. This cannot be achieved through a contractual obligation to enroll a given number of children; if this becomes the principal objective, it is at the expense of other elements that are important in terms of sustainability. The project was designed to cover 30 learning centers, which was increased to 58 to reach the desired number of beneficiaries with an acceptable teacher-pupil ratio. No corresponding increase was made in staffing levels, beyond increasing the number of volunteer animators and roving animators. This meant that the project's human and financial resources were spread more thinly in order to train animators, monitor progress, and equip all 58 centers. If the project had operated on the basis of the original 30 centers, it might have been feasible to train the center committees, devote more time to raising community awareness, and develop locally defined categories of herding and work status monitoring, all of which would have contributed to greater community ownership and the sustainability of project initiatives.

USDOL needs to be aware of this and avoid overemphasis on target numbers in its projects to eliminate child labor. During the evaluation, the project director stated: "You can't be below the dam pulling out the drowning people and up above working to repair the breach at the same time." This is exactly what USDOL projects should aim to do if they hope to be more than a passing interlude in the lives of a limited number of children, and this means accepting that resources should be allocated to promote both withdrawal and sustainability. If grantees believe that they need to withdraw/prevent ever-increasing numbers of children at less cost in order to win a bid, USDOL projects will be increasingly less sustainable because resources will not be allocated to this end. If this is a conscious choice, USDOL should remove the fifth goal related to sustainability from its list.

5.3.8 Conclusions

Although the project had planned for an effective exit strategy based on the government taking over the learning centers and LANFE continuing to support them, this disintegrated in 2007 when NGOC was no longer negotiating with government representatives and LANFE lost its long-term funding. The project was not able to respond to this situation by developing a new strategy, resulting in the current lack of any plan to enable long-term sustainability. It worked in collaboration with TECL to develop and encourage policy initiatives, but the government is not prepared to put these into practice by taking on support for learning centers when RECLISA finishes.

The project has had a significant impact on all community-level stakeholders. It has changed the quality of life for learners and animators and demonstrated the relevance of the educational

opportunities provided by learning centers to parents, employers, and community leaders. It is true that it has only succeeded in scratching the surface concerning community-level awareness of child labor issues, but it has prepared the foundation for ongoing work in this sense. Vocational training combined with literacy holds the potential for income generation; herders, parents, employers, and community leaders are all excited by this initiative.

The project was a steep learning curve for the NGO subcontractors and leaves them better equipped for the future if they choose to build on the lessons learned. AIR put 100 percent of its effort into meeting the obligations and commitments of their cooperative agreement with USDOL and complying to the letter with the MPG. USDOL's emphasis on reaching the target number of beneficiaries may have influenced the degree to which the project focused on promoting sustainability.

5.3.9 Recommendations

For USDOL

- The most important recommendation of this evaluation is that USDOL should immediately fund ongoing work to support and develop the learning centers, alongside additional components to encourage and facilitate community awareness raising and the implementation of the national APEC. If this does not happen, it is difficult to see how the centers will continue to operate and how the process of changing the perceptions and lifestyle of communities where children are working in WFCL will continue. Ideally, such funding would include capacity building for LANFE and the Lesotho Herd Boys Association; this would enable them to develop and expand the work that they are doing with this target group and to develop skills for networking and the use of participatory approaches.
- USDOL should reflect on the effect of overemphasizing the importance of target numbers of withdrawn/prevented children on the sustainability of project initiatives and tailor its Solicitations for Cooperative Agreement Applications accordingly. If too much emphasis is placed on reaching a high number of direct beneficiaries without a corresponding emphasis on sustainability, grantees will be encouraged to develop projects that concentrate on a short-term intervention in the lives of high numbers of beneficiaries; this would result in insufficient attention to activities designed to promote the sustainability of project initiatives. Ultimately, it is the sustainable aspects of USDOL projects that will bring lasting change to the lives of working children—not only direct project beneficiaries but their younger brothers and sisters as well. If projects are not sustainable to some extent, they risk being little more than a passing phase in the life of a community.

For Future Grantees and Subcontractors

- If the project's strategy for sustainability depends on the government taking over support for service provision, a concrete commitment from the government should be obtained at the start of the project. Also, a plan for how state services will be involved in implementation and how the takeover will happen should be developed in collaboration

with the ministry concerned. If this is not possible, an alternative sustainability strategy needs to be developed.

- Any alternative strategy should involve the following stages:
 - An assessment of what resources and conditions are needed to ensure sustainability at least two years before the end of the project.
 - Consultation with stakeholders at all levels (community, district, national) to assess the degree of interest and potential allies, resources, and strategies.
 - The development of a concrete plan of action detailing activities, those responsible for carrying them out, and a timescale.
 - Regular monitoring/realignment of the plan, keeping all stakeholders informed of progress.

VI GOOD PRACTICES

The project implemented several good practices, such as the following:

- The project’s design is based on partnership with local organizations because they have the knowledge, experience, and credibility for activities to be effectively integrated into local communities.
- The literacy centers use good practices in line with several of the International Literacy Benchmarks, which outline 12 standards that contribute to successful literacy programs identified through a study of successful literacy initiatives around the world.¹¹ One of these benchmarks states: “To retain facilitators, it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation, and follow-up).” LANFE’s animators receive a stipend of about US\$35 a month, which is a move in this direction.
- The development of vocational skills as response to the economic needs of learners and their families was an effective way of helping parents and employers see the relevance of the centers and the importance of education. The fact that these skills built on traditional skills and introduced new possibilities—the majority utilizing locally available materials—contributed to this good practice.
- The provision of basic business skills training adapted to people who are developing literacy skills was another good practice. It is often overlooked that it is not enough to know how to deliver a service without the additional concept of making it profitable and managing the income to sustain the activity.
- Animators succeeded in helping children with disabilities to make progress despite their lack of appropriate training. This enabled such children to be taught in an integrated manner alongside their peers.
- Shared learning at different levels is good practice. Facilitators met regularly, as did project partners from different countries. National and international conferences contributed to this process.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Nov2005/1.%20Writing%20Wrongs%20Literacy%20Benchmarks%20Report.pdf>.