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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Final Evaluation of the Countering Youth & Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia (CYCLE) Project

International Rescue Committee
Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-5-0048



2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report describes in detail the final evaluation, conducted during October 2009 and April 2010, of the Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) project in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The report was prepared by ICF Macro, according to agreements specified in its contract with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The evaluation of the CYCLE project in Sierra Leone and Liberia was conducted and documented by Louise Witherite (phase one) and Sue Upton (phase two), independent evaluators, in collaboration with USDOL/OCFT staff, the CYCLE project team, and stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Liberia. ICF Macro would like to express sincere thanks to all parties involved in this evaluation: the independent evaluator, International Rescue Committee and its partners, and U.S. Department of Labor.



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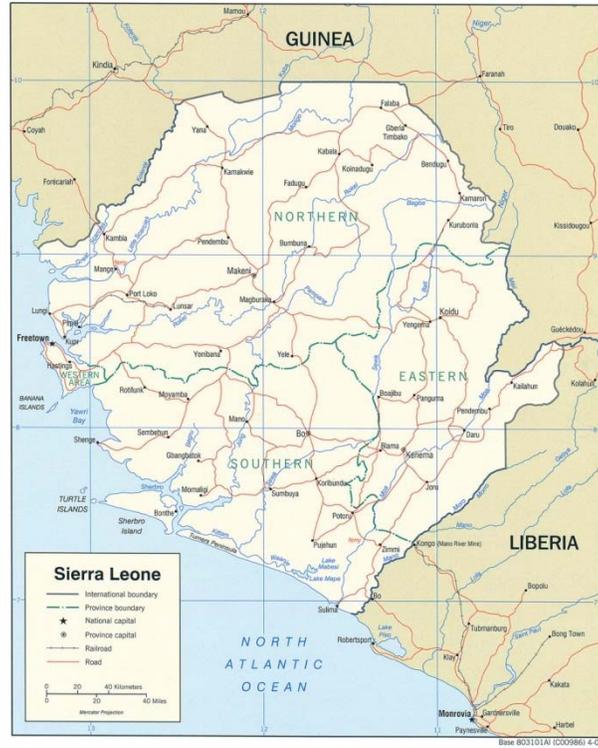
ACRONYMS

ALP	Accelerated/Alternative Learning Program
CAFF	Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CARD	Community Action for Rural Development
CLMS	Child Labor Monitoring System
CSE	Commercial Sexual Exploitation
CTA	Community Teachers' Association
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
CYCLE	Countering Youth and Child Labor through Education
CYPD	Children and Youth Protection and Development
EI	Education Initiatives
EOP	Economic Opportunity Program
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
IGA	Income-generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LTTP	Liberia Teacher Training Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Nongovernment Organization
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEARCH	Special Emergency Activity to Restore Children's Hope
SMC	School Management Committees
TACKLE	Tackle Child Labour Through Education
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WAEC	West African Examination Council
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

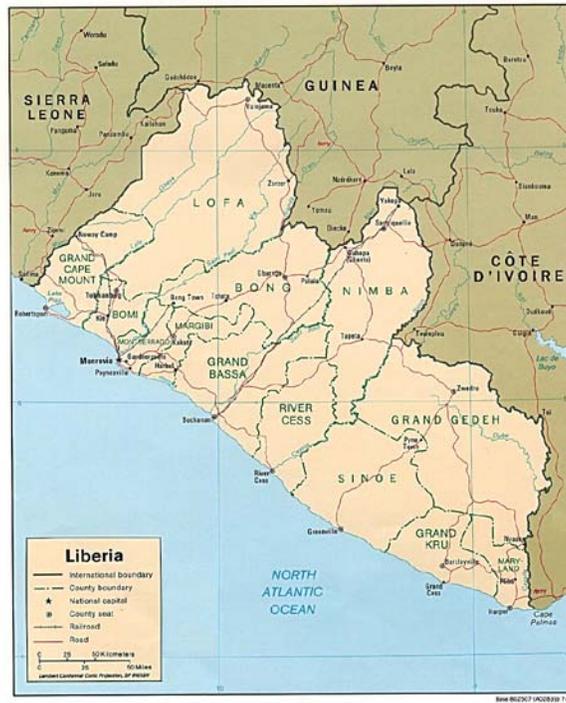
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MAPS

Sierra Leone



Liberia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Decades of brutal and devastating civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia have caused enormous social fragmentation and created a population of poor, often homeless and orphaned children who engage in the worst forms of child labor. During the conflicts, children were recruited as soldiers, and abducted and raped, causing not only physical but serious psychological and emotional injuries. With peace, the severely damaged infrastructures of the two nations are still in need of massive repair. The educational system was a major casualty of the conflict; schools were destroyed, teachers scattered, and the value of education itself diminished. Impoverished families who returned to their devastated villages or settled in suburban areas condoned and even encouraged their children to work in the mines, at sea, on farms, and in the streets. Some children, lacking proper adult moral references, opted for criminal activity and prostitution as survival mechanisms.

In an appropriate response to these serious problems, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), through its Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking Bureau of International Affairs, has supported the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in implementing the Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) project to work towards the elimination of child labor in the two countries. The 4-year cooperative agreement for US\$5,999,979 from USDOL, with a matching grant of just under US\$800,000 from the project itself, started in September 2005.¹ In 2009, IRC received an additional US\$300,000 and an extension to June 30, 2010, to ensure that children in their last year of school complete their education and to perform additional advocacy training for local groups.

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION

A final evaluation of the project was conducted in October and November 2009. The evaluation consisted of document review; individual and group interviews with project staff, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders; and field site visits to Nimba and Montserrado counties in Liberia, and to Kenema and Kono districts and Freetown in Sierra Leone. At the end of the field site visits in each country, CYCLE project stakeholders participated in debriefing workshops to discuss preliminary findings and further inform the evaluator. Stakeholders from different sectors and geographical areas had the opportunity to meet with the evaluator following the meetings.

To ensure an evaluation that covers the breadth of the project, this report covers the first phase of a planned two-part final evaluation. Since some direct beneficiaries have a few months until completion of their educational program and the end of the project, it was deemed prudent to continue to support them in their programs. USDOL's cost extension made it possible for 4,531 beneficiaries (2,190 in Liberia and 2,341 in Sierra Leone) to complete the final months of their programs. Further, the project wanted to implement an exit strategy that would strengthen advocacy and child monitoring work by local groups, notably the child welfare committees. A second phase of the final evaluation will take place at the end of the extension before the

¹ According to project documents and technical progress reports, the matching grant amount is US\$780,177.

project's revised closing date in spring 2010. While about a dozen CYCLE staff will stay on to monitor and provide technical assistance, others, including the overall project director, will leave at the original end of project date. The first evaluation phase encompassed the 4-year project and was conducted at the original end of project date before all staff had left, making it possible to gather accurate and useful data, facilitate connections with all stakeholders, and gain an accurate and chronological perspective.

FINDINGS

The evaluation found that CYCLE successfully removed tens of thousands of vulnerable children from the worst forms of child labor in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The CYCLE direct beneficiaries have been enrolled in formal public and private schools, vocational training institutions, or linked with capable vocational skills providers. They have received essential supplies to help them stay in school, including uniforms, tuition vouchers, copybooks, and writing instruments. The schools and facilities where children have been enrolled were given essential materials and equipment, such as textbooks, attendance registers, and teaching aids, to create the best learning environment possible. In some cases, this has meant refurbishing classrooms, re-roofing dilapidated buildings, and even rebuilding a school. Schools with skills training received well-stocked start-up kits of pertinent tools and equipment upon completion of the programs. In addition, many vocational graduates have started their own businesses or found work. Support in the form of grants for income-generating activities and, perhaps more importantly, training in sound business and economic practices was provided to older youth and the parents and guardians of at-risk children to improve their conditions as a means to alleviate poverty and discourage children from returning to work.

Through a variety of activities, CYCLE effectively increased awareness among the larger target population about the dangers of child labor and the value of education. Parents and the general community in the target areas reported attitudinal shifts and greater understanding of the complex issues related to child labor and demonstrated favorable views toward encouraging children to attend school or receive other instruction instead of engaging in child labor. Many of the sensitization activities were planned and conducted by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), who also benefited from training and material inputs through the project.

CYCLE correctly recognized that their efforts over four years would not be able to resolve a problem as large as child labor in these countries. Consequently, CYCLE offered many training workshops to build the capacity of government policymakers, educators, and civil society. Workshops addressed sensitization to child labor, issues surrounding child labor and education policies, useful and innovative teaching methodologies, and organization techniques. In Liberia, the project helped strengthen the National Council on Child Labor. In Sierra Leone, a policy focus of the project was on passage of the Child Rights Act. Overall, CYCLE is well integrated into the national and district educational systems. The project is seen as a major player in the fight against child labor as well as a reference point for technical expertise in child protection and education.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

CYCLE represented an intense and dynamic effort by the implementing agency to address a serious problem. As such, the project is characterized by four years of good practices and laudable achievements. Challenges produced an ample set of lessons as well.

The post-conflict aspect of this project challenged IRC to modify some of its approaches from other education or child protection projects. Given the context, USDOL was wise to award the project to IRC, an organization already established in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Many CYCLE staff came from other IRC projects that addressed child protection and/or education. Although staff members were unfamiliar with some concepts of child labor and trafficking, they were mostly knowledgeable and immediately up to speed on the project tasks. The project benefited from IRC's, as well as its partners', presence and experience. Technical expertise from a number of IRC programs, including Child and Youth Protection and Development, Economic Opportunities Program, and Education, Health, and Gender-based Violence, enhanced the CYCLE productivity.

Because of IRC's presence in both countries, staff had logistical support to begin work quickly. The organizational structure used to implement CYCLE may have reflected an institutional approach that made sense to the IRC, but as a regional project, the structure was confusing. Each country has an IRC country director who oversees all IRC projects. At the outset, there was at least one senior staff (CYCLE project director or monitoring and evaluation officer) in each country. Later, all senior staff was located in Liberia leaving a vacuum in Sierra Leone, if only physically.

For various reasons, the project had four CYCLE project directors in four years. When there is a frequent change of leadership, a program risks floundering. It takes time for leaders to establish styles and methods of operations. Meanwhile, the conscientious CYCLE staff kept working and responded as best as possible with on-the-ground approaches in the interest of keeping the project going and meeting targets. As the original organizational structure changed, staff responsibilities in each country changed slightly. The ramifications of this situation, given the logistical challenges and geographic spread of the project, hindered the project's overall potential.

If CYCLE had not been a regional project, there might have been a project director in each country. Instead, project senior staff was divided between countries. Despite efforts to have frequent and open communication, it appears that the geographically divided staff configuration resulted in disparate efforts based in each country, which then filtered out to all field sites. The project lacked strong, central leadership because of its structure, not because of the capabilities of the four consecutive project directors were lacking.

Also, the familiarity of working in emergency mode and the organizational culture related to relief work may have contributed to an unnecessary frenzy in the project's implementation. At project start-up, CYCLE staff began immediately to enroll children into the program, mindful of the targets but also because they were accustomed to a work culture of immediate removal from danger. Finding children in the workplace was not difficult for the social workers, but problems arose when placing beneficiaries in schools that were convenient for them to attend. Schools rapidly became overcrowded. Vocational training opportunities were sometimes difficult to find. CYCLE education officers and social workers worked together to quickly resolve any challenges

they faced, and their actions were appropriate in light of the sense of urgency they reported feeling. However, had the project adopted a more strategic, less crisis-oriented institutional culture, there may have been more coherence and creativity in the policy and educational quality objectives.

Cross border networking conferences were very effective. Participants came from a broad range of sectors—government, education, and civil society. Attendees from each country reported acquiring specific lessons and techniques which were viewed and then applied in their distinct projects.

Various elements contributed to widespread sensitization of communities where CYCLE appears to have had a remarkably sustainable effect. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, local NGOs that were contracted to wage awareness-raising campaigns conscientiously did so with successful results. Along with CYCLE staff, these groups held mass meetings and visited schools, places of worship, markets, and workplaces explaining the dangers of child labor, appealing particularly to communities' concerns for security, safety, and building a future.

A song, created during one CYCLE workshop, had a particularly enchanting effect (see Annex A). Fun, catchy and easy to remember, it was sung with accompanying hand gestures by pupils, teachers, staff, parents, and even government officials at most CYCLE events. As a good practice, it was a rallying point for everyone touched by the project: beneficiaries, stakeholders, general public, and staff.

Communities were already aware of the plight of those young people who had missed critical school years or had received some sporadic education in refugee camps. Successful awareness raising also occurred one-on-one, as CYCLE staff met working children, and their parents and guardians in their homes. Both tactics—mass meetings and individual casework—proved necessary and effective to raise awareness among target populations.

Constituencies were built around CYCLE efforts to stop child labor and enroll children into educational programs as the message struck a chord and became urgent to their audiences. The project pragmatically used and strengthened the child welfare committees (CWCs) and other community action structures, such as parent-teacher and community-teacher associations (PTAs and CTAs), theatre troupes, and youth groups to mobilize against child labor. Eventually, these groups, along with teachers and educators, became proficient at monitoring child labor, although systems still need to be put in place for this action to be sustained. A benchmark in seeking ways to stop hazardous child labor came through the efforts of the CYCLE-trained and -supported Lower Bambara Tongo Fields Mining Committee. Working with the Paramount Chief, the group saw their advocacy pay off with the imposition of a fine against any diamond mine license holder employing children under age 17.

A second target for sensitization, the more formal sector of educators and policymakers, presented other challenges. At both the national and local levels, ministry personnel were busy engaging in multiple tasks related to rebuilding the government infrastructure. Some were less efficient, competent, or committed than others, and some were less aware of the implications of CYCLE to national stability and productivity. Working with these personnel to change policies and build a policy advocacy constituency was a challenge and not as inherently systematic as

changing attitudes of parents and children. CYCLE was less able to influence those national constituencies, but did make significant inroads nonetheless. Line ministry personnel acknowledged the support that CYCLE offered, especially at the Ministry of Labor in Liberia, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs in Sierra Leone, and the education ministries at the local level in both countries. However, challenges remained. It appears that, except for those committed individuals in the aforementioned ministries, government officials seem willing to let CYCLE and IRC fight child labor alone.

Addressing the poverty of children and families is important, but complicated. Recognizing the connection between abject poverty, survival issues, and children working in the worst forms of child labor, the project design appropriately called for the establishment of income-generating activities (IGAs) for families. The implementation had some trials and errors, and participants floundered at first. Valuable lessons emerged, primarily, the need for IGAs to have expert technical support and capacity building. Once IRC, CYCLE, and the Sierra Leone-based NGO Community Action for Rural Development provided business skills training, participants in the project were greatly empowered. Other lessons include the need for follow-up of families and the monitoring of children to ensure that they do not return to child labor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation concludes that CYCLE is on the right track to remove children from the worse forms of child labor and integrate them into learning situations where they will be more productive members of society. CYCLE did a masterful job in implementing the objectives of the project design. However, there are still ongoing challenges to exploitive child labor, including child trafficking. Key recommendations for future programming, including before CYCLE officially ends, are²—

1. *Focus on providing experiential, results-oriented training.* It is strongly recommended that training be taken out of the workshop venue and presented in real-world, real-time arena. Training should be experiential, offering useful tools and techniques for advocacy such as dealing with media, policy design and writing or making presentations to elected officials. If advocacy for public policy is to be part of the training, government officials would benefit and should be participants alongside those doing the advocating.

That means making the workshops worth attending. CYCLE has been successful in creating incentives without providing paying to attend, and this should continue. However, there may be other, low-cost incentives to encourage attendance, such as certificates, prestige, publicity, or a ceremony with influential attendees. Child labor and child trafficking in Sierra Leone and Liberia take many forms and are urgent and serious problems. Relevant policymakers and activists need intensive training to stay updated and connected with one another to make a real difference in eliminating these practices. If it is not possible for policymakers to attend training sessions, meetings should be held where trainees have a chance to interact with government officials.

² Chapter VIII, Conclusions and Recommendations, contains more detailed recommendations specific to sectors and objectives.

Similarly, child labor monitoring should be taught in the field, not in a classroom. Participants should be able to contribute to the design of child labor monitoring systems to ensure the systems are user-friendly and appropriate to the abilities and needs of the individuals who will do the monitoring.

Invite children to participate in these workshops and to give testimonies, not only of harsh treatment, but also of their successes, hopes, and aspirations. Children need to remind participants that they have the potential to be the future leaders of their country. Children are an increasingly significant percentage of the population due to war and population growth and can play an effective role in bringing about positive change. A large number of trained and educated young people now at the point of young adulthood have graduated from CYCLE programs. As they excelled in school and were involved in drama and sports, they should also have been involved in decision-making and problem-solving related to the projects in which they are direct beneficiaries. They need platforms for sharing ideas. They also need training and opportunities to experience their rights and responsibilities as members of civil society.

2. *Research ways to support primary school children other than with direct support.* The objective—access to education for child workers and vulnerable children—has merit, but is hard to implement when faced with large numbers of school-age children. Frequently, direct support given to children in child labor projects creates dependency among children and parents, particularly in formal educational programs. Neither USDOL nor IRC can provide individual benefits to each needy child in Sierra Leone or Liberia. CYCLE was an excellent model for stopping child labor by awareness raising and upgrading schools and educators. With universal and compulsory primary education in both countries and supplementary governmental support minimally provided to junior secondary schools by governments in both countries, the need for external aid to support beneficiaries in those levels is reduced. School supplies and uniforms are still needed, but community structures, such as CWCs, PTAs, CTAs, and school management committees, and civil society should be encouraged to bear some of these responsibilities.

A major strategic planning session would have been beneficial before the project began to articulate assumptions, consider the consequences of recruiting masses of children to enroll into a limited number of suitable educational sites, and review the objectives in detail.

An emphasis on secondary and vocational training is needed as there is less support and greater need in this area by a burgeoning population of otherwise idle and disenfranchised youth. More vocational options that reflect an understanding of the future markets and the learning capabilities of the targeted youth should be explored. Projects like CYCLE that support the most vulnerable children should continue, but work in closer proximity with the Ministry of Education to present the project as a model for replication.

3. Involve parents and older children in innovative and responsive livelihood activities to ensure continued withdrawal from child labor. Projects that aim to combat child labor have to address the entire family to release them from the poverty, the driving factor in choices to make young children work. It is more cost-efficient to develop a component uniquely focused on livelihood support to the family unit than to have trials and errors.

There have been many replicable, demonstrable models of successful IGAs throughout the world that would most likely be applicable to the target countries. The addition of expert short-term consultants is recommended or the creation of a project personnel position to help create sound IGAs with market studies, group organization and facilitation, and achievable models. These consultants would focus uniquely on IGAs, microfinance, and livelihood schemes. They should be involved before the projects launch IGAs, as these are complicated activities.

4. Continue to work on strengthening the legal environment and child protection policies. Except for the Child Rights Act in Sierra Leone, the legal response to child labor, including child trafficking, remains insufficient. Child labor projects should be involved in strengthening policy, legal, and enforcement aspects of the child labor problem. Policy development requires steady commitment on the part of advocates. Child labor projects need a director/leader and/or senior staff who can establish rapport and build relationships to affect policy. Staff in the field need to understand the influence of empowering and mobilizing local citizens, particularly children themselves, to have their voices heard.

USDOL is to be commended for tackling this complex task. However, the need to support educational institutions and other initiatives as a means to curb child labor continues in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It is hoped that the project can be renewed and expanded geographically. One principal of a CYCLE-benefitting school underscored the need with a heartfelt statement at the Liberia Stakeholders Meeting: “It breaks our hearts when children come to our campus [wanting to attend, but impoverished and powerless to leave child labor]. There are many, many more needy children who are working and unable to go to school.”

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I EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Projects funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) are subject to midterm and final evaluations. The Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) in Sierra Leone and Liberia project began in September 2005, with an original end date of September 26, 2009, but was extended to June 30, 2010. This report covers the first phase of a two-part final evaluation. The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the 4-year cooperative agreement with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (and supplementary extension) to implement the CYCLE project in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The project received an extension through June 2010 and an additional US\$300,000 in funds to support students with their final year and final examinations of their primary and secondary schooling and to strengthen local structures so they may continue to monitor child labor; these actions will be covered by the second phase of the final evaluation.

The evaluator, in consultation with OCFT, ICF Macro, and CYCLE project staff, developed an evaluation methodology and itinerary that was appropriate in view of the requirements of the terms of reference, the local situation, and conditions. The assessment areas outlined in the terms of reference (Annex B) are—

1. Whether the project has met its objectives and identify the challenges encountered in doing so.
2. The relevance of the project in the cultural, economic, and political context of each country, as well as the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host country governments and USDOL.
3. The intended and unintended outcomes and impacts of the project.
4. Whether project activities can be deemed sustainable at the local and national level in each country and among implementing organizations.³

The first phase of the final evaluation reviewed the project as a whole, looking at project design, implementation, and recurring elements in project management and approach. The evaluation also determined if and how recommendations of the midterm evaluation were addressed. Lessons learned during project implementation were collected to be applied in current or future child labor projects in the countries and in projects designed under similar conditions or target sectors. Recommendations were made that may be of value to IRC's implementation of other child-focused and education programs as well as for USDOL programs in West Africa and in other countries.

³ Terms of Reference for the Independent Final Evaluation of Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia, August 20, 2009, p.7.

1.1 PROJECT DOCUMENT REVIEW

Documents deemed pertinent to project design and implementation, including the original project documents, the midterm evaluation, technical progress reports, related comments and answers between IRC and OCFT, the project logical framework, and many auxiliary documents, were analyzed before the evaluator's arrival in country. IRC staff provided additional material at the project site offices. Following an extensive desk review of the literature, an 18-day field visit was made to the two target countries, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The field visit was conducted from October 19 to November 4, 2009. Modifications to the evaluation plan regarding scheduling were made, as necessary, because of time constraints resulting from unusually long road trips in slick, muddy roads or from unavailable government officials. For a full description of the itinerary, see Annex C.

The evaluation approach consisted of an in-depth, rapid investigation through visits to multiple primary and secondary schools and learning centers, vocational training programs, public markets, government offices, and diamond mines and other sites where child labor was apparent. The methods for collecting information included individual interviews, district and town council offices visits, school and classroom observations, and stakeholders' discussions, all of which proved to be rich sources of information.

1.2 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholders at many levels. In the capital cities, government focal points—including the former commissioner of Liberia's National Commission on Child Labor (NCCL) and the head of Sierra Leone's Child Welfare Secretariat, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, among others—were interviewed. IRC country directors, members of local community associations, and the U.S. Embassy Political Officer in Liberia were also consulted during the many interviews held.

At project sites in Nimba and Montserrado counties in Liberia and Western, Kenema, and Kono districts in Sierra Leone, principals and teachers from more than nineteen primary and secondary schools were interviewed. Members of Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), composed of community leaders and representing local governments, police, industry, religions, and local peasant populations made themselves readily available to be interviewed.

1.3 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP WITH PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Focus group discussions were held with direct beneficiaries of the CYCLE project in primary, junior secondary, and secondary schools, vocational centers, such as Stella Maris, and various skills training locales. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were held with a number of individual beneficiaries of vocational training and alternative skills training. The evaluator also witnessed and spoke with many beneficiaries at their workplaces, including seamstresses and tailors, mechanics, and hairdressing.

Interviews with direct beneficiaries, which often included individual testimonies of the tragic hardships that they had endured, underlined the vulnerability of the youth population in the region. Many of the children were orphaned or had lost contact with families as they escaped fighting during the war. Those who were of school age during the fighting lost critical years in the educational system. Some beneficiaries were children who had been abducted by fighting forces during the war. Particularly poignant were the stories of girls who had turned to prostitution to earn money for food for themselves and their younger siblings. Stories of boys who had been duped by guardians and ended up in subservient work situations were common. The youngest children, of primary school age, had not experienced the war, but suffered its consequences in poverty and instability of their parents.

1.4 STAKEHOLDERS BRIEFING IN MONROVIA AND FREETOWN

At the end of the field mission in each country, half-day meetings were held offering the evaluator the opportunity to present preliminary results and invite stakeholders to give their feedback. The lively discussions provided further information for the final evaluation. Additional interviews were conducted after the meetings with previously unavailable CYCLE stakeholders. A list of participants is included in Annex D.

1.5 MIDTERM EVALUATION

The midterm evaluation was conducted by independent evaluator Dr. Martina Nicolls in January and February 2008, and the resulting report was published April 2008. The midterm evaluation identified the achievements of the project as effective and pertinent to the context of both Sierra Leone and Liberia. Among the major recommendations from the midterm evaluation were—

- Strengthen CWCs further through additional training and support, particularly in Liberia; link CWCs and other community groups with relevant line ministries, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other donors.
- Convene a cross-border conference annually to share and impart information, challenges, and good practices across countries.
- Provide timely support materials (such as uniforms and start-up kits) to beneficiaries.
- Conduct capacity building for communities in agriculture, income generation, sustainability planning, business skills, financial management, and/or proposal writing.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the project.⁴

⁴ *Independent Midterm Evaluation of IRC: Countering Youth & Child Labor through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia (CYCLE Project)*, p.vi.

1.6 FINAL EVALUATION REPORT FORMAT

As outlined in the terms of reference, this report is divided into twelve distinct sections. Following Chapter II, Project Description, Sections III to IX will discuss the actual findings, based on the specific questions asked in the terms of reference. Section VIII is the conclusion and includes specific recommendations.

II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2005, IRC began implementing a project with support from USDOL and the OCFT Bureau of International Affairs. IRC, founded in 1933, operates in the region of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea attending to the needs of people who are struggling to survive during extremely violent conflict in their home areas, and who often became refugees.⁵ IRC works worldwide in areas that are frequently in conflict or recovering from conflict, providing relief and rehabilitation, as well as promoting civil society and addressing human rights issues.⁶

Focusing on the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) in Sierra Leone and Liberia, CYCLE worked toward withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor by expanding access to, and improving the quality of, basic education. CYCLE also responded to the five goals of the USDOL Education Initiative (EI).

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 funded the 4-year cooperative agreement worth US\$5,999,979, with a matching grant of just under US\$800,000 from the project itself.⁷ The project start date was September 30, 2005. In 2009, IRC received an extension to June 30, 2010, and an additional US\$300,000 in funds to ensure that children in their last year of school complete their education, and to perform additional advocacy training for local groups.

As stipulated in the cooperative agreement, the project targeted 8,243 children for withdrawal and 21,647 for prevention from child soldiering and other WFCL. CYCLE aimed to (1) provide access to education to otherwise working children; (2) improve the quality of education for children withdrawn and prevented from child labor; (3) mobilize relevant stakeholders to increase knowledge and improve attitudes about the value of education and the negative effects of child labor; and (4) establish or strengthen sustainable child labor monitoring nationally and in communities. Another CYCLE goal was the sustainable reduction or elimination of exploitive child labor in the target West African countries.

⁵ IRC began work in Guinea in 1991, Liberia in 1996, and Sierra Leone in 1999.

⁶ <http://www.theirc.org/>

⁷ According to project documents and technical progress reports, the matching grant amount is US\$780,177.

The project was located in two countries: Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Liberia, the project sites were in three noncontiguous counties: Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado. In the 2008 Census, the population of Nimba County was estimated to be 468,088, Lofa was 270,114, and Montserrado, home to the capital Monrovia, had a population of 1,144,806, making it the most populous county in Liberia. (Monrovia itself is estimated to have 1,010,970 residents). Within the three counties, the specific project sites were Voinjama, Zorzor, and Foya in Lofa County; Red Light, Chicken Soup Factory, and PHP in Montserrado County; and Ganta, Karnplay, and Tappita in Nimba County.

Project sites in Sierra Leone were located in seven communities in two provinces, Western and Eastern. In the Western Province, CYCLE found beneficiaries and ran activities in districts of Western Urban and Western Rural, centered in Aberdeen and Waterloo. In the Eastern Province, CYCLE activities were located in Kenema and Kono districts, which have a combined estimated population of just under 750,000. Project communities in the Eastern Province were Koidu Township, Small Sefadu, Manjama, and Koardu clusters in the Kono District, and Tongo Fields cluster in Kenema District. Overall, CYCLE activities reached 72 towns, villages, or suburbs in 16 communities in 12 districts (8 in Liberia and 4 in Sierra Leone).

In Liberia, CYCLE partnered with the African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect in Montserrado County, the Community Development, Empowerment Through Participatory Project in Lofa County, and the Special Emergency Activities to Restore Children's Hope (SEARCH) in Nimba County. In Sierra Leone, NGO partners included the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in the Western Province and the Community Action for Rural Development (CARD) in the Eastern Province.

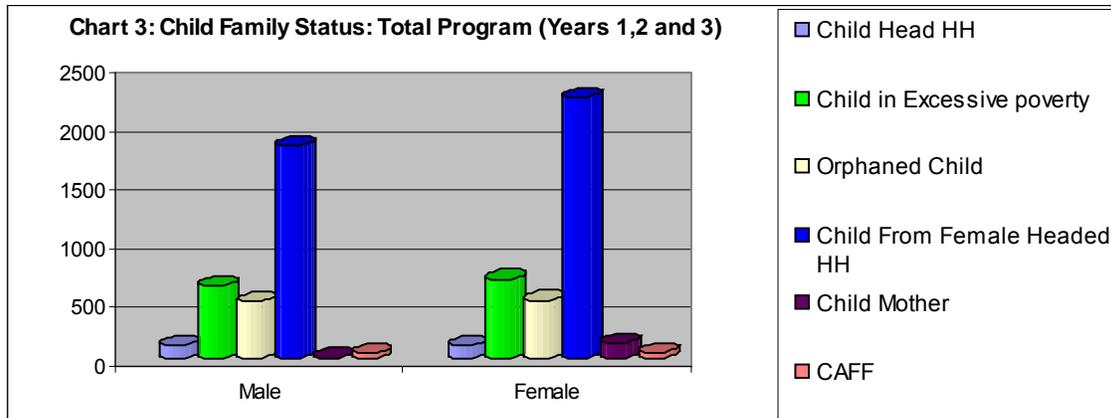
At the time of the final evaluation fieldwork, the project had withdrawn 9,556 children and prevented 20,334 children from engaging in child labor, and enrolled them in educational programs. Those children enrolled in the formal education system received uniforms, copy books, writing implements, textbooks, tuition vouchers, and other necessary supplies. Some children were enrolled in vocational skills training, either at institutionalized centers or with skills training providers. Upon completion of the skills training programs, children received useful start-up kits with tools for their newly-acquired trade. For example, children who received tailoring training received sewing machines, scissors, measuring tape, chalk, thread, and bolts of cloth.

Children were identified as potential beneficiaries according to clearly defined criteria:

1. Children or youth between age 5 and 18 who were engaged in WFCL, such as prostitution, mining, street vending, farm and domestic labor, drug distribution, or theft and other criminal behavior, or who were victims of trafficking; and/or
2. Children deemed at risk of engaging in WFCL. This included children living in child- or female-headed households or in excessive poverty, or children who were orphaned, child mothers, associated with fighting forces, or were in other vulnerable situations and referred

through community structures and other IRC projects. The CYCLE Technical Progress Report March 2008 depicted family status of child beneficiaries in the following table.⁸

Figure 1: Child Family Status, Total Program (Years 1, 2, and 3)



Note: The original data for this chart was not available.

The project improved access to education by providing scholarship support to destitute students who would otherwise be engaged in WFCL; rehabilitating or constructing classrooms and latrines; and equipping teachers with textbooks and supplies. The project also introduced or provided refresher training in child-centered methodology and healing classroom techniques to teachers and school administrators who were coping with returning former child workers, larger classrooms, and other associated problems.

The project worked with government structures on the national and local levels to fight child labor and enhance educational opportunities. The NCCL in Liberia, an entity established before the project, was reinvigorated with the help of CYCLE. CYCLE had mutually respectful and supportive relationships with ministry officials in the field as well as in the capital cities. Regular coordinating meetings of all stakeholders, and government, nongovernment, and international constituents were held to discuss and strategize on child protection and child labor issues. Through workshops, CYCLE technical assistance provided important support in strengthening CWCs, parent-teacher and community-teacher associations (PTAs and CTAs), youth groups, and other community structures and had multiplier effects when these groups became anti child labor activists. A stellar example of these organizations is the Tongo Fields Chiefdom Mining Committee in Sierra Leone, which with CYCLE's help, expanded and ameliorated its efforts to monitor and counter child labor practices in local mines.

⁸ Technical Progress Report, March 2008, p. 9.

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III RELEVANCE

CYCLE represents a logical and systematic response to the problem of children involved in WFCL in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The complex political, economic, and social contexts of the two countries, fueled by recent highly destructive conflicts, provide an environment where children are easily exploited. The wars left both countries in economic ruin with deficits to basic infrastructure posing huge barriers to human empowerment and development. Population centers had fragmented and social networks had broken down. In Sierra Leone, some towns had been leveled and desperately needed rejuvenation. Logging and diamond mining sanctions placed on Liberia curtailed violent and illegal activity but also negatively affected economic productivity; these sanctions have since been lifted. Wanton and growing weapons caches and armed crime posed problems in both countries. Despite these problems, when the project began, many post-war efforts, including political transitions, reintegration programs, and new educational policies, had begun with some noteworthy successes. There was an atmosphere of hope.

In the context of CYCLE, the aftermath of the wars provided a setting where children were frequently engaged in hard labor and/or were completely excluded from opportunities to become educated. First and foremost, many children lacked one or both parents and were left to fend for themselves. Families and whole communities that had been uprooted were slowly returning home or creating squatter settlements. Scarcity of jobs and money-making options for parents caused them to seek alternate ways of making money, including sending their children to work or placing them with guardians. Too often, this resulted in children becoming servants. Throughout the project sites, crumbling schools and nearly destroyed roads frustrated development. The implementing agency faced running offices with infrequent or no electricity or water, and required heavy-duty vehicles to manage the nearly nonexistent roads.

In its intervention methodology, CYCLE has adequately supported the five EI goals with its activities. There are areas where, with increased resources such as staff or budget, greater emphasis could be placed.

1. *EI Goal One: Withdrawing or preventing children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of direct educational services.*

Children in the target areas were involved in WFCL or at risk of being involved in hazardous activities such as prostitution; diamond, gold, and sand mining; rock crushing; fishing; street vending and begging; and crime, among other activities. Nearly thirty thousand (29,890) children became direct beneficiaries of EI activities when they were removed from work or at-risk circumstances and enrolled in educational programs.

Of these children, 14,557 were girls and 15,333 were boys. Through careful monitoring and outreach, the project was able to demonstrate a high completion and retention rate (91.6%) among those children enrolled in a variety of educational programs. At the time of the final evaluation, 39.4% had completed and more than half of the enrolled beneficiaries were still in school or other educational programs (52.2%). Children who received CYCLE support completed the school year(s) or graduated from vocational and technical training programs at a high rate with few drop outs (8.4%).

Table 1: CYCLE Aggregated Results—Sierra Leone and Liberia

CYCLE Status	Program	Male	Female	Total
Completed	Primary	4,238	4,162	8,400
	Junior	637	658	1,295
	Senior	391	363	754
	ALP*	0	0	0
	Vocational	137	101	238
	Skills training	292	794	1,086
Total Completed		5,695	6,078	11,773 (39.4%)
Dropped Out	Primary	1,176	1,110	2,286
	Junior	49	66	115
	Senior	18	4	22
	ALP*	0	0	0
	Vocational	0	1	1
	Skills training	36	59	95
Total Dropped Out		1,279	1,240	2,519 (8.4%)
Retained	Primary	7,038	7,662	14,700
	Junior	251	268	519
	Senior	142	166	308
	ALP*	0	0	0
	Vocational	12	2	14
	Skills training	3	54	57
Total Retained		7,446	8,152	15,598 (52.2%)
Grand Total		14,420 (48.2%)	15,470 (51.8%)	29,890

* ALP = Accelerated/Alternative Learning Program

- 2. EI Goal Two: 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.*

The CYCLE project worked in both target countries to strengthen the capacity of national education, labor, and social affairs ministries and institutions with some success. The project also worked directly with the appropriate ministries to affect policy.

The legal climate for child protection, education, and the fight against child labor and human trafficking is similar in both countries. Policies, legal frameworks, commissions, and local/national systems have been developed, but the operation and enforcement is under-supported and consequently often lethargic. The International Labour Organization's

(ILO's) convention 138 on the minimum age of work—the standard convention covering the abuse of child work—has not been ratified in either Sierra Leone or Liberia. ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labor has been ratified in Liberia but not domesticated into national laws; the convention has not been ratified in Sierra Leone. In both countries, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified. Sierra Leone has signed, but not ratified, and Liberia has ratified, the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Both governments signed the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Joint Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in West and Central African Regions. As part of the agreement, the signatories agree to use the child trafficking monitoring system (CLMS) developed by LUTRENA, a USDOL-funded ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) project, to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenders, to rehabilitate and reintegrate trafficking victims, and to assist the 22 fellow signatory countries to implement these measures under the agreement.⁹

Despite good will, the environment was not very results-favorable for CYCLE to affect policy regarding child labor and education in both countries. The participating governments are constrained logistically and politically. Without clearly articulated relevant policies to fight child labor, they are unable to generate public funds to educate the public about the problem and combat it. The two governments are also strapped financially, as evidenced by the struggles that each government has had paying salaries for teachers, education officers, police officers, and other civil servants. In 2008, the total national budget for Sierra Leone's population of over 6 million was around US\$340 million. Liberia's FY 2009–2010 national budget, signed into law in July 2009, amounted to US\$371,908,799 for its 3.9 million people.¹⁰

The project identified the *line ministries* with which to work: in Liberia, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Gender and Development; and in Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Employment, Social Security and Industrial Relations, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, and Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

CYCLE deserves credit for energizing and encouraging the awareness, utilization, and enforcement of some child-oriented policies. For example, the technical expertise and encouragement that CYCLE brought to the National Commission of Child Labor in Liberia's Ministry of Labor was well noted and appreciated by ministry representatives. A recent changeover of the director general of the commission will present a challenge to the sustained enthusiasm to drive child labor-related issues within the commission. In Sierra Leone, the Child Rights Act, enacted in Parliament in 2007 for the protection of the rights of all Sierra Leonean children in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, offered an ideal vehicle for the project to advance the cause of education while fighting child labor within a legal framework. CWCs, which play an extremely important role in CYCLE's success monitoring child labor, are included in the act as primary actors. A commission to monitor the enforcement of the act has not yet been formed.

⁹ The text of the agreement can be found at <http://www.droit-migrations-ao.org/PDF/Multilateral%20cooperation%20agreement.pdf>

¹⁰ CIA. *The World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sl.html>

Both countries have Education Plans of Action (Liberia's plan is from 2009–2019,¹¹ Sierra Leone's is from 2007–2015). CYCLE was recognized for sensitizing populations to the existence and aspects of these education policies. The project collaborated with the ministries of education in both countries to ameliorate the abilities of teachers and principals and to upgrade the learning environment in all schools with CYCLE beneficiaries. Teacher training workshops were held and 2,731 teachers received training. CYCLE worked with Sierra Leone's Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports to introduce the code of conduct and a newly developed teacher training manual on child-friendly methodology and child labor monitoring, developed with CYCLE assistance.

3. EI Goal Three: Raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.

Throughout the life of the project, CYCLE was active building awareness among diverse populations to combat child labor and promote the value of educating children to build new, peaceful societies. Community meetings, mass rallies, marches, and special events were held in villages and towns with participation from children, adults, youth, CWCs, city mayors, district education officers, PTAs, CTAs, religious leaders, educators, government representatives, and CYCLE staff. Radio and television were effectively used to advocate for good practices in protecting children from WFCL by sending them to school.

The project was particularly successful lending support to Liberia's NCCL, which produced and distributed calendars and stickers with anti child labor messages, and conducted awareness raising activities with rubber plantation employers, trade union members, employees, parents, and camp representatives. In January 2008, NCCL and CYCLE jointly conducted a workshop on child labor for media practitioners in Monrovia. The workshop, which was attended by more than thirty media professionals, improved their knowledge on child labor in Liberia and international norms.

4. EI Goal Four: Supporting research and the collection of reliable data on child labor.

Project records of beneficiaries provide reliable, accessible, and highly pertinent data on incidence and type of child labor. The M&E information shows family situations that cause children to work. Child heads of households, single parent heads of households, and orphans can be identified with a few key strokes. Confidential files kept on children also record the number of hours that children work and if they work on weekends. The types of labor in which children are engaged are also recorded and can be used to show, for example, localities of specific types of work. There is useful information available, but the actual utilization and application of the data has not been specifically for applied research because the project does not have a strong *research component*. Staff is completely engaged in following individual beneficiaries, raising awareness, or interacting with government to impact on policy. If the data were compiled in a manner to present to constituents, policy advocacy might be easier to advance.

The project has carried out a number of studies which have been useful to make improvements on the implementation of the project. Before enrolling students in skills training, a market survey was carried out in both countries by the IRC's Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) in Liberia

¹¹ Second Plan, launched on October 24, 2009.

and by CARD, a local NGO in Sierra Leone. The surveys were conducted to ensure that beneficiaries would be trained in appropriate skills marketable in their communities. Results of the surveys were used as a guide when enrolling beneficiaries for different skills training.

In 2008, several studies and surveys were conducted to measure the project's effectiveness. Desk research examined the general status of project beneficiaries and their families to gauge their vulnerability and plan appropriate interventions suiting different groups. A knowledge and attitudes on child labor and education survey was conducted of 3,920 respondents (2,520 beneficiaries and 1,440 parents or guardians) which showed that 94 percent of the parents/guardians recognized the value of education.

Following the grant officer's audit in 2008, the project conducted an assessment of school conditions—structure, water, and sanitation—in all schools in both target countries where CYCLE-supported children were enrolled. Approximately 20 schools failed to meet the basic learning standards defined in the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction developed by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies.¹² The project gathered information concerning (1) the problems identified in assessed schools; (2) possible actions; (3) estimated cost of required rehabilitation/construction or alternative actions; and (4) the timeframe for potential actions. Problems ranged in urgency. While some of the schools lacked clean drinking water and separate latrines for boys and girls, others were structurally unsound. CYCLE decided not to enroll children in any school considered unsafe and hazardous, but the results from the assessments were distributed among key stakeholders to advocate for increased school construction or rehabilitation.

An August 2009 study examined the Family Income Generation Projects piloted in the Kono and Kenema districts of Sierra Leone. The study showed that about two-thirds of the income-generating activities (IGAs) that had started were still operating. With their earnings, many parents reported that they were able to provide educational costs for their children. However, it was also shown that the parent beneficiaries will continue to need considerable nurturing and monitoring for the IGAs to be sustainable and profitable.

The CYCLE team has worked with Liberia's NCCL to help highlight the need to establish a national database on child labor statistics. At the time of this report, the NCCL is still seeking funds to begin work on the database.¹³

5. EI Goal Five: The long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The effect of CYCLE inputs on building long-term sustainability must be seen in context with the post-war and extremely impoverished environment in the two countries. However, based on

¹² The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies is a global, open network of nongovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, donors, practitioners, researchers, and individuals from affected populations working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery. The IRC and many emergency child protection and education agencies follow these standards. See <http://www.ineesite.org/>.

¹³ According to an email on November 18, 2009 from CYCLE Education Specialist David Walker, "The National survey on child labor seem[s] to have lost momentum. At my last discussion with Andrew Sermah of NCCL, he indicated that UNICEF, which is the funding source, has redirected to fund to other child protection uses."

field visits and interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders, it appears that CYCLE's effect has taken hold. Target populations are involved in withdrawing or preventing children from engaging in WFCL. Building government ownership and strengthening government and civil society institutions are two important elements toward creating sustainability of actions to prevent child labor. Examples of the project's hard work toward sustainability are the training of labor inspectors and involvement of Family Support Units of the police, but the gains are yet to be seen. If the NCCL in Liberia can continue its work developing a tracking database on child labor, this will be an important step. Awareness of the dangers of child labor issues is not likely to fade away, due in part to the consciousness that has evolved thanks to the efforts of CYCLE and its partner NGOs.

Involving children in a more direct way at the policy advocacy level also ensures long-term sustainability. Former graduates of CYCLE programs, as future enfranchised citizens, could be organized, enlisted in the Children's Parliament, or otherwise mobilized to confront their lawmakers about strengthening national policy against child labor.

3.1 MAIN OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS

At the onset of the project, CYCLE faced the reality that Sierra Leone and Liberia are considered among the least developed countries in the world, characterized by illiteracy, high infant and maternal mortality, and lack of infrastructure, such as water, electricity, and other basic services. All of these factors naturally place children in vulnerable positions, which may result in children working. Even more significant, the countries are both emerging from years of terror and warfare. Extreme poverty, directly attributed to the post-war situation, and the impact of the global economy crisis continue to pose a long-term threat to removing children from the workforce.

Initially, ignorance of the significant value of educating one's children was a barrier, but during the evaluation, it became clear that within the project target sites, the awareness-raising components of CYCLE rapidly dispelled this notion.

IRC also found a weak educational infrastructure in the two nations, which discouraged many children from obtaining an education. With free and compulsory education, the school systems were stretched as enrollment mushroomed. The governments had limited resources to pay teachers' salaries or build new schools. Teachers were isolated and many had never attended a teacher training institute.

Families and communities were fragmented because of the wars. There were many children living on their own in both countries, who had lost parents and had no guardians. UNICEF estimated 35,000 orphans in Sierra Leone in 2006, children made orphans by the war, but also by the prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

School enrollment was down, partially because government support to all educational infrastructure had been so disrupted that buildings were destroyed, teachers were unpaid or had abandoned their posts, and materials and supplies were not forthcoming. Children worked as street vendors, on subsistence family farms, and as casual laborers, domestic workers, and even beggars and thieves. As mentioned previously, the use of child soldiers was common among

government armed forces and rebel groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia. As a result, many youth have been scarred by battles and abuse. Many girls were also abducted and raped during the wars, adding to the collective trauma and adding more unwanted children. Because of age and experiences, these children and youth were not likely to be enrolled in traditional schools.

Through enrollment of children into formal and nonformal education programs, especially vocational training, CYCLE has been able to address these obstacles and remove nearly 30,000 children from child labor situations or prevent them from becoming engaged in exploitive child labor. The project has provided support to help children stay in school. Vocational skills training resulted in hundreds of children gaining skills that will eventually help them find jobs. These skills include carpentry, plumbing, masonry, tailoring, electrical installation, community development, nursing, driving, automobile and small engine mechanics, and human resource development.

There is ample evidence that a sizable and significant amount of CYCLE beneficiaries who received skills training are working in their own businesses or are employed, usually by their teachers. The evaluator met with many graduates of CYCLE vocational training programs (formal centers or with mentors/teachers), among them:

1. A young man who followed carpentry trades training and works on building one of China's construction projects in Liberia. Like most workers in the field, he is not on contract, but assured of a job through the end of the project. He will likely be hired by the same company for other planned buildings.
2. Two individual young women, two women working together, and several groups of young women working with their mentors/teachers operating tailoring and seamstress shops with a limited amount of customers in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. One young woman showed the evaluator where her new shop will be, closer to the urban population of Monrovia.
3. Several young women who were successfully earning money as caterers in Sierra Leone.
4. Two young men with a steady stream of customers working on Honda engines.

There is widespread unemployment at all project sites. However, CYCLE beneficiaries interviewed demonstrated a high degree of motivation and hope. Nearly all were employed in some capacity, although not always permanently, and not always fully employed. Armed with the general business skills that they gained through CYCLE, they articulated their understanding of how to withstand some of the vagaries of the marketplace. This included, for example, keeping records, diversifying their products, and saving some of their earnings.

Teachers have received refresher courses and training in new methods especially designed to address problems such as overcrowding. Textbooks, teacher aids, and other materials and equipment have made schools more relevant. The project also upgraded the physical condition of

many schools through wells, latrines, roofing, and furniture. In one case, a school was completely rebuilt.¹⁴

3.2 FIT WITH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Although government officials express concern about child labor, and also child trafficking, little has actually been done. Both countries have legislation that touches on child labor and trafficking but it is not adequate to deal with the actual and current situation. In addition to the Child Rights Act of 2008, the government of Sierra Leone has created a multisectoral Trafficking in Persons Action Committee and has held anti-trafficking training for police officers.

CYCLE is recognized as a key player in the fight against child labor and for promoting education in the two countries. CYCLE has worked doggedly with the line ministries in the capitals, districts, and counties to complement the few existing government efforts with project activities. Throughout the life of the project, the project staff has participated in regular meetings to coordinate activities to ensure that IRC works with other NGOs, multilateral and international groups, and donors working to implement government policies.

The project provided logistical and technical support to Liberia's NCCL through workshops for members of community structures and child labor monitoring committees in CYCLE operational communities. Participants included employers, workers' unions, women's groups, youth groups, local authorities, the Women and Children's Protection unit of the Liberia National Police, Children's Parliament, school personnel, and CWCs from CYCLE operational areas. In Sierra Leone, CYCLE cooperated with the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, other line ministries, NGOs, UNICEF, local councils, women's organizations, the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police, and students to launch the Child Rights Act on November 20, 2008 in Koidu Town and Freetown.

With regard to trafficking, there has been collaboration between enforcement officers and the project stakeholders. In all technical progress reports, the implementing agency is required to report data on special circumstances of those beneficiaries who have been withdrawn from commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking. The technical progress report form states:

“The following two tables represent a subset of the data reported in Table III.B.1 above. Grantees are required to fill out the tables below if their project has direct beneficiaries that are victims of trafficking and/or commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) or direct beneficiaries that are at risk of being trafficked or entering CSE. After calculating the overall numbers for all direct beneficiaries (including trafficking and CSE) and reporting them above, grantees should then disaggregate the trafficking and CSE beneficiaries and report them below. Note that a beneficiary cannot be counted as both trafficked and in CSE—they should only be included once [in] the tables below. Please see Annex A for examples and instructions on reporting these data. If the tables do not apply to your project, please type ‘n/a’ in the tables below.”

¹⁴ Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School, Kenema District, Sierra Leone.

It is surprising and confounding that the CYCLE project technical progress reports consistently report ‘n/a’ for numbers of trafficked children. According to ILO-IPEC, children in both countries reported having been trafficked, especially internally.¹⁵ Many of the children interviewed in the course of the first phase of the final evaluation reported that they had been sent by family, were recruited, or had otherwise found themselves in the household of a “guardian” who was not actually behaving in a guardianship role. These children were living in homes and acting as servants, performing heavy lifting, long hours of unpaid work, and living in unsanitary conditions. CYCLE staff and CWC members withdrew such children from these situations. Some CWC members reported on their own actions in educating guardians and withdrawing children from situations that would be characterized as slavery. These are complicated situations in which a child lives in the home, or close by, and works for free, receiving some food and sometimes, but not always, shelter from an unrelated person. When children live with unrelated adults, they may qualify as victims of internal trafficking and the situation should be examined as such.

Additionally, when children from either country who are beholden to a guardian perform other acts, such as carrying a load of firewood to sell at a market some twenty miles across the border in the neighboring country (Guinea), this qualifies as trafficking. In fact, immigration officers at the Guinea-Sierra Leone border have alerted CWC members, turned back children carrying heavy loads, and detained the guardians for some period. The concern is that CYCLE personnel and stakeholders may not fully understand the issue of trafficking. The condemnation of the practice needs more attention. At the stakeholder meeting in Freetown, the ambiguity surrounding this issue surfaced when, after the harshness and unfairness of the guardian situation was described, a plea was made to provide livelihood support for the guardians. The case was made that if the guardians received support they would no longer enslave children. This is the logical approach for real guardians, but there must be some recourse to penalize those who exploit children placed in their care.

3.3 MIDTERM EVALUATION FINDINGS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Several modifications were made throughout the course of the project. The CYCLE country teams were conscientious in their attempts to make the project efficient, appropriate, and meaningful. Nearly all of the recommendations in the midterm evaluation were studied, and the project made changes as possible. First and foremost, the Ahmadiyya Primary School in Sierra Leone, which was determined to be unsafe for pupils, has been totally reconstructed. The participation of parents was requested to build latrines. This has been partially fulfilled; the latrines function but do not offer the utmost privacy.

¹⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/48caa47c18.html>



Rebuilt Ahmadiyya Primary School in Sierra Leone

Other responses to the midterm evaluation included the Cross Border Conference held in March 2009 in Gbarnga, Liberia; changes to beneficiary monitoring forms; further business skills training workshops; improving scheduled provision of support; and regular visits to schools to inspect safety conditions.

Those involved in monitoring child beneficiaries, such as volunteers and teachers, have become more capable, mostly through strengthening relationships and capacities with the help of social workers and education officers. The CYCLE M&E departments in both countries have become better organized to analyze the data collected. The USDOL-supported project extension responded to a concern with sustainability that the project had been grappling with since it began. The midterm evaluation was useful to further the capacity building for sustainability.

Some of the midterm evaluation recommendations have not been met in actual practice, either because the timing of the recommendations in relation to the project's end seemed infeasible, or because the project focused on resolving other, more immediate problems. The midterm evaluation noted useful strengths and weaknesses, and while the project may not have implemented every recommendation, there is evidence that the project has attempted to address the spirit of the recommendations. For example, the IGAs and cooperatives schemes have been monitored, but the introduction of business skills training seemed like a more efficient approach to resolving the same concern—creating sustainable and employable income producing activities.

3.4 OTHER DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Overall, the project design provides a practical blueprint for addressing the vulnerabilities of a very needy population.

Areas of concern that affected project implementation and are related to the project design are (1) the management and administrative structure and (2) the post-war immediacy. The circumstances, or context, of the project provide the best explanation for the strengths and weaknesses of the CYCLE project. Sierra Leone and Liberia emerged from war with similar demographic, cultural, economic, and political environments. At the time of the proposal and initial project design, it made sense for the project to cover both countries. The experiences of CYCLE demonstrate the commonalities and explain why the cross-border conferences were so helpful to CYCLE implementers and stakeholders.

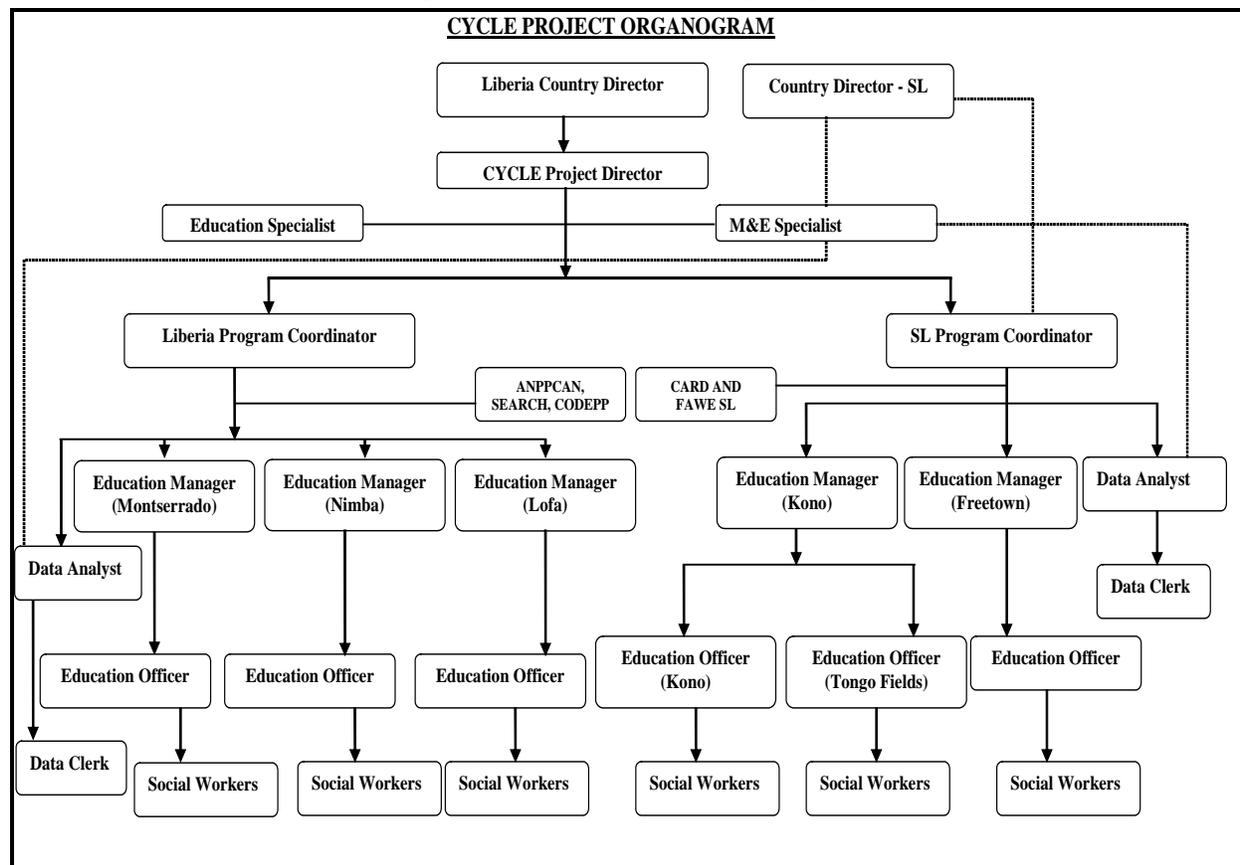
The project must be examined within the unique context of post-conflict transition. IRC had been working in the region since 1991, capably attending to the needs of people in crisis. Wars raged in both Sierra Leone and Liberia, causing unimaginable terror for civilians, especially children. The brutality was witnessed by vulnerable children and their parents. Staff members who now work for CYCLE have been both victims and activists, and have superb skills in treating social and psychological needs. IRC also had well established systems to address the hardships resulting from the destruction. Offices were already equipped with resources such as generators and garages with hardy Toyota Land Cruisers when the project began.

This crisis mentality is understandable, but it worked against the project in some ways. For example, as staff moved rapidly as a team to enroll the target objectives of the first cohort, delineation between job descriptions dissolved; jobs such as education officer and social worker co-mingled making the difference between them confusing to stakeholders and some of the staff members themselves.

As it was, the project leadership defined in the project document *organogram* is unclear and reportedly caused some uncertainty even among the implementers. A stronger, more coherent organizational structure for the project would likely have resulted in more creative approaches. Little has changed in the management structure since the midterm evaluation except that some staff members are no longer with the program and more will be finishing their contracts a few months after the project's original end date. At its peak, CYCLE had 39 personnel: 3 expatriate regional management staff, 16 national staff in Liberia, and 17 national staff in Sierra Leone. After January 2010, the program will have 12 staff members; five in Liberia and seven in Sierra Leone. An education officer for each of the three counties in Liberia, an education officer and two Social Workers for Kono, and an education officer and two Social Workers for Freetown in Sierra Leone will remain. Liberia will have a national project manager, and Sierra Leone will have a national project coordinator. A data officer in charge of M&E will be stationed in Monrovia. The original organizational chart for CYCLE from the project document is shown below. Since the project has begun to close down, the numbers of staff and their workloads are

diminished, but the structure as described in the midterm evaluation has been in place for most of the life of the project.¹⁶

Figure 2: CYCLE Project Organogram



Originally, each country had at least one senior staff (the CYCLE project director or the M&E officer), but later, all senior staff were located in Liberia, leaving a vacuum in Sierra Leone, if only physically. Some staff members insist that communication and frequent visits meant smooth operations, but various issues of ambiguity were reported. More than once, it was mentioned that CYCLE staff were hired—and fired—outside of the purview of the CYCLE project director,

¹⁶ From the midterm evaluation, p. 35-36: “The CYCLE management team (or regional team) comprises the CYCLE regional project director, the regional education coordinator (both based in Liberia) and the M&E Coordinator (based in Sierra Leone). The management team is the human resource and communications link between countries...Each country has a national coordinator. If the CYCLE regional director is out of country, the national coordinator reports to the IRC country Child and Youth Protection Development (CYPD) [Coordinator].” CYCLE pays a percentage of the CYPD coordinator’s salary. The CYPD plays a major role in CYCLE’s policy and direction, regardless of the percentage officially allotted.

“...The team in each country has an onerous workload supporting beneficiaries, liaising with line ministries and local NGO partners, and working collaboratively with targeted communities. The 21 education officers and social workers service 342 institutions (approximately 16 each) and are currently supporting 29,890 students (approximately 1,423 each) with follow ups twice a year (although many students require continual follow ups). To counter this workload, staff initiated the use of community volunteers (12 in Liberia, 4 in each country; and 7 in Sierra Leone, 5 in Kono and 2 in Tongo Fields).”

who was based in Liberia. Given the original organizational chart, it is logical that IRC country directors have the ability and authority to supervise the CYCLE program coordinators and program managers, but for the smooth operation of CYCLE, it is ultimately the responsibility of the CYCLE project director to demonstrate leadership. This is not a criticism of individual directors. This observation comes from analyzing certain given information, including but not exclusively, that the project had four directors in four years. When there is a change of leadership, a program flounders. It takes time for leaders to establish styles and methods of operations. Conscientious CYCLE staff had to keep working and create on the ground approaches in the interest of keeping the project going and meeting targets.

In a related matter, there is disappointingly little innovation in the project. Some of the ideation and creativity which comes with such an exciting concept as the CYCLE project was lacking. For example, approaches to awareness raising, creating welcoming schools, and choices of vocational training were mostly traditional. The concern is that the staff *lacked the optimal leadership and direction* to implement the project. Optimal leadership would have been characterized by consistent direction, clearly defined job descriptions, and strategic group planning exercises as a means to create a strong team. Apart from the usual structural problems that often accompany programs operating in very difficult environments is the distinction between simply following “defined objectives and purposes” and the project operating from a “sense of purpose.” While the defined purpose is just that, defined by someone else and buried in planning documents, the staff and leadership could enter into a process of defining their own “sense of purpose.” This might result in the development of deeper commitments to the clients and allow the staff to create their own approaches to address client needs. A sense of purpose originating from project staff might provide the ongoing capacity to generate new possibilities.

CYCLE staff members were highly qualified, extremely competent, reliable, intelligent, and hardworking. Their major competencies were related to implementing crisis mode relief and rehabilitation, rather than peacetime human empowerment and community development. At project start-up, they attacked the challenges with solutions that may have seemed expeditious because of the post-conflict nature of their usual work. However, some of these decisions—for example, the provision of products to sell on the open market as an income-generating activity—in retrospect may not have been the most efficacious way to proceed. The staff immediately began to enroll children who were unambiguously involved in WFCL and ended up with large numbers of children in overcrowded schools. Finding suitable matches for children who would receive vocational skills was problematic, especially in Sierra Leone. Space in vocational institutes was limited and there was a general lack of institutes near the children; qualified individual teachers were not immediately available. Consequently, staff reported scurrying around to find people who could provide training.

While CYCLE met its project objectives overall, it would have achieved even more with (1) better and more clearly defined leadership—singular direction from the project director—and (2) more process-oriented, reflective strategy meetings that included the field staff—social workers and education officers from both countries.

Other design and/or implementation issues include—

- *School as a Welcoming Environment*

Although posters against child labor and other topics were made by the project, none were seen on any school room walls in the more than a dozen schools visited. ILO-IPEC-created posters against child labor were seen only in a very few instances. Schools are supposed to be welcoming environments, and children bring individual learning styles to that environment.¹⁷ Some children learn aurally, while others benefit from visual stimulation. More image-driven stimulation is required for those children who learn using those senses.

- *Seeking Employable Vocations*

Although the market surveys conducted for identifying vocational training skills found mostly traditional skills, such as tailoring and mechanics, there were some non-traditional skills which were also provided, including driving, nursing, and community development studies. It is important to have non-traditional options as markets may become oversaturated with people who have traditional skills. Though children were asked what they preferred to learn, they cannot predict what vocations may become significant or desirable. Technology may experience a boost in the target countries, and with some additional expertise, anticipating skills that will be needed in the future would result in a jump ahead of the market.

- *Creating Worthwhile and Sensible Income-generating Activities*

While a lot of progress was made, the project was particularly stymied by the issue of providing secure livelihood support to children and their parents or guardians. The challenge of creating worthwhile and sensible income-generating activities resulted in some trial and error. Using the expertise of IRC and Street Kids International, parents and skills providers received appropriate and useful training in business skills. Through its YouthWORKS project, IRC is now working on a program to introducing *micro franchise*, which holds promise for more creative income-generating projects.

¹⁷ Kolb's *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (1984) defined four learning styles: activist, reflector, theorist, and pragmatist.

IV EFFECTIVENESS

The people of Sierra Leone and Liberia benefitted from IRC’s presence during and immediately after the conflicts. With CYCLE, IRC was on the ground and prepared to implement the project to fight child labor with rapid response, adequate tools and equipment, qualified staff, and necessary budget and resources. The implementing agency effectively managed subcontracted NGO partners ensuring delivery of their responsibilities in a timely fashion. The government officials were kept apprised and involved, as were other stakeholders, and the project management was clearly goal-focused. The beneficiaries and their situations, needs, and options remained in the forefront of the project implementation.

4.1 ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1.1 Output One: Supported project beneficiaries to access locally available education services

During the project, CYCLE enrolled 29,890 children into educational activities including public and private primary, junior, Accelerated/Alternative Learning Program (ALP), and secondary schools, formal vocational training centers, and mentor/apprenticeship-type programs.

Table 2: CYCLE Child Beneficiaries Enrolled During the Life of the Project

Sierra Leone

Indicators	Male	Female	Total
Withdrawn	3,223	3,087	6,310
Prevented	4,021	4,269	8,290
Total	7,244	7,356	14,600

Liberia

Indicators	Male	Female	Total
Withdrawn	1,587	1,660	3,247
Prevented	5,589	6,454	12,043
Total	7,176	8,114	15,290
Grand Totals	14,420	15,470	29,890

In Sierra Leone, 4,117 children completed an educational activity; 7,656 did so in Liberia. Most of the children were enrolled in primary schools. Of the total enrollment, 3,519 children, or 11%, dropped out. The project attempted to uncover reasons for dropout. The most common reason given was the movement of parents out of the school district, but pregnancy (girls) and returning to work (boys) were also given as reasons.¹⁸ Dropout rates at the vocational training centers were low in both countries—one dropout in Sierra Leone and none in Liberia. Annex E depicts a breakdown of the beneficiaries according to their educational programs.

¹⁸ Health and sexuality were taught at some schools and vocational skills centers.

There is no question that children who benefitted from the project were accurately identified as being either engaged in WFCL or at risk of becoming involved in WFCL. Some children had been child soldiers, abducted by the fighting forces, and victims of the war in various ways, including rape. Project beneficiaries included sand, diamond and gold miners, rock crushers, prostitutes, and haulers.

4.1.2 Output Two: Improved the quality of education or withdrawn and prevented children from child labor

The project trained more than two thousand teachers (2,731) in child-centered methodology. Training was conducted by qualified educators and teacher trainers, with some assistance from Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP). The teachers, school administrators, and PTA training included—

- Healing the classroom techniques
- Classroom management child-centered methodology
- Keeping school records with an emphasis on student attendance
- Child rights and the laws and conventions that protect those rights
- Child labor and the worst forms of child labor
- Child labor monitoring

Table 3: Final Figures—Indicators of Output 2 Over The Project Life

Indicators	Sierra Leone	Liberia	Total
Teachers and school administrators trained	1,793	938	2,731
New spaces created which can accommodate more pupils	747	821	1,568

Many of the teachers in schools in both countries are secondary school graduates who are uncertified and virtually untrained as teachers. There is critical need for teacher training in both countries, where more than half of the teachers are only high school graduates who have not received any education in pedagogy and may have questionable qualifications. For some, the training they received from the project was their first introduction to pedagogical methods. They are paid by the schools through a variety of schemes. While their presence is highly appreciated by communities and school principals, these young *volunteer teachers* are somewhat less than reliable, and less likely to be motivated to inspire children to learn. This generalization does not mean to diminish these *volunteers* on the whole. Some are more reliable than salaried teachers and represent an important step in the evolution of education in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Mentor teachers received more training, as they were expected to train others and appear to be conscientious and willing, but could still use more assistance.

More than 1,000 new spaces in schools were created because of project inputs, particularly the rebuilding and refurbishment of classrooms. In some cases, this meant re-roofing buildings, plaster and painting walls, and laying plaster on floors. CYCLE social workers are expected to continue to monitor school buildings when they visit, but it is not known if their inspections are recorded and filed. The findings are shared with education ministries in both countries. CYCLE's provision of benches and desks was also significant. With the increased enrollment in all schools, these inputs helped not just CYCLE beneficiaries, but the larger communities who now send their children to school thanks to free primary education. Girls Social Clubs were established or further supported by CYCLE in Liberia. Principals and school directors at several schools that benefited from CYCLE's provision of equipment and supplies and construction improvements reported higher passing rates and better test scores either for individual CYCLE pupils or for the school overall.¹⁹

4.1.3 Output Three: Mobilized relevant stakeholders to increase knowledge and improve attitudes about the value of education and the negative effects of child labor

With CYCLE assistance, hundreds of relevant stakeholders, including civil servants responsible for all aspects of child protection and activists directly linked to the project, have received comprehensive training, including information about national laws, international conventions, and other pertinent information. Volunteers have been mobilized to increase knowledge and improve attitudes on the value of education and negative effects of child labor.

Training topics included—

- The meaning of CYCLE—its goals, purpose and activities
- What CYCLE offered in terms of project outputs
- Definitions of child labor
- Local and international laws addressing child labor
- The importance of education
- The responsibilities of CYCLE, parents, and guardians towards their children enrolled in CYCLE
- The role of parents and community members in monitoring child labor to eliminate child labor in their communities.

¹⁹ During the first phase of the CYCLE final evaluation, every principal, teacher, and school director was asked to assess the impact of the project on academic performance by CYCLE beneficiaries and by their schools as a whole. These schools included Karn High School in Karnplay, Liberia; George A. Dunbar School, Nimba County, Liberia; St. Raphael's Junior Secondary School, Waterloo, Liberia; and Cape School, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Principals post lists of the examination results, and in Cape School, the head teacher pointed to a CYCLE beneficiary's name at the top of the list.

The project coordinated its activities well with government structures, especially the labor and education ministries in both countries. Line ministries were aware of CYCLE activities, so there was no duplication. CYCLE complemented government efforts where possible. Collaborating with line ministries, CYCLE facilitated or supported workshops, such as the training of rubber plantation employers in Liberia.

Community sensitization programs, mainly run by local NGOs subcontracted by CYCLE, reached multiple constituencies, and many people were sensitized to child labor issues. Awareness-raising campaigns made a significant contribution to changing the perceptions of parents, teachers, leaders, and communities about WFCL. Parents and communities have begun to understand the difference between child labor and child work, and the importance of education. Taking advantage of commemorative days and holiday, the project organized marches, presented dramatic and/or comedic shows, and handed out t-shirts to celebrate World Day Against Child Labor, and sensitized communities about many aspects of child labor. The project used television and radio in creative and effective ways. For example, the half-hour television program entitled *Issues* ran for two weeks, three times per week on two national channels in Sierra Leone.²⁰ This kind of exposure was very cost efficient and reached a large audience of TV watchers, not simply confined to private homes, but also public venues such as restaurants.

All of the NGOs that were subcontracted to provide services to raise consciousness and build a larger network to combat child labor were highly professional and did not disappoint. For example, in Nimba County, Liberia, the NGO group SEARCH held stimulating and widely attended drama events. SEARCH, like other NGOs involved, has expanded its original focus to include child labor. The group expects to make a film about child labor. CYCLE M&E staff estimate about 133,000 people have been reached with the messages that education has value and child labor is bad for the child, the family, and the country.

4.1.4 Output Four: Strengthened sustainable child labor monitoring at both community and national levels

From the outset, CYCLE staff members have been especially mindful of the need for transparency in project implementation. The concern that their efforts take root and become sustainable has been an area shared with all stakeholders as a challenge that they all must take on. In some cases, stakeholders have met the challenge. The CWCs, as well as some of the other volunteer community support structures such as PTAs, CTAs, and school management committees in both countries, aver that child labor monitoring must and will continue. As these groups and individuals clearly understand child labor issues, there is little doubt that people who abuse children will be called on their behavior if they are discovered.

Training of labor inspectors, police officers, and media specialists was conducted jointly with relevant ministries and stakeholders, to ensure a reasonable mass of informed and mobilized constituents to continue the fight against child labor. The training built capacity of the collaborating trainers (such as the Ministry of Labor) as a strategy to improve knowledge and attitudes of the local NGOs and key government officials who will be involved in child labor

²⁰ The *Issues* broadcast explained very clearly what child labor is, differences between child labor and light work, and what the Child Rights Act is.

monitoring and labor law enforcement in Liberia. Training workshops and awareness-raising sessions at the community level and lobbying at the national level with ministries, lawmakers, national agencies, and international bodies to encourage the Sierra Leone and Liberia governments to ratify and domesticate ILO conventions 138 and 182 were considered critical to building government and community long-term commitment.

The project has held sustainability workshops and developed a phase out/exit strategy with elements designed to make the project activities sustainable. Within the immediate plan, the project intends to work with key stakeholders, especially personnel from the ministries of labor and education, the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare, the NCCL in Liberia, community leaders particularly within the CWCs, youth groups, CYCLE project graduates, and NGO partners to ensure a continued program against child labor; to create awareness and advocate for children using the available bills and Child Rights Acts; and to design a gradual project phase out support plan for parents, guardians, and beneficiaries, involving them so that they will be ready to assume responsibilities as the project withdraws or phases out support. The project will continue to work on family IGA support, seeking other IRC and non-CYCLE programs to sustain the cost of educating children. The work plan identifies activities to be performed after the first phase of the final evaluation such as “provide follow up support to enrolled children through CYCLE M&E strategy” and “strengthening links between CWCs and government Ministries in Sierra Leone.” While it is not completely clear how this will be done, an updated sustainability plan fleshes out the suggested idea.²¹ A comprehensive nine-page sustainability plan is part of the revised and updated phase out/exit strategy.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF DIRECT ACTION INTERVENTIONS AND SERVICES

CYCLE successfully withdrew and/or prevented 29,890 children (15,290 in Liberia and 14,600 in Sierra Leone) from hazardous labor, including prostitution, rock crushing, mining (diamonds, sand, gold), and carrying heavy loads of water, wood, and other products extreme distances to and from markets. CYCLE education officers and social workers, and CYCLE-trained CWC members, teachers, and other CYCLE supporters effectively convinced children, parents, and guardians of the opportunities available by enrolling in educational programs. Once removed from labor, children were placed into one of these programs, which included public and private formal education schools, such as primary, junior secondary, ALP, or secondary schools; formal vocational institutes; or less structured skills training programs. Skills training programs were customized to meet the needs of an individual or a small group of learners and usually consisted of a mentoring or apprentice situation.

Besides school uniforms, children in primary schools were each provided with exercise books, two pens, two pencils, an eraser, and a ruler, as well as backpacks. Secondary school students also each received uniforms, copy books, four core text books, two pens, two pencils, a ruler, an eraser, and a math tools set. For the most part, supplies were delivered in a timely manner and always in a systematic way, so that no student received two sets of materials. The power of these materials as an incentive to keep children in school is inestimable, and during the first phase of

²¹ Approved Work Plan 2005–2010, revised 2009, Excel file.

the final evaluation, children, parents and guardians, and principals and teachers underlined these simple inputs as a key to retaining pupils in schools.

The majority of those trained in vocational skills are well on their way to using their newly acquired skills to establish businesses, be employable, and have the confidence to leverage their abilities into another vocation. All of the vocational skills programs had literacy and numeracy components which were necessary and helpful to students who had been out of the school system since early primary school. The children involved in the vocational skills training were removed from WFCL and were enrolled between age 15 and 18. Therefore, they will not return to *child labor*, but will engage in reasonable, legal activities.

IGAs were introduced as part of the CYCLE project in Sierra Leone as a means of providing support for vulnerable families to replace income lost as a result of withdrawing their children from WFCL and to ensure that they can continue to send their children to school.²²

In addition to the abovementioned approaches, IRC developed several excellent models for working with vulnerable children, parents, and communities. Among these, the child protection skills training model was employed and was very practical. Healing Classrooms was also introduced and teachers reported using it with good effect. IRC's EOP was extremely well received and useful in helping families and skills trainers understand elements of good business and develop business plans. CYCLE also benefitted from the USAID-funded LTTP to train teachers and school administrators. The evaluator agrees with IRC's assessment in the September 2009 Technical Progress Report: "The availability of internal expertise like this minimizes duplication of efforts. Collaboration is not only an opportunity for the project but also strength for IRC as an organization."²³

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF MONITORING SYSTEMS

The project used a number of systems to track children, identify child laborers (or potential child laborers), refer them, and follow up with them once they were withdrawn or prevented and enrolled in an educational program. Local volunteer activists, such as mentor teachers or CWC members, monitor children individually by visiting schools and other educational training sites, as well as conducting home visits. Many CWCs routinely monitor key work areas, such as streets, markets, quarries, and mines. Forms are filled out for all beneficiaries, and follow-up dates are noted until the child completes the cycle. Following routine IRC child protection protocols, the files are kept in accessible but locked file cabinets at CYCLE field offices. The participation of local CWCs and other volunteers is efficient. CYCLE social workers or education officers visit the learning sites conduct some follow-up and gather forms filed by volunteers on a regular basis. The monitoring can be difficult. The beneficiaries are located in a broad geographical range, and while CYCLE staff members have motorcycles or access to vehicles, CWC members and other volunteers do not. Recently, CYCLE gave bicycles to some CWCs.

The data collection, while somewhat problematic at first, has become fine tuned since the staff performing M&E are qualified and able to use software to analyze much of the information. The

²² Responses to USDOL comments on September 2006 Technical Progress Report, p. 5, #8.

²³ September 2009, p. 5.

information analyzed is accurate. Spot checks of the files—referrals, intake forms, and follow-up forms—revealed accurate files, although the input depends on the information that social workers, education officers and volunteers are able to glean. In some cases, this has required intensive footwork to ascertain guardianship or the exact or approximate ages of children. Files are arranged according to schools, and children are assigned identification numbers. It is refreshing to note the intense interest and concern of volunteers in this process. The CYCLE *child verification exercise* exemplifies the scrupulous attention that the project directs towards accuracy, as noted in technical progress reports: “The...Verification exercise...revealed that some beneficiaries were wrongly recorded in the database as *male* or *female*. When correction was made to the database it showed that in cohort one in Sierra Leone, 18 beneficiaries previously recorded as male were actually females, while one female in cohort two also in Sierra Leone was also wrongly captured as male.”²⁴

4.4 EFFECTIVENESS OF INCOME-GENERATION ACTIVITIES

The need for parents and guardians to have options to generate income has been a concern for CYCLE since the project began. Project experience underscores the fact that family-based poverty reduction strategies are essential to ensure access to education for children at risk of child labor exploitation. CYCLE staff meticulously followed the project document when conducting market surveys to ensure that proposed activities were market-driven and when identifying the next steps based on these studies.

Output 1.5: *Provide IGA support to households and communities to compensate for lost income*²⁵

“To address poverty as a barrier to education, the IRC will provide families and communities with training and transitional, in-kind support to enter into or strengthen existing income generation activities... CYCLE project identifies needy families whose children are being supported by the project as a way of helping them to raise income and save for future education of their children after the project phases out... The project provides families involved in IGA in Sierra Leone with the following key services; technical support; capacity building through basic micro-business training; identification and provision of materials or in kind support necessary to start up the income generation activities or agricultural ventures; linkages to micro-credit or savings and loan opportunities; follow-up and monitoring of these families... Specific examples of the types of materials which CYCLE will provide include tools, manuals, and equipment. IRC helps families to access financial services where possible; encouraging families to work in groups...will hold meeting sessions with families to link those receiving similar IGA assistance and provide information on the benefits of collaborating together. IRC will gather and distribute information to the families on where and how to access financial services. Types of income generation activities may include; vegetable gardens, small animal husbandry (chickens), selling of second-hand clothing, soap making, and rice cultivation.”

²⁴ Technical Progress Report, March 2008, p. G-18.

²⁵ Project Document, CYCLE—Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia DOL SGA 05-03, Budget Narrative, p.19.

However, implementation of IGAs was lackluster, probably because staff members were stretched in their duties to enroll and follow-up with direct beneficiaries. Initially, mistakes were made providing families with products designed to sell on the open market, violating USDOL regulations and deemed not an effective IGA approach. Income-generating projects demand a comprehensive approach that involves debits and income, profits and products. The implementation of an IGA program should be recognized as a separate project component that requires specific expertise. IRC recognized the IGA implementation problems and moved to remedy the situation with the provision of different models and business skills training. The micro franchise program developed by IRC in other projects holds a great deal of promise for the young, but may also be applied for adult parents and guardians.²⁶

Despite a study CYCLE carried out in August 2009, it is not known if the IGAs are gaining profits; further information is not available. The study did show that about two-thirds of the IGAs are continuing.

4.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES

Awareness raising, launched in many diverse venues, proved to be highly successful in educating the public about child labor and related issues. A higher consciousness of the dangerous practices of having children work in hard labor was frequently reported, including carrying heavy loads, selling in the streets, inappropriate and hazardous farm work, and performing late night tasks that interfere with studying. Messages and activities to sensitize communities, children, ministries, government officials, and other beneficiaries were accurate, audience- and age-appropriate, and culturally relevant.

Once training began, early in the project, relevant stakeholders in both countries took initiative and arranged awareness-raising activities. The Liberian Labor ministry's organization of activities for the World Day Against Child Labor in 2008 and creation of calendar and stickers was considered a major indicator that the project goal had been reached.

4.6 LESSONS LEARNED

According to CYCLE staff both at senior levels and in the field, many lessons learned during the CYCLE project came from collective reflection and resulted in modification. By identifying difficulties, certain design elements and procedures can be modified in Sierra Leone and Liberia and prevented in other programs.

- *Volunteers Who Are Real Volunteers*

CYCLE should be commended for limiting economic incentives for volunteers monitoring child labor. Volunteers were paid for transportation and other necessary

²⁶ *Micro franchise* is an initiative developed within IRC's YouthWorks program, in collaboration with Street Kids International. The program adopts a professional approach to helping young people develop livelihoods by linking them with established businesses and creating franchises, albeit on a small scale. It incorporates youth-run market analysis and business plan training, including location choice, operating costs, credit, and savings; MOUs between IRC-Youth-Franchisor; business mentoring; branding support; and record-keeping. The program began in 2009, so only a few CYCLE children were involved; the exact number is not known to the evaluator.

expenses. Workshop attendees received reimbursement for travel and expenses only. That policy builds a constituency of committed people, not just those who sign up only for remuneration.

- *CYCLE Cross-border Meeting*

CYCLE sponsored three cross-border conferences, each lasting three days. The first was held in Ganta, Liberia from October 17 to 19, 2007; the second was in Kono, Sierra Leone from May 21 to 23, 2008; and the last was in Gbarnga, Liberia from March 4 to 6, 2009. Cross-border meetings were highly successful and very effective in stimulating staffers and government representatives. Attended by a variety of stakeholders, these meetings were praised repeatedly by interviewees. The meetings were described as open with ample sharing, feedback, and training. Participants visited some CYCLE schools and skills training centers and met with some project beneficiaries. They acquired ideas that they carried back to their projects. The meetings helped stakeholders understand in depth the scope of the project and its expected outputs. The meetings also helped stakeholders to understand their roles in the referral system and community-based child labor monitoring approach being implemented by CYCLE.

This kind of cross fertilization was particularly helpful to CYCLE. Attendees mentioned the following examples of innovations or refinements of techniques gathered in one country and transferred to the other:

- Child labor monitoring systems
 - Mobilization of Child Welfare Committees
 - School gardens
 - Filing of referrals
 - Setting objectives and developing plans
 - Treatment of child beneficiaries.
- *Employing Familiar Approaches in Awareness Raising*

Awareness-raising campaigns used familiar techniques, such as banners, t-shirts, drama, and marches that were immediately understood by the public. This made it easy for the implementers to rapidly organize mass media campaigns and facilitated the public's comfort and ease in participating and grasping new information. The use of radio and television broadcast was a cost-efficient method to reach a large audience.

- *Using Commemorative Days as a Rallying Point*

Scheduling events annually, during events such as World Day Against Child Labor and the Day of the African Child, were excellent ideas. Children's activities should highlight

local realities, such as celebrating universal primary education or calling on the nation to adhere to international commitments and national legislation.

- *Engaging Partners with a Proven Track Record on Policy Advocacy to Ensure Substantive Input*

The choice of the NGOs involved in CYCLE, all with track records of reliability and effectiveness, were good ones. The NGOs were well connected and also called on colleague groups, such as the Freetown Players Theatre Troupe, to help address child labor issues.

- *Business Skills Training Are Essential for IGAs*

Many lessons came from observing the lifestyles of the child beneficiaries and their parents/guardians. One of the best lessons learned involved the implementation of IGAs. The project found that it was necessary to include a business skills training in the program when helping the 188 families with IGAs in Sierra Leone. This approach was expanded for youth and also implemented in Liberia, where the project secured funding from Refugees International Japan to assist 40 young women with IGA activities. The NGO partner CARD in Sierra Leone and IRC Liberia's EOP provided expertise, but developing sound and profitable IGAs is not an easy endeavor.

- *Start-up Kits and Savings*

CYCLE encountered an unanticipated tax on sewing machines in Sierra Leone municipalities. Responding appropriately, the staff negotiated a one-year waiver. This is an important factor to investigate before awarding start-up kits. People felt start-up kits could include a financial award as well. Providing the first six months' rent on a shop was suggested, but the savings and loans schemes that have been worked out by IRC on other projects seem to be a more feasible prospect, closely akin to traditional pooling of funds.

- *Children with Parents Who Have Special Needs*

In Liberia, CYCLE social workers realized that a large group of vulnerable children had parents who were disabled. These children serve as the sole breadwinners for their families, who are dependent on the children to sell goods in the street or haul heavy loads to earn money. CYCLE brought these children into schools, provided counseling, and found livelihood support programs for the families. Some of these children still work, but they now sell products in front of their homes.

V EFFICIENCY

5.1 COST AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

In the broadest goal-oriented sense, the project is cost-efficient. The budget was small considering the length of the project (four years) and the fact that it was implemented in two countries. Both of the project countries have relatively high costs of living and low accessibility to resources, such as credit, education, and other services. For the typical population, necessary staples, such as rice, are not affordable since the general population earns less than US\$100 per month.

The following figures calculated during the midterm evaluation are considered accurate and are worth reviewing for the sake of project cost-efficiency.

“The CYCLE project had a total budget of \$5,999,980 from the U.S. Department of Labor to cover the management and implementation costs of the project in Sierra Leone and Liberia from October 2005 to September 2009... CYCLE supports beneficiaries by providing school materials, uniforms, tuition fees, and WAEC examination fees. The costs per beneficiary are dependent upon the education services supported:

- *A primary child costs \$14 USD per student, per year (excluding WAEC fees, and no tuition fees are provided due to both countries’ free education policy).*
- *Junior secondary students cost \$50 USD per year (includes tuition but excludes WAEC fees).*
- *Senior secondary students cost \$90 USD per year (includes tuition and textbooks but excludes WAEC fees).*
- *Skills and vocational training students cost between \$250 to \$750 USD per year (depending upon their start-up kits).”²⁷*

According to a World Bank publication in 2007, Sierra Leone spends about 53,000 leones or US\$13.64 per primary school pupil.²⁸ UNICEF places the cost per primary school pupil in Liberia at USD\$13.²⁹ These figures correspond to the cost per child by CYCLE and can be deemed reasonable. More advanced grades in school require higher costs and the escalation of CYCLE’s formal education and vocational skills training costs were equally sound.

²⁷ Nicolls, Martina (2008, April). *Independent Midterm Evaluation of IRC: Countering Youth & Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia (CYCLE Project)*, p. 34–35.

²⁸ *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities*. World Bank publication by Lianqin Wang p. 109.

²⁹ *UNICEF Contributes US\$1million In Educational Supplies To Boost Schooling*. Monrovia, June 11, 2008. For stark contrast, see The Washington Post article, “The Real Cost Of Public Schools,” April 4, 2008. “...In the District, the spending figure cited most commonly is \$8,322 per child.”

Project staff seemed mindful of costs and implemented the project in a frugal way so that program benefits exceeded normal costs. Money saved in one component was used wisely to support an unexpected or expanded component, such as the rebuilding of a school. At the same time, the project did not economize on quality. The rehabilitated and re-roofed classrooms were well constructed so that they would not fall apart easily. T-shirts and school bags were durable and of good quality so that they would last. Using local volunteers also meant that staff members did not have to visit project sites every day as they were doing at project start-up, making the implementation more economical as well as promoting sustainability. CYCLE paid for transportation expenses, but the volunteers otherwise worked for free.

Locating children by visiting work sites known to have high incidences of child labor, and providing skills training near those sites, made the project cost-efficient. However, because of the high costs involved in classroom rehabilitation, the project was unable to meet the cumulative target of creating all targeted learning spaces by the time of the first phase of the final evaluation.³⁰

The project was situated in six vast, but geographically diverse sites. The road systems are extremely bad. These factors alone created additional costs associated with heavy duty vehicles (many staff used motorcycles), fuel, travel time, drivers, and repairs. While a diverse geographical spread might not normally be cost-efficient, in this case, it was resourceful. Since IRC had established field offices with running generators and a fleet of vehicles, equipment and supplies were shared across programs. Close proximity to staff expertise from other IRC programs also increased efficiency.

Given the infrastructural, time, and budgetary constraints connected with implementing CYCLE, the monitoring system was also designed and applied efficiently. Volunteers on the ground collected information; data were entered in field offices and transferred electronically to the country offices. Data forms could be streamlined. There are many systems that existed but had not been fully exploited and might warrant experimentation, such as the use of solar batteries to compile data on computers. The IRC organizational culture appears to be very open to broad thinking; this might be something to explore in the future. For the time being, the monitoring is efficiently done.



PTA-built latrine at C&S School, Liberia

³⁰ Technical Progress Report, March 2008, p. 12.

VI IMPACT

The project has had a very positive impact on the population centers where activities took place, touching populations beyond the individual beneficiaries. CYCLE is well known among local people in the major areas and appears to be well integrated into the development strategies of the region. The highly visible efforts to stop those who exploit children through work and deny them schooling has also had efficient results. As CWC and CYCLE staff made their way through communities and information about child labor became better known, guardians and employers were deterred from coercing children to work and enrolled them in schools. Related anecdotal accounts from stakeholders involved children who were not CYCLE beneficiaries leaving child labor and coming to school; guardians who were humiliated into sending their working wards to school even without CYCLE support; and conversely, CYCLE beneficiaries' friends who were still working and not in school who would only be able to attend school if they had CYCLE support.

6.1 CHILDREN

Overall, the project has had a significant impact on the lives of those who received direct benefits, such as school-age children now able to attend classes regularly instead of working. Child beneficiaries have been extremely well served by the project. Children in the two countries who have been touched by CYCLE are enthusiastic and happy to be in school.

There are a myriad of success stories, in both formal and nonformal education. The highest grade for passing the class six standard examinations was achieved by a CYCLE beneficiary in Cape School, Western Urban district, Sierra Leone, though this proved typical at many project sites. Most educators report high performance among CYCLE beneficiaries.

Successes among the older children enrolled in vocational training programs were also the norm. Young seamstresses in Tongo Fields who had never held scissors before CYCLE earn rent money and support younger siblings. On occasion, vocational graduates stay on with their mentor teachers because they cannot yet earn enough to be on their own or because they have a higher likelihood of attracting customers.

6.2 PARENTS

Although the younger children (primary school age) may not have felt the full brunt of the war, their parents have suffered a great deal. Parents repeatedly expressed relief and joy to be able to send their children to school instead of forcing them to work. The project has brought parents into the school communities. Several spoke of personal empowerment because they received business skills training from CYCLE staff. All parents interviewed recounted their new awareness of the dangers of allowing children to work in hard labor, including carrying heavy loads and even work around the home that exceeds a child's ability or interferes with studying.

6.3 TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

Educators from both the formal and nonformal sectors praised the training that they received. In schools that benefited from CYCLE's provision of equipment, supplies, and construction improvements, impressive promotion rates for passing students and better test scores were reported.

6.4 IMPACT ON GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES

The value of supplying scholastic materials, textbooks, teaching aids, and equipment cannot be underestimated as they had an impact not only on overall educational quality but on communities. Particularly in rural communities and the urban areas connected to Freetown and Monrovia, schools play a noticeable role as places of stability and as community centers. With these inputs, CYCLE was well known and appreciated by educators, parents, and surrounding communities. Government representatives from education ministries echoed their approval of the introduction of new methods and materials.

Education ministry representatives and educators were extremely grateful for the project's inputs. CYCLE provided government-approved textbooks to school teachers. Without CYCLE, schools would have begun the school year with no textbooks, despite a curriculum that required them. The provision of attendance registers was seen as a major step toward improving teaching, since teachers had not maintained attendance before. Some school-based youth groups also received soccer and volleyball equipment.

CYCLE was in the forefront and was recognized by other groups as a major player in the fight against child labor and other efforts related to child rights and protection. CYCLE staff regularly attended meetings at national and district levels with the line ministries—the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, and educational and child protection agencies like FAWE and UNICEF—where child protection issues were discussed. These groups also participated in activities together, such as World Day Against Child Labor. The NCCL in Liberia praised the technical support that CYCLE offered as a major force for the Commission to be able to function. Although the NCCL was in place when CYCLE came, the project's presence and unflagging interest kept its momentum going.³¹

On a local scale, the CYCLE-trained and supported Tongo Field Mining Committee, with the help of the Paramount Chief, was instrumental in introducing a fine of US\$167 to be imposed on any mine license holder employing children under age 17. Proceeds from any fines collected would be paid to the community development committee for other developmental activities in their locality. This is a replicable activity, and should be promoted by the project as an example for other CWCs to follow.

On a national scale, CYCLE struggled to overcome obstacles of government inertia, work overload, and lack of resources to have any impact on system-wide policies. While CYCLE provided technical assistance and facilitated events and workshops that involved all relevant

³¹ Paraphrase of Reginald S. Mehnepaine, Director of Trade Union Affairs, Former Coordinator, National Commission on Child Labor comments at the Stakeholder's Meeting, October 29, 2009.

ministries, it is not clear what the impact has been on system-wide change. Certainly, the policies of free and compulsory education in both countries coincided well with the CYCLE objectives, and the project supported educational initiatives, but there is little evidence of a noticeable impact on education policies. In Sierra Leone, the project worked with the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs on disseminating information about the Child Rights Act, and has provided technical assistance. The Liberian Ministry of Labor's activities, especially with the NCCL, is one area where there has been some impact.

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VII SUSTAINABILITY

Since the beginning, CYCLE has worked towards developing its efforts as part of a larger national strategy to be sustained through local structures and networks. The project has developed and revised a phase out/exit strategy that involves workshops to further build capacity, some already held before the first phase of the final evaluation.

In schools, youth clubs were established or strengthened to provide peer group activities to fight child labor. According to the project's March 2009 Technical Progress Report, "By encouraging beneficiaries as agents of change to disseminate these messages within their communities, the program has established a sustainable way of creating awareness about these issues after the program phases out."³²

IRC successfully advocated for the NCCL in Liberia and provided technical support and other resources. Through its varied logistical and technical support to the line ministries in both countries, CYCLE helped build networks with a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders.

CYCLE worked with training and NGO partners, CARD, FAWE, SEARCH, the Community Development and Empowerment through Participation Program, and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, to build their capacity in child labor advocacy and monitoring, enabling these groups to take leadership to protect children, fight child labor, and advocate for education.

The monitoring and evaluation section of CYCLE developed an excellent database of CYCLE beneficiaries. Although confined to project target sites, the data provides an overview and contributes to the institutionalization of child labor information overall.

As the project geared up, local people have been empowered to identify child laborers and children at risk and perform CYCLE referrals and follow-up. Teachers, paramount chiefs, immigration officers, and other educated people live in isolated areas and have skills that can be used to serve their communities beyond their traditional roles. These people served on CWCs and other community structures and were employed as volunteers to follow up on child beneficiaries, conduct awareness-raising campaigns, and oversee latrine construction. During the evaluation, some CYCLE staff worried that the voluntary work would diminish after the project ended. Volunteers who were interviewed were committed and mainly concerned that they would not be able to carry out their duties, including child labor monitoring, without a central meeting place or office, transportation, and office supplies.

7.1 EXIT STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

As a means to build sustainability, the project design focused on building the capacity of relevant stakeholders through many workshops. Line ministry participants and local CWC members acquired skills appropriate for monitoring child labor according to their unique venues. Educators acquired skills related to providing enhanced quality education, such as large

³² Technical Progress Report, March 2009, p. 6.

classroom management. Mentoring workshops were designed to train teachers and build future supporters in the fight against child labor.

In both Sierra Leone and Liberia, stakeholders were reportedly told from the beginning of the program's time limitation. However, as projects and activities gained momentum and experience success, participants were reluctant to let the source of support go. As the project neared its end, an excellent strategy was devised to encourage families and beneficiaries to attend to other families in need of support. In Sierra Leone, the exit strategy was applied as a clear and unambiguous mantra, according to Sia M'Bayo, former project coordinator and now ILO-IPEC Tackle Child Labour Through Education (TACKLE) coordinator. The CYCLE team repeated at every possible forum several key points:

- The project has a defined ending period.
- The education of children will benefit the parents and family.
- Education is an investment in peace and stability in the whole country.
- Other children deserve the same blessing as the first CYCLE children.
- Once a child has received assistance, parents and communities can continue to help.

As simple as this message of self-sufficiency sounds, it is actually a sound exit strategy that appeared to be working at the time of the first phase of the final evaluation. The message, which appealed to peace and self-sufficiency, was reiterated at project sites visited during the evaluation. While stakeholders—children, parents, CWC and CTA members, teachers and principals, and local government officials—regretted the end of CYCLE, their messages were consistent with this *mantra*. Often, a plea was attached, but not for the current beneficiaries. Rather, communities asked for expansion of the project to reach other deserving and destitute children who are working and not receiving an education.

In Liberia, the strategy for sustainability is less defined, and there is some confusion about the next steps. Staff is leaving, and the message seems to be mostly that work on advocacy or building sustainable child monitoring is uniquely focused on Sierra Leone.

7.2 APPROACHES TO BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

In both countries, the civil service presented challenges to building partnerships. There is a need for more government services to tie in with livelihood support activities and to increase civil service capacity. More teachers, government social workers, labor inspectors, and police sensitive to child labor, child trafficking, and special situations of these children are needed. Multilateral and international aid agencies are working with the governments to develop various programs to address these problems in both countries, but more needs to be done and quickly.

With regard to leveraging non-project resources, IRC met the increased match requirement and shows promise leveraging funds for the continuation of several CYCLE components. The organization has submitted proposals to potential donors to improve schools, provide skills

training for girls, promote vocational training opportunities, and support other CYCLE project activities. IRC received private funding for girls' scholarship programs in Liberia that provide resources to cover school fees to at-risk girls. The organization expects to continue the LTTP program in Liberia improving the quality of teaching and school management.

The project developed strong, mutually respectful and assistive relationships with the governments, particularly in the field, at district levels. CYCLE was perceived as a worthwhile endeavor that brought value to the work that they were trying to do, and local government officials were keen to participate. However, government officials have limited budgets and do not have the resources to travel or furnish supplies and equipment. The government appreciated CYCLE's material support to schools, for example, since the Ministry of Education budgets were limited. In the interest of strengthening local institutions and building sustainability around any government efforts to fight child labor, CYCLE was very transparent and included government officials in all aspects of their work, including decisionmaking.

Although CYCLE staff insisted that local government officials have been forthcoming, the findings of the first phase of the final evaluation were mixed. Some government officials were stellar in their commitment and ability to see the larger connections between removing children from child labor and into education and the stability and security of their respective countries. However, the civil service lacks consistent competencies and commitment. Although corruption is problematic, it is likely that the representatives are more focused on survival issues. There is much to do in the two countries, and the priorities are difficult to readily identify, especially when civil servants focus on the resources available when setting priorities. For some government officials, the trappings of the offices interfere with the substance of the work. The project has worked within these parameters and been able to identify strong champions for children and nurture their efforts.

Until a few months ago, ILO-IPEC had not had a presence in either Liberia or Sierra Leone that specifically addressed child labor. This past year, the former CYCLE project director in Sierra Leone has been named director of the TACKLE project. The aim of TACKLE complements the efforts of CYCLE. TACKLE aims to contribute to the withdrawal of working children and to further prevent children from entering into the workforce by offering alternative education and training opportunities. The project will also provide guidance to formulate new, or improve existing, legal and policy frameworks on child labor and education; promote the development of institutional capacities of ministries and other relevant bodies for concrete action to fight child labor as well as to raise awareness; and strengthen networks on child labor and education. With ILO-IPEC and TACKLE in Sierra Leone, there is a strong potential that CYCLE achievements will be supported in other parts of the country.

CYCLE has had many opportunities to collaborate, through meetings, workshops, commemorative days, and joint support, with other international and multilateral organizations working on child protection and education issues over the life of the project. These include UNICEF, Don Bosco, Street Kids International, and World Food Programme. For the most part, this has strengthened the project's presence and created options for expanding services to beneficiaries. IRC has many programs in both Sierra Leone and Liberia with multiple donors,

which have led to many interactions with international and multilateral organizations.³³ The project has benefitted from the overlap of IRC staff expertise in such areas as gender-based violence, economic development, and teacher training.

Partnerships that CYCLE established with local NGOs and community structures such as CWCs and youth groups, were mutually valuable. The community-based structures visited during the first phase of the final evaluation showed no evidence of disintegrating at the end of the project. These groups were formed at a time when the communities clearly needed some local structures, and they appear to be very functional. Many would benefit from continued support of some kind, such as office space or registers, but the spirit of the groups to be a source of support to community leaders seems to be healthy.

The challenges working with the NGOs as subcontractors were the obstacles that they faced preparing reports to donors and documenting their work. While extremely competent, these groups struggled with presenting their accomplishments for dissemination. CYCLE worked with them on this, and representatives noted the assistance with gratitude.

7.3 LESSONS LEARNED

Sustainability requires thinking in terms of what can make a difference in the long run. A well-defined plan of building local and national institutions and strengthening advocacy efforts should be designed from the beginning of any project to fight child labor. Policy objectives, such as the formation of an NCCL or appointment of a WFCL Focal Point in several ministries, should be included in the plan. Introducing curricula or preparing in-service training for teachers on the associated subjects should be another objective. These proven initiatives have a chance of taking root if started from the beginning, but the fruits are not always visible immediately and may take years.

³³ Some of the IRC donors for other programs are the U.S. State Department Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) NoVo Foundation.

VIII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSIONS

Through CYCLE, IRC rescued nearly 30,000 children and placed them into educational activities with the hope and promise of a better future. In their own words and testimonies, CYCLE direct beneficiaries confirmed that they were at risk of engaging in WFCL if they were not already working. Of these beneficiaries, few dropped out. Most of the young people who gained vocational skills are on their way to running their own businesses or being employed. Of those enrolled in formal education programs, there have been many successes. Many of the children interviewed reported that they still work after school and on weekends, but none of the children interviewed reported returning to WFCL. Qualitatively, USDOL's support to CYCLE has been a huge impact in the two target countries. Very little else is being done to thwart the problem. With some project modifications and possibly expansion into other geographical areas, the agency can continue to have a significant influence on the lives of the children in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the stability of the region.

8.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS—CRITICAL FOR SUCCESSFULLY MEETING PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project has met its objectives. During the extension period, the project will support those students who are close to completing critical grades. IRC staffers who remain will monitor them. Additionally, the project will focus on providing advocacy training for local groups.

There are several recommendations for immediate steps to take in meeting project objectives before CYCLE officially ends:

1. *Focus on providing experiential, results-oriented training.* It is strongly recommended that training be taken out of the workshop venue and into real-world, real-time activities. Training should be experiential, offering useful tools and techniques for advocacy, such as dealing with the media, policy design and writing, or making presentations to elected officials. If advocating for public policy is to be part of the training, government officials would benefit and should be participants alongside those who would be advocating.

This also means making the workshops worth attending. CYCLE has been successful creating incentives for people to attend without offering payment; this should continue. However, there may be other, low-cost incentives to encourage attendance, such as certificates, prestige, publicity, or a ceremony with influential attendees. Child labor and child trafficking in Sierra Leone and Liberia take many forms and are urgent and serious problems. Relevant policy makers and activists need intensive training to stay updated and connected with one another and make a difference eliminating those practices. If it is not possible for policy makers to attend training sessions, meetings should be held where trainees have a chance to interact with government officials.

Similarly, child labor monitoring should be taught in the field, not in a classroom. Participants should be able to contribute to the design of the CLMS to ensure the systems

are user-friendly and appropriate to the abilities and needs of those who will do the monitoring.

2. *Children should be invited to participate in these workshops and give testimonies, not only of the harsh treatment they suffered but also of their successes.* Children can play an effective role bringing about positive change. A large number of trained and educated young people have graduated from CYCLE programs and are now young adults. As they excelled in school and were involved in drama and sports, they should also be involved in decisionmaking and problem-solving related to the projects from which they benefitted. They need platforms for sharing ideas. They also need training and opportunities to experience their rights and responsibilities as part of civil society.
3. As they successfully engaged NGOs competent in working with children, such as SEARCH and FAWE, *CYCLE and future child labor projects should subcontract with NGOs to hold conferences* where children can learn about cultural understanding, children's rights, and how to be active participants—future workers and leaders—in their society.
4. *Although the component to improve the quality of education is virtually complete, it is not too late for the project to obtain books and magazines for those who received literacy training, including adults.* It is discouraging for people who have gained literacy skills to have nothing to read. In the schools, teachers could start a newspaper or journal as part of a club where literacy can be practiced.

8.3 OTHER SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ACCORDING TO THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND RELATED COMPONENTS

8.3.1 Access to Education for Child Workers and Vulnerable Children

1. *Seek ways to support primary school children other than direct support.* Frequently, direct support given to children in child labor projects creates dependency among both children and parents, particularly in formal educational programs. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, few beneficiaries and parents demonstrated this attitude of dependence. Instead, CYCLE heard these messages: “What about our siblings [or my friends] who are still working,” or in the case of Sierra Leone: “CYCLE worked in four out of fourteen chiefdoms in Kono, what about the other chiefdoms, which have the same circumstances?” Neither USDOL nor IRC can provide individual benefits to each needy child in Sierra Leone or Liberia. CYCLE was an excellent model for stopping child labor by raising awareness, upgrading schools, and training educators. With universal primary education compulsory and the government providing supplementary support to junior secondary schools in both countries, the need to support beneficiaries at those levels is reduced. School supplies and uniforms are still needed, but the community structures, such as PTAs, CTAs, and SMCs, could be brought to bear some of these responsibilities.

For example, in Karnplay, Nimba County, Liberia, CYCLE provided start-up funds to the school PTA for a garden and small livestock project. Income from the sale of products

from the project will be used to earn money to pay for volunteer teachers and vulnerable children after CYCLE support ends. The efforts were just beginning when the first phase of the final evaluation took place. This kind of activity can have many benefits: providing education about agriculture, providing food for school lunches, and obtaining income to support the school. However, it requires careful planning and committed adult volunteers.

2. *Emphasize secondary and vocational training.* These areas have less support but greater need by a burgeoning population of otherwise idle and disenfranchised youth. Any future projects should explore more vocational options that reflect an understanding of the future markets and the learning capabilities of the targeted youth.
3. *Continue to have projects like CYCLE* that support the most vulnerable children, but work in closer proximity with the Ministry of Education to present the project as a model for replication.
4. *Create livelihood support projects for parents and recent graduates of CYCLE.* To enable continued withdrawal from child labor, parents and older children need to be involved in innovative and responsive livelihood activities. Projects that aim to combat child labor have to involve the entire family unit to address the poverty that drives families to send young children to work. It is more cost-efficient to develop a component uniquely focused on livelihood support to the family unit than to have trial and error.

Bring in expert short-term consultants or create a project personnel slot to help create sound IGAs with market studies, group organization and facilitation, and achievable models. There have been many replicable, demonstrable models of successful IGAs throughout the world that would be applicable to the target countries. These consultants focus uniquely on IGAs, microfinance, and livelihood schemes. They should be involved before projects launch IGAs, as these are complicated activities.

Explore IRC's program called Micro-franchise, which shows promise in building young, successful entrepreneurs. It is a welcome sign to see innovative thinking in the area of job creation as there is concern that traditional vocational programs are saturating the market.

8.3.2 Quality of Education

1. *Deliver more training in student-centered techniques and creative classroom methods that were introduced by CYCLE.* A specific component to develop curriculum and produce educational materials to improve the quality of teaching would greatly enhance the project. Education officers should work with teacher training colleges and institutes to create curriculum for schools and teacher training schools. Curriculum should not focus uniquely on child labor, but should be integrated into math, science, and other subjects. This was done to an extent with CYCLE input, but more could be done in this area.
2. *Create an afterhours study space* by refurbishing one classroom to be an after-school study hall; provide lanterns to beneficiaries; or look into solar or other low-energy lighting systems, other than candles—or start vocational skills training in superior, safe candle making.

3. *Increase professional development support to teachers and educators, including vocational skills providers.*
4. *Ensure that psychosocial counseling is included in the teacher training programs for USDOL supported projects.*
5. *Employ visual decorations in schools to foster a more welcoming environment.* In other USDOL-funded projects, a very successful approach has been to hire a painter, who visits all participating schools and paints the outside and inside school walls in a mural style. The pictures include maps of the target country and/or of Africa, a human skeleton, or parts of the eye or ear. This was suggested at the stakeholders meeting in Freetown, but not mentioned at the Monrovia meeting, although it was noted that the visuals seemed somewhat lacking in the schools. Murals such as these are more permanent than the posters and maps that the project gave as teaching aids (which were seen more than once only hanging on the wall of the principal's office) or other materials seen carefully packaged in a cupboard. Given the limited resources available in both countries for teaching aids, it makes sense that teachers may not want to use all of the materials provided by IRC. Teachers are often frugal, knowing these are like prized possessions. The painted, more durable and permanent murals are seen every day and are cost-effective.
6. *Consider ways to build a stronger and larger cadre of qualified teachers.* Special circumstances found in Sierra Leone and Liberia have led to a number of teachers with only partial teacher training. The environment is ripe for the development of a teacher corps. This could be established within a larger project, whether government-run or NGO-sponsored, in which these volunteers receive stipends and receive regular training.

8.3.3 Awareness Raising

1. *Use the CYCLE song wherever possible.* The CYCLE song is fun, catchy, and easy to remember. It should be seen as a best practice and replicated. As a rallying point for everyone touched by the project—beneficiaries, stakeholders, general public and staff—the CYCLE song has the potential to be a long-term vehicle for raising awareness about child labor.
2. *Continue other awareness-raising activities applying more innovations.* Working with one theater groups identified in the course of the program, perhaps a radio or television soap opera or a traveling theater program with child labor and education themes might be developed. Clubs and theater arts groups have a potential to reach large numbers, portraying complicated ideas related to child labor, child work, child rights, and the value of education in appealing ways.
3. *Target raising awareness of child trafficking including internal trafficking.* Internal and other forms of child trafficking exist in the two target countries. Raising awareness of this phenomenon specifically should begin with a policy advocacy emphasis.

8.3.4 Capacity Building and Strengthening Local Institutions

1. *Increase capacity-building activities for all stakeholders—government, children, civil society—especially to give voice to advocacy and to monitor child labor.* Although the project struggled with building support and capabilities at the national policy level, several important inroads were made. Broadening the approaches to build government capacity should be strengthened, including holding a national or regional conference to study child labor policies and approaches; establishing or reinforcing entities, such as the NCCL; expanding the training; bringing child leaders and beneficiaries into direct contact with policymakers; garnering more media attention; and slow, dogged advocacy with key stakeholders.
2. *Add a training component for institutional development to build enduring capacity of stakeholders.* By creating a cadre of institutions and individual leaders, projects have a greater chance of becoming sustainable. Capacity building occurs in several forms—for example, training, resource availability, and creating systems. Those who received CYCLE training said it was valid and valuable. There is ample evidence that the training had an impact on the CWCs, teachers and educators, and the NGOs involved. During the final phase of the project, a training component should be added to focus on institutional development.
3. *Encourage leadership and recognize accomplishments.* The people who have already worked on these projects should be recognized for their efforts and for the accomplishments, especially CWC members, youth, and educators. The Tongo Fields Mining Committee comes to mind as an outstanding example of community leaders who are well organized and committed to making their town a better place. Similarly, the devotion of the individual vocational skills providers also merits acknowledgement.

8.3.5 Children’s Involvement Is Capacity Building of Leaders for the Future

1. *Increase children’s involvement* by visiting members of Parliament and encouraging scholarships and other opportunities for vulnerable children.
2. *Hold annual competitions* for essays or posters to heighten children’s awareness of child labor, child trafficking, and the value of education.
3. *Encourage the establishment of local children’s clubs* as an opportunity for children to express themselves. Existing clubs and associations in schools, religious centers, communities, and quarters should be reinforced.

8.3.6 Sustainable Policy Initiatives

1. *Build the capacity of CWCs.* If they are to be effective, new organizations require time and support. CWCs are still fledgling institutions, and as such, will encounter organizational problems. Viewed as institutionalized by the Children’s Rights Act, there is some tendency to believe that at least the CWCs in Sierra Leone will receive some

help. As local institutions in both Sierra Leone and Liberia established to protect children, CWCs lack the necessary resources to enable them to effectively interact with one another. There are motivated individual members, but they require institutional support from the ministry if they are to function independently.

2. *Include all key stakeholders in the initial activity of designing programs.* Sustainability requires thinking in terms of what can make a difference in the long run. A well-defined plan of building local and national institutions and strengthening advocacy efforts should be designed from the beginning of any project to fight child labor. Policy objectives, such as the formation of a NCCL or appointment of a WFCL focal point in several ministries, should be included in the plan. Introducing curricula or preparing an in-service training for teachers on the associated subjects should be another objective. These proven initiatives have a chance of taking root if started from the beginning, but results are not always visible for several year.
3. *Give weight to strengthening policy in project implementation.* Except for the Child Rights Act in Sierra Leone, the legal response to child labor, including child trafficking, remains insufficient. CYCLE and other child labor projects should be involved with strengthening policy, law, and enforcement aspects. An adequate response would include (1) a national plan of action to combat child labor and trafficking with actionable components, including goals to create laws and follow through on ILO conventions and multilateral accords; (2) institutional awareness and capacity in appropriate ministries; (3) research and national databases; and (4) the involvement of educator, educational institutions, trade unions, and employers. Policy development requires steady commitment on the part of advocates. Child labor projects need a director/leader and/or senior staff who can establish rapport and build relationships to affect policy. Staff in the field needs to understand the power of empowering and mobilizing local citizens, particularly children themselves to have their voices heard.

8.3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation, and Applied Research

1. *Explore how information collected could be used to develop programs.* A lot of information about the status of child beneficiaries is available through the CYCLE database, but it is not always used. For example, since it is known that a certain number of children are orphans or that some are engaged in a certain type of labor, indicators should be developed to measure progress on critical success factors that directly relate to objectives. Since performance indicators reflect project goals, the indispensable indicators are withdrawal, prevention, enrollment, retention, drop out, and completion. Beyond that, the goals, purposes, and objectives should be dissected to clarify the values attached to the objectives and determine what the indicators should be. Some of the questions on the IGAs included in the terms of reference (see Annex B) are good examples of questions that measure progress on critical success factors. These proved difficult to answer because of the nature of the data collected by the project and the time required for the CYCLE staff's professional compulsion to respond punctually to project indicators in the technical progress reports.
2. *Continue accumulating and compiling archives in an organized fashion.*

3. *Help the NCCL in Liberia create their national database.* According to the executive director of Liberia's NCCL the organization would appreciate CYCLE's assistance in conducting a national survey on child labor and creating a national database on child labor statistics. The data needed to be collected, the frequency and method of data collection, and the needed data collection tools would need to be identified. Funding for the project is on hold; perhaps USDOL and ILO could assist by funding or providing technical expertise for the national database to proceed.
4. *Build databases on child labor.* Now is an appropriate time to look beyond anecdotal information and gain real knowledge regarding the actual situation of child labor and child trafficking in the target countries. Without building these databases, it is impossible to know where to direct actions and how to measure impact.
5. *Enlist the help of university teachers and students who may be available to perform social science research.* Obvious research topics include tracking and monitoring child labor; setting up child labor monitoring systems; following children's performance in schools; and understanding income generation.

8.3.8 Project Management and Implementation

1. *Increase participation in the project design process and on-going implementation by staff.* Work plans were designed for social workers and education officers. Detailed work plans reflecting advocacy goals and objectives might help make the interaction with ministry personnel clearer.
2. *Before creating multi-country projects, investigate the merits carefully. If there are individual country projects, ensure cross-fertilization opportunities.* While there may have been some justification at the beginning of the project for creating a regional program spanning two neighboring countries, the circumstances no longer merit the joint activity. It is not clear that money was saved or that the dual-country structure enhanced the project's effectiveness. The key benefit to the regional project was that there was cross-fertilization which occurred when key stakeholders were brought together. This benefit is important and can continue without a regional framework. It is not clear that the other benefits were exploited as well as possible due to lack of clearly defined direction from the project director. According to staff, the project start up was tumultuous. Staff was anxious to get the first cohort off the ground and fulfill its targets. The 15,000 child beneficiaries targeted were considered massive and daunting, but a completely realistic task. For one thing, the children were known to be working, and in need of help. Taking an expedient approach is common for IRC workers who have been in refugee camps and near the front lines in their work. However, in this case, a major strategic planning session would have been beneficial in the beginning to articulate assumptions, to consider the consequences of recruiting masses of children to enroll into a limited number of suitable educational sites, and to review the objectives in detail.
3. *When transferring from conflict and crisis to development, it is best to spend some time at start-up fully analyzing the consequences of the interventions.* The transition from working on humanitarian assistance in conflict to sustainable development requires

careful assessment of the social environment, exploitable strengths, and cautionary weaknesses. CYCLE appropriately conducted baseline data collection and visited communities before enrollment. Stakeholders were extremely well-trained in child labor and project-related issues, but it is not apparent that a lot of participation went into the actual project design. A project design incorporating well-articulated reflection and project planning with expanded process-oriented community and stakeholder participation, including that of key government representatives, might seem like a luxury. However, taking the time to build a solid core of stakeholders ensures issue adherence and fewer burdens on field staff. For example, CYCLE learned after the first cohort that incorporating local stakeholders in beneficiary enrollment helped to reduce the stress and built adhesion to CYCLE, but if they had done this before there might have been less frenzy in the initial enrollment. Stakeholder input in project design should be seen as a component of the actual project implementation.

4. *Expand the geographical spread.* The need is great in both countries. This would likely require adding staff.
5. *Share and network with other child labor projects.* Although USDOL conducts a grantee conference, it seems that more could have been done to network with other projects. If the project in these two countries is indicative of other USDOL-supported projects, it may be that USDOL needs to give more guidance to implementers. However, it is the opinion of the evaluator, who has seen other similar programs, that the crisis mentality found in the CYCLE project can be tempered and more focused without too much guidance.
6. *USDOL and the implementing agencies should agree on technical progress report requirements in order to have reports that are less onerous and more informative.* The technical progress reports drafted by CYCLE were somewhat lacking. The M&E graphs seemed accurate, but the information in the text was not very informative, nor did it completely describe the breadth of the project's activities over the six-month span. Specific training in filling out the technical progress reports with hands on guidance from USDOL might reduce the need for follow up comments and questions.

ANNEXES

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ANNEX A: CYCLE SONG

Verse 1:

It's time, It's time, It's time to stop child labor

It's time, It's time, It's time to stop child labor

It's time, It's time, It's time to stop child labor

It's time to stop child labor now

La la la la la (or CYCLE Project)

Go around the counties, Go around the districts,

Go and do your best to stop child labor now

Go and do your best to stop child labor now!

Verse 2:

It's you, It's me, It's you to stop child labor

It's you, It's me, It's you to stop child labor

It's you, It's me, It's you to stop child labor

It's you to stop child labor now

La la la la la (or CYCLE Project)

Go around Liberia, Go around Sierra Leone,

Go and do your best to stop child labor now

Go and do your best to stop child labor now!

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ANNEX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Terms of Reference
for the
Independent Final Evaluation of
Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education
in Sierra Leone and Liberia**

Cooperative Agreement Number:	E-9-K-5-0048
Financing Agency: Grantee Organization: Dates of Project Implementation:	U.S. Department of Labor International Rescue Committee September 30, 2005–June 30, 2010
Type of Evaluation:	Independent Final Evaluation
Evaluation Field Work Dates:	October 19–November 4, 2009 and April 2010 (exact dates to be determined)
Preparation Date of TOR:	August 20, 2009
Total Project Funds from USDOL Based on Cooperative Agreement:	US \$5,999,979
Vendor for Evaluation Contract:	ICF Macro, Headquarters 11785 Beltsville Drive Calverton, MD 20705 Tel: (301) 572-0200 Fax: (301) 572-0999

I BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). OCFT activities include research on international child labor; supporting U.S. government policy on international child labor; administering and overseeing cooperative agreements with organizations working to eliminate child labor around the world; and raising awareness about child labor issues.

Since 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated over \$720 million to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects to combat exploitive child labor in more than 80 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL range from targeted action programs in specific sectors of work to more comprehensive programs that support national efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor as defined by ILO Convention 182. USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects generally seek to achieve 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; and
5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The approach of USDOL child labor elimination projects—decreasing the prevalence of exploitive child labor through increased access to education—is intended to nurture the development, health, safety, and enhanced future employability of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor.

USDOL reports annually to Congress on a number of indicators. As these programs have developed, an increasing emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the data collected by grantees is accurate and reported according to USDOL definitions.

In the appropriations to USDOL for international child labor technical cooperation, the U.S. Congress directed the majority of the funds to support the two following programs:¹

1. *International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC)*

Since 1995, the US Congress has earmarked some \$410 million to support the International Labor Organization’s International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC), making the U.S. Government the leading donor to the program. USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC projects to combat child labor generally fall into one of several categories: comprehensive, national Timebound Programs (TBP) to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in a set time frame; less comprehensive Country Programs; sector-specific projects; data collection and research projects; and international awareness raising projects. In general, most projects include “direct action” components that are interventions to remove or prevent children from involvement in exploitive and hazardous work. One of the major strategies used by IPEC projects is to increase children’s access to and participation in formal and non-formal education. Most IPEC projects also have a capacity-building component to assist in building a sustainable base for long-term elimination of exploitive child labor.

¹ In 2007, the US Congress did not direct USDOL’s appropriations for child labor elimination projects to either of these two programs. That year, USDOL allocated \$60 million for child labor elimination projects through a competitive process.

2. *Child Labor Education Initiative*

Since 2001, the US Congress has provided some \$249 million to USDOL to support the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), which focuses on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor through the provision of education opportunities. These projects are being implemented by a wide range of international and non-governmental organizations as well as for-profit firms. USDOL typically awards EI cooperative agreements through a competitive bid process.

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 avert 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, quality of, and relevance of education. Without improving educational quality and relevance, children withdrawn/prevented from child labor may not have viable alternatives and could resort to other forms of hazardous work. EI projects may focus on providing educational services to children removed from specific sectors of work and/or a specific region(s) or support a national Timebound Program that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in multiple sectors of work specific to a given country.

Other Initiatives

Finally, USDOL has supported \$2.5 million for awareness-raising and research activities not associated with the ILO-IPEC program or the EI.

Project Context

The latest ILO estimates on child labor indicate that progress towards the elimination of child labor in Africa lags behind other regions in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest incidence of economically active children—26.4 percent of all 5–14 year olds, compared to 18.8 percent for Asia and the Pacific and 5.1 percent for Latin America. Africa ranks second behind Asia in absolute terms, with 49.3 million children working.² In Liberia, children work in subsistence agriculture, rubber tapping, street vending, domestic service, rock crushing, mining, fishing, and construction; there are also reports that girls engage in prostitution to pay school fees or support their families.³ In Sierra Leone, children mostly work in the informal sector, in family businesses and on family subsistence farms, as well as in alluvial diamond mining, petty and street vending and domestic work.⁴ Both countries are also origin, transit and destination countries for trafficking in children.⁵ During past conflicts in both countries, children were recruited as child soldiers as well.⁶

² “International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor—Africa.” <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Regionsandcountries/Africa/lang--en/index.htm>

³ U.S. Department of Labor, “Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor 2008,” <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/PDF/2007OCFTreport.pdf>, p. 197.

⁴ Ibid, p. 300.

⁵ Ibid, p. 197, 300.

⁶ Ibid, p. 198, 301.

The Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone have participated in initiatives to combat child labor and child trafficking, and have implemented policy and legal frameworks to address these problems. In Liberia, the law does not establish a minimum age of employment, but prohibits children under the age of 16 from working during school hours.⁷ In Sierra Leone, the minimum age of employment is 15, although children can engage in “light work” starting at age 13.⁸ Both countries prohibit children under the age of 18 from engaging in hazardous work.⁹ In Liberia, the Ministry of Labor monitors compliance with labor laws, including child labor laws.¹⁰ In Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Labor, Social Security, and Industrial Relations administers labor laws, and the Ministry of Mineral Resources enforces regulations on child labor in mining activities. In 2007, the Parliament also passed a Child Right Act, which strengthened provisions against child labor.¹¹ Liberia has ratified Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour; Sierra Leone has not.¹²

Both governments have adopted the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Joint Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in West and Central African Regions. As part of the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement, the governments agreed to use the child trafficking monitoring system developed by the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC LUTRENA project; to assist each other in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of trafficking offenders; and to protect, rehabilitate, and reintegrate trafficking victims.¹³

In addition to participating in the Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia project, the Government of Liberia supports a program with UNICEF to provide vocational training and apprenticeships to former child soldiers and children associated with fighting forces.¹⁴ The Government of Sierra Leone also participated in the Community Based Innovations to Reduce Child Labor through Education (CIRCLE) project funded by USDOL at US \$8.1 million and USAID at US \$500,000 and implemented by Winrock International and various community-based organizations in many countries around the world.¹⁵

Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) in Sierra Leone and Liberia

On September 30, 2005, International Rescue Committee received a 4-year Cooperative Agreement worth \$5,999,979 from USDOL to implement an EI project in Sierra Leone and Liberia, aimed at withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor by expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education and supporting the five goals of the

⁷ Ibid, p. 197.

⁸ Ibid, p. 300.

⁹ Ibid., p. 197, 300.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 198.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 301.

¹² International Labour Organization, “List of Ratifications of International Labour Conventions: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byConv.cfm?hdroff=1&conv=C182&Lang=EN>.

¹³ Ibid., p. 198, 301.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 301.

USDOL project as outlined above. International Rescue Committee was awarded the project through a competitive bid process. The project received an extension until June 30, 2010, to ensure that children in their last year of school complete their education, and to perform additional advocacy training for local groups.

As stipulated in the Cooperative Agreement, the project targets 8,243 children for withdrawal and 21,647 for prevention from child soldiering and other worst forms of child labor. In Liberia, the project targets children from Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado counties and in Sierra Leone, it focuses on children from Freetown, Kono district, and Tongo fields. The project's goal is to contribute to the sustainable elimination of exploitive child labor in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The project's objectives are to improve school access, enrollment, retention, and completion; provide formal and non-formal education opportunities; improve educational quality; target communities, parents, and government officials with awareness raising activities around child labor and child rights; and assist local partners in development monitoring and evaluation tools.

Midterm Evaluation

A midterm evaluation was conducted in January and February 2008 by Dr. Martina Nicolls, an independent international consultant. The evaluation consisted of document review; individual and group interviews with project staff, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders; site visits (observation) in Nimba County, Lofa County, and Monrovia in Liberia, and in Kenema and Kono Districts and Freetown in Sierra Leone; and two stakeholder workshops.

The evaluation found different effects and results in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Overall, the evaluator found that at its midterm point, the CYCLE program was effective and pertinent to the context of both Liberia and Sierra Leone due to their high rate of exploitive child labor. However, some communities supported by the program were inherently weak, thwarted by ineffective leadership, and limited initiative, and thus the project could not successfully implement all of its components. Among the major recommendations from the midterm evaluation: Strengthen Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) further through additional training and support, particularly in Liberia; link CWCs and other community groups with relevant line ministries, NGOs, and other donors; convene a Cross-Border Conference annually to share and impart information, challenges, and best practices across countries; provide timely support materials (such as uniforms and start-up kits) to beneficiaries; conduct capacity building for communities in agriculture, income generation, sustainability planning, business skills, financial management, and/or proposal writing; and improve monitoring and evaluation of the project. This evaluation will include an assessment of how the project followed up on these midterm recommendations.

II PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

OCFT-funded projects are subject to midterm and final evaluations. The Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) in Sierra Leone and Liberia went into implementation in September 2005 and is due for final evaluation in 2009. The project received an extension though June 2010 to oversee scholarships to students in the final year of their primary and secondary schooling to ensure not only their completion of the final school year but also to

ensure that they complete school exams. Due to this extension, the project will receive two evaluation visits, focusing on different aspects of the project; these visits will occur in October 2009 and April 2010. The first visit will focus on issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and plans for sustainability. The second visit will assess realization of sustainability plans, the project's activities with regard to advocacy training for local groups, and any other issues which are relevant to the last stage of the program. The findings from the first visit will constitute the main evaluation report, and the findings from the second visit will constitute an annex to the main report.

Scope of Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation includes a review and assessment of all activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement with International Rescue Committee. All activities that have been implemented from project launch to the time of the evaluation fieldwork visit should be considered. The evaluation should assess the achievements of the project in reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document.

The evaluation should address issues of project design, implementation, management, lessons learned, and replicability and provide recommendations for current and future projects. The questions to be addressed in the evaluation (provided below) are organized to provide an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and (to the extent possible) impact on the target population.

Final Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the four-year cooperative agreement (and supplementary extension) to implement the CYCLE Project in Liberia and Sierra Leone by International Rescue Committee. Key assessment areas are:

1. Whether the project has met its objectives and identify the challenges encountered in doing so;
2. The relevance of the project in the cultural, economic, and political context of each country, as well as the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host country governments and USDOL;
3. The intended and unintended outcomes and impacts of the project; and
4. Whether project activities can be deemed sustainable at the local and national level in each country and among implementing organizations.

Further, the evaluation will provide lessons learned from the project design and experiences in implementation that can be applied in current or future child labor projects in the countries and in projects designed under similar conditions or target sectors. These documented lessons learned, good practices, and models of intervention will serve to inform future child labor projects and policies in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and elsewhere, as appropriate. Recommendations should

focus on lessons learned and good practices from which future projects can glean when developing their strategies toward combating exploitive child labor.

In addition to these uses, the project will use the findings from this evaluation to inform future projects—both in West Africa and elsewhere—that aim to prevent and withdraw children from engaging in child labor by providing them with education. The evaluation will also help IRC share information about the project’s successes and challenges with USDOL, project beneficiaries, and government and other stakeholders.

Intended Users

This final evaluation should provide USDOL, International Rescue Committee, other project specific stakeholders, and stakeholders working to combat child labor more broadly, an assessment of the project’s experience in implementation and its impact on project beneficiaries. The final report will be published on the USDOL website, so the report should be written as a standalone document, providing the necessary background information for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of the project.

Evaluation Questions

Specific questions that the evaluation should seek to answer are found below, according to five categories of issue. Considering the methodology of one-on-one interviews, focus groups and document review, the evaluators will ascertain the answers to the following evaluation questions and provide details on them in the final report. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) will be specifically addressed during the second trip of the evaluation.

Relevance

The evaluation should consider the relevance of the project to the cultural, economic, and political context in each country, as well as the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host country governments and USDOL. Specifically, it should address the following questions:

1. Does the project design seem to be adequately supporting the five EI goals? If not, which ones are not being supported and why not?
2. What are the main obstacles or barriers that the project has identified as important to addressing child labor in these countries? (i.e., poverty, lack of educational infrastructure, lack of demand for education, etc.) Has the project been successful in addressing these obstacles?
3. How has the project fit within existing programs to combat child labor and trafficking, especially government initiatives in each country? How do the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia view the issue of child labor? What are these governments doing to address child labor and ensure that children go to school? Are CYCLE’s advocacy approaches aligned with or appropriate based on the governments’ perspectives on and efforts to reduce child labor and increase access to education?

4. Did the project adjust implementation and/or strategy based on the findings and recommendations of the midterm evaluation?
5. What other major design and/or implementation issues should be brought to the attention of IRC and DOL?
6. How do the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia view the issue of child labor?
7. What are these governments doing to address child labor and ensure that children go to school?

Effectiveness

The evaluation should assess whether the project has reached its objectives, and the effectiveness of project activities in contributing toward those objectives. Specifically, the evaluation should address:

1. Has the project achieved its targets and objectives as stated in the project document? What factors contributed to the success and/or underachievement of each of the objectives?
2. Assess the effectiveness of the “direct action” interventions, including the education interventions provided to children (i.e. tuition vouchers or scholarships, school health activities, family income generation, non-formal educational opportunities). Did the provision of these services result in children being withdrawn/prevented from exploitive child labor/trafficking and ensure that they were involved in relevant educational programs?
3. Assess the effectiveness of the services in meeting the needs of the target population identified in the project document including children prevented and withdrawn from labor/trafficking.
4. Assess the effectiveness of the specific models (the Economic Opportunities Program model, Child Protection program’s skills training model, Community Conversations model and Healing Classrooms initiatives model) on increasing educational opportunities, creating community ownership, increasing the capacity of communities, and increasing awareness/understanding of the dangers of child labor.
5. Has the project accurately identified and targeted children engaged in, or at risk of working in, the target sectors identified in the project strategy (child soldiering and the worst forms of child labor)? In a larger sense, did they accurately identify the worst forms of child labor in these countries?
6. Are there any sector specific lessons learned regarding the types and effectiveness of the services provided?
7. What monitoring systems does the project use for tracking the work status of children? Were they feasible and effective? Why or why not? Describe the quality of the data on

the key indicators. How could IRC improve how it collects data so that it is of better quality and utility?

8. Assess the project's effectiveness during its extension. Was the project able to successfully help students finish the school year with a reduced staff and less resources?*
9. What kind of support did IRC provide related to income generation? What process did CYCLE follow in its implementation of income generation activities? Were these IGAs market-driven (as best as the evaluator can tell)?
10. Were the IGAs that IRC supported profitable?
11. Does there appear to be a sustainable flow of income/funds to support the IGA?
12. Was CYCLE's approach to awareness-raising appropriate based on what the evaluator understands to be the gaps in knowledge about child labor and the importance of education?
13. Did CYCLE develop accurate, age-appropriate and culturally relevant awareness-raising messages?
14. How did community members engage in child labor awareness-raising activities? Did they take responsibility in guiding these activities? Who was targeted and who was not? Did anyone not participate who should have?
15. Assess the project's efforts to monitor and repair schools. Did the project monitor school buildings on a regular basis and follow up on any identified problems?

Efficiency

The evaluation should provide analysis as to whether the strategies employed by the project were efficient in terms of the resources used (inputs) as compared to its qualitative and quantitative impact (outputs). Specifically, the evaluation should address:

1. Is the project cost-efficient?
2. Were the project strategies efficient in terms of the financial and human resources used, as compared to its outputs? What alternatives are there?
3. Was the monitoring system designed efficiently to meet the needs and requirements of the project?

Impact

The evaluation should assess the positive and negative changes produced by the project—intended and unintended, direct and indirect, as well as any changes in the social and economic environment in each country—as reported by respondents. Specifically, it should address:

1. What appears to be the project's impact, if any, on individual beneficiaries (children, parents, teachers, etc)?
2. Assess the impact, to the extent possible, of project activities/strategies on education quality (both formal and non-formal interventions). How has the education quality improvement component been received by the government and the communities?
3. What appears to be the project's impact, if any, on partners or other organizations working on child labor in these countries (NGOs, community groups, schools, national child labor committee, etc)? Did the project adequately prepare community groups to monitor and sanction miners in Sierra Leone who relied on child labor? Should the project's efforts to promote community-level child labor monitoring in Sierra Leone be a model for other EI projects?
4. What appears to be the project's impact, if any, on government and policy structures in terms of system-wide change on education and child labor issues?
5. Did the project see expected changes in enrollment over the course of the project?

Sustainability

The evaluation should assess whether the project has taken steps to ensure the continuation of project activities after the completion of the program, including sources of funding and partnerships with other organizations and/or the governments, and identify areas where this may be strengthened. Specifically, it should address:

1. Were the exit strategy and sustainability plan integrated into the project design? Will it likely be effective?
2. How successful has the project been in realizing its plans for sustainability? What can be improved for future projects?*
3. How successful has the project been in leveraging non-project resources? Are there prospects for sustainable funding?
4. Is there evidence of ongoing funding for any aspects of the project?*
5. What have been the major challenges and successes in maintaining partnerships in support of the project, including with other USDOL-funded projects? How did the project approach partnership building at different levels of government? Did it create linkages and if so, what did these look like? What are the strengths and limitations of these linkages? How did strategies differ according to context?
6. What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of maintaining coordination with the host country governments, particularly (Ministries of Labor and Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs in Sierra Leone, the National Commission on Child Labor in Liberia), as well as other government agencies active in addressing related children's issues?

7. What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the ILO-IPEC?
8. What have been some of the challenges and opportunities in working with international and/or multilateral organizations?
9. How did the project link community structures to government? Have community structures and government maintained their linkages (held meetings, informed one another of their activities, etc) without IRC's involvement? How has IRC approached building capacity of local structures (CWCs, etc) in Sierra Leone and Liberia? How were they different or similar? What are lessons learned from building capacity of local structures that IRC should do differently in future projects that work with such structures?
10. What have been some of the challenges and opportunities in working with other national NGOs present in these countries?
11. To what extent (if any) have partnerships created during the course of the project been sustained during the extension?*
12. Will the Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), youth groups, peer educators, monitoring systems, and other committees/groups and systems created by the project be sustainable?
13. To what extent have these committees/groups and systems proved sustainable during the extension?*
14. What structures did the project put in place to keep students in school during the extension?*
15. How successful has the project's advocacy training proved to be during the extension?*
16. How successful has the project been in realizing its plans for sustainability? What can be improved?*
17. What structures did the project put in place to keep students in school during the extension?*
18. How successful has the project been in its advocacy training efforts during the extension?*
19. What lessons can be learned of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?
20. In the light of the extension, what further observations can be made concerning the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?*

III EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND TIMEFRAME

The evaluation methodology will consist of the following activities and approaches:

A. Approach

The evaluation approach will be primarily qualitative in terms of the data collection methods used as the timeframe does not allow for quantitative surveys to be conducted. Quantitative data will be drawn from project reports to the extent that it is available and incorporated in the analysis. The evaluation approach will be independent in terms of the membership of the evaluation team. Project staff and implementing partners will generally only be present in meetings with stakeholders, communities and beneficiaries to provide introductions. The following additional principles will be applied during the evaluation process:

1. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives will be triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions.
2. Efforts will be made to include parents' and children's voices and beneficiary participation generally, using child-sensitive approaches to interviewing children following the ILO-IPEC guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor (<http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=3026>)_and UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html).
3. Gender and cultural sensitivity will be integrated in the evaluation approach.
4. Consultations will incorporate a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, allowing additional questions to be posed that are not included in the TOR, whilst ensuring that key information requirements are met.
5. As far as possible, a consistent approach will be followed in each project site, with adjustments to be made for the different actors involved and activities conducted and the progress of implementation in each locality.

B. Final Evaluation Team

The evaluation team for the final evaluation of the CYCLE Project consists of two evaluators and two separate time components. A Lead Evaluator will conduct the first phase of the evaluation, and an Evaluation Expert will conduct the second phase addressing the extension issues, notably project sustainability and advocacy training. The evaluation team will consist of:

1. A lead evaluator who will visit the project in October 2009.
2. An evaluation expert who will visit the project in April 2010.

One member of the project staff may travel with the team to make introductions. This person is not involved in the evaluation process.

The lead evaluator for the October 2009 field work is Ms. Louise Witherite. Ms. Sue Upton will conduct the April 2010 field visits. Ms. Witherite will serve as the lead evaluator, and will be primarily responsible for developing the methodology in consultation with ICF Macro and the project staff; dividing tasks for the field work; directly conducting interviews and facilitating other data collection processes; analysis of the evaluation material gathered; presenting feedback on the initial findings of the evaluation to the national stakeholder meeting and preparing the evaluation report. Ms. Witherite will focus her findings and analysis on an assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact up to the originally scheduled end of the project, and its plans for sustainability.

Ms. Upton will be responsible for site visits to schools and meeting with children in their final years of primary and secondary school to see how successful the project approach has been in retaining them in school. She will also interview project staff and community members to assess the project's ability to conduct local advocacy training during the project extension. She will provide analysis of the evaluation material gathered; and assist Ms. Witherite in preparing the final report by contributing her specific findings. Ms. Upton will focus her findings and analysis on an assessment of the project's realization of its sustainability efforts, and contribute any additional findings which occur during the project's extension.

C. Data Collection Methodology

1. Document Review

Evaluators will conduct a desk review of documentation on the CYCLE Project, supplied by USDOL and staff of International Rescue Committee through electronic access. Documentation includes project document and revisions, the cooperative agreement and modifications, solicitation of grant applications, management procedures and guidelines, baseline reports, Technical Progress and Status Reports (TPRs), Correspondence related to Technical Progress Reports, research or other reports undertaken (baseline studies, etc.), the performance management plan (PMP), Project Logical Frameworks and Monitoring Plans, work plans, Midterm Evaluation report (MTE) and other relevant and appropriate files (including school attendance records) as appropriate. During the fieldwork, documentation will be verified and additional documents may be collected.

2. Preliminary Interview and Consultations

Evaluators will conduct interviews by telephone during the desk review before the in-country field visits, with ILAB project management staff of USDOL in Washington, DC to further refine USDOL's expectations for the evaluation, clarification of issues, and their impressions of aspects of the CYCLE Project. Telephone interviews with the implementing agency staff of International Rescue Committee at their New York City office will also be held.

3. Country and Field Site Visits

Evaluators will conduct consultations and meetings with International Rescue Committee staff initially at the project's regional headquarters in Monrovia, Liberia. Interviews will also be held in country offices in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Regional offices in counties in Liberia and districts

in Sierra Leone will be visited. International Rescue Committee also works with local partner NGOs in each country, and meetings with these groups and visits to their project activities will be held.

During the field site visits, the evaluators will directly observe CYCLE activities in target districts, schools and education centers, infrastructure, learning and teaching environments, and the general management of project sites, and the way project staff interact with beneficiaries and their families and government personnel at the national, regional and community level.

Interviews in the field will be coordinated with suggestions and contact information provided by USDOL and International Rescue Committee. These interviews will be conducted with project implementation staff and partners, ministry and other government officials, project stakeholders, and direct beneficiaries. Stakeholders and direct beneficiaries include members from community and parents organizations, educational institutional staff, learning site directors, teachers (both formal and non-formal educators), district officials, youth groups, peer educators, social workers, teachers, parents, students, local partner NGO staff, relevant government ministry staff, ILO and other appropriate UN agency staff, and relevant US Embassy staff.

Over the in-country period, the evaluator will visit a reasonable and feasible sample of the nine participating communities (nine in Liberia and seven in Sierra Leone); and of the 342 benefitting educational institutions (151 primary, 74 secondary, 12 Accelerated/Alternative Learning Program (ALP) schools, 101 skills training centers, 4 vocational institutes). Further, the evaluator will visit sites where child labor is frequent.

All interviews will be conducted on an independent and confidential basis to maintain objectivity. International Rescue Committee or partner NGO staff that may accompany the evaluators while traveling to locations will not take part in the interviews or consultation processes in order to avoid influencing the interviewees. In each location, interviews will depend upon the availability of stakeholders, the numbers involved and the time available. Depending upon the number of participants and the time available, focus groups may be held in some locations. Generally, the evaluators will meet with boys and girls in small groups, with parents, teachers and local leaders in appropriate groups, and with individuals as appropriate, while also viewing project activities.

As noted, child beneficiaries will be included in the evaluation. Mindful of UNICEF's interview protocols and Save the Children UK's guide to interviewing children, evaluators will adhere to the protocols to ensure the ethical, responsible and respectful consultation with children, including maintaining anonymity and being sensitive to the children's needs and situation by providing a relaxed informal situation for free expression.

D. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The evaluation mission will observe utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure a maximum freedom of expression of the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and beneficiaries, implementing partner staff will generally not be present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff may accompany the evaluator to

make introductions whenever necessary, to facilitate the evaluation process, make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

E. Stakeholder Meeting

After field visits in each of the two countries, the evaluator will conduct stakeholder meetings to present major findings and emerging issues, solicit further discussions and lessons learned, hear from those stakeholders not contacted during the field visits, and obtain additional information or clarify information gleaned from the site visits. The evaluator will review the list of attendees in advance and discuss the proposed agenda, designed by the evaluator, with the project director.

F. Limitations

Fieldwork for the first visit of the evaluation will last two and a half weeks, and fieldwork for the second visit will last approximately two weeks. Thus, the evaluators will not have enough time to visit all project sites in both countries. As a result, the evaluators will not be able to take all sites into consideration when formulating their findings. All efforts will be made to ensure that the evaluators are visiting a representative sample of sites, including some that have performed well and some that have experienced challenges.

This is not a formal impact assessment. Findings for the evaluation will be based on information collected from background documents and in interviews with stakeholders, project staff, and beneficiaries. The accuracy of the evaluation findings will be determined by the integrity of information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

Furthermore, the ability of the evaluator to determine efficiency will be limited by the amount of financial data available. A cost-efficiency analysis is not included because it would require impact data which is not available.

G. Timetable and Workplan

The tentative timetable is as follows. Actual dates may be adjusted as needs arise.

Activity	Responsible Party	Proposed Date(s)
Phone interview with DOL and Grantee Staff/Headquarters	ICF Macro, DOL, Grantee, Lead evaluator	September
First Desk Review	Lead evaluator	September–October
First Question Matrix and Instruments due to Macro/DOL	Lead evaluator	September 7
Finalize TOR and submit to Grantee and DOL	DOL/ICF Macro/Lead evaluator	September 28
International Travel		October 17
Introductory Meetings with Project Staff and National Stakeholders in Monrovia	Lead evaluator	October 19

Activity	Responsible Party	Proposed Date(s)
Field Site Visits—Liberia	Lead evaluator	October 20-24
National Stakeholder Meeting—Monrovia	Lead evaluator	October 27
Travel by road to Sierra Leone	Lead evaluator	October 27
Meetings with Project Staff and Stakeholders in Freetown	Lead evaluator	October 28
Field Site Visits—Sierra Leone	Lead evaluator	Oct. 29–Nov. 2
National Stakeholder Meeting—Freetown	Lead evaluator	November 4
International Travel	Lead evaluator	November 5
Post-evaluation debrief call with DOL	Lead evaluator	November 12
Draft report (first visit only) to ICF Macro for QC review	Lead evaluator	November 19
Draft report to DOL & Grantee for 48 hour review	ICF Macro	November 19
Draft report released to stakeholders	ICF Macro	November 23
Comments due to ICF Macro	DOL/Grantee & Stakeholders	December 7
Report revised and sent to ICF Macro	Lead evaluator	December 14
Revised report sent to DOL	ICF Macro	December 14
Desk review for April evaluation, including main body of report	Second evaluator	
Introductory Meetings with Project Staff and field visits—Liberia and Sierra Leone	Second evaluator	
Post-evaluation debrief call with DOL for second visit	Second evaluator	
Draft appendix to ICF Macro for QC review	Second evaluator	
Draft appendix to DOL & Grantee for 48 hour review	ICF Macro	
Draft appendix released to stakeholders	ICF Macro	
Comments due to ICF Macro	DOL/Grantee & Stakeholders	
Appendix revised and sent to ICF Macro	Second evaluator	
Revised appendix sent to DOL	ICF Macro	
Final approval of appendix	DOL	
Integration of main report and appendix; finalization and publication of report	ICF Macro	

IV EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

Ten working days following the lead evaluator's return from fieldwork, a first draft evaluation report will be submitted to ICF Macro. The lead evaluator will be primarily responsible for writing the bulk of the report, and later incorporating the second evaluator's findings from the April field work. Ten working days following the second evaluator's return from fieldwork, a first draft evaluation appendix will be submitted to ICF Macro. The entire report should have the following structure and content:

- I. Table of Contents
- II. List of Acronyms
- III. Executive Summary (providing an overview of the evaluation, summary of main findings/lessons learned/good practices, and three key recommendations)
- IV. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology
- V. Project Description
- VI. Relevance
 - A. Findings—answering the TOR questions
 - B. Lessons Learned/Good Practices
- VII. Effectiveness
 - A. Findings—answering the TOR questions
 - B. Lessons Learned/Good Practices
- VIII. Efficiency
 - A. Findings—answering the TOR questions
 - B. Lessons Learned/Good Practices
- IX. Impact
 - A. Findings—answering the TOR questions
 - B. Lessons Learned/Good Practices
- X. Recommendations and Conclusions
 - A. Key Recommendations—critical for successfully meeting project objectives
 - B. Other Recommendations—as needed
 1. Relevance
 2. Effectiveness
 3. Efficiency
 4. Impact
- XI. Appendix on Sustainability

- A. Findings—answering the TOR questions
 - B. Lessons Learned/Good Practices
 - C. Recommendations
 - D. Other Findings and Observations from Project Extension
- XII. Annexes—including list of documents reviewed; interviews/meetings/site visits; stakeholder workshop agenda and participants; TOR; etc.

The total length of the report should be a minimum of 30 pages and a maximum of 45 pages for the main report, excluding the executive summary and annexes.

The first draft of the report and the annex will be circulated to OCFT and key stakeholders individually for their review. For each round of review, comments from stakeholders will be consolidated and incorporated into the final reports as appropriate, and the evaluators will provide a response to OCFT, in the form of a comment matrix, as to why any comments might not have been incorporated.

While the substantive content of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the evaluators, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB/OCFT in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR.

After the first evaluator’s fieldwork in October, the first draft evaluation report is due to ICF Macro on November 19, 2009. A revised draft is due one week after receipt of comments from ILAB/OCFT and stakeholders and is anticipated to be due on December 14, 2009, as indicated in the above timetable. The due dates for the annex and the final report will be determined at a later date, after fieldwork dates are established for the second visit. All reports including drafts will be written in English.

V EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

ICF Macro has contracted with Ms. Louise Witherite and Ms. Sue Upton to conduct this evaluation. Ms. Witherite has conducted several evaluations for USDOL-funded projects in the past, including the Rwanda and Kenya country reports of the final evaluation of the Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia Together (KURET) project. Ms. Witherite also reviewed all of the evaluations of USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC projects from 1995-2005.

Ms. Upton has also conducted several evaluations for USDOL-funded projects, including the midterm evaluation of the TEACH project in Tanzania, and the midterm evaluation of the EDUCARE project in Guyana. Ms. Upton also served as the team leader for the final evaluation of RECLISA, a regional child labor, USDOL-funded project in five countries in Southern Africa.

The contractors/evaluators will work with OCFT, ICF Macro, and relevant International Rescue Committee staff to evaluate this project.

ICF Macro will provide all logistical and administrative support for their staff and sub-contractors, including travel arrangements (e.g., plane and hotel reservations, purchasing plane

tickets, providing per diem) and all materials needed to provide all deliverables. ICF Macro will also be responsible for providing the management and technical oversight necessary to ensure consistency of methods and technical standards.

ICF Macro or its subcontractors should contact Paul Taylor, Regional Director for West Africa (212-551-0989 or paul.taylor@theirc.org) to initiate contact with field staff. The primary point of contact for the project in the field, located in Liberia, is Mr. Zulfiqar Rao—CYCLE Project Director (Zulfiqar.Rao@theirc.org).

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ANNEX C: FIELD SITES ITINERARY

Day	Activity/Location
18	Travel to Ganta
19	Karn High School, Karnplay PTA SEARCH, Sanniquellie
20	IRC, Nimba County George A. Dunbar School CWC Skills Graduates
21	Vocational Skill Graduates (MVTC and others) Monrovia ANPPCAN Ministry of Labor and National Commission on Child Labor Group 77 (Hope School)
22	C&S School Chicken Soup Factory Vocational Skills Graduates Business Domestic Opportunity Training Center (BDOTC) Red Light Community Pipeline Group
23	Liberia Stakeholders Meeting
24	Monrovia to Kenema
25	Kenema
26	Tongo Ahmadiyya Community Youth Training Lower Bamabara Chiefdom Mining Committee, Tongo Fields Kono Vocational Skills Graduates

Day	Activity/Location
27	Aladura Primary Community Awareness Skills Training Small Sefadu Child Welfare Committees: Penduma Small Sefadu Government Officials, Kono
28	Manjama Workor Koardi Gbamandu Fao
29	Freetown IRC
30	Kulafari Rashida Ismail Primary, Tombo Peninsular Secondary SLMB Primary, Lumpa Bread of Life Model Primary, Waterloo St. Raphael Primary, Junior Secondary Vocational Skills Graduates
31	Freetown
1	Freetown IRC Writing
2	Schools: Cape, Aberdeen AGibbs Hairdressing, Stella Maris Vocational Training Mayor of Freetown ILO-IPEC Government Officials, Freetown
3	Sierra Leone Stakeholders Meeting

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ANNEX E: TABLES ON EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF CYCLE BENEFICIARIES, BY COUNTRY

Status of CYCLE Beneficiaries in Educational Programs

SIERRA LEONE

CYCLE Status	Program	Male	Female	Total
<i>Completed</i>	<i>Primary</i>	1,502	1,353	2,855
	<i>Junior</i>	223	184	407
	<i>Senior</i>	154	125	279
	<i>Vocational</i>	58	27	85
	<i>Skills training</i>	142	349	491
<i>Total Completed</i>		2,079	2,038	4,117
<i>Dropped out</i>	<i>Primary</i>	433	515	948
	<i>Junior</i>	26	28	54
	<i>Senior</i>	17	2	19
	<i>Vocational</i>	-	1	1
	<i>Skills training</i>	13	38	51
<i>Total Dropped out</i>		489	584	1,073
<i>Retained</i>	<i>Primary</i>	4,338	4,344	8,682
	<i>Junior</i>	189	191	380
	<i>Senior</i>	134	143	277
	<i>Vocational</i>	12	2	14
	<i>Skills training</i>	3	54	57
<i>Total Retained</i>		4,676	4,734	9,410
<i>Grand Total</i>		7,244	7,356	14,600

LIBERIA

CYCLE Status	Program	Male	Female	Total
<i>Completed</i>	<i>Primary</i>	2,736	2,809	5,545
	<i>Junior</i>	414	474	888
	<i>Senior</i>	237	238	475
	<i>Vocational</i>	79	74	153
	<i>Skills training</i>	150	445	595
<i>Total Completed</i>		3,616	4,040	7,656
<i>Dropped out</i>	<i>Primary</i>	743	595	1,338
	<i>Junior</i>	23	38	61
	<i>Senior</i>	1	2	3
	<i>Vocational</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Skills training</i>	23	21	44
<i>Total Dropped out</i>		790	656	1,446
<i>Retained</i>	<i>Primary</i>	2,700	3,318	6,018
	<i>Junior</i>	62	77	139
	<i>Senior</i>	8	23	31
	<i>Vocational</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Skills training</i>	-	-	-
<i>Total Retained</i>		2,770	3,418	6,188
<i>Grand Total</i>		7,176	8,114	15,290

ANNEX F: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Annex D—Targets September 07
2. Appendix 5—DOL Revised Budget Narrative FINAL
3. CYCLE approved work plan—Sept 07 (EXCEL)
4. CYCLE Data Management Protocol
5. CYCLE PMP revisions June 29 07
6. CYCLE Document Title Page
7. CYCLE Project Document FINAL
8. CYCLE Sustainability Plan September 27, 2007
9. CYCLE Work Plan—June 29 2007 (EXCEL)
10. CYCLE_Logical_Framework Liberia and SL FINAL
11. Final Project Document Project Authorization Form (PDF)
12. Final Report IRC Sierra Leone-Liberia (PDF)
13. IRC Liberia programs
14. IRC SL Program Overview—September 2007
15. List of Grants SL and LR (EXCEL)
16. NEW Negotiate rate agreement 0001 (PDF)
17. Project lists SL and LR (EXCEL)
18. Midterm Evaluation Report folder
19. CYCLE MTE Final Report 4 16 08 (PDF)
20. Annex C Emerging Good Practices
21. Attachment 3—Exit Strategy March 09 (PDF)
22. Attachment 4—Sustainability Plan (PDF)
23. Attachment 5—Annex C—Emerging Good Practices (PDF)
24. Attachment 6—Response to Sept 2008 Comments to TPR (PDF)

25. Cooperative Agreement (PDF)
26. CYCLE MTE Final Report (PDF)
27. CYCLE Project Document Final
28. CYCLE Project Work Plan (Excel)
29. CYCLE Logical Framework FINAL
30. DOL March 2008 CYCLE TPR Comments
31. DOL Sept 2008 CYCLE TPR Comments
32. Attachment 1—Start up Kit composition (PDF)
33. Attachment 2—Asset Inventory Liberia (PDF)
34. Attachment 3—Asset Inventory Sierra Leone (PDF)
35. Attachment 5—NICRA Rates (PDF)
36. Cycle Project Financial Status Report (PDF)
37. Sept 08 Response to DOL's comments to TPR Final (PDF)
38. Sept 08 Response to DOL's comments to TPR Final Cover letter (PDF)
39. Final Report IRC Sierra Leone Liberia—Accountant Report (PDF)
40. Guideline on Skills Training and IGA, 2008
41. IRC Study Report Condition of Schools 1st Report Draft
42. NCCL's Plan of Action Revised
43. NCCL's Revised Activity Work Plan
44. Project Revision Form, revised
45. Response to Donor Comments, Response to DOL's comments on March 2007 TPR
46. Revised Withdrawn/Prevented Chart April 2008
47. Revised Updated Sustainability Phase Out/Exit Strategy
48. IRC Strategy for Micro Franchise
49. IRC Harm to Home Project Document

50. IRC CYCLE brochure
51. Maps
52. Charts developed by Nyuma, Freetown M & E
53. List of Vocational Skills
54. Files on Children in all field sites visited
55. Study on IGA (1 and 2)
56. ILO and IPEC Documents on line regarding Sierra Leone and Liberia
57. Contemporary Books on Sierra Leone and Liberia, including Wang, Lianqin (2007), *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities*, World Bank Publications; Beah, Ishmeal, *A Long Way Gone*; Doden, Richard, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*; Others

CYCLE Project TPR—Technical Progress Reports

58. March 2006
59. September 2006
60. March 2007
61. September 27 2007
62. TPR March 2008
63. September 2008
64. TPR—March 2009 (PDF)
65. September 2009

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ANNEX H: SCHOOLS VISITED, BENEFICIARIES AND LOCAL STRUCTURES (CWCS, PTAS, CTAS) INTERVIEWED

A note about the names and ages of the CYCLE beneficiaries met in the course of the first phase of the final evaluation:

The ages recorded in this annex, self-reported by the children, serve to demonstrate the general ages of the interviewed beneficiaries, many of whom had completed the CYCLE program. Children wrote their own names and ages as interviewed. In some cases, their ages do not conform to CYCLE's files. In at least one instance, two seamstresses differed over what they thought their ages were, one reminding the other of her recent birthday. CYCLE M&E and field staff who were interviewed in the course of the evaluation reported having some problems with ascertaining correct ages and finding some enrolled children as over-aged. TPR narratives also mention the problem. CYCLE dealt with age-disparity problems appropriately by re-training those who enrolled children and correcting mistakes in files as they were discovered.

LIBERIA

Karnplay

Student 1, 10th

Student 2, 12th

Student 3, 10th

Student 4, 10th

Student 5, 8th

Student 6, 12th

Principal, Principal

Barser Menkarzon, Mentor Teacher

John Q. Gomah, Mentor Teacher

Nally Dahn, PTA, Skills Provider

Julius Tiahton, Sr., PTA Chairman, K.I.A.

Cooper Gbaryeah, Parent, PTA

Amos K.Teah, Sr., PTA Chairman, Karnplay

George A. Dunbar School

Stanley Z. Bembo, Principal

P. Emmanuel Zumba, Mentor Teacher

Andrew S. Zuobiah, PTA

Emmanuel S. Kwiti, PTA

Cooper Z. Dahn, CWC Ganta Chairman

Student 7, Student

Student 8, Student

Student 9, Student

Student 10, Student

Student 11, Student

Student 12, Student
Students, Students and Youth Leader

C&S Standard Community School

Joshua Melway, PTA Chairman
Mardea David, Teacher
Martine David, Parent
Morris G. Tompoe, Teacher and parent
Student 13, Student
Student 14, Student
Student 15, Student
Student 16, Student
Student 17, Student
David Harris, School Principal

M. Sungu Cooper School

Olive Talery, Principal
James M. Paasewe, Registrar
Girls Social Club, CYCLE Beneficiaries
Zoric Fahnbulleh, Girl Scout Club Head

Business and Domestic Occupation Training Center

Kaema Jones, Assistant Director
Students, Hairdressing Beneficiaries Focus Group
Students, Tailoring Beneficiaries Focus Group

Group of 77 School

Rev. Mrs. Constance, Program Officer/AA, Group of 77 School

Vocational Beneficiaries

Student 18, CYCLE Graduate from MVTC, Chinese Building
Girl, Seamstress, 16

SIERRA LEONE

R.C. Primary School, Koadu (Workur)

Sahr K. Sabudel, Head Teacher
Sahr James Koneleh, Assistant director
Student 19, 13
Student 20, 13
Student 21, 14
Student 22, Student—15

Manjama R.C. Primary School

Aiah Francis Mbayah, Teacher and CYCLE focal point
Tamba Moiwa Kpakiwa, Deputy Head Teacher
George Bokua, CWC

Mariam Alou, CWC
Idrissa Johnny, CWC
Aissa Komla, CWC
Fatmata Abdul, CWC
Kimba Ali, CWC
Aissa Tamale, CWC
Student 23, Student 14
Student 24, Student 16
Margaret E. Bangali, Head Teacher Primary School and CWC Member
Emily Massah Koroma, Teacher
Fatmata Joaque, Head Teacher Juniors
Student 25, Student 14
Student 26, Student 10
Student 27, Student 13
Student 28, Student

Cape School

Kodjo Moussa, Head Teacher
CYCLE Dance and Choral Troupe

Stella Maris Vocational Training Center, Stella Maris Vocational Institute, Juba-Goderich, Freetown

Student 29, 24 (according to IRC's database student was enrolled at age 15 in Cohort 1)
Student 30
Teachers
Alice George, Director, Vocational Skills

Abdul Sesey Ansurul Islamic Boys Secondary School, Kono

AGibbs Hairdressing School

Student 31, 19 (according to IRC's database, she should be 20 as she was enrolled at age 16 in cohort 1)
Student 32, 18 (according to IRC's database she was enrolled at the age of 16)
Student 33, 18
Student 34, 16
Student 35, 19 (according to IRC database, she was enrolled at age 16 in cohort 1)
X, Teacher Owner

Aladura Primary School, Koidu City

Sahr Duwai, Head Teacher
Student 36, 12
Student 37, 9

Western Peninsula Senior and Junior Secondary School

Kenneth Kromanty, Principal
Student 38, Student 18
Student 39, Student (22 or 19) (according to IRC database, this student was enrolled at the age of 15 in cohort 3)

Small Sefadu Senior Secondary School ISSK

Student 40, 17

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School

Joseph Koroma, Head Teacher

Lois Korong, Teacher

Jamiatu Konoy, Teacher

Issa A. Kamena, Teacher

Mustapha Ngevgo, Arabic Teacher

David Kanu, Teacher

Lucia Musa, CTA Vice Chairman

Foday Tambo, CTA Chairman

Mohamed Sesay, CTA

Foday Jaward, CTA Organizer

Musa Suminalo, CTA Member

Fanta Mansaray, CTA Member

Students, Mixed Grades Focus Group

Community Service Youths Skills Training, Tongo Fields

Mohamed M. Ngubekay, Trainer

Student 41, 15 yrs

Student 42, 14 yrs

Student 43, 18 yrs

Student 44, 20 yrs (according to IRC's database this student was enrolled at 16 in cohort 1)

Student 45, 14 yrs

Student 46, 15 yrs

Student 47, 18 yrs

Student 48, 18 yrs

Student 49, Graduate

St. Raphael's Primary and Junior Secondary School, Hartshorn Street, Waterloo

Sylvanus A. Kargbo, Principal

Alpheus D. Kerona, Senior Teacher and Coordinator of CYCLE program

Robinson S. Bangura, Head Teacher, Junior Secondary School

Adembah Krumah, Deputy teacher

50 +/- Students, Mixed Grades Focus Group

Bread of Life Model Primary School, Waterloo

Rev. John B.S. Kawaa, Head Teacher, Coordinator Model Technical and Vocational Secondary School

SLMB Primary School, Lumpa

John S.A. Kagbo, Head Teacher

50 +/- Parents, Focus Group

10 Students, Mixed Grades Focus Group

Kulafai Rashideen Islamic Primary School, Tombo

X, Head Teacher

X, Deputy

300 + Pupils, CYCLE Beneficiaries

Vocational Skills Training

Student 50, Trainer in Tailoring

Student 51, Seamstress 16

Student 52, Seamstress

Student 53, Mechanic Skills student

Student 54, Mechanic Skills student

Lasane Kemare, Mechanic Skills Provider

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ANNEX I: FORMS USED BY CYCLE

**TEXT BOOKS DISTRIBUTION
CYCLE PROJECT
NIMBA COUNTY**

SCHOOL NAME: George A. Dunbar Jr. High
 COMMUNITY: Cranda
 DATE: October 9, 2007

No.	Item description	Quantity	Comment
1.	New General Math 1	3	Retained
2.	New General Math 2	3	
3.	New Gen Math's JSS 3	3	
4.	New Science JSS 1	3	
5.	New Science JSS 2	3	
6.	New Science JSS 3	3	
7.	The Rain & The Night	3	
8.	Things Fall Apart	3	
9.	Animal Farm	3	
10.	Students' Companion	3	
11.	The gods are not to blame	3	
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			

PRINCIPAL NAME: Stanley Z. Bember
 SIGNATURE/DATE: [Signature] / Oct. 9, 2007



George A. Dunbar Elem. and Jr. High
 School, Nengbeh, Bain-Garr Ed. Dist #7
 Nimba County, Liberia.
CYCLE Students Progress Report
 For Academic 2006/2007, August 6, 2007

Grade	Male	Female	Total	Male Pass	Female Pass	Male Failed	Female Failed	Male Dropped	Female Dropped
9	08	07	15	02	05	01	02	05	00
8	03	02	05	01	02	02	00	00	00
7	06	07	13	06	03	00	02	00	02
6	04	10	14	02	06	01	02	01	02
5	11	09	20	10	05	01	03	00	01
4	05	15	20	04	11	01	01	00	03
3	10	13	23	08	11	02	01	00	01
2	11	12	23	08	09	02	02	01	01
1	15	08	23	08	03	01	02	06	03

COMMENTS: Most of the female students dropped due to pregnancies; while the male students dropped due poor academic but put out some responsibilities. In short, they dropped to carry on garden work for earning more money prepared by [Signature]

D. Staff Capacity

	Name of staff member	Qualification (if available)	# of years of experience working in the skill	Years of experience teaching the skill
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

E. Ability to operate as a skills training center

Please tick appropriate response:

- | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| 1. Center has permission to operate as a commercial center | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 2. Center been registered with the Ministry of Education | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 3. Center has paid its taxes up to date | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 4. Center has a curriculum that it uses for instruction | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 5. Center have a schedule is uses for instruction? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 6. Center have the ability to offer literacy classes | Yes _____ | No _____ |

Space below is for observations not included in above assessment if there are any:

Name of center Supervisor/Proprietor: _____

Signature of Center Supervisor _____ Date: _____

Name of staff conducting assessment: _____

Signature of staff: _____ Date: _____

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ANNEX J: SPEECH BY CYCLE BENEFICIARY

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

I am [deleted],* a 12th grade student of the Messiah Mission Institute located in Morris Farm, Red Light Community.

On behalf of all beneficiaries enrolled into the various educational programs by the IRC/CYCLE project, I say a very big thank you to the government of Liberia and the U.S. DOL through the IRC/CYCLE people for sending us to school.

If it had not been CYCLE project, many of us would not have been in school. Some of us might have dropped out because of our life situations. Some of us would never have been enrolled in school our lifetime because our lives were ruled by poverty and work. Support from the CYCLE has prevented many of us from continuing our lives in exploitative child labor.

I set myself as an example. I live with my parents at the Morris Farm Community. We are a family of 12. I am the eldest of 9 children. As a result of the level of poverty in our home, selling in the streets to help our parents to support the family was a normal thing. I used to spend so much time to sell before and after school that I did not have the chance to study my lessons, I used to be so tired from selling that failed to go to school everyday. As a result, my academic performance was very poor as there was no time to study. I continued under this hardship until I came across one of the CYCLE Project Social Workers in the Red Light Community. His name is [deleted].* He was having meeting with community leaders about the CYCLE Project. I stood by and listened. During the meeting he was explaining what the CYCLE Project can do support children engaged in too much work to go to school. This was my interest. I went to my mother, talked to her about meeting the community leaders to help us. She did. Later on Mr. Togbah came to interview me and I was enrolled in the CYCLE Project in 2006. Since that time, support for my schooling through the CYCLE Project has brought us a big relief. I no longer sell for long hours because my parents now understand how important it is for me to study so that we will not all continue to remain in poverty. We share the hours of selling. I have more time now to study. As a result, my grades have improved in school. This is just an example of how the CYCLE Project is saving children from child labor. I know there are many examples that can be told.

CYCLE has made a difference in our lives. It is helping to making dreams come true. CYCLE has given us the hope that we can be someone in the future. CYCLE is contributing to changing our lives in the communities where we live. We can now walk in the community with our heads up.

On behalf of the entire beneficiary group of CYCLE, I am appealing of a replication of the project in other places to benefit children in our country who still need help as the economic situation of the country improves and we develop the skills to support ourselves. We also appeal for projects that will provide means of employment for our parents so that our brothers and sisters will have the time to study and build a better future for themselves. Finally, as we are of the opinion that with the government getting stronger, there will be laws and means made to guard against the use of children in exploitative child labor and other such evils, we appeal for projects to strengthen the government institutions towards these goals.

Thank you.

* Due to privacy concerns, names have been deleted.

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ANNEX K: EVALUATION PHASE TWO

Prepared by Sue Upton

April 2010

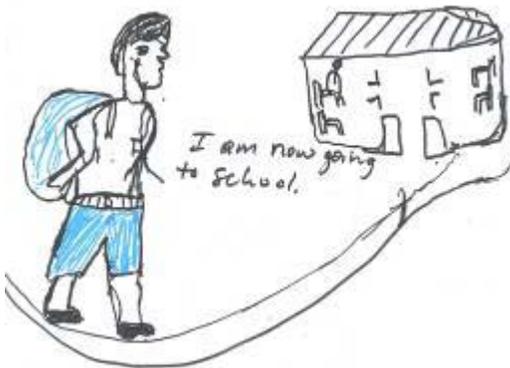
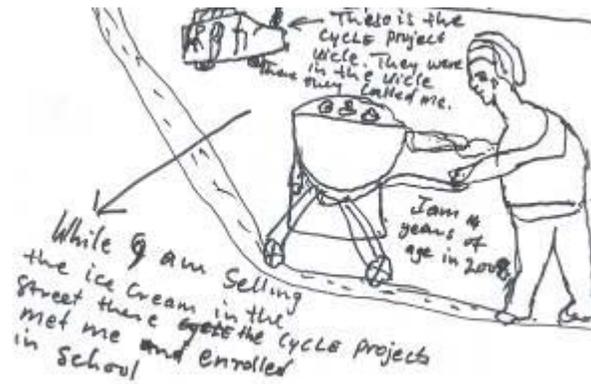


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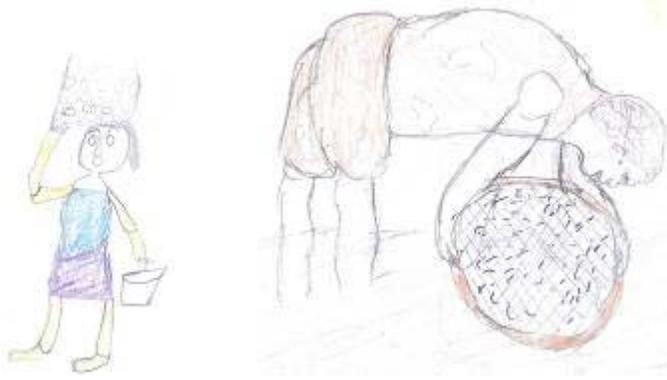
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ANNEXES

- i. List of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups
- ii. Program for Focus Group Meetings
- iii. Schedule for Evaluation Field Visits
- iv. Terms of Reference—Annex A

NB: The drawings throughout this report are a selection of those created during the evaluation workshops with children supported in school by CYCLE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second phase of the final evaluation of the Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) project was conceived to assess the results of the project's nine-month extension after its end date in September 2009.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) used additional funding of US\$300,000 to support 4,325 children in school and enable them to take public examinations and obtain recognized qualification. Children in exam classes in junior and senior schools in both Sierra Leone and Liberia were selected to benefit from this support. In Sierra Leone, the project also worked with the Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) to help them adapt to their role, as defined in the 2007 Child Rights Act, and develop their advocacy skills. In spite of reduced staff, CYCLE teams continued to work with line ministries in both countries, encouraging the establishment of systems and processes to protect children from child labor and provide them with education.

The evaluation was principally based on the views and experiences of children and young people who benefitted from CYCLE, as expressed during two workshops in each country (four workshops total). The workshops provided an opportunity for the children to take part in focus group discussions with the evaluator, express themselves through writing or drawing, and work in small groups to create and perform small sketches. The evaluator also carried out a limited number of key informant interviews with project staff and government representatives and met with groups of CWC members in Sierra Leone.

The children expressed their profound gratitude for the help offered by the CYCLE project. Many of them suffered through traumatic experiences as a result of war or poverty and have little or no family support. CYCLE appeared in their lives as an answer to their dreams and opened up new possibilities through education. However, many children are still apprehensive about the future since they see little possibility of continuing their studies and fear the need to return to child labor to survive. They also spoke of the many other children in their countries who have had the opportunity to benefit from the project and advocated on their behalf for further help for children access education.

Since exams are currently underway in the two countries, it is not possible to assess exam results or completion data at this stage. However, attendance has been high during the extension period; only seven children left project schools and could no longer be monitored. There seems to be some correlation between families who received support for income generation and families who

have sent all children to school, whereas children whose families received no such support typically reported being the only child in the family in school. This led the evaluator to revisit a study into the income-generation support offered by the project; this annex summarizes the findings of that report.

The vast majority of children said that they were no longer involved in child labor. Some said they continue working on a limited scale to assist their parents, but that this does not impinge on their school work. One child said he works long hours before and after school. Some children said that when they enrolled in school, their brothers or sisters had taken over their workload, but most said that no children in their families were still involved in child labor. Workshop participants demonstrated a clear understanding of child labor, child rights, and work that was suitable for children.

Governments in both countries described improving the legal environments to fight child labor. Sierra Leone is in the process of ratifying ILO Conventions 182 and 138, and ministry representatives expect this to be completed by June 12, 2010, World Day Against Child Labor. Liberia has just completed a situational analysis on human trafficking and will shortly carry out a similar study to provide baseline data on child labor. IRC and CYCLE have been instrumental in flagging the issues to be tackled and supporting the development of strategies and structures to fight child labor. This work continued during the extension period and line ministries spoke of an effective and valuable partnership with CYCLE/IRC.

CWCs in Sierra Leone are reorganizing to fulfill their roles as front line community child protection agents, as described in the 2007 Child Rights Act. One CWC is envisaged for every community of 500 or more people. CYCLE has provided capacity building to support this process through advocacy training and facilitating introductions with local government personnel. CWCs are committed and enthusiastic about their work but somewhat uncertain about their relationship with the government and their capacity to act independently without CYCLE support. They have some strong, capable members with the potential to create and organize a dynamic network, but it remains to be seen to what extent it can be achieved without even minimal financial support.

In Liberia, there is no sign of any ongoing funding for any aspect of the CYCLE project. In Sierra Leone, the ILO-IPEC project, Tackle Child Labour Through Education (TACKLE), will shortly start implementation with IRC as the implementing agency. This project will run for 18 months and plans to work with 1,500 beneficiaries; it may be able to pick up a number of CYCLE children and provide ongoing support. This would make a lot of sense since 18 months is too short a period to effectively work with a cohort of new children.

While CYCLE has clearly changed the lives of thousands of children, thousands more remain involved in child labor and not in school in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Even for CYCLE beneficiaries, the future is quite precarious. The sustainability of projects offering educational support to individual children is quite limited, and this was very evident during the evaluation workshops. A number of the recommendations are aimed at developing projects that tackle the causes of child labor at the community level as well as influence the legal framework and national level capacity building.



Key Recommendations:

Concerning Planning for Future Projects

- Work with local partner organizations, since they are present for the long term and have specialized knowledge of their communities. Capacity building for these organizations is a long term development strategy to enable them to conceive, plan, and implement initiatives in collaboration with the communities, increasing the likelihood that such initiatives will be relevant, locally owned, and sustainable.
- Enable national NGOs to work with local communities to contribute to project conception and planning through funding for project planning.
- Ensure that projects working with extremely vulnerable children are sufficiently innovative in developing a creative mix of types of training and education to meet the particular needs of specific groups. This may involve providing skills training and/or business development courses for children in formal education to account for the fact that children with no family support will need to become financially self sufficient to complete or continue their academic education.
- Develop individual country programs for Liberia and Sierra Leone to facilitate and streamline project management and enable country specific needs and issues to be addressed.

Concerning CWCs

- Help CWCs develop strategies so that child members really represent children in their communities. Some example strategies might be a transparent selection process, regular meetings of children and young people, and helping children become involved in advocacy and fundraising activities. This is an opportunity for CWCs to enable the development of leadership and advocacy skills and provide models of democratic and transparent decisionmaking and community organization.
- Facilitate discussion among CWCs concerning the resources needed for long-term sustainability and encourage them to advocate for such resources.
- Develop strategies for wider community involvement through sub-committees and working groups to supplement the work of the 14 statutory members of CWCs in Sierra Leone.

Concerning Support for Education

- Consider abandoning the cohort system for direct beneficiaries, so that a given number of children can receive the maximum number of years of education that the project can offer.
- Consider increasing project length or developing other mechanisms so that children can benefit from the full six years of secondary education. This and the previous recommendation would mitigate, to some extent, the feeling expressed by many children of being left stranded by the project after having the idea that they would be assisted to become, for example, doctors, engineers, or accountants.
- Be very clear from the start about exactly what the project can offer and provide opportunities for children to discuss and plan for the transition to post-project life.

Concerning Income Generation

- Ensure that all projects aiming to withdraw or prevent child labor for children from poor families have a livelihood component. Similarly to education, this component requires specialist input, training, and sufficient time to become established.
- Children coming to the end of formal education can also benefit from support for income generation, and business and skills training since they will need to earn a living and resources for further education in countries where the formal employment sector is small.



I PHASE TWO EVALUATION REPORT

Context

Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) in Sierra Leone and Liberia started in September 2005 and was originally scheduled to end in September 2009. The project received an additional US\$300,000 in funding and was extended until June 2010. This extension aimed to enable the project to oversee scholarships to students in their final year of primary and secondary schooling so that they could finish and sit for external exams. Approximately US\$3,000 of this extension funding was allocated to continuing work with 10 Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) in Sierra Leone to strengthen the link between the CWCs and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs. In 2007, with the passage of the Child Rights Act in Sierra Leone, the government recognized CWCs as legitimate community structures with a well defined role to play in monitoring the implementation of the new act throughout Sierra Leone.



II OBJECTIVES

The objective of the evaluation's second phase was to assess the final nine months of project activities. It examines the project's sustainability, including the effectiveness of the additional CWC activities in Sierra Leone. The evaluation was also intended to look at the outcomes for the beneficiaries who remained with the project during the extension, including completion rates and exam results. Overall, the second phase of the evaluation sought to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact during its extension and to respond to the specific questions identified in the terms of reference.

III METHODOLOGY

3.1 Meetings with Children

The second phase of the evaluation consisted primarily of a series of four meetings with children receiving support from the project to attend school. A cross section of these children were selected by the evaluator and project staff (50% each) and were brought together in two locations in each country, one in the capital city and one in a rural location. In Sierra Leone, meetings took place in Freetown and Koidu town, Kono District and in Liberia, in Monrovia and Ganta, Nimba County.

Twenty-five participants were invited to each meeting, including boys and girls of different ages, some who had been withdrawn and some who had been prevented from child labor. In each meeting, participants were divided into three groups. Some were single sex and some were mixed; older and younger children were grouped separately. After a general introductory session, participants all took part in three activities, moving from one to another as the day progressed. The activities were as follows:

- i. *Small group discussions with the international evaluator and a national evaluator from the country concerned, who was there to facilitate communication between the evaluator and the children.* In Liberia this role was fulfilled by guardians or mentor teachers from the project. In Sierra Leone, the evaluator was assisted by a development worker from outside the project, who had previous experience working with vulnerable children and combating child labor. Specific questions on work status and school attendance were included in these discussions, and children were also asked how involvement with CYCLE had affected their lives and what choices were available to them for the future.
- ii. *An individual creative activity, either writing or drawing.* Each participant was asked to choose between two themes, the first being “How my life has changed” and the second “My hopes and fears.” They then either drew a picture based on their chosen theme or wrote a short essay.
- iii. *Work in groups to prepare a group presentation—either a short drama or a song around a theme of their own choice or the theme (“I feel happy when...”).* Most groups enacted scenes showing children in exploitive labor being approached by CYCLE staff and subsequently enrolled in school.

The final session brought participants together to watch the presentations from each group and discuss the messages they conveyed. Drawings were displayed on the walls and some children read out their written pieces. A short evaluation of the day and some games completed the workshop. Children were given breakfast, lunch, and snacks during the day and were supervised and accompanied to and from the workshops by project staff.

This methodology was adopted to put the main focus of the evaluation on the children’s points of view and experiences. It provided an opportunity to interact with and observe the young people in both small and large groups and gave them several different ways of expressing themselves. The meetings took place in non-school environments to encourage relaxed and informal discussion. Participants were encouraged to speak their local vernacular rather than using formal English, so that they could speak from the heart and effectively communicate their feelings and experiences. As Brima Bockarie, the co-facilitator in Sierra Leone, said when explaining why we were conducting the focus groups in Creole, “You can’t cry in English.”

3.2 Other Key Informant Interviews

In addition to meetings with children, the evaluators also met with CWC members in Sierra Leone and conducted interviews with key informant from the project staff and relevant ministry personnel. In Liberia, one visit was made to two young people who had received vocational

training from the project, and in Sierra Leone to a family who had been part of the project's income-generating initiative was also visited.

3.3 Desk Review

A desk review of project documents before the evaluation field visit was supplemented by further documents gathered during visits to the ministries and project offices. These included—

- The final evaluation for a different IRC project in Sierra Leone called YouthWORKS Microfranchising
- A study carried out into the family income-generating projects initiated during CYCLE in Sierra Leone
- The user friendly version of the Sierra Leone Child Rights Act, 2007
- A situational analysis of human trafficking, especially of women and children in Liberia, carried out by the Ministry of Labor and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Documents related to the current activities of the National Commissions on Child Labor in both countries



IV DESCRIPTION OF THE CYCLE PROJECT EXTENSION

After the close out process was well underway, CYCLE received the go ahead to continue support to a limited number of beneficiaries for a further nine months. This was designed to give children taking West African Examinations Council exams at primary and secondary levels an opportunity to obtain a recognized qualification.

In Liberia, the project provided financial and material support to 2,183 beneficiaries (1,057 boys and 1,126 girls). Support included provision of uniforms and learning materials and the payment of examination entry fees. The number of project staff dropped from 16 to 5, and although they focused on supporting and monitoring the children in school, they also continued to participate in monthly coordination meetings at national and county levels with the ministries of labor and education and to work with CWCs with to encourage them to continue their work after the end of the project.

Similarly, the project continued to support 2,142 beneficiaries in Sierra Leone (1,120 boys and 1,022 girls) to complete their exam year by paying 50% of the costs of their education, with

parents or guardians being asked to pay the remainder, in preparation for the end of the project. Staff numbers dropped from 17 to 8, but work with key line ministries (Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports) continued in order to promote and discuss ongoing issues relating to education and child protection. The project supported capacity building for CWCs to assist them to take on their responsibilities under the Children's Rights Act and facilitated introductions between CWCs and Ministry officials as part of the process.

In November 2009, the Ministry of Education in Sierra Leone launched its code of conduct for education personnel, which regulates the abolition of corporal punishment and sexual abuse and exploitation in schools, and encourages teachers to become positive role models for their students. IRC is one of the development partners contributing to developing training modules and other materials to ensure all schools understand and are able to apply this code effectively. CYCLE personnel were also involved in this work.



EVALUATION FINDINGS

V RELEVANCE

Conversations with the beneficiary children, project staff, and Ministries in both countries made it abundantly clear that the CYCLE extension is extremely relevant. It has enabled children to sit public examinations and have the opportunity to obtain the recognized qualifications that are needed if they are to progress to the next stage of their education. It has enabled ongoing work with key line ministries developing and consolidating child labor legislation, and also with the newly established ILO office in Sierra Leone.

There is, however, a concern regarding young people leaving senior secondary school in the 12th grade. Many of them have expectations of going on to further education and becoming doctors, accountants, lawyers, and engineers, but with no further assistance, it is unclear how this will be accomplished or how they will support themselves in the immediate future. In countries where unemployment is high and the informal economy dominates, some form of skills training, business management, and career advice would have widened their choices following the end of their school-based education and enhanced possibilities for earning a living and supporting their own education. In Sierra Leone, some high school graduates are investigating teaching posts but most have few plans or ideas about what they will do when they finish school, other than looking for assistance to go to college or university.

A visit to two girls developing their tailoring business in Ganta, Liberia showed how effective skills training can be. These two former beneficiaries were trained by CYCLE in 2007 and are now running their own business and supporting themselves and their children. They have their

own premises and, in addition to sewing machines provided by CYCLE, they have a new over-locking machine donated by another IRC partner that effectively extends the range of services they can offer. They attend literacy and numeracy classes three evenings a week and save regularly with a view to buying an embroidery machine that will further increase their versatility. It is true that not all those who benefitted from CYCLE skills training have achieved this degree of success but discussion with these girls and project staff suggests that a significant number are working for themselves or others and earning an income several years after their initial training.



VI EFFECTIVENESS

CYCLE has been successful helping students finish the school year and stay out of hazardous labor, in spite of reduced staff and resources. The effectiveness of the extension period is examined under several headings.



6.1 School

Attendance has been good—over 80% for most children according to the March 2010 Technical Progress Report—and only 7 of the 4,325 children supported have dropped out during the school year. These are children in Liberia who stopped attending project schools and could no longer be monitored. Some of them are reported to have moved to other schools and one became pregnant.

Focus group discussions revealed that children were particularly serious about school during this exam year and that they really appreciated this opportunity, which came when they believed that CYCLE had finished. They were extremely aware of their own good fortune and took pains to explain that there were many more children like them who also needed help, both in the areas where CYCLE operates and in other districts. There was also a good deal of apprehension about the future and dismay that CYCLE support was coming to an end.

Unfortunately it did not prove possible for the evaluation to assess students' final exam results and completion rates; exams take place between April and June, and it will be several months before the results are available. The completion rates for beneficiaries supported during the extension period are likely to be high, but the final figures can only be calculated after the end of the school year.



6.2 Work Status

With regard to hazardous child labor, project monitoring of children outside of school hours was limited, depending largely on CWCs. However, most of the children in the focus groups said that they were no longer involved in the types of hazardous labor they had experienced before being enrolled in school. A few children reported working during the weekends alongside their parents, but not to an extent that it interrupted their study time. One group of girls who had been sex workers were clear that they had made a deal with the project—they would change their lifestyle if the project kept its promise to support them in school—and they reported keeping this promise. Only one boy reported working for his guardian (a relative) before and after school and consequently not having time to study.

The focus groups described the type of work that children should not participate in as—

- Anything that prevents children attending school
- Any work that is harmful to children (chemicals, carrying heavy loads...)

Participants were also clear about the types of work that children could be expected to do, which included domestic household chores and helping parents as long as this did not impinge on school and study time or involve any kind of potentially harmful activity. Many also gave comprehensive explanations of children’s rights, including the right to an identity, to health care, to education, to leisure time, to express themselves, to follow a religion, and to have food to eat. Children’s responsibilities were cited as respect and support for parents and elders and to work to develop the nation.



6.3 Strategies and Structures During the Extension

CYCLE staff described a number of strategies used to keep students in school during the extension period:

- Real efforts were made to ensure that materials and uniforms were available when needed and that examination registration and payment of entry fees took place on time.

- Attendance was monitored by project staff, mentor teachers, and CWCs. A follow-up form for each child was completed every three months in Liberia, and in Sierra Leone, project staff and CWC members visited schools twice a month to carry out a head count. Follow up was made for any children with significant absences.
- CYCLE staff visited schools regularly, which encouraged mentor teachers, CWCs, and PTAs to continue to follow up on CYCLE children.

No new structures were put in place to keep students in school during the extension but IRC continues its effective strategy of building the capacity of existing structures, principally the CWCs. These organizations existed before the project, having been established to accompany previous IRC initiatives, and were revitalized and developed to play an important role in CYCLE. In Sierra Leone, the extension period was used to encourage them to become increasingly autonomous, as discussed later in the report. In Liberia, they assisted project staff who would have been unable to monitor all beneficiaries without such help.



6.4 Advocacy Training During the Extension

Advocacy training for CWCs is ongoing in Sierra Leone. The committees have been introduced to line ministry personnel and have participated in conferences in the north and south of the country to learn about and discuss their responsibilities under the Child Rights Act, which include ensuring that children's rights are protected, giving advice and guidance to children committing minor offenses, preventing violence against girls and women, and investigating concerns expressed by children or adults about the wellbeing of any child.

It seems particularly important that the CWCs see themselves primarily as community organizations with specific responsibilities under the act, rather than as an arm of the government requiring and awaiting instruction and guidance from the ministry. Since the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs itself has limited capacity to implement all aspects of the act, the CWCs can be most effective if they act as autonomous bodies advocating for children within their communities and ensuring that the ministry is kept informed of local needs and realities.

CWCs seem a little unsure of their position during the transition from CYCLE support to working more closely with district councils. This is understandable, and members are clearly very committed to organizing themselves effectively. It was encouraging to note that many CWCs are already working in collaboration with Family Support Units, which are part of the police authority, and one CYCLE trained CWC member in Freetown has even been employed on the staff of his local Family Support Unit. In Kono, CWCs are in the process of opening bank accounts, and others are seeking identification badges to support their credibility while working in the community and

when trying to raise funds. CYCLE is offering training in preparing project proposals to assist this process, which is essential to the long term functioning of the committees.

In Liberia, Child Labor Monitoring Committees (CLMCs) have been established in a number of communities but have not yet received training, since this was not part of the plan for the extension, and will be managed by the ministry and the National Commission for Child Labor when resources become available.



VII EFFICIENCY

Although the second stage of the evaluation was not designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the extension period's efficiency, a relatively small amount of money went a long way. On a crude cost per child calculation, 4,325 children were supported to stay in school for nine additional months and take their exams for less than US\$70 each. There has also been merit in the additional work with the CWCs in Sierra Leone, which has enhanced the sustainability of the committees and assisted with their integration into the implementation of the Child Rights Act. Reduced numbers of project staff meant that those who remained were responsible for monitoring the same number of children as before, but spread across a wider geographical area. They organized time and logistics efficiently and effectively and should be congratulated on a job well done.



VIII IMPACT

8.1 Trends in Work Status and School Retention

The project emphasis was on keeping children in school and creating awareness of the importance of education and the concept of child labor, rather than on work status tracking. The assumption that working hours would automatically be reduced for children who are in school was confirmed during focus group discussions, which indicated that this was a dominant trend. Only one child said that he was still working in exploitive child labor. All children were involved in household chores, and some worked alongside their parents on a limited basis during evenings and weekends.

Children were asked whether they had brothers and sisters and, if so, whether these children were also enrolled in school. Most participating children had siblings of school age, but most of

these children were not in school. Several children whose families had benefitted from project help with income generation reported that all their brothers and sisters were in school. One such family was visited during the evaluation. The mother was a weaver and had used the initial support to fund a loom and other materials. The family was now supporting 5 children in school.

Children who had been involved in child labor before being enrolled in school were asked who was now responsible for the work they had been doing. Some reported that other siblings now fulfilled the working role, but many others said that no children in the family worked in activities classified as child labor.

The real impact of the extension period can only be truly assessed in the future, since the education and development of the children concerned is a work in progress. What can be said is that a further year of support to attend school has increased the opportunities available to CYCLE beneficiaries by enabling them to take public examinations. The extension also enabled IRC's experienced staff team to continue to work with ministries to strengthen the enabling environment to fight child labor in the two countries.



IX SUSTAINABILITY

During the extension period, CYCLE continued to implement its plan to phase out the project and encourage the sustainability of its initiatives. The evaluation was able to assess how effective this has been to some extent, but since only children still supported by the project were monitored, this assessment is still based on predictions of what might happen in the future, rather than what has actually happened to children who no longer benefit from project support.



9.1 Continuing Education

Focus group discussions confirmed that the majority of children supported by CYCLE during the extension thought it unlikely that they would be able to continue their education after the end of the project. This is not surprising since these children come from some of the poorest and most marginalized families in their communities, and a number of them do not have any family members at all. Noticeably few of the children were living with their own parents. Some were

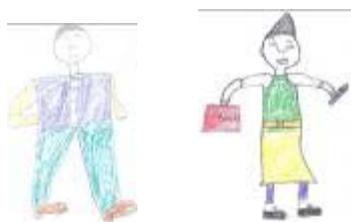
orphans and many were looked after by aunts, uncles, grandparents, brothers, or other relatives; some were completely on their own.

In Liberia, this was the dominant message in both rural and urban focus groups, although some of the younger children were optimistic that their parents or guardians would be able to continue to support them in school.

In Sierra Leone, the rural and urban environments were completely different. In the eastern province the fallout from the war was still evident in conversations with the children, many of whom had experienced traumatic events that deprived them of their families and any material and psychological support. Some had seen their parents killed or die from illness. One boy had been part of a group of rebel soldiers that had burned down his family home. Child after child described working for *aunties* as their only way of survival, and one group of ex-child sex workers described how they had organized themselves and taken care of each other. The vast majority of such children and young people will not have resources to continue their education. For many, this is quite devastating as they are on their own or risk exploitation from guardians or family members.

In contrast, the war was not even a feature of the focus groups in Freetown. Many of the children here think they will be able to continue their education, although some said this won't be possible because of a lack of family support. They talked movingly of their struggle to attain an education, telling stories of family deaths, exploitation by uncles and aunties, and great hardship selling, working in the mines, breaking stones, and harvesting sand—all with the happy ending of being enrolled in school by CYCLE, clearly a life changing event for many.

The evaluators were surprised that there seemed to be no strategies in place to help these children access information about scholarships or any other opportunities for ongoing education. During the focus group in Freetown, the co-evaluator was able to pass on information about a GTZ skills training project, and participants were encouraged to take control of their lives and start planning ahead for the end of the project and the next school year. Possibilities for returning to school at a later date, even if it was not an immediate option, were also discussed, as was information on how to look for work opportunities that would involve ongoing learning and self development.



9.2 Partnerships

During the extension period CYCLE's principal partnerships were with the governments of the two countries through the appropriate ministries, the CWCs, and ILO in Sierra Leone, all of which are important for the sustainability of project achievements.

9.2.1 Governments

During the evaluation, CYCLE was described as a catalyst project. IRC was the first major partner to work consistently with the governments to combat child labor. CYCLE flagged the major issues, raised awareness, and supported and encouraged government action.

In Liberia, the Ministry of Labor has taken ownership of child labor issues, putting in place the 16 member National Commission for Child Labor and recognizing the need for a national policy, which is in the process of being developed.

The national commission meets regularly, has identified a list of priorities, and is actively working to carry them out. This includes advocating for the government to ratify ILO Convention 138 on the minimum age for work. Currently, the Decent Work Bill 2009 is before the Liberian parliament and includes a section on the Employment of Young Persons which "...establishes a legal framework that enables young people to participate in the labor market while ensuring that they do not do so to the detriment of their education and that they are properly protected against work that would be harmful to their health, safety, or moral or material welfare or development." It identifies the minimum age for employment and defines light work for children, types of prohibited work, and working conditions for young people. The current focus of the national commission is passing this bill, since it is seen as covering the most important aspects of ILO Convention 138.

CYCLE has assisted the Ministry of Labor to organize training for labor inspectors and media personnel and to produce promotional materials to help raise awareness of child labor issues. CLMCs, including representatives of government, management, and workers, have been established and trained at various Firestone rubber plantations, where an agreement is in place to ensure that children are not employed. Other CLMCs have been put in place toward the creation of a national network, but there is no formalized database or data collection system as of yet. There is talk of the CYCLE database being taken over by the Ministry of Labor after the end of the project.

UNICEF is helping to meet the need for national baseline data concerning child labor and trafficking. They have funded "A situational analysis of human trafficking, especially women and children in Liberia," which was completed in February 2010. The terms of reference for a similar study on child labor are currently being developed, to be carried out by a consultant from South Africa in the very near future.

In Sierra Leone, CYCLE continued to work with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, all of which are part of the National Commission for Child Labor. Much of the work has concerned the implementation of the Child Rights Act, including provisions to combat child labor.

There is currently a ministry initiative to ratify ILO Conventions 182 and 138, due to take place before World Day Against Child Labor—June 12, 2010; since the process is well underway, this seems to be a realistic expectation. Ratification will be followed by national laws to ensure implementation of convention provisions. A planned 2-day workshop to inform and sensitize

parliamentarians about the conventions will enable parliamentarians both to take the issues back to their constituencies and to participate in parliamentary debate from an informed perspective.

These government initiatives are all supported and encouraged by the CYCLE team, which has continued to play a role at the national level during the extension. The degree of activity and the close relationship between ministry staff and the project team bear witness to the importance of this support in keeping up the momentum to move strategies forward to combat child labor. At a local level project personnel have continued to work with local government offices to help them effectively fulfill their child protection responsibilities. Government officers all spoke warmly of CYCLE support and extended requests for ongoing assistance from IRC and USDOL.

9.2.2 CWCs, PTAs, peer educators and other community groups

In Liberia, the CYCLE team has continued to encourage CWCs and PTAs to continue the struggle to eliminate child labor through their continuing visits to schools. Attendance at monthly coordination meetings at national and county levels enabled ongoing input and support to ministry activities. The project team has been fully occupied supporting and monitoring children in school. The fact that the Ministry of Labor and a number of its partners are actively working on child labor issues will no doubt contribute to the sustainability of local committees, but judging by experience from other countries, without further training and resources it seems unlikely that these committees will remain active in the long term.

In Sierra Leone, the evaluator was able to discuss the issue of sustainability with groups of representatives from CWCs in two locations. Since CWCs are integral to the implementation of the Child Rights Act and have received some training during the extension period, the outlook for their future is relatively good. They will need to organize themselves, develop partnerships, obtain recognized identification cards, and raise some resources. CWCs that succeed in developing their credibility have the potential to be sustainable and to protect and monitor children in their communities. However, the development of a national child labor monitoring plan is still some way off, since the ministries currently lack the capacity and logistics to support it.

The Child Rights Act originally planned for CWCs in every village, but when it came to implementation, the Ministry found this to be impractical since some villages in Sierra Leone are extremely small. A new proposal to have CWCs at the chiefdom level provoked concern among development partners, since they thought this would place committees too far from the communities concerned. During the evaluation, the Head of Child Welfare said that a solution had now been found and a CWC is now envisaged for every community of over 500 people.

Project supported CWCs have reorganized themselves to fit the structure outlined in the Child Rights Act, which identifies 14 members representing different sectors of the community. During the evaluation, one group explained that more than 14 people had been involved before the reorganization, and they were worried about losing the energy and input of those who were not part of the restructured CWCs. This is a valid concern and the project might suggest strategies, such as subcommittees or working groups, so that everyone who wants to contribute has a role to play.

CWCs are starting to meet twice a month without CYCLE participation and have been trained by the project in local fundraising, basic proposal writing, and sensitization activities, such as drama, football games, and dances, among other activities. During the extension, they have jointly monitored beneficiaries with project staff and continue to report to the project. Once the project closes, the plan is for groups to report to the ministry; mechanisms need to be clarified for this to be implemented. The government hopes to set up its own database that will integrate results from NGOs working in the field of child protection so that an overview of activities can assist government planning.

CYCLE continues to provide CWCs with some stationary supplies and has also provided some bicycles. One CWC member expressed his gratitude but said that really most of the members were too old to ride bicycles and what they really needed were motorbikes. Other CWC members asked that a request be made to USDOL for a further project extension. These aspects serve to highlight that without ongoing support and some financial resources it will be difficult for CWCs to function effectively and to be sustainable—not because of any lack of commitment but because this work requires resources and running a child protection system on a voluntary basis may not be realistic in the long term. It risks undervaluing the importance of community-based support for children in difficulties. With this in mind, some CWCs have had the idea of developing income-generating initiatives and hope to develop a seed bank, the proceeds of which could be used to support vulnerable children in the community. While this is a great idea, it would benefit from some start-up support; this should be kept in mind if any further opportunities arise.

An important aspect of work at the community level is the involvement of children in the fight against child labor. There is room for further development of work that is already taking place in this area. CWCs can be encouraged to work with children—particularly some of the children who are about to graduate from school and who have firsthand experience of child labor—and use the skills that they have to offer. CYCLE might well try to link such children with their local CWCs. The government structure for CWCs includes child representatives—so there is scope for organizing local selection processes so that these young people can be true representatives of the children in their communities and develop mechanisms for consultation, feedback, and action planning.

A national conference will take place in Sierra Leone before the end of the project that will include input from past and present CYCLE beneficiaries. This might provide a platform for discussing such mechanisms to encourage effective child representation so that the two young people on every CWC fulfill their potential and do not become token child members.

9.2.3 *NGO partners*

During the extension period, CYCLE's NGO partners were no longer directly involved in the work of the project. However, they continue to operate as child protection agencies in their areas and use their accumulated expertise through other projects and programs.

9.2.4 *ILO-IPEC*

Sierra Leone is one of 11 countries to benefit from the EU-funded ILO-IPEC project known as Tackle Child Labor Through Education (TACKLE). TACKLE aims to contribute to the withdrawal of children from child labor and to prevent children from entering into employment

by offering alternative education and training opportunities. The project also provides guidance to formulate new, or improve existing, legal and policy frameworks on child labor and education in partner countries and to ensure their effective application and implementation. Activities to promote the development of the institutional capacities of ministries and other relevant bodies for concrete action to fight child labor as well as to raise awareness, increase dialogue, and strengthen networks on child labor and education in collaboration with social partners and civil society are also part of the program. TACKLE is a 48-month project that started in 2008.¹

Since the Sierra Leone ILO office has only recently become operational, TACKLE is only now preparing to enter its implementation phase in the country, which means it will only run for 18 months before it closes. IRC has been chosen as the implementing agency for the project and will work with 1,500 children as direct beneficiaries and with 30 CWCs to develop child labor monitoring in 30 communities. The project will also work with 600 families to offer business skills training and links with microfinance institutions. TACKLE will offer an ideal opportunity to pick up 1,500 ex-CYCLE children who still need support for education. In fact, these children provide a realistic target group since the short implementation period is not long enough to offer effective support to a completely new cohort of children. It seems that this is one of those rare occasions when circumstances conspire to meet a very real need, and TACKLE is expected to start operating in Sierra Leone within the next few months.

Regrettably, TACKLE will not be operational in Liberia, and the evaluator found no evidence of any similar ongoing funding for any aspects of the project.



9.3 Income Generation—Support for Sustainable Livelihoods

As described in the main body of the report, CYCLE identified the need to help poor families increase their income, not only replace the income lost when working children were withdrawn from child labor and enrolled in school, but also enable parents to support direct CYCLE beneficiaries in school after the end of the project and enroll other siblings. In response to this need, the project supported a number of families, providing them with food that could be traded or converted to income to buy equipment and materials. USDOL determined that the food was equivalent to a direct cash transfer and because of legislative requirements that were in place at the time, USDOL projects were prohibited from providing this service to beneficiaries. Consequently, USDOL required the project to bring this income-generating activity (IGA) to a close. However, a number of lessons learned are clearly important in terms of sustainability, so the issue is revisited here, following discussions during the evaluation field work.

¹ The other TACKLE countries are Kenya, Zambia, Sudan, Madagascar, Mali, Angola, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Guyana.

IGAs supported by CYCLE took a while to get going and were helped by additional training. One unforeseen result of starting the activities before the training was that people had an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and could quickly understand the relevance of what they learned in relation to their own practical experiences.

As indicated previously, in the sample of children participating in the evaluation focus groups in Kono, there seems to be a correlation between families that received income-generating support and CYCLE beneficiaries having siblings in school. Such children also felt more likely to be able to continue their schooling after the end of the project since their parents had a small income to support them.

In 2007 and 2008, IRC carried out follow-up studies of IGAs² that had been introduced in 2006. The following tables summarize the findings.

Table A: 2008 Education Status of Children in Families Benefiting from IGA Inputs

Category	# of children	%
Child beneficiaries whose families received IGA inputs	188	100%
Children successfully completed an education program and family IGA continues functioning	76	40%
Children still in an education program and IGA is still functioning	65	35%
Children still in an education program although IGA failed	13	7%
Children completed an education program but IGA has failed	21	11%
Children dropped out but IGA continues	12	6%
Children dropped out and IGA failed	1	1%

Table B: Status of IGA Projects

Category	2007		2008	
	#	%	#	%
Family IGA projects sites visited	188	100	188	100
Family IGA projects functioning	177	94.2	122	65
Family IGA projects that are successful*	22	11.7	42	22.4
Family IGAs that failed (relocated or not functioning)	11	5.9	66	35.1

* *Successful* is defined as projects with goods and savings equal to or greater than the start-up value.

The studies also looked at changes in family status and reasons for projects succeeding or failing, revealing a broad range of factors affecting the outcomes, which overall, were quite positive, for example—

- Families identified for IGAs were spending an average of US\$0.75 per day before receiving the IGA support. When the study was completed, it was observed that families

² CYCLE Family Income-generation Projects—Study Two Report, August 2009.

that still had a functioning project were spending an average of US\$1.49 per day. This is close to a 100% increase in average daily family expenditures.

- Although families lost income by allowing their children to be enrolled in school, the family's lot increased considerably. This is evidenced in the anecdotal comments collected by officers during the study.

The following quote is just one example of how IGA support evolved for one family:

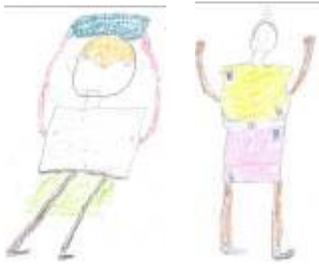
"I was not the one that the IGA project came to initially. The project was actually given to my elder brother for the benefit of my nephew. However, when my brother died, taking care of his family and mine became my responsibility. I took over the table market that my late brother had established to help take care of my nephew in school. After participating in the business skills training organized by the CYCLE officers, I realized that the profit margin for the table market was too small and could lead to the breakdown of the project, so I converted the proceeds over time to buying one sewing machine and started a tailor shop in Manjama town. Now I have three machines and two helpers and this is providing me the income to maintain both [my brother's] family as well as mine."

The conclusions and recommendations of the IRC IGA study raised the following points:

- Training is essential. Beneficiaries remarked that the training they received helped them understand some of the dynamics between pricing, management costs, and profit making.
- Setting goals for the IGA helps. Beneficiary families were informed from the beginning that IGAs were grants that they were expected to build from to help educate their children. It was clear to them from the onset that although the project was not going to get the money back, the project required that proceeds from the IGAs were used to remove barriers to education for the children.
- Support for family IGA needs to be included in child labor projects as it helps the family and therefore the community to be more sustainable in reducing the number of children engaged in child labor activities.
- The definition used to determine successful projects was very limiting, thereby giving the impression that the family IGA project was not profitable and productive.
- Constant monitoring of project beneficiaries and mentoring helps reduce risks of failure.

Discussions during the evaluation supported the view that although providing support for sustainable livelihoods is not straightforward, it is extremely important to design an economic component to any initiative to withdraw children from child labor and enroll them in school. Even if families are convinced of the value of education, and many are, they cannot act on this conviction without the necessary funds to support their children's education, which becomes increasingly costly the further the children progress.

X CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



10.1 Conclusions

Overall, the project has worked hard to realize its plans for sustainability. Support for government and community-based organizations has contributed to the evolution of structures and systems to protect children and eliminate child labor. However, if governments are unable to support the ongoing development of these systems, it is unlikely that community-based CWCs and CLMCs will be sustained in isolation. This means that ongoing policy development and capacity building for ministries are important priorities for the future, particularly in Liberia where ILO does not have an office and ILO-IPEC has no current project.

Governments in Liberia and Sierra Leone are committed to combating child labor. Sierra Leone is very close to ratifying ILO Conventions 138 and 182, and Liberia is undertaking essential baseline research. Both countries have active national commissions concerned with child protection. IRC, through CYCLE, has made a significant contribution to this national level work.

Focus group discussions suggest that direct educational support to individual children from poor families is not sustainable after the end of the project for the majority of those concerned, mostly because these children or their families lack access to the necessary financial resources to continue their education. The extension period could have provided an opportunity to count how many of the beneficiaries who did not receive extended support from the project actually continued in school. However, this was not part of the work plan and would have required more staff to implement, so this information is not available. Children from families that received support for income generation seem to be better able to continue their education, since some families are successfully supporting several children in school.

The opportunity provided by the project extension was universally welcomed and appreciated. However, as it comes to an end, it leaves many children in an uncertain position regarding their future. An opportunity provided by the evaluation focus groups for children to discuss their hopes and concerns about the future and to access information about any education openings or skills training that they might tap into was apparently very useful. If such an opportunity could be offered to all CYCLE beneficiaries, either by schools or by the project, it might serve to facilitate the transition from CYCLE to the future—whatever that may be.

CYCLE beneficiaries who are finishing their school career and graduating from the 12th grade said that access to business management and skills training would have provided them with a pathway to earning money for their ongoing education, since many of them hope to become doctors, engineers, lawyers, or accountants. They are unlikely to have immediate access to resources for tertiary education.

Project staff explained that IGAs have been successful in a number of cases. It seems clear that projects that do nothing to tackle the economic factor have little chance of benefitting more than their immediate beneficiaries during the time span of the project. In contrast, if money is invested in training and start up for IGAs, there is potential to enable educational support for all children in a family and a chance to lead to greater sustainability for project interventions.

In all four evaluation workshops, children made it clear through their drawings, words, and skits, that CYCLE has completely changed their lives, providing opportunities that many could only dream of before the project arrived. While it is relatively easy to identify improvements to project activities in hindsight, and the future for many of these children is still uncertain, this should in no way detract from the truly admirable work that the project has done. Many beneficiaries suffered unspeakable hardship because of wars, poverty, and the general breakdown of the societies in which they lived. It is heartening that something good has finally happened to them, and USDOL and IRC have every right to feel proud of their achievements.



10.2 Recommendations

Based on observations in the different sections of this annex, the evaluation workshops, and the conversations with various stakeholders, there are a number of recommendations that should be taken into account when planning and implementing future projects including, where appropriate, ILO-IPEC's TACKLE, which IRC will shortly start to put into practice.

10.2.1 Concerning Planning for Future Projects

- While it may have been relevant to run CYCLE as a cross border project at the time it was conceived, Sierra Leone and Liberia have very different characteristics and are moving along individual paths of reconstruction. In the future, it would make more sense to develop individual country programs to combat child labor, although this would not rule out the possibility of cross border exchanges to share experiences, which have been extremely useful. Country programs would facilitate and streamline project management and enable country-specific needs and issues to be addressed.

- Increasing work with local partner organizations is strongly recommended since they are the ones present for the long term and have specialized local knowledge of the communities where they work. Capacity building for these organizations should be seen as a long-term development strategy. International NGO staff can offer an important role as specialist advisors, but the more they can enable national NGOs to conceive, plan, and implement initiatives in collaboration with the communities concerned, the more likely it is that such initiatives will be relevant, locally owned, and sustainable.
- Any strategies to enable national NGOs to work with local communities to contribute to project conception and planning would be extremely welcome. One possibility is funding for project planning. The final evaluation report speaks of the speed with which the project start-up took place, the pressure to enroll children in school, and the problems that resulted. The report also links this with a lack of creative thinking and time for reflection based on the real issues that arose. The second phase of the evaluation observed vulnerable children left unassisted with little idea of what comes next. These issues are not confined to CYCLE, but are seen repeatedly in similar projects. Experience demonstrates that the more people are involved in planning and defining their futures, the greater the impact of subsequent initiatives. However, many projects continue to follow a project design process based on short term deadlines that makes such local involvement and consultation virtually impossible. Projects such as this one should find a way of doing this based on local ownership and commitment at all stages of the project, rather than hoping that this will somehow emerge once a project worker appears in a community and tells people about the role they are expected to play in a preconceived project. USDOL's CIRCLE project,³ which also operated in Sierra Leone, offered one solution to this issue and perhaps should be revisited.

The CIRCLE project asked partner NGOs to develop community-based pilot projects that would contribute to one or more of USDOL's four Education Initiative objectives. This enabled local people to participate in the design of projects subsequently implemented in their communities, ensuring that the activities responded to locally identified needs, in addition to a high degree of local commitment and buy in. This seems to provide an innovative approach to project design that builds on community strengths and caters to specificities of communities in the same country, without assuming that the same activities will be welcomed in all villages. Successful pilots can then be scaled up through extending activities to communities requesting to join the project—being community led.

- Projects working with extremely vulnerable children need to be innovative in developing a creative mix of different types of training and education to meet the particular needs of specific groups. This may involve a mix of skills training, formal education, and business development for individual children. While it is important to support and build on

³ CIRCLE (2002–2007) was a global Education Initiative project implemented by Winrock International through subcontracts with national NGOs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. CIRCLE aimed to prevent or reduce child labor through education by identifying and promoting innovative, locally developed, and community-based pilot projects and documenting their best practices. In Sierra Leone, NGOs CARD and RADA implemented six sub-projects working in the eastern province (Sorogbema, Tunkia, and Segbewema Chiefdoms).

government programs in terms of sustainability, for projects working with very vulnerable children, their best interests must be the guiding principal for project design. For a number of CYCLE children there will be no sustainability because they will not have the means to continue in school and will find themselves ill prepared to fend for themselves without returning to child labor.

10.2.2 Concerning CWCs

- CWCs should be encouraged to develop strategies so that child members are real representatives of the children in their communities. These might include a transparent selection process and regular meetings of children and young people to get feedback from the CWC and voice any concerns that need CWC attention. Such meetings could also be used to develop advocacy and fundraising activities. This is an opportunity for CWCs to tap in to the energy and enthusiasm of CYCLE beneficiaries and other local young people and enable them to develop leadership and advocacy skills. It can also provide models of democratic and transparent decisionmaking and community organization.
- Facilitate discussion among CWCs concerning the resources needed for long-term sustainability and encourage them to develop strategies for accessing such resources. It is important that the CWCs take the lead in this so that they do not become increasingly dependent on external support. However, once they have developed a viable plan, start-up resources and training could be provided by a project, such as TACKLE in Sierra Leone.
- Develop strategies for wider community involvement through subcommittees and working groups to supplement the work of the 14 statutory members of CWCs in Sierra Leone.

10.2.3 Concerning Support for Education

- In post-conflict situations where the whole social and physical infrastructure is in the process of reconstruction, there are limited resources and established systems and structures available to offer ongoing support to beneficiaries after the end of the project. In such situations, USDOL might consider abandoning the cohort system for direct beneficiaries, so that a given number of children receive the maximum number of years of education that the project can offer. While this would result in a lower number of direct beneficiaries, it would avoid, to some extent, raising the hopes and expectations of children enrolled in school, only to leave them stranded after one or two years with no alternative means of continuing their education.
- Consider increasing project length or developing other mechanisms so that children can benefit from the full six years of secondary education. This and the previous recommendation would mitigate, to some extent, the feeling expressed by many children of being left stranded by the project after believing that they would be assisted in their goals to become doctors, engineers, accountants, or other professionals.

- In the same vein, it is extremely important to be very clear all along about exactly what the project can offer, and ideally, to offer opportunities for children to discuss and plan for the transition to post-project life.

10.2.4 Concerning Income Generation

- Ensure that all projects aiming to withdraw or prevent children of poor families from child labor have a livelihoods component. This needs to cover strategies for enabling families to replace lost income and cover costs of supporting their children in school. This component requires specialist input, training, and sufficient time to become established.
- Children coming to the end of formal education can also benefit from support for income generation, business and skills training since they will need to earn a living and resources for further education in countries where the formal employment sector is small.



XI PARTICIPANTS' WRITINGS

Excerpts from the Writings of Participants in the Evaluation Workshops Under the Headings "How My Life Has Changed" and "My Hopes and Fears"

And the final words are from CYCLE beneficiaries. No identifying information is provided since the children were promised anonymity.

My life has changed in that my parents and I used to go and get sand from the beach and wait until someone came to buy it before we got food to eat. My parents never had the money to send me to school until one day while we were working one of the CYCLE project workers came and asked if I was going to school. I explained and they understood my problem and I was enrolled in school. Since then CYCLE has been a great help to me because I no longer do child labor and am now in school. After school my parent now find food for me and I am able to sit and study my lessons. I don't need to go to work for myself to get school materials because CYCLE helps me with notebooks, pens, uniform and many things for school including my school fees. My life has changed in that I am now in the twelfth grade and in a few months now I will be out of high school and I can stand among my friends and speak about the effects of child labor and the harm it does.

Before CYCLE came I used to go with my mother to the market to sell and then come home to cook. At that time the money was used to pay my school fees but it was not enough so I was not regular in school. One day CYCLE was having a meeting in our community and that's where I gave in my name and explained my problems. I started getting support from CYCLE project and since then my life has really changed. I never used to have time to study so I used to score bad grades, but now my grades have improved greatly and I have more time to study and spend less time working. But one thing that really made me sad is the closing of the CYCLE project. Even though it is hard we have to accept the result and work as a team to help ourselves.

Now that the CYCLE project has come to an end I hope that USDOL will try to restart the project or start another education project to enable other Liberian children to be educated. I fear that the present CYCLE beneficiaries will not be able to continue their education because their parents are not financially potent and if the child insists that he or she wants to continue to go to school this child will have to involve himself or herself in child labor, for instance selling at the market to save for their education, which will have a negative effect on the child's development.

My hope is that this project should continue so that our friends that are out there will receive help from the CYCLE project. My fear is that if this does not continue many of us are likely to go back into child labor.

My hope is that CYCLE should keep helping we the Liberian children to keep in school because if we don't go to school we will not be good future leaders. We the Liberian children are hoping to do some good for our country. We want to make this nation a great nation. My fear is that most children will be in the streets and have nothing to do for their own future, so they might even have to involve themselves in all kinds of behavior.

I was crushing rocks without going to school but since CYCLE entered into my life I'm now in school in 9th grade. I can study my lessons and score good grades. My working hours have reduced and my study time has increased, so I am grateful to DOL and all CYCLE workers for their hard work. But not all children who engage in child labor are out of child labor so we are appealing to the DOL to help other children to get out of child labor.

My past life is not easy. That life that is full of poverty is not good for children. I don't want to go back where I came from—if this project closes I will surely go back there. It is a pity for my dreams to die and it is only going to school that will help me meet my dream. Sadness is the most biggest thing in my life now. Going out of school is not good for us. I am going to join others in the street, as demonstrated in my drawing. I wish my God will surprise me by sending another project to help continue our education so that I will become someone different and a helper.

I was a small girl about three years of age my mother died and my father was left alone to try so I could go to school, but soon there was no money and I sat doing nothing for one year. Then IRC started to help me and now I am in JSS 3. Then I became sorrow when I heard that the project was now at the end.

I was in the village with my mother. At that time my father was dead and my mother could not afford any money to send me to school, so she sent me to my sister. I tried and I started going to school with so much suffering and I reached a time when she said she would not be able to pay my fees. I went to my older brother and he said he would see how best he can help me. One day I was at home cooking and he told me about the IRC program and I started going to school. By the end of JSS 3 I heard that the program would be breaking off, which was a big blow for all the IRC children. How will I go forward with my education without the IRC? Who will I be in the future with the help of IRC? All I wish for is that you will remember us in any program that you will come up with. Thank you for your support towards education.

My fear is that if the project closes now we will have a problem with our community because not all the children have been taken out of child labor and if these children grow up like this we will have too many criminals in the community.

I came from a poor background and I started school when I was 10 years old. By then my parents usually asked me to go and fetch firewood and after that I took my machete and hammers to the quarry and worked about 5 to 8 hours per day. When I got back from the quarrying site I used to take a little rest. After resting for a while I went to the street to sell fruits, such as mangoes, oranges, etc. After selling I couldn't read my books as I would start nodding by myself and I took my little mat and I spread it on the floor and I slept on it until the morning hour. My parents woke me up to do little domestic works before I go to school. By the end of the semester I ended up being a failure and I was expelled from school because of tuition fees and I continue my bad ways of living in my vicinity as a drop out for about 2 or 3 years. When CYCLE project came in our country Sierra Leone in 2005, I was enrolled back in school when I was 14 years old. When the extension project started I was in an examination class. They only gave me 50% including tuition fees and other scholastic materials such as uniform, core text books, pen, pencils, bags, etc. So I so much appreciate what CYCLE has done for me and I will pray that all those who are supporting this project God will reward them handsomely.

My fear is that CYCLE has done a lot, supported by USDOL they have started to support us up to this level and now the CYCLE project is finishing how will we continue our schooling again? Most of us are not living with our parents. Some of us have guardians who do not have anything so depend on diamonds. How long could we wait for them to get diamond money to continue our schooling? And some of our sisters and brothers are in the streets out there involved in the worst forms of child labor—my fear is that they

can't get a future like us because for now they will not be hoping for any good in Kono. We have 14 Chiefdoms and CYCLE has only targeted 4. What about the rest? We are at strain [under stress].

I was with my father and mother, everything was going well. When my father became ill my mother started spending all the money so there was no money to pay my fees. I was in JSS3 when that happened, taking my exams. I was 12 years old when I lost my Dad and my mother decided to send me to my aunty at Goderich. I was with my aunty when I sat my B.E.C.E. exam [National exam taken to enter SSS]. I came out with a grade 16 but there was no money for me to go to SSS1. I was so sad at that time. One day I went in a shop to purchase some goods and I heard someone talking about the CYCLE project and I asked what it was about. One boy came out and told me that the CYCLE project means Countering Youth and Child Labor through Education and I pleaded with him that he would help me to join this program so that I would be able to go back to school, since my aunty wasn't able to pay for me. The boy promised me that he will try to meet the man and explain everything. He told me that he will help me. He went and told [deleted name] and suddenly I saw [deleted name] coming to my home to ask me some questions about my life story and I explained everything to him and he felt so sad about it. I pleaded to him to help me by sending me back to school and he promised that he would. I was so happy about that, so much, and he told me to meet him at Services Secondary School. I met him there the next day and signed the forms and started to go to school again. The program has helped me from SSS1 to SSS3 when [deleted name] told me the program is going to end. My fear right now is how I am going to continue my studies. I wish this program will continue so that I can go further.

At first I was living with my grandmother and my sister. My grandmother was blind and my sister was not even living with her husband because of another woman who had married him and he and his wife wanted my sister to be their slave, which she did not agree with, so that caused the separation. My sister could not afford food for us because at the time we lost our mother and father during the rebel war and we find it very difficult for survival. My sister has to ask me and my brother to go and fetch wood for her to sell so that we can survive. We didn't argue at all and we started fetching firewood. There I met a friend called Chairlady of the American girls and she explained to me what the group was about and I decided to join and she elected me vice chairlady and I also agreed. The group was just about doing prostitution. Some men were wicked. They do price a candle for two thousand Le (2,000 Le). Some after using us they drive us away, but at the time there was no option.

We met with CYCLE and some of the CWCs in town they advised us to stop doing prostitution and we asked them if in return they will do something to help us to do what we want and support us to go to school. They agreed and they bought us books, pen, shoes, uniform, etc., with much advice. We thank CYCLE very much for their efforts and many thanks to the USDOL for their support. The change is now from American girls to future leaders.

I was one of the RUF leaders in this past war and dropped out of school because of lack of family support. When I was 10 years old I lost my father so I was living with my mother in Tongo. My late father's people came to us and told my mother to get out of my father's house. At that time my mother was blind so I took her from the house and we were on the streets suffering because we didn't have anybody to take care of my mother. When I was sitting on the street crying one man came and asked me why I was crying. I told him I had been driven from my father's house without any good reason and the man took us to his house and started taking care of my mother. We were there when my mother died so then I was lacking any family support. So I decided to go to the mining fields. While I was there CYCLE people met me and took me from manual work and settled me in school and paid my school fees. Then I was in class 6. Now I am in JSS through the help of CYCLE project, so that is why my life has changed.

Before CYCLE I was living in the worst form of life. Because at that time my main motive was just to go out and sleep with those men for me to have my livelihood. We call this sort a prostitute life and there are so many constraints about this sort of life. Sometimes when you meet with those boys they will not give you anything and after that they will ask you to go and if you do not they will flog you and drive you into the street. When we met with CYCLE then my life totally changed and then I have hope that I will be somebody in the future, because I am not happy about my past situation. But as for now I am happy about my present situation because I find myself in a good position because I know my life has already changed.

I am sad that the CYCLE project is leaving and it worries me that I have to find another way of getting education to go to college. However the things that I have learned and experienced through the CYCLE project will enable me and give me the courage to start looking for a way, although it is a tough situation.

ANNEXES

Annex A: List of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups

IRC

Elijah Okeyo, Deputy Country Director, Liberia

Amanda Sim, Child and Youth Protection and Development Coordinator, Liberia

Christina Harmon, CYCLE Manager, Liberia

Arthur P. Nah-Togbah, Education Officer, Liberia

Robert Sloan, Data Base Officer, Liberia

Mulbah K. Yorgbor Sr. Education Officer, Nimba County, Liberia

Aitor S. Lacomba, Country Director IRC Sierra Leone

J.C. Lamin, CYCLE Manager, Sierra Leone

Liberia

Ministry of Labor

Cde. J. Cole Bangalu, Assistant Minister/Trade Union Affairs

S. Reginald Z. Mehnepaine, Director, Trade Union Affairs (ex-coordinator National Commission on Child Labor)

Sermah G. Tegli. Sr., Assistant Coordinator/National Commission on Child Labor

Sierra Leone

Ministry of Employment and Social Security

Mr Ahmed F. Musa, Commissioner of Labor

Mr Sidie M. Sesary, Senior Assistant Secretary

Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs

Francis M. Lahai, Head of Child Welfare

ILO-IPEC

Sia M. Lajaku-Williams (Mrs), National Project Officer

Summary of focus group participants:

Group	Age	Boys	Girls	Withdrawn	Prevented
Ganta 1	15–17	4	5	3	6
2	11–14	0	8	1	7
3	10–14	8	0	3	5

Group	Age	Boys	Girls	Withdrawn	Prevented
Monrovia 1	16–17	8	0	0	8
2	16–17	0	8	1	7
3	11–15	3	6	1	8
Kono 1	18–20	3	6	4	5
2	9–14	0	8	2	6
3	11–15	5	3	3	5
Freetown 1	15–20	0	9	6	3
2	16–19	6	0	3	3
3	9–11	3	5	3	5
TOTAL	9–20	40	58	30	68

Annex B: Program for Focus Group Meetings

Time	Activity	Objectives	Methodology
09h30	Participants arrive and have breakfast		
10h00	Introductory session in large group	Introductions Explain purpose of the day Create a relaxed atmosphere Divide into three groups	In pairs—each introduces the other plus some name games
11h00	Group (i) <i>Activity A: Focus group discussion</i>	Discuss aspects of their lives and how useful the CYCLE program has been	Focus group
	Group (ii) <i>Activity B: Individual drawing/painting/writing around the themes: “How my life has changed...” or “My hopes and fears”</i>	Enable each participant to express themselves	Paper, paints, pens and crayons will be provided
	Group (iii) <i>Activity C: Prepare a group performance (sketch, dance, song...)</i>	An opportunity to develop cooperation and work as a group to present a short performance	The group will be asked to choose a leader, listen to each other’s ideas and make sure everyone contributes to the group presentation
12h00	Group (i) <i>Activity C</i> Group (ii) <i>Activity A</i> Group (iii) <i>Activity B</i>		
13h00	Lunch		

14h00	Group (i) <i>Activity B</i> Group (ii) <i>Activity C</i> Group (iii) <i>Activity A</i>		
15h00	Watch group performances	Give feedback and appreciation!	The three groups take it in turns to perform for the others
	Look at individual creations	Give everyone a chance to see what the others have created	Drawings displayed around the room
15h30	Large group session	Feedback from facilitators and discuss points that come up in the focus groups and participants evaluation of the day	Group discussion Brief evaluation of the day
16h00	Participants leave		

Annex C: Schedule for the Evaluation Field Visits

Date/Day	Community	Activity/Site to Visit
April 5 Monday	Monrovia	Easter Monday—Office Closed
April 6 Tuesday	Monrovia	Debriefing meeting Country Director CYPD Coordinator/CYCLE Team
	Monrovia-Ganta	Travel to Ganta by Road (5–6 hours)
April 7 Wednesday	Ganta	Beneficiaries Workshop
April 8, Thursday	Ganta-Monrovia	Meet with: Field Coordinator in Nimba CYCLE Education Officer Skills training beneficiaries (2)
		Travel to Monrovia
April 9 Friday	Monrovia	Beneficiaries Workshop
April 10 Saturday	Monrovia-Kenema	Travel to Kenema by road (7–8 hours) with car swap at border—Bo Waterside-Zimmi.
April 11 Sunday	Kono	Travel to Kono via Tongo Fields
April 12 Monday	Kono	Focus Group Discussion with Kono beneficiaries Meeting with IGA family
April 13 Tuesday	Kono	Meeting with CWC representatives from Kono communities
	Freetown	Travel to Freetown via Matatoka
April 14 Wednesday	Freetown	Focus Group Discussion with Freetown beneficiaries
April 15 Thursday	Freetown	Meeting with CWC representatives from western area communities
		Meeting with IRC CYCLE staff
		Phone call meeting with CYPD Coordinator

Date/Day	Community	Activity/Site to Visit
		Meeting with IRC CD—debrief
April 16 Friday	Freetown	Meeting with MSWGCA
		Meeting with MELSS
		Meeting with ILO
		Depart for Lungi Airport

Annex D: Terms of Reference

This annex provides information on the background, methodology, and specific questions to be answered during the second phase of the CYCLE final evaluation. The second visit is scheduled to occur April 4–16, 2010.

Background

The Countering Youth and Child Labor Through Education (CYCLE) in Sierra Leone and Liberia went into implementation in September 2005 and was originally scheduled to end in 2009. The project received an extension of US\$300,000 through June 2010 to oversee scholarships to students in the final year of their primary and secondary schooling to ensure the students' completion of the final school year and also to ensure that the students complete school exams. Of this amount, the project allocated approximately \$3,000 during this extension to continue working with 10 Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) in Sierra Leone in order to strengthen the link between the CWCs and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA). In 2007, with the passage of the Child Rights Act (CRA) in Sierra Leone, the government recognized CWCs as legitimate community structures with a well-defined role to play in monitoring the implementation of the CRA throughout Sierra Leone.

Due to this extension, the project will undergo a second phase of the evaluation, which will mostly focus on the project's sustainability, including the effectiveness of the additional CWC activities and the outcomes of the beneficiaries who remained with the project during the extension. The findings from this second visit will be included in the evaluation report as an annex to the original findings.

Methodology

The methodology will consist primarily of a series of meetings with child scholarship beneficiaries. A cross section of the beneficiaries continuing to receive scholarships during the project extension will be gathered in two locations in each country to meet the evaluator for a total of four meetings, one in the capital city and one in a rural location in each country. In Sierra Leone, the evaluator will conduct meetings in Freetown and Koidu town, Kono district and in Liberia, the evaluator will work in the capital city of Monrovia and in Ganta.

Each meeting will have 20–25 participants attend one day with a mix of activities including:

1. Small group discussions/focus groups

2. Individual creative activity (writing/drawing, etc.)
3. Work in groups to prepare a presentation/role play/sketch of some kind
4. Group presentations and discussion in large group

Information from these activities will be gathered to answer the specific questions for this phase of the evaluation and assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact during its extension. The evaluator will include specific questions on work status and school attendance in her question guides for the child beneficiaries. The schedule will be adjusted depending on time. There will be opening and closing sessions in the large group for introductions, informing the children what is the evaluation's purpose, and other protocol.

The children who are identified as participants will receive individual invitations, written by the evaluator and delivered by the project, explaining what the day is about, and framing it as a "fun" event. Food and drinks will be provided, as well as materials for the activities. Half of the participants will be selected by the project and the other half by the evaluator in a manner designed to ensure coverage of a cross section of scholarship recipients, including representation of the different age groups and also a mix of girls and boys.

The advantages of using the focus group approach are that:

- It provides an opportunity to work with and observe the children in both small and large groups, and also on an individual basis in formal discussions during the course of the day.
- It gives the children several different ways of expressing themselves, since not all young people are adept at verbal expression, and will thus give a broader scope to the assessment.
- A non-school environment may facilitate more relaxed discussion.

The evaluator has experience working with groups of vulnerable children in this way and has found that the children enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to interact with others in similar circumstances and to discuss common experiences. The safety and welfare of the children are a priority. The meeting locations in each country have been selected to ensure that children can participate without having to spend a night away from home. Project staff will supervise and escort the children during their travel.

In addition to these four meetings, the evaluator will also hold meetings with some CWC members in Sierra Leone. The location of these meetings and the participants will be determined in consultation with the project.

Key informant interviews will also take place with project staff and relevant Ministry personnel, to the extent that time allows.

Evaluation Questions

Considering the methodology of key informant interviews, meetings with scholarship beneficiaries and document review, the evaluator will ascertain the answers to the following evaluation questions and provide details on them in the final report.

1. Was the project able to successfully help students finish the school year (and stay out of hazardous labor) with a reduced staff and less resources? What structures did the project put in place to keep students in school during the extension? If possible, assess students' grades and completion rates from the final exam period.
2. Given the discussions with child beneficiaries about their work status, are there noticeable trends with regard to work status and school retention among the beneficiaries?
3. Is there evidence of ongoing funding for any aspects of the project?
4. To what extent (if any) have partnerships created during the course of the project been sustained during the extension?
5. Will the Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), youth groups, peer educators, monitoring systems, and other committees/groups and systems created by the project be sustainable? To what extent have these committees/groups and systems proved sustainable during the extension?
6. In what ways have the CWCs in Sierra Leone forged stronger links with the MSWGCA, especially around child labor monitoring?
7. How successful has the project been in its advocacy training efforts during the extension?
8. How successful has the project been in realizing its plans for sustainability? What can be improved for future projects?
9. In the light of the extension, what further observations can be made concerning the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?
10. What lessons can be learned of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?