

Short Term Consultancy
Evaluation of the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project
Evaluation of global activities, outputs and outcomes

Background and context

As part of broader efforts to accelerate progress against child labour, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNICEF and the World Bank initiated the inter-agency research project, Understanding Children's Work (UCW), in December 2000. The Project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, unanimously adopted at the 1997 International Conference on Child Labour, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labour. The Oslo Agenda specifically identified the need to improve data collection, research capacity and monitoring systems related to child labour, and called for stronger co-operation amongst international agencies involved in addressing child labour.

Through a variety of data collection, research and assessment activities, the UCW project is directed towards helping to increase understanding of child labour, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and what works in addressing it. The project also seeks to strengthen consultation and information-sharing amongst the three partner agencies in the area of child labour. Financed by contributions from donor countries and by core agency resources, the UCW Project Secretariat is based at Centre for International Studies on Economic Growth (CEIS), University of Rome (Tor Vergata).

Phase 1 of the UCW Project ended in July 2003. The first project phase saw progress in a number of areas. An information mapping exercise streamlined and consolidated available information on child labour, and helped to identify key knowledge gaps. A range of research activities began to fill some key information gaps of relevance to agency efforts relating to child labour. The coordination mechanisms created through the Project during the first three years (e.g., country-level UCW working groups, UCW steering committee, UCW technical working group etc.), provided a vehicle for the exchange of information and programming experience in the child labour field. First phase country-level efforts created a framework for analysing and addressing the child labour phenomenon in a variety of national contexts.

Phase 2 of the Project began in August 2003 and is on-going.¹ Phase 2 efforts focus on analysing and extending current information on child labour, building on the initial stock-taking and research efforts undertaken in the first phase. Phase 2 also addresses the research process itself, providing technical support in the development of research tools and methodologies, and helping build the capacity of national counterparts in data collection and analysis. As detailed in the Phase 2 project document,² the second phase

¹ Phase 2 was initially envisaged as finishing in December 2006. But in view of the continuing need for an inter-agency mechanism for information exchange and research in the area of child labour, the Project's mandate is now open-ended.

consists of five components: (i) child labour measurement; (ii) child labour and the Millennium Development Goals; (iii) impact assessment; (iv) country-level research and capacity-building; and (v) mainstreaming and dissemination.

Purpose and scope of the external evaluation

The external evaluation will examine Project implementation since the beginning of Phase 2 in August 2003. It will form one component of the reporting, monitoring and evaluation activities agreed in the phase 2 project document. Initially envisaged as a mid-term evaluation, it will instead constitute one of a series of interim external evaluations to be conducted every 3-4 years for the duration of the Project. A final evaluation of the Project's legacy in terms of how it influenced the individual and joint work of the three agencies will be conducted at the eventual conclusion of the Project.

The external evaluation will also be designed to satisfy the evaluation requirements of the three partner agencies. Every three to five years, the World Bank Development Grant Facility (DGF) calls for an independent external evaluation of programs benefiting from DGF funding in excess of \$300,000. The purpose of the DGF independent evaluations for Window 2 is to assess overall relevance, appropriateness, adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness. ILO also requires appropriate evaluation process of all activities, including management of the evaluations independent of the management of project, with at least one external evaluation of funding in excess of USD 500,000 and before decisions on subsequent funding or phases are made.

The evaluation will assess the effectiveness and role of the Project in supporting the agencies' separate and joint strategic objectives in the area of child labour. It will also assess the effectiveness of the agencies in fully exploiting the Project to further their corporate priorities in the area of child labour. Based on this assessment, evaluation will constitute an input to management discussions on what the role and future strategic direction of UCW should be.

The evaluation will look at UCW in the broader context of the agencies' global partnerships, and link to the 2004 findings of the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) relating to the World Bank's global partnership programmes. Other relevant findings from evaluations and reviews of global programmes can be used as per suggestions from the agencies.³ The evaluation will in general follow the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.⁴

It is expected that the evaluation will provide feedback to the partner agencies on any improvements which can be made in the areas of governance, fund raising and utilization, programme design and implementation. The external evaluation should also serve as a means to demonstrate the value added of this partnership – how resources have been spent and what results have been achieved. The review should examine the impact of the Project's or take-up of the Project activities, the roles and responsibilities

³ For ILO/IPEC, for instance, the global evaluation of SIMPOC from 2004 and evaluations of global capacity enhancement and technical support project that include research-oriented activities. [Exact references can be provided.]

⁴ United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System", April 2005.

of the partners, and the governance arrangement and functions as they relate to strategic and programmatic work.

The evaluation will directly address and take into account the Project's inter-agency nature, and specifically the challenges associated with bringing three agencies with very distinct cultures, mandates, structures and operating modalities together within a common research initiative. The evaluation will also take into account the overall funding available to the Project, and the key operational constraints facing the Project, since the beginning of phase 2. Most important in the context of constraints is the lack of core budgetary resources for implementing the full range of activities envisaged in the logical framework/workplan attached to the phase 2 project document and the consequent reliance on fluctuating levels of "supplementary funding", often tied to specific Project activities.

Evaluation components

Relevance

This component will assess whether the Project brings added value and comparative advantage to broader agency efforts in the area of child labour. It will assess the Project's continued relevance in four areas in particular: (i) expanding the knowledge base on child labour; (ii) promoting inter-agency cooperation and information exchange; (iii) improving child labour measurement and promoting common statistical standards; and (iv) building research capacity. It will look at the success of the Project in helping address the specific corporate priorities of the three agencies in these areas, on one hand, and the degree to which the agencies were able to articulate these priorities to the Project, on the other.

The extent to which UCW and its activities are known within the agencies, and the extent UCW has influenced the orientation of their work, will also be looked at, again within the context of the Project's resource base. The Project's operational relevance at the country-level in the countries where Project activities have taken place to date in phase 2 will be another area of focus. The evaluation findings will feed into management discussions concerning any necessary realignments to the design and focus of the Project to ensure its continued relevance in the future.

Effectiveness

This component will evaluate the degree to which stated objectives were achieved and intended outputs and outcomes were produced, taking into account the Project's resource base and the strategic adjustments necessitated by resource fluctuations. This component will be structured around the six broad strategic objectives identified in the phase 2 project document:

- (a) Improved technical tools for measuring, monitoring and analysing child labour;
- (b) Expanded collective knowledge base on child labour of direct relevance to the agencies' efforts against child labour, and, more broadly, to their work towards the MDGs;
- (c) Expanded collective knowledge base on programming experience in the child labour field;
- (d) Strengthened country-level capacity to collect and analyse child labour data;

- (e) Sustainable mechanisms for inter-agency information-sharing and research co-operation in the child labour field; and
- (f) Policies and programmes benefiting from the knowledge generated by the project.

Efficiency

This component will examine whether UCW is efficiently managed against benchmarks of good management practices. It will compare budgetary and human resources with tangible outputs (publications, indicators, statistics, training events, workshops and seminars) and less tangible outputs (networks, coordination mechanisms, experience exchange, “mainstreamed” research results) that can together provide a comprehensive picture of efficiency of Project efforts to date. This component will also examine the efficiency of the organization and governance of the Project, and in particular the clarity of roles and responsibilities between the Secretariat on one hand and the agencies on the other.

Resource base

The evaluation will address and make recommendations regarding whether the Project is adequately resourced to optimize efficiency. The implications of the Project’s reliance on “supplementary” specific-purpose rather core funding, in terms of strategic planning, administration and staffing, will also be addressed.

Methodology

The process will involve staff of the three agencies both at headquarters and field level. A *desk review* of all relevant documents of the Project will take place during the review. These documents will include but not be limited to: strategy papers, funding proposals, donor reports, progress reports and minutes of Steering Committee and Focal Points meetings. They will also include research reports produced by the UCW Secretariat and the partner agencies. Based on the desk review, a detailed evaluation work plan with detailed questions will be developed.

The desk review will be followed by a series of open and semi-structured *interviews* with staff involved in the programme at headquarters of the three agencies (ILO – Geneva, World Bank – Washington D.C. and UNICEF – New York) and in the field. For this purpose, the Project Focal Points from the three agencies will provide the evaluator with lists specifying the persons to meet. The evaluation might also involve country case studies and, where time and finances allow, site visits or other means of collecting information (such as requesting of related documents from relevant organizations/projects, where applicable and feasible). Video conferencing will be employed to the extent possible to contain travel costs.

The exercise will result in a comprehensive *review report* with clear conclusions designed to feed into management discussions on the future functions and structure of UCW. The report will include: (a) executive summary; (b) description of the evaluation methodology and objectives; (c) description of Project objectives, components and activities; (d) analysis of semi-structured interviews and responses to

core questions; (e) summary of key findings including lessons learned; (f) specific conclusions relating to each of the main evaluation components; and (g) overall conclusions. The report will be brought to the attention of senior management of the three agencies and feed into an analytical report to be provided to the donors.

Organisation and management of the review

The review will be overseen by the Project Focal Points from each agency supported by their evaluation offices, according to the regulations of each agency, to ensure the independence of the exercise. The OECD/DCA Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations can serve as a reference point. The methodologies to be used in the external evaluation will be identified by the external evaluator and shared with the Project Focal Points in the form of a detailed evaluation workplan for feedback and input prior to the start of the evaluation. The UCW Project Secretariat will oversee the administrative aspects of the evaluation process.

The independent evaluator will provide a written report in English with findings and conclusions, plus any essential annexes, to the Project Focal Points and Project Secretariat for comment and discussion before finalisation. If necessary, a Project Focal Points meeting will be held to discuss the draft evaluation and arrive at a unified response to it. The evaluator shall provide a draft report and a final report for circulation as spelled out in the timetable below. The final report should take into account recommendations/feedback received from the draft report review.

Criteria for the recruitment of the evaluation team

The following criteria will apply for the recruitment of the evaluation team:

- (a) Good knowledge and understanding of global and local development issues on child labor and youth employment,
- (b) At least 7 years of experience in development evaluation in UN or other multilateral contexts, and some previous exposure to evaluation of inter-agency project or global partnerships. Demonstrated skills at developing and synthesizing quantitative and qualitative evidence and drawing findings from evidence,
- (c) Experience in carrying out (rapid) institutional and organizational analysis,
- (d) Fluency in English and good reporting and writing skills,
- (e) Integrity and international stature,
- (f) Familiarity with the agencies' priorities, working environment, systems and procedures, and a track record for delivering high quality outputs with minimal supervision.

None of the evaluators should directly benefit from, or be involved in, UCW activities or its governance, at present or in the past.

Budget and Timing

An overall budget for the evaluation is USD 25,000 (=€17,360), excluding taxes. Travel expenses for a maximum of USD 3,000 (economy class, apex fare) will be reimbursed upon the deliverable of the original receipt.

Time table:

- (a) TOR and consultant identification
- (b) Evaluation workplan with detailed questions and an outline of the evaluation
- (c) Draft Report by the end of December 2007
- (d) Final Report

Method of application:

Interested and qualified applicants should send their detailed curriculum vitae to segr.ceis@economia.uniroma2.it

Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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