

Evaluation Summary: Brighter Futures Program, Phase II Nepal (BFII)

Project and Evaluation Facts

Region/Country: ASIA/Nepal

Grantee: World Education

Project Duration: September 30, 2005 –
September 29, 2009

Fiscal Year and Funding Level:

FY 2005 USD 3,500,000

FY 2007 USD 345,000

Grantee Matching Funds USD 729,500

Type of Evaluation: Mid Term

Date of Evaluation: December 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Evaluation Management: Macro International

Evaluator(s): Susan Reynolds

Background and Context

Summary of Project Objectives and Focus

The Brighter Futures Program, Phase II is a four-year project that aims to reduce the incidence of the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) in Nepal through the provision of educational services. The Brighter Futures Program, initiated in 2002, was designed in the context of the Ministry of Labor and Transport Management's National Master Plan on Child Labor, the Time Bound Program for the elimination of the WFCL, and the 10th National Development Plan.

The project operates in 27 districts and is focused on children engaged in or at risk of engaging in the following WFCL: porters, rag pickers, domestic servants, carpet factory workers, mine/quarry workers, former bonded laborers, brick factory workers, transport workers, restaurant/entertainment workers, and children affected by the civil war.

The project is guided by the following Immediate Objectives:

- Greater parental and community participation in formal, non-formal, and vocational education for children removed from or at risk of engaging in WFCL;
- Improved quality, relevance, and access to educational programs for children withdrawn from or at risk of engaging in WFCL;

- Reduced barriers to the success of children withdrawn from or at risk of engaging in WFCL in formal or alternative school systems;
- National education policy dialogue reflecting the needs of children engaged in and at risk of engaging in WFCL.

The project is designed to work closely with government actors, NGO's, and community-based organizations, including Community Legal Resource Center, Porters Progress Nepal, Community Women Development Center, and Change Nepal.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation examined project performance to date in relation to stated objectives. Specifically, the evaluation reviewed and assessed activities with respect to their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Further, the evaluation was designed to be a learning process that could serve to provide guidance as to revisions in strategy for the balance of the cooperative agreement to ensure project objectives are realized.

Methodology of Evaluation

The evaluation was based on a desk review of relevant documentation, followed by a field mission to select provinces conducted by the evaluation team from the 3rd of December 2007 to the 15th of December 2007. The field work consisted of interviews, focus groups, and other information collection techniques with stakeholders including government representatives, NGO's at the national, provincial, and district level, children, parents of beneficiaries, teachers, project staff, and USDOL representatives. The evaluation was affected in accordance with the terms of reference (TOR), as prepared by Macro International with input from USDOL and other key stakeholders.

Evaluation's Main Findings & Conclusions

Performance Summary

Despite continued domestic conflict, at mid term, the second phase of the Brighter Futures Program has served to withdraw 14,150 children engaged in the WFCL, and has served to prevent 10,501

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children at risk of engaging in the WFCL, exceeding withdrawal and prevention targets of 7,000 and 8,500 respectively. In addition, the project continues to positively affect the enabling environment through engagement in select national forums as well as through support for key initiatives such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and the Quality Education Resource Package (QERP).

Nonetheless, retention rates and completion rates for project participants remain a challenge, and efforts to improve these outcomes are critical to ensure effectiveness for the balance of the project.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Lessons Learned

- The entertainment sector remains harder to reach than expected, as trafficked victims are reluctant to be identified;
- The transport sector remains harder to reach than expected, and in order to facilitate participation in vocational training, provision of residential shelter is necessary;
- As children engaged in or at risk of engaging in WFCL are difficult to reach, retention and program completion remain a challenge;
- Interventions may provide greater impact if “follow on” or successive interventions are readily accessible to the participant; and
- Frequent turnover/transfer of district-level government officials presents a challenge.

Key Recommendations

- Establish a dialogue between “home” schools of migrant children working in the brick factories and non-formal programs;
- Establish informal “safe” confidential networking between project participants from the entertainment sector and those still working in the industry to identify prospective beneficiaries;
- Consider limiting remaining resources to interventions targeted at the transport sector, as: (a) children engaged in transport work have proved difficult to reach, and (b) the project does not have funding to provide

residential living space for prospective entrants;

- Work with district-level government, PTAs, and School Management Committees (SMCs) to determine if national government distribution of scholarships can be influenced to ensure project beneficiaries remain enrolled in school;
- Include “supply chain” exercise with remaining Self Employment Education Package (SEEP) classes;
- Identify medium-sized businesses to support future apprenticeship opportunities;
- Utilize established PTAs to collect follow-up information on participants subsequent to their respective program completion;
- Target remaining interventions to be affected in areas with greatest institutional and organizational capacity for success; and
- As withdrawal and prevention targets have nearly been achieved in the first two years of the cooperative agreement, to maximize impact and sustainability, focus should be placed on:
 - expanding PTA networks;
 - working with QERP and teacher training;
 - supporting the national level data system.