



International Labour Organization

**IPEC**

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

## ***IPEC Evaluation***

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# **Eradicating Child Labor in the Fireworks Industry - El Salvador**

**(ELS/00/05/060)**

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**An Interim Evaluation Report**

**prepared by**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This interim evaluation —carried out during a 8-weeks period beginning on November 27, 2002— has the purpose of determining the relevance and effectiveness of the strategy to address the needs of the target population defined for the Project “Eradication of Child Labor in the Fireworks Industry in El Salvador”. The evaluation also analyzes the perspectives for sustainability of the project’s impact on the sector. The project is being developed in the municipalities of Ciudad Delgado, Apopa, Mejicanos, and Cuscatancingo, in Guatemala.

As part of the evaluation, different key actors of the governmental, labor and corporate sectors, as well as non-governmental organization representatives related to child labor in the fireworks industry, were interviewed. The evaluation activities also included a workshop for the validation of the conclusions, with the participation of representatives from all the sectors involved in the project.

The project, which has a budget of over \$1 million dollars and that has been scheduled to be implemented over a 27-month period, includes as partners the organizations Fe y Alegría and Fundación El Bálsamo. These partners develop the two main components of the intervention: social protection services and income generation alternatives.

### **Main findings**

The evaluation has concluded that the elements of the project design are essential to assure its correct implementation; however, certain gaps and ambiguities in this respect might adversely impact the services offered to the target population.

Regarding the project’s implementation, the achievements in terms of prevention of child labour have been more visible than those in withdrawing children from work. The limited institutional participation is one of the critical project elements that threaten the future sustainability of the project’s impact.

The adequacy of the project strategy regarding the income generation alternatives is still to be analyzed, especially due to the need to define the feasibility of fireworks production in the future. This feasibility analysis will offer elements that have to be incorporated within a strategy to reinforce households’ productive capabilities.

### **Recommendations**

The project monitoring systems needs to be strengthened so as to generate reliable and timely information for decision making.

Efforts should be made to increase the institutional support for the project. The more institutions appropriate the methodology proposed by the project, the more will the country be able to eradicate child labor effectively in the fireworks industry.

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

This interim evaluation of the project for the eradication of child labor in the fireworks production in El Salvador was planned in the project document. It has the purpose of providing information regarding the project implementation and results obtained up to the moment the evaluation was carried out.

The evaluation focused more on the project processes than on the impact generated on the target population; however, the evaluation does provide information that could be useful for predicting how the target population would be impacted if the project's trends and practices continue as they are at the time of the evaluation.

As part of the evaluation process, the focus has been on aspects related to the project design, how it is implemented, and its management in order to comply with the objectives established.

## **1.2 Project Description**

The project is trying to implement a methodology for dealing with children involved in child labor in the fireworks sector. The project has three components: (i) identification, prevention, removal and provision of services to children involved in fireworks production; (ii) capacity building among key social actors —employers, workers, government agencies, civil society organizations— and the communities in which the project is implemented, and (iii) awareness raising and social mobilization of social actors to act against child labor.

At the time of the evaluation, the project had put into practice direct actions to provide services to children, it had raised awareness and mobilized various social actors —very successfully at the Municipal Mayor's Office of Ciudad Delgado and the parents that produce homemade fireworks— and had made the necessary preparations to strengthen the capabilities of the social actors to combat child labour.

The project expects that the strategy against child labor in fireworks production would be useful also for other municipalities in which children are involved in this hazardous occupation.

As part of the sectorwide efforts to eradicate child labor, the project promoted the construction of a "Model Workshop" (*Taller Modelo*). This factory would be run by small scale producers that currently work in their own homes. The Municipal Mayor's Office of Ciudad Delgado directly supports the project by collaborating with the identification of a property to place the workshop. Consultancies about technologies to properly produce fireworks are planned but had not started at the moment of the evaluation.

The project, which has a budget of over \$1 million dollars and that has been scheduled to be implemented over a 27-month period, is funded by the United States Department of

Labor (USDOL) and executed by the International Labour Organizations' International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). As part of the implementation strategy, the project has partnered with two nonprofit organizations that would be responsible for: (a) offering services to children, promoting awareness-raising and social mobilization and building capacity in selected institutions (FE Y ALEGRÍA), and (b) strengthening household capacities to improve family income within the framework of the alternative income generation strategy (FUNDACIÓN EL BÁLSAMO).

### **1.3 Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation process followed the model included in the terms of reference for this exercise.

- *Evaluation Strategy*

According to the terms of reference proposed for the evaluation, the strategy followed by the evaluation team started with the establishment of a knowledge base derived from the analysis of documents complemented with the initial interviews with several key actors.

The second stage involved the field research, which included interviews with members of the target population—both children and their parents or custodians—in addition to representative of governmental organizations and municipalities that have—or should have—a direct relationship with the project.

The drafting of a document for discussion allowed the validation of some of the evaluation findings during a stakeholders workshop, where the participation of diverse actors and the exchange of experiences regarding the project approach offered the chance to deepen the analysis of some aspects for which only limited information existed or which had not been openly addressed, without detriment to the objectivity of the process.

Appendix 1 presents a detailed description of the methodology and the tools used for information gathering.

- *Limitations to data gathering*

It is important to point out that the data gathering process encountered some problems concerning the information related to the population assisted by the implementing agency of the social protection component, the monitoring systems of both of the implementing agencies and IPEC's project management, and the coordination with different public and private institutions.

Due to the importance of this situation for the evaluation process, it is deemed convenient to briefly analyze the nature of these limitations and the achievements of this evaluation within this framework.

*(a) Population assisted by the implementing agency of the social protection component*

In this project's case it is particularly difficult to determine the information that is valid for analysis purposes. During the evaluation, this point was raised with all the relevant actors, including both the implementing agencies and IPEC. The most significant situation refers to the data regarding the children assisted, as the Project Coordinator on behalf of IPEC handles her own statistics and Fe y Alegría representatives have data that differ from those available at IPEC.

The lists provided to identify the target families did not always have accurate information that allowed for carrying out the proposed interviews for the evaluation. To solve this problem, the lists were updated as many of the addresses on the lists did not exist.

*(b) Project monitoring systems*

One of the most frequent indicators for project analysis and evaluation deals with the cost-benefit ratio. Moreover, data regarding the planned and actual number of beneficiaries makes it possible to determine the existence of factors that affect the achievement of the project expected results.

In both cases, the essential input consists of quantitative and qualitative information that allows making operational and financial decisions. In this way, it is possible to assess if the reasons for which a project is successful or does not meet the expected goals, are due to structural weaknesses, to factors external to its implementation, or to both simultaneously.

The analysis of the technical progress reports revealed that the data included in the document required by IPEC (that is submitted to the donor) had not been updated or did not agree with information extracted from the records available at the implementing agencies.

*(c) Coordination with public and private institutions*

Since the evaluation was carried out towards the end of the year, it was difficult to involve all the project key actors in the process as most of them were in full production. This situation explains the absence of the fireworks manufacturers' association, APROPISA, at the workshop to present the preliminary results of the evaluation that was organized as part of the consultation process.

Fear among the target population, especially after the explosion of a fireworks company in Mejicanos, increased during the project implementation period. The declarations of the Fire Department regarding the need to prohibit and close the fireworks companies in the short term contributed to this situation.

Due to this uncertain environment, many of the people who would be interviewed refused to participate, or the regular workplaces changed their geographic location, probably to avoid direct action against them on the part of the local and governmental authorities.

The care centers for the child population in the project were not operating at the time the evaluation was carried out. Neither were schools, which made it even more difficult to have access to the children that are included in the target population. This situation improved during the month of January, but some schools were not available to respond to the evaluation interviews due to the approaching school year.

Due to the limitations found to obtain accurate information, there are reasonable doubts regarding the actual progress of the project for the achievement of the expected results. The analyses carried out during the evaluation are based on the information in the technical progress reports presented by the implementing agencies to IPEC.

In addition, there were difficulties in validating the information from secondary sources. Access to relevant data was not the same in all the municipalities participating in the project; this situation is due to the fact that the project's actions have not been fully developed in the municipality of Cuscatancingo.

## **2. VALIDITY OF PROJECT DESIGN**

### **2.1 Coherence of the project with IPEC's strategic vision**

The project document's structure reflects agreement with IPEC's priority objectives for the eradication of child labor, the promotion of education as an effective alternative, the support for parents' capacities to generate income, awareness raising and social mobilization among the communities and key actors in the fireworks production sector, and the strengthening of public and private institutions that are involved in the sector in order to coordinate efforts to guarantee that children will be removed from fireworks production.

The project document helps understanding the phenomenon, its magnitude and nature, and how it is proposed to address it. It specifically indicates the number of children to be assisted, the type of services they will receive and the organizations that are expected to collaborate in the achievement of the objectives.

These conditions are also reproduced in the Action Programs, whose implementation lies in the hands of the NGO's Fe y Alegría and Fundación El Bálsamo.

The necessary resources to implement this strategy are well identified, and it is believed that their allocation among the different project components is well balanced.

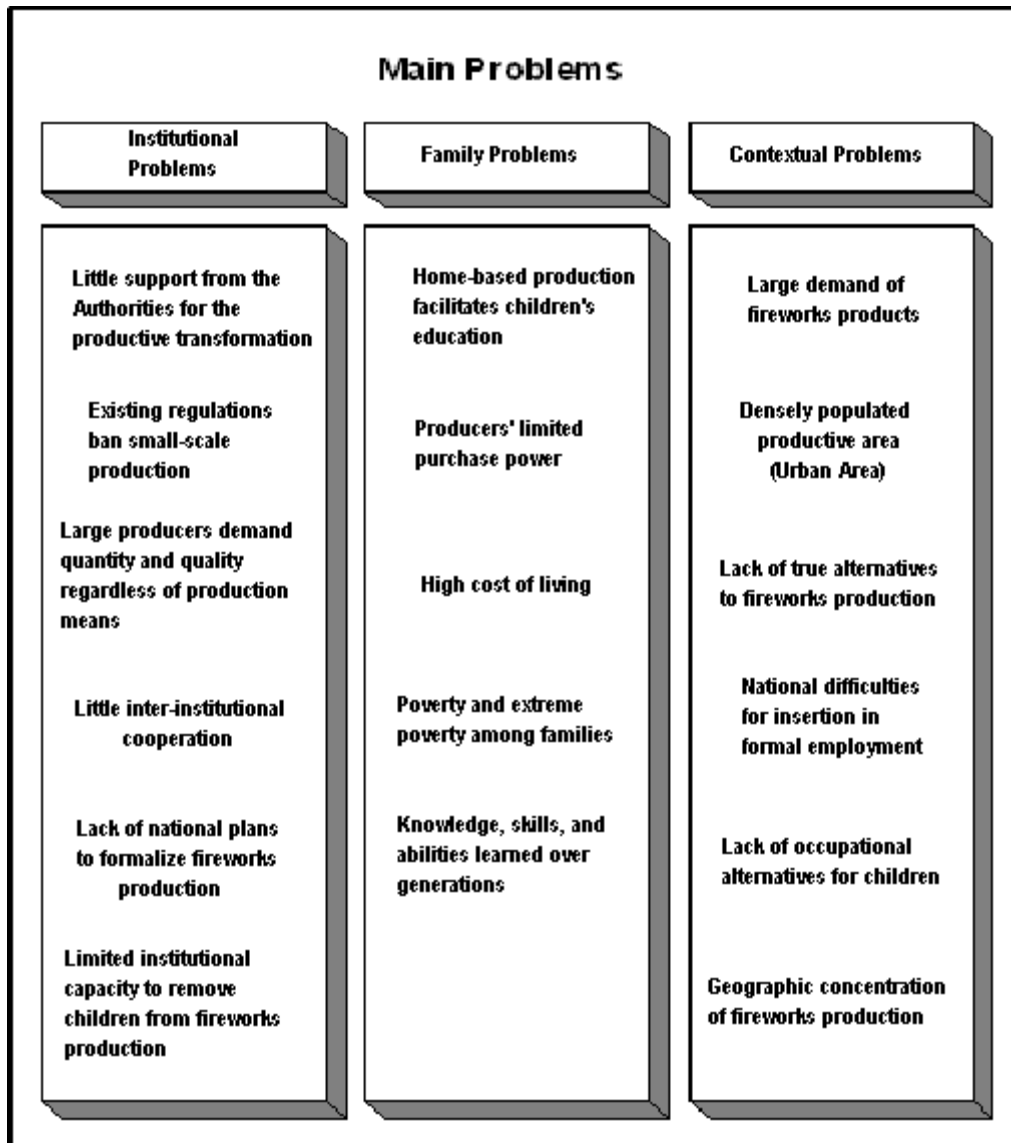
### **2.2 Analysis of the project's relevance**

According to the documents analyzed during the evaluation, the interviews with IPEC's representatives in the country, the implementing agencies, and the most important social actors in the fireworks production sector—including the target population— three categories of problems could be considered to be at the basis of the existence of child labour in fireworks production.

#### **Institutional Problems**

The first element refers to the vision of the public and private institutions regarding the fireworks industry. Their actions or omissions create critical conditions for the fireworks-producing families.

These problems basically refer to the existence of regulations that require minimum facilities and safety levels that small producers cannot comply with, in addition to the existence of an "institutional consensus" to require producers to fully comply with these requirements to the letter. This behavior is problematic as it requires "formality" from a sector that, for years, has not had any kind of requirements and that has operated at a small scale.



It is precisely this behavior that causes the “shock” that the project had foreseen, although not in the magnitude it had at the moment of the evaluation. The project components refer to several problematic situations in this area in the sense that the project proposed solutions to the problems faced by the target group, but the conditions in which several key actors — the Fire Department, the National Civil Police, and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare— view the small-scale fireworks producers’ situation makes its structuring difficult.

Moreover, institutions’ capacity to offer an alternative to children involved in fireworks is still limited regarding the definition of joint or common strategies. The project strategy is based on this premise, which has been verified in practice.

With the exception of some institutions that have a legal mandate —such as the Fire Department and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare— most of the institutions

do not have a well defined policy toward the sector. On the contrary, they are using the project to define their operational strategies for the sector. This is particularly important for most municipalities, which did not have specific policies on this issue, situation that is even more evident in Cuscatancingo.

The project strategy has been designed to promote the creation of public policies and operational plans and programs that guarantee children will not take part in fireworks production and that guarantee their remaining away from these activities permanently.

The idea included in the project document (PRODOC) of involving APROPISA<sup>1</sup> as one of the key partners in sharing information about fireworks manufacturers and establishing links between the implementing agencies and the communities was good, as their experience and presence in the manufacturing communities is unquestionable.

However, this position is not shared by all the participating actors, especially those responsible for applying the public policies aimed at the control of gunpowder use and fireworks production. This situation was not foreseen by the project; it was discovered during the evaluation, when the validation workshop was held.

Regarding the framework for the public institutions in the area, the project is only limited to establishing coordination mechanisms and, although this is an important step, it is believed that this should be a preliminary step and that a concrete result that should be proposed. This should be the opening of discussion opportunities between the public institutions related to this issue and the large and small scale fireworks manufacturers.

It is expected that these discussion opportunities would generate concrete guidelines to gradually adapt the small scale production to the safety requirements required by the competent authorities. Otherwise, this situation will generate conflicts that would drive the industry even further underground, and children in particular would face even greater risks than those to which they are exposed today.

## **Family Problems**

For evaluation purposes, family problems are considered to be those related to the existing conditions that promote children's participation in fireworks production. It is important to point out that these conditions are not necessarily the result of deliberate decisions made within the family, but are responses that arise as a way to ensure their survival.

Within these types of problems, there are two clearly marked tendencies. On the one hand, they refer to household characteristics concerning income and role distribution and, on the other, to the measures that have to be assumed due to fireworks production and how the family creates a lifestyle based on this particular situation.

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<sup>1</sup> APROPISA is the acronym of *Asociación de Productores Pirotécnicos*, an organization that encompasses the most important fireworks producers in the country.

If it is taken into account that households are poor or extremely poor, the need to have some income is a powerful incentive to involve most family members in fireworks production; moreover, the fact that production takes place in their homes allows mothers to closely supervise their children and fulfill their housekeeping and productive worker roles without having to go out.

Regarding the lifestyle created by fireworks production, it may be stated that the capacities generated over many consecutive years of involvement in the same activity and the transfer of knowledge between generations, facilitate the entrance and permanence of children in this environment, especially if their parents or other relatives participated in this activity when they were children themselves.

The project staff clearly understands this problem and, although the project document (PRODOC) does not address it, the Summaries (APSO) by Fe y Alegría and Fundación El Bálsamo do clearly make reference to this situation, and their staff agrees on the need to expand the project's scope and to create an intervention strategy more in line with the existing conditions in the implementation area.

To modify this situation, it has been proposed that income generation alternatives be developed that promote the effective separation of factories and homes in order to reduce the risk of accidents that affect children, as well as to make their taking part in fireworks production more difficult. In this sense, the proposal for a model shop becomes an important issue in relation to families' safety without considering a lifestyle that aims at taking care of children.

However, none of the documents discusses the creation of economic alternatives that take into account the mothers' situation and the facilities they require to continue taking care of their families, and those required for production.

### **Education and child labor**

In all the cases addressed, families had enrolled their children in school, representing an important step in relation to the value of education in building a better future for their children. However, this vision of educational value is undermined by a value that is highly rooted in the families: the family business.

The problem of fireworks production further turns into an intense activity during the second half of the year, and although parents are aware of the danger of this activity for their children, they involve them in the family productive activities. In most homes, the fireworks production tasks are clearly differentiated; children are assigned the less dangerous tasks and parents work with the product once gunpowder is added to it.

During the intense production activity period—July to December—children's school performance is negatively affected; this is reflected in the poor quality of their homework assignments and the low grades they receive. This situation arises from the physical effort that supporting the family's productive activities means for the children, tasks that they

perform during their free time (usually in the afternoons) for shifts that extend well into the night and even the early morning.

A logical consequence of this process is that children's school achievement is low and they are distracted in class; these symptoms make it easy for teachers to identify these children.

Although the academic situation of the children who work in the fireworks industry is not favorable—especially for those who come from the poorest families or those who live in rural areas without access to basic services—in most cases the dropout level is similar to that of the national average for the urban area, a situation that regularly begins during adolescence when child labor starts becoming a profitable activity and when education costs increase. Children who live in the most remote areas of the municipalities—with limited access to basic services—are even more vulnerable due to transportation difficulties and other direct costs of education.

The project has responded to this situation by promoting the reduction of costs in schools—especially those related to enrollment and other payments—which are required “voluntarily” from parents. This is done with the approval of the parents who comprise the school board (CDEs). Moreover, they have given “school packages” to children to ensure their attendance; however, these actions have only been aimed at promoting education from an economic point of view; very few actions have been aimed at promoting children's permanence in school. Some outstanding actions are those related to educational support through the specialized attention rooms. In all cases, the project's assistance will be difficult to sustain over time.

A greater integration of the project's efforts with those made in the schools is indispensable. Furthermore, it is necessary to demand more active participation from parents in their children's education by encouraging them to make spaces available for their children to study and to respect their regular life cycle. The awareness-raising actions should be mainly addressed toward this aspect, but they will not have a positive effect unless the definite support of the schools concerning attention to children, including the strong participation of parents in the educational activities, is assured.

### **Contextual Problems**

Undoubtedly, the problems posed by the situation of the country, the municipalities, and the communities were clearly identified both by the project and by the summaries of the implementing agencies.

In this sense, the project only addresses the problems related to the production and transfer of the proper technology, but it does not establish the construction of spaces for the identification of alternative proposals which define the country's policies about the future of fireworks production. In practice, although this sector creates jobs and generates income for a good number of families, public support policies are minimal or nonexistent.

The project does not promote support for the sector—concerning the strategy proposed—and this causes a weakness that could create important conflicts in the middle term. This

means that the project strategy offers a solution to children's problems concerning supporting their parents to generate income; yet, the sector's conditions demand the creation of an integral proposal that allows for harmonizing the need to get an income with children's safety. Fireworks production cannot be suddenly abandoned, especially if the difficult economic situation of the families and their limited skills—outside the fireworks production realm—are taken into account.

The effects evidenced during the evaluation showed a tendency toward the polarization of the social actors' roles. On one extreme, there is the vision of the Police Department, the Fire Department, and some clinics of the Ministry of Health, as in the case of the clinic in Poptlán, Apopa. On the other extreme, there are the underground factories, where risks are multiplied not only for the working children but also for the population that lives near these unauthorized factories.

The other social actors are located midway between these two extreme positions. Although some have not yet defined an active role, it is expected that they will do so if encouraged by the project.

In synthesis, the project should not try to solve the problem of child labor and oversee the problems of the fireworks sector; the proposals included in the strategy are aimed directly at the parents, but the existence of other actors complicates the panorama and, therefore, it is necessary to carry out studies that offer future options for the sector.

These studies will be the basis for the discussion of the future of fireworks production among the social actors, thus creating options for the families and large manufacturers in the event that fireworks productions were completely banned.

Neither does it consider the existence of geographic areas within the municipalities that are impacted by the program in which there is some "specialization" to produce some type of specific fireworks product—such as the firecrackers in Apopa and explosive gunpowder in Ciudad Delgado—which creates similar characteristics in the families that live in these places, but that makes the groups heterogeneous.

These elements are important as they make it possible to determine types of risks and to later to prioritize attention in those areas at highest risk.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of National Defense, this entity supported the project in the design phase by precisely locating the fireworks producers, a situation that is also shared by the Mayor's Office of Ciudad Delgado; thus it would have been possible to incorporate the issue of risks in the project's implementation strategy.

The information available in the project document does not include this situation in its analysis, even when some of the social actors in the project's intervention area mention it as a critical element. In addition, the removal of the production factories from the homes to other areas is very difficult due to the population density in the municipalities in which the project is being implemented. This is especially true at the municipality of Ciudad Delgado, where it is almost impossible to identify areas that are unpopulated enough to build the

number of factories necessary to include all the families devoted to this activity. Therefore, the project strategy is also limited.

The presence of spaces to keep children busy rather than having them participate in fireworks production is very limited, and the project correctly underlies this issue as one of the most important. Most children go to school during the elementary years, but drop out during their adolescence in order to be fully engaged in paid activities that contribute to the family income. This situation is not very different from the national trend and, therefore, the project adequately responds when proposing education as the best alternative to child labor.

Regarding design, the conception of spaces which children are supported to improve their academic performance, in addition to providing them with recreational options and training in lifelong skills, is correct. Yet neither the project document nor the summaries of the action program establish a direct link between these spaces and the school centers in the area, despite the fact that there is a concrete component in which teachers' technical capabilities are strengthened.

## **2.3. Identification of beneficiaries and benefits**

### **Direct Beneficiaries**

The determination of the project beneficiaries has as its starting point the Baseline Study document and the implementing agencies that have used these data as described in the project document.

<b>Total of Children Benefited with the Project According to the Project Document</b>					
<b>Baseline Study</b>		<b>Removal</b>		<b>Prevention</b>	
Ages 6-14	1256	Ages 7-15	1274	Under 7 years old	287
Ages 15-17	237	Ages 16-17	219	Ages 7-15	620
				Ages 16-17	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1493</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1493</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1007</b>

There is no database that could make it possible to determine the number of children related to the prevention activities, mainly because the Baseline Study did not address the totality of children that should be assisted by the project—2500—but only included 1,628<sup>2</sup>. This difference of 872 children is not justified in the project documents; therefore, it is believed that the formula frequently used at IPEC that equates children at risk with the siblings of working children was also used in this case.

It is important to point out that IPEC's formula to determine the children at risk that would be subjected to prevention activities could have some practical implementation problems in

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<sup>2</sup> These figures were taken from the section about child population in Chapter 4 of the Baseline Study, page 65.

the case of fireworks production if it is considered that the whole family participates in productive activities, and that there could be no children at risk in most homes.

<b>Total Parents and Teenagers that will be Assisted</b>					
<b>Baseline Study</b>		<b>Social Protection</b>		<b>Income Generation Alternatives</b>	
Men	282	Men	280	Technical Assistance	500
Women	222	Women	220	Credit	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	Professional Training	100

The selection of parents was done on the basis of heads of household interviewed for the Baseline Study. At this point no distinction was made regarding the data gathered by the Study and the target population selected by the project.

There is no doubt that this is the population that could be directly benefited by the project actions that would guarantee a gradual removal of children from this productive activity; this would be done by either integrating and/or maintaining school-aged children in the formal education system, and complementing this training with actions to look after their health, use of free time, and recreation. Additionally, there is the concrete possibility of looking for other productive alternatives and/or developing and improving the working conditions of the families that continue participating in fireworks production, as well as the attention provided for teenagers. In summary, it is estimated that the definition of the beneficiary population agrees with the design and work plans.

### **Indirect Beneficiaries**

According to the project documents, the indirect beneficiaries are:

- *The population in general of the four municipalities in which the action program will be implemented*
- *The teachers who will be taught about child labor and trained in the learning-by-doing methodology*
- *The schools in which the children and teenagers that have been benefited by the action program will be enrolled*
- *The staff of the governmental and nongovernmental institutions involved in the execution of the action program*
- *APROPISA, the Asociación de Productores Pirotécnicos (Association of Fireworks Manufacturers) of El Salvador*

As will be noticed, the definition of indirect beneficiaries is quite ambiguous in the project document. Some of the most common problems faced in the formulation of the projects is

to consider the “general population” in the intervention area as an indirect beneficiary simply because the project could somehow improve their living conditions.

The logic applied in the definition of the direct beneficiaries, in which each beneficiary was subject of specific services to be delivered by the project, was not reexamined for the definition of the indirect beneficiaries. This situation presents several gaps in the intervention strategy structure and the need to define the project scope. A vague definition in this point could mean an allocation of resources and prioritization of cooperation relations with social actors during the execution phase without having an objective base to make both decisions in a rational way.

Therefore, it is essential for the project to clearly determine the population that would be benefited indirectly due to the project’s implementation. Some important elements in this sense would be the children who attend the same grade as the working children who, although not part of the project, would be taught by teachers who would be using methodologies that take into account the particular situation of children involved in fireworks production.

The implementing agency reported difficulties in locating the target population included in the figures in the Baseline Study, and mentioned the following difficulties as causes of the problem:

- Many fireworks producers who were located during the Baseline Study have hidden in the years since this study to prevent their factories from being closed due to the violations of the law for the control of explosive production.
- They also have information about the unsustainability of children working in fireworks production and prefer to hide this practice rather than possibly being forced to having to stop it.

Through the fieldwork done within the evaluation framework, enough elements were found to conclude that the child population involved in fireworks production is high, especially based on the information provided by teachers in the schools of the communities with the highest concentration of fireworks factories: Ciudad Delgado and its surroundings, and Poptlán in Apopa.

The trend of increased figures of the assisted population could be maintained and intensified based on the motivating actions of the implementing agency on timely and more aggressive coordination work with the local actors that the project had proposed including from the start of its design.

### **Project’s Benefits**

The study and analysis of the documents indicates that the design describes the benefits that will be delivered to the target population in order of importance and significance:

- Remove children from fireworks production;

- Strengthen this option by means of educational training—both formal and informal—for all children, and technical training for teenagers in order to facilitate their integration to the labor market;
- Offer productive alternatives to the parents of working children, including professional training for their effective insertion in the employment sector;
- Promote the integral attention of the target population in the areas of education, health, and recreation;
- Promote the participation of other social actors through the participation of governmental and nongovernmental institutions; and
- Provide for the sustainability of the actions by transferring management capacity to the local actors and developing it.

It is estimated that these benefits meet the expectations for strengthening the tendency to remove children from labor, especially fireworks production, as it is deemed one of the most dangerous activities for this population.

Knowing the socioeconomic characteristics of this population, the motives and reasons for children to participate in fireworks production, the benefits described adequately respond to this concern. That is, there is a logical and historical correspondence in the design of the benefits, the promotion of social participation in the execution of the project, and the results expected.

The evaluation done of the benefits has made it possible to confirm the aforementioned statements. Thus, the visits and interviews held during the fieldwork with parents and children who participate in fireworks production made it possible to determine the congruence between the benefits considered in the design, and the social and economic conditions of the target population.

<b>Relationship between the Target Population and the Project Benefits</b>	
<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Benefits Proposed</b>
1. Children involved in fireworks production and those at risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification and removal from work</li> <li>2. Incorporation in school</li> <li>3. Integral attention health services</li> <li>4. Attention in informal education</li> <li>5. Attention to reinforce academic performance</li> </ol>
2. Parents of children involved in fireworks production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free technical assistance</li> <li>2. Access to credit</li> <li>3. Advice for the implementation of appropriate technologies</li> <li>4. Professional training</li> <li>5. Awareness raising and social mobilization</li> </ol>
3. Social actors related to fireworks production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthening of technical capabilities</li> <li>2. Training for teachers</li> <li>3. Training for future partners in other municipalities</li> </ol>

## **2.4. Project Institutional Framework**

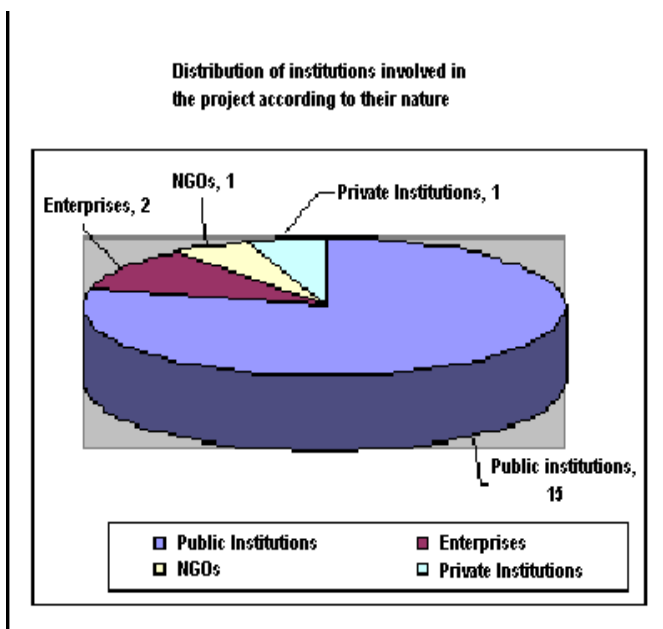
The project document (PRODOC) was designed in a conservative way, as it lists less than 50% of the participating institutions for the achievement of the objectives. Some important

institutions as the Ministry of National Defense, the National Commission for Micro-enterprises (CONAMYPE) and the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of El Salvador (COMURES), were not taken into account in the project document (PRODOC). However, the later involvement of these institutions in the APSO is due to correct interpretation of the institutional framework by the Project Coordination.

All the institutions listed in the project documents (PRODOC + APSO) are relevant to achieve the proposed objectives and, in most cases, there is even a feeling of complementarity in the roles assigned to each of these institutions. The responsibilities of the participating institutions are described in a simple and limited way, which provides a general framework that makes the direct participation of the institutions feasible.

Regarding the achievement of the proposed outcomes, PRODOC lists in its institutional framework those institutions whose role is essential to create an effective strategy to remove children from work, as well as to offer viable alternatives to their families for them to generate income without putting their children at risk.

The importance of governmental institutions is much higher than that of institutions from the civil sector. This is a common characteristic in economic and social support projects for groups in a situation of exclusion, as state institutions are encouraged to assume a commitment for the effective attention of the population in question.



Although the project established clear and specific responsibilities for each of the institutions involved in its startup, some of these responsibilities vary from the project document (PRODOC) and the summaries of the action programs (APSO). In some cases, these variations occur at each stage, but there are no records to back up the acceptance of these responsibilities by the public institutions being referred to.

An example of this situation is the role assigned to the Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Niñez y la Adolescencia—ISNA— (Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Childhood and Adolescence), (formerly ISPM), by the PRODOC, which makes it responsible for the development of the recreational component and the monitoring role. The Social Protection APSO, however, does not assign the recreational component to it, but retains the monitoring role; the Income Generation Alternatives APSO assigns additional functions to it, such as participation in the APSO design, participation in the visits made by the APSO staff to the fireworks production factories. This is not the only

such case, as there are also some other institutions in which there is a transformation of the institutional roles (see Appendix 3 which presents a more detailed analysis).

More specifically, this “operational ambiguity” of some institutions translates into limited action in the field, which contrasts with the highly operational position of some other institutions, particularly the Ministry of Education, the Fire Department, and the Ministry of Health. A lesson that is learned from this experience is that the institutional roles that are not clearly defined from the beginning in the project documents could translate into a minimal contribution for the achievement of the project objectives.

The APSO also include institutions with a relatively inoperative role in the program document; this is the case of the National Secretariat of the Family. Since its implementing agency in the area of childhood and adolescence is the ISNA, an institution committed to the monitoring role of the program, its presence in the project document is not very relevant for practical purposes.

An element that has to be taken into account by IPEC for future interventions is to relate the institutional roles to the concrete outcomes in which they should participate within the program strategy. In this sense, it is much easier for those responsible to coordinate the project. Even for the participating institutions, it would be easier to determine the referents with which to address those areas that require coordination with different institutions.

## 2.5. Coherence of Logical Framework

OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2	OBJECTIVE 3
<p><b>By the end of the project child labor would have been prevented and children would have been removed from fireworks production. Children involved in this activity would</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>*have been identified and removed from home based and factory production.</b></li><li><b>*have received education support and rehabilitation services</b></li></ul> <p><b>Parents would have received support to create income alternatives.</b></p> <p><b>The project will also promote compliance with and respect for the law.</b></p>	<p><b>At the end of the project the capacity of the participating institutions, community organizations, labor inspection, local authorities, employers' and workers' organizations would have been strengthened to start actions against child labor in fireworks production in El Salvador.</b></p>	<p><b>At the end of the project the communities, parents, factory owners and managers, workers, and local authorities would have been made aware and would have been mobilized to undertake actions against child labor.</b></p>

The project objectives show design weaknesses, as some of them try to describe the entrance situation of the project while at the same time incorporating the process by which

it is expected to get to that "ideal" situation, or in other words, the change that the project will bring about.

Although some objectives try to describe the "ideal" situation that would result at the end of the project implementation, the description lacks the needed elements to make the measurement of results expected from the project actions more accurate.

This situation is particularly evident in the case of objective number 1, which makes reference to two different moments; the first refers to the prevention and eradication of child labor in fireworks production without establishing the scope of these achievements. Moreover, it incorporates other elements related to the specific products the project will offer to the identified parents and children: rehabilitation services and support for the establishment of income generation alternatives.

The second moment addresses aspects related to law respect and enforcement, but they seem to have been added later and there is no obvious integration between these elements—which refer to one of the project processes—and the "entrance situation" that should have been described in the objective.

It is important to adjust the wording of the objectives to the resulting concrete situation that the project expects to generate. A proposal as to how the immediate objective should be worded is presented below.

***Immediate Objective 1***

*By the end of the project, in the urban areas of the municipalities of Ciudad Delgado, Mejicanos, Apopa, and Cuscatancingo: child labor will have been prevented, children will have been removed from working in fireworks production at home or in the factories, while their parents will have the capacity to generate enough income for their household survival without requiring their children to get involved in activities that endanger their lives or integral development.*

Objectives two and three are coherent as they are, and also contribute to achieving the development objective as stated, although some modifications are necessary. Objective number two should incorporate the participation of workers as key actors to promote actions in their homes and workplaces to eradicate child labor in fireworks production. Objective number three should incorporate the strengthening of the actors for law enforcement, and not just for taking actions against child labor.

The statement referring to the legislation was derived from the idea in immediate objective number one, as it is believed that its contribution is important to ensure both the removal and the effective prevention of child labor in fireworks production. Below is a proposal to modify the objectives following the suggestions proposed above:

***Immediate Objective 2***

*By the end of the project, communities, parents, factory owners, and local authorities will have been made aware so that they will act against child labor and respect the labor legislation.*

***Immediate Objective 3***

*By the end of the project, the capacity of the partner organizations in the project, the community organizations and institutions, as well as labor inspectors, local authorities, and employers' and workers' organizations, all will have been strengthened to enforce the law and to take actions against child labor in the fireworks industry in El Salvador.*

***Objectives of the Action Programs***

Some weaknesses observed in the formulation of the PRODOC are even deeper in the APSO document that refers to the Social Protection component. The objective stated not only describes processes, but also proposes the existence of other conditions that could be considered as elements addressed in other sections of the document. This same situation is observed in the APSO that refers to the Income Generation Alternatives.

The tendency to describe quantities in the immediate objectives is a situation that inundates the wording of the objectives, makes them difficult to understand, and very often does not address accurately the arrival situation of the project. It is advisable that these objectives only describe the conditions of the target population at the end of the project, and that the data about the target population to be covered by the project be included only in the corresponding section and in the description of the results that the project expects to achieve.

Another situation identified refers to a kind of “distortion” in the sense that the project objectives do not necessarily coincide with those proposed in the APSO. For instance, none of the action program documents refers to the strengthening of social actors to coordinate activities and implement the corresponding regulations. The document of the component Income Generation Alternatives refers to this point as an additional objective, but does not describe the expected outcome.

It is advisable that the action program documents incorporate the spirit of the objectives proposed in the project document in such a way that the initial commitments with the donor can be operationalized in the field and produce the desired results.

***Indicators of achievement***

The structuring of the indicators of achievement proposed in the project document differs from those established in the action programs. This is probably due to a greater demand at an internal level by IPEC than by the donor. The indicators established in the project document are simple and, although some allow for determining the successfully met objectives, it was not possible to establish an exact relationship between the indicators in the PRODOC and immediate objectives 2 and 3.

Another issue that calls the attention is the incorporation of quantitative data as part of the indicators, thus clearly indicating that there is a tendency to confuse the indicators with the project goals. The project documents of IPEC should distinguish between the goals set for the projects and the indicators of achievement related to each objective.

Furthermore, some of the indicators are ambiguous or not very relevant, so it would be necessary to review the PRODOC indicators. For this purpose, some of the indicators listed in the APSO could be taken. Two indicators in the PRODOC that have this problem are listed below as an example:

- *Number of children incorporated into fireworks production in the target communities*
- *Number of families with child labor problems that demand support to remove their children and send them to school*

This first indicator attempts to determine the project's success on the basis of a lower number of children that "wish to" or "actually" participate in fireworks production after carrying out the awareness raising campaigns in the intervention areas. Both indicators are related, in the evaluation team's opinion—to Specific Objective 1. In the case of the first indicator, it is suggested to reformulate it to make sure that it will measure the unfavorable opinion of children regarding child labor in fireworks production before and after the project.

On the other hand, the second indicator does not measure results or "desirable conditions" that the project would build in the future, except under a potential "assistentialist" vision (if the interpretation of the indicator is right) in the sense that people would be "waiting to be helped" in order to act against child labor, even when the decision is directly in their own hands, whenever there is the possibility of getting external support for making a decision that is inherent to the family (according to the project proposal for the awareness raising component).

### ***Indicators for the Social Protection Component***

Several of the indicators listed in the program document are not very relevant or cannot be considered as measurement units for the purpose of measuring the success of the objectives. Other indicators refer to the program implementation processes, and not to the measurement that should be done at the end of the project.

The way in which the objectives are written contributes to this confusion because when detailed figures are incorporated in the objectives, the writing of the indicators is guided by these figures and tries to establish the mechanisms to measure them, but this only describes what is expected to be achieved with the objective.

Other indicators refer to measurement elements that are more or less standardized in the international cooperation projects in different matters such as education (enrollment rates, dropout rates, etc.), but this standard has not been adapted to the project concerning increase or reduction percentages or some other similar measurement. The indicators related

to the institutional participation have very little relative weight, and have been structured as “participation” rather than as concrete results that the project should generate.

### ***Indicators for the Income Generation Alternatives Component***

The weaknesses observed in the social protection component are also found in this action program, but to a lesser degree. The same distortions in the objectives that include quantitative data are found in this program. One of the points that must be stressed in the case of this component is related to the establishment of process indicators, which in fact should measure the performance of the implementing agency and not the success of the attainment of the immediate objectives.

As an example the “*number of loans granted*” could be mentioned, a situation which in itself does not reflect a notion of success for the project—more than 200 loans could be granted, but this does not translate into improvement in the families’ income level—on the contrary, it tends to limit the project’s capacity to determine if the project is on the right track regarding the benefits that it is expected to generate.

## **2.6. Gender perspective in the project formulation**

The main elements regarding gender perspective are outlined in the Baseline Study that details the percentages of women’s participation in all the production levels that the study refers to, and in the support statistical charts.

In general, this approach confirms the unequal participation of women, their relevant role in reproducing the conditions both inside the family and in the society as a whole.

However, the evaluation team could not identify lines of work or actions that have a gender approach as their focus. The implementing agencies have criteria that promote women’s participation in the same conditions as men, both in the production levels as in their integration in the organization, management, and decision making levels.

And in the area of fireworks production, women have a protagonist role since a significant number of small factories (more than 50% in the communities of the area covered by the project) belong to women, who, in turn, are the heads of their households.

Although IPEC’s principles indicate that girls are one of the priority groups in the target population, it was not possible to verify the existence of specific practices to promote the participation of girls in the project activities nor is there special emphasis to guarantee their participation in formal and informal education during the project implementation stage.

## **2.7. Incidence of external factors on the project**

One of the most important elements that stands out in this document is the almost complete absence of information regarding the critical conditions that have an impact on the project. Due to the field analysis and the information from some primary sources, the evaluation

teams were able to establish some ideas about the critical conditions that affect the project and that could have been taken into account not just in the PRODOC, but also in the two APSOs to be implemented by the implementing agencies.

This situation is particularly important if it is considered that it has a very relevant role in the monitoring program for the project, as the need to implement adjustment in the strategy largely depends on this. As long as this information is not available in IPEC's project documents, it will be vulnerable to the changes in the context, and it could only react when critical conditions are present or it becomes difficult—or very expensive—to revert the situation.

The assumptions should be considered as the main input for the contingency plans in case any inconveniences arise for the implementation of the activities, or if there are any difficulties in reaching the expected results.

As a result of the analysis done by the evaluation team, it is believed that the two most important critical conditions that should have been taken into account in the project design are the following:

***Legal safety requirements in fireworks production***

The national regulations that refer to fireworks production establish specific requirements that can only be complied with by large companies, which have more resources to make important production transformations. These regulatory requirements are in opposition with the small-scale production that takes place at the home-based factories that belong to the project target population.

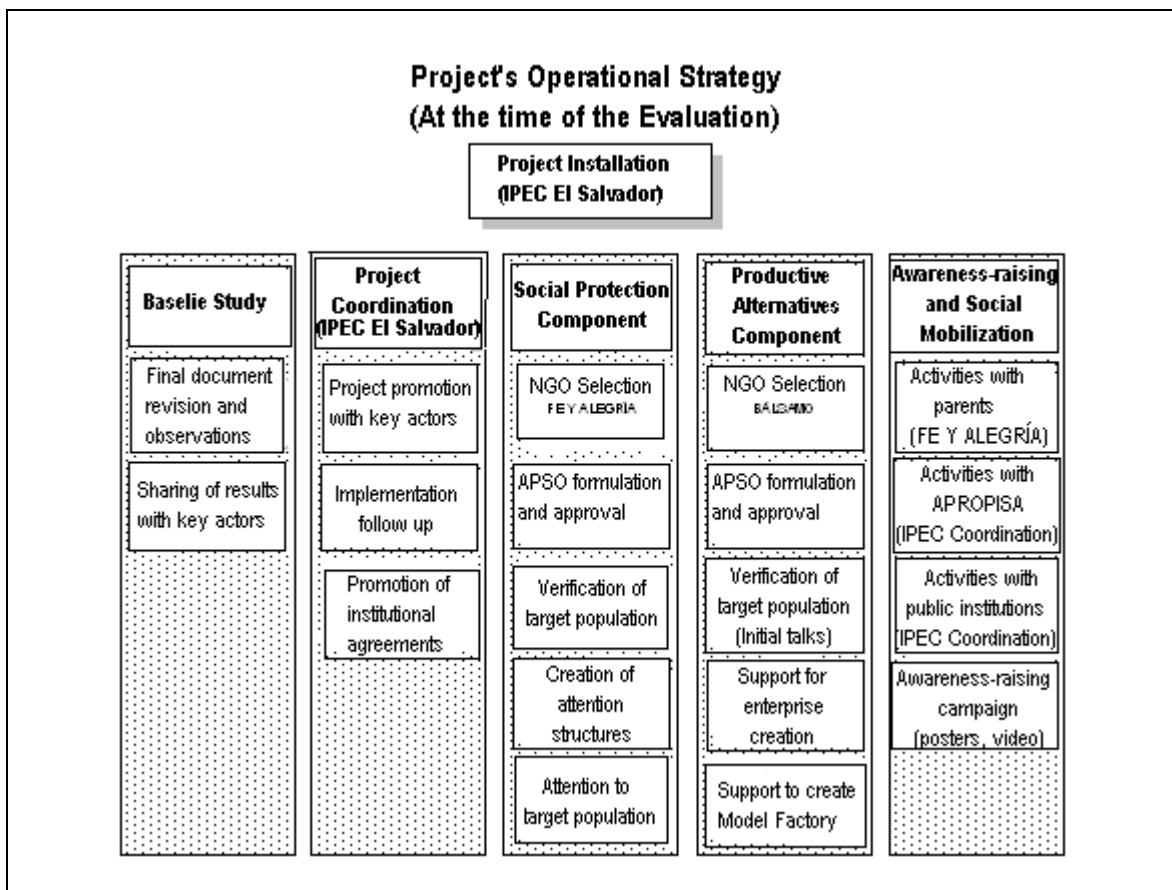
The changes that were established later and that require specific distances between the production centers and populated areas are elements that were under discussion since the design stage of the project, but were not incorporated as conditions that could negatively affect its execution. In fact, in one of its objectives the project proposes to promote law enforcement, but this would mean closing all the unauthorized fireworks production centers—95% according to the PRODOC—whose owners would demand immediate solutions to their problem, which the project is not able to comply with.

***Attitude of public institutions related to fireworks production***

According to the remarks made by representatives of the Ministry of Public Health, the National Fire Department, and the National Civil Police, a plan has been devised to close the “illegal” fireworks production factories. The plan will try to prevent their access to the necessary raw materials—explosives and gunpowder. This situation should have been taken into account in the project, because if the organizations in charge of enforcing the law have changed their vision as to how the problem should be faced, then the project intervention required should have been different, but this situation is not included in any of the documents.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

#### 3.1. The intervention strategy



The project execution at the moment of the evaluation had been done on the basis of four components: (a) social protection, (b) productive alternatives, and (c) awareness raising and social mobilization.

#### *Social protection*

This started with the selection of FE Y ALEGRÍA as the project implementing agency, the formulation of the action program (APSO), and the verification of the target population previously identified by the Baseline Study. The installation of attention services for the target population and the awareness raising activities for parents and other local actors are important actions developed in this component.

#### *Productive alternatives*

In this component, the selection of Fundación El Bálsamo and the formulation of the corresponding document are the notable actions. In addition, the direct actions with the target population have been started by promoting their participation in the component activities.

### *Awareness-raising and social mobilization*

Although many of the activities in this component are part of the responsibilities of Fe y Alegría, this is considered an additional stage due to the importance these actions have taken on during the last months of the year—November and December—for the project. Furthermore, the project coordination has also promoted national awareness-raising campaigns and other activities with key project actors.

### ***Remarks about the project's implementation***

In general, the project strategy proposed in the Project Document was executed without variations, with the exception of some areas in which it has been necessary to invest a larger amount of time and resources in order to move toward the attainment of the desired results.

### Verification of the target population

There is a period between the definition of the target population in the Baseline Study (this in any case was established based on the information provided by APROPISA, which is the association of fireworks producers that has the most objective knowledge of the population that is involved in this activity, and by the Instituto Salvadoreño de Protección al Menor—Salvadoran Institute for the Protection of Minors—which is the regulatory entity regarding public policies for the protection of children) and the moment in which the project actions started.

The verification of the target population identified by the Baseline Study has demanded more time on the part of FE Y ALEGRÍA in order to determine the target groups that will be covered by the project. According to the information supplied by this organization, the inconsistency in the data provided by the study to locate the beneficiary families has turned into the main obstacle to be overcome.

The initial months of the implementation of the social protection component by the implementing agency were used to verify the target population included in the Baseline Study. A primary weakness factor in the verification of this population was the fact that the participation levels of the local actors, the authorities, and the institutional representatives of the municipality of Cuscatancingo were not sustained long enough to become incorporated into the project.

Moreover, the strategy employed by Fe y Alegría for this purpose is to visit the producing communities in the intervention municipalities and interview the parents that produce fireworks in order to encourage them to become involved in the project activities. No important actions other than this strategy have taken place. It is important to stress the slowness of the system and the high demands placed on the staff to be able to carry this strategy out.

The climate of fear and insecurity that surrounds the home-based producers makes the task in the communities even more difficult, although some progress has been made toward the

achievement of the desired results. In practice, it was not possible to verify the possibility of getting support from the educational centers located in the project intervention area, or from the producers affiliated with APROPISA (there is very little information about this last option), a situation that could have facilitated the identification of potential beneficiaries.

This verification process has created a situation of “institutional stress” because the strategy used to induce people to fill out the verification cards consisted of underlining the project benefits concerning credit facilitation and training, a situation that generated short-term expectations among the beneficiaries that has made the income generation component activities more difficult<sup>3</sup>.

#### Time to execute the components

The selection process of the implementing agencies and the formulation of the program documents (APSO) has taken up an important time segment of the project, especially regarding the income generation alternatives component, as it recently started functioning in the last quarter of the year with a difference of 9 months, this in comparison to the social protection component.

#### Model Shop

The construction of the model shop has represented an important challenge for the project, as there have been difficulties in finding a physical space—land—appropriate for its construction. The urban situation of the target population makes it even more difficult to find a physical space that meets the characteristics required by the law for the construction of the model shop. At the moment of the evaluation, no concrete progress had been made in this sense despite the efforts made by the Project Coordination and the implementing agencies.

#### Operations in Cuscatancingo

At the time of the midterm evaluation, the levels of attention and execution of the actions in this municipality were not representative enough to be able to draw conclusions and make an assessment.

#### External conditions affecting the project

It has not been possible to control some elements, especially the enforcement of the law for the control of explosive productions, which came in effect at the same time the project actions started; its application covered part of the target population, which caused production to go underground (factories, people, and especially children).

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<sup>3</sup> This conclusion is drawn from the insistent comments made by the interviewees to the project evaluation team. Although it was not included in the questionnaire, it was considered appropriate to record the additional comments made by the interviewees in order to determine patterns of information or specific concerns of the project target population.

Fe y Alegría, the implementing agency, has not been able to overcome this situation, nor has the law stopped being enforced with a series of confiscations of explosive materials and the closing of several fireworks factories that do not comply with the legal safety requirements. Others have decided to hide production.

This fact has not been dealt with enough. Nor was it discussed in the workshop, although it was mentioned several times. The evaluation team could draw some conclusions by comparing the contents in the documents (the Baseline Study and its institutional sources and the interviews with APROPISA personnel) and by reviewing the opinions of the related institutions (PNC, the Fire Department, the Ministry of National Defense, ISPM, and others).

### ***Organization of the participation of the different actors in the execution area***

The evaluation considered the participation of the different actors as one of the project's fundamental axes, not just concerning the expected results and future sustainability, but also from the point of view that IPEC interventions are basically demonstrative actions that promote capacity building among the social actors; this is done in order for them to be able to assume the responsibility for the eradication of child labor after the project ends.

#### **Governmental organizations**

In general, the participation of governmental institutions could be classified into two categories. One category is comprised by those institutions that maintain a permanent presence in the project, have interrelated on a regular basis with the project in the intervention area without this representing the development of especially defined actions aimed at fighting against child labor, and that implement their own initiatives in relation to the problem. The other type of institutions are those which have only participated in specific issues required by the project without getting actively involved in the other actions, or without integrating the approach to fight against child labor in fireworks production into their agendas, even when there is a legal mandate for some of them to do so.

It is possible that this lack of participation has its origin in the absence of an attention strategy toward the sector in each institution. It was observed that there are “common fronts” with specific positions on this issue, as in the case of the Fire and Police departments which keep a position of total elimination. The municipalities, in particular the municipality of Ciudad Delgado, see fireworks production as a productive alternative that contributes to the economic and social development of the municipality, while others simply have not taken a definite stand, as in the case of the Ministry of Labor.

No evidence was found of the existence of labor programs that reflect an institutional stance consisting of action aimed at supporting the attainment of the project objectives. Only the police and fire departments—and to some extent the Ministry of Defense—consider this problem as their own, a situation that is supported by the local health clinics

due to the responsibility assigned to them by the current legislation in relation to the use of dangerous materials such as gunpowder.

Most local school teachers are fully aware of the problem of children involved in fireworks production, but do not have a specialized curriculum that operates in the project intervention areas; instead, some actions promoted by the implementing agencies are being carried out—such as the elimination of enrollment fees—whose implementation varies according to the level of awareness of each local official; resistance is found in some cases to continue without the authorization of the Ministry of Education, authorization that has not yet been issued<sup>4</sup>.

Regarding this issue, the position of the Ministry of Education (MINED) has been a particularly difficult one due to the implementation of several projects by IPEC that directly involve MINED. This institution is willing to support the efforts to integrate children into the formal education system, but the progress toward this objective has been minimal, especially because of the absence of a specific policy on the part of the MINED authorities.

The roles of the other key institutions, such as the National Civil Police and the Fire Department, are limited only to monitoring compliance with the regulations related to safety at the fireworks production factories, including the presence of children at these places. In practice, they only act as safety agents, generating a climate of tension among the population of the fireworks-producing municipalities due to the fear of having their work source closed without having identified a viable alternative.

#### *Institutions with a permanent presence*

These institutions have a highly specialized institutional role, and have specific experience with the problems that the communities are facing. Their knowledge and experience offers them a better perspective to design and offer services adapted to the specific needs of the population living in the area where they are located, provided that they relate to the legal mandate that has been assigned to them. This does not mean that the institutional roles are adequate for each community, but that the overall services that are already offered take into account the most pressing needs in the area.

One of the most visible cases is that of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, through the health clinics and SIBASI. Other institutions that belong to this classification—but in a more limited way—are the Ministry of Education through the teachers in the

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<sup>4</sup> The Education Act prohibits schools from collecting obligatory fees from families; therefore, MINED does not deem it necessary to reiterate that the payment of enrollment fees is not obligatory. However, schools have argued on this point, citing the lack of didactic materials which are usually covered by parents' contributions. Moreover, there are different mechanisms to raise funds, especially through activities promoted by the schools as sports events, dances, raffles, and others. The project considerations to deliver didactic material have not had schools as their target in order to have the contributions in kind translate into the elimination of fees, but have been addressed toward the families to try to better supply their needs. This particular approach makes the sustainability of actions difficult and generates negative feelings among the target population that does not receive these benefits. In any case, the project has understood this situation well, and is promoting a commitment between the schools to facilitate the access and permanence of working children in the formal education system.

project area, the Fire Department, and the National Civil Police. The municipalities were also conceived as part of this category because, even though they do not necessarily have a governmental character in the traditional sense of the term—that is, related to the Executive Power—their governmental features at the local level turn them into state institutions with authority in a specific territory.

The results of the evaluation, especially during the interviews, the validation workshop, and the on-site observations, all showed the high level of involvement of these institutions in the attention to safety conditions in fireworks production. Yet, concerning child labor in the sector, the signs observed during the evaluation pointed to a limited and fragmentary knowledge at the institutional level as, well as to a response level that is not highly systematic, and, rather, is mostly geared to a personal approach by the authorities in each of the institutions in the area.

It is important to stress the commitment shown in practice by the municipality of Ciudad Delgado. At the other municipalities, this commitment is not so evident, especially evidenced by the lack of activities in the municipality of Cuscatancingo. It is deemed necessary to review the scope of the participation of the municipalities in the project, especially concerning the expectations included in the Project Document, and the need to have effective support that would not only ensure the success of the project during its implementation, but also the sustainability of the results achieved.

At the moment of the evaluation, active participation was observed by the municipality of Ciudad Delgado in assigning staff on a permanent basis to the attention centers for the project target population, especially in the informal education area. This municipality has been very active in becoming part of the efforts to eradicate child labor; in practice, the implementing agencies and IPEC have used this situation as a motivational example for other actors and other municipalities in relation to fireworks production.

For the project, this institutional participation has meant a step ahead toward the sustainability of the results in the area of social attention, but does not necessarily translate into a definition of specific institutional policies and programs for global attention to the fireworks producing sector. The situation of fear and illegality tends to increase, while the comprehensive solutions have taken too long to be defined—even when there is no concrete response at the time of the evaluation.

In this case, it is advisable to develop a shared strategy between the project and the institutions with local presence in the intervention area, which would make it possible to determine the direction of the actions related to the eradication of child labor, the operation of small-scale fireworks production, and the home-based labor situation that comprises the highest risk to which children and their families are exposed.

#### *National institutions*

Under this classification we include institutions with the specific mandate of national attention but that lack a significant presence in the project intervention area, which means that there are no local offices in the municipalities where the project will be carried out.

The Ministries of Labor and of the Environment are part of this category, as well as ISNA and other similar institutions.

The participation of these institutions in the project has shown to be less active or low profile, depending on their presence in the area. Therefore, the project has prioritized the direct participation of those institutions that have local presence in the project. This is deemed to be appropriate, although it does not mean that no efforts have been made to incorporate the other institutions. In practice, it is noticed that the institutions that do not have presence in the area have not appropriated the project, and have made a very limited contribution for the achievement of the expected project results.

This situation was marked during the interviews with some representatives of the public institutions related to the project. While the institutions with local presence have a specific stance regarding the problem, no signs of concrete actions were observed in those that are not directly involved. The situation of the Ministry of Labor is particularly of concern because the interviewees stated having no knowledge of the project, arguing that they only participate in coordination actions that are of a national nature. This is a limited vision of the role that an institution should have when dealing with a problem of national importance, it being necessary to go beyond a position devoted exclusively to dictating guidelines and reviewing the project actions—including IPEC and its implementing agencies—to one that promotes concrete actions and institutional policies aimed at eradicating child labor.

Faced with this situation, a concrete effort could be undertaken to relate the participation of these institutions with specific activities in the action program, which would facilitate their incorporation within the strategy designed by the project.

On the other hand, institutional participation should become one of the important assumptions for the action programs; in the future, IPEC should include this aspect among the monitoring components that require periodic follow-up to adapt the strategy and strengthen the weakest points. It should be acknowledged that the existence of a national office should support specific programs in order to promote the involvement of the institutions with national characters in the local interventions.

It is important to mention that there is no national mechanism to ensure the implementation of institutional actions—of a governmental nature—at the local level. Regarding this matter, it is imperative to carry out an analysis and make follow-up proposals to demonstrate the national commitment for the eradication of child labor.

### ***Benefits provided by the project***

During the evaluation there were no doubts regarding the project's attention for children and parents in the intervention area. The people interviewed as part of the target group coincided in pointing out the benefits of the project, especially direct attention to children through informal educational methodologies, and support for the development of skills and abilities.

The presence of the implementing agency in the social protection component at the site is notoriously higher than that of the implementing agency responsible for implementing the income generation alternatives component, a situation caused by the divergence in the execution of both components, which gives some edge to the social protection component. The interviews with the target population showed a tendency to emphasize the informal educational activities more than any other activity in the component.

The data gathered during the evaluation showed a tendency toward direct attention by Fe y Alegría through actions geared toward preschool children—those under 6 years old—and those attending school—7 to 18 years old. Due to attention strategy reasons, three age groups have been created, as follows: those who are not yet in school (0 to 6 years old), those who should attend school compulsorily (7 to 15 years old), and those who have already passed the compulsory school years (16 and 17 years old).

The attention by age groups was effectively focused on the 7 to 15 year age group (53% of the total child population covered), due to the importance that the project provided concerning removing children from child labor and preventing their involvement in this activity. Regarding the adequacy of the execution strategy, this emphasis is accurate and adjusts to the overall project strategy. The second group assisted was that comprised by children between 0 and 6 years old (35% of the total population covered). Only 12% of the 16 and 17 year-olds were covered, a situation which is explained by the fact that the number of children included is smaller than those in the other two groups.

**Child Population Covered by Fe y Alegría**

		Total		0 to 6		7 to 15		16 to 17	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
C. DELGADO	Urban Core	51	41	27	15	19	21	5	5
	San Sebastián	35	35	11	12	19	22	5	1
	San Antonio L.V.	44	45	21	8	16	28	7	9
	Northern Area	13	21	7	7	6	13	0	1
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>143</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
APOPA	Chintú and Popotlán	<b>82</b>	<b>59</b>	17	14	49	35	16	10
MEJICANOS		<b>88</b>	<b>73</b>	43	23	40	46	5	4
CUSCATANC		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>313</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>

Data obtained from the cards filled out up to the month of December 2002.

The site visits showed that attention to the population is provided through informal education services and recreation. The opening of Centros Infanto-Juveniles de Promoción Integral--CIPI (Child-Youth Integral Promotion Centers) contributed to generating direct support for the children through informal educational activities and academic reinforcement. Recreation is also part of the services offered at these centers. Regarding their strategic importance for the project, these centers make it possible to offer an option

for the children and their families to spend their free time in activities other than fireworks production.

An important execution flaw is that these centers are closed between the middle of December and the end of January—the high season for fireworks production due to the approach of Christmas and New Year’s Eve, when the consumption of fireworks increases throughout the country. Moreover, regarding academic matters, material support was offered to the families—school packages and stipends to pay for children’s transportation—in order to promote their attendance to school. However, the scant coordination between the schools and the project has not contributed to the consolidation of an alternative to child labor in which education plays an important role. The project team stated that coordination with the schools is one of the priorities for 2003.

On the other hand, the Centros Infantiles de Desarrollo--CINDE (Child Development Centers) assisted the preschool population during the hours in which fireworks production takes place in the houses, thus reducing the risk of home accidents. The parents interviewed by the evaluation team who mentioned having received the project services for children under 6 years old were very pleased because they believe that these centers meet a very important need.

It is estimated that the project’s management for the purpose of involving the municipalities to sustain the CIPIs and CINDEs is indispensable for the sustainability of the project’s successful results. Moreover, we would like to stress the commitment of the Municipality of Ciudad Delgado to generate local support conditions for the families so that they can remove their children from fireworks production.

The evaluation team did not have information to be able to distinguish between children who receive services aimed at their removal from fireworks production and those for whom the purpose is to prevent them from entering this activity. This is due in part to the unavailability of access to the CIPIs and CINDEs to gather information directly from the children who receive direct attention from the project, in addition to the absence of a central database with information about the child labor situation for each family.

The interviews held by the evaluation team with 20 children in three project municipalities showed that there is a similar ratio between children removed from child labor and those prevented from engaging in it: almost 50% for each group. In practice, no qualitative differences were observed concerning the services provided.

Municipality	Baseline	Assisted
Mejicanos	42	59
Ciudad Delgado	354	120
Apopa	52	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>226</b>

Data gathered from cards filled out up to December 2002.

In the case of the project target families, they have received services mainly related to raising awareness in special sessions organized for this purpose. The interviews held by the evaluation team did not show any other kind of attention received by the parents although, according to the program team, they have also received health services at the SIBASI thanks to the efforts of the project held in the corresponding target communities.

The limited participation of parents at the time of the project evaluation is due to the fact that the activities carried out by the income generation alternatives component were just beginning; they would require more intense participation in the future.

## **3.2. Project management**

### Strengths and weaknesses of the implementing agencies

Fe y Alegría has ample experience in attending youngsters in a situation of social exclusion, including the development of professional training and life-skills development programs. The prestige and acceptance of this institution among the poor communities makes it easier for them to have access to the selected population for this project. In addition, the existence of attention models for children with methodologies validated in the field several years ago make the CIPIs and CINDEs strategic operational tools that represent a strength in the area for this implementing agency, which has been taken advantage of as explained earlier.

In the case of Fundación El Bálsamo, its experience in the administration of micro-finances gives it an edge to understand how to implement the income generation alternatives strategy. Its staff is qualified to offer technical and administrative assistance to the people who so require said assistance, whether to start a company or to support an existing one.

Regarding weaknesses, it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions beyond those related to some specific elements of the project, a situation which is due to the scarcity of information available about the performance of the organizations evaluated in projects related to child labor or children's rights.

It is believed that a fundamental weakness identified in both organizations deals with the formulation of innovative proposals to overcome some of the specific obstacles encountered at the moment of executing the project on site, particularly in aspects related to the identification of the target population—for the case of Fe y Alegría—and the definition of profitable productive options in the short term—in the case of El Bálsamo.

The Project Coordination at IPEC should assume a facilitative role between these organizations for the construction of proposals to solve the problems that make the achievement of the expected results and proposed objects at the project level possible.

### Integral conception of the project

The project coordination at IPEC constantly promotes exchange meetings between the teams of each implementing agency in order to maintain the integral character of the project in practice. The basic project strategy is maintained in practice despite the existence of divergences in the implementation process of the social protection component.

As part of the management and objective achievement, the promotion of the project's integral character facilitates the structuring of support activities between the different components, in addition to taking advantage of the synergies built with certain public institutions to support both components. Although the initial support has been minimal, over time it will grow, provided that the project's position is maintained regarding the need for the country to adopt as its own the intervention strategic objectives. The influence of IPEC in the country should contribute to strengthen this tendency.

#### Operation of the inter-institutional mechanisms

The relation between the implementing agencies and the inter-institutional counterparts does not have a permanent friendly character. During the interviews with representatives of the institutions identified by the project, officials indicated not collaborating frequently with the implementing agencies although—in their opinion—there was a possibility of actively participating in the project strategy.

This situation has generated poor results in the implementation stage, and in some cases, the coordination that they claimed to have with the main participating institutions in the matter was very often negated by the persons interviewed during the fieldwork.

Effective mechanisms have not been created to relate the implementing agencies with the key institutions for the project success. This situation translates as poor performance for the component as concerns offering quality services for the target population. The most evident area, and where it is most urgent to establish a relationship in the shortest time possible, is education since schools have not yet been approached.

Although some officials—and the Project Coordination at IPEC—have expressed the importance of coordinating efforts at a national level in order for the country to appropriate the strategy, this does not necessarily mean that this mechanism will ensure results in the project intervention area. Due to the institutional importance of the Municipalities in projects of this nature, the type of interrelation mechanisms should be grounded almost exclusively at the regional level, and should cover those regions where the problem is significant.

#### Beneficiaries' participation

As of the beginning of the activities after hiring the project coordination staff, the Baseline Study was the most important element in this stage; there were also some actions to motivate the involvement of the key actors in the project implementation.

The beneficiaries have participated actively in different stages of the project, and have assumed a support position. However, since there is no important community organization, the community does not participate as a whole in the project activities. Concerning the support for the project, the initiative for the target population's participation is key input for the project.

During the initial phases of the project, the target population has participated in a limited way, offering information about their activities and incorporating their children into the

project. At the time of the evaluation, it was noticed that during the project's implementation, the activities undertaken have facilitated the mobilization of parents regarding the eradication and prevention of child labor in fireworks production.

However, during the evaluation it was noticed that there is an important level of uncertainty regarding the results of the project on the part of some interviewees. This is due to the creation of expectation in relation to the income generation alternative component because, as expressed by the interviewees from the moment the baseline study was carried out and even during the implementation of social protection component, they were told about having access to loans as one of the main incentives to remove their children from fireworks production.

It is estimated that as long as the income generation alternatives component takes place on site, parents would become even more involved in the project activities, provided that this component has effective alternative proposals that take into account the inherent limitations of the location in which the fireworks producing families live, as well as their aspirations.

### **3.3. Monitoring and evaluation system**

The system is structured on the basis of different targets and processes that allow for establishing a control mechanism for the project's progress and the achievement of the desired results. This chapter will be organized in two stages: a first stage will briefly describe the system, while the second will comprise an analysis of the effects of the system on the project management, offering specific values about aspects that are worth mentioning as they are considered good practices, and suggestions to improve the system and contribute to its strengthening.

#### ***1. System description***

One of the initial points in the project cycle consisted of the preparation of a **baseline study**. This document has as its purpose the identification of the target population that will be covered by the project by gathering information about social, economic, and family factors that are systematized and employed to design the direct attention services. This study was done by means of subcontracting organizations specialized in field research—the University Dr. José Matías Delgado in this case—which submitted a final document together with a database to be used by the implementing agencies in their on-site activities.

The second step in the structuring of the system refers to the definition of a **Monitoring Plan**, which established operational guidelines to monitor the project's actions and the benefits it provides to the target population. The Monitoring Plan includes quantitative goals—and some qualitative—in the indicators defined in the project document, while it allows for counting on a generic proposal on the expected progress.

As a third step, the **monitoring instruments** were defined according to the formats in order to gather the information not only on site but also from the key social actors, particularly interviews and direct inquiries.

Having as a basis the information compiled with the monitoring instruments, it is expected that a **database to systematize the information** about the target population will be created, both the population that has been identified on site and the population effectively covered by the project.

Operationally, this stage takes place on site under the responsibility of the implementing agencies, with special emphasis on the social protection component. In case of the productive alternatives component, usually the existing computerized systems at the implementing agencies are used—or the periodic credit reports—as important elements in the system.

The **reports issued every four months** as required by IPEC are also part of the project monitoring and follow-up system. There is a pre-determined format that attempts to compile information about compliance with the goals, timeframes, and use of the resources allocated to the implementing agencies.

The **financial reports** offer information about the execution of activities and the use of the resources assigned to them; they are also established as targets for the financial programming of the activities that will take place in the next four-month period.

Moreover, IPEC has the responsibility for presenting a **quarterly report** to the donor which includes the same elements as the reports issued every four months as required by IPEC, but it also analyzes the external factors that either favor or make more difficult the achievement of the goals proposed by the project. It demands synthesized information about the execution of both components and IPEC's administration in relation to the objectives set out in the project document.

The last element of the monitoring and follow-up system includes the **midterm and final evaluations**, which provide information to IPEC and its implementing agencies about the successes, success factors, and obstacles for the attainment of results.

To establish these systems in each project, IPEC invests significant resources in training the parties involved, in defining the instruments required for the system's operation, and in general in providing guidance about the adjustments to the system whenever required.

## **2. System analysis**

It is important to stress the simplicity of the system, which makes it possible to carry out effective monitoring without this representing an additional work load that interferes with the regular operations of the project. The integration of the project documents (PRODOC and APSO) with the instruments that have to be designed as part of the monitoring and follow-up system contributes to this situation.

To guarantee the effectiveness of the monitoring system, it is necessary for both IPEC and its implementing agencies to assume a shared responsibility regarding the operation, data

standardization, and information updating about the project's progress. In practice, although this vision exists, it is not enough to achieve the desired results.

The strategic importance of the baseline studies concerning the future operations of the projects is significant, so it is indispensable to ensure the technical quality of this instrument and also to directly support IPEC's staff and the implementing agencies. The active participation of the implementing agencies in the compilation of the initial information will facilitate the identification of the target families for the project, and will allow for reducing the time needed to start effect on-site actions.

According to the main actors at IPEC and the implementing agencies, there were difficulties in identifying the target population once the on-site actions started; therefore, it is assumed that using a strategy that actively involved the implementing agencies will reduce the time frame for an effective response on the part of the project.

As evidence of this observation, it is enough to review the information about the project's target population—both that identified and that already assisted—as handled by the project coordination and the implementing agencies at the time of the evaluation. The project coordination staff reported higher numbers of assisted population than those reported by the implementing agency of the social component. This difference was not backed by the data handled by the coordination.

During the visits to the implementing agency for the social protection component it was noticed that it is not complying with the requirement of filling out the follow up cards established by the monitoring and follow-up system. It is possible that this situation is due to the absence of quality controls inside the implementing agency and the project coordinator has not issued a specific requirement to Fe y Alegría.

The interviews with the staff at Fe y Alegría showed conceptual and information gaps regarding how the monitoring and follow-up system has to operate. This situation remains despite the training that, according to the Project Coordinator at IPEC, was carried out with the staff of this implementing agency.

On the other hand, no effective mechanisms were identified for the gathering of information coming from sources foreign to the project that could facilitate the follow-up of the target population. However, it is important to point out that some institutions that provide direct services to the target population, such as the Ministry of Health, have made some effort to generate instruments to gather specialized information.

In conclusion, the structure of the follow-up system is simple and geared to its onsite applicability. The weaknesses observed by the system in practice are due to its administration, a situation which has not been taken as a priority by the project coordination at IPEC. It is urgent to reconsider this aspect, to offer technical support and training to the staff of the implementing agencies to overcome the existing limitations in the monitoring and follow-up system, and to ensure permanent coordination up to the end of the project.

### 3.4. Efficiency

Concerning budgetary execution, the project comprised a total of 1,008,327 dollars aimed at the attention to be provided for 2,500 children. The group of children that will be removed from child labor totals 1,493, equivalent to 59.72% of the population to be covered, while the group of children to be prevented from entering this activity totals 1,007, equivalent to 40.28% of the total population to be covered.

Although the project is conceived to last 27 months, it is estimated that the time frame devoted to the installation and regular operation of the project requires three months; therefore, the average number of children assisted per month is 104, and it is estimated that by the evaluation period, it will total 936. The project has been able to cover 587 children, equivalent to 63% of the total expected goal. Taking as a reference the average amount of money to be used per child, up to the moment of the evaluation a total of \$124,263.36 should have been spent; however, taking into account the actual number of children assisted, the budgetary execution should reach \$77,930.12.

IPEC disbursed \$103,346.73 for the attention of children during the first twelve months of operation of the action program. In general, without taking into account the project implementation timetable, IPEC should have disbursed a total of \$147,511.11, which would be equivalent to an estimated average of \$157.57 per child assisted. Actually, each child assisted requires the spending of \$176.08, which is about 11% higher.

Objective	Total Planned (No. Children)	Implem period (months)	Planned for the period *	Current data	Age group
RESULT 1	200	25	1100	587	All
RESULT 2	287	24	6 yrs=12 m attention; others=24 m	61	0-6
RESULT 3	630	23	297 one yr; others=24 (323+6 yrs olds)	314**	7-15
RESULT 4	100	23	100 in CIPI (1 yr)+100 (and 16 yrs olds) next year	68***	16-17
RESULT 5.1	1274	24	584 (up to eval) and 690 next year	314**	0-6
RESULT 5.2	219	24	57 (up to eval) and 162 formal and informal education; 179 in school; 40 not schooled (12 m)	68***	7-15
RESULT 6	2500	23	937 (up to eval) & 1563 (rest of period) 89 families (up to eval) & 411 rest of period	587	All
RESULT 7	2243	22	714 (up to eval) & 1529 rest +159 families up to eval. & 341 the rest	382	All but those under 6
RESULT 8	2500	22	16 wrksp; 2 fora; etc.	nl.	All

\*Number of children to be attended in the total months for each result  
 \*\*Not possible to separate prevented from removed; they are added (expected for period)=681 vs. 314 up to evaluation period  
 \*\*\*Not possible to separate prevented from removed; they are added (expected for period) = 157 vs. 68 up to evaluation period

So far, the investment made by IPEC is less efficient than the expected average. However, the level of distortion is not very large. As long as a plan for the expansion of the project's actions for the target population is established, the attention costs will decrease beyond the average cost of attention in the last five months of the execution of the project. The project should make sure that the implementing agency is able to define the goals for children's incorporation—some 128 per month—in order to justify the investment made.

FIREWORKS PRODOC		
PROJECT COST	1,008.327	100%
Baseline Study	20,000	2%
Education	211,700	21%
Income Generation Alternatives	349,700	35%
Awareness-raising and capacity building	20,200	2%
Health services	70,000	7%
Monitoring system	47,000	5%
Program coordination	143,200	14%
Cost of Program support	112,034	11%
Previsions for cost increase	34,493	3%

When reviewing the budgetary allocations in the PRODOC, it seems that they have been defined on the basis of the strategy developed in the document, in which education plays an important role for the removal and prevention of children's participation in fireworks production. Moreover, the income

generation alternatives component for these children's parents requires the intensive use of economic tools such as loans and technical assistance. Both budgetary entries have enough resources and together represent 56% of the total of the project's allocations.

Regarding the entry for awareness-raising and capacity building, the amounts allocated barely reach 2% of the total, when in practice this point practically takes up a full objective and part of another one. The allocations for health issues are high in comparison to this component, especially if it is taken into account that they are the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Health. This situation responds to needs of the target population that are not being covered by the Ministry of Public Health, so the project has to allocate significant resources to meet this need.

In the action program of the social protection component, the largest budgetary allocation is composed of donations to the target group.

Social Protection Action Program		
Project Cost	331,900	100%
Program staff	97,815	29%
Subcontractors	14,500	4%
Donations to the target group	112,005	34%
Training	52,241	16%
Non-consumable equipment	11,400	3%
Consumable equipment	36,000	11%
Miscellaneous	7,940	2%

This situation is particularly important for the project in the sense that it is expected to generate capacities and not to supply them directly by giving donations to the families. One of the elements that should be considered deals with the purchase of uniforms and shoes for school-aged children.

This allocation does not correspond to the project purpose of promoting school as a viable alternative, but to the attention centers created by the project to attend preschool children.

Income Generation Alternatives Action Program		
Project Cost	234,700	100%
Program staff	46,200	19%
Subcontractors	12,171	5%
Training	21,120	9%
Non-consumable equipment	3,259	1%
Consumable equipment	1,100	1%
Miscellaneous	150,850	64%

In the case of the income generation alternatives component, the allocation is more balanced. The allocation for miscellaneous activities takes up 64% of the total budget of the action program. This occurs because it includes the resources for credit. The other budgetary entries are also balanced and correspond to the strategy

proposed by the project to assist parents.

At the time of the evaluation, no substantial changes had taken place in the budgetary allocation, with the exception of a request issued by Fe y Alegría to transfer resources from the donations for the target groups to operational costs in the school support centers and transportation expenses for their staff to the geographic areas covered by the project. According to the information supplied by the direct sources consulted, the expenses were charged to the budget even when the authorization process had not concluded.

In general, the timetable has been followed, although there have some delays in the presentation and approval of financial reports, which generated a slight delay in the implementation of the activities of the social protection component. These delays have not been significant and, in this case, Fe y Alegría assumed the operational costs of the project, expecting to be reimbursed by IPEC.

### **3.5. Effectiveness**

#### Achievement of the Immediate Objectives

The project objectives are ambitious concerning the outcomes they describe; however, taking into account the need for the country to assume a national commitment for the eradication of child labor in fireworks production, the project scope established in the project is appropriate as part of the assumption for the country's appropriation of the objectives that would translate into actions to accompany the project.

At the time of the evaluation, the conditions were geared to the feasibility of complying with the first objective, as this falls under the responsibility of the implementing agencies. In the case of the other two objectives, as they demand a change of attitude in the institutions regarding the problem that the project addresses, the probability of compliance is more limited.

As long as the efforts last to actively involve the public institutions at a national and local level so they will assume the commitments that translate into specific actions in the project intervention area, the achievement of the two objectives will be feasible. It is not possible to strengthen the institutions while the effective role required for them to develop in practice is not known. The project should contribute to defining the effective role of the institutions in relation to the sector and to child labor, and on this basis strengthen the operational and design capabilities, management and impact on public policies of the institutions—public and private—related to the fireworks production sector.

At the time of the evaluation, the Project Coordination had undertaken notable efforts to encourage the institutions' involvement in direct attention actions for the target population.

It is worth stressing the commitment of IPEC to achieve the results as a key element that offers an optimistic perspective regarding this issue.

The situation of objective three should be emphasized. It proposes direct action by the target population and the community against child labor in fireworks production, but this condition would be difficult to achieve unless there is a proposal for the sector about productive alternatives to fireworks manufacturing. As long as the project can support families' income generation—either through the safe production of fireworks or through other occupations—it would be easier to build consensus among the target families and the main actors related to the problem to act against child labor in the sector.

#### Attention to the Totality of the Target Population

When comparing the number of beneficiaries established in the project (defined in the bases of the Baseline Study) with the number of those assisted by the implementing agency, it was determined that attention is under 25% of the total population (2,500 children). This figure comes from the attention data presented in the progress reports, in which 593 children represent exactly 23.72% of the total child population mentioned in the project.

There are a total of 224 family groups whose children are receiving formal education and are participating in the CIPIs and CINDEs. This information was provided by the implementing agency FE Y ALEGRIA.

The beneficiaries included in the PRODUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES component are part of this population. The actions of this component are promoted to try to coordinate with FE Y ALEGRIA the control and access of the beneficiaries to the first component.

At the time of evaluation, the project was attending the expected target population in all the project municipalities—with the exception of Cuscatancingo—with the different component defined. In addition, there was a delay regarding the child population within the goals of the target population to be assisted, achieving coverage of 23.72% rather than 37.44% expected for the time of the evaluation. There is a completely different situation in the case of the families identified, as the expected attention level was 37.8% of the total number of families (189 households), and the project was already attending 45.2% (226 households).

Based on this information, it can be concluded that the project is attending the expected target population, but that the level of attention is low in comparison to the expected levels of attention for the progress recorded by the project at the time of the evaluation. This situation could be partially explained by the semi-illegal character of production, due to the inspections and control of the National Civil Police and the Fire Department.

#### Project Impact on the Eradication of Child Labor

It was possible to observe an acceptance process for the project's actions, taking into account its vision to integrate actions on education, health, and economic alternatives.

The guidelines underwent an adaptation period when working with the population, which could explain the delay in producing the desired effects on the target population. It is worth mentioning that the project has gained visibility in the community. Both the target population and the institutional actors in the area have a vision of the project's actions, and its immediate and far-reaching importance, which will be the basis to guarantee the achievement of the remaining objectives. Nevertheless, this vision does not translate into a change of attitude regarding child labor in fireworks production.

It was noticed that more children took part in the production of fireworks in 2002. This was confirmed with the opinions of the teachers in the schools visited and because the CINDEs and CIPIs were not operating during the same season, even when the document project makes it clear that during this period the project would provide attention to the children to discourage them from participating in fireworks production.

The presence of children in fireworks production at the end of the year—when the CIPIs and CINDEs were closed—demonstrated that the project still has to strengthen families' ideas regarding the risks which children are exposed to. As long as the income generation alternatives component defines viable options for the families, the change of attitudes will be easier, and children would be removed from child labor in fireworks production in a sustainable way even when the project can no longer provide incentives for the families.

#### Project effect on the factors determining the existence of child labor

The project's effect on the factors that determine the existence of child labor could be clearly understood when the monitoring and follow-up tools strengthened and respond to a constant updating dynamic. Therefore, it is appropriate to encourage the implementing agencies to define the key information for the project, and to organize the compilation, systematization, and analysis actions based on this definition.

The data contributed by the project are limited almost exclusively to the information gathered from the families about their condition; however, it is necessary to incorporate into the monitoring system elements that would make it possible to follow-up the "objective" conditions that intervene in child labor in fireworks production. The definition of a monitoring plan on the bases of the indicators and most important external factors would facilitate this task.

At the time of the evaluation, the monitoring and impact measuring system was still in its initial stages, and some of its main components were not operating on a regular basis. As long as the project improves how the information is collected and used for decision making, then it will gradually develop a system that would make it possible to determine the degree of progress towards the achievement of the objectives, not just in quantitative terms, but also at a qualitative level.

#### Project impact on prevention

The project's greatest success is related to the prevention area, as its implementation shows a clear tendency in that sense. At the time of the evaluation, some progress was observed in this regard, and during the on-site interviews it was possible to verify this situation.

However, a weak coordination with the schools combined with a lack of alternatives at the municipal level does not favor child labor prevention. Teenagers between 15 and 17 comprise the target population sector that has received the least benefit in this sense. The informal education actions have not promoted professional training as an effective alternative, partially because the options to enter the formal job market—for which professional training is designed in the country—are very weak. The startup of the income generation alternatives component will significantly contribute to changing this situation, yet at the time of the evaluation, this component was still in its initial stages, so its impact on preventive actions was not yet discernible.

It was noticed that the project has a tendency to offer preventive actions almost exclusively in the CINDEs and CIPIs financed by the project; this situation could be explained by the limited array of options offered to keep children busy during their leisure time. Although there is an open school program, this does not take place in the schools located in the project intervention area, as it demands additional unpaid work from the school teachers.

Inter-institutional coordination is important to define child labor prevention modes with a local and external character for the project. This situation would contribute to the country's appropriation of the methodology to eradicate and prevent child labor, which is essential for the project.

#### Project action in specific areas

##### ***Education***

Children's situation in schools is similar to the national average—late entrance, dropping out during adolescence, etc.

Taking as a reference the data in the baseline study, most children combine school with work, a situation which is noted by teachers, who blame the long and extenuating hours in fireworks production for children's low academic performance. Low achievement is also related to children's irregular attendance to classes.

Teachers are aware of the impact of child labor on children's health and education, and under the initiative of the Ministry of Education, they are being motivated to raise awareness among parents for them to not involve their children in fireworks production. Their knowledge about this problem is basically empirical, as they do not have appropriate pedagogical tools to deal with the problem in their classrooms.

One of the most important gaps in the implementation of the social protection component consists of having waited for almost a year to approach teachers and to involve them actively in the project's implementation. The reasons expressed by the implementing agency responsible for the project are vague and not very technical, and make reference to the convenience of starting the talks when the children are getting ready to restart school—during January—in order to offer a complete follow-up during the school year.

Although there are communities with extremely poor families, the project generates distortions among the target population by allocating resources to pay for children's transportation to school.

One of the most persistent demands of the target population interviewed referred to the establishment of preschool centers, since the number of children under 6 is high in the communities, and they are the children at the greatest risk because they are present most of the time while fireworks are being produced in their homes.

Informal education has played an accessory rather than a highly effective role concerning removing children from child labor. Its focus on building manual skills contrasts with children's need to strengthen their education with academic reinforcement in the case of the younger children, and with labor skills in the case of teenagers. This situation is critical as there is no link between schools and the project.

Regarding the construction of strategic alliances, teachers should have an important role in the project implementation strategy as they are very close to the target communities and they know about children's involvement in productive activities. They mentioned that parents threaten their children and prohibit them from talking about fireworks production in their homes.

For the evaluation team, school should become the natural channel to identify the children that have to become involved in the project; moreover, close contact should be kept with schools in order to integrate efforts and build their capacities. These elements had not been considered before in the evaluation process, and they could very well be the solution to the problem of identifying children who participate in fireworks production.

### ***Health***

Regarding health, it was found that the children participating in the project actions are assisted in health centers and units in the area communities, which have not been subject of support by the project concerning strengthening the local systems. It is expected that this stage will be developed in the period covered in this evaluation.

According to the evaluation results of health-related issues, there is no practice of promoting preventive medicine to improve the target population's health conditions. The report obtained from the implementing agency refers to cases of specialized attention. Nevertheless, the staff in these health units indicated that they see cases related to the basic aspects of children's health. A revealing case is that of the community of Popotlán, in which the medical staff and their assistants are aware of the project's nature even though their actions are not directly related to it. In any case, the effect on the improvement of the health conditions of the target population may be more easily recorded as the health units collaborate with the project.

It is important to point out that the level of the implementing agency, the follow-up, and coordination of this aspect of health is very limited; this did not allow for making an evaluation of the terms expected and planned for.

### ***Income Generation Alternatives and Fireworks Production***

Regarding the evaluation of the effectiveness of the income generation alternatives component, it was determined that its implementation level is still in the initial steps, so it was not possible to make a proper evaluation. This component started being executed in October. Very few elements had been implemented at the time of the evaluation.

At the time of the evaluation, APROPISA representatives showed their concern for this component, as they considered that it was geared to the elimination of the industry, that it generated high expectations among families, and it may not have the capacity to make important changes in the socioeconomic conditions of the families. In their opinion, they would expect the project to support the introduction of safety measures in the factories so they become not only safe, but also highly productive and efficient.

They base their remarks on the fact that the experience gained by the families in fireworks production is their main strength, but they do not make direct reference to the support that they would offer to the project; instead, they expect the project to fill a need which, as an employers' organization, they have not been able to meet.

This same concern is shared by the target population among whom access to credit was promoted as one of the alternative that the project offered to remove their children from child labor and improve their income. Yet, the families maintain their optimism regarding the response that the project will offer, as they are aware of the danger posed by the activity they are involved in.

In this sense, an important point needs to be emphasized: what response does the project propose concerning the future of fireworks production? There is no definite answer to this question, and this point should be one of the first to be addressed in the income generation alternatives component. This is mentioned because the relevance of the strategy proposed will depend on the answer to this question.

At the time of the evaluation, it was noticed that there was some uncertainty among fireworks producers due to the authorities' insistence on limiting fireworks production to safe conditions that are not possible for the project target population to obtain. This would require migration to other occupations that offer a similar income to the families, but this point is still pending.

Within this framework, APROPISA has undertaken several efforts to promote modifications in the regulatory framework currently in effect in the country, proposing a larger flexibility that would allow production under conditions according to the general situation of the producers in those municipalities where the project is intervening. In addition, they have organized observation visits to countries that have made more advances in fireworks production.

The point of interest for the project is that the APROPISA's investment to equip their objective production conditions—factories, equipment, warehouses, instruments, and processes—do not necessarily translate into a substantial improvement for the families—that is, concerning transferring production to factories rather than keeping it at home, the

application of appropriate technologies, and production conditions—so it is possible that the situation of risk will not be substantially modified even if the proposed legal amendments are approved.

This means that the investment that APROPISA will make will be focused on the areas where they have direct control, while in the case of families, they will not have the support of the producers, especially because of the availability of work and the ease of hiring other workers under the home-based modality.

The fact that producers improve these aspects does not necessarily mean improvements in production at the home level, and as demonstrated at the beginning of the evaluation, the strengthening of controls by the competent authorities will only cause fireworks production, especially child labor, to go underground even further.

Therefore, the project has the ethical responsibility of offering viable alternatives to the target population so that they have the possibility of abandoning fireworks production, but without this being a serious threat to the quality of life existing at the time the project is implemented. The success of removing children from child labor is based on this project's responsibility; thus, it should be a priority in the component in question before developing the actions proposed in the strategy outlined in the action program document.

The effect of the late implementation of the component (in comparison with the beginning of the implementation of the social protection component) as well as the difficulties in defining the beneficiaries based on the population assisted by the implementing agency of the social protection component, and the updating of the criteria<sup>5</sup> for small fireworks producers to qualify as creditworthy subjects will all be factors that will tend to reduce the effectiveness of the implementation of this component. It would be important for IPEC to keep this in mind in order to provide timely follow-up and guidance to the implementing agency.

### ***Awareness-raising***

The interviews held on site and the opinions gathered in the area and during the workshop are sufficient to affirm the following:

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<sup>5</sup> The action program in the income generation alternatives component proposes, among others, the following qualifying criteria to opt for a loan: (a) production under safe conditions (according to the law), (b) identification of viable and feasible productive alternatives concerning profitability, etc. These qualifying criteria have a limiting effect for the project target population as they demand conditions that cannot be complied with by the target population without prior technical and financial support; therefore, there is a tendency toward exclusion. This situation is not discriminatory, but it is a principle because the project has assumed the ethical responsibility of not financing fireworks production under unsafe conditions that pose a risk to the community. The definition of an alternative strategy for the sector will contribute to defining specific criteria in order to have access to credit, which will be adjusted to the conditions of the project target population.

- For the population in the area, whether related to fireworks production or not, child participation in fireworks production is a high-risk job; therefore, it is suitable to remove children from this productive activity.
- This level of awareness is the result of strong pressure exerted from different sectors of society due to the frequent accidents at fireworks-producing factories and the fact that most victims are children who were working in the factories at the time of the accident. Taking into account that the awareness-raising activities involve three interrelated aspects—knowledge, attitudes, and practices—this awareness has already been achieved at the lowest level—knowledge—and probably at the level of attitudes, even though this is not an exclusive outcome of the project implementation. In any case, it is a facilitating factor for promoting it.
- Particular opinions of institutional, political, and religious actors in the area tend to express higher awareness and to exert a disseminating effect toward the rest of the society in each of the communities in the project area; among these opinions are those of school teachers and principals, mayors (especially, the Mayor of Ciudad Delgado, whose city is the largest fireworks producing city in the country and where this activity is the main economic source of the people in his municipality), the health units staff and the staff of other entities of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Salvadoran Institute for Childhood and Adolescence Development, all of which are present in the project implementation area and participate in actions inherent to their institutions, but that contribute to the awareness component, and others.

It is appropriate to take into account that this factor of awareness is not a definitive and final achievement that could not be reverted and reflect levels of lack of attention. Much will depend on the implementing agencies to maintain the dissemination and awareness-raising activities in the communities by involving local actors and representatives of public and private institutions.

Since the problem is sensitive in itself, integrating the different local actors and, in some cases, having them participate in the project actions, is a task with great likelihood of being achieved. The two implementing agencies could take advantage of these circumstances to guarantee the success of their actions and the continuity of the project beyond the initial two-year stage.

An example of this situation are the school teachers: they indicated having knowledge of the situation of children involved in fireworks production and economic constraints of their parents; they have access to these children's parents and homes; they frequently get in touch with the families, and, at the same time, they know the high risk that this kind of work poses. Taking into account the traditional level of influence teachers have with them in the communities, it is essential to coordinate closely the rest of the project's actions.

Achieving the integration of the key social actors for the project is a task that is still pending for the implementing agencies and IPEC's coordination. Although a conversation space has been established among the public institutions related to this problem, it has not

been possible to identify firm steps for the creation of a monitoring network that directly deals with the fireworks producing sector.

### **3.6. Perspectives of Sustainability**

#### Conditions created for the continuity of the project's results

At the time of the evaluation, the conditions created for the continuity of the positive effects of the project were minimal in the sense that many of the project's actions had not yet been implemented; however, the greatest achievement observed in this sense refers to the involvement of the municipalities in offering services to the population which are directly related to the prevention and eradication of child labor.

It is important to stress the role of the Municipality of Ciudad Delgado<sup>6</sup> concerning its support of the informal educational opportunity offered for working children and those at risk, which includes the conditioning of establishments and the direct funding of the staff for these activities. This experience could be used to encourage other municipalities to get actively involved in the definition of actions for eradication and prevention of child labor that can be sustained over time.

The coordination staff's actions with the schools in the area, which were starting to take place, will also become essential elements to continue supporting children's removal from child labor as well as preventive actions against child labor in the project intervention area. This situation is also found in the other fundamental project components, so the evaluation team believes that the project is creating grounds for sustainability and that, therefore, the progress made so far is little but significant.

#### Critical factors for the project's sustainability

There are different key factors to guarantee the sustainability of the project's results on site. Below is a detailed analysis of each of these factors and their implications for the project sustainability.

- *Legal framework for fireworks production*

The requirements concerning safety measures for the operation of fireworks factories, as established in the legal framework in effect, make the establishment of factories difficult in the country as they demand investments that are beyond the real possibilities of the target population. Although APROPISA promotes modifications to the legal norms, the country's tendency is geared to hardening the legal requirements for fireworks production, especially due to the population's demand to prevent accidents that affect third parties.

This legal situation is precisely one of the points that have stood out in the course of the evaluation due, and is to the difficult conditions that the target families have to meet to

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<sup>6</sup> There is a commitment from the local authorities (as expressed by the mayor of Ciudad Delgado, during the interview held with him in which he indicated the interest and suitability of undertaking actions geared toward removing children from fireworks production and to generating a permanent institutional support for fireworks production by making it safe and profitable) which constitutes the basis for the local sustainability.

prevent their factories from being closed by the competent authorities. The hardening of the regulations makes it difficult for fireworks to continue being produced; nevertheless, the competent authorities have not identified viable options to be added to those the project is trying to provide to these families.

- *Definition of a comprehensive proposal for the sector*

It is important for the country to define its position regarding fireworks production; a national analysis of the positive and negative factors of the sector will contribute to consolidating a national project for the sector, whether support or prohibition. In light of this situation, the project should face its ethical responsibility—which has been assumed from the beginning—of proposing alternative solutions in case production is banned (or for the proposal to generate interest in other activities and to limit the participation of the population in these activities under high-risk circumstances).

The possibility of defining local economic development plans for the project intervention area should be considered. These plans should help define options for the population in the municipalities, and the municipalities should have a leadership role in the definition of an economic identity for the municipality that translates into better living conditions for its inhabitants.

- *Strengthening of informal education services*

As mentioned earlier, the project substantially contributed to meeting the needs demanded by the target population concerning better conditions for their children, opportunity that was utilized to promote the idea of using some services as effective tools against child labor. The strategy used was that of promoting services such as academic reinforcement, artistic instruction, and other activities that parents valued as important for the future of their children. Once the families were convinced of the importance of these services, they were encouraged to keep their children out of child labor and, instead, actively participating in these services.

This contribution of the project should be strengthened at the local level, and spaces to attend children and teenagers in an effective way should be offered. These spaces should promote children's integral development while keeping them away from the risks of fireworks production, not as the project's responsibility, but under the control of the key local actors—including the corresponding governmental institutions. The relevance of these services for the children's future is critical, especially if it is believed that they have relative importance in the definition of a future life project for these children.

- *Institutional involvement in the attention to the sector*

The nature of the project establishes intervention as a pilot strategy in regards to the sector, which should be assumed by the country to continue assisting the population located in other municipalities in the country.

Although this vision on the part of IPEC is accurate as concerns the purpose of the interventions, it is not completely shared by the institutions related to the fireworks production sector. This situation creates a disadvantage, not just for those groups similar to the project target population who have not been assisted to, but also to

guarantee that the children that have been removed from child labor won't participate in fireworks production again.

The project insistence on achieving institutional involvement in the problem does not only refer to providing more effective immediate services to the population, but also to ensuring the operation of the strategy to eradicate and prevent child labor after the external cooperation in the intervention area is withdrawn.

- *Parental awareness*

The income generation alternatives are important as mechanisms to ensure the survival of the household without having to recur to child labor, but this is just a theoretical premise that is not achieved automatically in the homes just by offering an additional productive option.

It is indispensable for the families to be convinced of the risks their children are exposed to when they participate in fireworks production, and to turn the prevention of child labor in that activity into a family value that is constantly reaffirmed. In this way, when there are no alternatives to fireworks production for parents, the non-participation of children and the prevention of child labor will stand a better chance due to parents' commitment to their children's future.

- *Creation of a child-labor monitoring system*

The contribution of the local agents to monitoring child labor is critical. The position taken by the Ministry of Health<sup>7</sup>--the local clinics—was decisive during the result validation workshop of the evaluation as a continuation of the onsite observations.

In case of the institutions that have a local office, their contribution to monitoring child labor is essential since they obtain immediate information that facilitates the follow-up work of the competent authorities. A child-labor monitoring system that adequately operates in the project's area of influence will contribute to reaffirming the family values against child labor that the project is promoting, but this can only be complied with if institutional participation is strengthened.

Probably an effective strategy is to encourage public institutions to assume the role of monitors and on these grounds, determine the need to strengthen institutional capacities to address the problem of child labor in the sector from a competencies framework for each of the participating institutions.

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<sup>7</sup> The representatives of the Ministry of Health insisted on the need to control fireworks production to prevent accidents from harming children. They expressed their desire to contribute actively to achieving this purpose as they have been disturbed by the burns and other physical injuries caused to children by accidents that take place in the fireworks production process.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1. Regarding the project design

- *Original design of the project*

The strategy is designed in a logical and coherent fashion. It deals with the problem of children in fireworks production, and has an objective basis in the information collected to determine and delimit the problem and the measures used to solve it. The definition of the target population, the local actors, and the participation of other entities present in the area is considered explicitly and dynamically.

Some limitations related to the sector approach strategy observed in the project document (PRODOC) were overcome on the basis of the integration of wider strategic elements in the program documents (APSO). This situation indicates an optimal capacity of adaptation to contextual changes by IPEC, which translates into a more effective operational strategy concerning the results expected from the projects.

- *Proposal for a comprehensive strategy for the fireworks sector*

The project is conceived as a “generating” strategy that aims at motivation actions from the diverse actors and institutions related to fireworks production. As a demonstrative project, it has been successful in the application of a pertinent strategy related to the fireworks sector problems and the specific situation of the families with regards to child labor; however, it has not achieved substantial impact on the public institutions related to the sector concerning defining a concrete strategy to integrally address the fireworks sector problems and child labor.

It is estimated that the project should have foreseen the need to prepare proposals related to the future of the sector when the viability of production under the conditions in which it is carried out poses a great risk for children, even when they have been removed from child labor. This is a pending task for the project.

To comply with this objective, it is important to promote discussion spaces among the main parties—governmental institutions, municipalities, employers’ organizations, communities, and civil society organizations—on the perspectives of the sector in the short, medium, and long term, particularly on the implications of these actions on families’ socioeconomic situation and its impact on child labor.

- *Project’s logical framework and its relation to the monitoring and follow-up activities*

Despite the adequacy of the strategy definition, there is lack of clarity in the formulation of some of the objectives and indicators of achievement, and limited objectivity in others. On this point a proposal has been made in this document, trying to offer alternatives to overcome the limitations in each of the cases mentioned.

The relevance of defining a logical and coherent framework is based on the need to have monitoring instruments for the project’s progress toward the attainment of the

objectives, a situation that can only be complemented on the basis of a correct definition of the project's indicators, its verification sources and, especially, the external factors that will affect the project—whether positively or negatively—demanding constant observation of its evolution over time to ensure a correct reaction in case one of the external conditions does take place.

IPEC has a clear panorama in this sense and is making efforts to integrate these issues within the project; however, during the design phase it is important to define these elements correctly as they generate an idea of the magnitude of the effort to be developed and because it has significant implications both for the way in which the resources assigned to the project are distributed, and for the startup of the on-site actions.

- *Limited information about the project's objectives and logical intervention among the target population*

According to the information compiled during the interviews with the target population and key informants, the community's participation—both that which is organized and that which is not—was not intensive during the design stage of the project, situation why there are exaggerated or out-of-context expectations on the part of the target population regarding the benefits that they can receive from the project. This situation is not exclusive to the design stage, as it is also caused by the rumors among the families that are desperate to ensure the productive activities that guarantee household income for their survival.

Moreover, the situation of illegality adopted by many families forces them to respond with cautiousness to the project's invitations and to limit their participation in the dissemination activities organized by the implementing agencies.

## **4.2. Regarding the project implementation**

- *Integration of institutions related to the sector*

The building of an effective strategy for the eradication and prevention of child labor in the sector requires the integration of the public institutions related to the sector in a gradual way and with well defined roles. Moreover, they must also respond effectively to the needs of the target population and demonstrate their active commitment to solve the problem of the fireworks sector.

IPEC has made substantial efforts to convince the institutions to participate actively in the project's actions, but taking into account the conditions of the social actors involved at the moment of the evaluation the methodology used—work sessions for the analysis of the regulatory framework and presentations of the project objectives and actions—is not the most appropriate.

- *Implementation strategy*

The implementation strategy has remained almost invariable according to the program's documents, with the exception of the verification of the target population to be covered

by the project, which demanded more time and resources than that which was originally thought. Quality control mechanisms should be generated to ensure the relevance of the information collected through the baseline studies.

This facilitates the startup task of the action programs, and assures the efficiency and effectiveness of the investments made by IPEC. In addition, external factors that affect the target population should be taken into consideration since in the case of fireworks production, they are strongly pushing the target population to go underground.

▪ *Strategy of the education component*

The project has understood well the problem of having children working in the fireworks industry, and it is believed that the provision of academic support services to keep children away from fireworks-related jobs is indispensable to achieve their gradual removal, and to make permanent removal sustainable in the medium term.

Moreover, the actions taken to actively involve the Ministry of Education in the adaptation of educational services to make them more pertinent are valid, although they still have to define the specific role the educational system has to play in the removal of children from child labor. This goal transcends the project's responsibility; instead, it is the challenge of IPEC as a whole.

On this basis, the project's efforts to establish a valid experience for the fireworks sector is adequate and useful for the purposes not only of IPEC in the short term, but also for the country as a whole in order to ensure the sustainability of the project's efforts. As long as the project is successful in the effective integration of the educational system in the overall strategy to fight against child labor in the fireworks industry, the future sustainability of children's removal from this activity will be guaranteed and will allow for the creation of a national strategy in relation to this issue.

▪ *Strategy of the health component*

The strategy assumed by the project of complementing the country's efforts to offer health services to the project target population is deemed appropriate. The few advances on this issue are attributable to the somewhat ineffective role of the Ministry of Health in practice.

The project's efforts in the area of health, however, should have been organized directly with the participation of the representatives of this institution at the moment of designing the project. This is needed to be done in order to assure an effective integration that directly benefits the project target population in relation to the objectives proposed.

▪ *Strategy of the income generation alternatives component*

There is an important question regarding the strategy to pursue in relation to the fireworks production section: the families should know about expectations in relation to the sector's future and if there is any technical feasibility to continue developing their regular activities. The project should contribute to offering a proposal for this question—although it is not responsible for solving such a complex problem—that

gives rise to wide discussion among the key social actors in the project intervention areas.

It is expected that the project will draft a proposal for actions to be agreed on by the different institutions in the sense that the institutional responsibilities are defined. That will include the areas that have to be covered in order to be able to offer a viable alternative to the families without endangering the quality of life existing in the homes at the time of the evaluation, but that will contribute effectively to guaranteeing the survival of the household without having to recur to child labor in fireworks production.

The income generation alternatives component has to define its proposal for the target population; otherwise, it would generate situations of exclusion that would place some groups of beneficiaries at a disadvantage in relation to their surroundings, which could have negative repercussions on the conditions in which children become involved in fireworks production.

However, of concern is the limited capacity of the project to convince the country of the need to restrict children participation in fireworks production. Although there is an important institutionality related to the sector, there is very little consensus regarding the strategy to adopt. In case it is not possible for families to continue in fireworks production, there has been no response from the Government to identify effective alternatives.

In this sense, the project should gear its activities toward supporting the safest production conditions, but which do not necessarily relate to the model shop. In practice, it will be difficult to establish structures of this nature; therefore, the creation of smaller model factories is indispensable.

The idea behind this proposal is that families will find it feasible to establish the factories provided that they comply with the legal regulations in force, that the non-participation of children in the production processes is guaranteed, and that they definitely separate the factories from homes to reduce the risk of accidents.

▪ *Institutional participation*

While the institutions with local presence have a very specific position regarding the problem of child labor in fireworks production, no concrete evidence was detected regarding those that are not directly involved. The situation of the Ministry of Labor is particularly worrisome as the interviewees consulted during the evaluation claimed to not know about the project, arguing that they only participate in national coordination actions, which is a very limited vision of the role that an institution should have when faced with a problem of national importance such as the eradication of child labor.

In this sense, the Ministry of Labor should assume its leadership role not only at the level of a national coordinating institution, but also as a leader for the actions undertaken by other organizations, thus favoring the definition of action plans to fight against child labor. At a local level, it is indispensable to create action groups with an

operational character that will coordinate actions with the municipalities and communities.

▪ *Services provided to the target population*

The informal education services are the most important offer of the project for the target population. Although other actions have been undertaken, none has had the magnitude and visibility of those services. A significant execution flaw is that these centers were closed from the middle of December to January, the time at which fireworks production is in high season due to the closeness of Christmas and New Year's Eve, during which the consumption of gunpowder is intensive throughout the country.

The evaluation team believes there was a lack of ethics in applying the labor policies for the Fe y Alegría staff to the project, especially when the Project Coordination in that implementing agency knew that this decision directly affected the implementation of the project decision aspects related to the relevance of the support services to keep children away from the productive activities. This situation was not detected on time by IPEC, which indicates the need to improve the coordination with the implementing agencies both at the level of activity planning and their on site follow-up.

Moreover, regarding education, material support was offered to the families—school packages and stipends to pay for children's transportation—in order to promote their school attendance. However, the inadequate coordination between the schools and the project does not contribute to consolidating an alternative to child labor in which education plays an important role. The project team stated that coordination with the schools is a priority for 2003.

▪ *Strengths and weaknesses of the implementing agencies*

The project dynamics require having implementing agencies that formulate creative solutions to the problems the project faces. The creative capacity of the implementing agencies is indispensable in a project that is contributing to national capacities to address the problem of child labor. This lack in the implementing agencies has adversely affected the project, generating some significant delays in the attention of the target group.

▪ *Beneficiaries' participation*

The beneficiaries' participation in the different stages of the project has been irregular, with minimal involvement during the design stage, but gradually improving, especially during its implementation, although not yet reaching desirable levels in relation to the dynamics the project expects to generate. The lack of information and a hostile environment toward small-scale fireworks production negatively impact the target population's desire to participate in the project's implementation, which has made it more difficult to carry out the awareness raising activities.

As the target population becomes more afraid that their productive activities will be closed down and banned by the public institutions related to this issue resulting from hostility toward small-scale fireworks production and as long as it is not possible to identify viable productive alternatives, the sense of apathy and the tendency toward

illegality will continue to grow. Those living near the factories are also afraid due to the lack of safety measures complied with by the direct producers.

This situation represents a special challenge for IPEC, which should convince not only the target population of the benefits of removing their children from fireworks production and preventing this activity, but also to have an impact on the public institutions in order for them to define and implement policies that ensure children's protection; this needs to be done while allowing families to obtain the necessary income to guarantee household livelihoods without violating the regulations in effect or putting children at risk.

- *Monitoring and evaluation system*

At the project level, the system was not clearly defined in the project document (PRODOC), except for a note in the section about the necessary inputs to implement the project (budget). The monitoring and follow-up system is not clearly described by the project. This situation was substantially improved in the program documents (APSO). Although the mechanisms to carry out the monitoring, follow up, and evaluation of the action programs are clearly described, it seems that the implementing agencies are not clear about the operation and purpose of the system, so their practical application has not been complied with as expected.

The incongruence of the data provided by the population targeted by the project and the scarce systematization of the relevant project data point toward difficulties in the implementation and operation of the system. Decisions about the appropriateness of the project operational strategy are not based on substantial information coming from the monitoring and follow-up system at the implementing agencies, but instead respond to circumstantial information compiled by the decision makers at the level of the Project Coordination and implementing agencies.

- *Efficiency*

In the meantime, the investment made by IPEC is less efficient than the expected average if we take into account the ratio between the low numbers of children assisted and the few financial resources used; nevertheless, the distortion level is not significant due to the low level of budgetary execution observed at the implementing agencies. As long as an expansion plan for the project actions is implemented, the attention costs will continue decreasing beyond the average attention cost in the last five years of execution. This will occur because the administrative costs will remain constant while operational costs will only increase in direct proportion to the number of children that directly receive the project services.

This means that the project has to be sure that the implementing agencies are capable of defining not only the goals to incorporate children—some 128 a month—so that the investment made by the international donors is justified, but also that they are able to assure that the resources allocated to provide attention to children will cover the operational costs of offering quality attention that incorporates the elements of relevance and opportunity.

▪ *Effectiveness and compliance with the immediate objectives*

The project objectives are ambitious regarding the arrival situation they describe. Taking into account the country's need to assume a national commitment for the eradication of child labor in fireworks production, the scope of the project indicated is adequate, the assumption that the country will appropriate the objectives would translate into accompanying actions for the project on site.

In practice, among the public institutions in charge of protecting childhood, or among those related to fireworks production, there is no vision of appropriation of the methodology proposed by the project for the eradication of child labor. This will adversely affect the future sustainability of the project unless there is a positive change during the project implementation period.

▪ *Attention to the totality of the proposed target population*

The project is attending the expected target population, but the attention level is low in comparison to the expected levels of attention for the degree of progress required of the project at the time of the evaluation. This situation may be partially explained by the underground character of production as an effect of the inspections and controls by the National Civil Police and the Fire Department, and a lack of information among the fireworks-producing communities.

The adequate handling of the information, the absence of clear procedures in the institutions related to fireworks production, the lack of a national vision regarding the future of the sector, and the existence of a hostile climate against fireworks producers are factors that will continue making the project's actions difficult. Therefore, it is necessary for a country to assume a direct responsibility for the alternatives that can be offered to the families to assure the survival of their household without having children get involved in dangerous activities or those that can harm their physical, mental, or social development in the short, medium, and long term.

▪ *Project effect on the eradication of child labor*

The effect of the project on the eradication of child labor has been positive, but limited. At the time of the evaluation it was possible to observe that the project had reached an impact level that was more or less acceptable after a period of adaptation for the small portion of the target population identified and assisted. Nevertheless, the presence of children in fireworks production during the end of the year season—when the CIPIs and CINDEs were closed—demonstrates that the project still has to strengthen the idea among families of the risks to which children are exposed. As long as the income generation alternatives component defines viable options for the families, the change in attitude will be easier and the children will be removed from child labor in fireworks production in a more sustainable way, even when families do not get direct incentives to remove children or keep them away from child labor.

▪ *Influence of the project components*

The influence of the project components has been relative; a higher influence was observed among those largely controlled by the project. The component with the

highest influence was the social protection component, mainly due to its implementation time. The most visible benefits have been those related to the distribution of school packages to the target population, and the attention provided in the rooms especially created for that purpose as part of the informal education strategy: CINDEs and CIPIs.

Although the project gives priority to formal education as part of the strategy to guarantee the removal of children from and prevention of child labor in the fireworks sector, the links established between the implementing agencies and the schools that attend the project target population are weak, not very systematic, and have no permanent follow-up geared toward the achievement of concrete results. This situation is worsened by the institutional rivalry shown by the Ministry of Education regarding the attention to the project target population; the Ministry's attitude toward the project's demands is ambiguous.

- *Effect of the project on the factors that determine the existence of child labor*  
At the time of the evaluation, the effect was not yet clear, especially due to the difficult situation existing as a result of the negative attitude assumed by the public institutions related to child protection and the operation of the fireworks sector. It is important to point out that the first steps to address these factors have been taken by the project; it is expected that these steps will increase in number according to the pace of the project implementation on site.

On the other hand, the measurement of the project's effect on the factors that determine the existence of child labor will be clearly noticeable with the use and/or reinforcement of the monitoring and follow-up tools, in addition to assuring the existence of constant updating dynamics. It would be suitable, therefore, to encourage the implementing agencies to definite the key information for the project and to organize the actions of compilation, systematization, and analysis based on this definition.

- *Project achievements concerning prevention*  
The project's main success is associated with the prevention area as its implementation shows a clear tendency toward this purpose. However, weak coordination with the schools does not favor the prevention of child labor or alternatives offered at the municipal level.

The informal education actions have not promoted professional training as an effective alternative partly because the options for insertion into formal employment—to which the country's professional training is geared—are very weak. The startup of the income generation alternatives component will contribute significantly to change this situation, but since at the time of the evaluation it was still in its initial stage, its impact on the prevention actions was not yet effective or visible.

- *Project actions concerning education*  
The presence of children in school is similar to the national average: late entrance, dropping out during adolescence, etc. This situation spurs the awareness-raising activities among parents, the community, working children, and those at risk.

Informal education has played an accessory, not very effective role concerning children's removal from child labor. Its focus on building manual skills contrasts with children's need to strengthen their educational capacities with academic reinforcement in the case of younger children, and with job skills in the case of teenagers. This situation is critical as there is no link between the schools and the project.

For the evaluation team, the school should become the natural channel to identify the children that the project should cover; moreover, close contact should be kept with the schools in order to join efforts and build capacities. These elements had not been considered before the evaluation process, and could very well be the solution to the difficulty of identifying working children.

- *Project actions concerning health*  
Regarding health, it was found that the children included in the project's actions are assisted in health centers and units of the communities in the area, which have not been supported by the project regarding the reinforcement of local systems. It is expected that this stage will be developed after this evaluation.
- *Project actions concerning awareness*  
It is appropriate to take into account that this factor of raising awareness is not a definite achievement that could not later be reverted and thus reflect levels of inattention. Much will depend on the implementing agencies' dissemination and awareness raising activities in the communities, actions that are to involve the local actors and representatives of both public and private institutions.
- *Project actions concerning income generation alternatives to fireworks production*  
An important point is stressed in this sense: what response does the project propose concerning the future of fireworks production? There is no definite answer to this question, and this point should be one of the first to be addressed in the income generation alternatives component. The definition of this response is not within the scope of the project, but it is important input to generate an institutional movement that offers productive alternatives to the project target families. Another important element related to the attention offered by the component refers to people's own potential to enter new job sources, including self-employment.

It is also deemed important to create an attention strategy that actively involves the national institutions related to the promotion of micro and small enterprises so that the installed capacity in the country can contribute effectively to achieve the objectives of the project and of the component.

- *Sustainability of the positive results of the project*  
At the time of the evaluation, the conditions created for the continuity of the project results were minimal in the sense that many of the project's actions had not been implemented yet. Nevertheless, the greatest achievement of the project in this regard refers to the involvement of the municipalities which offer services to the population that are directly related to the prevention and eradication of child labor, even when they

are not associated with the project's activities. The greatest challenge consists of having the municipalities continue to provide these services after the project ends, or having them assume new services that the project had not considered.

It is important for the country to define its position about fireworks production; a national analysis of the positive and negative factors of the sector will contribute to consolidating a national project about the sector, whether support or prohibition.

The project's contribution to the provision of child attention services should be strengthened at the local level and should offer spaces to attend to children and teenagers effectively by offering alternative spaces for children's integral development once they are removed from the dangers of fireworks production.

Finally, the strategic importance of the component in relation to the achievement of the objectives should be considered. Since the target population covered by the project is poor and lives in mainly urban areas, they require about \$140.00 dollars to maintain their living conditions. As long as families have the capacity to replace the income generated by fireworks production for another kind of productive alternative, the removal of children from fireworks production would become sustainable.

We still have to see the initial results of the productive alternatives component, and until this happens, the evaluation cannot go beyond the theoretical assumptions observed in the strategy proposed by the document. However, it is believed that in order to assure the sustainability of the project objectives, the innovations in the strategy promoted not only by IPEC but also by the implementing agencies are highly important.

- *Child-labor monitoring system*

In the case of the institutions that have local offices, their contribution to child labor monitoring is essential as they get immediate information that facilitates the follow-up activities by the competent authorities. A child-labor monitoring system in the area of influence of the project will contribute to reaffirming the families' values against child labor, values which are promoted by the project, but this can only be complied with if the institutional participation is strengthened.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***For IPEC***

#### ***Define the logical framework of the project***

It is advisable to develop a planning exercise between the Project Coordination and the implementing agencies to redefine the logical framework of the PRODOC and the APSOs in order to incorporate indicators, verification mechanisms, and assumptions (or critical conditions) pertinent for the project strategy and the intervention modality. On these grounds, it is advisable for the actions to start by defining the logic framework and establishing as arrival point the structuring of monitoring plans of the project's progress—based on well-defined indicators—and those conditions that have a direct effect on the project and that require permanent monitoring.

#### ***Support the implementing agencies for them to strengthen their management capacities***

IPEC should support its implementing agencies in developing internal strengthening processes for the project's management, especially regarding the identification of “problematic situations” that demand creative solutions, and maintain cohesion not only between the teams in charge of the action program implementation, but also with the institutions and key actors related to the project.

Methodologies such as “Lateral Thinking,” planning for objectives, and information management would be appropriate elements that IPEC could consider to strengthen the management capacity of the implementing agencies. This recommendation is based on the premise that only a well trained technical team can achieve quality results geared toward the attainment of the objectives.

It is particularly relevant to strengthen the project monitoring capacities, the construction of information systems that facilitate decision making not only at the management level, but also at the operational level that require the identification of innovative solutions for the problems that the project is facing in practice.

To reach an acceptable monitoring level, it is also necessary to strengthen the communication channels and the flow of information inside the organization. This situation can only be possible when the project management style is modified, and the creation of coordination mechanisms inside the project and with the national counterparts is promoted.

IPEC may provide technical support to design these mechanisms, although its most important participation should be geared toward the achievement of an effective commitment on the part of the institutional authorities, aimed at modifying the management style and the implementation of efficient information and communication systems.

#### ***Promotion of the monitoring and evaluation system***

On this issue, IPEC is the only organization in which there is a clear idea of the type of monitoring and evaluation system that should be used in the project. The implementing

agencies have a hard time understanding the importance of the system and its practical application.

Since decision making is not based on information about the project progress, very often decisions are not pertinent or adequate for the needs of the target population. IPEC should reinforce, together with the implementing agencies, the implementation of information collection systems about the effects of the project on site and use these data to make modifications—especially to take innovative actions—that allow the objectives proposed by the project to be reached.

It is deemed important that the two characteristics that should be stressed in the system should be its simplicity, so that it is easy for the implementing agency to operate, and the practical usefulness of the information gathered, so that it allows for modifying the intervention strategy.

#### *Encourage the appropriation of the strategy in the country*

IPEC should encourage the appropriation of the intervention strategy to eradicate child labor in the sector among those national institutions related to this issue. The technique of building a solid basis is based on this idea. On this basis it is expected that the roles and actions that should be assumed by some of the key social actors during the implementation of the project will be defined, and mainly, once its intervention has concluded.

This responsibility is exclusive of IPEC in the sense that its relation with the national intervention follow-up and support structures concerning child labor are unique. A national discussion should be generated in the country around the issue of fireworks production in which the target population and the local and national authorities should reach consensus about the future of the sector.

#### *Child labor monitoring*

IPEC should define the structure of a child-labor monitoring system in which the country's key actors should participate. This system should be defined taking into account the current roles of the institutions related to the sector's problems in order for adoption of the system to take place immediately.

The system design should include information-gathering instruments as well as procedures and methodologies for its systematization, analysis, and interpretation of data for decision making. In some cases, the strengthening or building of institutional capacities that present significant gaps should be taken into account.

It is recommended that a training program be structured in the way to operate the system for the key actors related to the project.

#### ***For Asociación Fe y Alegría***

#### *Design a dissemination strategy for the project*

With the support of IPEC, a dissemination strategy for the project objectives, results, and actions should be undertaken in the project intervention area. This strategy should be

designed taking into consideration the characteristics of the two most important target groups: (a) the project target population and (b) the relevant institutions and key actors for the project.

It is indispensable to have the information about the aspirations, expectations, and conditions of the project beneficiaries to guide an easily understood message that takes into account their situation at the moment of developing dissemination activities without this representing a shock that would delay the project activities. In the case that the relevant institutions and key actors have to follow a similar methodology, the coordination of these actions with Asociación El Bálsamo is essential.

All the dissemination actions have to be framed within the Awareness Raising Plan that should be created together between IPEC and the implementing agencies in order to standardize the message for the target population, and define the kinds of materials and the methodology to be used.

#### *Project services adapted to the target population's needs*

The project is clearly geared toward supporting the target population in the process of gradually eradicating and preventing child labor, taking into account that at each of the stages the required support differs according to the population's needs—schooling, academic support, loans, technical assistance, etc. Thus, the services provided through the implementing agencies should be adjusted in relation to these aspects.

Each service offered by the implementing agencies should have a clearly defined target population with indicators about the specific benefits to be provided. The agencies should adapt these efforts to the dynamics of the fireworks sector and the target families. A priority is the definition of attention services for the teenage population in the project by offering an effective combination between informal education and vocational training. The latter should include operational actions to be provided as soon as possible.

Fe y Alegría should adjust its schedules and work calendar so that it coincides with the productive cycles of the sector. The closing of the CIPIs and CINDEs during the highest production season is not advisable, especially with the minimal progress of the project, and should not reoccur.

#### *Education: A priority in the intervention strategy*

Fe y Alegría should take into account that IPEC's on-site intervention strategy is based on the premise that the most effective alternative to child labor is education. This situation is not very complex in the project intervention area, as most families value education, which means that half the distance has been covered.

Thus, the project should project an image in which education plays a fundamental role. Schools, therefore, should become the center around which the community activities related to working children and those at risk take place. The project should contribute substantially in order that schools become key actors that offer a valid alternative to child labor. The intensive way in which informal education is promoted by the project is a situation that should change.

The responsibility for supporting children's education should not only be focused on limited spaces—CIPIs and CINDEs—but should also be part of regular school programs, with building capacities in the schools to assume this responsibility after the project ends.

*Beneficiaries' participation in the project management: cross-sectional axis*

The relevance of the project should be perceived mainly by the project target actors. They are the reason for IPEC's interventions on site and, therefore, should maintain an active role concerning the definition of better options to build life projects for a future in which child labor would be absent.

All the strategies and actions should have the acceptance of the target population. Moreover, their aspirations should be taken into consideration to define concrete intervention strategies. IPEC, Fe y Alegría, and Asociación El Bálsamo should incorporate as cross-sectional axes of their on-site activities the participation of the target population which, in turn, requires strengthening the community organizations for them to take the representation role of the target population in the different geographic areas in which the project intervenes.

*Define a realistic working plan geared toward achieving the goals*

Taking into account that the level of attention of the project was lower than what had been expected at the time of the evaluation, it is indispensable for Fe y Alegría to define a realistic working plan geared toward achieving the implementation goals. The support and participation of IPEC in this task is fundamental.

Due to the difficulties found at the moment of identifying the target population it would be advisable to define the maximum attention level that can be offered and, on this basis, adjust the assisted population goals. As to the intervention logic, it would be required that the activities be more intensive during this stage of the intervention in order to reach the largest number of people before the end of the project.

*Health attention of the target population*

At the time of the evaluation, it was not noticed that health was a priority among the target population, and there were no complaints about how this component had operated. It is deemed important for the project to support this component when strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health to attend the problems due to fireworks production, problems for which the Ministry of Labor also has an important responsibility concerning the quality of the working environment.

The constant exposure to risk factors can cause progressive poisoning or health ailments when not treated in a timely fashion. The capacities of both institutions, and their joint efforts, of course, are essential elements in the health area for the project.

***For Asociación El Bálsamo***

*Redefine the strategy of the income generation alternatives component*

Since the income generation alternatives component was only in its beginning stage at the time of the evaluation, it is considered that this is a good time for Asociación El Bálsamo to review the component strategy and modify it according to the following factors: (a) the feasibility of supporting the fireworks sector on the basis of the corresponding study and (b) the incorporation of other key actors to support the project, especially in the areas of credit, technical assistance, and professional training.

It is necessary for the strategy to clearly define the target group in the component and the way in which it will benefit given the existing conditions in the project intervention area. The strategy should be clear enough to be shared and accepted by the target population and the key actors that support the project.

#### *Establish realistic outcomes for the component*

Given the high expectations generated among the target population on the assignment of loans and other productive reinforcement actions, it is indispensable for Bálsamo to define the scope of its intervention and to share this information with the target population. The dissemination activities could be developed together with Fe y Alegría to get to the target population in a single effort and demonstrate the integration of the project components.

#### *The importance of professional training*

In formal terms, Fe y Alegría has the necessary funds to support the professional training of teenagers under 18, while Bálsamo has the funds to cover the adults. It is deemed pertinent for Bálsamo to develop an integral strategy that covers both age groups on the basis that professional training should be geared toward insertion in the labor market and, therefore, requires linkage with the productive alternatives component strategy.

This single strategy should be implemented also by Fe y Alegría, but Asociación El Bálsamo is the entity responsible for the follow-up of the professional training of teenagers concerning its relevance, pertinence, and adaptation to the needs and possibilities in the environment in which the target population operates.

#### ***For the public institutions***

##### *Definition of national priorities regarding the fireworks sector*

The country should structure a national approach strategy for the problems in the fireworks sector, which should integrate all the key areas: education, health, technology, technical support, financing, regulations, and other elements that the governmental institutions deem pertinent.

The leadership for the definition of this approach strategy should lie within the Technical Committee and the National Committee, which comprise the most representative actors of the country related to the eradication of child labor, but it should not be concentrated exclusively in these entities.

In practice, the definition of action plans at the municipal level that compile the intervention proposals and identify the institutional responsibilities of fighting against child labor, should become a permanent practice not only for this project but also for all IPEC

projects. In this sense, this project provides the opportunity for building practical experience that can be replicated in the future.

The public institutions should assume their responsibility of fighting against child labor in the sector, but these actions should have an objective basis that responds to the families' survival needs. Not doing so can cause fireworks production to go even deeper underground, which could translate into worsened labor conditions for the children involved and increase the risk for the communities in general.

# Appendixes

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Evaluation methodology**

The evaluation process followed the model suggested in the terms of reference required by IPEC.

Due to the need to adjust the schedules, some activities had to be varied as to their time. The evaluation team has summarized the results of these activities in order to integrate them into the analysis and to respond to the tasks as designed.

- Evaluation strategy

A strategy that contained the following levels was used:

1. Development of pertinent evaluative questions (evaluation hypothesis),
2. Validation of the questions and definition of appropriate information gathering techniques,
3. Data gathering,
4. Data analysis

The development of this methodology comprised:

#### **1. Desk work: Documental and bibliographic analysis**

Several documents that had been used to frame the project were studied and analyzed:

- The Project Document,
- The Baseline Study,
- The institutional profiles of the implementing agencies,
- The Summaries of the implementing agencies,
- The implementation reports of each of these agencies,
- The regulations related to fireworks production,
- The legal basis of child labor in El Salvador, and
- The ILO Conventions regarding child labor and its eradication

The evaluation team was able to ascertain the interrelation among these documents for the preparation of the project strategy, which is outlined in the Work Plan of the implementing agencies.

This comprised the basis to carry out the field work by addressing the various dimensions that the implementation period evaluated has included: the information gathered from the public institutions related to the project and the problems of child labor detailed in the document, the role of the implementing agencies and their connection with the target population and other social actors, as well as the role of the municipal authorities.

A study of the implementing agencies was also done in relation to their installed capacity and the project implementation processes: this study included the information offered by each of the implementing agencies, interviews held with people in the agencies, inquiries in the project implementation area, as well as analysis of the relationship with the target population, with the participating institutions, and with other relevant actors for the project.

- Initial interviews with key interlocutors

A matrix was previously designed to systematize the information gathered during the interviews with the officials of the organizations as described in the project documents (both the PRODOC and the Action Program Summaries). One of the important points identified during the evaluation was the incorporation of public entities with specific responsibilities into the action programs that had not been considered initially in the project document. The evaluation team did not find information to back up a practical application of the commitments established in the PRODOC for the governmental institutions listed.

The Project Coordination supported the application of some interviews while others were directly organized by the evaluation team.

To hold the interviews, a specific questionnaire was prepared—which is included in the corresponding appendix—that addressed basically three specific aspects: the institutional relationship with the project, the perceptions about the project's execution, and the recommendations for the future of the project.

## **2. Fieldwork**

- On site observations

At the beginning, we tried to get the information necessary for the interviews with the families in the project target group from Fe y Alegría, but the location data of the target families was not updated, so there were difficulties in finding the families and completing the corresponding evaluation instruments.

### **Methodological aspects: Contact form and conditions with the families**

Based on file cards provided by Fe y Alegría, a list of visits was prepared. These visits would take place in different areas of the project intervention sphere in the municipalities of Ciudad Delgado, Apopa, and Mejicanos. The lists included the name of the household head, the children registered on the family card, and the full address.

To avoid distortions and facilitate the gathering of information based on observations, the visits were paid to the families' homes, and they were asked to participate in the survey which was carried out during regular working hours: between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. When the evaluation team arrived, they very often found that the addresses recorded on the card did not exist, or that people did not give any information about some of the other people included on the lists. In some cases, it was possible to identify them, and the corresponding interviews were held. In most cases, fathers were not present during the visits, so the responsibility of providing the information depended on the mothers and the children.

During the evaluation, gathering complete information from the families was difficult due to the rumor about the eminent closing of the fireworks production factories by the Fire Department of El Salvador. However, this situation was corrected during a second visit to the communities to confirm the information compiled. A positive change was observed among the people, who were more willing to answer the questions.

Since the implementing agency of the social component was in recess at the time of the evaluation, the answers of the target population were open in this sense, while the evaluation team had more freedom to move among the target population. This ensured more objectivity in the compilation of information, although operationally it represented an extra effort needed to meet with the families.

Efforts were made to overcome those limitations and visits were paid to the different communities covered by the Project using the updated addresses of the family groups that were on the list provided by the implementing agency mentioned earlier.

The visits were made to the homes of those people who produce fireworks as confirmed by the visits paid by Fe y Alegría in the intervention municipalities. Interviews were held at homes located in three municipalities: Apopa, Ciudad Delgado, and Mejicanos. Since a number of the addresses recorded on the cards did not exist, there were limitations to distribute and separate the visits geographically. This means that several of the interviews were held with several members of the same community, a situation which could have influenced the responses provided due to the expectations generated in the communities by the visits of the evaluation team.

During these visits, contact was made with the families of the children involved in fireworks production, with the children themselves, with the teachers that work with them in the schools, and with staff from the implementing agencies in charge of the attention units that attend the children benefited by the project. A preliminary instrument was designed to collect information from the families and use it in the validation workshop of the initial findings of the project evaluation.

This allowed the evaluation team to determine the validity of the project strategy and the possibilities of achieving the proposed objectives, as well as the difficulties the implementing agencies have in implementing the project, its successes, and its main limitations.

In case of the beneficiary children and their families, after administering the initial document to 50 family groups located in the project implementation area, some corrections were made and the instrument was extended to improve the collection of information in order to present the final evaluation report.

This second instrument meant additional work to collect information on site, involving 20 parents and 19 school-aged children. To develop these activities, there were different instruments to collect the information from the beneficiary children and from their families; special emphasis was placed on the parents' role.

Similar work was done regarding the interviews with the teachers and school principals; interviews were held at the schools with an instrument specially designed for this purpose was used.

Earlier it was explained that the characteristic of semi-illegality that fireworks production has assumed in the last years did not allow for paying visits to the production centers, meaning those general production areas that do not have authorization to operate. The families were interviewed by the evaluation team in their homes—where they produce the fireworks—and they provided the information requested by the evaluators.

This situation can be explained by the activity of the National Civil Police and the National Fire Department which, in order to enforce the law that regulates the production of explosives, have confiscated significant quantity of materials, and ordered the closing of several fireworks production centers. In addition, this situation has had impact, as it has limited and even obstructed the impetus of some of the project's actions.

#### Validation of the evaluation results: Workshop with the stakeholders

The preparation of a summary about the initial results of the midterm evaluation was done before the Workshop with the Stakeholders. During this stage, there was a very short period to collect information and organize the document of the initial evaluation.

Most of the data and the statements included in it were included on the basis of the information collected through the primary sources, especially the project coordination at IPEC, the implementing agencies, the National Civil Police, and the National Fire Department. A great deal of the data included in this report was modified as a result of the contributions from the participants in the workshop and the analysis of the information.

The workshop with previously selected participants having a stake in the project's outcome was organized and carried out. The initial results were subjected to discussion and consideration in a far-reaching way as they reflected: the most relevant limitations in the project implementation area, the most common expectations among the beneficiaries and

key actors in the area, the participation of the public and private institutions in the project development, and the adverse situations that have appeared during the implementation period being evaluated.

The workshop dynamics were as expected; the invited participants attended and demonstrated a great deal of interest in the project implementation. However, some of the key participants that had been invited to the workshop did not attend, as in the case of the representatives of APROPISA. Other important absentees were the teachers at the schools located in the project intervention area who were on vacation at that time, making it impossible to locate them to invite them to the workshop.<sup>8</sup>

Materials had been prepared in advance; the agenda was followed, and the results concerning contributions, participation, proposals, and analysis were also achieved.

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<sup>8</sup> A report of the workshop to validate the preliminary results as an appendix to this evaluation report.

## APPENDIX 2

### Instruments Used for the Evaluation

Instrument for the Interview with School Teachers and Principals

**MIDTERM EVALUATION**  
**PROGRAM: ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOR IN FIREWORKS PRODUCTION IN**  
**EL SALVADOR – INTERVIEW FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

I. Identification															
1.1. Interviewee's name:															
1.2. Age:				1.3. Sex		M				F					
1.4. School name:															
1.5. Title:															
1.6. Work schedule															
1.7. Address															
1.8. Interview date				January 2003				1.6. Hour		AM				PM	
II. School Data															
2.1. What grades do you teach?		P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
2.2. How many groups are there in the school?															
2.3. How many teachers work in the school?						Male				Fem.					
2.4. How many shifts are there in the school?															
2.5. How many children are there in each shift?															
2.6. What is the teachers' highest degree?															
2.7. How many training sessions do they receive a year?															
2.8. How is CDE's participation in the school?								Good		Regular		Bad			
2.9. Do teachers have enough support from parents?						YES				NO					
2.10. Do teachers update their methodologies constantly?						YES				NO					

2.10.1. How?				
<b>III. Requirements for economic resources</b>				
3.1. Does the school require an enrollment fee from parents?		YES		No
3.1.1. How much?				
3.4. Does the school require voluntary economic contributions from parents?		YES		No
3.4.1. How much?				
3.4.2. How often are these fees required?				
3.5. What kind of materials should children bring to school?				
3.6. To what extent do children find the materials they need in the school?				
<b>IV. Data on children attending the school</b>				
4.1. About how many children who work in fireworks production attend the school?				
4.2. What is these children's achievement like?		Good	Regular	Bad
4.3. In what shift are there more fireworks-producing children?		Morning	Afternoon	Evening
4.4. How many children dropout to fully devote themselves to fireworks production?				
4.5. How many fireworks-producing children flunk?				

<b>4.6. Is there any difference between the children involved in fireworks production and those who are not? What?</b>				
<b>4.7. Do children involved in fireworks production attend school regularly?</b>				
<b>4.8. Do the parents of children involved in fireworks production participate in school activities?</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	

<b>V. Relationship between the school and the executing agency:</b>				
<b>5.1. Are you familiar with the project to eradicate child labor in FP in El Salvador?</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
<b>5.2. Are you familiar with the agency implementing the program?</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
<b>5.3. Do the school and the agency work together in any project?</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
<b>5.4. What kind of activities do they develop jointly?</b>				
<b>5.5. How often does the executing agency visit the school?</b>				

## Instrument to Interview Children

**Midterm Evaluation**  
**Program: Eradicating Child Labor in the Fireworks Industry in El Salvador**  
**Interview for the Children**

<b>I. Identification</b>																											
1.1. Interviewee's name																											
1.2. Age				1.3. Sex		M		F																			
1.4. Level		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td> </tr> </table>												1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14														
1.5. Address																											
1.6. Interview Date				/January 2003				1.7. Hour		AM		PM															
<b>II. Family Data</b>																											
2.1. Do you live with your parents?								Mother		Father																	
2.2. What's your mother's name?																											
2.3. What's your father's name?																											
2.4. How many persons live in your house? Adults				M		F		2.1.2. No. children				M		F													
2.5. How many siblings do you have?				Masculine				Feminine																			
2.7. The house where you live is		owned		rented		borrowed		familiar		other																	
2.8. Number of rooms		Bedrooms						Other rooms																			
		0		1		2		3		4		5		6		Bath		Comm		Self-Comm		Clo.		Por.			
<b>III. School Data</b>																											
3.1. Are you going to go to school?				Yes				No																			
3.2. What school will you go to?																											
3.3. What grade will you be in?		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>P</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> </tr> </table>												P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13														

3.4. Do you go to school regularly?	Yes		No	
3.5. Do they purchase the school materials for you? Who?	Yes		No	
3.6. Do you find school difficult?	Yes		No	
3.7. Do you have to do a lot of homework?	Yes		No	
3.8. Do you get bored or get sleepy in class?	Yes		No	
3.9. Do teachers call your attention often?	Yes		No	
3.10. How are your grades?	Good	More or less	Poor	
<b>IV. Information on Health</b>				
4.1. Have you been sick this year?	Yes		No	
4.2. How many times?				
4.3. What did you get sick with?				
4.4. Have you visited the doctor?	Health Unit		Private Doctor	
4.5. Did you buy the medicine or was it a gift?	Bought		Gift	

<b>V. Occupational Information</b>				
5.1. Do you make or have made fireworks?	Yes		No	
5.2. How old were you when you started making them?				
5.3. Have you ever had an accident?	Yes		No	
5.4. Where do you make the fireworks?				
Factory owned by someone else			Own factory	
At home by someone else's order			In another house by someone else's order	
5.5. How many hours a day do you make fireworks?				
5.6. What time do you start making them?				
5.7. What time do you finish making them?				
5.8. How many days a week do you make fireworks?				
5.9. Were there other children making fireworks like you?	Yes		No	
5.10. Did you get paid to make fireworks?	Yes		No	
5.10.1. How much?				
5.11. What did you do with the money you earned?				
5.12. Did you ever have to leave school to make fireworks?	Yes		No	
5.12. When you were making fireworks, could you play?	Yes		No	
5.12.1. For how long?				
5.13. Do you like making fireworks?	Yes		No	

VI. Information on the Project's Benefits				
6.1. Did you know there is a project to help families so their children don't have to make fireworks?		Yes		No
6.2. How did you learn about this project?				
6.3. Do you participate in any of the project's activities?		Yes		No
6.3.1. Which?				
Informal Education		Health		
Recreation		Professional Training		
6.4. How long have you participated in the project?				
6.5. Has anyone else in your family participated in the project?				
6.6. Do you like the kind of services provided by the project?		Yes		No
6.7. Has it ever been difficult or impossible to get the project's services?		Yes		No
6.7.1. How many times?				
6.7.2. Why?				
6.8. What would you like the project to do for you to get involved?				

## Instrument to Interview Parents

F-M

### I. Identification

- (a) Full name
- (b) Age
- (c) Sex
- (d) Address
- (e) Occupation
- (f) Date
- (g) Hour

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### II. Family data

- (a) Number of people living in the house
- (b) Number of adults
- (c) Number of children
- (d) Children's school level
- (e) Who is the head of the family?
- (f) How old is he/she?
- (g) What his/her school level?
- (h) Household income (**Gross income**)
  - a) Less than 875 per month
  - b) 875 – 1000 per month
  - c) 1001 – 1500 per month
  - d) 1501 - 2500 per month
  - e) 2501 - 4500 per month
  - f) 4501 – 6000 per month
  - g) More than 6000 per month

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- (i) Situation of the house
    - a) Owned
    - b) Rented
    - c) Borrowed
    - d) Familiar
    - e) Other (Specify)
  - (j) Number of rooms in the house
    - a) 1
    - b) 2
    - c) 3
    - d) 4
    - e) 5
    - f) 6 or more

### III. Socioeconomic Information

- (a) Father's occupation:
- (b) Mother's occupation:
- (c) Number of persons who contribute economically to the house:
  - a. Adults
  - b. Children
  - c. Family remittances
- (d) Household's income distribution per items (estimated)
  - a. Food
  - b. Transportation
  - c. Basic services
  - d. Clothing
  - e. Education
  - f. Health
  - g. Recreation
  - h. Savings
  - i. Other (specify)
- (e) Father's schooling level
  - a. None
  - b. Reads and writes
  - c. First cycle
  - d. Second cycle
  - e. Third cycle
  - f. High school
  - g. Technical
  - h. College
  - i. Occupation
  - j. Other (Specify)
- (f) Mother's schooling level
  - a. None
  - b. Reads and writes
  - c. First cycle
  - d. Second cycle
  - e. Third cycle
  - f. High school
  - g. Technical
  - h. College
  - i. Occupation
  - j. Other (Specify)
- (g) Work experience (What have you worked in?)
- (h) Information about children's education?
  - a. Do you pay an enrollment fee?
  - b. Do you make monthly payments?
  - c. Do you buy school materials?
  - d. Do you buy uniforms and shoes?
  - e. Do you pay for the children's transportation to school?

f. Do you have other school-related expenses? Which?

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#### **IV. Experience in fireworks production**

- (a) Age in which you started participating in the activity:
- (b) Number of years of experience
- (c) Training received
- (d) Place where you manufacture the fireworks:
  - a) Somebody else's factory
  - b) At home (own factory)
  - c) At home (for someone else)
  - d) In another house (for someone else)
- (e) Number of hours devoted to fireworks production:
- (f) Number of days you work in fireworks production:
- (g) Hour you start working on fireworks production:
- (h) Hour you finish working on fireworks production:
- (i) Number of accidents suffered while involved in this activity:

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#### **V. Information about the project's benefits**

- (a) How long have you known about the existence of this project?
- (b) How did you learn about the project?
- (c) Have you been invited to participate? How?
- (d) Do you know what the project's objectives are?
- (e) Do you know what services are provided by the project?
  - a. Education
    - i. Academic reinforcement
    - ii. Informal education
  - b. Health
  - c. Awareness raising
  - d. Recreation
  - e. Training
  - f. Loans and counseling
- (f) Which of these services has your family received?
  - a. Education
    - i. Academic reinforcement
    - ii. Informal education
  - b. Health
  - c. Awareness raising
  - d. Recreation
  - e. Training
  - f. Loans and counseling
- (g) Have these services been provided on a timely and sufficient manner?
- (h) Have you ever had difficulties to have access to these services? How many times? What kind of problems did you have?
- (i) Can you make any suggestions to improve the services provided by the project?
- (j) Do you know if the project coordinates efforts with public or private institutions to support the services offered by the project?

- (k) How would you rate the participation of public or private institutions in supporting the services offered by the project?
- (l) Do you think that there are institutions that should be actively involved to help the project achieve its objectives? Which?
- (m) Do you think that the work done by the staff of the project's implementing agencies is acceptable? Why?
- (n) What suggestions do you have about the activities undertaken by the non-governmental organizations responsible for implementing the project?

## APPENDIX 3

### Institutional roles

INSTITUTION	PRODOC	APSO SOCIAL PROTECTION	APSO PRODUCTION ALTERNATIVES	EFFECTIVE ROLE
Ministry of National Defense		Authorization to import, manufacture, and merchandise fireworks  Coordination with PNC to guarantee compliance with the law	Technical assistance and supervision of plans to build model factories	Knowledge of the places where fireworks are produced  Revision of the legal framework and proposed reform
Ministry of the Environment			Advice on the design of the factories  Advice on the EIA studies  Advice on the construction of the factories  Follow up the operation of the workshops	
Fire Department	Inspection of the factory operation	Training on the implementation of the fireworks regulations  Training on the application of safety measures	Dissemination of the legal framework that controls fireworks production  Verification of the Good operation of factories	Follow up factory operation
National Family Secretariat		Project monitoring	Participation in monitoring through national committee	
INSAFORP			People's participation in existing training workshops  Finance special professional training courses	Has taught courses according to the population's needs

INSTITUTION	PRODOC	APSO SOCIAL PROTECTION	APSO PRODUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES	EFFECTIVE ROLE
Mayor's Office Munic Ciudad Delgado		Obtain land for model factory  Promote mixed-economy enterprises		Support process to obtain land for model factory  Contribute with staff for Child Development Center  Contribute premises for CIPi's operation  Revision of municipal regulations
Mayor's Office Munic Mejicanos		Creation of micro region  Revision of municipal regulations, relocation of factories and social promotion		Revision of municipal regulations
Mayor's Office Munic Apopa		Child Development Center Santa Catarina  Health Clinic Complejo Santa Catarina  Multiple use room  Relocation of fireworks factories		
Mayor's Office Munic Cuscatancingo		Relocation of fireworks factories  Recreation Programs  Creation of Child Development Center		

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Report of the Workshop to Validate the Results of the Evaluation**

#### **1. Agenda**

##### Day One

- 08:30 a.m. Participants' registration
- 08:45 a.m. General presentation. ILO's IPEC  
Mr. Benjamín Smith  
Main Technical Advisor
- 09:00 a.m. Presentation. Project to Eradicate Child Labor in Fireworks Production  
Ms. Melania Recinos  
Project Coordinator
- 09:30 a.m. Presentation. General Framework of the Evaluation  
Lic. Ítalo Cardona  
National Coordinator
- 10:00 a.m. Presentation. Preliminary Results of the Evaluation  
Diana Otero de Oqueli  
Coordinator of the Evaluation team
- 10:30 a.m. Recess
- 11:00 a.m. Participants' Comments
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 02:00 p.m. Presentation. Social Protection Component
- 02:30 p.m. Participants' Comments
- 03:00 p.m. Group Work
- 03:30 p.m. Recess
- 04:30 p.m. Plenary
- 05:00 p.m. Close

## Day Two

- 08:30 a.m. Participants' Registration
- 09:00 a.m. Presentation of the Productive Alternatives Component
- 09:30 a.m. Comments
- 10:00 a.m. Group Work
- 10:30 a.m. Recess
- 11:45 a.m. Plenary
- 12:45 p.m. Workshop Conclusions
- 01:15 p.m. Close

## 2. Workshop Participants

The workshop participants were second-level officials of the institutions with some decision-making autonomy. Some of them participated actively in the project coordination entities established by IPEC in the country. There were no representatives from private institutions, so this summary only makes reference to those that actually assisted the workshop.

The institutions that participated in the workshop were:

- Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare
- Ministry of National Defense
- National Civil Police
- Fire Department of El Salvador.
- Municipality of Ciudad Delgado.
- Association Fe y Alegría de El Salvador.
- Association El Bálsamo.

## 3. Work Methodology

The most appropriate methodology was thought to be the presentation of the preliminary results of the evaluation, summarizing the most important results for their discussion with the participants. A space for comments, questions, and answers was assigned, in addition to organizing work groups for the discussion of the main points in the evaluation and to propose recommendations to improve on the work already done.

With this methodology, the participation of the organizations related to the project activities was encouraged in such a way that they would provide input and feedback about the results of the evaluation.

#### 4. Workshop Conclusions

In summary, the participants mentioned the following as the most important elements in relation to the project:

- *Project implementation level*  
The participants are concerned about the low level of the project's implementation, debating about the exaggerated optimism for the identification of the target population which is to be covered by the project. The participants feel that the legal framework is a factor that affects the project's capacity to identify the population, but it is necessary to continue with the activities despite these circumstances. No concrete commitment was obtained to support the project from these institutions in this sense.
- *Institutional participation*  
The participants acknowledged their institutional responsibility to assure the removal of children from working in fireworks production; however, they also acknowledged their absence from the project's actions and the negative effects of this tendency with respect to achieving the expected project results. The participants advocated giving direct and constant support to the project, so that the removal of children from child labor becomes effective and sustainable.
- *Approach to attend the sector*  
There was divergence of opinion among the participants regarding the strategy to deal with the fireworks sector. This divergence confirmed the thesis that there is a dilemma that the country is not solving effectively, and which is generating uncertainty among the fireworks-producing communities and families. At the end of the workshop, there was no consensus on this issue, making it one of the most important challenges to be solved to be able to offer effective attention to the target population.
- *Importance of education*  
The participants agreed on the importance of education in the strategy to eradicate child labor in fireworks production. Therefore, they were concerned about the temporary closing of the services offered to the children during the high season of fireworks production. It is estimated that the project has to establish a solid and permanent relationship with the Ministry of Education, and with the schools located in the project intervention area, in order to ensure quality and relevant education for the children who work in the fireworks industry.
- *Emphasis on awareness*  
The awareness actions are essential for the project and for the families to understand the risks that children run when they are involved in fireworks production, and for them to agree to remove them from this dangerous activity. However, the participants agreed on

the fact that awareness itself would have little significant effect; thus the approach to the target population should be integral.

- *Alternatives for the families*

The families involved their children in fireworks manufacturing due to the need to assure their household survival. This premise in the project strategy is shared by the participants, who agreed on the importance of identifying alternatives to fireworks production that would allow families to maintain and even improve their income without recurring to child labor. This situation is particularly important when considering the current trend to enforce a legal framework that forces families into illegal production and, therefore, to hide child labor. It was estimated that a combination of restrictions and prohibitions, together with direct support to the families to implement alternative productive activities, is the best option for the project to pursue.