



FINAL EVALUATION BRIEF | October 2023

TOGETHER AGAINST CHILD LABOR IN TUNISIA (PROTECTE) PROJECT

The PROTECTE project in Tunisia was funded by the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) and implemented by the International Labor Organization (ILO) from September 2016 to August 2023. PROTECTE was designed to support the Government of Tunisia and other key stakeholders to implement the National Action Plan Against Child Labor in Tunisia (NAP-TN) and support the goal of preventing and reducing child labor in Tunisia.

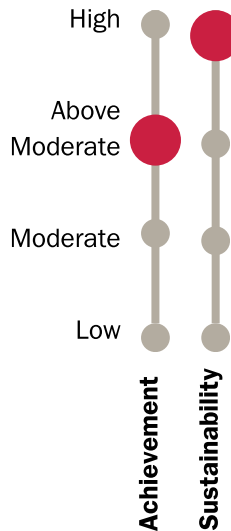
The results presented in the brief were garnered through a qualitative and participatory performance evaluation conducted by DevTech Systems Inc. The evaluation utilized a two-step outcome harvesting methodology infused with the principles of a utilization-focused evaluation (U-FE). A U-FE approach ensures that the evaluation is useful to its intended users and that integrating users into the evaluation process generates more relevant findings that are more likely to be used. Evidence was drawn from a desk review of PROTECTE documents coupled with semi-structured key informant interviews and focus group discussions, triangulating data across sources and data types to respond to the evaluation questions.



KEY RESULTS OF THE PROTECTE PROJECT



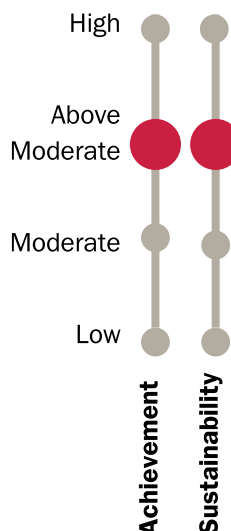
OUTCOME 1 : PROTECTE successfully built the capacity of Government, workers' and employers' organizations, and civil society, facilitated information coordination, and supported the implementation of the NAP-TN.



The project successfully engaged diverse stakeholders, including government, employers, social actors, and civil society, increasing their awareness and knowledge of child labor issues. PROTECTE provided essential resources and tools, including simplified guidelines on national child labor law and regulations for labor and occupational safety inspectors. This addressed the lack of expertise and improved law enforcement efforts. Systematic training dissemination and increased resources for future NAP-TN implementation are essential to sustain and enhance these achievements. These successes were achieved despite the challenges posed by a dynamic and complex social and political context characterized by frequent turnovers of governments, directors, and project managers, in addition to the COVID-19 health crisis.



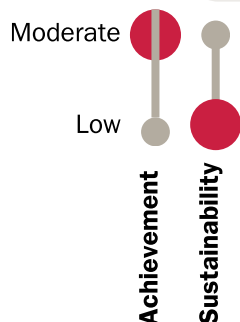
OUTCOME 2 : PROTECTE contributed to a better understanding and the expansion of the existing knowledge base of child labor, including through an inaugural national survey to furnish key data to policymaker to inform decision-making.



PROTECTE provided policymakers with valuable research through an inaugural national survey, improving framing of the child labor phenomenon and furnishing policymakers with valuable data for informed policymaking. As a result of the training and tools provided by PROTECTE, the Ministry of Social Affairs noted their enhanced ability to craft child labor reports, bolstering their ministry's capabilities. Discussions are ongoing to integrate a child labor indicator into the National Institute of Statistics' data collection activities. This endeavor seeks to streamline data collection from various government and non-government sources, fostering coordinated research and the establishment of effective mechanisms for ongoing monitoring.



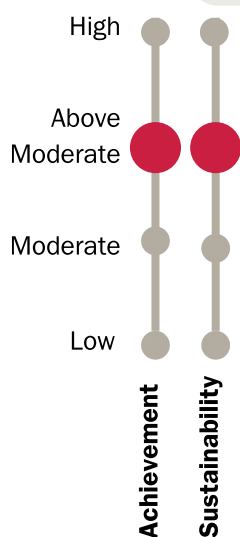
OUTCOME 3 : PROTECTE struggled to raise awareness among and mobilize the general public and cited the high cost of media campaigns and the topic's sensitivity as reasons for this challenge.



PROTECTE achieved moderate progress by successfully shifting public officials' mindset from denial to a strong commitment to combat child labor, a critical first step to onboard key stakeholders. However, efforts to raise public awareness about child labor faced limitations, primarily due to the high cost of media campaigns and limited engagement from public media sources.



OUTCOME 4 : PROTECTE supported the implementation of a tested child labor monitoring system (CLMS) in the two targeted regions; however, replication is unlikely without significant capacity building and adaptations for other regions and nationally.

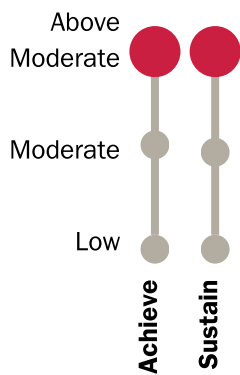


Key stakeholders considered activities towards establishing a CLMS premature in the first national plan to combat child labor. Due to political instability and COVID-19, the implementation was delayed until the end of the project. However, the project made significant strides in piloting a non-digital CLMS model at the regional level. Case monitoring and reporting effectiveness were more evident in Sfax than in Jendouba. Systematic evaluation and learning from both targeted regions are necessary to facilitate the model's replication in other regions and to advance the digitalization of the identification and intervention processes.



OUTCOME 5 : PROTECTE collaborated with government, social, and civil society actors to support the use of alternative reintegration models but encountered challenges with the Ministry of Education due to their different priorities.

The project fostered collaboration among the Ministry of Social Affairs, Vocational Training and Employment, social partners, and civil society. The Center for Defense and Social Integration received support for educational reintegration, especially for children aged 12 to 15 without access to public vocational training. These centers' limited



resources, seats, and geographical scope restrained the scale of the intervention and excluded some vulnerable populations. A significant challenge encountered by the project was the Ministry of Education's resistance to consider the reintegration solutions proposed by the project.



OUTCOME 6 : PROTECTE faced considerable delays in mobilizing regeneration models at the community level. Educational and mobilization activities were still ongoing at the time of the evaluation. Recipients welcomed the direct aid, but insufficient data prevented the evaluation from rating this outcome.

Outcome 6 was added in response to the COVID-19 crisis and its effect on increasing child labor. The direct assistance interventions to vulnerable children and families faced considerable delays and were still in progress during data collection for this evaluation. With insufficient data available, this outcome could not be rated. At the time of the evaluation, regional stakeholders found direct aid to be highly welcome in providing concrete solutions, economically empowering vulnerable households, and resolving family conflicts. However, effectiveness was inhibited due to the lack of a shared vision between the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and Employment.



PROMISING PRACTICES

This final performance evaluation identified the following promising practices:

- 1** A participatory approach effectively involves diverse stakeholders and builds commitment and engagement to combat child labor.
- 2** Evidence-based information to guide policy decisions regarding child labor is critical.
- 3** A common understanding of legal frameworks enhances role comprehension and inter-agency collaboration and coordination.
- 4** Regional committees in Sfax and Jendouba to implement the NAP-TN promoted effective decentralization and localized interventions.
- 5** Collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) enabled PROTECTE to overcome resource challenges limiting its reach to children in rural areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

This final performance evaluation identified the following lessons learned:

- 1** Project planning should consider external factors including political instability and limited resources of government ministries.
- 2** Considering limited funds and competing priorities, building personal commitment among public stakeholders to implement their mandates on child labor was critical to project success.
- 3** Understanding of and working within Tunisia's administrative hierarchies is critical to a successful participatory approach.
- 4** Implementing a national and regional CLMS proved overly ambitious for Tunisia's initial child labor eradication plan.
- 5** Adequate resources are vital for effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes to gather timely data to inform implementation adaptations, particularly for PROTECTE, Tunisia's first project targeting this issue.



»»» RECOMMENDATIONS

Government of Tunisia

- 1** Work to unify the visions and align the strategies between ministry policies and parallel programs to increase coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- 2** Continue efforts to revise the legal framework and align legal and regulatory instruments with international standards of relevant issues.
- 3** Institutionalize coordination mechanisms through national and regional committees to achieve inter-ministerial collaboration and decentralized implementation of NAP-TN.
- 4** Promote social sensitization and mobilization through targeted awareness campaigns with an enhanced role for civil society.
- 5** Continue to develop the digitized CLMS focusing on regional level implementation.
- 6** Expand capacity building and mainstream child labor issues in additional governorates.
- 7** Enhance child labor prevention with educational support and alternative reintegration models and expand to the most vulnerable children.

International Labour Organization

- 8** Place greater emphasis on contextual monitoring and learning, clearly define and routinely assess the project's actions and assumptions, and systematically evaluate progress to inform management and technical adaptations.
- 9** Prioritize CSO and public institutions collaboration when awarding grants to enhance logistical support.

Bureau of International Labor Affairs

- 10** Balance stakeholders needs with a thorough, regularly updated contextual assessment to promote the technical feasibility of projects.



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For more information regarding the PROTECTE Project, scan the QR code or access the following site:
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/together-against-child-labor-tunisia-protecte>.



USDOL commissioned DevTech Systems, Inc. to conduct an independent final performance evaluation of PROTECTE. For the full report, scan the QR code or access the file online at URL.