

FUNDED BY THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

# Independent Midterm Evaluation of the Combating Child Labor and Exploitation Through Education in Guinea (CCLEE) Project

Save the Children

Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0060



2006



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>I CONTEXT</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Education	1
1.2 Exploitive Child Labor	2
1.3 Refugees and Child Soldiers	2
1.4 Child Trafficking	2
<b>II PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>III EVALUATION OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Project Design	9
3.2 Project Implementation	9
3.3 Partnership and Coordination	9
3.4 Management and Budget	10
3.5 Sustainability and Impact	10
<b>IV EVALUATION METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>V FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1 Project Design Issues	13
5.2 Project Implementation	19
5.3 Partnership and Coordination	33
5.4 Management and Budget	37
5.5 Sustainability and Impact	39
<b>VI LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES</b>	<b>43</b>
6.1 NGO Partnerships	43
6.2 Building on Existing Organizations Within the Community	43
<b>VII STAKEHOLDERS MEETING</b>	<b>45</b>

## **ANNEXES**

Annex A: Contact List

Annex B: List of Participants in the Stakeholders Meeting

Annex C: Summary of Ideas from the Stakeholders Meeting

Annex D: Stories from Nafa Center Students

Annex E: Terms of Reference

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

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AACG	<i>Association des animateurs Communautaires de Guinée</i> (NGO partner)
APEAE	<i>Association des Parents d'Elèves et Amis de l'Ecole</i> (Parents` Association)
APROFIG	<i>Association pour la Promotion des Filles de Guinée</i> (NGO partner)
ASED	<i>Association "Sauvons les Enfants Déshérités"</i> (NGO partner)
CAAF	<i>Centre d'Appui a l'Auto-promotion Feminine</i> (Vocational training center in N`Zérékoré)
CAM	<i>Club des Amis du Monde</i> (NGO partner)
CECOJE	<i>Centre d'Ecoute, de Conseil et d'Orientation pour Jeunes</i> (Youth Center)
CCC	Central Consultative Committee
CCP	District (Prefectural) Consultative Committee
CCR	Regional Consultative Committee
CONEBAT	National Commission for Basic Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EFA	Education for All
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
ICLP	International Child Labor Program
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO-IPEC	International Labour Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INADER	<i>L'Institut National pour l'Appui au Développement Rural</i> (NGO partner)
MEPU-EC	Ministry of pre-University Teaching and Civic Education
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PACEEQ	Community Participation for Equitable and Quality Basic Education
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RONGEP	NGO network for Education and Child Protection ( <i>Réseau des ONG pour l'Education et la Protection des Enfants</i> )
SERACCO	<i>Service Régional d'Appui aux Collectivités et de Coordination des ONG</i> (Regional Service Coordinating Local Government and NGOs)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2004, Save the Children U.S. signed a four-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to implement the project entitled Combating Child Labor and Exploitation through Education in Guinea (CCLEE). The project aims to reduce the number of children engaged in or at risk of the worst forms of child labor and exploitation and enable such children to benefit from either formal or nonformal education.

Save the Children U.S. manages the project in partnership with five national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), using a range of strategies designed to achieve the following four goals:

1. To raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.
2. To strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.
3. To strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.
4. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The CCLEE project works in 110 communities in 10 districts. It has restructured and trained 100 primary school parents' associations and 20 nonformal education center management committees. These organizations have registered a total of 4,157 vulnerable children who were either exposed or at risk of exposure to exploitive labor; 3,351 of these are now enrolled and being supported and monitored in either formal or nonformal education. The project has revitalized 20 nonformal education centers that were not previously functional. A Central Consultative Committee (CCC) brings together representatives of five government ministries concerned with children, employment, education and the law in order to promote the development and implementation of child protection and education policies and support project initiatives. Similar committees have been set up at regional and district levels. Youth clubs have been established in some communities to enable young people to play a role in their own protection and that of their peers. They use theatre, sport and other strategies to draw attention to health and child protection issues (including HIV/AIDS) and the importance of education. Support networks for girls have been set up in nine project districts in response to the particular difficulties faced by girls trying to access education. These networks bring together representatives of local agencies to promote a girl friendly environment for education and to act in specific cases to facilitate enrolment and attendance.

The midterm evaluation looked at the impact of the project in relation to its objectives, with the aim of insuring that children's needs are being met through current interventions and that the remaining period of the project is utilized to maximum effect.

The evaluation found that local organizations in communities where the project works have considerable understanding of child protection issues. They can consistently distinguish between acceptable work for children and work which is exploitive or hazardous. They are using the project training to identify and register vulnerable children in their communities and to

encourage their enrolment in formal or nonformal education. As a consequence of project training for parents' associations and management committees, primary schools and nonformal education centers have more democratic, transparent and effective management. The quality of the education on offer is improving due to better community monitoring and follow-up of student and teacher attendance and the development of local action plans to address issues such as lack of infrastructure, equipment and personnel. The implementation of these action plans is supported by improved advocacy techniques which facilitate negotiation with potential financial and technical partners. These project activities benefit not only children registered as being at risk but also all those attending the schools concerned. Increased demand for education has become apparent in many communities since the start of the project to the extent that sometimes the supply does not meet the demand.

The project's work at the grass roots is complemented by its policy level initiatives. Members of consultative committees at central, regional and district levels have participated in key project activities and expressed their commitment to promoting child protection and education. These committees have established links between key government agencies at various levels and encourage them to work together for the same objectives. This has the potential to become a functional national child protection network that continues to coordinate responses to child protection issues after the end of the project, but in the context of Guinea's difficult political situation it remains to be seen to what degree this will materialize.

Youth clubs, while operating in a limited number of communities, are generating interest, enthusiasm and commitment among their members. They are enabling young people to develop leadership and organizational skills and to make messages about children's rights and protection more widely available to their peers.

Save the Children has developed effective partnerships with five national NGOs which are successfully implementing project activities at the community level principally through the delivery of high quality training programs to community organizations. An impressive NGO capacity building program is planned based on a participatory analysis of strengths and weaknesses which was carried out within the framework of the project.

The project team has had difficulty understanding and measuring the USDOL common indicators, and project documentation and reporting lacks clarity and on occasions, accuracy. However, in spite of these difficulties and some fairly serious project management issues, the project is on the way to meeting its outputs. A considerable amount of work remains to be done but with good planning and no further disruptions the project can achieve its objectives by the time it finishes in 2008.

This report describes in detail the midterm evaluation which took place during October 2006. The report was prepared by Macro International Inc., according to guidelines prescribed by the USDOL International Child Labor Program (ICLP). The evaluation was conducted and documented by Sue Upton, an independent development consultant, in collaboration with USDOL/ICLP staff, members of the project team, and stakeholders in Guinea.

# I      **CONTEXT**

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The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funds international labor projects through its Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), one part of which is the International Child Labor Program (ICLP). In 2001 ICLP began funding the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), which seeks to improve the access and quality of basic education for children who either have been involved in the worst forms of child labor or are at risk of becoming involved. The EI has four main goals which are—

1. To raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.
2. To strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.
3. To strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.
4. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The Republic of Guinea possesses major mineral, hydropower and agricultural resources, yet remains one of the world's least developed countries. In 2004 a U.S. State Department report estimated that at least 40% of the population lives below the poverty line<sup>1</sup> and around 85% survives through subsistence farming and informal commerce. The country suffers from rampant inflation and the state is largely dysfunctional. Political infighting surrounds the president of 26 years, as demonstrated by the widely publicized drama currently being played out between rivals Mamadou Sylla and Fodé Bangoura. Governance is poor and in Transparency International's newly updated corruption index, Guinea is listed second equal as the most corrupt country in the world. Government workers are poorly paid, with salaries often in arrears and failing to cover the cost of basic food requirements. This untenable situation has resulted in a series of national strikes during 2006 which will almost certainly continue. Existing infrastructure is poorly maintained, which has led to a crisis in the Forest region, which currently has no passable major road connecting it to the rest of the country. Fuel can only arrive across the border from Liberia and can be three or more times as expensive as in other regions.

## **1.1      EDUCATION**

While Guinean law made education compulsory and free in 1984, primary school enrollment remains low, principally due to parents' inability to meet the associated costs and the need for children to contribute to the family income. More boys than girls are enrolled in school and girls are often withdrawn early, either to work or to marry. In 1986, the Ministry of Education created parents' associations (APEAE) to provide stronger links between schools and their communities and to give parents some control over their children's education. Since 1987 Save the Children has been working with some of these associations in the Forest and Upper Guinea regions to promote the value of education and encourage community participation in the education process.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—2003: Guinea*, Washington, DC, February 25, 2004.

Over the past 15 years there have been several national education initiatives and some progress has been made. However in 2005 only 36% of men and 14%<sup>2</sup> of women were literate and there is a long way to go to achieve the goal of Education for All.

In addition to strengthening the formal education sector, the government, assisted by UNICEF, created *Nafa* centers, which give young people who have left or never attended school a “second chance” to acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills. The centers can also enable children to reenter the formal schooling system.

## **1.2 EXPLOITIVE CHILD LABOR**

The combination of a fragile economy, a weak education system and the absence of a formally regulated labor sector makes child labor pervasive. Activities range from household chores to exploitive labor that impinges on children’s health and development, including subsistence farming, small-scale commerce, mining, domestic labor and child soldiering. Most rural children work at home or in the fields, whereas urban children work primarily in small-scale commerce. The perception that cities offer better pay and working conditions has created a rural exodus but children who leave their communities to seek more remunerative solutions in the towns are more vulnerable to exploitation than their urban counterparts. In 2000 the ILO estimated that 309,000 Guinean children between the ages of 10–14, or 31% of the children in that age group, were economically active.<sup>3</sup> Guinea ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182 in 2003<sup>4</sup> but, while the government has spoken out against child labor, it lacks technical and financial resources, enforcement mechanisms and reporting structures to combat the problem.

## **1.3 REFUGEES AND CHILD SOLDIERS**

Guinea shares borders with Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, which all suffer from civil unrest or the after effects of war. The flow of people, including refugees and former child soldiers, across Guinean borders makes exploitive child labor an international concern. A large number of relief agencies have been working with refugees in the Forest region in recent years. As these people return to their countries of origin the agencies are also departing, leaving the local population to cope with remaining refugee youth who are often traumatized and lack family or other social support systems.

## **1.4 CHILD TRAFFICKING**

Child trafficking has become increasingly common in Guinea. A 2003 study commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs determined that the majority of children come to Conakry in search of work from Upper Guinea, the Forest Region, and Middle Guinea.<sup>5</sup> Children from neighboring countries are also trafficked in or through Guinea and in 2005 the governments of

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<sup>2</sup> Available at [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan\\_africa/countries/guinea/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/guinea/).

<sup>3</sup> ILO, International Labor Office—Bureau of Statistics, *Economically Active Population 1950–2010*, STAT Working Paper, ILO 1997.

<sup>4</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [cited 10 August 2004]; available from [http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/raifce.pl?Guinea\\_](http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/raifce.pl?Guinea_).

<sup>5</sup> Stat View International, *Enquête Nationale sur le Trafic des Enfants en Guinée*, August 2003.

Mali and Guinea signed an agreement to combat child trafficking between the two countries. Guinea is also one of nine West African countries to sign a multilateral agreement to cooperate against child trafficking.

In September 2004 Save the Children signed a four-year cooperative agreement with USDOL to implement the EI project entitled “Combating Child Labor and Exploitation through Education in Guinea” in 22 districts of the four natural geographical regions of Guinea.

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## II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project aims to reduce the number of children at risk of or engaged in the worst forms of exploitive labor by withdrawing them from such work or preventing their exposure to it and by providing them with education. Project activities are concentrated in 110 communities in 10 districts where children were judged to be particularly vulnerable. A further 12 districts will benefit through the dissemination of information and experience gained in the intensive implementation zone.

**Table 1: Project Activities by Location**

Geographical Region	District (Prefecture)	Communities	Primary Schools	Nafa Centers	Youth clubs	Girls' support networks
Conakry	Conakry	6	6	0	3	0
Coastal	Boké	12	12	1	2	1
Upper Guinea	Kankan	12	10	2	6	1
Upper Guinea	Kerouane	11	10	3	1	1
Upper Guinea	Mandiana	11	10	2	1	1
Mid Guinea (Futa)	Labé	18	14	4	2	1
Forest	Guéckédou	10	10	2	1	1
Forest	Macenta	8	8	2	2	1
Forest	Lola	12	10	2	1	1
Forest	N'Zérékoré	10	10	2	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>

Note: The 12 districts identified for non intensive coverage: Forecariah, Gaoual, Kindia, Mamou, Dabola, Dinguiraye, Faranah, Siguiré, Kissidougou, Youmou, Kouroussa, and Bey.

The project works with the Parents' Associations of 100 primary schools and the Management Committees of 20 nonformal education centers to enable them to differentiate between acceptable and non acceptable work for children, identify children engaged in or at risk from exploitive labor and encourage and support their enrollment in formal or nonformal education. These community associations receive financial, management and advocacy training to enable them to support and improve the functioning of the schools and nonformal education centers in their communities, hence improving the quality of the education provided. Project activities include establishing youth clubs in some communities and support networks for girls in most project districts. The project also works on a policy level and has established a Central Consultative Committee at a national level (CCC), three Regional Consultative Committees (CCR) and 10 Consultative Committees at District (Prefectural) level (CCP) to support the development and implementation of child protection legislation.

Save the Children manages the project from its Guinea headquarters in Kankan and three regional offices in Conakry, Labé and N'Zérékoré. The project is implemented in partnership with government ministries, five national NGOs and 120 community organizations with assistance from various other national and local collaborators. The work at community level is carried out by the national NGO partners, each covering the districts indicated below:

- *Club des Amis du Monde (CAM)*—Conakry and Boké
- *Association Sauvons les Enfants Déshérités (ASED)*—Labé
- *Association pour la Promotion des Filles de Guinée (APROFIG)*—Kankan, Mandiana, and Kerouné
- *Association des animateurs Communautaires de Guinée (AACG)*—Guéckédou and Macenta
- *L'Institut National pour l'Appui au Développement Rural (INADER)*—N'Zérékoré and Lola.

The project is implementing a range of strategies and activities in order to achieve the following outputs:

**Output 1: Awareness Raising**

Output 1.1: Stakeholder awareness raised regarding the importance of education and the negative effects of exploitive child labor, especially regarding girls.

Output 1.2: Girls' awareness raised about the importance of education and the consequences of risky behavior.

**Output 2: Educational Systems Strengthened in the Target Communities**

Output 2.1: Quality of formal education delivered to children in targeted schools improved.

Output 2.2: Access and quality of education delivered to students at *Nafa* and other nonformal education centers improved.

Output 2.3: Girls' education and protection issues addressed by formal and nonformal educational systems.

**Output 3: Institutional Capacity Strengthening**

Output 3.1: Capacity of governmental institutions regarding education and child protection re-enforced.

Output 3.2: Capacity of NGOs, APEAEs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) in education and child protection re-enforced, with emphasis on girls' issues.

The project document states that the project intends to reach 4,800 children at risk of engaging in exploitive child labor by enrolling, monitoring and supporting them in nonformal or formal education programs and providing them with school supplies or materials. The project also intends to indirectly support the enrollment of an additional 9,000 children in primary school and prevent 29,749 children from dropping out of school and becoming vulnerable to exploitive child labor. Finally, the project is committed to raising awareness among some 200,000 family members and government and community leaders about the negative effects of exploitive labor, and promoting education as a positive and viable alternative.

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### **III EVALUATION OBJECTIVES**

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The evaluation looks at the project as a whole and its overall impact in relation to its stated objectives. The activities carried out during the first two years of the Cooperative Agreement are reviewed and assessed with regard to their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation aims to—

- Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved.
- Assist ICLP to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad ICLP technical cooperation program framework.
- Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved.

To achieve these objectives the various aspects of the project are divided into five categories:

#### **3.1 PROJECT DESIGN**

The evaluation assesses the project's overall design in terms of its relevance and adaptation to the Guinean context. It looks at the direct and indirect services provided to children and the types of child labor that beneficiaries engage in the targeted areas. It considers the degree to which the project was informed of the needs of the targeted population at the start and the adequacy of the project's preparation to meet its objectives.

#### **3.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Project implementation issues focus on the project's progress towards meeting its stated purpose and outputs and the challenges that it has encountered so far. The evaluation considers the reasons for the identification of 4,800 direct beneficiaries in the second year of the project and the consequences and impact of this decision. The capacity of the project to track direct beneficiaries and other aspects of monitoring and evaluation are assessed alongside the implementation and impact of project activities. The evaluation looks particularly at how the project is improving the quality of vocational and nonformal education and also at its use of mass media to raise awareness about child labor.

#### **3.3 PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION**

The major issues and challenges of initiating and coordinating partnerships in support of the project are examined including the opportunities for working with the host country government and the development of the Central Consultative Committee. The evaluation also assesses the partnerships between the principal organizations involved in the project.

### **3.4 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

The evaluation looks at the overall management of the project and budget issues with regard to their effect on project implementation. It also considers whether the project team is able to work effectively within the current budget provision and management structure.

### **3.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT**

This section examines the strategies being used to promote sustainability and continuing development of education opportunities to combat child labor beyond the life of the project. It evaluates the impact that the project has had so far on the various stakeholders and considers the particular challenges to sustainability emerging from the decision to provide basic school supplies to children.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to learn what is and is not working at the midterm point of the project, which may have implications for the project itself or for the ICLP program in general. The evaluation is an objective inquiry which will enable any necessary corrective action to be taken and successful aspects of the project to be reinforced. Ultimately, the purpose is to assure that children's needs are being met through project interventions. It is above all a learning process.

## IV EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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The evaluation consisted of three main phases. Initially there was a desk review of relevant documents including the cooperative agreement, progress and technical reports, the PMP and data tracking tables, work plans and the baseline study. The lead evaluator being based in Mali, interviews with stakeholders in the U.S. were conducted via e-mail and telephone. A conference call with USDOL-ICLP staff enabled a clear understanding of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and particular concerns and expectations for the evaluation to be established. Save the Children project personnel provided some input into the questions examined by the evaluation through an e-mail exchange with the evaluator that outlined issues raised at a project team meeting prior to the evaluation. The TOR may be found in Annex E.

The second phase consisted of extensive interviews with stakeholders at all levels. During this phase the evaluator met with the Director of Save the Children's Sahel Country Office in Bamako before traveling to Guinea. In Conakry representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Women and Children and the Ministry of Education were interviewed in addition to a meeting with the Central Consultative Committee for the project where the three Ministries of Justice, Security and Employment were also represented. A Guinean education specialist with knowledge of the project and other education initiatives contributed some valuable insights. The evaluator, accompanied by project staff, traveled to eight out of the ten districts where the project works. Meetings took place with each of the five NGO partners and NGO field workers accompanied the evaluator on visits to formal and nonformal education providers in each district, which provided opportunities to talk to the associated parents' associations and management committees. An in-depth meeting took place with project staff at Save the Children's head office in Kankan. Throughout the tour local authority representatives were interviewed according to their availability and a meeting with the District Consultative Committee took place in Macenta. Youth club representatives were interviewed in Boké, Labé and Kankan and discussions with several groups of children took place, supplemented by a series of question and answer sessions in the classroom. Two spontaneous visits to groups of young people in community placements where they were learning soap making and hairdressing took place in N'Zérékoré. The following list summarizes the discussions that provided information for the evaluation and more detail can be found in Annex A of this report.

The evaluator met with—

- Members (13) of the Save the Children project team
- Representatives (30) of the five partner NGOs
- Ministry representatives (6)
- Specialists from international organizations (3)
- Local government representatives (11)
- Guinean associations supporting the project (3)

- Representative of community radio (1)
- Representatives (2) of USAID's education team in Guinea
- Groups (3) of youth club representatives
- Nonformal Education Center Management Committees (5)
- Primary school Parents Associations (6)
- Boys (10) and girls (28) in small groups
- Primary school classes (3) of boys and girls
- *Nafa* center classes (3) of girls with one or two boys.

The final phase of the evaluation was the presentation of its broad findings to a meeting of stakeholders that took place in Kankan. This was attended by 36 people representing all key stakeholder organizations. The first half of the meeting was used to present and discuss the findings and the second half was taken up by small group discussions about the future of the project. The input from this meeting contributed to the content of the evaluation report.

## V FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This section examines how the project is addressing the child labor situation in Guinea, the strategies it has developed and the activities it is implementing. These findings, conclusions and recommendations are grouped in the five categories identified under the evaluation objectives:

- Project Design
- Project Implementation
- Partnership and Coordination
- Budget and Management
- Sustainability and Impact

The findings of the evaluation are organized around the questions posed by USDOL in the TOR, taking the opportunity to not only respond to each question but also to expand on the issues concerned as appropriate. Any additional findings are covered after the responses to the questions. Conclusions and recommendations complete the evaluation of the relevant issues.

### 5.1 PROJECT DESIGN ISSUES

#### 5.1.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL

1. *Assess the CCLÉE project overall design in terms of relevance and appropriateness to the following Guinean contexts:*
  - 1a. *Is the design and strategy appropriate and relevant to current day Guinean society?*

To a large degree the CLEE project design and strategy are relevant and adapted to current day Guinean society. The particular strengths of the project design are:

- **The emphasis on capacity building for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly *Nafa* center Management Committees, primary school Parents' Associations and national NGOs.** This strategy is extremely important within the current Guinean political context in that it contributes to civil society's readiness for the period of change which will inevitably arrive at some point in the future. The degree to which CSOs at all levels are able to organize themselves effectively, practice good governance and make their voices heard will contribute to Guinea's ability to make a peaceful transition to a more socially just and democratic way of life. The project design builds in training that contributes not only to its immediate objectives but also to the longer term development of civil society.

- **The strengthening of formal and nonformal education opportunities.** In a country where state systems, including education, are weak, where school enrolment is low and significant numbers of young people completely miss out on formal education, any strategy that develops and strengthens the available education opportunities makes an important contribution. CCLEE arrived at a time when the USAID funded program *PACEEQ* supporting *Community Participation for Equitable and Quality Basic Education* was already underway. Many of the project team members had experience with this program, which seeks to strengthen primary schools across the country and has created a climate of change which CCLEE has been able to exploit and extend to new communities.
- **Working at both community and policy levels.** This is particularly important due to the hierarchical and centralized nature of Guinean society. Changes in belief and behavior at community level have little chance of being sustainable if they are not supported at a policy level. The fact that messages about child protection and child labor introduced by project field workers are also carried by national and local media and supported by national, regional and district government officials, reinforces their importance. Likewise the development of a legal framework for child protection, supported by a national network of officials and CSOs makes it more likely that such legislation will be implemented and enforced.

The major weakness in the CCLEE project design is its failure to address the poverty which is the daily reality for its target communities. Parents are asked to withdraw their children from exploitive labor, hence losing their contribution to the family income. In addition they are asked to send their children to school with the additional costs that this incurs. While the provision of school supplies does help to some extent it will cease with the end of the project. The project has no income generating or micro finance strategies to help communities cope with the cost of education, and this emerged as one of the principal challenges that it has faced.

*Ib. Were important geographical and/or accessibility concerns factored into the design?*

The evaluation looked at concerns about the geographic spread of activities and whether communities are sufficiently accessible over the wide area where the project operates. Members of the project team were convincing in their arguments supporting the inclusion of the four natural geographic regions of Guinea. The principal ideas that they put forward were—

- The development of a national child protection network based on the central, regional and district consultative committees becomes more feasible if the project has a wide geographical spread so that non intensive or other areas have a point of reference relatively close at hand.
- The need to develop knowledge of and flexible responses to child exploitation and child protection issues within the different cultural contexts of the four regions.

- Expanding Save the Children's zone of intervention within Guinea in order to broaden its experience.

The problem of accessibility mainly arises during time limited exercises such as the midterm evaluation. The project has developed decentralized management systems based around regional offices which work with NGO partners based in different districts to implement project activities. Once project planning is accomplished each region is autonomous to some degree, with regular visits from Save the Children specialists to offer technical support and supervision. Regional staff came across as competent and committed during the evaluation period. It was they who organized the logistics of the visits in their region and there were no significant glitches.

The problem concerning access to the Forest region is of a national dimension since the only tarmac road became impassable in August due to the collapse a bridge. There is currently no access for heavy good vehicles or fuel tankers to the entire region other than through Liberia. The remaining minor dirt roads are entirely inadequate to cope with the volume of traffic that is now using them. Fortunately this does not directly impinge on project implementation as those immediately responsible are based within the region and project vehicles can get through on these minor roads. However, the situation adds to the general climate of unrest and dissatisfaction within which the project has to operate.

*1c. Is the design in harmony with Guinean cultural and traditional practices and appropriate to the milieu?*

While the design of the project challenges some of Guinean cultural and traditional practices, it does this in a way that local people can understand and relate to. Child agricultural labor has been a traditional part of rural life in Guinea for centuries and the concept that some forms of work are unacceptable for children is new. During visits to different communities in the course of the evaluation, people repeatedly explained that they hadn't known that some work was dangerous for children and now that they did know they were taking steps to tell other people and change local practice and the laws that regulate it.

Traditionally more boys than girls are enrolled in school and girls tend to be withdrawn early, either to work or to marry. The project puts a particular emphasis on girls' needs and education. The *Nafa* centers cater almost exclusively to girls and the evaluator noted a surprising degree of equity between the numbers of boys and girls observed in the primary school classrooms that were visited, although this did decline in the higher grades. When communities were asked whether girls left school early to marry, many of them said that this was largely a thing of the past and some even said that such a thing was now forbidden and subject to a locally imposed fine.

Community responses to messages about child exploitation and child protection suggest the arrival of an idea whose time has come. One might have expected more resistance to such challenges to tradition and economic reality, but the universal expression of support for such ideas indicates that the project design is appropriate to the milieu.

2. *Please provide a breakdown of the direct and indirect services the project provides to children.*

**Direct services provided so far:**

- Provision of school materials to 667 children enrolled in *Nafa* nonformal education centers. (The distribution took place in June when a national strike disrupted schools. This meant that some children will not receive their materials until registration for the 2006/2007 school year is complete.)

**Direct services planned for the immediate future:**

- Provision of personal training materials and equipment to approximately 80 children enrolled in the CAAF vocational training center in N'Zérékoré.
- Provision of the schools materials to those children enrolled in *Nafa* centers who did not receive them in June.

**Indirect services currently provided:**

- Child Protection training for 100 primary school parents' associations (APEAE) and 20 nonformal education center management committees to enable them to identify and register children engaged in or at risk of exploitive labor and promote and support their enrollment in primary school or a nonformal education center.
- Internal governance and financial management training for 100 APEAE and 20 nonformal education center management committees to improve their ability to effectively manage their respective establishments.
- Advocacy training for 100 APEAE and 20 nonformal education center management committees to enable them to develop and improve the education and facilities offered by their respective establishments.
- Child protection and health training for youth clubs created in selected communities to enable young people to actively participate in protecting themselves and their peers from exploitive labor and other risks, including HIV/AIDS.
- Creation of nine girls' support networks to develop and promote coordination and communication between different organizations and actors working with girls in each district (excluding Conakry).

**Indirect services to be provided during the coming year:**

- Training for 100 APEAE and 20 nonformal education center management committees concerning life skills, children's health, gender equity, providing quality education and more about child protection.

- Training for the nine girls' support networks concerning child protection, health issues and life skills.
  - Training for youth clubs concerning life skills.
  - Training for 100 primary school teachers in lesson planning and child protection.
  - Training for 40 teachers in nonformal education centers in child protection and how to use a methodology guide.
  - Development and implementation of strategies to meet the needs of children registered as being at risk but who are not enrolled in any educational establishment (currently 806 children). Such strategies include accelerated learning centers to enable a number of children to rejoin the formal education system at the end of primary schooling, based on a model being used successfully by ASED, one of the project's partner NGOs. If such children receive school supplies they will become direct beneficiaries.
  - Financial awards to support the implementation of the action plans developed by 100 APEAE and 20 nonformal education center management committees to improve the quality of education provision.
3. *In which types of child labor are beneficiary children engaged in the targeted areas? At project inception, did the project seem adequately informed of the needs of the target population and prepared with the necessary human and financial resources to successfully implement project objectives?*

The project has registered children engaged in most of the types of work mentioned in the project document. The occupations of registered children that appear in the project database are listed below in approximate order of frequency, starting with the most commonly occurring types of work:

- Agricultural work (including digging, weeding, harvesting, bird scaring) in all rural areas.
- Animal herding, particularly in the Coastal and Mid Guinea regions.
- House work including cooking, clothes washing, child care.
- Wood and water collection.
- Selling a variety of items, particularly in urban areas.
- Transporting rice and other goods by push cart.
- Washing and transporting gravel, mainly in Mandiana, Kankan, and Kerouané.
- Mining activities—two children in Kankan and two in Mandiana.

- Shoe shine.

The project team explained that it was through implementing the project that they discovered that both boys and girls leaving their home areas are often trafficked by intermediaries in the guise of “helping” them to find work in the towns. Other children leave rural areas of their own accord and head for members of their communities who are living in urban areas. These people then act as intermediaries to place them as domestics or apprentices.

The evidence suggests that the project was relatively well informed of the needs of the target population at project inception. Save the Children has been working in Guinea for many years and their team of national staff was closely involved in developing the project, which is based on their accumulated professional knowledge of the country. The project team has a broad spread of competencies complemented by those of the five national NGO partners and the project has access to sufficient financial resources to achieve its objectives.

### **5.1.2 Conclusions**

In conclusion, the evaluation found that the project design is relevant and appropriate to Guinean society today, but fails to address the level of poverty in the communities where it works. The project’s geographical spread, while challenging, is justified in order to touch each of the four geographical regions of the country and the project design factors in strategies to cope with this.

The project works principally to build the capacity of primary school parents’ associations and nonformal education center management committees, so many of the services offered to children can be classified as indirect. This is a valid strategy because it promotes sustainability through strengthening the capacity of these organizations to effectively manage their establishments and protect the children in their communities from exploitive labor. The current policy of only offering direct services to children in nonformal education through the provision of materials such as text and exercise books is creating some difficulties and this will be further discussed in the following section regarding project implementation.

The training of various CSOs and national and local authorities lies at the heart of the project. While a considerable number of training modules have been developed and delivered, a substantial part of this process remains to be completed during the coming year.

### **5.1.3 Recommendations**

1. A clear and detailed plan for the delivery of the remaining training modules needs to be developed. This should include a schedule for developing the modules that are not yet finalized and a timetable for training NGO partners in the delivery of the modules and also for the training workshops for teachers and CSOs. These activities all appear in the annual work plan under general headings, but it is unclear how they will fit together and within what period each specific type of workshop will take place. As these are core project activities, it is important to decide if it is realistic to implement all the planned modules, develop a detailed timetable and disseminate it to project stakeholders so that other activities can be planned around it.

2. It is important to discuss the feasibility of introducing strategies to help communities improve their economic situation. Although it is quite late in the life of the project to think about this, it may be possible to pilot some ideas in some communities. There are two possible approaches. The first is to introduce communities to strategies that have been successful elsewhere and the second is to give communities the opportunity to develop small scale initiatives based on activities in which they already have some experience.
3. In line with the first approach, it may be useful to look at the CARE Mali experience of MJT women's savings and credit groups during the planned visit to the USDOL project in Mali. The advantage of the second approach is that it is based on local initiatives that the project can foster and support with start-up materials and advice, thus continuing to build self confidence, self reliance, capacity and ownership within communities.

## **5.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

The answers to the following questions are inevitably interrelated. The report attempts to avoid undue repetition so the reader is advised to read the entire section to gain a comprehensive understanding of answers to specific questions.

### **5.2.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL**

4. *What have been the major challenges to project implementation thus far?*

The challenge that was most frequently mentioned by different stakeholders during the evaluation is the poverty of the communities concerned, and this has been covered in some detail in the previous section. Related to this is the fact that other agencies often provide financial assistance and infrastructure to the communities where they are working. This makes the task of a project based purely on training and capacity building more difficult as people tend to be more attracted by immediate material gains. This has been particularly true in the Forest region where a large number of relief and development agencies have been operating over recent years.

The project has also found it challenging to change behavior rooted in the cultures of communities that have traditionally viewed their children as contributors to family income and survival. The project's success in working with community organizations to achieve this became clear during the evaluation as one group after another explained that the message concerning child protection to avoid child exploitation had been new to them, but they now understood and supported the concepts. Schools' APEAE and *Nafa* Management committees described how they are acting to protect children and working to extend their understanding to the wider community. Many community groups gave clear explanations and examples of acceptable and unacceptable forms of child labor and locally generated bylaws and sanctions, reinforcing the perception that the project is successfully responding to this challenge.

Communities in urban areas, particularly in Conakry, have found it more difficult to act on child protection issues for a number of reasons. By nature, urban communities tend to be less homogenous and more dispersed. Parents' associations often include people living some distance

from the school, so it is more time consuming and costly for them to attend training workshops. The lack of any material assistance to children in primary school has discouraged some APEAEs. While Conakry has proved particularly difficult, it is important that the project is working there because there are clearly significant numbers of children at risk attracted by the supposed opportunities to be found in a port and in a capital city. The project is developing strategies to tackle the problems, which include the idea of running more compact mini-workshops to limit the amount of time that participants need to set aside.

It has been a severe challenge for the project team to understand the USDOL common indicators and definitions of direct and indirect beneficiaries. The fact that these are only available in English has probably hindered understanding of a concept that should be quite clear. This confusion has taken up a great deal of project time and energy and is still not entirely resolved for all members of the team. In the same vein, the fact that the project document has never been translated into French has meant that many of its finer details are unavailable to the majority of the project personnel.

There have also been some challenges related to project management and these are discussed further on in the report.

5. *Among the challenges described, are there any that would prevent the project from meeting its goals and objectives?*

Communities are clearly committed to the project due to the effectiveness of the work of partner NGOs and the Save the Children team in the field, so there is no reason why the project shouldn't go a long way towards meeting its objectives. The difficulties that exist relate more to reporting and measuring the results of field activities than to the activities themselves. The decision to identify 4,800 children in nonformal education as direct beneficiaries has created some problems which are discussed in detail under Questions 7 and 8 below.

6. *Has the project been on track in terms of meeting its stated purpose and outputs in the project document? If not, what seem to be the factors contributing to delays?*

Analysis reveals that of the 4,157 children so far registered by the project, 3,046 (73%) reported working 42 or more hours per week. 3,351 (81%) registered children are now enrolled in some form of education. While the vast majority of these children were working in exploitive labor that affected their access to education, the degree to which the work that they were engaged in can be described as the WFCL, as defined by Convention 182, is questionable. While the project is moving towards achieving its stated outputs, it is not clear to what degree it is reducing the number of children engaged in the WFCL, which is part of its stated purpose.

Having said that, there is a broad understanding of the importance of education and the negative effects of exploitive child labor among project participants at national, district and community levels and this is probably the project's greatest achievement so far. Better management of primary schools and nonformal education centers is already evident as a result of training received by parents' associations and management committees. The training has enabled those concerned to identify and understand the role and responsibilities of their organizations and of

each elected official. They have begun to put this understanding into practice through, for example, checking and following up on absentee students and teachers on a systematic and regular basis and developing action plans to improve the infrastructure, materials and equipment that enrich the learning environment. These examples are true of all the schools and nonformal education centers visited during the evaluation. Some of these establishments have also successfully negotiated resources to start implementing their action plans. This aspect is being further developed in the advocacy training module currently being administered. A tentative network of national, regional and district authorities is beginning to work towards developing systems for child protection at their respective levels. This aspect will need considerable support before the end of the project, including the creation of sustainable links between this network and CSOs at all levels. The project team can facilitate a process of reflection and planning at both national and local levels to enable network members to think about and plan for their ongoing work after the end of the project. This aspect is further discussed under the “Partnership” section of this report.

7. *Evaluate the significance and impact of the project’s decision in November 2005 to identify 4,800 children as direct beneficiaries and provide them with school supplies. What have been the consequences, positive or negative, of this decision and change in project inputs on project design and implementation? What is the impact of this strategy on beneficiaries in terms of prevention from child labor and enrollment and retention in school? Additionally, what impact have the school supplies had on non-targeted children in the communities?*

This decision was the result of the project team belatedly becoming aware of the significance of the USDOL definition of direct beneficiaries. That is to say that without the provision of material assistance to identified children, the project team understood that the project would have no direct beneficiaries according to USDOL’s definition. The decision was taken that children registered as being withdrawn or prevented from exploitive labor and then enrolled and monitored in nonformal education centers would also receive a package of school materials, so that they would become direct beneficiaries of the project.

In fact, the USDOL criteria for direct services require that a child *is enabled* to attend school as a result of these services. The CCLEE registered children received their school materials at the end of their first year of education well after their enrollment; so, strictly speaking, it could be said that the provision of school materials does not make these children direct beneficiaries of the project. However, in reality, whether a child is enrolled in school or not is rarely dependant on something so clear cut as the provision of a package of school materials. A range of factors comes into play and the provision of materials is one that helps to weigh the balance on the side of enrollment. There is little doubt that the provision of materials retrospectively to vulnerable children already enrolled due to project intervention is a significant factor in enabling their continued school attendance. Ultimately it will be up to USDOL to decide the degree of flexibility that they can accept in the application of their criteria regarding the identification of direct beneficiaries of the project.

This decision to provide school materials to registered children enrolled in nonformal education had several consequences, the first of which was that those children and families concerned were extremely pleased and felt encouraged and enabled to continue with their education and training.

At the same time, children *identified in an identical fashion* as being at risk, who were then enrolled and monitored in primary school, received no help with school materials. Ten project communities have both primary schools and *Nafa* centers and it is here where this discrepancy is felt most. Parents and children fail to see the logic of giving materials to one group of registered children and not to another. Some creative NGO animators have explained this by saying that children in nonformal education had already missed out once and so deserved particular encouragement, but this did not do much to alleviate the sense of injustice and incomprehension expressed by some parents.

Another consequence of this decision became evident during a visit to an extremely poor primary school squeezed between the market and the port area of Conakry. This parents' association had stopped identifying and registering children at risk in their community as they said there was simply no point because they had nothing to offer them. While appreciating the training they had received, these parents were clearly angry with the project because it had raised their hopes that they would be able to bring more children into school by suggesting that there might be some material assistance, which has not as yet been forthcoming.

It is difficult to get to the bottom of why or how this seemingly illogical decision was made. One explanation was that it was linked to the budget, while another suggested that it was the result of misunderstanding between the project team and the country director. What is now important is to expand the group of direct beneficiaries to include children registered by the project who are enrolled in primary schools, and this is the recommendation made below.

Another aspect that needs to be clarified is whether the school supplies should be given only once to each child during the life of the project or annually during years two, three, and four. Currently the generally accepted version is that this is a one-off package of materials worth the equivalent of US\$10 per child, but the budget provision is for US\$15 for 4,800 children in each of years two, three, and four of the project. This second option would clearly do more to encourage children to remain in school and to establish a culture of school attendance within the families and communities concerned.

### ***Project Document***

The project document contradicts itself on numerous occasions concerning the definition of direct beneficiaries that the project is adopting. To give just one example, on page 11 it talks about providing direct nonformal education services to 4,800 children, while on page 13 the 4,800 direct beneficiaries are described as being enrolled in nonformal or formal education programs.

### ***Project Indicators***

A further result of the change introduced in 2005 was the disappearance of one of the original indicators: “4,800 children enrolled in a *formal or nonformal education program*” with emphasis

subsequently being placed on the following two indicators, “4,600 children at-risk or involved in exploitive labor enrolled in *nonformal educational programs*,” plus “200 girl mothers enrolled in a *nonformal educational program*.”

This then becomes extremely problematic because simple arithmetic suggests that it will be virtually impossible to achieve 4,800 children enrolled in the existing 20 nonformal education centers within the life of the project. Each center has two trained teachers, so even if class sizes go as high as 60 students, each *Nafa* center would have a capacity of 120 places at any one time. There are 20 centers. One hundred and twenty places by 20 centers gives a total of 2,400 places, half of the required number. To reach 4,800 students, each teacher would need to be responsible for 120 students, which would inevitably have some effects on the quality of the service provided. The centers became functional in year two and enrolled approximately 800 students. This leaves a further 4,000 to enroll in the remaining two years of project operation. Two thousand new, nonformal education students per year is a very optimistic target, even supposing that the project develops new nonformal education options in some communities.

Reintroducing the original indicator so that registered children in both formal and nonformal education receive packages of school materials returns the project to its original concept and resolves the problems created at community level. If, in this case, USDOL is able accept a degree of flexibility in applying its criteria, the original indicator becomes instantly achievable because it would include the 2,558 children who are currently registered and enrolled in primary school.

8. *Is the project able to directly and accurately track and monitor the work and school status of 4,800 nonformal education students including 200 girl mothers? How is the project able to ensure that children are no longer working in hazardous conditions or engaging in a worst form of child labor?*

The 200 girl mothers have yet to be identified and this is an activity planned for the coming year. The project monitors the school status of children registered as exposed to or at risk of exposure to exploitive labor, which currently covers 2,558 children enrolled in primary school and 793 children in nonformal education centers. Their attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the management committee or parents’ association, which follow up unexplained or prolonged absences. Each child’s school achievement by subject is monitored annually, as are the USDOL common indicators.

The work status of a child is recorded when he or she is registered as being at risk or engaged in exploitive or hazardous work. Registration covers detailed information about the child’s circumstances, including the type of work and the number of hours per week that he or she has been working. The project has not so far monitored the ongoing work status of registered children beyond monitoring their school attendance, but during the current school term each registered child will be interviewed regarding his or her work status, with the idea of being able to asses to what to degree they have been withdrawn from exploitive work.

Apart from periodic interviews with registered children, project strategy relies on parents’ association and management committee members being aware of whether or not children are

engaged in exploitive labor because they are living in the same communities. The training provided by the project enables community organizations to recognize exploitive and hazardous work, to identify and register children at risk, and encourage, and put pressure on their parents to enroll them in school or nonformal education so that they can receive education, be monitored and thus protected.

Members of APEAE and management committees can also ensure that local child protection byelaws are implemented. The evaluator came across several examples of these including a limitation placed on the age at which a child can scale a palm tree to pick palm nuts and a ban on early marriage for girls in some areas.

9. *Assess the project's ability to measure and/or monitor the impact of its support to 9,000 (indirect beneficiary) newly enrolled children. How does the project identify students to be enrolled, 'facilitate enrollment,' and attribute and measure the impact of its support to these children?*

These 9,000 potential indirect beneficiaries benefit from improvements in school management, school facilities and in the quality of the education on offer in 100 primary schools. Before the end of the project, the parents' associations of these schools will have received training on the following themes:

- Child protection (one of three modules so far, including children's rights)
- Internal governance (finished)
- Financial management (finished)
- Advocacy (nearly finished)
- Life skills
- Health
- Gender equity
- Quality education

One-hundred teachers will have received training in—

- Child protection
- Lesson planning

Each parents' association has completed an action plan to address issues in its particular school. The project will shortly offer an award to each school to contribute to the costs of implementing its action plan.

The project monitors the existence and state of school infrastructure (e.g., classrooms, water points, latrines), equipment (desks and chairs) and text books, as well as the available teaching staff and particular strengths and weaknesses of each school on an annual basis. The impact of project support on these 9,000 newly enrolled children is measured through monitoring their attendance, retention and completion rates. Results are aggregated by grade and by gender.

As far as encouraging enrollment is concerned, the project policy of empowering and capacity building of parents' associations again comes into play. It is these associations alongside school authorities who are primarily responsible for encouraging and monitoring school enrollment, attendance and the behavior and presence of school staff. Since the project became operational in school year 2005/2006, 5,417 children have enrolled in primary schools that it supports (2,657 girls and 2,760 boys). The project has not collected information about enrollment in previous years to provide a comparison, but such data is presumably available from local education authorities. Anecdotal evidence suggests a general increase in school enrollment since the start of the project.

10. *Assess the project's success at preventing 29,749 (indirect beneficiary) children from dropping out of school and becoming vulnerable to exploitive child labor thus far. What mechanisms has the project devised for measuring and attributing its impact and monitoring the outcomes of preventing these children from exploitive child labor?*

The strategies for preventing children from dropping out of primary education are the same strategies outlined above for encouraging new enrollment. Data for the first operational year of the project will become available as schools complete registration for the 2006/2007 school year. The project will measure its success in this area by the retention rates of children attending the 100 supported primary schools. As the first set of data is not yet available, it is difficult to assess success so far.

11. *How does the project identify children engaged in the WFCL? What challenges has the project faced in being able to withdraw children completely from the worst forms of child labor? What lessons can be learned from the experiences of Save the Children in this regard?*

Project personnel see themselves as working primarily to prevent children being exposed to exploitive labor rather than as being in the forefront of withdrawing children from the WFCL. The process for identifying and registering children at risk is as follows:

Primary school parents' associations and the management committees of nonformal education centers are trained to identify and register children at risk in their communities, including those exposed to the WFCL. Child protection training modules enable participants to understand and explain—

- The concept of protection.
- The concept of childhood.

- Child labor and exploitation.
- The current legal framework and conventions ratified by Guinea (including children's rights).
- Children and their social and psychological well being.

The child labor and exploitation component—

- Defines the concepts of work, exploitation, and abuse.
- Helps participants to identify work carried out by children in their communities.
- Explains and cites examples of exploitive work including the WFCL.
- Discusses the consequences of exploitive child labor.
- Identifies strategies to reduce the phenomenon.

The criteria used to identify and register children are the following:

**1. Children to be withdrawn or removed:**

- Any child working six hours or more per day (42 hours a week).
- Any child engaged in the WFCL (prostitution, pornography, slavery or any similar practice ).

**2. Children to be protected who are at risk:**

- Any orphan (child who has lost one or both biological parents).
- Any child who has been raped.
- Any child working less than 42 hours a week who is unsupported or neglected.
- Any child who has dropped out of school.
- Any school age child who is not in school who has vulnerable parents.
- Any child living near a diamond or gold mine.
- Child soldiers.

APEAEs and *Nafa* management committees systematically visit the households in their communities to assess whether they house any children who meet these criteria. Such children are then registered. It is within this context that the project identifies children engaged in the WFCL.

One of the challenges that the project faces in withdrawing children from work is the lack of opportunities for education in the communities where registered children live. Of the 4,157 children registered by the project, 806 are not so far participating in any education program. This is due to a variety of reasons, among which are insufficient classrooms and teachers in some primary schools and the small number of *Nafa* centers in existence. Project monitoring systems rely largely on parents' associations and management committees supported by NGO fieldworkers and it is more difficult to regularly monitor children who are outside both formal and nonformal education.

The experience of Save the Children demonstrates the pressing need for more nonformal education opportunities and the need to expand existing formal education provision. Parents in Guinea are increasingly aware of the importance of education, which is reinforced by the understanding of the dangers posed by exploitive child labor that the project has introduced. However, if educational opportunities are not available, parents and children in poor communities are left with limited choices. The project is preparing to experiment with accelerated learning centers in some communities that have no other nonformal education options. It is also looking at other possibilities, including supporting children placed with local artisans and trades people.

12. *In terms of project purpose, is the project able to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL common indicators (withdrawn/prevented, retention, completion)? If not, why not?*

The project has systems in place to collect the information needed to accurately measure results in terms of USDOL common indicators and there is no reason why it should not do so. The only factor limiting this is some remaining confusion about the definitions of some of the indicators and the need to measure and report others.

The initial registration form collects information about any type of work a child is engaged in and this information is recorded in the database. The project is due to collect information regarding the ongoing working practices of registered children during the current school term. This may result in some of the children reported as prevented in the most recent progress report (September 2006) being reclassified as withdrawn. There seems to be a reluctance to classify children as withdrawn because the project team feels that they cannot guarantee that a child will continue not to work. The evaluator was able to resolve some remaining confusion about the definitions of retention and completion. The most recent report gives figures for completion, which should in fact be reported under retention.

13. *Describe how the targeted NAFA centers have been revitalized and the extent to which the project has improved the quality of vocational and nonformal education.*

The project has carried out the following activities to revitalize the *Nafa* centers:

- Negotiation with national and local education authorities so that each center would be provided with two teaching staff rather than the initial one; 80% of centers now have two state-funded teachers and some also have an additional assistant funded by the community.
- Restructuring center management committees so that they do not include teachers and are based on community participation principals. Two new posts responsible for education and protection issues have been introduced and some committees also have student representatives.
- Training management committees in internal governance, financial management, child protection and advocacy (other modules to follow).
- A participatory needs assessment of each center has been carried out with community members and local authorities, resulting in an action plan and budget to improve the services provided by the center.
- Provision of school materials to *Nafa* center students or, in the case of the vocational training center CAAF in N'Zérékoré, appropriate materials or individual equipment according to the trade that the student is learning.
- Training for 40 *Nafa* center teaching staff is planned for November 2006. Local and regional education authority personnel will also participate to enable them to effectively monitor and supervise the teachers.
- Each *Nafa* center will shortly receive an award worth around \$2,000 to support the implementation of its action plan

The project works with 19 standard, state-run *Nafa* centers and one vocational training center run by an association. This is the CAAF in N'Zérékoré, which has a long history going back to the 1960s. It is in a poor state of repair and has virtually no equipment, so its trainees are in community placements with a range of different trades' people and artisans. The evaluation visited groups of trainee hairdressers and soap makers and found the standard of training, the enthusiasm of the trainees and the level of commitment of the management committee very encouraging. Many of the *Nafa* centers are ill equipped to offer practical training, but this should improve to some extent once the project awards are distributed.

It is clear that the project has made considerable progress in improving the nonformal education opportunities in communities where *Nafa* centers exist. This work needs to continue to help management committees to better equip the centers and to find community placements so that students can gain practical experience. It remains to be seen how these centers will progress, as

they are just beginning their second year since being restructured by the project, but there has certainly been a very promising beginning. The overall impact is limited because these centers exist in only a small number of communities and finding viable nonformal and vocational opportunities for young people in other communities remains a challenge. It is also worth mentioning that *Nafa* centers cater almost exclusively to girls, which has to be seen in a positive light but poses a question about what similar opportunities exist for boys. For the project team, this poses no problem as girls are a particularly vulnerable group whose needs are particularly targeted by CCLEE's interventions.

*Nafa* centers were originally created by the government with support from UNICEF, to cater principally to the needs of girls in recognition of the lack of provision sensitive to their needs. Girls have always been prioritized in admission and the overwhelming majority of students enrolled are traditionally female.

14. *Evaluate the project's use of mass media to raise awareness about child labor.*

National, community and local radio, television and various newspapers have been used to publicize aspects of the project at national and local levels. Broadcasts and articles have included reporting of events marking the Month of the Child celebrated in June 2006, round table discussions of child exploitation and the WFCL, and radio and television coverage of the project launch and subsequent training workshops. Several documentaries and interviews on child protection issues have been organized by the CCC and project staff in Conakry. Coverage has been in both French and local languages. The project has also financed and distributed an edition of "Globe Magazine", which is aimed at young people and published in Kankan. The CCLEE edition explains the project and features stories of individual young people (featured in Annex D) and various *Nafa* centers. It makes interesting reading.

The project has been fairly creative in its use of mass media to raise awareness about child labor, but it is difficult to assess how effective this has been. The one radio professional that the evaluator met bemoaned the fact that the project relies on one-off broadcasts rather than having a regular contract with her radio, but this may have been more of an entrepreneurial comment rather than being linked to effective use of media. NGOs said that they would have liked to have a budget to use on regular local language broadcasts, as radio is probably the only access many people have to the project message. While the project is exploiting a range of media, there is probably more that can be done to develop this, including investigating ways of measuring the impact of media events on a target population

## **5.2.2 Additional Findings Concerning Project Implementation**

### ***Work Planning***

Annual project work plans have been somewhat ambitious and significant numbers of activities were carried over from year one to year two and from year two to year three. While this is not necessarily a problem, there comes a point when it will no longer work as an implementation strategy. The start of the project's third year is probably a good moment to reassess the work that remains to be done between now and the end of the project in order to develop a detailed plan

related to and consistent with the available financial and human resources. Key elements of this plan will include the following:

- Remaining training activities for community organizations, NGOs and teachers.
- Strategies to cope with registered children who are not currently receiving any form of education.
- Literacy teaching for some parents' associations and management committees (the nonformal education specialist has proposed 18 centers).
- Building the national child protection network: Capacity building of the CCC, CCRs, and CCPs, including strengthening or developing formal lines of communication with communities.
- Implementing the capacity building plans for NGO partners.
- Exchange visits at several levels (project team to the USDOL project in Mali and visits between different community groups).

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation Systems***

The project has developed a complex monitoring and evaluation system that will be tested over the coming year, the first period for which it will be fully operational. Fieldworkers feel confident in applying the questionnaires that have been designed and tested for use with various stakeholders at periodic intervals. The database is in place to enable the analysis of results collected in the field. The project funds a monitoring and evaluation officer within each of the NGO partners, which not only strengthens NGO capacity, but also ensures the existence of a local database within each NGO, a useful resource that could be used to support future initiatives to combat child labor and exploitation. A particular strength of the CCLEE system is that it does not only collect and analyze information to measure project impact. It then also disseminates selected information so that different project stakeholders, including community organizations, have access to it.

The PMP has failed to some extent to keep up with changes in project implementation and there are discrepancies between the French and English versions. The document needs to be finalized to reflect project reality, and coherence established between the French and the English versions and the final version of the project document. The project has the potential to have a sophisticated and effective monitoring and evaluation system, but it may be useful to clarify exactly what information is required by USDOL and what information is needed to measure project indicators to avoid spending too much time and resources collecting more information than is needed. Some minor streamlining and refinement of the PMP and data tracking tables would avoid the system becoming too cumbersome.

### **Security Issues**

Security is a serious concern for project field workers in the Forest region. One has already been attacked, shot seven times and had his motorbike stolen. The evaluation team was met by a field worker openly carrying a firearm, clearly having no conception that this might be a cause for concern. The evaluator raised the question with Save the Children's Sahel Director, who was horrified and made it clear that this was completely against Save the Children's policy, which does not allow military personnel to travel in project vehicles, let alone project workers to carry firearms. This issue is being raised in the evaluation report simply to highlight that it needs to be discussed by the project team. Community development workers need to conduct themselves as some kind of role models in the communities where they work and if everyone adopted this response to an insecure situation, it would automatically make the situation worse. However, the very real issue of safety does need to be discussed and addressed.

### **Life Skills Training Module**

This module contains sections concerning information on the dangers of drugs, sex, smoking, dropping out of school, early marriage and criminal behavior but apparently nothing about decisionmaking, cooperation with others and responsible risk taking. While access to information is crucial to developing life skills, the evaluator would like to suggest that a more positive slant might be placed on this module so that it is more than one long warning about the dangers that life holds. Opportunities for role plays and simulations to enable children to develop skills in taking decisions and interacting in groups might stand them in good stead to resist peer pressure and falling prey to the dangers highlighted by the module.

### **Small Innovative Initiatives Fund**

The project document mentions a budget of US\$118,000 to enable NGOs and community groups to develop innovative strategies to address issues related to child support and working conditions. This initiative has not yet been implemented, but it provides an exciting opportunity for associations such as CECOJE to develop the work it is doing with youth clubs, for the CAAF in N'Zérékoré to develop its facilities to better meet the needs of young people, and for communities to develop small scale initiatives to generate income to support both formal and nonformal education.

### **5.2.3 Conclusions**

The project has been extremely successful in raising awareness of child protection issues at all levels, particularly in the 110 communities where it is working. It has succeeded in delivering high quality and effective training to 120 parents' associations and management committees, which are now actively working to apply what they have learned. This is resulting in improvements in school management, including monitoring of children and teachers. Communities have a growing capacity to organize themselves and plan and implement activities to improve the educational opportunities available to their children. The project is reducing the numbers of working children and ensuring that more children have access to formal or nonformal education.

There have been relatively few difficulties in implementing the project in the field. The real challenge has been in understanding and applying the USDOL common indicators. There is no reason why these difficulties cannot be rapidly resolved, perhaps with the help of the new country director, so that the project team can put all its efforts into carrying activities forward at national and local levels.

#### **5.2.4 Recommendations**

1. An official French version of the USDOL common indicators should be provided to grantees working in francophone countries when they sign the cooperative agreement with USDOL.
2. At the beginning of future cooperative agreements, USDOL should suggest to grantees working in francophone countries that they translate key project documents into French in order to maximize project staff understanding of the project and avoid confusion that can affect project progress.
3. Certain CCLEE project documents should now be translated into French and made available to project team members. These include the project document and this report.
4. In addition, the project document, the PMP and DTT need to be revised so that they are both internally coherent (without contradictions) and in line with each other. French and English versions also need to be harmonized.
5. The category of direct beneficiaries should be redefined to include all children registered in project communities who are enrolled in programs of either nonformal or formal education that are supported by the project.
6. The frequency of provision of school materials to direct beneficiaries needs to be clarified and the information shared with project stakeholders. (Once for each child in the life of the project, or on an annual basis in years two, three and four.) This evaluation recommends the second option in line with budget provisions.
7. The indicators “4,600 children at-risk or involved in exploitive labor enrolled in nonformal educational programs” and “200 girl mothers enrolled in a nonformal educational program” should be changed to reflect the original project idea: “4,600 children enrolled in a formal or nonformal education program” and the project needs to decide if the 200 girl mothers will be identified across the board or only within nonformal education programs and the indicator adapted accordingly.
8. Project reporting needs to distinguish between children who are withdrawn from and children who are prevented from engaging in hazardous or exploitive work.
9. The project team needs to carry out a comprehensive work planning exercise with the aim of completing the majority of planned project activities by the end of year three so that the last year of the project can concentrate on refresher training and strengthening identified weak points.

10. The strategy of supporting the development of small scale innovations needs to be implemented as soon as possible to allow time for lessons to be learned and documented before the end of the project.
11. Security of field workers in the Forest region should be discussed by Save the Children and NGO partners and appropriate strategies adopted.

## **5.3 PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION**

### **5.3.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL**

16. *What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating partnerships in support of the project?*

Save the Children undertook a fairly exhaustive selection process to choose partner NGOs in the different regions. There were around 160 responses to the recruitment advertisement and out of the five successful NGOs, the agreement with one was later terminated because of the organization's unwillingness to comply with the required financial procedures. A replacement partner was found and there have been no further difficulties.

The NGO partners are crucial to the success of the project and Save the Children has invested considerable time and resources to support and facilitate their work. This, combined with the commitment and competence of the NGOs themselves, has resulted in exceptionally effective partnerships characterized by good communication and mutual respect, trust and cooperation. Save the Children facilitated an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each partner organization and helped them to develop a plan to enable capacity building and shared learning that makes use of the competencies available within the group. NGO partners expressed their appreciation for the way that this was done on several occasions during the evaluation. The evaluator was impressed by the quality of the relationships between field workers and communities and by the degree to which the training offered by the project has been understood and assimilated by community groups.

The CCLEE team has succeeded in sharing information and building relationships with other organizations working in the domain of child protection and to combat child labor and child trafficking. These include Sabou Guinea, a national NGO that provides social services for displaced and other children in difficulties and CECOJE, an association in Kankan that is successfully coordinating youth clubs set up in the context of CCLEE.

UNICEF is working to develop child protection networks in Guinea and it is particularly important that the CCLEE team works in harmony with UNICEF initiatives to avoid having parallel networks set up by different organizations. The UNICEF child protection specialist in N'Zérékoré is aware that UNICEF also needs to do more to coordinate activities and share information.

The USAID education team expressed their appreciation for the work of the project. They also talked about the importance of good communication, particularly during the planning phase of

new interventions. They said that both they and USDOL could make more attempts to keep in touch and overcome the challenges of staff turnover.

17. *What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the host country government, particularly education and women's/children's welfare ministry officials, as well as other government agencies active in addressing related children's issues?*

The evaluator was able to meet with representatives of five ministries during the course of the evaluation:

- Education (MEPU-EC)
- Social Affairs, Women and Children
- Employment and the Civil Service
- Justice
- Security

All these representatives expressed support for the work of the project and the CCLEE team. The Ministry of Social Affairs' representative talked about his appreciation of Save the Children's support for the recent session of the Guinean Children's Parliament and the importance of the Central Consultative Committee put in place by CCLEE. His ministry initiated the development of the Guinean Children's Code, which is currently awaiting ratification by the National Assembly so that it can become law. This code brings together all aspects of children's rights and child protection covered by both national law and international conventions ratified by Guinea. The Ministry of Education representative appreciated the contribution that the project was making to improving formal and nonformal education opportunities. However, in all these conversations there was the underlying understanding that in the current political situation, with the lack of available resources and any serious political leadership, the possibilities for effectively tackling issues related to child protection and education are severely curtailed.

The project team expressed some frustration concerning working with government agencies due to their degree of preoccupation with financial remuneration for any involvement in project activities. While regrettable, this is hardly surprising within the Guinean context, where civil servants are poorly paid and NGOs are relatively well resourced. In spite of this, officials at the national and local levels seemed well informed and enthusiastic about project activities in their areas. Government officials at different levels made reference to Conventions 182 and 183, calling into question the statement in the most recent progress report that these are unknown at all levels of government.

18. *What have been some of the challenges and issues in working with the National Steering Committee?*

There were some difficulties in establishing the CCC and its mode of operation. Before the start of the project, some of the CCC members had been involved in the signing of the agreement between the USA and Guinean governments, which had led them to believe that the resources would be put at the disposal of government agencies rather than being administered by an American NGO. After their initial disappointment, these people seem to have worked hard to establish the CCC, but it is not surprising that they continue to request access to financial resources to fund their related activities. These resources have not been forthcoming due to the terms of the agreement between USDOL and Save the Children, but the project team has done its best to accommodate the needs of the CCC by providing them with office space and facilities within the Conakry Save the Children office.

The CCC is primarily perceived both by the project team and by its members as existing to support the CCLEE objectives through support of the project itself. While this presents no problems during the life of the project, if followed to its logical conclusion it would mean the disappearance of the CCC when the project comes to an end. If the CCC and the parallel organizations at regional (CCR) and district (CCP) level are to meet their potential, they need to be perceived and to act as the beginning of a state national child protection network that can coordinate the work of all agencies concerned with related issues. The need for this change in perception became clear during the conversation with the UNICEF child protection specialist in the Forest region. She said that she believed that she was working with the same central government representatives but had not been aware that they were part of the CCC set up by CCLEE.

Representatives from the five ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Employment, Justice and Security met with the evaluator in their capacity as members of the management committee of the Central Consultative Committee, and two of them traveled to Kankan for the stakeholders' meeting at the end of the evaluation. Representatives have participated in all key project events, including the launch of the project, training activities, media events and field visits. As individuals, they are clearly committed to child protection and to the project and a high priority should be given to capacity building and enhancing their ownership of project objectives over the next two years so that they can be at the forefront of child protection in Guinea in the future.

### **5.3.2 Additional Findings Concerning Partnership and Coordination**

#### ***Peace Corps***

At the start of the evaluation, USDOL expressed an interest in knowing if there was any Peace Corps involvement in project activities. A Peace Corps volunteer was involved during the development of the project, but since then there has been no further collaboration. Through a chance encounter, the evaluator had a discussion with the assistant director of the Peace Corps in Guinea, who was visiting the Forest region to investigate possibilities for reintroducing volunteers to the region after their withdrawal several years ago due to security concerns. She was interested to hear about the CCLEE project and the Save the Children Sahel Director was

similarly interested in the possibility of working with volunteers, so there is the potential for future collaboration.

### ***The Partnership Between USDOL and Save the Children***

Communications in general between the United States and the project have been difficult due to Guinea's poor communications infrastructure, but there is hope that the new internet connection in the office in Kankan will make this a thing of the past. The Save the Children U.S. office sees the USDOL partnership as productive, but finds it difficult to respond rapidly to information requests due to the challenges of communicating with project staff in the field. The length of time taken to approve the project document has been difficult for all concerned. The Save the Children U.S. office was apparently unaware of any project management or budget issues prior to the evaluation, which suggests a surprising degree of detachment from the realities in the field.

USDOL feels that it has done its best to assist the project in understanding reporting requirements for the common indicators, and project staff concurs with this. They found the USDOL field visit much more helpful in this sense than the external technical assistance they had previously received. USDOL found the previous project director particularly difficult to work with and this, combined with the overall Guinean environment and the moral of the project team during their field visit, contributed to concerns about the implementation of the project.

### **5.3.3 Conclusions**

The project has successfully developed effective partnerships at all levels. These are particularly strong in communities and with NGOs, where they can serve as a model for others to emulate. An area that could be strengthened is collaboration with other development partners to avoid duplication of effort and maximize creative potential. While the evaluation did not witness any direct duplication of effort, the danger of potential duplication was identified through the interview with the UNICEF child protection consultant in N'Zérékoré, who explained that UNICEF is in the very early stages of establishing a national child protection network and that she had not realized that the committees supporting CCLEE could evolve to become a national network. During the evaluation, both UNICEF and USAID recognized the lack of contact between partners as a general shortcoming that they are equally responsible for improving.

The development of the CCC, CCR, and CCP has been challenging but holds within it considerable potential for the future. In spite of the difficulties, there are clearly a number of committed individuals who are strategically placed within government ministries. These people are working within the difficult context of a dysfunctional state and need encouragement to maintain their efforts in spite of the challenges they encounter.

### **5.3.4 Recommendations**

1. The CCLEE team needs to make a concrete plan to ensure collaboration and coordination with UNICEF and any other existing initiatives to develop and strengthen national child protection networks.

2. CCLEE should initiate discussions with the Peace Corps to investigate future collaboration.
3. Strategies and activities for capacity building and encouraging ownership of project objectives by the CCC, CCR and CCP should be developed in consultation with these committees so that they form the basis of an effective and active national child protection network.
4. More strategies for consultation with key partners can usefully be built into each stage of the project process for this and future EI projects (identification, conception, and implementation).

## **5.4 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

### **5.4.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL**

19. *What have been the greatest challenges in the overall management of the project?*

There is no escaping the fact that the change in Save the Children's Guinea country director not long after the start of the project presented a challenge to project management. The evidence suggests that the incoming country director (who has now left) never understood the project in any depth or developed any commitment to it. Reports suggest that she had a poor management style and weak team building skills and consistently discriminated between different members of her team, which made the period she spent with the project stressful and disempowering for the personnel concerned. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that she was one of very few team members who could work in English and she apparently wrote USDOL progress reports with little consultation with project staff. The evaluator draws this conclusion because the most recent report contains a series of inaccuracies which do not reflect the reality in the field. Examples of this are—

- *“Support networks for girls have been introduced in the 120 project communities”* (p. 8). In fact, nine support networks have been created at district level and the project covers 110 communities (10 communities have both primary schools and *Nafa* centers).
- *“More than 100 youth clubs have been established so far”* (p. 10). In fact, 21 youth clubs have been established and no more are planned. Initially, NGOs did set up a larger number, but the project team was worried that they could not effectively support and manage so many, so the number was reduced. This led to some disappointment for members of clubs that were dismantled.
- *“76.6% of project communities offer nonformal education programs”* (p. 14). If that were the case, it begs the question why 806 registered children remain un-enrolled in any form of education. The statement seems to be an over-optimistic interpretation of community responses to a question concerning the potential opportunities for nonformal education that exist in their locality. The statement would more accurately read, “76.6% of project communities have the potential to offer nonformal education programs.”

The report states in several places that life skills training has already taken place when in fact it has not. The module has been developed and NGO partners will be trained to use it to train community organizations within the next few months.

There are so many similar examples within the report that its overall validity is called into question, as it becomes difficult to assess which content actually reflects the reality of project implementation. These examples demonstrate the project manager's apparent lack of knowledge of the project, which presented a significant challenge to project management and to the project team during her time filling this position.

20. *Have the challenges affected project implementation? If so, please describe.*

While having a country director/project manager who is not in tune with the project team is bound to affect project implementation, it has not been as disastrous as it might have been. Aside from the difficulties around identifying direct beneficiaries already mentioned, the project team has succeeded in implementing project activities with a considerable degree of success. What has been lacking is the overview of project activities that one would expect from a project manager. This would have ensured that the work plan was maintaining its pace and was better supported by administrative and budgetary provision. The Sahel Country Director was in a somewhat difficult position. She was largely responsible for project development and was the previous Guinea Country Director and clearly did not want to impose her point of view on the new country director, even though she was extremely worried about the project management situation.

21. *What major budget issues have impacted the project thus far?*

At its midway point, the project has only spent 35% of its budget. The high rate of inflation in Guinea means that there are increasingly more Guinean francs available for every dollar in the budget. It is important to carry out a budget analysis in conjunction with the planning exercise suggested in the previous section to ensure the maximum value for the money available in the two remaining years of the project. Inflation means that regular reviews of the cost of fuel and the overall cost of living are needed to identify at what point and with what frequency NGO budgets and staff salaries need to be reviewed. The evaluator understands that a review of salaries and salary structures is currently underway.

22. *Is the project team able to work effectively within its current budget and management structure?*

The Country Director has now left Guinea and the director of the Save the Children, Sahel office expects a replacement to be in post by mid-December, so there is no reason why the team cannot work effectively.

## **5.4.2 Conclusions**

In spite of the unfortunate choice of project manager, the implementation of the project on the ground really does not seem to have suffered to a great extent. There have been problems concerning project documentation and reporting and some lack of a project overview. The

project team should be congratulated for its competence and commitment, its professionalism during the evaluation, and the degree to which it has managed to get the job done in spite of the constraints and difficulties. The Sahel Country Director has monitored the situation closely. Without wanting to micro-manage, she has done what she can to mitigate the effects of the lack of project management within Guinea and is deeply committed to the success of the project.

### **5.4.3 Recommendations**

1. A budgetary review should take place in conjunction with the detailed work planning exercise recommended in the previous section.
2. A regular and transparent review process needs to be established to take into account the effects of the extraordinarily high rate of inflation in Guinea on project budgets.
3. The incoming country director/project manager needs to have a good understanding of the Guinean or West African context and be able to rapidly gain the trust and confidence of the project team.

## **5.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT**

### **5.5.1 Responses to Specific Questions Raised by USDOL**

23. *What steps have been taken so far to promote sustainability and continuation of education strategies for combating child labor beyond the life of the project?*

The project's strategy for sustainability centers on capacity building through training and support for NGOs, community organizations, teachers, and members of consultative committees. The training on offer is of a high quality and is being successfully assimilated by the parties concerned. During the remaining two years of the project, the emphasis needs to be on developing ownership of the child protection objectives and activities initiated by the project so that the organizations concerned have the self confidence and competence to continue and develop the work they are doing without the support of the project team.

One very positive indication in this sense is the newly established network (RONGEP—*Réseau des ONG pour l'Education et la Protection des Enfants*) set up by the project's partner NGOs to promote education and child protection. This network is well placed to understand the ongoing needs for capacity building and support of CSOs after the end of the project. If it is able to develop and obtain financial support for post project activities, it will be an important component in the sustainability of project achievements.

24. *Was the project's initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate? What changes were made to the exit strategy after the project began to provide basic school supplies to children?*

The initial strategy for sustainability has not changed since the start of the project. It is certainly appropriate in that it aims to build the competence and capacity of existing organizations or those created during the life of the project. Whether it is adequate will depend on a variety of factors,

many of which are beyond the control of the project. The challenge presented by the degree of poverty experienced by the vast majority of the population in Guinea means that significant numbers of children will continue to work rather than go to school. The political situation in the country and the resulting poor governance and inflation will inevitably have their effect on this.

Leaving aside these factors, improvements to child protection and education are likely to continue as long as parents' associations and *Nafa* management committees feel that their responsibility remains after the end of the project. This commitment depends on the degree to which they take ownership of project objectives and the activities they are involved in. As already mentioned, the project needs to focus on these organizations taking responsibility for children in their communities. This will not be done by solving their difficulties for them, but by encouraging and empowering them to look for, develop and implement their own solutions. A small indication that this is successful will be if during the final evaluation APEAE and management committees talk about "our activities" and "our account books" rather than "CCLEE's account books," as was occasionally heard during the midterm evaluation.

The establishment of the CCC, CCRs, and CCPs is a step towards a national child protection network bringing together the different ministries and agencies concerned. It remains to establish or reinforce links between community organizations on the ground with authorities at district level so that community groups are formally tied into the national network.

The project team has not made changes to the exit strategy since the introduction of school supplies given to direct beneficiaries. During the evaluation, there was some discussion of supporting income generating activities within communities and if this materializes, it has the potential to increase community capacity to pay for school supplies in the future.

25. *What appears to be the project's impact to date, if any, on—*

25a. *CCLEE's NGO partners (AACG, APROFIG, ASED, CAM, INADER). Has NGO capacity for dealing with child labor been enhanced by working with the grantee? Have the results with NGO partners been consistent across geographic areas?*

There is no doubt that NGO capacity to deal with child labor has been enhanced. NGO staffs have received and given training in child protection and the manuals remain at their disposal. All five NGO partners have developed a commitment to child protection and an understanding of the role that education can play, whereas previously they were more focused on education as an end in itself. The project has broadened their understanding of child development and children's needs and developed their capacity to act as effective CSOs. Results have been consistent across geographic areas. One of the strengths of the project has been its choice of locally based NGOs with knowledge of the specificities of their regions.

25b. *The formation or strengthening of APEAEs. Will APEAEs be strengthened to the point of being able to carry on project objectives without NGO support?*

In terms of improved school management, APEAEs will be able to continue functioning more effectively at the end of project than they did before it arrived. It seems extremely likely that this

will also be true for child protection activities, including the registration and monitoring of children at risk, but this will also be influenced by the availability of formal and nonformal education opportunities. It is clear that APEAEs have understood the issues and their role within the project, but everything now hinges on their capacity to take responsibility for these issues in their own right rather than as part of the CCLEE project.

*25c. The revitalization of NAFA centers.*

The project has had enormous impact on the revitalized *Nafa* centers in that they were barely functioning before the start of the project and they are now virtually full and have two or three teachers each. They have trained and functioning management committees and are providing a much needed service to their communities. The only problem is that there are not enough of them to meet demand.

*26d. Links between civil/municipal bodies, NAFA centers, and APEAEs in promoting protection for children at risk of being exploited for labor.*

In the 10 communities where there are both primary schools and *Nafa* centers, the APEAE and management committee work closely together. Girls' support networks link community organizations to local authorities and CCPs bring representatives of civil and municipal bodies together. These links are beginning to create wider awareness of child protection issues and there is evidence of concerted action in particular cases. The project has certainly had an impact in this area, as these links did not exist in the past. It is now important to ensure that they become an established part of local government and civil society collaboration.

*25e. Lives of individual children, parents, community members.*

The project has had a significant impact on the lives of the 3,351 children who have been enrolled in primary school or a *Nafa* center as a result of being registered as being at risk. The examples of individual stories given in annex D of this report bear witness to this. Thirty-three girls and 10 boys from two districts have transferred from *Nafa* centers into formal education, and this figure is expected to rise as teachers receive training and the centers become better established.

The impact has also been felt by parents and community members—both those who are part of a management committee or APEAE and those whose children are now receiving education. A further result has been the election of APEAE members to local government as witnessed by the evaluator in Macenta, where most of the APEAE in Djomandou were relatively new, as they were replacing members who had left due to election to other community responsibilities. This can be seen as an impact of the project, as it enabled APEAE members to develop and demonstrate their organizational and management capacities.

## **5.5.2 Conclusions**

The project is already having an impact on individuals, NGOs and community organizations. To ensure that this impact is sustainable, the nascent networks need to be strengthened and local and national ownership of child protection and education objectives and activities reinforced.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations**

1. The project team needs to refine its strategy for strengthening the CCC, CCR, CCP network and ensure that it has sustainable links with APEAEs and *Nafa* center management committees, with the aim of leaving an established and functioning national child protection network in place when the project finishes in 2008.
2. The project team needs to continue to develop capacity building strategies to promote ownership of child protection and education objectives and initiatives at community, district and national levels.

## **VI LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES**

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### **6.1 NGO PARTNERSHIPS**

Many international NGOs work in partnership with national NGOs to implement development activities and the quality and effectiveness of these partnerships is extremely variable. When such partnerships work well, as is the case with this project, specific factors are usually evident, among which are the following:

- Recognition that each partner has a specific and different role to play and brings particular skills and knowledge to the partnership.
- Recognition that each partner's role is essential to the success of the project.
- Power sharing between partners concerning planning and decision making.
- Tolerance of the internal difficulties or constraints of the other partners.
- Mutual respect and shared learning.

These elements are all in evidence in the project partnerships between Save the Children and national NGOs. Save the Children has facilitated these successful partnerships through specific actions which are worth noting under the heading of good practice:

- Placing and supporting monitoring and evaluation officers within each NGO partner, thus building NGO monitoring and evaluation capacity.
- Facilitating mutual capacity building, enabling partners to learn from each other.
- Being prepared to learn from NGO partners' experience gained in other projects.
- Providing high quality training to field workers.

*Working at grassroots and policy levels* is clearly good practice. Project activities at both levels mutually reinforce each other and have the potential to change perceptions of child labor and exploitation in the country as a whole.

### **6.2 BUILDING ON EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

Another example of good practice is the way in which the project works with APEAE and *Nafa* center management committees and with two other organizations in particular. The first is the CAAF in N'Zérékoré, run by an existing association that has been revitalized by the project. The second is CECOJE in Kankan, an association that has been encouraged to develop its leadership potential and activities through organizing the project youth clubs in Kankan.

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## VII STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

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At the end of the field visits, a representative selection of project stakeholders attended a meeting in Kankan to discuss the initial findings of the evaluation. After a presentation covering the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, the degree of implementation of project activities, aspects linked to partnership and coordination, and the issue of sustainability, participants were able to clarify certain points, ask questions and express their points of view. The general opinion seemed to be that the presentation captured the principal aspects of the project. It also raised some issues for reflection and some of these were discussed in small groups during the second part of the meeting. Participants were asked to develop ideas and strategies linked to the following topics:

- Host families, mentors and other support services for girls envisaged by the project.
- Providing educational opportunities for children currently registered but not enrolled in any form of education.
- Contributing to improving the economic situation of people in communities where the project is working.
- Taking into account the non-intensive zones identified in the project document.
- Other issues that participants wanted to discuss.

The groups came together to share their discussions in a plenary session, a summary of which is annexed to this report.