



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)



International  
Labour  
Office

## ***IPEC Evaluation***

### **Inter-Regional Programme for Prevention and Reintegration of Children involved in Armed Conflict Central Africa Component**

**(P340 03 900 052 – INT/03/P52/USA)**

**An independent mid-term evaluation by a team of external  
consultants**

Central Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo,  
Rwanda, Burundi

**May 2006**

## NOTE ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND REPORT

This independent evaluation was managed by ILO-IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED) following a consultative and participatory approach. DED has ensured that all major stakeholders were consulted and informed throughout the evaluation and that the evaluation was carried out to highest degree of credibility and independence and in line with established evaluation standards.

The evaluation was carried out a team of external consultants<sup>1</sup>. The field mission took place in May 2006. The opinions and recommendations included in this report are those of the authors and as such serve as an important contribution to learning and planning without necessarily constituting the perspective of the ILO or any other organization involved in the project.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

A.P.	: Action Programme
CAR	: Central African Republic
CNP	: Country National Project Coordinator
CONADER	: National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration (DRC)
CTA	: Chief Technical Advisor
CTS	: Project Monitoring Committee (in French comité technique de suivi)
DBMR	: Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring and Reporting Systems
DDR	: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
FFT	: Food For Training
IDA	: International Development Aid
ILO	: International Labour Organisation
IPEC	: International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
MICS	: Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MDRP	: Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
MONUC	: United Nations Organisation Mission in the DRC
M&E	: Monitoring and evaluation
NCDR	: National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration (Bur.+Rw)
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	: National Plan
RoC	: Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)
SNES	: Child Soldiers National Structure (Structure Nationale Enfants Soldats)
USDOL	: United States Department of Labor
VGU	: Vulnerable Groups Unit
WFP	: World Food Programme

## I. Executive Summary

1. The Inter-Regional Project document dated 17 September 2003 and covering the seven countries is an impressive accomplishment. With over 150 pages its contents show that serious documentary research has taken place in order to prepare the project, and it is both very meticulously written, logical, coherent, and very detailed. The evaluation recognises the enormous amount of work that went into the preparation of this very good project document.
2. Unfortunately, the operating environment in the African countries is anything but logical and coherent. All four African countries covered in this project are in conflict or post-conflict phase. All are trying to transition towards a democratic and functioning state, with different degree of endeavour according to their current leaders and the pressures from the international community. Three of four countries are in a very delicate process of transition or change: in DRC elections are due to take place by summer, which many see as the last chance for lasting peace; this is coupled with the continued disintegration of the state administration as a result of ten years of war and turmoil, and the country and particularly the capital city Kinshasa living in the midst of generalised chaos, repeated power failures, and widespread corruption. DRC has been and remains a country with many problems, as exemplified by the lack of reliable transportation means to travel across the country, just one example of the many challenges of working in this environment.
3. In Rwanda wide-ranging reform at ministerial and administrative level is also a cause of uncertainty as the country has been divided into only four provinces since January 06 (where 12 provinces existed previously) and the number of ministries is due to be reduced. In Burundi the new democratically-elected government has just recently begun its work and is struggling, with a recognisable degree of success, on the path to lasting peace (the latest rumours include a possible agreement with the only party which did not participate in the elections and has retained a fighting force led by Rwaswa, although this is not officially confirmed). The start of good governance appears to be on its way, although the process is incipient, remains fragile and needs to be consolidated.
4. As a consequence the four African countries are marked by an uncertain environment, where a return to violence and open-conflict should not be excluded, particularly in the DRC which hosts the CTA and the project management team, should contested electoral outcomes spark a new wave of violence. In this context, any project is bound to consider the operating environment and adapt itself to the realities and constraints of each of these countries, else it fails. The frailty of the structures commands what can be realistically achieved. And understanding the constraints in each country are of paramount importance to appraise the project's successes and shortfalls to date, something that is unfortunately not covered, documented or researched in the project document. However the constraints of the country's operating environment are so numerous and varied that a special section has been dedicated to them under the main findings of the report.
5. A first lesson is therefore to identify how other actors who have been previously working in these countries deal with the specific constraints. And a first finding shows that

flexibility is a key variable in unstable environments, and projects require a substantial degree of decentralisation of responsibilities. The evaluator is not familiar with ILO/IPEC procedures, being this the first evaluation undertaken on behalf of ILO/IPEC. However as compared to the thirty five evaluations undertaken over the last twelve years for eighteen customers, including state donors, UN agencies and NGOs, it appears that this particular project has an unusually high number of decision-makers at the different levels, which appears to point towards a lack of confidence in the capacity of the CTA and the project staff. Its inter-regional nature requires a certain degree of decentralisation, but in practice there are too many levels of clearance to facilitate project implementation. This is covered in more details in the management structure under the main findings in the body of the report, as it directly impacts on the project results.

6. In terms of accomplishments, the project team has had to work extremely hard in order to be able to ensure the actual start of the project. Serious underestimation of constraints caused by insufficient resourcing in terms of inputs have lead to further delays. Given the overall sum of internal and external constraints, the evaluation concludes that the project team has done a commendable job under extremely constraining and difficult working conditions, showing a dedication and commitment to the project which goes beyond the normal call of duty.
7. The project has by now approved 14 A.P.s which are being in the four target countries, with a total of 4,921 beneficiary children ex soldiers or at risk of being recruited in the armed groups. This represents 62% of the total target group for the four countries of 7,940 children. In addition three A.P.s are in the pipeline in the process of approval. A number of studies, destined to guide and serve project implementation, were also undertaken in DRC and in Burundi.
8. There are seven different levels of constraints in the project's operating environment. Some of these constraints are internal, while other are external. They are described in the main findings section of the report. While taken individually, these constraints would not jeopardise the project results, the aggregate sum of these constraints has pushed the project to the limit. It is currently on the brink of implosion if measures are not taken immediately to minimise the constraints given it has used all its margin of manoeuvre.
9. In its conception and approach, the project has been identified by many stakeholders as a potential model for economic reintegration in the four African countries. There are three reasons for this :
  - 1) IPEC has focused on economic reintegration as a specific component, whereas most other actors have undertaken a wide, even perhaps too wide, range of activities including under the label of "socio-economic reintegration". However their achievements to date show that there was no specific focus on economic reintegration, and particularly as regards to sustainability. In three of the four countries the IPEC project was therefore judged to be of great interest as a potential model for economic reintegration of child soldiers - provided it attains its stated objectives. It is thus quite unique in its approach and focus.
  - 2) The whole DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) is a concept which is fairly new and it still being experimented with various degrees of success

in the seven countries which are eligible to receive World Bank funding under the MDRP. The MDRP is the overall framework under which DDR activities are carried out in each of the four African project countries (with seven countries in the sub-region eligible for MDRP funds). Each of the IPEC project countries now has elaborated a National Demobilisation and Reintegration Plan (most of which were drafted as late as 2003), which is compulsory for governments to access MDRP funding. However the MDRP has not foreseen a separate programmes for children. Therefore the "special projects" component of the MDRP has been used for funding actors dealing with former child soldiers in Burundi and DRC, while there have been no special projects for Rwanda and ROC. Until the IPEC project, no actor was dealing exclusively with the economic reintegration of former child soldiers.

3) The aspect regarding the prevention of recruitment (or re-recruitment) of former child soldiers has generally been the object of weak attention by the different actors involved in child soldiers. Where prevention has been done, it has been with a rights-based approach focusing on raising awareness and dissemination. However there is no demonstrated link between the impact of these campaigns and concrete results. The revised approach used by the IPEC project is strategically and ethically interesting and unique for three motives :

- a) by using the reintegration component as the basis of the prevention strategy, results can be demonstrated as the monitoring of project beneficiaries will be able to show the status of the reintegrated children at the end of the project, and therefore the degree of effectiveness of the reintegration AND the prevention component together.
- b) The stigmatisation of former girl child soldiers makes it extremely difficult to identify this target group. They will not willingly make themselves known. Therefore in order to address this difficulty the IPEC project has foreseen the inclusion of "vulnerable groups" in the prevention component, which is where most girls have registered according to the sample beneficiary groups visited by the evaluation. Although this cannot be demonstrated by the evaluation with hard data and given the lack of time to carry out individual interviews, nonetheless they are reasons to believe that within the girls who have been targeted for prevention there may also be former child soldiers who did not want to be identified as such.
- c) The fluidity of the political and social environment in three of the four countries makes it such that an approach based only on dissemination and awareness raising would not be acceptable, in view of the generally unfulfilled needs faced regarding the reintegration of child soldiers (particularly in DRC and Burundi).

10. While this is not the focus of the project, it needs to be stated that being successful in prevention of recruitment equally leads to being successful in preventing the child's entrance into other worst forms of labour, something which is customary and widespread in all of the project's countries (for examples in Rwanda according to UNICEF's MICS survey some 352,000 children are believed to be working, many of whom are involved in some of the worst forms of child labour). So while this an indirect result of the prevention strategy, it needs to be stated that this leads to a

positive impact on the reduction of the number of children generally involved into the worst forms of child labour, over and beyond the obvious direct result which is that they are prevented from being recruited into armed groups.

11. The results of this justified approach to prevention is however reverting in higher costs than anticipated, as economic reintegration is much more costly than dissemination campaigns. This needs to be recognised and budget adjustments are necessary to reflect this reality.
12. All of the above explains why in terms of strategy, objectives and approach, the IPEC Child Soldiers' Project has the potential for becoming a model for economic reintegration of former child soldiers and children associated with armed groups. This could certainly become the case provided the means to reach to stated results were allocated to the Project team. Unfortunately in the current situation and after having reviewed and in some cases even experienced some of the numerous constraints, the evaluation sees the project currently lagging behind with consequences on the rest of project implementation. Any further delay in implementation or payment are likely to cause a fatal blow to the expected implementation results. In order to avoid such a situation, the evaluation recommends the following measures to be taken : Timely payments to partners and suppliers, effective decentralisation of programmatic decision making and budget, increase funds for oversight functions (field monitoring of implementation and results), and shifting one expatriate IPEC staff to be based in Bukavu.
13. The aggregate constraints, stemming as much from the internal and international IPEC procedures, lack of staffing at headquarters level (the VGU which oversees the project and is responsible for the project budget and backstopping the project team originally had three people, one of whom was to be out posted in DRC. Currently the unit has been reduced to one person, (expected to do the work that was previously done by three people), delays regarding the approval of documents in Kinshasa given that administrative functions are assumed by the ILO Office Director, (as a consequence reinforcing the controlling function of management and overloading the director with petty administrative work, which does not allow him to keep up to date with payment requests and other important issues – something which only strengthens an already highly centralised management style), a general lack of decentralisation<sup>2</sup> in terms of decision making, adding to further delays, coupled with the constraints of the specific working environment (for example lack of regular power supply during days in three of the four project countries – with one country with a fairly steady power supply has seen the project office move regularly within the Ministry where it is hosted (as often as every six weeks) still adding to delays, and the UN security procedures (requiring an escort in Burundi which is on phase II on the UN security scale, whereas no escort is necessary in Eastern DRC which is on phase IV) constraining the mobility of the project staff, the logistical constraints -which require sometimes days to reach places which appear nearby on a map, but given the absence of road maintenance and/or security, require sometimes a loop of 300 km to reach a place only 50 km distant! and unreliable flight connections, all these constraints have cumulatively pushed the project to its limits. The results of all this is that while the project was to start in December 2003 the A.Ps and activities actually only started in the second half of 2005. This means that **half of the project life was**

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<sup>2</sup> Due to IPEC procedures and management setup

**necessary just to prepare the project set up, without any activities having taken place.** All this while objectives have been maintained and are expected to be reached within a seriously compressed time frame. The project currently has no margin of manoeuvre and constraints should be minimised quickly to ensure smooth implementation. Some of the A.P. are based on seasonal factors, and delays in the execution means they simply cannot succeed given the agricultural calendar. Likewise the IPEC implementing partners are finding out that the whole process of formulating, approving and obtaining the first instalment of an A.P. can take a substantial amount of time, up to 14 months in one case, and that they are able to obtain much more easily funding from different sources. In one example the first A.P. presented to IPEC was actually taken by the partner to another UN agency and became immediately funded. And examples are multiplying as partners learn from the IPEC experience and use the same approach to obtain more flexible funding elsewhere.

14. Because of the importance of MDRP funding in DRC and Burundi there is a variety of funding sources which are available for actors dealing with the DDR process, and therefore also with the economic reintegration of former child soldiers. There is a real risk that IPEC partners simply choose to obtain funding elsewhere for the economic reintegration activities under more flexible and rapid funding. The project's approach and objectives are good, but procedures and management structures are simply inadequate.
15. While it is not part of the TOR to evaluate the IPEC structure and procedures, it does need to be said however and in support of the above point that partners have clearly indicated that IPEC was the slowest and most difficult funding agency they had worked with. Some specific recommendations have been made under the recommendation section at the end of the report. Partners have struggled with IPEC regulations (such as opening of a bank account, understanding the procedures, etc). In DRC, it is a requirement to deposit US\$ 5,000 in order to open a bank account, something which is not in every local association's capacity (and US\$ 2,500 for a private individual!). Delay in funding also means that in a number of cases, partners have actually advanced the money on their own funds for the activities undertaken (such as the initial identification of the target beneficiaries). It has often taken over a month to make bank transfers. All this is not contributing to the perception that the IPEC project is a reliable funding partner. Because there are still large uncovered needs, there will be continued support for economic reintegration of former child soldiers (concurrently with that of former adult soldiers, as the approach to economic reintegration is essentially the same). Therefore unless IPEC is able to give greater flexibility both in budgetary and programmatic terms, it seriously risks losing the hen that lay the golden eggs by having other funding agencies take up the economic reintegration of former child soldiers, simply because it has not been able to adapt its procedures to the enormous difficulties of the operating environment in the field.
16. The evaluation strongly recommends an urgent review of the procedures, as it is convinced that if the project must continue to operate under the same constraints it will not be able to reach its objectives. It is almost miraculous that it has been able to come thus far given the conditions. At the time of writing this draft report the third budget revision has not yet been granted and the IPEC project are on the verge of expulsion from some of the offices that have been rented, but unpaid, since October 2005! In one case the security company officer in charge of providing the office guards came physically to the

project office to collect its first payment since the project office was installed (in Bukavu). It is really urgent to settle these administrative and financial problems.

17. The evaluation further recommends that a person from USDOL be detached as observer for the final evaluation of the project, in order to gain a hands-on experience of the reality of the environment and the constraints under which the project is operating and incorporate this knowledge for future project designs. USDOL were invited to participate in parts of this evaluation as a key stakeholder. Only by being physically present on the ground will USDOL be able to appraise the incredibly difficult working conditions which are characteristic of this project, require an important amount of flexibility and that do not appear to have been considered in the project design and document. Minimising the project constraints are both as a priority and a necessity.
18. The project also needs to catch its breath and cannot continue to function properly under such a tight time-frame. As a result of a careful analysis and after discussion with the project team, the evaluation believes it is entirely justified to seek a 6-months extension to accomplish results in RoC and Rwanda, until July 2007. For a number of reasons, and chief of which the amount time which has passed since these children were involved in the armed groups (now they are mostly full grown adults), the project should not be continued into a phase II, independently of the results attained, in Roc and Rwanda. IPEC should therefore concentrate on ensuring a close monitoring of these two project countries, something which cannot be done with the current staff structure and the budget. Increased monitoring capacity is needed in both these countries, given both the fact that only one staff in each country is not sufficient to ensure field based monitoring and that budget allocation for monitoring and evaluation is not sufficient. One assistant for each project country should be recruited until July 2007 to allow proper monitoring of the project activities. The implication of inadequate monitoring are very important to the project results as it may question the validity of the data being reported. Therefore it is of capital importance that partners understand and apply the selection criteria rigorously.
19. In DRC and Burundi, there are large uncovered needs. Provided the project reaches its stated objectives and that this is supported and confirmed by the end of project evaluation, there should be a second phase for these two countries to continue their efforts. Discussions with the project team have also given a number of reasons for the evaluation to recommend a possible extension into Uganda, given that there are already existing ILO programmes, that they are also a part of the sub-regional conflict into DRC, and that there remains a large child soldiers problem.
20. It should be remembered that a project document does not automatically entail good results. Good results have been obtained by other projects despite poor and badly written project documents, and conversely good project documents have not always been matched by good results on the ground. A lesson to IPEC should be to balance its effort more to monitoring of implementation at field level, something for which it has a weak capacity given its insufficient budget and staffing, and spend less time and efforts into ensuring a good project document or A.P. document. In the end, documents remain only words on paper, and the final evaluation will have to judge the project on the basis of its concrete results, and not on the basis of how well the project document, country annex and the A.P.s were written.

## II. Methodology

21. The methodology used was a multi-method approach. A documentary review of the documents was done as preparation for the mission. In April 2005 meetings were held in IPEC Geneva with the former DED evaluation specialist in charge of this evaluation, with the Technical Specialist in the VGU (today limited to one person only), as well as with other IPEC and ILO departments. In addition and as part of the Phase I of the evaluation (covering the three non-african countries) the evaluator prepared a series of tools and interview guides which were used as much as possible into the current evaluation. A phone conversation with USDOL was also held prior to the fielding of the evaluation.
22. An evaluation instrument detailing the stakeholders and the approach to the mission was submitted after discussion with the project team on 16 January 2006.
23. The stakeholder matrix for this evaluation has been the following, and included a visit to each of the project countries :

<i>Country</i>	<b>IPEC staff</b>	<b>UN agencies (Unicef, WFP)</b>	<b>Government (DDR, Min. Labour, etc.)</b>	<b>IPEC Implementing partners (including APs and studies)</b>	<b>Beneficiaries (reintegration &amp; prevention)</b>	<b>Benef. parents</b>
<i>RoCongo</i>	X	X	X	X		
<i>Rwanda</i>	X	X	X	X		
<i>Burundi</i>	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>DRC</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X

24. In total the evaluation carried out 69 individual and group interviews with a total of 237 people. Details of the interviews are as follows :

interview stats	meet	people	meet	people	meet	people	meet	people	meet	people	meet	people	meet	people
	IPEC		UN		Govt		partners		other		benef		parents	
Roc	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	8	0	0	0		0	
Rwanda	1	1	0	0	2	2	3	7	2	10	0		0	
Burundi	1	2	1	1	3	4	5	7	1	1	5	39	0	
DRC	2	5	5	8	8	9	6	17	7	8	6	20	1	5
DRC rapid group interview											3	78		
sub-total	5	9	7	10	15	18	17	39	10	19	14	137	1	5
total interviews 69 of which 14 with beneficiaries, 1 with parents and 54 with key informants														
total persons 237 of which 3 rapid interview with 78 beneficiaries														

25. For each key informant category, the first column is the number of meetings/interviews held, while the second column represents the number of people who attended the meeting. The average interview time was 45 minutes, except for the 3 beneficiary rapid group

interviews which lasted some 15 minutes each. 66 of the 69 were semi-structured interviews using deductive enquiry.

26. The present report is one of the inputs into a synthesis report which will be prepared in the framework of this evaluation, and will cover in addition to the present report the national evaluations undertaken in Colombia, The Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

#### *The evaluator*

27. Mr. Christian Bugnion is the founder and director of Subur Consulting S.L., a private consulting company specialised in evaluation work, based in Spain. Mr. Bugnion is familiar with all four countries covered by the project, having worked in all of them on repeated occasions since 1994.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Evaluation constraints and bias*

28. Due to the tight time-frame the evaluation discussed with the Project Team how to make the best use of the time available. It was agreed that field work would only take place in Burundi and DRC where the largest target groups are.
29. Not all available project documentation had been given prior to the fielding of the mission, and additional documents were provided by the Project Team.
30. The other constraints relating to the working environment are described at length in the main findings section of the report.

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<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bugnion is a trained socio-economist and has carried out thirty five evaluations over the past twelve years for eighteen different customers including donors (World Bank, USAID, DfID, ECHO, DANIDA), UN agencies (UNHCR, UNTAET, UNDP, WFP, UNOCHA, UNILO), IOM, NGOs (Mercy Corps, SFCG, CARE, IRC, DARA) and others (ODI/ALNAP). Mr. Bugnion is a board member of the Spanish Evaluation Society, and member of the European Evaluation Society. Mr. Bugnion also teaches evaluation and humanitarian aid in post-graduate degrees in Spain.

## II. Main Findings

### *Summary*

#### 31. Summary of main findings :

- The project faces an enormous amount of constraints and difficulties. These are detailed hereunder
- The project has managed to deal with constraints and difficulties and has been able to actually start the implementation of activities at beneficiaries level.
- Most activities on the ground are just starting as the evaluation takes place; only in Kananga are beneficiaries near completion of their training
- Three A.P.s remain in the pipeline and require urgent approval and implementation
- Given the delays the time-frame is too tight to reach the objectives, and an extension is necessary for all countries
- Governments welcome the IPEC project. Despite its perceived small budget, it is interesting and can be seen as a model for economic reintegration and prevention through reintegration of the ex child soldiers and other vulnerable groups.
- Governments and partners have complained about the rigidity of the IPEC project.
- Partners have welcomed the availability and support from the IPEC staff for assisting them in designing and writing the A.P.s. Some have even been funded by other donors for their proposal. Positive capacity building of IPEC partners.
- Beneficiaries are happy with the training received : they feel more confident and have higher self-esteem
- Former child soldiers and at risk youths are no longer seen as a threat to society by their family and neighbours; if they can live from their job it will be a successful economic reintegration coupled with social reintegration

32. As mentioned in the executive summary, the project is faced with an enormous amount of constraints and difficulties. These exist at different levels, and must be clearly understood in order to properly appraise the project's results. Seven different levels of constraints have been identified, which can broadly be divided into two categories: internal and external constraints.

33. Among the internal constraints, there are three major elements which contribute to constant delays in project implementation :

1. The project design
2. The management structure
3. The decision making structure

As regards to the external constraints, there are also there major elements which contribute to a very difficult project implementation, something like trying to roll a stone uphill:

1. The political situation in the project countries
2. The state of degradation of the governance and government structures and infrastructures, particularly in DRC which now hosts the project team and CTA
3. The extreme difficulties in logistical and communication means between the four countries and even within countries (particularly DRC internal travel to the East)
4. The security situation in the different project countries

34. While the project can only directly influence its internal constraints, the external constraints are just as important in terms of affecting project implementation.

## *Internal constraints*

### *1. Project design*

35. The project design has been recognised to be of very high quality, both in terms of its structure, amount of research, and the logical and coherence that are part of the design. However it has one essential gap : it does not reflect the conditions or constraints of the different operating environments in each of the project countries, nor the difficult relationships between each of these countries. As a result the chain of logic in the interaction between the different project elements is expected to take place as if the project was working under optimal conditions in a very different working environment. The project design has further gone into great efforts to identify specific budget lines and even prepared a detailed calendar and budget, but again without considering existing difficulties and without any flexibility to reallocate funds. This invalidates to a large extent the excellent work that was placed into the project document, and creates unnecessary constraints for the project management team as it already places the project team, even before the project starts, in a rigid situation. A review of how other actors in DDR operate under the same conditions would have immediately shown the lack of applicability of a fixed and detailed budget.<sup>4</sup>
36. IPEC should not be reinventing the wheel nor attempt to force all its projects to come under the same model. Child soldiers' economic reintegration is a new and specific activity within the IPEC projects. As all newborns it requires a certain degree of flexibility in order to establish itself, something which the project design does not give it. In fact the design for project activities is so detailed that it appears to micro-manage what the project team is expected to accomplish. It almost seems as if the project document was meant to take a life of its own.
37. This however is simply impossible. As the usual saying states, "a picture is worth a thousand words" : it is therefore strongly recommended that USDOL appoints one staff as observer for the final evaluation to learn from this process how to identify and incorporate constraints in future project designs, and the necessary need for budget flexibility to be recognised in similar projects from the onset.

### *2. The management structure*

38. The project management structure is complex and has many different levels. One finding is that the nature of a project such as this makes it impossible for the CTA to be based in

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<sup>4</sup> Feedback received from a stakeholder on this point : It should also be highlighted that while the evaluation report criticizes on the one hand the time and effort put into APSOs design it does not recognize on the other hand that the technical soundness and uniqueness of the project, expressed generally by the implementing agencies, governments and other UN agencies, might actually be an indirect consequence of this long and thoroughly process of design. In fact, the design stage of the APs is considered a learning process and are extremely pleased with the comments made by the implementing agencies as regards the crucial role of facilitation and technical advice by the IPEC's team in this process.

third countries. This project is not a typical development project, but a very sensitive and high profile experience which requires the capacity for rapid adjustments to exist both at management level and within the IPEC structure. For logistical reasons and in terms of travel and communication, the initial posting of the CTA in Yaoundé proved to be a nightmare. A lesson learned is therefore that for this type of project the CTA must be based in one of the project countries, probably on the basis of the number of beneficiaries and on its communication/logistics capacity with the other project countries. This is one of the reasons which explain part of the delay that the project has taken.

39. Another constraint is the fact that the project decision making and budgetary allocation has not been decentralised. This means :

- 1) that an enormous amount of time was spent simply in obtain the official signing and approval of the A.P.s;
- 2) that further delays were experienced in making the funds available

Figure : Table of A.P. partners payment delays

Delays between Partners Submission of technical proposals for A.P.s, actual date of signature and date of reception of first payment						
IPEC/ILO CHILD SOLDIERS A.P. LIST						
A.P. partner Name	Submission date of A.P. for technical proposal (dd/mm/yy)	Date of signature of contract by agency (dd/mm/yy)	Date of reception of first payment (dd/mm/yy)	Country	number of days between	
					submission and approval	submission and payment
ONEMO	15-08-05	18-11-05	15-12-05	ROC	94	122
DMI	27-06-05	26-08-05	24-11-05	ROC	60	150
ASOFERWA	13-10-05	30-11-05	06-01-06	RWANDA	48	85
APROPOL	28-10-05	14-12-05	28-12-05	RWANDA	47	61
ADEPE	31-10-05	14-12-05	28-12-05	RWANDA	44	58
TPO	15-07-05	18-08-05	06-10-05	BURUNDI	34	83
CFR	15-08-05	18-09-05	21-10-05	BURUNDI	33	67
BICE	10-06-05	27-07-05	05-09-05	DRC KAN	47	87
FSH	29-07-05	31-08-05	12-01-06	DRC BUK	33	167
G1	15-07-05	19-08-05	03-10-05	DRC BUK	34	80
AASD	23-08-05	12-10-05	09-12-05	DRC	50	108
APEE	23-08-05	12-10-05	01-12-05	DRC	50	100
<b>AVERAGE</b>					<b>48</b>	<b>97</b>

NB : dates obtained from A.P. Partners and verified by IPEC project

40. The table above shows that the average time between submission of the AP proposal for technical clearance until the date of receipt of the first payment is 97 days, or three months and one week! And this for projects ranging from 12 to 15 months duration. In fact the delays for A.P. approval are on average 48 days. The problem lies in the delay to

transfer the funds through a conjunction of three factors : the capacity (or lack thereof) of the banking system, ILO office, or IRIS, as an additional 49 days are required on average just to transfer the funds to the project partners.

41. There are two reasons for the delays in funding allocation : 1) the internal structure of the IPEC approval process, and 2) the lack of functionality of the banking system in DRC
  - 3) the internal structure of the IPEC approval process
42. The project team has been as thorough with the design of the A.P. projects as IPEC and USDOL have been for the overall project document. All partners received support and guidance from the project team in order to improve the quality of the project proposal. However here the same comment applies as to the overall project document : the writing of a good project document does not entail automatically a successful application and good results. The evaluation finds that too much efforts were placed on the proposal writing phase while insufficient efforts are being developed to ensure a proper monitoring of implementation.
43. Another aspect is the complicated approval process internal to the IPEC. From the moment the VGU approves an A.P. proposal technically, it still has to go through different clearing stages within IPEC including through the ILO PROCUREMENT Department for financial approval before the ILO Director actually signs the contract. While the signing of the contract is supposed to be a formality, the management style of the ILO Director has provided additional delays. In this type of project further unwarranted delays negatively affect project implementation and should be avoided.
44. Likewise it is important to the success of the project that the financial approval that is to be given by ILO PROCUREMENT Department be accelerated.
45. VGU are a key structure in the project management and are normally very rapid and cooperative. Therefore they are not responsible for any delays and have always pro-actively supported the project team. Recent staff turnover led to a temporary situation of the unit being depleted from three staff to one staff which had some consequence on the project.
  - 4) the banking system in DRC
46. In addition to the stringent requirements to open a bank account in DRC, the banking system is hardly well functioning. In Eastern DRC almost everyone's bank account is in Rwanda, as the banking system in the neighbouring country is much more reliable and efficient. Nonetheless IPEC regulations require A.P. partners to have an account in the same county. This has entailed countless delays, and in one case more than four months were required only to open the bank account! In addition errors in banking transfers have also contributed to delays in the partners' reception of funds (such as transferring the money to a bank in Burundi for a Rwandese A.P. partner).
47. The sum of these different factors explain to a large extent the delays experienced under the project implementation. But there are also other factors involved.

48. Staffing also proved to be a difficult issue. Finding the proper staff took great efforts. In the two largest target group countries (DRC and Burundi), the two CNPs had to be replaced. This also contributed to further delays as the new CNPs had to quickly take charge of the project. Not only did the necessary staff turn-over contribute to delays, but in addition the staff recruited for the project are not IPEC staff and are therefore not knowledgeable regarding the procedures and the ILO/IPEC system (with the exception of the DRC CNP). This lack of procedural knowledge also translates into additional delays (e.g. not knowing how the system works). Day to day hassles also diminish the IPEC staff's effectiveness in many countries : for example, in Rwanda the lack of a UN ID card for the CNP obliges him to wait at the security desk of the UN and he is not granted entrance until the person he comes to see confirms the appointment in the UN building! Many small but significant elements contribute to a general loss of efficiency and effectiveness of the overall project performance. In the opinion of the evaluator, the hosting of the IPEC project within UN offices wherever possible, rather than outside the UN, might have contributed to lessen these unnecessary additional limitations.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5) constraints from budgetary system

49. While the ILO/IPEC financial system is determined by the nature of ILO as a UN organisation using public funds, it is also the case that such a system on occasion is not conducive to working under conditions found in the project countries. One such illustration of how other organisations operate under existing conditions is the inclusion in their budgets of a 'miscellaneous' budget line. Although ILO/IPEC would not be able to emulate this it is nonetheless illustrative of what obstacles IPEC faces and how others have been able to maintain flexibility. The project's experience is that the staff have to work for days in order to find "arrangements" to compensate for the missing "miscellaneous" budget line to settle utilities, instead of spending these days working for the beneficiaries. By including a simple "miscellaneous" budget line this allows the other projects to handle minor problems in a few minutes, while its absence may occupy the whole staff for days. This is a typical and regularly occurring example of how the rigidity of IPEC's financial rules, instead of increasing the productivity of the project team, reduces it. However, IPEC explicitly does not allow such a BL in the budgets of APs, and only recently accepted a limited BL for the IPEC project as a whole. On the other hand, and IPEC should be well aware of this, the CONADER is allowing a 5% BL "miscellaneous" (expenses to be justified) + a 10% "fees" (not be justified, corresponds to "agency costs" in the UN system) to all their implementing agencies (versus 0% in IPEC). The Project is finding itself in the absurd situation concerning the well advanced plans for IPEC/CONADER co-funding of APs that some of IPEC implementing agencies executing APs that are co-funded by the CONADER and IPEC will get 5% + 10% as indicated above, while those executing APs funded only by IPEC get neither fees nor miscellaneous. Under these conditions, and apart from the impossibility to function without a BL "miscellaneous" in the given context, it is clear that IPEC implementing agencies will sooner or later turn away from IPEC and go to the CONADER.

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<sup>5</sup> The Project Team disagrees with this statement : « In none of the 4 countries this was an option, because there was simply no office space available. But even if it were, we would have refused it, because UN security regulations would have made it impossible for our target group to come to us. We intentionally excluded this option anyway. »

### *3. The decision making structure*

50. The IPEC project implementation is established under a fragmented decision making structure. This means that the VGU in Geneva has “overall responsibility for ensuring technical consistency and coordination”, as mentioned in the project document. With the only project CTA being based in one of the four African countries, he has no real possibility to follow up the project implementation outside these four African countries. As a result the VGU is providing both technical assistance and backstopping to the project staff in Philippines, Sri Lanka and Colombia, in addition to its overall responsibility for all of the countries and backstopping the CTA in Africa. But the real decision making power, in terms of formal authorisations for signature and fund disbursement, is held both by IPEC Geneva, in charge of the overall budget allocation, as well as by the Kinshasa ILO Office Director who must authorise each and every disbursement. In practice this means that the CTA has no authority to take the final decision regarding funding allocations and is therefore consistently dependent on the ILO/IPEC structure’s procedures. Again as compared to other projects working in the field of DDR (such as Unicef and SCF or the Consortium in DRC) it appears clearly that IPEC has the most centralised management and control structure which also leads to the longest delays both in terms of decision making and in terms of funding allocation. It is critical for IPEC to review whether it wants to maintain this structure despite its comparative disadvantages with other actors and its negative impact on the smooth implementation of the child soldiers’ project.

#### ***The external constraints***

##### *1. The political situation in the four project countries*

51. The operating environment is a major factor which directly affects day to day implementation of the project in all four countries. One of the first factors which needs to be identified is the political situation of the four project countries. All are attempting to transition out of a period of strife and conflict, but each has a different political system, culture, history, and of the four countries it can be said that DRC, which hosts the project team and the CTA, is probably the most fragile of the four project countries. Undoubtedly as the big brother in the Great Lakes region, anything affecting DRC will continue to have spill-over effects on the neighbouring countries, and beyond.

52. Rwanda has had a stable leadership since 1994 under Paul Kagame, marked by a large number of reforms and measures (for example the *imidugudu* policy, the *gacaca*, *land rights*, *inheritance laws*, etc.). In the latest series of government reshuffles and administrative restructuring, Rwanda is currently undergoing since the beginning of 2006 a major administrative reform. The number of provinces have been reduced to 4 from the original number of 12. At the same time and in order to contain costs, all government ministries and staff have been required to move into government and public buildings. As a result of both decisions a cabinet reshuffle is expected and the current period is not conducive to introducing new projects or proposals as those in charge today may no longer be there tomorrow. In concrete terms this was demonstrated by the interview with the Director of Labour and Employment who was interviewed on 25 January 2006 by the evaluation and replaced on the 27<sup>th</sup>. In Rwanda the issue of child soldiers is a difficult

issue and heavily politicised, as dates of services in the armed groups are clearly marking the type of group to which the child belonged. A unique feature in Rwanda was the existence of a former Child Soldier's Association (CECA), which is currently undergoing a name change to RUYAAC (Rwanda Union of Youth Affected by Armed Conflict) for a number of justified reasons. In the current political context, the Child Soldiers issue is certainly not at the top of the government's agenda. Neither are there any special projects under the MDRP in Rwanda.

53. The Republic of Congo, partially thanks to its oil revenues, has been able to continue on the road to recovery since the end of its civil war in 1999, with only the Pool region under Reverend Ntoumi maintaining an armed struggle with the government. It appears probably as the most stable country of the four, but the underlying widespread poverty and uneven distribution of the benefits of the oil revenue does not contribute to a visible improvement in the daily lives of Congolese. As compared to the previous visit to RoC by the evaluator in 2003 the price increase was surprising. Indeed the government partners interviewed even highlighted the need for the project budget to be indexed on the cost of living increase in each of the countries, as they claimed to be the big losers in the budget allocation exercise given the sharp rise in prices. The government, through the Coordination of the National Plan for DDR, expressed its interest in the IPEC project on three accounts : 1) because of its specific child soldier focus (again as in Rwanda in RoC there are no special projects under the MDRP), 2) because of its advocacy work with legislators and government in order to support both the application of convention 182 and preventive aspects and 3) because it works in prevention, with people who did not directly participate in conflict but are at risk of being recruited. Despite the government's interest however, it needs to be stated that the government also believes it has the capacity to deal with the child soldiers' problem itself . As regards to the existing needs, the government uses the figure of 3,500 children in the NP for DDR. Considering that seven years have passed since the civil war, from the evaluation's perspective the only remaining real need will be for those children who remain in the Pool region, once and if the Reverend Ntoumi finally decides to give up its armed resistance and the children can be demobilised.
54. Burundi has just gone through a tense but peaceful and up to date successful transition phase, since October 2005 when a new government was voted in. After 12 years of regional and internal conflict, initially triggered by the assassination of the first democratically elected president, M. Ndadaye in October 1993, Burundi has known very few periods of peace. It appears now to be heading towards a consolidated peace process, and rumours report the possibility that the last of the political and armed group led by Rwaso (essentially in Bujumbura Rural) might be joining the democratic peace process. Results to date are certainly very encouraging, but it is too early to confirm that lasting peace will be possible. Furthermore Burundi is land-locked and sandwiched between three countries : DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania. Its internal situation is also tributary on the regional political situation. Nonetheless there is room for optimism and a vote of confidence to the new government is necessary to assist the consolidation of peace. In Burundi the needs for economic reintegration are far from covered, and there is a very receptive government, both from the new Minister of Labour, and from the National Demobilisation Commission, looking forward to a continuation and extension of the IPEC project (provided the anticipated results are reached and demonstrated).

55. Finally in DRC, the multiplicity of the crises that have affected the country since 1994 have not yet come to an end. A main turning point are the elections that are scheduled to take place this spring, and that many see as the last chance for peace in DRC. The continued unreversed trend of degradation of all administrative and social structures has not been halted, and small-scale corruption has become a general means of survival for all. Civil servants haven't been paid for months (or is it years?), and the provincial governments do not receive any funding from the central level. In this growing state of anarchy and chaos, poverty remains rampant and the fragility of the current peace is only expected to last until elections take place. However should the elections be contested or the process not judged as fair, there is a real risk of returning into a spiral of widespread violence. It would also be useful to foresee contingency mechanisms for the project staff and structure should a return to violence become a reality in DRC.
56. In terms of needs there is no doubt that DRC, together with Burundi, has the largest number of uncovered needs for the reintegration of child soldiers. The estimated number of child soldiers is 33,000 according to the CONADER. While this figure is likely to overestimate the current number of accessible children (it is based on a 10% estimation of the existing DDR beneficiaries), two issues must be clearly raised. First that the part where most of the damage was done was in the Eastern DRC, which is also where most of the child soldiers are to be found. Second that there is no capacity outside the IPEC project designed to specifically target economic reintegration of child soldiers.

## *2. The state of governance and government structures*

The state of degradation of the governance and government structures and infrastructures, particularly in DRC which now hosts the project team and TCP

57. As mentioned above most governance structures in the project countries are fragile, particularly in the DRC where most of the project team and the CTA are based. As a example of the sad state of affairs, it needs to be recognised that anyone wishing to board even an internal flight without hassle is strongly advised to recruit one of the many "helpers" which will ensure check in and customs and immigration clearance for a small fee (normally US\$ 10). And this is reproduced everywhere and at every level, including some of the authorities ("by the way, I'm out of credits on my mobile. You don't happen to have an extra phone recharge card" –worth as little as US 5.--, has been according to partners and interviewees a very common request). It is quite impossible to function according to a logical and coherent plan in such a state, as is the currently the case with DRC . If this is by itself a major difficulty, this only enhances overall difficulties in terms of travel and communication both within the DRC and within the region. Additionally power supply is at very short demand in the region. On the first day when the evaluation arrived the project office power supply in Kinshasa shut down at 18h00 and the team meeting continued with candle lights until 20h30. Power supply has been uneven and haphazard in Kinshasa, Kananga, Kigali, Bujumbura, Bukavu – with only one country having a regular power supply for the time being – RoC. This means that no work can be undertaken which require any electronic material, or internet access, without resorting to the use of backup power supply groups for project offices.
58. The evaluation itself witnessed the frequent and repeated power cuts –sometimes lasting days- in all but one country of the four African project countries. This contributes to the

isolation of the project staff and also partly explains the high cost of the phone communications, which are virtually the only reliable communication means between the IPEC project team, its field offices and the IPEC partners implementing the A.P.s on the ground.

### *3. Logistics and communication difficulties*

The extreme difficulties in logistical and communication means between the four countries and even within countries (particularly DRC internal travel to the East)

59. As if the general state of degradation of infrastructures was not enough, in addition severe logistical constraints further hamper smooth project supervision. Again of particular difficulty is the DRC, which has very poor connections for internal flights and very insecure internal flights to the East of the country (during the security briefing the evaluator was told to avoid commercial planes in DRC and only to use MONUC planes. However non-MONUC staff are not given priority and they can be dropped off at the last minute. Furthermore MONUC is just as unreliable in its flight plans as the commercial companies). Therefore travelling from Kinshasa to Eastern DRC, or to Kigali or Bujumbura, cannot be done in a direct straight flight. The IPEC staff coming from Burundi and Kigali have to transit through Nairobi to reach Kinshasa. Again the unreliability of planes caused the project staff from Burundi and Rwanda to miss the evaluation restitution session on 3.2.06 as their flight was cancelled. Internal travel in DRC is just as difficult and unreliable. The road conditions make road travel a journey, and a trip of 50 km in straight line can take six hours given the unkept road network, or even more during the rainy season. Finally for example it took the evaluation one entire day to return from Bukavu to Kinshasa, after spending more than 3 hours on a boat (Bukavu – Goma). Because the Governor of Sud Kivu was on board, the boat left late and arrived late in Goma. The flight from Goma was awaiting at the airport with a nervous pilot anxious to depart soonest, so the commercial airlines agent drove with its minibus filled with people to the brim at over 60 mph through the centre of Goma to reach the airport as soon as possible. Somehow we all made it alive to the airport. The flight made a further stop in Kinsangani, and eventually arrived in Kinshasa in the late afternoon, with the usual round of people and army soldiers and police requesting some “help” from the newcomers to make ends meet. While this might appear to be an anecdote, it is in fact part of the usual travelling conditions. It is almost impossible to describe all the impediments to smooth travel in the country. But experiencing it is believing it.

### *4. The security situation in the different project countries*

60. An added constraint which limits smooth field work in Burundi is the UN security rules. The four project countries are subject to the same UN security rules. Within each country each capital city and the rest of the country is ranked according to a security scale which attributes a risk level from phase 1 to 5, with phase 5 being evacuation of all UN staff. The higher the phase the higher the risk. Bujumbura, Burundi’s capital city, and most of the countryside are in phase II, with the exception of Buja Rural which is on phase IV (Rwasa armed opposition group). Despite being on phase II, the security officials make it compulsory for all UN staff to have a police escort when going to the field. This of course does not apply to NGOs or donors, only the UN. During the field visit to Cibitoke it was obvious that departure could not take place before 10h00 with a compulsory return at

15h00 from Cibitoke. In the best of cases, there were five working hours in that day (of which 2 were travel time to Cibitoke and back), therefore only three working hours could be spent in the field! Each time, IPEC has to pay not only for the fuel, but also for the per diem of 6 military/police escort which makes any field visit a nightmare for IPEC travel budgets which never foresaw such type of expenses.

61. These security requirements stem partly from the large number of deaths from expatriates in Burundi over the last ten years, particularly UN staff (although in 1994 and 1995 the evaluator worked throughout Burundi on phase IV without any escort) but are both ridiculous and uneven across the region. Even to reach Uvira (border town on the lake Tanganyika, half an hour drive from Bujumbura to DRC, some thirty miles out), the evaluator should have requested an armed escort. But when this is compared with the regional situation, particularly neighbouring Eastern DRC, which is on phase IV of the UN security scale, but require no armed escort (as the car that picked up the evaluator in Uvira to drive up to Bukavu clearly showed), the comparison shows the inconsistency of the UN security system across the different countries of the region.
62. While in Eastern DRC it is a recognised fact that some areas are still out of bounds for MONUC and UN and NGOs, with pockets of armed resistance, there is only one province in Burundi on phase IV. The compulsory armed escort for the UN severely constraints the field monitoring capacity of the IPEC staff and obeys no clear rationale. It is a specific constraint applicable only to Burundi, although most of the areas where IPEC operates in DRC –including Bukavu- have a higher risk ranking in the UN security scale.
63. Clearly realising and understanding the implications of all these seven types of constraints are key in understanding how far the project has been able to evolve.

***MDRP : the overall framework for DDR in the four project countries***

64. In the four African countries there is a similar framework for DDR which has been established by the World Bank as a multiple-agency response with a large number of donors, but administered by the World Bank, through the MDRP (Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program).
65. The objective of the MDRP is to contribute to the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in the Great Lakes Region. Eligible countries are seven, the four IPEC project countries, plus Uganda, Angola and CAR. Funds can either be accessed through the multi-donor Trust Fund (TF) or through IDA. According to the MDRP website information, the estimated pledges and disbursements per country were as follows :

MDRP FRAMEWORK				
<a href="http://www.mdrp.org">www.mdrp.org</a>				
MDRP fundings				<i>IPEC project</i>
Country	amount pledged	disbursed	source	
Rwanda	\$53.000.000			
of which	\$14.400.000	\$6.500.000	Trust Fund	
	\$25.000.000	\$18.300.000	IDA	
No special projects	\$0			\$312.228

RoCongo	\$25.000.000			
No special projects	\$0	included in overall figure		\$312.228

Burundi	\$84.400.000			
of which	\$41.800.000	\$4.000.000	Trust Fund	
	\$33.000.000	\$11.000.000	IDA	
Special projects				
Unicef	\$3.536.000			\$780.450
DRC	\$200.000.000			
of which	\$100.000.000	\$9.000.000	Trust Fund	
	\$1.000.000	\$20.000.000	IDA	
Special projects				
SCF	\$5.370.000	\$2.400.000		
Consortium	\$9.160.000	\$2.770.000		
UNDP CR	\$5.000.000	\$5.000.000		
UNDP RRM	\$12.600.000	\$4.700.000	not children	
RC	\$1.140.000	\$640.000		
Unicef	\$4.998.000	\$2.775.000		\$1.092.000
sub-total	\$362.400.000			
<b>total children sp.proj.</b>	<b>\$24.206.000</b>			<b>\$2.496.906</b>

Note : the Special Projects are a separate funding category from which activities specifically targeting children soldiers have been funded (in total for US\$ 24 millions)

66. Two of the four countries, RoC and Rwanda have no special projects. However actions in favour of ex-child soldiers is one of the five components of the RoC National Plan for DDR, and are also contemplated in Rwanda.

67. In RoC the national DDR Commission foresees 3,500 ex-child soldiers as its objective. In Rwanda, the figure is of 2,500 ex-child soldiers (source NCDR). In DRC the target figure is 33,000 ex-child soldiers, with 17,000 already “liberated” with 30 partners (source CONADER). And in Burundi the NCDR indicates the target figure of 3,015 ex-child soldiers to date, with an additional 500 ex-child soldiers foreseen by the end of 2006, raising the total to over 3,500.

68. Adding all these figures, the target for the MDRP funding in the four countries amounts to an anticipated 42,500 ex-child soldiers in the four countries, with 78% of the target group in DRC. As compared to the IPEC beneficiary figures, the numbers appear as follows :

Ex child soldiers figures

Country	estimate Govt sources*	IPEC Reint.	IPEC Prev.	IPEC Total	difference	coverage IPEC/Reint. only versus Govt figures
Rwanda	2500	200	600	800	1700	8%
RoCongo	3500	200	500	700	2800	5.7%
DRC	33000	2000	2000	4000	29000	6.1%
Burundi	3500	1440	1000	2440	1060	41%
Total	42500	3840	4100	7940	34560	9%

\*Official statistics given during evaluation interview by each country's National DDR Commission

69. This indicates that equity in coverage as compared to needs was not a criterion for defining the target group in each of the IPEC project countries. As it stands Burundi has received the lion's share of coverage, with 41% of the government's estimate taken up by the IPEC project, while in DRC the figure is a meagre 6% of the identified needs. It should be noted however that the figures both in RoCongo and DRC are based on a flat 10% estimate of the total number of ex-combatant and do not reflect actual surveys. Therefore governments' figures are essentially estimates which may or may not be grounded in reality.

70. The MDRP was behind the funding and creation of a number of activities involving DDR and therefore also including ex-child soldiers' activities and programmes (such as the Unicef funding in Burundi). The MDRP has been designed as the framework for the entire region as regards to DDR activities, inclusive of ex-child soldiers. Each of the countries' recent National DDR Plan was drafted with a view to access MDRP funding.

***Actual IPEC implementation and achievements***

71. Somehow, the project managed to survive thus far all constraints and eventually was able to start the implementation of activities on the ground. The project strategy is described in overall project document, but for each country a more context specific country annex has been prepared. Unfortunately it reproduces to a large extent the project document model and therefore inherits many of its strengths and weaknesses, particularly in regards to the lack of explanation regarding the constraining operating environment and the project's inherent limitations given the country's situation. Again a substantial amount of work and effort is placed both in a very thorough drafting and design of the country annex (including detailed calendar activities and budgets), as well as for each of the A.P.s, but the relationship between project proposal writing and implementation is not at all explicit. Preparing a detailed logical framework does not automatically entail that activities will actually take place. In terms of the design and preparation for the project, both at IPEC/USDOL levels and at country level, the evaluation finds that too much efforts were

placed on paper proposal and insufficient means were allocated and foreseen to monitor the actual implementation. This creates a serious imbalance within the PCM (Project Cycle Management) and gives an excessive importance to project writing versus field monitoring. This is probably due to ILO's long standing experience in development aid, and limited experience in fluid environments. However balance between project design and proposal writing versus the need for effective field monitoring and supervision needs to be found.

72. For all four countries, the development objective of the programme is : "To contribute to the reduction of the incidence of children serving in armies and/or in armed groups". In each country the same three immediate objectives apply :

1. "By the end of the programme, there will be an enabling environment in each country, facilitating the prevention, withdrawal and subsequent reintegration into society of children involved in armed conflict".
2. "By the end of the programme, former child soldiers above the minimum working age will be assisted to acquire decent work and achieve a sustainable income".
3. "By the end of the programme, fewer children will be recruited into armed conflict in the targeted countries".

The findings of IPEC implementation and achievements per country are as follows :

### ***Republic of Congo***

73. In RoC there are currently two A.P.s which have started, the first on 24 November 05, the second on 15 December 2005. An additional A.P. has yet to be approved and started. The A.P. table appears as follows :

IPEC partner	Start date	Reint.	Prev.	Length Of A.P.	Sub –total	Location
DMI	24.11.05	100	400	15 months	500	Niari/Lekoumou/Bouenza
ONEMO	15.12.05	115		14 months	115	Cuvette/Plateaux/Brazza
NIOSI	pipeline		100	? max 9 ?	100	Pool

74. It has taken almost two full years of the project life to start A.P.s in RoC. The original duration of the A.P.s actually exceed the project deadline of 31.12.2006, which means that partners must strive to accomplish the same results within a compressed time-frame. However this is not possible in many cases, because some of the components which are part of the intervention strategy are subject to seasonal and climatic factors. This means that the overall delays in designing the A.P., approving the A.P., funding the A.P. (as mentioned previously with an average of 97 days having passed between the submission on an A.P. for technical approval and the reception of the first funding allocation) have obliged some of the partners to simply have to substantially change their initial strategy. This has been one of the constraints on IPEC partners. After having placed many efforts into a specific project design and approach, the excessive delays have invalidated a large part of the approach and negatively affected their implementation capacity. Another point which has negatively affected partners in RoC and in the other countries is that in order to facilitate the start of activities, many partners actually financed the first beneficiary

identification mission on their own funds. However given the delays between the identification mission and the actual starting date of activities, in a number of cases a secondary identification had to be undertaken (something neither foreseen nor budgeted for in the project). There have also been delays for questionable bureaucratic requirements regarding the approval of the A.P., such as the fact that the A.P. must first be signed by the ILO Director (so the partner's signature cannot be placed on the A.P. before it is signed by ILO), and that an electronic copy is not acceptable (so the original document has to physically travel to the ILO Office)<sup>6</sup>. For DMI the project staff was already recruited in September 2005, but the staff was suspended in October 2005 as funds had not been received (which eventually arrived on 24 of November 2005 only, and staff was again deployed on 26 November 2005). Another consequence of the delay in starting the activities is the actual quality of the work that can be accomplished. Maintaining the same work plan, work load and objectives on a reduced time-frame can only be done at someone's expense. This means that some of the training choices, and the variety of choices, have to be reduced. It also means that some activities have been undertaken two at a time, instead of progressively developing the activities. In concrete terms for example, both beneficiary's identification and the orientation and sensibilisation process were conducted at the same time (DMI), to the detriment of the orientation process.

75. A similar experience was done by ONEMO, as on their own funds in July 2005 they deployed a four-day mission to identify beneficiaries, with 82 ex-child soldiers in Owando (Cuvette) and 85 in Gamboma (Plateaux). But given funding delays until mid December a new identification mission was fielded in January 2006, at which time 51 and 55 ex-child soldiers were identified in Owando and Gamboma respectively. However most of them proved over the target age group and only 22 and 25 were retained in the respective towns, with an additional 40 in Brazzaville, raising the total of beneficiaries who meet the selection criteria 87. ONEMO is the only government partner of 13 currently approved A.P.s.
76. Both partners are equally worried that IPEC funding, divided into different instalments, will also continue to arrive late as the activities continue to be underway. A further delay of funding would deal a final blow to an already difficult project implementation.

*A) Feedback from government*

77. It needs to be noted that in RoC even the Government (Coordinator for the National Plan for DDR and also President of the Technical Committee in charge of supervising the IPEC project) stated that ILO procedures were too rigid, slow and stringent both in administrative and financial terms (something echoed by the MinLabour representative). The rest of actors working in DDR simply use more flexible and fluid structures with faster funding allocation and decision making (Unicef was cited as an example).
78. The IPEC project is of great interest to the government for three reasons : 1) because of its specific focus on former child soldiers; 2) because of an approach which requires government's and legislators' advocacy and support for applying the ILO convention 182

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<sup>6</sup> This is no longer true as the ILO Director has reportedly accepted a scanned copy provided the original is submitted at a later date upon request of the Project Team.

including in the prevention aspect, and 3) because it works on prevention with people who haven't directly participated in armed conflict but are at risk of being recruited. As regards to the evaluation process of the IPEC project, the Coordinator further stated that "if adequate means are not given to evaluate the intervention, it is not possible to appraise the relevance of the approach and the choice of the operating mode". This is both a request for more funding to the Technical Project Committee in order to be able to evaluate the results of the IPEC project on the ground but also a request that a full-fledged evaluation be undertaken at the end of the project (unlike the current evaluation which did not foresee any field visit to the project sites). It was further indicated that the HCR would also be potentially interested in fielding a joint mission at the end of the IPEC project phase. The choice of implementing partners for the A.P.s was judged to be good.

### *B) Overall findings*

79. In RoC the two A.P.s have recently started their activities and even if no further difficulty is encountered they will be hard pressed to reach the stated objectives within the specified time-frame. It is urgent that the third A.P. be approved and funded as soon as possible – else it will not even be able to start. The third A.P. is interesting because it works on prevention in the vicinity of the Pool region, which is the last remaining area with armed groups confronting the government. It would be therefore very useful to pilot such an approach and see what results can be obtained, and whether the success of the third A.P. may lead to a multiplier effect from the bordering Pool districts. However considering the situation and the very slow project implementation the evaluation recommends a six-months extension to ensure that positive results might be obtained and the third A.P. can be implemented. There are no other actors focusing specifically on the economic reintegration of ex-child soldiers, and therefore the IPEC project is filling a critical gap through its pilot approach.

### **Rwanda**

80. In Rwanda there are three A.P.s currently on-going, as per the following details :

IPEC partner	Start date	Reint.	Prev.	Length Of A.P.	Sub –total	Location
Asoferwa	6.01.06	100	300	13 months	400	Gysenyi, Ruhengeri
ADEPE	28.12.05	56	300	12 months	356	Byumba, Umutara
Apropol	28.12.05	40		12 months	40	Kigali

81. In Rwanda the delay in starting the activities was even greater than in RoC, and activities were virtually just starting when the evaluation took place. This was also a problem for the identification of beneficiaries. According to Asoferwa initially in July 2004 when the IPEC staff was recruited many potential beneficiaries expected the project to start quickly. Now when it finally starts 18 months later a substantial number of potential beneficiaries are found to exceed the maximum age limit. Funding was only received at the end of 2005 for 2 of 3 A.P.s. However the surprising new territorial and administrative division is also causing some problems to IPEC partners as some of the areas under responsibility of Asoferwa are now in the ADEPE area of coverage, and vice-versa. This external constraint will therefore negatively affect work until both partners are

able to closely coordinate their activities. Of particular interest in Rwanda is the Apropol pilot which targets the restaurant and hotel/tourism sectors with an interesting approach and substantial success on their previous experience. However again given that activities are just starting it is not possible to talk about concrete results to date. A former Child Soldiers Association (CECA) including women formerly involved in armed groups benefited from a mini-programme on capacity building so the Association is able to prepare project proposals and obtain some funding for their own activities and objectives. This has been strongly appreciated by the CECA.

82. In addition ILO/IPEC funded some specific studies in Rwanda. However the results of the one study that was seen by the evaluation (JOUEP) showed that the quality of the study that is requested by ILO/IPEC is rather low, in line with what is usually produced. In addition there lacks some degree of experience to undertake user-friendly, practically oriented studies. Finally as already mentioned the administrative reform negatively impacted the study's capacity to identify the administration's focal points in order to carry out the baseline in the field. Rwanda is very much a state under strong administrative control and collaboration are necessary to undertake field work in any province. The lesson here is that before studies are commissioned their level of applicability should be clearly identified and that studies should be avoided when reforms are taking or are due to take place.

#### *A Feedback from government*

83. In Rwanda feedback was obtained from the NCDR (the child protection and liaison officer) and the Ministry of Labour (Director of the Labour and Employment Department, substituted two days after the interview). In general Rwanda did not have a specific child soldier component until 2004. The focus and importance of reintegration, including as a form of prevention, was again discussed with the evaluation. No other actors intervene specifically on economic reintegration. A comment was made about the very small budget size for this kind of project. The objective of the project is important because it caters for target beneficiaries that NCDR cannot account for. Despite its small budget it is therefore politically important. The lack of identification of the constraining factors in the country was mentioned as a weakness of the country annex.

#### *B Overall findings*

84. In Rwanda the project office, hosted within the Ministry of Labour, has been consistently changed from one location to another, on average every six weeks. Whether or not this is linked to the perceived small project budget is irrelevant, but the fact is that under these conditions the project CNP (only IPEC staff) is unable to work properly and adequately. When the evaluation visited the office five other people (from the MinLabour) were sharing it and additional furniture was being moved across the room, turning it into an impossible working environment. A budget for a separate office has reportedly already been accepted. It is urgent that the project office can be installed outside the government office, and that adequate monitoring capacity of the project's implementation at field level is ensured. The current situation both in RoC and Rwanda with only one CNP and no other staff does not allow proper monitoring and progress reporting on the A.P.s. An assistant should be recruited for a six-months period in each country to facilitate the supervision and monitoring of results, with an adequate budget.

## ***Burundi***

85. In Burundi there are two on-going A.P.s, with one additional proposal in the pipe-line as follows :

IPEC partner	Start date	Reint.	Prev.	Length Of A.P.	Sub –total	Location
CFR	21.10.05	350	100	12 months	450	Cibitoke, Bubanza, Mura.
TPO	06.10.05	300	50	12 months	350	Makamba, Bujumbura
CONSEDI	pipeline	165	236	??	401	Bujumbura rural

86. Burundi is one of the two countries where field work was carried out, including visits to a number of project beneficiaries (both CFR and TPO A.P. beneficiaries). A separate CD with a number of pictures at the different training sites was prepared by the evaluation and sent directly to the CTA in Kinshasa and another CD to IPEC Geneva (DED). As mentioned in the methodology, five group interviews of 39 beneficiaries were undertaken by the evaluation in Cibitoke and Bujumbura in to obtain beneficiary feedback on the training and on potential change as a result of the training.

87. Burundi is a project office where a new CNP started in February 2005, and where the UN security rules heavily restrict the mobility of the UN staff. This means that historically there were difficulties with the former CNP and that part of the new project staff's time had to be devoted to addressing and solving the previous problems. Not a single A.P. was ready when the new CNP started in February 2005 and therefore one of the first tasks was to make sure that A.P.s were identified, prepared, finalised and approved.

88. The evaluation had field visits and project site visits from which the detailed information on the tables included in this section come from.

89. Five beneficiary interviews were undertaken in Burundi as per details hereunder :

A.P. partner	location	Name of centre	Number of children	girls	boys	Type of training	Remarks
CFR	Cibitoke	CFR	9	0	9	Sheet metal welding	All demob 2005. 7 orphans, 2 with one parent
CFR	Cibitoke	CFR	8	6	2	sewing	2 boys demob 2004, 6 girls vulnerable (not ex-soldiers)
TPO	Buja	CNTA	6	4	2	cooking	2 vuln., 4 ex-soldiers, demob. 2004. 3 orphans, 2 one parent, 1 extended family
TPO	Buja	St-Luc	9	0	9	car repair sheet metal electricity	All former child soldiers
TPO	Buja	Musaga	7	3	4	sewing	6 ex child soldiers, demob in 2005. 1 girl vulnerable
<b>Total</b>			<b>39</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>9 vulnerable, 30 ex soldiers</b>

90. The group interviews took place while the children were being trained, and had not reached yet the end of their training. Therefore the primary purpose of the interview was to obtain their feedback regarding the training received and, more importantly, on the possible changes or impact that the training was having on their daily lives.

91. The results and key messages of the interviews are summarised as follows :

<i><b>The good points - strengths</b></i>	<i><b>The bad points - weaknesses</b></i>
1. Children do not have the means to afford a training school, so they are happy and grateful. It gives them something to do and will allow them to live from this activity in the future. Without this opportunity some of them would be earning a living on the streets	1. All are hungry and request to be fed to continue their training. (To date the WFP has not signed any agreement for the IPEC project to supply food to the children during training as foreseen in the annex. The Deputy WFP director instructed ILO to present a formal request). No food is being provided while they are on training.
2. It gives them a profession (before they had no particular civilian skills which they could use to earn a living)	2. Also request from those who live far away support for transportation
3. The communities (families, friends, neighbours) encourages them to attend the training, as they see the training as part of the reintegration process	3. Another request concerns having soap to wash their clothes, as they become dirty during the training (this is not a high cost and could be considered)
4. The neighbours are gradually starting to be less afraid of the children as they learn a job, so they won't have to resort to other means of obtaining money – they are no	4. Request some support for those who are in bad health or become ill (this is part of the lack of social safety net and social security and the evaluation does not

<i>The good points - strengths</i>	<i>The bad points - weaknesses</i>
longer becoming seen as a menace to civil society	recommend support in this aspect through the project)
5. All are enthusiastic and most of them want to set up associations to continue their activities at the end of their training (rather than individually) because a) it makes access to bank credit possible and b) it facilitates getting customers	5. Request for IPEC to assist them in finding employment at the end of the training (finding an incentive for potential employers to hire them)
6. Especially useful training given that most employment and income comes from individual family farming but given current drought agricultural production non existent	6. Request some equity in the end of training kits that will be provided, but preferably will create an association to maximise the end of training inputs to be received
7. The kits which will be received at the end of the training will allow them to start income generating activities	

92. The length of the training as well as the weekly and daily schedule vary according to the type of training. This is quite normal as there are several types of training cycles. The one interesting pilot in Cibitoke is actually related to bee-keeping, and all the training skills are part of an integrated approach to producing the necessary inputs for bee-keeping. Therefore the metal sheet workshop allows the children to prepare the specific material necessary for fumigation and processing the honey, while the sewing is useful to prepare the special clothing necessary to collect the honey. This pilot is interesting because the product which is being sold, honey, is actually not the result of human work, and therefore not very labour intensive. According to CFR they have received requests from South Africa to export honey, and this may therefore be an interesting pilot for the project beneficiaries.



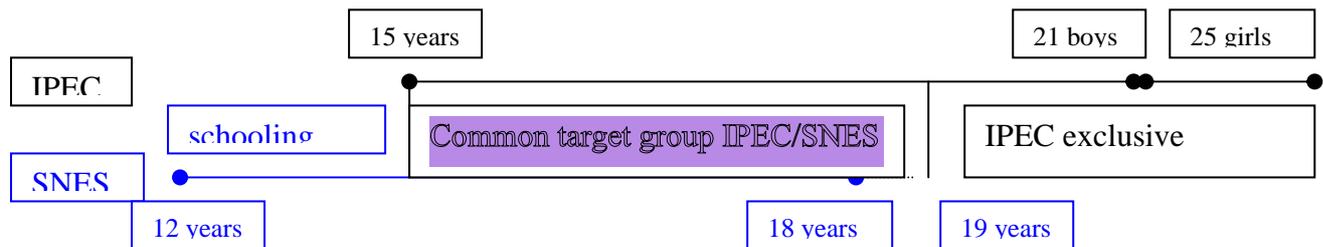
Uniform for honey collection made by the sewing group trainers, and fumigation material made from the metal sheet workshop

93. As a result of these interviews, it appears that the project has the potential to reach its objectives but the weaknesses that have been raised have to be addressed. Of particular concern is the lack of WFP food for training (FFT), which was supposed to start at the same time as the training. This has been a recurrent problem with WFP as in none of the four countries was FFT given out to project beneficiaries. although it is foreseen in three of the four country annexes. It is likely that some misunderstanding regarding the procedures between WFP and ILO/IPEC are the cause of these delays, as the target group of the IPEC project falls clearly within the mandate and the programming category of WFP. Urgent attention to this matter is required, as the provision of food will act as an additional incentive for the children to attend the training. IPEC staff should become more informed about WFP procedures for supplying food.

*A) Feedback from the government*

94. In Burundi a new Labour Minister has been appointed. There is a strong interest that ILO develops a formal structure in Burundi, and the minister has formally requested the ILO DG in Geneva for such a structure. This is also politically important as the country is successfully transitioning out of a prolonged crisis. The Minister is also supportive of the project and would like to see it extended and also applied to street children who are also a cause of concern. Good appraisal from the Minister regarding the IPEC project staff in

Burundi. From the NCDR the IPEC project is quite welcome as it fills a gap by working with different age groups from 15 to 21 years of age for boys and up to 25 years of age for girls. This is different from the MDRP funding through Unicef and SNES where the target group starts at 12 years up to 18 years of age, with apparently according to SNES some flexibility on the cut off point which can go up to 19 years of age. Therefore it is important to ensure close coordination between the NCDR and the IPEC project. SNES funding finishes at the end of June 2006 and the structure will be placed directly under the NCDR for the future. Therefore IPEC coordination should be continued with NCDR as synergies are likely to take place. The target beneficiary groups can be outlined as follows :



In fact in all four countries the target group for women was extended up to 25 years of age for two reasons : 1) because of the difficulty in finding the numbers of that specific target group, 2) because former girl soldiers are stigmatised and will not easily accept to be singled out as a former girl soldier. By extending the age limit this allows the project to encompass some of the former girl soldiers and reach a larger proportion of ex girl soldiers.

### *B)Overall findings*

95. Burundi has now finally just started on two of the A.P.s. It is also urgent that the third A.P. is finalised and implemented as soon as possible. As in RoC some of the activities are seasonal and further delays will negatively impact on A.P. implementation.
96. The changing structure for child soldiers (e.g. the SNES was created by Unicef with MDRP funding before the NCDR existed, but SNES will now come under the NCDR) will facilitate closer coordination between the government actors dealing with former child soldiers. There remains large uncovered needs for successful economic reintegration. As in other countries, IPEC has taken a specific and targeted focus on economic reintegration of child soldiers. It is therefore a pilot which raises interest at many levels. In Burundi there is also another ILO project for micro-finance, which has been building linkages with the on-going IPEC project, in particular a training of trainers for IPEC partners in order to explain the principles of micro-finance to the beneficiaries.
97. One of the key issues is to ensure that after having spent so much time into designing documents, the project is well executed. It needs to be stated that A.P. partners have a difficult time understanding the ILO/IPEC system. One partner spent two nights in the office trying to figure out how to make the proposal in the right terms. However it is of paramount importance that the implementation follows the established rules. During the beneficiary interviews the evaluation verified the selection criteria for beneficiaries. This is particularly important (in all countries) to avoid jealousy and resentment and show a

professional targeting of beneficiaries. As mentioned above, the age is one of the criterion with a cut-off point at 21 for boys and 25 for girls. But one of the boys in St-Luc was 26 years old, while two boys at Musaga were 25 and 27 years old respectively, bringing the total of out of age beneficiaries to 3. Out of the sample of 16 beneficiaries interviewed in the two places, the percentage of beneficiaries not fulfilling the criteria was therefore 19%. This was thoroughly discussed with the A.P. partner and the CNP as close monitoring of the target groups needs to be ensured. And this also shows why the evaluation strongly recommends more focus on the monitoring of the project.

98. In addition to the APs, Burundi also commissioned a database and studies as follows : 1) on the setting up of a specific database for the project (PROSYS); 2) for the adaptation of the national legal framework to deal with WFCL, particularly child soldiers (CADHRO); 3) study on training and employment opportunities in specific provinces (SOBEC). All three studies experienced a number of difficulties which seriously limited, even if it did not invalidate, the work accomplished.

- 1) The PROSYS database development was approved on July 1, 2005 and by October 05 a working module had been created, expected to be used by the IPEC Project for its monitoring needs. This contract was broken given the introduction of the IPEC DBMR, which also led to break the contract with the DRC consultancy database. The full reasons are explained in the CTA letter “reply IPEC DBMR 29/01/06” and are self-explanatory. The evaluation notes the poor information and communication between IPEC Geneva and the Project Office over the DBMR introduction.<sup>7</sup>
- 2) The CADHRO research study proved difficult for various reasons. It took 4 months to obtain the first payment once the study was approved, but it was difficult to find documentation in Burundi regarding the ILO convention 182 given it was recent legislation and there was little in-country expertise among Burundi jurists. One of the consultants dropped out given the delay in obtaining the first payment. The actual expenses incurred were higher than the first 25% payment, as field work is the most costly part. One of the reported findings is that Child Labour is considered as normal from a customary perspective. The study report is currently being finalised.<sup>8</sup>
- 3) The SOBEC study on training and employment opportunities was initially approved in mid-June 2005. Again funds only arrived on 25.10.05, four months after the initial approval and in the midst of the elections. As a result field work was not undertaken in the most conducive environment.

It is important to indicate the reasons for these delays, as they had nothing to do with IPEC or project delays, but with the functioning of the Citybank, (and, incidentally, the ILO office Kinshasa) as it took the Citybank Kinshasa **several months**, in spite of nearly daily follow up by the administrative and finance assistant of the project, to figure out that the money had been...sent back to them by Citybank New York because of erroneous or missing transfer codes! Malfunctioning of banks, including the US-based Citybank, is certainly one major obstacle to adequate project implementation in

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<sup>7</sup>This DBMR is meant to support new IPEC projects in the designing of a database for monitoring purposes. The problems with the Guidelines is that this is the first project dealing with child soldiers being implemented by IPEC and therefore many adjustments to the DB had to be done in order to fulfil the project's needs. However it should be noted that this DB will be used not only by this project but by any new IPEC's project targeting at child soldiers

<sup>8</sup> The Project Team makes the remark that there may have been some biases in the interview, as the fact that child labour is a customary practice is a banality everywhere in developing countries and can hardly be considered as a main finding.

DRC. – As regards the ILO office, it might be fair to add (and well known to IPEC) that the ILO office Kinshasa went through like most external ILO offices from the considerable disturbances caused by the introduction of a new financial and administrative system (IRIS) ILO-wide during the second half of 2006.

99. As in Rwanda, this again shows that studies which are undertaken in a fluid environment within a political transition or reform process may not be able to reach the intended objectives, particularly if four months are needed to send the first payment after approving the study contract.

### **DRC**

100. DRC is both the country with the highest number of estimated needs, the most difficult country of the four given its size, structure, and the most fragile governing structure. It is also a divided country, with the Eastern part of the country living through over a decade of continuing warfare. All indicators for Eastern DRC show that the population is being decimated by a combination of war casualties, abuse, exactions, insecurity, widespread rape (as a war tool) and HIV, poverty, malnutrition, repeated and chronic displacement. In DRC this duality between East and West has required a specific project structure, as well as the appointment of a Technical Advisor in the East, with a clear division of responsibilities between the Western part, under supervision of the Kinshasa CNP, and a separate office, initially established in Goma, moved to Bukavu for security reasons in October 2005, in charge of all the Eastern part – which is where the highest needs are.

101. Furthermore in December 2005 the head of the IPEC office died in Bukavu in an accident and the assistant became acting head since, with a substantial workload ahead and very difficult working conditions as the project office was just being installed in Bukavu.

102. At the time the evaluation was taking place, four A.P.s had formally started, one A.P. was just approved on 30.1.06, and one A.P. remained in the pipeline, as per details hereunder :

IPEC partner	Start date	Reint.	Prev.	Length Months	Sub total	Location
BICE	5.09.05	210	150	15	360	Kasai oriental, occidental, Kins.
AASD	9.12.05	500	0	14	500	South Ouibangui, Equator
APEE	1.12.05	450	0	14	450	North Ouibangui, Equator
Group1/FSH	3.10.05	200	150	15+12	350	Bukavu, Eastern DRC
GAV	30.1.06*	450	600	??	1050	South Kivu, Eastern DRC
ITURI	pipeline	300	300	??	600	Ituri

\*date of approval

103. The evaluation was able to carry out field work in the two regions, more particularly in Kananga (Kasai) and in Bukavu (South Kivu). Given the tight time-frame only rapid

interviews were possible in Bukavu. The interviews in Kananga were on average 45 minutes, while the rapid group interviews in Bukavu were limited to an average of 15-20 minutes. Substantial discussion time was given with the A.P. partners both in Kananga and Bukavu.

104. The number of interviews and beneficiaries are as follows :

A.P. partner	location	Name of centre	# of children	girl	boy	Type of training	Remarks
BICE	Kananga	Mbango	3	0	3	carpentry	3 vulnerable
BICE	Kananga	farm	1	0	1	farming	1 boy demob 2004
BICE	Kananga	Bondock	1	0	1	mechanic	Referred from CONADER
BICE	Kananga	Michel	1	0	1	Photo lab	former child soldier
BICE	Kananga	Tabulakayi	2	2	0	sewing	Vulnerable
BICE	Kananga	Bakayi	12	12	0	Sewing & bakery	4 mothers with lactating infants
Subtot		6 interv.	20	12	8		
G1/Fsh	Bukavu	Rapid int.	32	18	14	soap	Mixed vuln.+ child soldiers
G1/Fsh	Bukavu	Rapid int. Kapa	22	4	18	Leather tanning, welding, sewing	Mixed child soldiers and Vulnerable
G1/Fsh	Bukavu	Rapid int. FSH	24	23	1	mechanic	All child soldiers 8 demob 2004, 9 in 2003, 2 in 2002, 2 in 2005, 2 no answer
Sub-tot	Bukavu	3 rapid int.	78	45	33		
Total		9 interv.	98	57	41		

105. Unlike the field interviews in Burundi or in Bukavu, the BICE A.P. started earlier and it was therefore possible to obtain feedback from beneficiaries who were near the completion of the training cycle. In Bukavu the activities had just started and therefore beneficiaries were only at the beginning of the training cycle.

106. The results of these different interviews, three of which were individual, are :

<i>The good points – strengths</i>	<i>The bad points – weaknesses</i>
1. The training allows the children to learn a specific profession. All expect to be able to earn a living as a result of the training. Some are happy about the short training period (e.g. 6 months for sewing).	a) All are hungry and expect to be fed during the training. No food is being provided while they are on training (although an agreement has been made with WFP to supply FFT, it has not yet become operational). In Bukavu WFP confirmed food would be available first week of Feb.
2. It is a job that can be done individually (carpentry) and will lead to economic independence	b) Worry about those who become wounded or fall ill during the training, as they have no coverage. Request soap to wash.
3. Grand parents are happy to see their grand children learn a profession rather than staying home and do informal jobs such as carriers	c) Problem of insufficient inputs to produce the goods (i.e. when products are sold a part should be reinvested into buying materials for future production)
4. Training leads to knowledge and helps children with their self-confidence and respect	d) Request that the end of training kits be of better quality.
5. Some of the children are already producing products, and this has led to a change of perception from their families – who see them now as active workers	e) Problem of distance to attend the training – in one case of girl walking daily 10 km (one way) to reach the training centre. Request support to pay the rent for those

107. In addition to these points, there have also been some interesting comments made directly by beneficiaries. Hereunder a selection of quotes from the interviews :

- “When I was in the armed group I did things which were not right; now I learn how to behave as a responsible individual” . “Now people consider me just like any other civilian”. “I have greater self-confidence and in what I can achieve. Before I had the military frame of mind, something which made coexistence (with civilians) difficult”– 18 year old former child soldier, Kananga
- “The mechanics training received contributed to having others respect me. Training contributes to knowledge, so I have more respect and self-confidence” 21 year old former child soldier, Kananga
- “the project has brought an important change : before the training our social circle did not have any consideration for us, now we are considered as useful and we have a lot more self-esteem as we have acquired a profession” 2 girls 17 and 18 years old, vulnerable, sewing training, Kananga

108. In addition to these interviews, in Kananga a sample of 5 parents (4 mothers and one father) having their sons (4) and daughters (2) as beneficiaries were also interviewed. (One mother had both a son and a daughter as former child soldiers in different training). 3 of the parents interviewed were child soldiers’ parents, 3 were vulnerable children’s parents. The interview contents are equally positive about the training being provided through the IPEC project. Hereunder some quotes from the parents’ interviewed :

- “Its really a good job because it allows the children to obtain a profession”
- “It is good for my daughter to learn a profession”
- “Since my child has started the training he doesn’t just stay home and takes the study seriously. As we do not have to pay the training costs it is good for us”
- “Thanks to the project we now see the child making small things at home and helping out in repairs” (carpentry training)
- “I am happy because my child (married) is becoming self-sufficient with the little home production (bakery training) and doesn’t ask his father for money any more”

#### *A) Feedback from the government*

109. In Kananga very good feedback was received by the different government authorities, from the town Mayor to the CONADER, including from the Social Welfare and Labour Provincial Inspectors. Specifically the CONADER assistant in charge of former child soldiers stated that “without the IPEC/BICE project, it would have been a disaster as children were constantly coming to complain to the CONADER office”. The appraisal of the work of BICE was very positive from all levels, including from other UN agencies (such as UNICEF) and the relationship in the network of actors created on the child soldiers issue. Again a recognition that the project is quite unique, as no other actor concentrates only on economic reintegration of the former child soldiers. In Bukavu the government officials were equally supportive of the project and of the importance of its objectives, although there was a request from the social welfare department that more information be communicated to the provincial authorities (although the project was officially inaugurated on September 2005 by the provincial authorities). It needs to be

recalled that the CTS (Comité Technique de Suivi, or Project Technical Monitoring Team) is composed of government representatives from the central levels only, in each of the project countries. In Kinshasa the government was also supportive of the IPEC project, but as in many countries also criticised the “rigidity” of the project and the delays in making the funds available.

*B) Overall results regarding beneficiaries*

110. At the time the evaluation was undertaken, the target beneficiaries planned in the country annexes versus the actual numbers of beneficiaries according to A.P.s already started (and therefore not counting those in the pipeline or the GAV A.P. in DRC) were as follows :

Planned versus actual target beneficiaries in all four countries based on country annexes

Country	Planned IPEC Reint.	Planned IPEC Prev.	Planned IPEC Total	Actual figures based on A.P.s	overall difference	coverage in % of total target
Rwanda	200	600	800	196 R, 600 P	4 R, 0	100%
RoCongo	200	500	700	215 R, 400 P	+15 R, 100 P	88%
DRC	2000	2000	4000	1360 R, 300 P	640 R, 1700 P	42%
Burundi	1440	1000	2440	650 R, 150 P	790 R, 850 P	33%

111. In addition a new A.P. has just been approved on 30.1.06 (but not yet started) in DRC with GAV, for an additional 450 R and 600 P. Three other A.P.s remain in the pipeline : in Ituri (DRC) for 300 R and 300 P, in Burundi for 165 R and 235 P, and in RoC for 100 P. If these figures are included the table shows a very different coverage, according to the following details :

Planned versus A.P. target beneficiaries (incl. pipeline) based on country annexes

Country	Planned IPEC Reint.	Planned IPEC Prev.	Planned IPEC Total	Actual figures based on A.P.s	overall difference	coverage in % of total target
Rwanda	200	600	800	196 R, 600 P	4 R, 0	100%
RoCongo	200	500	700	215 R, 500 P	+15 R	102%
DRC	2000	2000	4000	2110 R, 1200 P	+110 R, 800 P	83%
Burundi	1440	1000	2440	815 R, 385 P	625 R, 615 P	49%
<i>total</i>	<i>3840</i>	<i>4100</i>	<i>7940</i>	<i>3336 R, 2675 P</i>	<i>504 R, 1425 P</i>	<i>76%</i>

112. Except for Rwanda for which the target groups objectives have already been met, the other countries need the time and the funding to implement the four A.P.s which have not yet started. This will lead towards an acceptable percentage of coverage of 76% overall, with the exception of Burundi which will remain under the 50% mark, indicating that less than half of the anticipated target beneficiaries will be covered by the project.

113. Reasons for the actual coverage results are a complicated mix of different factors. Some have to do with the high number of constraints and delays, which required setting of priorities and considering that the shift to include the prevention component within the reintegration activities resulted in a much higher cost, some of the activities had to be

dropped. However the actual decisions which appear to favor RoC and Rwanda as compared to Burundi and DRC should be asked to the project management team. There did not appear to the evaluation to have a deliberate choice to exclude any country from reaching its target group, but the choices were made to allocated the limited resources under the existing constraints. It should be noted that changes of CNPs in both Burundi and DRC have also contributed to slowing the project implementation process and may be one of the factors involved. In addition in Burundi the United Nations security rules further limit access to field work.

### *C) Partners feedback*

114. All partners complained about the difficulty of getting the A.P.s accepted, which entailed substantial re-writing, up to six times for one partner, and the corresponding delays to their implementation. However they all recognised having received strong support from the IPEC project staff, something that was highly necessary and appreciated by partners as it was difficult for them to understand the IPEC *modus operandi*. Only one NGO thought such a stringent requirement was actually useful as a capacity building exercise to develop their skills in proposal writing. The other partners did not as they were or are all used to get funding much more easily from other donors. As regards to the delays there were two major concerns : the first was the delay in obtaining the official approval of the A.P., but also the delay in obtaining the first payment. As mentioned previously, the average time between the two dates was 97 days, something clearly constraining for partners and pushing their A.P. into a compressed mode to reach objectives within the project allocated time-frame, something which is highly unlikely given the existing constraints.
115. Yet another concern (and a lesson to be learned) is that –in the case of the research studies- a number of partners actually spent more than they received as first payment (25%). It was repeatedly mentioned in RoC and DRC that the identification of the target groups for the A.P.s was pre-financed on the basis of the partners' own funds, both because of the late receipt of funds and because of the insufficient provision by IPEC to cover some of the incurred expenses (particulary in RoC).
116. A number of target beneficiaries did change as a result of the delay between the primary identification phase and the subsequent start of the A.P.s, in one case after 14 months. This had two negative effects on the project :
- 1) the first is that high hopes were created when the project started (something also shared by government officials in all countries). The delays in the actual implementation led to some shattered hopes and frustration. Among other reasons and as an example given by the ONEMO in RoC, sometimes a certain number of those target beneficiaries identified for the project were over-aged by the time the A.P. started and no longer met the selection criteria (same as was mentioned by Asoferwa in Rwanda). As a consequence often at least two beneficiary identification campaign had to be undertaken, something which was neither foreseen nor budgeted for. The evaluation was unable to verify this given the constraints of the evaluation field work.

2) The second is a lesson learned by most partners that in future IPEC collaboration beneficiary identification will not be undertaken until funding has been received, in order to avoid the consequences mentioned under point 1).

117. The strategic planning exercise using elements of SPIF was really a mixed blessing for A.P. partners. In most cases they were unfamiliar with IPEC and did not really understand what was requested from them and the intricate IPEC administrative and financial procedures. The SPIF helped clarify somewhat the IPEC objectives, but it was certainly not sufficient for partners to fully grasp the project approach and understand the IPEC procedures. IPEC should compare its planning tools with the reference framework for all DDR in the region, the MDRP, so that the methodology used in the project planning is supportive of the overall framework. In the end the methodological tools are only a means to an end and do not constitute an objective by itself; they are only as good as the use that can be made of them.<sup>9</sup>

### *As regards to the three project objectives*

118. “By the end of the programme, there will be an enabling environment in each country, facilitating the prevention, withdrawal and subsequent reintegration into society of children involved in armed conflict”.

119. As mentioned in three of the four countries there is a reform or political process under way, which means that government institutions have many priorities in addition to the application of the ILO convention 182. Nonetheless the importance and objectives of the project have been recognised and are supported by each country’s government. But some political stability is needed to talk of institutionalising the prevention and reintegration of children involved in armed conflict. The fragile political processes are plagued with uncertainties (DRC, Rwanda) or difficulties (Burundi). The creation of an enabling environment must be coupled with some stability and continuation of existing government’s policies. This is not within the IPEC project’s capacity, and therefore there are many external factors that may influence positively or negatively the evolution of the situation as regards to children involved in armed conflict. In the current context IPEC’s efforts to contribute to an enabling environment can only have a limited impact.

120. “By the end of the programme, former child soldiers above the minimum working age will be assisted to acquire decent work and achieve a sustainable income”.

121. This is probably the one element where IPEC should concentrate its efforts, as it will be the direct result of the A.P.s implemented by partners as well as from the support given by the project staff to the partners. This is where the IPEC project can become a model to be replicated, provided it is able to address the strategic and technical points mentioned in *major outstanding issues* hereunder. This is also where IPEC has a comparative advantage, as other actors have a wider approach to former child soldiers, rather than the IPEC focus of economic reintegration – something which is strongly needed.

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<sup>9</sup> Kindly refer to the report « analysis of quality management tools in the humanitarian sector » commissioned by ECHO and written by C. Bugnion, 2002, for details.

122. “By the end of the programme, fewer children will be recruited into armed conflict in the targeted countries”.
123. As discussed in the report the shift from prevention through awareness raising to prevention through economic reintegration was well founded and justified. This shift was operated by the project team on its own initiative, and was not the initial concept of the project document, showing the project team’s ability to grasp emerging opportunities and adapting to the evolution of the context on the basis of experience and learning. Differentiation between I/O 2 and 3 is done on the basis of the target group label : the first (reintegrated) are all former ex child soldiers, while the second group label (vulnerable) are those at risk of recruitment (and likely a part of the girl soldiers who do not want to declare themselves as such). But in fact the activities and support provided are identical in both cases.
124. At the political level, most countries could not see the usefulness of awareness campaigns while a growing number of former child soldiers were being unemployed. In terms of state security and safety it was therefore a priority to provide economic reintegration also as a deterrent to join the armed groups.
125. Another interesting and positive aspect of this shift is that under the label of “vulnerable” more girls were able to be targeted (given the extreme difficulties in identifying former girl soldiers, as demonstrated by the very high stigmatisation of this target group). In the project “vulnerable” are those individuals who are considered as prevented, whereas those “former child soldiers” identified as such are considered to be reintegrated.
126. As seen from a security perspective, the former child soldiers *and* street children (also considered as “vulnerable”) are both a threat to law and order and public security. The inclusion of these two categories in the project was a positive outcome of the lessons learned by the project staff through their experience with this project since its inception.
127. While there is no baseline on the number of the children recruited into armed conflict (and therefore it is impossible to sustain the statement regarding “fewer children will be recruited”), the effect of the project, if it can be successfully completed, will certainly contribute to fewer children being recruited *in those areas where the A.P.s have taken place*. Since the project only covers a fraction of the needs, it is exceedingly ambitious to expect to have an impact nationwide. Nonetheless a positive impact in the project areas would likely lead to replication of the project approach by other actors.

### ***Major outstanding issues***

128. Some major issues remain to be addressed if the success of the project objectives 2 and 3, which are the ones where IPEC is likely to have a more direct impact, are to be reached.
- a) The sustainability of the employment provided
129. Former child soldiers are not being rewarded for good behaviour by receiving a job’s training. They are being kept from becoming a security hazard, which would most

certainly be the case if they find no legal source of income. However past experience shows that sustainability of the income source often drops with time. In order to really be able to appraise whether or not the former child soldiers are able to continue their professional occupation after the end of the project, a specific monitoring plan must be designed. Prior experience from the trainers interviewed indicate that some 60% of the apprentices are still able to make a living from their activity after two years, while some other sources indicate that the figure drops as low as 10% after four to five years.<sup>10</sup> The fact is that 100% of the target beneficiaries will not be able to become independent in economic terms. This raises three questions :

1. How must “sustainable income” be defined? A clear time frame must be determined to measure whether these children still are making a living from their activity, and can be considered as “successfully reintegrated”. A two year time-frame after the end of the project could be an adequate measure, but for practical reasons a shorter one year time-frame may be necessary.
2. Since it is impossible for 100% of the children to be successfully economically reintegrated, what is the success criteria for the project? Based on previous experience and with a 1 year time-frame to measure results the figure of 70% appears as reasonable.
3. But the 30% who may not have become economically independent run the risk of being again a threat to public security. What needs to be done with those children who are not able to become economically self-sufficient? If the project is unable to provide any further assistance, who will be responsible for this target group, and what are the measures that will be taken? Up to now no project seriously contemplates the group that fails.<sup>11</sup> Yet it is the group which is the most dangerous both in terms of re-recruitment and in terms of public security. How should they be treated and by whom?

b) The number of children targeted by the project

130. 70% of the planned overall target group is substantially lower than 100% of the initial estimates. Using the estimates under point a), this means that 30% of the funding has not been able to accomplish its anticipated results. In a best-case scenario out of 7940 targeted former child soldiers (if all had been included in the A.P.s) the success benchmark would be 5558. If the project’s initial target group is meant to represent those *successfully reintegrated in economic terms*, then for any future extension of this type of project the numbers must include a provision for those who will not succeed. In other words, if the 7940 were meant to be successfully reintegrated in economic terms, the actual target group (considering 70% of successful reintegration) should have been 11342.

131. Another key issue is that prevention through reintegration is more expensive than sensibilisation campaigns, and this needs to be officially recognized by IPEC and

<sup>10</sup> The first figure is from a « maître artisan » in DRC and also matches the evaluator’s findings of previous adult DDR economic reintegration in RoC (UNDP evaluation). The 10% figure is from RoC government officials for child soldiers demobilised in 2002-2003.

<sup>11</sup> APROPOL in Rwanda has taken into consideration this group, by intending to provide assistance for installation in secondary services/productions (vegetable , fruit production etc. for the restaurants and hotels) for those who fail the training for jobs in the restaurant and hotel branch

USDOL and a budget allowance to make up for this shift should be included in the project budget.

c) On the technical side, the project needs to establish clear drop out and abandon rates.

132. These rates were not included in the A.P.s. How many days can a child be ill or simply miss class before he/she is considered as an abandon or to have dropped out? This technical aspect is very important because it can give some indication of the difficulties encountered by the children during the training. The evaluation has collected evidence of low drop out rates from different project sites, but in the absence of a standard criteria regarding attendance they are not relevant and therefore not presented. But there still remains a need for a standard.

d) Kits to be given at the end of the training period

133. Another technical issue has to do with the kits that former child soldiers receive at the end of the training. Previous experience (including in the earlier 2001-2003 ILO/WB pilot project) has shown that some of the kits are sold by the children, which obviously doesn't allow them to become economically independent. There are several ways to counter this practice. One is to make the child responsible for the kit received, and to involve the family (if any) as guarantee or collateral (*cautionnement solidaire*) in case the kit is sold. All five parents interviewed said they would sign an official document accepting responsibility to refund the value of the kit should their child sell the equipment received at the end of the training. An alternative is to find a group of guarantors (family or friends) to reimburse the costs in case of sale. While some concerns were raised about the quality of the kit, additional options include the supply of a better quality kit (the equipment provided is reportedly of rather low standard given the limited funding available), provided the child is able through its work to pay back gradually the difference in costs. But this requires a sufficiently long time period as monthly paybacks cannot be very high for start-up activities.

e) Management culture of the training centres

134. Most of the training centres in Kananga have shown to lack basic management skills. The lack of inputs in order to be able to produce goods was a repeated problem raised by the training centres independently of the activity, whether it was a carpentry, mechanics, sewing or even bakery. While it is clear to some extent that the structures that have accepted the children are also trying to obtain more funds from the IPEC project (an expatriate evaluator is equated with additional US\$\$\$), there is a point which is worth noting. Most of the children do not have even a clear idea of basic management concepts such as profit or cash flow. But most of the structures do not seem to have a business plan or management plan either. One exception is in Bukavu where two partners G1 and FSH have joined efforts as G1 will also provide a management training to target beneficiaries. However the point here is that basic management training should already take place at the training site. The children are working and producing goods by the end of the training, and these goods have a value. How this is managed by the training structure could also provide good grounds for a basic grass roots management training to the children. But given the existing capacity within the training structures, the first step might be for IPEC

to provide training in management skills to those centres where the project beneficiaries are referred.

f) The concept of cost per beneficiary

135. There have been many discussions amongst the DDR actors regarding the cost per person in this type of project. Considering the fact that series of diverse professional training are being provided, some being short cycles of 3 months and others spreading over a 9 months period, without counting the subsequent follow-up and monitoring necessary, the evaluation considers that it is not possible to determine a standard cost per person in this context. It is clearly normal that each training type incurs different costs, based on a series of factors – length of training, technical inputs necessary including machinery and tools, learning ability of the child, value of the end of training kit given, etc. What is important is that the child is able to earn an income with the professional skills acquired, so that he/she will be no longer a security risk. A seamstress will not earn the same income as a mechanic or a carpenter, so naturally training costs also partly reflect the difference with the expected income of the chosen profession. The evaluation recommends that the focus be placed on the child's economic self-sufficiency through the exercise of the newly acquired professional skills, rather than looking at a standard cost for each child across the countries. Within the four countries the cost of living is very different (even within the country) and more budgetary flexibility is necessary to adapt the costs related to the project target beneficiaries. The focus should be the number of successful target beneficiaries, and full flexibility to allocate budgets, in so far as possible within existing ILO regulations and rules should exist to support this objective.

## IV. Conclusions

136. The objectives of the IPEC project fill both a gap and a need. The project is rather unique in its focus to address specifically the economic reintegration of child soldiers. It is therefore a potential model for economic reintegration. However there are numerous challenges and constraints which have negatively impacted and continue to impact the project and enormous delays in the actual implementation of the project components. It is impossible to successfully operate under the current conditions of the project countries without more programmatic and budgetary flexibility and an extended time-frame. Given the numerous constraints results simply cannot be reached within the envisaged project deadline and without some additional budgetary support for monitoring the partners' work in the field.

## V. Recommendations

137. *At the strategic level*

1. USDOL needs to give greater flexibility to the child soldiers project, both in programmatic and in funding terms. Budget revision 3 was only approved on 24 February 2006 while it was sent on 21 December 2005. The evaluation witnessed how landlords, security companies and other project contractors repeatedly requested payment of their arrears. It is important that payments be streamlined from all sides (USDOL and IPEC Geneva and ILO Director in Kinshasa) and expedited given the very high internal constraints affecting project execution.
2. Flexibility is key in the current environment in the Great Lakes. Other actors access funds more rapidly and show much more flexibility. There is a real risk that partners may end up doing the same activities, which are clearly necessary, but with different funding sources given the constraints linked to IPEC procedures.
3. USDOL and IPEC should review carefully the procedures. It is simply impossible to work in such a difficult environment when it takes an average of 97 days to obtain the first funding once an A.P. is officially submitted.
4. The enormous delays in implementation are not giving time to reach the stated results within the anticipated project time-frame. For all countries an extension of the project until July 2007 is necessary to reach results. But in Rwanda and RoC there may no longer be a need for an additional phase, while in DRC and Burundi (and a possible extension into Uganda) a continuation over a two-year time-frame is necessary in view of the uncovered needs.
5. USDOL should participate as observer in the end of project evaluation.
6. The potential success of the project covers essentially I/O 2, which is the provision of reintegration assistance to allow former child soldiers above the minimum working age to acquire decent work and achieve sustainable income. Therefore further efforts must be placed on the capacity of the children to reach this stage, rather than focusing on ensuring vocational training assistance, which is only a first stage.
7. Thus longer-term support is necessary after the training so that A.P. partners and the project staff can support and monitor the evolution of the graduates and provide the monitoring data necessary to report on the actual results regarding the sustainability of the reintegration process.

8. Criteria for the success of the project need to be established. While quantitative indicators have been identified, there is no indication of how many beneficiaries should be economically independent as a result of the training and support received. The evaluator recommends a 70% success rate after one year as a success indicator (e.g. children still able to earn a living with the training/skills provided by the project one year after they have completed the training).
9. In order to minimise the difficulties, the evaluation recommends to balance a little more the approach with some flexibility for corrections during project implementation; more focus on the actual result of the project, which is to raise capacity of the child to earn a living (not just to be taken into vocational training) and on the monitoring of project partners at field level, with a little less demand on the quality of the A.P. design.

*138. At project management level*

1. The agreements with WFP in all countries should be updated immediately so that effective provision of food for training can be done as soon as possible in all project countries
2. Systematic field monitoring of the A.P.s need to be done by the project staff, together with the corresponding monitoring plan. This requires an increased budget for monitoring and additional staff with specific monitoring skills.
3. Project beneficiaries' have made a number of requests for material assistance. From those points mentioned, the evaluator recommends ensuring that the promised food is indeed given, the provision of soap as a basic hygiene concern (which can also be requested from WFP) and that the project develops a comprehensive toolkit strategy for vocational training graduates. More efforts to facilitate beneficiary access to micro-finance are necessary to ensure their capacity to earn a living, as most have no basic management skills.
4. It is also recommended that training centres where project beneficiaries are placed are somewhat trained in basic management skills, as an example which will familiarise beneficiaries with the basics of management
5. More decision making power should be given to the CTA. The particular project structure is not rational given the specifics of the intervention mode in the seven countries. Further decision making must be allocated to the CTA and Project Management Team.
6. Success and abandon criteria must be established for all project countries and must be the same across the countries. Likewise a maximum amount of days of absence needs to be determined before a child is considered to have dropped out of the training.
7. To avoid problems the project must ensure timely payments to partners and suppliers, effective decentralisation of programmatic decision making and budget, increase funds for oversight functions (field monitoring of implementation and results), and shifting one expatriate IPEC staff to be based in Bukavu.