



International Labour Organization

**IPEC**

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

## ***IPEC Evaluation***

# **National Programme for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in VietNam**

**VIE/01/P50/USA**

Nguyen Van Hung, MD PhD

August 2005

## **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 by an external consultant<sup>1</sup>. The field mission took place in August 2005. 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.

The language of the report was heavily edited by DED to make sure that it was understandable to the reader. However, every effort was made to preserve the original meaning of the contents.

*Funding for this project evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor. This report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.*

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<sup>1</sup> **Nguyen Van Hung, MD PhD**

## Acronyms

CLM	Child labour monitoring
CPFC	Committee for Population, Family and Children
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DME	Design Management and Evaluation
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOLISA	Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
IEC	Information, education and communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Program for Elimination of Child Labour
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
USDOL	United State Department of Labour
VAC	Vietnam Alliance of Cooperatives
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VGCL	Vietnam General Confederation of Labor
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union
WFCL	Worst forms of child labour
YU	HCM Communist Youth Union

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## Executive Summary

This project was carried out from 2001-2005 by ILO/IPEC in cooperation with the Vietnamese government (MOLISA) and with funding from the US Department of Labour. The overall goal of the project was to contribute to the progressive elimination of child labour in Vietnam by strengthening the capacity of the governmental agencies, including the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the employers', workers' mass and other child development organizations. The project sought to help these organizations to plan, initiate, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the action to combat child labour, especially its worst forms. The project also aimed to identify a selected number of working children and to provide appropriate social and other services to enable their protection and withdrawal from hazardous and exploitative work. The evaluator has reviewed secondary data (including project documents, an internal working paper and lessons learned); conducted consultations with stakeholders (including donor) and facilitated an evaluation workshop.

**Findings and conclusions:** This was the first major project to address the emerging issue of child labour in Vietnam. *The project achieved most of its objectives and indicators in reviewing legal documents on child labour, raising awareness for policy makers and people; building capacity for related partners and supporting a large number of working children.* The review of existing legal documents was an important step in moving toward revisions, new policies and enforcement mechanisms. The project's approach, experiences, lessons learned, strengths, and weakness positively supported both ILO/IPEC and the Government partners in combating child labour. Overall, ILO/IPEC and its partners have greater capacity to take follow-up action in eliminating child labour, especially the worst forms, in Vietnam.

Existing laws and legal documents on child labour were reviewed with inputs provided for the amendment of policies and laws. The project conducted advocacy and awareness raising activities on ILO Conventions on Child Labour and on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, involving most of the appropriate stakeholders. Stakeholders included the Party, the Central Mass Media (VTV, Radio, Newspaper, meetings, campaigns, newsletters, clubs, and printing material) and organizations (VCCI and VAC). Awareness raising activities were also integrated into other action programs at the central, provincial and district levels within the project. *It was found that public awareness on child labour increased*, and concrete actions have been initiated by government staff, mass organizations, local authorities and parents towards the elimination of child labour.

*The project contributed to the integration of the child labour issue into local government plans* for education and poverty reduction programs. The experimental, active-teaching program on non-formal classes in Long An gained many experiences which may be replicated elsewhere. *Around 1450 working children and 124 abused/at risk children received direct support* through education, vocational training and counselling. Poor parents were trained and supported to access credits and saving programs to increase the family income, thus enabling them to support their children. In addition, hundreds of local authorities, members of women's union, DELISA, CPFC, DOET, school teachers, social workers and parents were provided with knowledge and skills on various child labour related areas. These areas included the ILO Convention on Child Labour; income generation activities; child labour monitoring; child centre teaching methodologies, counselling skills, and children rights. The project created opportunities to strengthen the capacity of staff and officials from MOLISA,

CPFC, and related organizations in project planning, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, staff gained new knowledge and skills in combating child labour based on ILO policies. Related training documents were developed and used, and four action research projects were completed to provide recommendations on government policies and interventions. A network of government, related organizations working, and sectors including employers and workers was formed. The network operated to share experiences and lessons learned on combating child labour, especially its worst forms.

***The project has partially met its objectives in supporting abused children*** in Ho Chi Minh City. The number of victims of trafficking, sexual abuse or at high risk who received services was lower than the targeted number (124 compared to 200 planned). Some partner agencies viewed the action programmes as supports for working children rather than model demonstrations testing new ideas for replication. Partners expected more chances to learn from each other, including study tours to learn experiences from other countries. A key partner of this project, the Department of Labour and Employment (MOLISA), raised concerns on how to improve its partnership with ILO/IPEC. MOLISA sought to make more effective use of the financial and technical support of IPEC. In addition, it expected exchange experiences with other countries in the region and worldwide to combating child labour.

**Recommendations:** *Child labour, especially the worst forms, is a growing issue* in Vietnam which needs more support from ILO/IPEC and other international organizations. The participation of children and partners in planning process of future projects, with technical assistance from ILO/IPEC should be strengthened. The scope and expectations of the project should be more practical in considering both technical and financial resources. The project proposal should take into account all factors which could cause its delay including the approval process in Vietnam, partnership preparation, staffing, and selection of the demonstration sites. Awareness raising and capacity building activities should address child labour based on “***ILO Convention 182,***” and should be better integrated into existing advocacy activities on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Technical staff or consultants should be key resources for the project implementation. The integration of child labour issues into policy making at the national level should be a priority. The same applies to regular planning processes for programs such as credit and saving, poverty reduction and children rights promotion.

***Key areas for future interventions*** include an analysis of the current status, underlying causes and recommended solutions of the worst forms of child labour in Vietnam. A community based child labour monitoring and inspection system was raised as a great need during project implementation. Helping families to become better integrated into income generating programme activities may enable children to continue their education, find suitable jobs to survive and develop their full potential. It is recommended that child participation skills training should be conducted for all partners who are working with children. This would enable them to involve children in the whole process of project planning, monitoring and evaluation. Children should be empowered to advocate for their rights with government, including local authorities.

***The technical staff*** should be considered as a key resource for developing models of learning and replications. Moreover, ILO/IPEC has become a leader on child labour issues among international organizations in Vietnam. As a leader, ILO/IPEC should advocate to form a network of International and Government agencies and individuals working in the area of

child labour to promote learning and sharing. A *partnership mechanism* should be developed between ILO/IPEC and core partners. A partnership with other implementers and collaborators (not as “core”) would be more flexible. MOLISA and CPFC are potential key partners in child labour projects and the Ministry of Health should also be involved. ILO/IPEC should seek to have a general agreement with the Government (e.g., 5 year cooperation plan) so that it could be actively plan for specific interventions. Lessons from other UN agencies such as WHO, UNDP, UNICEF that have long experience working in partnership in Vietnam should be considered.

**The lessons learned:** The commitment and coordination of all levels and sectors of government in the overall project as well as for each particular action program was the key success factor for project implementation. It was necessary to identify clear target groups of working children. Problems needed to be addressed by interventions such as policies, awareness raising and direct support at different levels. Because child labour is such a broad issue in Vietnam, the choice of appropriate partners was a key factor for the success of the project. Capacity assessment of partner agencies and individuals involved in the project was crucial for the formulation of a capacity building strategy. Partnerships in demonstration projects at the provincial level were effective because they allowed more chances to work directly with the children and to provide technical support and monitoring. The participation of all stakeholders in the project proposal development process was essential to building their ownership and to ensuring the preparation phase is appropriate.

The recruitment of qualified technical staff was difficult and time consuming. In addition, staff also needs to learn more about government administrative structures and operations. This will allow it to better cooperate with relevant partners to maximize using project resources. It will also facilitate an understanding of the areas of expertise required in the project, including rights-based approaches and rights enforcement mechanisms. The advocacy and awareness raising activities on combating child labour would be more effective if they were integrated into children rights promotion activities. Specific obstacles that need to be addressed to better serve children include residency requirements to school admission, scholarships and family subsidies; alternate curricula versus existing curricula; the link between non-formal education and streamlined education, between education and vocational training, between vocational training and employment; and between project interventions and government programs.

## 1. Introduction

In November 2000, the Government of Vietnam ratified the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In the same month, the U.S. Department of Labour (USDOL) offered Vietnam financial assistance, through the ILO, to address issues of child labour. ILO/IPEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) as the administrator of the project, through a newly established Child Labour Unit. Following the initiation of the project, the government also acceded to ILO Convention 138, the Minimum Age Convention.

*The Long-term Objective* of this project, with a focus on prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation, is to contribute to the progressive elimination of child labour in Vietnam through the achievement of the following two immediate objectives:

**Objective 1:** At the end of the project, the capacity of the governmental agencies, including the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the employers', workers' mass and other child development organizations will have been strengthened to plan, initiate, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on action to combat child labour, especially its worst forms.

**Objective 2:** At the end of the project, a selected number of working children will have been identified, provided appropriate social and other services to enable their protection and withdrawal from hazardous and exploitative work and working conditions and some at risk children and their families will have been prevented from starting work. The proposed strategy of the project was based on **four components**.

### *Programme Component 1: Policy and Programme Planning and Research*

This component seeks to develop a package of policy and programme responses on child labour especially its worst forms. The component should lead to the expansion of the knowledge base on child labour and to the reformulation of law and practice on child labour in order to meet international labour standards of ILO Convention 182 and ILO Convention 138.

### *Programme Component 2: Advocacy/awareness*

This component creates the conditions for a national dialogue and debate on child labour through awareness raising and advocacy activities within the Government, and with ILO's social partners and the civil society. The advocacy and awareness raising will consist of public education and media campaigns across the country. The campaign will cover three media channels (radio, television and print) as well as seminars and workshops with programme implementers and affected children, families and communities.

### *Programme Component 3: Capacity Building*

This component involves all the activities that will lead to trained programme implementers and partners. The training will give emphasis and priority to the prevention, protection and removal from dangerous work of children who are at greatest risk. This covers a range of subjects ranging from child and community empowerment, labour inspection and community watch, law and policy, and special training on the provision of interventions. It also includes

the efforts to develop a national coordination and monitoring mechanism linking the central, provincial and local programmes in an integrated manner.

*Programme Component 4: Targeted Social protection and Direct Action*

This component consists of (pilot) demonstration programmes that are based at the community and district levels. The pilot programmes target different groups of children: (a) children working in the streets and urban informal workshops in hazardous and dangerous conditions; (b) children found scavenging in dumpsites; (c) children at risk for the worst forms of child labour in the services sectors (tourism, entertainment). Within these three groups of child labour, the programme will look closely into the manner and patterns of recruitment into the sectors to determine the extent of trafficking. The target groups of children have been selected on the basis of baseline studies of the MOLISA and the results of focused group discussions conducted by the MOLISA as part of the DME training in Vietnam in 2000.

After the project was officially started in 18 Feb 2003, **six action programs** were developed for implementation, with the active participation of Vietnamese officials whom the project had trained. The action programs included: 1) capacity building on design, management and evaluation (DME); 2) strengthening of legal framework, action-oriented research and capacity building; 3) advocacy and awareness raising; 4) mobilization of school teachers, administrators and professionals to take action on child labour; 5) prevention and rehabilitation of children in hazardous work; 6) prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labour from tourism and entertainment services and other hazardous sector (details of the action programs in annex 7).

**Vietnamese partners** (recipients) included: MOLISA (the Departments of Labour & Employment and Department of Social Protection) and MOLISA's Social Labour College; the Ministry of Education and Training (National Institute for Education Strategy and Curriculum Development); the Vietnam Women's Union; the Commission for Population, Family and Children (CPFC, Department of education and communication). The project also collaborated with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), Mass Media (National Television, Voice of Vietnam Radio, and several newspapers), the Vietnam Central Committee for Ideology and Culture, Ministry of Justice, the Central Youth Union, the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA), research institutions, local NGOs, and provincial, district and commune authorities and vocational training schools, education sector, health sector, labour-invalids and social affairs sector, CPFC, social workers, educators, farmers association etc.

**Evaluation methodologies:** The evaluation assessed the project as a whole including all project activities in Action Programmes. It sought to determine the impact of the project in relation to the objectives from the project document in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The purpose of the evaluation was to document the outcomes of the project, the changes that were brought about by the existence of the project and the way forward in any future interventions in Vietnam. The evaluation also documented good practices and lessons learned. These could be used as a knowledge base in developing sustainable models in eliminating child labour in Vietnam or in the region. Methodologies used for this evaluation followed the ILO's evaluation framework and agreement with ILO/IPEC. It included various techniques such as in-depth interview; focus group discussion; observations; impact matrix analysis; problem tree analysis, gender mainstreaming measures,

and measures of participation and inclusion/accountability to stakeholders. The information for this evaluation is based on:

*A desk review of all secondary data*, including project documents, technical progress reports; action programs; researches and health survey; especially internal working paper (prepared in January 2005) and lessons learned review (June 2005). Quantitative data (e.g., number of beneficiaries) in this evaluation was obtained through desk review from different sources of information, in consultation with other stakeholders rather than quantitative survey and questionnaires. There are three types of sources of secondary data:

- project documents and other data, technical progress reports and financial reports prepared by project staff.
- documents prepared by project partners, researchers, experts involving in project implementation such as 4 action-oriented researches, health survey, legal review reports, reports on the implementation of action program, lessons learned review...
- documents prepared by independent specialist: internal working paper.

*Limited consultations* with stakeholders, including project staff; key partners; implementers; donor as well as ILO/IPEC staff and specialists.

*Conducting a stakeholder evaluation workshop* with the participation of partners from district, provincial and central levels including network of MOLISA, CPFC, Women's Union, the MOET as well as ILO/IPEC regional office and project staff in Vietnam office.

## **2. Design**

### **Socio-economic and cultural context**

The socio-economic and cultural context of Vietnam was well addressed in the original project document, especially in relation to child labour. The project proposal was initiated and approved between the MOLISA and USDOL in November 2001. After a period of development and discussion, ILO/IPEC and MOLISA officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June, 2002. By the time the project officially started, in March 2003, the socio-economic context of Vietnam had significantly changed from what was described in the original project proposal.

### **Adequacy of the problem analysis**

The project design document described the numbers of children being harmed and identified the underlying causes of the problem to be solved. As Vietnam goes through a process of renovation, privatization and modernization, child labour has emerged as an important issue. However, these findings were not based on an independent survey or research. Most of the data came from existing reports of the Government, mainly the MOLISA.

### **Development and immediate objectives**

The project objectives are clearly stated and indicators for measuring project achievements were clearly defined. The two immediate objectives are feasible and achievable, even with a small amount of money. Solutions that were essential to the identified problems and needs included: building capacity for government officers, especially who are working directly with child labour issues; introducing new ideas for debate; seeking to improve skills; improving

the form of a social worker system; and trying to model some new approaches with seed money.

### **Overall validity of design**

- In general, the project document is logical and coherently links the inputs, activities, outputs to each immediate objective. Different inputs were to be sequenced to create the context for change, to introduce new ideas, and to test new models of support for a group of previously neglected beneficiaries, that would feedback into the process. The proposed implementation strategy, with four components, was also relevant. The project also planned to involve Vietnamese partners at national, provincial, district and commune levels as well as local institutions, mass organizations and NGOs. The project was correct in addressing the need for close cooperation with UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance, because they have an active role in the promotion of children's rights in Vietnam.
- At the beginning of the approval process, the roles and responsibilities of the proposed National Coordination Committee, were not clarified and agreed to by key partners. The "coordination committee" that MOLISA established actually functioned more like an "advisory committee." As a result, the committee's contribution was been very limited.
- It was challenging for the project to work with partners at the Ministerial level that had new staff. This resulted in some confusion on the roles and responsibilities of each key stakeholder during the starting period. MOLISA was considered a key partner but its role in the project was not clear. The coordinating agency (Department of Labour and Employment) also implemented an action program with the same roles as other agencies (who implemented other action programs). This led to the lack of coordination among the six action programs.

## **3. Implementation**

### **International inputs**

As a technical assistance project which aimed at building capacity and developing models to combat child labour, international inputs such as financial and technical support were very necessary. Most of the activities supported with international inputs were relevant to achieving the corresponding objectives. However, some of the partners at the provincial and district levels misunderstood the objective of the project. They thought that the project was designed to carry out poverty reduction efforts rather than to develop models for learning and replication. Therefore, some partners complained about the "small investment" compared to other projects. As a result, some of the implementers of these models focused on the subsidies and support to their children, rather than finding lessons learned and good practices.

### **National inputs**

The National inputs were in-kind contributions from existing administrative systems and networks (except in some cases in demonstration sites). This is a situation similar to that of many other development projects in Vietnam. This would be considered as a good way to gain international support for the government's priorities and strategies. However, this kind

of contribution has shown limitations in actual implementation. In this project, the “advisory committee” has not been functioning well signalling its lack of ownership. The plan was for the committee to be funded by the government; however there was not a clear budget for its operation. The committee would have been more effective if the financial contribution (not just in-kind) from the government had been clarified from the beginning. With a financial contribution, the ownership of key partners could have been considerably increased.

### **Activities**

The project’s main activities were implemented through six action programs. The analysis of these action programs will be integrated with the analysis of outputs and impacts (table 1 and 2). This approach will permit the reader to determine how the activities contributed to the outputs and project objectives.

*Action program 1: Capacity building of the IPEC partners on Design, Management and Evaluation (DME) of Action Programs.* This was implemented by the College of Labour and Social Affairs (COLSA) of the MOLISA in three months with limited budget (\$15,732). The program was successfully implemented to train key officers in design, management and evaluation skills related to ILO programs that later on played key roles in designing and implementing action programs. These key officers had participated in the design and manage action programs for the project implementation. Staff of the College who participated in the implementation of this action program also gained experiences in their careers as trainers for social workers and staff of MOLISA.

*Action Program 2: Prevention and elimination of child labour through strengthening of legal framework, action-oriented research and capacity building.* The action has been implemented by the Department of Labour and Employment, MOLISA, which is considered a key partner and coordinating agency for the whole project. Most of activities as planned were implemented including review legal documents and training local officers as well as application and dissemination of the training manuals. The national laws and policy on child labour were reviewed, and recommendations to harmonize existing legislation with the relevant International Labour Standards were given. Four action-oriented researches were conducted in selected sectors of the worst forms of child labour, as of: (1) domestic work (2) small-scale coal mining (3) sale and distribution of illicit drugs; and (4) fishing. Government officials and other -partners from central to district/commune levels, involved in implementing the ILO-IPEC’s country programmes have been trained on child labour in which 15 core staff be trained as master trainers on child labour, ILO’s Conventions 182 and 138, national policies and legislation, and labour inspection. These activities were considered as a very important step in moving forward in improving laws and policies on child labour in Vietnam. It would have been more useful to have a comprehensive analysis of the underlying causes of all kinds of child labour, especially the worst forms. Moreover, the reviews focused more on the availability of the policies and laws; and less on actual implementation of the key legal principles, and the integration of international standards into government development decision making priorities.

*Action Program 3: Prevention and elimination of child labour through advocacy and awareness raising.* This activity was implemented by the Department of Communication and education, Vietnam CPFC with the participation from National Committee for Ideology and Culture; National Pioneer Council; National Youth Union; Vietnam Alliance of Cooperatives; Vietnam chamber of Commerce and Industry; Vietnam General Labour Union and Vietnam

Television, Voice of Vietnam Radio, and over 10 different newspapers. The advocacy and awareness raising were conducted nationwide with focus on the five project provinces/cities (Hanoi, HaNam, NinhBinh, Ho Chi Minh City and LongAn). In general, the program has used most of the existing channels for raising awareness on child labour issues, the ILO Conventions and CRC. Strategies of the AP were applied including (1) direct communication: meetings/forums/discussions; (2) mass media; and (3) printing materials. As commented by most of the participants in the evaluation workshop, the advocacy and awareness raising were successful in disseminating information on child labour to leaders, staff, communities and parents. The program also established a communication/media working group comprised of experts from national television, radio, other agencies to formulate television and radio programs and to publish newspaper articles about prevention and elimination of child labour. It would have been more effective if messages for advocacy and awareness raising had focused more on the responsibilities of government and communities. It appears that the messages addressed the responsibilities of parents to prevent child labour rather than the responsibilities of local government to provide learning opportunities for children. In one case, the local authority issued a regulation forbidding children from working even though they may have needed to work for survival and while supporting their poor families. It is necessary to note that children rights promotion activities are the mandate of CPFC and supported by different international organizations (UNICEF, Plan International, Save the Children Alliance). The cooperation with different organizations on implementation of this action program would have yielded a better impact on child labour.

*Action Program 4: Mobilization of school teachers, administrators and professionals to take action on child labour.* [Project Sites: 5 Provinces of Long An (two districts), Ha Nam, Ninh Binh (2 districts), Soc Son district of Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City (three districts)]. The Research Centre for Strategy and Non-formal Education, National Institute of Educational Strategy and Curricula Development (MOET) implemented this action program in collaboration with Department of Secondary School (MOET); provincial department of education and training; schools; community learning centres and people's committee at all levels. There were experiences in providing non-formal education for children in need of special protection in Vietnam (alternative basic education program for children in remote areas, multi-grade classes for street children). An analysis of educational policies and pedagogic measures regarding children in special circumstances, focusing on available and current legal instruments to support the child labour target group, was conducted by a group of educational experts and administrators from the National Institute for Educational Strategies and Curricula Development and Department for Secondary Schools of the Ministry of Education and Training. The policies were reviewed by the authorities and educational experts of Ha Noi, Ninh Binh, Ha Nam, HCMC and Long An to ascertain how these policies have been applied in the respective localities. The review also developed recommendations for improvements and revisions to ensure more working children are mainstreamed into the educational system. An experimental program of effective teaching methods was piloted by the National Institute of Educational Strategies and Curricula Development, under the MOET, in Long An Province. The content of the experimental program was brought into the non-formal class curriculum but simplified and made practical to encourage working children to be interested. In addition, the experimental program also integrated all contents relevant to child labour. These activities contributed to change the traditional regulations of the education system in the project areas in accepting children without resident certification or children who dropped out of school. Though there are not many "new initiatives" in this non-formal education; the integration of child labour issues into the curriculum was a good practice. It

would have been more effective to disseminate the message that children have the right to equal access to education and the responsibilities of government, communities and parents (but not just parents) to provide basic education for children, especially in full-time schools.

*Action Program 5: Prevention and rehabilitation of children in hazardous work* (scavenging, grass-mat-ware production and construction material manufacturers), which the Department of Social Protection of MOLISA was the principle implementing agency, with different collaborating partners, have been piloted in Soc Son (Ha Noi), Ha Nam and Ninh Binh in the North of Vietnam. The action program was implemented in 18 months with a focus on awareness raising and capacity building of governmental officials and staff at local level and mass organizations, children and their families. The goal of the programme of action was to prevent at risk children from dropping out of school and enter child labour, particularly the worst forms of child labour in the targeted sectors. Public awareness raising on the issue of CL in the project sites was done through the three main channels of mass media (1) direct communication: meetings/forums/discussions; (2) mass media; and (3) printing materials. Capacity building through several different training on communication skills, counselling skills, WFCL, UNCRC, the International Labour Standards, OHS, gender mainstreaming on CL etc was conducted. The program also collaborated with provincial and district education and health sectors as well as DOLISA to provide the target children with access to formal or non-formal education, vocational/prevocational/skills trainings, job placement, and regular health check, other necessary protection services and support for their families. A computer network system from central to district levels to update the progress of support to the target children and their families was set-up. A health survey was conducted in Soc Son, Ha Nam and Ninh Binh to assess the health status and working conditions of children working on hazardous environment and provide comments for the project and its related action programs.

*Action Program 6: Action Programme for the Prevention, Withdrawal and Rehabilitation of child labour from tourism and entertainment services and other hazardous sector*, implemented by Vietnam Central Women's Union in Ho Chi Minh City and Long An province in 20 months. The women's union has cooperated with different organizations, including the DOLISA, CPFC, DOET, Youth Union, Bank for Policy and Social Affaires, Mass organizations, Trade Unions, vocational training school, the agriculture and rural development sector to implement the action program. Large number of poor and working children and their families directly benefited from project activities by supporting them in accessing education (formal and non-formal), vocational training, credit and savings, health care. In HCM City, around 124 children who were victims of trafficking, sexually abused, prostitutes or at great risk were supported through counselling, vocational training or family integration. The HCM Women's Union actively supported these girls in HCM City and neighboring provinces. Through these supporting activities, they learned about the underlying causes of CL. This, in turn, helped them provide counselling and support for parents, children and communities to prevent child abuse. In addition, awareness raising and capacity building activities were also integrated and conducted in the action program, in which Long An provincial radio and television station was very proactive

*In Action Program number 5 and 6*, the management structures were complicated, which contributed to the delay of the project implementation. For example, an initiative from social workers/teachers, who work with children at village level, may have to go up to commune, district and then provincial management level. The provincial partners (women's union) then submit to the Central Women's Union who is the principle implementing agency of the project. The flow would continue from Central women's union to project staff. The positive

implication of this mechanism is the involvement of different sectors and levels in the project that they would learn from and contribute to in the future. However, this mechanism with many “layers” not only caused delays in implementation but also contributed to the workload of the project staff had to deal with all of the steps leading to the lack of time for monitoring and technical support. As a result, project partners at provincial and district levels expected the support from the project as investments for their development rather than demonstration activities/models. In addition, the delay shortened the time for the actual implementation of action programs (the durations of action programs 5 and 6 were about one and half years) which has affected the quality of their performance.

### **Activities/Outputs and changes**

In the project document, ILO/IPEC set a target to withdraw: 500 child workers engaged in scavenging; at least 500 child workers who are working in the streets and informal work arrangements in traditional production villages and other hazardous sectors, and 500 children working in the services sectors such as tourism and entertainment. In addition, ILO/IPEC set a target to provide services to 200 girls and boys who were child victims of trafficking.

Project records indicate that 1,545 children were profiled and that the project provided them with 3,890 individual interventions in the form of education and vocational/skills training, health care check up, counselling, job placement, home-shelters, etc. However, project records indicate that only 124 children who were victims of trafficking received services. The services included shelters, counselling, and vocational training by the HCM Women’s Union in two support centres which were partially supported from the project.

The main reasons for not meeting the targeted number of children who were victims of trafficking was selection of project locations and the way services were marketed to the children. The lack of baseline data also played an important role. In addition, there were 34 children who refused services from the support centres. Future evaluations should explore ways that the project can improve the services that it provides to victims of abuse and trafficking. This should include marketing approaches to attract them to the services available.

In addition, through policy and coordination mechanisms and with funding from government social assistance services, the project sought to reach one million working children. Of this number, around 200,000 were at risk of the worst forms of child labour. Through advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives, the proposed project sought to reach a potential target of 30,000 urban and rural families whose children were at risk for the worst forms of child labour.

The six action programs carried out integrated project activities. The activities that were directly implemented by the project staff seemed to offer the best opportunities for synergy. The result of this approach to project implementation is that all of the activities, action programs with project components and specific objectives were interdependent. Tables 1 and 2 below summarize the project outputs produced compared to planned and observed changes related to child labour during the period of project implementation.

Table 1: Outputs planned and actual produced

Objectives	Outputs	
	Planned	Actual produced <sup>2</sup>
<p><b>I/O 1:</b> At the end of the project, the capacity of the governmental agencies, including the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the employers', workers', mass and other child development organizations will have been strengthened to plan, initiate, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on action to combat child labour, especially its worst forms.</p>	<p>1.1 National Plan of Action revised, adopted and disseminated.</p>	<p>The National Plan disseminated and adopted; and Revised laws/policies finalized and disseminated. 12 February 2004, the Government Prime Minister has approved a Decision on approval of the National Program on the Prevention and Tackle of Street Children, Children Victims of Sexually Abuse and Children in Hazardous and Dangerous Works for the period 2004 – 2010...</p> <p>The final report on review of the existing laws and policies on child labour and child labour inspection was available which consolidates the information and findings and recommendations for further actions by the concerned agencies to expand the list of work and occupations to be prohibited for children in line with ILO C. 182 and C.138, as well as to formulate an organizational and operational regulations of labour inspectorate on young workers. The report has been circulated among the line ministries/agencies.</p> <p>4 action-oriented researches produced on child labour in areas: domestic workers; fishing; coal-mining and drug trafficking. The results from the research have been circulating among the concerned ministries/agencies.</p> <p>Several advocacy and awareness raising activities have been organized and conducted through mass media (national and local television, radio and newspapers); and meetings with the participation of the Central Committee for Ideology and Culture, CPFC, education sector, and other concerned ministries and agencies, and mass organizations at different levels; and printing materials with the participation of employers' and workers' organizations, Youth Union. Booklet about child labour and the rights of the child to be used for awareness raising for children has been finalized and printed with 5,000 copies, and distributed among children, especially those in the project sites.</p> <p>1,000 copies of the training package on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour, which covers the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, background on child labour, International Law on Child Labour (ILO C. 138 and C. 182), and the national legal framework with regard to</p>
	<p>1.2 Assist in the review of national laws to harmonize with relevant International Labour Standards.</p>	
	<p>1.3 At least 4 action-oriented research reports produced on selected sectors of the worst forms of child labour.</p>	
	<p>1.4 National advocacy campaign launched.</p>	
	<p>1.5 At least 40 trained core child labour staff at the MOLISA, DOLISA and VCPFC.</p>	
	<p>1.6 At least forty staff from governmental departments, employers' organizations, trade unions and non-governmental organizations trained in programme</p>	

<sup>2</sup> Outputs produced were consolidated from desk review and verified in the process of consultations with stakeholders.

Objectives	Outputs	
	Planned	Actual produced <sup>2</sup>
<p>design, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>1.7 Forty-five community-based workplace committee members trained on child labour issues, national legislation on the minimum age for employment and worst forms of child labour, child monitoring systems and maintenance of information databases.</p> <p>1.8 At least 75 school teachers, administrators and school professionals (25 from each project location) oriented and mobilized to take action on the worst forms of child labour.</p> <p>1.9 Models of intervention for selected target groups of children documented to serve as basis for replication in a larger scale.</p>	<p>child labour in Vietnam has been developed. The package has been using as material for several trainings for officials of different Government organizations, employees' and employers' organizations, mass and socio-political and non-governmental organizations working for children and children's welfare from national to commune levels.</p> <p>Hundreds of core child labour officials/staff, policy makers, legal experts, and researchers at MOLISA, DOLISA, CPFC, employers' and workers' organizations, Women's Union, Youth Unions, research institutions, MOET, DOET, and other related governmental and non-governmental organizations/agencies have been trained on various issues related to child labour: ILO policies on child labour, international labour standards-- particularly the Conventions on Minimum Age No.138 and on the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182 and their accompanying Recommendations, IPEC strategies and objectives, child rights, gender mainstreaming, action-oriented research on child labour, occupational health and safety, and project planning and implementation skills, etc.</p> <p>Fifty five staff from the above-mentioned ministries and departments, including VCCI and VGCL, have been trained in Design, Management and Evaluation of ILO-IPEC Action Programmes.</p> <p>Seventy five community-based workplace committee members were trained on child labour issues, national legislation on the minimum age for employment and worst forms of child labour, child monitoring systems and maintenance of information databases.</p> <p>Over 400 school teachers, administrators and school professionals have been oriented and mobilized to take action on child labour.</p> <p>Over 500 concerned project officials and staff, social workers, communicators, employers etc. were trained on communication skills, counselling skills, child rights, child labour issues, life skills, laws and policies pertaining to child labour, occupational health and safety.</p> <p>A community-based child labour monitoring system was piloted in HCMC and Long An. The selected sectors in which working children participate are tourism, entertainment services, and the informal sector such as construction material production, small private enterprises. Participating in</p>	

Objectives	Outputs	
	Planned	Actual produced <sup>2</sup>
		<p>child labour monitoring involves families, local authorities, Women Union, Youth Union, community organisations, business owners, teachers, CPFC staff, and community members.</p> <p>A Knowledge Sharing Workshop for the project stakeholders was conducted for two days with the participation of 63 people (1) to provide an opportunity for the project stakeholders to share their experience in combating worst forms of child labour; (2) to help document the project Lessons Learnt and Good Practices; and (3) to create a venue for each implementing agency to discuss the next steps. The lessons learnt and good practices drawn out as the results of the workshop have been documented by a consultant, and shared with the project implementing agencies, employer's and workers organizations, international government and non-governmental organizations, local NGOs, private sectors, communities where child labour is prevalent, including parents and children, and donors.</p>
<p><b>I/O 2:</b> At the end of the project, a selected number of working children will have been identified, provided appropriate social and other services to enable their protection and withdrawal from hazardous and exploitative work and working</p>	<p>2.1 About 300 child workers engaged in scavenging will be withdrawn from work and provided with appropriate developmental alternatives.</p> <p>2.2 At least 500 child workers who are working in the streets and informal work arrangements in traditional production villages and other hazardous sectors will be withdrawn from work and provided appropriate education and/or assistance to enable a return to school and supervised training under safe conditions, such as assistance for alternative</p>	<p>1,545 child profiles have been computerized for intervention support and monitoring purposes (in which more than 1,400 received direct support, the rest being support by the government since they were enrolled later than the project completion date). Intervention supports were made to the target children and their families. Few activities are on going to support the new profiled children. Up to the date, children received direct supports 3,890 times from the project with education and vocational/skills training, health care check up, counselling, job replacement, home-shelters etc.</p> <p>Hundreds of target families were provided with short trainings/seminars on credit/saving procedures, and skills/technologies on related areas that the families use for generating the credits/loans, such as planting, farming, husbandry, protecting animals from diseases etc. so that they could generate credits effectively. Life Skills training were also conducted for concerned project officials and staff.</p> <p>Prevention and Elimination Clubs activities to provide and share related information among the members for the child monitoring within the community, as well as for helping the members to understand more on child rights, the links between education and child labour, and for the members to support each others in combating child labour in their community.</p> <p>A health survey report on "Preliminary assessment of working condition of the children in Garbage of Nam Son Dump (Ha Noi), rush-making in Kim Son district (Ninh Binh) and stone quarrying in Thanh Son commune (Ha Nam)" has been finalized. The report findings provided an overview of</p>

Objectives	Outputs	
	Planned	Actual produced <sup>2</sup>
<p>conditions and some at risk children and their families will have been prevented from starting work</p>	<p>employment and livelihood skills training.</p> <p>2.3. 500 children working in the services sectors such as tourism and entertainment, profiled and provided social protection services.</p> <p><i>200 children as victims of trafficking will be provided services including counselling, education, skills training and support with aim of reintegrating them into mainstream life.</i></p>	<p>the hazardous work that their children are involved in and has been disseminated and circulated among the concerned partners/authorities in Ha Nam, Ninh Binh and Soc Son, and officials from different Departments of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA).</p> <p>Three 3-day training courses on development of small business skills for women were conducted in Ho Chi Minh city in June for 75 parents in three project districts.</p> <p>124 children (girls who were victims of sexual exploitation or at risk) were supported through counselling, vocational training to integrate into their families. Currently 23 are being cared for at the Centre managed by HCM Women's Union and 43 children are being supported in vocational training. Though the project had cooperated with the HCM Women's Union and the IOM, they could not access to the number of these needy children as planned (200). The main reasons would be the lack of baseline data, the partner approach to access these children as well as the support and cooperation from relevant agencies (especially the police). However lessons learned from this activity are great for partners in understanding the underlying causes leading to abuse and exploitation and trafficking which would be very useful for their next steps in counselling and education to prevent child sexual abuse, child trafficking,.</p> <p>An analysis of national educational laws and policies and pedagogic measures regarding children in special circumstances, with focus on available and current legal instruments to support the child labour target group, were conducted by a group of educational experts and administrators from the National Institute for Educational Strategies and Curricula Development and Department for Secondary Schools of the Ministry of Education and Training. The laws and policies were reviewed by the authorities and educational experts of Ha Noi, Ninh Binh, Ha Nam, HCMC and Long An to ascertain how these policies have been applied in the respective localities to develop recommendations for improvements and revisions to ensure more working children are mainstreamed into educational system.</p> <p>The Experimenting practical and effective teaching programme on non-formal classes at lower secondary level in Long An province was completed. Lessons learnt and good practices from the experiment, as well as recommendations to the governmental concerned agencies are made and shared at a national workshop which was held for educational policy makers, law enforcers, administrators, authorities, and teachers, and the concerned authorities and educators of the five</p>

Objectives	Outputs	
	Planned	Actual produced <sup>2</sup>
		project sites.

Table 2: Changes observed during project implementation

No	The project outcomes	Changes observed
1	Prime Minister has approved a Decision on approval of the National Program on the Prevention and Tackle of Street Children, Children Victims of Sexually Abuse and Children in Hazardous and Dangerous Works for the period 2004 – 2010.	The Govt. increased budget for combating WFCL for 2005 by 1.5 times in comparison to the budget for 2004. In 2006, the Government planned to allocate VND1 billion, which is equivalent to US\$63,000, to the National Program of Action for the Prevention and Tackle of Children in Hazardous and Dangerous Work (for 2005 about VND650, 000, equivalent to US\$40,950).
2	The final report on review of the existing laws and policies on child labour and child labour inspection was available which consolidates the information and findings and recommendations for further actions	A network among government departments/organizations on child labour have been formed and strengthened and better cooperated. Child labour has been addressed in the implementation of Government policies relating to poverty reduction and social development. Combating child labour tasks are partially integrated in to regular activities.
3	4 action-oriented researches produced and circulated on child labour in areas: domestic workers; fishing; coal-mining and drug trafficking. A health survey report on “Preliminary assessment of working condition of the children in Garbage of Nam Son Dump (Ha Noi), rush-making in Kim Son district (Ninh Binh) and stone quarrying in Thanh Son commune (Ha Nam)” finalized	Awareness of policy makers and related organizations raised on child labour and the worst forms of child labour. A network among government departments/organizations on child labour have been formed and strengthened and better cooperated.  Staff who participated in the project have been equipped with knowledge and skills to advocate for combating child labour, especially the worst forms.
4	Several advocacy and awareness raising activities have been organized and conducted through different channels (mass media, meeting...). Booklet about child labour and the rights of the child to be used for awareness raising for children finalized and printed with 5,000 copies, and distributed among children, especially those in the project sites.	Awareness of policy makers and related organizations raised on child labour and the worst forms of child labour. Related organizations participated in the project realize their responsibilities to support children and their families to combat child labour. Children rights materials were disseminated to families in project sites.
5	1,000 copies of the training package on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour developed and used to train hundreds of related staff, teachers, community-based	Staff who are working on areas relating to child labour have been equipped with knowledge and skills to advocate for combating child labour, especially the worst forms. Staff who participated in the project are capable to plan and develop

No	The project outcomes	Changes observed
	workplace committee members...The project also translated, printed and disseminated the “ <i>Handbook for Action-oriented Research on the Worst Forms of Child Labour</i> ” which was used in training package.	materials for advocating on ILO conventions and CRC toward elimination of child labour, especially the worst forms. Partners understand better on the nature of the target groups they work with; knowing which types of interventions are workable and which are not and why. They have been built capacity at agency level, particularly in the areas of awareness raising and providing direct assistance through formal and non formal education, vocational training.
6	An analysis of educational policies and pedagogic measures regarding children in special circumstances, with focus on available and current legal instruments to support the child labour target group, were conducted. An experimental program of effective teaching methods was piloted in Long An Province. In addition, the experimental program also integrates all contents relevant to child labour. Over 400 school teachers, administrators and school professionals have been oriented and mobilized to take action on child labour.	Related teachers are capable to teach children in a more active manner appropriate with their condition and expectations. Schools and teachers as well as education managers are more friendly in accepting children who have no residence permissions, or who had dropped out and come back to schools
7	A Knowledge Sharing Workshop for the project stakeholders was conducted for two days during 5-6 May with the participation from different government and non-government organizations, private sectors...	Lessons learned from different models developed during the project implementation documented and recommended for the line government agencies. Related organizations participated in the project realize their responsibilities to support children and their families to combat child labour.
8	1,545 child profiles have been computerized for intervention support and monitoring purposes (in which more than 1400 received direct support...).	Children in project areas are aware about their rights on education and development. Children in poor and near-poor families are more confident to enter schools as well as relevant informal classes for their education. Hundreds of children in poor/near poor families are provided opportunities to learn and study and integrate with their own communities.
9	Hundreds of target families were provided with short trainings/seminars on credit/saving procedures, and skills/technologies on related areas that the families use for generating the credits/loans, such as planting, farming, husbandry, protecting animals from diseases etc. Child labour Prevention and Elimination Clubs activities to provide and share related information among the members for the child monitoring within the community, as well as for helping the	Child labour issues are on the agenda of all provincial and district departments/organizations participating in the project. Child rights have been promoted and IEC materials disseminated to all families in project areas. The policies relating to children’s education have been implemented in a more flexible way to enable children enrolled again in the schools after dropt-out. Resident certification is no longer the mandatory condition for students enrolling into schools in project areas. Hundreds of children in poor/near poor families are

No	The project outcomes	Changes observed
	members to understand more on child rights..	provided opportunities to learn and study and integrate with their own communities
10	Over 500 concerned project officials and staff, social workers, communicators, employers etc. were trained on communication skills, counselling skills, child rights, child labour issues, policies pertaining to child labour. Child monitoring system and maintenance of information databases developed and applied to profile the target children and families, and to monitor the intervention supports towards the target children and their families.	Inspection to monitor child labour have been implemented by different line departments at provincial and district levels in project areas. “Near-poor” families who were excluded in the past (only poor families with certification received subsidies from government) are supported to enable their children in studying at schools and vocational training. Staff who participated in the project at provincial and district levels are now supported by their leaders so that they could allocate time for working on child labour issues.
11	124 children (girls who were victims of sexual exploitation or at risk) were supported through counselling, vocational training...to integrate into their families. 75 parents trained on development of small business skills in Ho Chi Minh city.	Girls and their parents in project areas are provided with knowledge and skills to prevent them from abuse. Staff involving in the project are learned about underlying causes and the way to provide counselling for children and their families to prevent being trafficked and abused.

## Management and Coordination

The project staff, including a National Project Manager and an Administrative Secretary, was committed to managing the project in a capable and enthusiastic manner. The staff worked hard to overcome daunting challenges. The following were specific limitations in the project management and coordination:

***Reasons for the delay of the project.*** The project proposal was developed in cooperation with MOLISA and approved by USDOL in November 2000. The proposed project was scheduled to start on October 1, 2001 and to end on March 31, 2004. However, the official agreement between ILO/IPEC and MOLISA was not signed until June 2002. Once the agreement was signed, it took an extended period of time to establish an ILO/IPEC office in Vietnam. After the office was established, staff recruitment began. Staff recruitment was delayed until December 2002 because a qualified national project manager was not available. Thus the starting time was postponed until early 2003.

There were also delays on the Vietnamese side. A decision<sup>3</sup> by the Prime Minister set new rules for the management and utilization of aid from international non-governmental organizations. The new rules required review and approval of all aid programmes, regardless of budget size, that dealt with policies, laws, public administration reform, culture and information, religions, national defence and security. This meant that the ILO/IPEC project, which sought to modify policies and laws, required approval by the Prime Minister.

***Partnership mechanism was not well developed.*** The cooperation mechanism between the project, MOLISA and the “advisory committee” was not clear. This led to confusion over roles and responsibilities in managing the project. The project was managed directly by ILO/IPEC (as stated in original project document). However, it was reviewed and submitted for approval with contribution and efforts to be made by the MOLISA. Then, contrary to what was set out in the proposal, MOLISA established a project “advisory board” rather than a “coordination committee.” In the implementation phase, the role of “advisory board” was not clarified and so its contribution was limited. In practice, there was not clear funding support for the operation of this “advisory board.” However, the working environment in Vietnam has improved significantly during the last five years. With experiences gained from the project, it would be a great chance for future interventions of ILO/IPEC on child labour in the country.

***Key partners and government contribution.*** The project “key partners” were not clearly identified in the implementation process. The project document wrote: “*Among the core partners are the Department of Employment and Labour of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, which, as part of its broader mandate on labour and employment, has a mandate to coordinate and oversee a national child labour policy in Vietnam. The Vietnam mass organizations – the Vietnamese Confederation of Labour (VGCL), the Vietnamese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Vietnamese Cooperative Alliance (VCA) will be involved from the start and their capacity to implement child labour programmes will be strengthened.*”

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<sup>3</sup> Decision No.64/2001/QD-TTg dated 26 April 2001

However, once the “advisory board” was established, the role of Department of Employment and Labour (DOLISA) was undifferentiated from the partners who implemented action programs, including the College (COLSA), Department of Social Protection (MOLISA); Department of Communication and Education (CPFC); Women’s Union and the National Institute for Education Curriculum and Strategy (MOET).

DOLISA’s ownership was limited, despite the fact that it was consulted during the preparatory phase of project activities and that it received the Technical Progress Reports. This led to the lack of coordination among implementers. In addition, the use of results/experiences from actions programs for combating child labour was limited.

***Partnership for demonstration components should be with provincial level.*** In addition to postponing the start of the project, the ending date was also rescheduled from June 1, 2005 to August 31 2005. This could be explained by different reasons. First, the level of centralization was not conducive to efficient project administration. The project staff had to work with partners at central level and then with implementers at provincial and district level which were far from project office. For example, there were delays in liquidation process, funds transferring from the ILO to the partners bank accounts (at central level, based in Ha Noi), and then to the local accounts (for example in Long An).

Second, the cooperation structures that were put in place to support the action programs were not sufficient. For example, there was not sufficient technical assistance to support all partners at different levels to improve the quality of the project and build capacity for them. Even with their great commitment and hard work, it was very challenging for two staff (national project manager and secretary) with some short-term consultants to manage the project both technically and administratively.

### **External factors affecting implementation**

***Government policies and programs.*** There were several factors which were considered in the project implementation in Vietnam. The government established Vietnam CPFC (2002) and the re-enforcement of the Law on the Protection, Care and Education of children (2004). These brought opportunities for more cooperation, commitment and support from the government on children’s rights including child labour issues. Future projects should seek to discover opportunities to strengthen cooperation with CPFC in the future. Moreover, there were government programs for poor children, including different vocational training programs and poverty reduction programs.

***Issues relating to child labour and the worst forms:*** During project implementation, several issues related to the worst forms child labour came to the attention of the Vietnamese public. These issues included street and working children in big cities; the migrant children with their families (who had no resident permissions leading to the lack of opportunities to access basic social services); sexual abuse and trafficking in children; and children in conflict with the law.

**International initiatives.** Several bilateral development agencies, UN agencies, and NGOs supported development projects that worked on child labour issues. For example, the World Bank made a loan to Vietnam to support basic education for disadvantaged children (implemented by MOET). It was fortunate that the project worked well with UNICEF, IOM and Save the Children Sweden to implement some activities. However, there were many opportunities for more cooperation and sharing, not only for project staff but partners as well. In particular, advocacy and awareness raising could have been made more effective by collaborating with the promotional campaigns of children rights. Research and demonstration project development was also a strength of these international organizations. Lessons learned from these organizations could have helped improve the management of a new project in a new office like the one in Vietnam.

## **4. Performance**

### **Relevance**

**The project is relevant.** Most of the Vietnamese partners that participated in the evaluation workshop recognized the project was very necessary and important for Vietnam. Given that child labour was an emerging issue in a time of transition, the project was an appropriate response to existing problems. The project objectives remained valid even though some of the component priorities changed due to the fast development of the country over the implementation period. Institutional development support resulted in important system changes that remained relevant. But the direct support components with selected target populations changed significantly.

**Focus more on working children in poor families.** A majority of the direct beneficiaries of the project were children from poor families who dropped out of school seeking jobs to earn their living and support their families. This “form” of child labour was not identified as one of the “worst forms”. However, this was a growing issue in Vietnam. The action-research studies supported by the project identified the four “worst forms” of child labour. However, the majority of working children who benefited from the project were not in these forms of child labour. A situation analysis of child labour and all the worst forms would be potentially very useful for planning areas for any future technical assistance in combating child labour in Vietnam.

### **Effectiveness and efficiency**

**The project has achieved most of its objectives within budget.** The project achieved its’ objectives in strengthening capacity of government staff, especially MOLISA staff and related organizations, to combat child labour in Vietnam. These trained officials were responsible for policy reviews and recommendations, monitoring and inspection of child labour related issues. Specific changes were made during the project implementation. Data was collected to provide adequate evidence regarding the effectiveness and impact of the project. Most of the indicators of achievement are available (Table 1). The project has generated a lot of potentially valuable data and pointed to some areas in which policies could be changed.

***The benefits of the project have accrued to the targeted group.*** The project worked at multiple levels; central, provincial, district, and commune. People from commune level were mobilized to participate in the project as volunteers. Teachers and social workers at village levels worked directly with children. The monitoring/reporting system set up by the project recorded data from all levels. Results from the monitoring system showed that most of the benefits of the project have accrued to the target group.

***The project has made positive changes on combating child labour.*** A network of officials from different Ministries (MOLISA, CPFC, MOET, etc.) and organizations was formed to share their experiences and lessons learned in areas of child labour. In addition, organizations such as CPFC and MOET realized their responsibilities to with raise public awareness in support of children who dropped out of school to work. As a result of the project, local authorities allocated more funding and paid greater attention to poor families and children at risk. Teachers were friendlier with students who returned to school from the labour force. Many families participated in income generation activities which allowed them to support withdrawing their children from work. The right of children to an education was promoted in project areas.

***The project partially met its objectives in addressing children working in “worst forms”.*** Many children were withdrawn from hazardous work in Soc Son or Ninh Binh. However, in HCM City, very few of them were victims of sexual abuses or at high risk. There were several reasons that explain why the project did not meet its targets. First, the demonstration sites, especially in Long An and HCM City, were far from the project office. This limited the direct communication and support from the project office to project partners. Second, the selection of these pilot locations was not based on a comprehensive situation analysis. Such an analysis could have provided a better picture of the number of working children. The project tried its best to enrol children in order to meet the target numbers. Third, there was a lot of vertical distance between partners of the central level component and targeted children at commune/ward and village level.

***Message on the “ILO” Convention needs to be changed to “UN Convention”.*** The names of the ILO and the ILO Convention may not have been appropriately understood by stakeholders as a UN agency and a UN Convention. It may be easier to understand and accept by the Vietnamese community if the Convention was translated into Vietnamese as the “UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”. The “UN Convention on the Rights of the Child” has been very successful tool for advocating to government on behalf of children. The lessons learned from these practices would be very useful for advocating the UN/ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour.

***Need for more training on child participation.*** It is very positive that in some pilot project areas, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Law on Protection, Care and Education for Children, were disseminated to families with children. This had a synergistic impact on working children. Partners in pilot project locations recognized that children became more confident and expressed their views on their rights. This may be a great lesson on the integration of UN conventions and national laws in awareness raising activities for the children. However, the participation of children in this project was still limited. The role of children in providing inputs and giving feedback to improve the project activities in order to better meet their needs was not clear. Moreover, some partners used the “subsidy” approach to provide support for children rather than to work “with” them. The project might consider

training partners on how to train children to participate in the process of project implementation.

***Need for more technical assistance in building capacity.*** The active participation of partners in planning and management of the project generates valuable results. Many people from different sectors have been trained and participated in designing and managing the project action programs. This helped build their capacity not only on child labour but other related areas as well. The active participation also reflected their ownership of the project. It helped to prepare them for future interventions to combat child labour. In the future it would be necessary to provide more technical support which could bring new skills and independent ideas for both monitoring and improving the quality of project interventions.

***The project supported a large number of children and families.*** At the time this evaluation was conducted (November 2005), 1545 working children had been profiled. Around 1450 of that number received direct support from the project. The remainder were enrolled after the project ended, but before the new school year began (31 August). Around 124 abused/at risk children received services. (Thirty-four children left the centre without clear reasons). Most of other outputs were achieved under budget because of the delay in the project's start-up and the difference in exchange rates from 2000 to 2005.

It is difficult to measure impact of the technical assistance project on children. This is especially true of those who indirectly benefited by the project implementation. This number was estimated to be around 200,000 children who were working or at risk for the worst forms of child labour. Most of partners who attended the evaluation workshop showed respect for the project's financial management and the cost/effectiveness of its operation. Observations showed clear evidence that the project staff (national project manager and secretary) tried their best to spend resources as economically as possible.

The project did not meet the targeted number of children who were child victims of trafficking. Therefore, it is necessary to focus more on strategic solutions that would enable the project to better serve this sub-group. For example, the project office was far from the demonstration sites where many activities were being implemented. For this reason, more staff for monitoring and providing timely support was needed. All the time that was spent travelling to and from the demonstration sites shortened the actual time available for project implementation.

## **Sustainability**

***The project has had long-term impact at policy level.*** The project contributed to a number of impacts which will continue after the withdrawal of external support. At the policy level, the project supported the review and the integration of knowledge on child labour into government programs. It also raised the awareness of policy makers about child labour issues. Child labour issues also pervaded the mass-media which had long-term impact on parents, communities and the government toward better lives for children.

***Implementation.*** The people who implemented the project from ministries, institutions, NGOs, local authorities and mass organizations were equipped with knowledge on child labour and related policies. Their knowledge of ILO Conventions on Child labour 138 and 182 helped them to realize the importance of their support for withdrawing children from

child labour, especially the worst forms. Many partners expressed a new found confidence with their knowledge. Also partners said that they learned new skills from providing counselling to children and their parents on the need to change their hazardous work and to attend school for a better future. Local authorities in the areas where the project piloted interventions realized their responsibilities. They integrated child labour issues into related existing programs, such as credit and saving, vocational training and poverty reduction.

***Some models need to be improved.*** Some results of the components, however, have not met the project expectations. Some models were not well designed; for example, the action programme in HCM City did not have a comprehensive strategy and it served a small number of children. To some extent, the components in Ha Noi, Long An, Ha Nam and Ninh Binh were considered as direct support similar to other poverty reduction programs. Few new ideas were tested in these locations that could be suggested for replication in other areas. However, some of the experiences gained from these models will be instructive for future programs.

### **Causality**

There are internal and external factors affecting the implementation of the project as following:

#### ***Internal factors:***

***Project design issue:*** The project proposal was developed and agreed by USDOL and the MOLISA in 2001 but was formally signed in 17 June 2002. When project implementation began in March 2003 some of the project priorities had changed from those in the original proposal. In addition, the cooperation mechanism between ILO/IPEC and MOLISA was not agreed upon from the beginning of the design phase. This created confusion over the starting period.

Moreover, the project management mechanism was not clear especially between the project staff with its key partners from national to provincial and district levels. It would have been much better to have general agreement with partners at the national level and direct partnership with partners at the provincial level.

In addition there was confusion over the roles and responsibilities of each key stakeholder. In future projects it will be necessary to identify who are the key partners and the individual and collective responsibilities of the partnership and members.

Among these, Department of Labour and Employment (MOLISA) should have clearer roles and responsibilities. Other than that, partners should be identified as “collaborators” to simplify the partnership while still promoting the participation and involvement of as many related organizations as possible.

***The project management team*** (including national project manager and the secretary) was recruited later (December 2002) than planned. As a result, the new ILO office in Ha Noi provides limited support for the project team in the starting period. In addition, there was a lack of technical staff/specialists, which could provide timely support for the implementation of project activities. Though the national project manager tried her best, it was difficult for her to provide administration, coordination, technical support and monitoring for the project implementation. The distance from the office to demonstration sites made project management especially problematic.

### ***External factors:***

***Delay in preparation phase.*** The project was approved for funding by USDOL in September 2001. However, it took almost a year for the project to be approved by the Vietnamese government. The project also experienced delays in recruiting management staff. This could be considered as an external factor for the project management team which really started its operation in 2003.

***Government policies and program.*** The Vietnam Commission for Population, Family and Children (CPFC) was established in 2002 based on the work of two committees: The Committee for Protection and Care for Children and the Committee for Population and Family Planning. In addition, the Law on Protection, Care and Education for Children was re-enforced by the National Assembly by June 2004. These changes were positive and should be taken into account in any follow-up action. There is also another government programme implemented by MOLISA and MOET. The programme provides vocational training for ALL children from 15 to 18 years old who could not continue their education from junior secondary school to upper secondary schools. Future IPEC projects may want to liaise with these government programmes.

***Some new initiatives*** were introduced by other international organizations, such as a child counselling helpline supported by Plan International. There were also on-going interventions including a national child protection strategy supported by UNICEF. Other related international projects targeting street and working children were funded by the European Union, the World Bank, IOM, Plan International, World Vision International, and Save the Children UK. These were external factors directly impacted on child protection policies and interventions in Vietnam.

### **Unanticipated effects**

During the implementation, some provincial and district partners expected to receive more funds to expand project services into other areas. These partners thought that the purpose of the project was to invest in supporting their children. They did not understand that the purpose was really to build models with new ideas from which to draw lessons learned. In another case, local authorities did not agree with the decision to prevent children from working because, from their perspective, they believed children have their rights and need to work to earning a living.

### **Alternative strategies**

***More technical assistance:*** Given the human resource demands, it may be more effective to have full-time or part-time technical staff or consultants and short-term international consultants to provide technical assistance for project implementation. Technical staff/consultants could spend most of their time working with project staff and partners to help them improve project planning and monitoring. A human rights-based approach and the integration of project activities into government planning processes would be an important way to enhance sustainability. Experiences from the international community also need to be promoted through project implementation and external consultants.

***Selection of demonstration sites:*** The site-selection for demonstration projects should have been conducted with specific criteria. The criteria would enable project management to prioritize target groups and the child labour issues to be addressed. In addition, the distance between the central office and the demonstration sites, the limited staff, and the delay-shortened implementation period should have been taken into consideration during site selection.

***Working environment:*** It is necessary to realize that the working environment for international-funded projects in Vietnam has improved positively during the last 5 years. Issue such as child labour are now openly discussed and communicated in meetings, workshops, and mass media. The government is trying to improve the effectiveness of ODA management. In addition, the Government trend is toward allocating more ODA assistance on social development sectors rather than economic sectors as previously practiced. In this project would have been more effective to have a direct partnership with provincial level partners to implement the demonstration components.

## **5. Special concerns**

### **International labour standards**

The project established firm contacts with the MOLISA as an implementing partner and started to work with CPFC. These were appropriate partners for promoting ILO/IPEC's principles of international labour standards and to promote their implementation in Vietnam.

### **Equality and gender issues**

Project reports and records contained data that was disaggregated by gender. This reflected the concerns and analysis from the partners at different levels. The project also worked with the Women's Union which is very sensitive on gender issues and their position in society. (Women's Union and its member's network have been receiving a lot of training and support from different projects/programs on gender equalities). Generally, the project's benefits have accrued equitably to men and women in the target group. The project should have conducted an in-depth analysis on the causes underlying the unequal persistence in school and what could have been done to support girls' education.

### **Environmental factors (Environmental Protection)**

The project has worked with children in Soc Son rubbish dump and in Lime Mountains in Ha Nam. This contributed to reducing risk factors for children exposed to toxins in certain forms of work. The project also worked with the health sector to provide health checks for children and to assure that this problem was rationally prioritized among other health workers.

## **6. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Findings:**

This is a new and major child labour project in Vietnam which, despite the challenges of distance, limited staff, and a delay-shortened implementation period, has achieved most of the set indicators within its approved budget.

Policy and programs responses: The final report on the review of existing child labour laws and policies was completed. The information and findings from the review were incorporated into existing laws and policies on child labour. In addition, they were used to develop curriculum for the national workshop and seminars on child labour law enforcement and inspection. The report makes recommendations for law amendments and adjustments including the expansion of the list of work and occupations to be prohibited for children. It also recommends the formulation of an organizational and operational regulation of labour inspectorate on young workers. Four action-oriented research studies were completed on small-scale coal mining; household traditional work including domestic labour; use of children in production, sale and distribution of illicit drugs; and fishing. These were disseminated to research institutions, concerned ministries and agencies, and the concerned international and NGOs. The review on national educational policies and its application and impact in selected provinces on child labour was also completed and shared with related organizations.

*Awareness raising:* the project cooperated with CPFC to conduct advocacy and awareness raising activities involving most of the appropriate stakeholders. The list of stakeholders includes the Party, the Central Mass Media (e.g., VTV, Radio, Newspaper, meetings, campaigns, newsletters, clubs, and printing materials) and organizations (e.g., VCCI, VCA). The awareness raising on the ILO Conventions on child labour have also been integrated into other action programs at the central, provincial and district levels within the project. Meetings, television reports, documentary films, articles on newspapers, booklets about child labour and children's rights were produced and broadcasted at the national level and in the targeted provinces. As a result, it appeared that public awareness on child labour increased. More concrete actions were initiated by government staff, mass organizations, local authorities and parents have been towards the elimination of child labour. For example, more attention was paid to poor and near-poor families with children who may have had to drop out of work. A network of officials that worked on child labour related issues from different Ministries and organizations was formed to share their experiences and lessons learned. These activities were implemented independent of child rights promotion activities and campaigns which were the responsibility of the CPFC.

*Capacity building:* the project created professional development opportunities to strengthen capacity of hundreds of staff and officials from MOLISA, CPFC, and related organizations. The training topics included project planning, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge and skills for combating child labour. The curriculum was based on ILO policies on child labour, international labour standards, Convention on the Minimum Age No. 138 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182 with their accompanying recommendations. The implementing partners gained a better understanding of which types of interventions worked best with which target group. Their knowledge on child labour laws and issues, especially the worst forms of child labour was improved significantly. They built capacity at the agency level, particularly in the areas of awareness raising, formal and non-formal education, vocational training, and networking at all levels. A series of training documents was developed, translated and used for training. Some training was conducted by the selected master trainers who participated in the previous TOT. In the management of this project, ILO/IPEC staff improved its capacity to plan and carry out projects combating child labour. Staff also learned many lessons about working with government and related organizations in Vietnam.

*Demonstrations and integration of child labour issues into local planning.* The project has contributed to the integration of child labour issues into local government education plans. For example, teachers are aware about child labour and ready to support children returning to formal schools. In addition, teachers and other educators were willing to teach in non-formal classes. The project has also contributed to the integration of child labour issues into poverty reduction programs. Poor and near-poor families were supported to access income generation programs, such as credit and saving and vocational training. An experimental non-formal teaching programme for children at the lower secondary level in Long An province was completed. The results were shared with educational policy makers, law enforcers, administrators, authorities, and teachers, and the concerned authorities and educators of the five project sites. A report on the working conditions of the children in Garbage of Nam Son Dump (Ha Noi), rush-making in Kim Son district (Ninh Binh) and stone quarrying in Thanh Son commune (Ha Nam)” has been finalized. It was disseminated to stakeholders to provide an overview of the hazardous work in which their children are involved. Local authorities were committed to continue allocating local budget on child labour issues after the project ended.

*Direct support to a large number of children and families.* The profiles of 1,545 working children have been entered into a database for intervention support and monitoring purposes. Among these, 1450 children received direct support 3,890 times in the form of education and vocational/skills training, health care check ups, counselling, job replacement, home-shelters etc. Hundreds of targeted families were provided with short trainings/seminars on credit/saving procedures, and skills/technologies on related areas. This training enabled families to generate the credits/loans for activities such as planting, farming, husbandry, protecting animals from diseases etc. One hundred and twenty-four abused/at risk children received direct support on education, vocational training, and counselling. Training courses on development of small business skills for women were conducted in Ho Chi Minh City for 75 parents in three project districts. The goals of the training were to improve the participants’ knowledge and skills in gender issues, and small business establishment and planning.

*Areas for improvement.* Though the project achieved most of its objectives, there were still some areas for improvement. Services were provided to few children who were considered to be victims of the worst forms of child labour. A key partner of this project, the Department of Labour and Employment of MOLISA, raised concerns on how to have better partnership with ILO/IPEC. The project organized workshops and trainings at the project sites for partners of different Action Programs to gather and share experiences. However, partners expected additional chances to learn from each other. They would have liked international study tours, workshops and meetings organized by the project to provide forums and discussions on child labour. The partners would have liked less debate on responsibilities of different sectors. It seems that the technical assistance, especially at the demonstration sites, needed to be strengthened. In addition, the selection of demonstration areas did not reflect the actual situations of the targeted children (working children) since these are far from the project office.

## **Conclusions:**

**The project has been successfully implemented and achieved it’s objectives in**

- Reviewing the existing laws and policies on child labour and child labour inspection. In giving recommendations for law amendments and adjustments and partially implementing these laws.
- Integrating child labour issues addressed in the ILO Convention into related government policies and programming at different levels.
- Building capacity for the staff of ILO/IPEC and that of its partners and forming a network of officials from government and related organizations including employers, workers, mass organizations who are playing key roles in planning, designing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on actions to combat child labour, especially its worst forms.
- Helping a large number of working children with direct support from the project, which included education and vocational/skills training, health care check up, counselling, job replacement, removing children from hazardous work, improved working conditions and prevented children from working. Hundreds of families were provided with short trainings on credit and savings procedures, and skills/technologies on related areas applicable for their loan contributing to increase their family income so that they can better support their children.
- Providing lessons learned in partnering with different government, non-government as well as mobilizing resources and integrating child labour issues into local socio-economic development activities.
- Raising awareness on the issue of child labour among policy makers, leaders, mass media as well as local authorities and communities, parents and children in demonstration sites.

### **The project has partially success in**

- Revealing the underlying causes of child labour and promoting concrete actions, policy changes and new initiatives to address these factors.
- Developing replicable models on mobilizing internal resources for combating child labour, especially the worst forms and providing direct support for children.
- Supporting target groups of child labour, especially those who were victims of trafficking, sexual abused or at great risk.
- Building a comprehensive partnership with appropriate local organizations in combating child labour.

**Generally**, this was the first major project to address the emerging issue of child labour in Vietnam. Many of the activities were designed to build capacity for related stakeholders to combat child labour. The review of existing legal documents is an important step in moving toward revisions, new policies and enforcement mechanisms. The lessons learned from the experiences of the project are positively supporting both ILO/IPEC and the Government

efforts in combating child labour. ILO/IPEC has built capacity for itself and its partners to be ready for the following steps in eliminating child labour especially the worst forms, in Vietnam.

## **Recommendations**

Child labour, especially the worst forms, is a new and growing issue in Vietnam. It is an area which needs to receive more cooperation and support from ILO/IPEC and other international organizations. Vietnam needs more technical expertise as well as lessons learned from other countries. The following are some recommendations for future works (together with lessons learned) to combat child labour in Vietnam:

- *Project design:* Local organizations and children should be consulted intensively regarding the design of a future project. It would be better if the proposal were initiated by Vietnamese partners with technical assistance from ILO/IPEC. Moreover, the scope and expectations of the project should be tailored to the current reality in Vietnam. Demonstration sites need to be carefully selected using key criteria such as the child labour situation, staff capacity to manage the project at demonstration sites, and partner capacity and commitment. Capacity and awareness raising at all levels of the project need to be strengthened. The project proposal should take into account all factors which may cause its delay including the approval process in Vietnam, partnership preparation, staffing, and selection of the demonstration sites.
- *Implementation strategies:* The awareness raising activities should address child labour based on the “ILO Convention 182.” Awareness raising activities should be better integrated with the existing advocacy activities on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Technical staff and/or qualified consultants should be considered as key resources of the project. They can provide technical assistance and independent ideas for project implementation. At the national level child labour issues should be better integrated into policy making. In addition, child rights promotion should become part of the regular planning process especially in existing programs such as credit and saving, and poverty reduction. Partnership with the provincial level should be promoted to improve the project performance in demonstration components.
- *Key areas for future interventions* include an analysis of the current status, underlying causes and recommended solutions of the worst forms of child labour in Vietnam. A community based child labour monitoring and inspection system was raised as a great need during project implementation. Helping families to become better integrated into income generating programme activities may enable children to continue their education, find suitable jobs to survive and develop their full potential. A survey should be conducted of existing socio-economic development programs and the opportunities to integrate child labour into these programs. Advocacy and capacity building for relevant partners are essential in all interventions.
- *Project Management and networking:* The project should have enough staff to manage the project--especially when it is far from its’ office with many activities. Moreover, ILO/IPEC has become a leader on child labour issues among international organizations in Vietnam. As a leader, ILO/IPEC should advocate to form a network of International and Government agencies and individuals working in the area of child labour to promote

learning and sharing. This would greatly facilitate sharing and learning toward eliminating child labour. In this project, partners which had a separate bank account to implement an action program would be considered as “core partners.” Core partners need to have meeting regularly to provide inputs and comments to improve their project implementation. However, the project should also have partnerships with many other organizations.

- *Partnership:* A well-defined partnership mechanism needs to be developed between ILO/IPEC and core Vietnamese partners for each project. The roles and responsibilities of each of the partners should be clearly defined from the start of the project proposal development to avoid confusion. This would also contribute to the creation of a supportive working environment for the project team in its operation. MOLISA, CPFC are potential key partners in future interventions on child labour. The Ministry of Health should be involved with the public health aspects of the child labour problem. Moreover, the project needs to diversify its partnership with different organizations at different levels, especially at provincial level for demonstration components. ILO/IPEC should seek to have a general agreement with the Government (e.g., 5 year cooperation plan) so that it could actively plan for specific interventions. Lessons from other UN agencies such as WHO, UNDP, UNICEF that have long experience working in partnership in Vietnam should be considered.
- *Children participation and capacity building:* It is recommended that child participation skills training should be conducted for all partners who are working with children. This would enable them to involve children in the whole process of project planning, monitoring and evaluation. Specific child participation activities need to be prioritized for getting inputs to improve the project implementation. Children should be empowered to advocate for their rights with government, including local authorities. Working children also need to be equipped with knowledge and skills so that they are confident to express their view and participate actively in the project cycle. Capacity of related partners to advocate for integrating child labour issues into local planning process should be strengthened. There is a need to conduct case studies of children who were victims of trafficking or sexual abused in order to understand how to better serve this population. Project staff, related partners and individuals who were trained and involved in this project are potential resources for future interventions.

## **7. Lessons learned**

The lessons learned are mostly for ILO/IPEC to use in future child labour interventions in Vietnam. Below are major lessons which the staff learned during implementation of the project:

- The involvement and commitment of the government from central level to local level is essential. Effective coordination amongst the different sectors, ministries, agencies, partner organizations and action programmes plays the key role in the success of project implementation.
- In the design stage of the project, it is necessary to clearly identify target groups, demonstration sites, and problems that will be addressed by project interventions.

- Choosing appropriate partners is one key factor for success of the project. The project should focus on capacity assessment of partner agencies. Partnership with provincial level partners is particularly effective because it provides opportunities for technical support and monitoring.
- The participation of all stakeholders in the project proposal development process is essential to creating a sense of ownership. It also ensures that the process will take into account all related factors which can cause delay or obstacles of the project implementation. The roles of each partner in the project should be clear and the operation mechanism must be consistent and well designed before implementation.
- The recruitment of qualified staff for a technical project is difficult and time consuming. In addition, staff also needs to learn more about Vietnam administrative structures and operations. This will enable them to cooperate well with relevant partners to maximize using project resources. In addition, it will impart an understanding of the areas of expertise required in the project, including rights-based approaches and rights enforcement mechanisms.
- ILO/IPEC should learn lessons on developing working relations with the Government and local organizations from other UN partners such as WHO, UNDP, UNICEF that have been working for years in Vietnam.
- The advocacy and awareness raising activities to combat child labour would be more effective if they were integrated into child rights promotion activities. This strategy is would also ensure that children are not just “target beneficiaries.” It would help them learn that they have the right to learn and develop their full potential. It would also help government, local authorities and parents to take responsibility for supporting them.
- Networking may provide opportunities to learn how to combat child labour from other developed and developing countries. This is one potential method for providing technical assistance and expertise for Vietnamese partners.
- Specific obstacles that may need to be addressed by future projects include residency requirements to school admission, scholarships and family subsidies; alternate curricula versus existing curricula; the link between non-formal education and streamlined education; between education and vocational training, and between vocational training and employment.