



Final Evaluation of the Project: Combatting Child Labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Cobalt Industry (COTECCO)

Evaluation Contractor: Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad Ltd. (SFS)

Objective

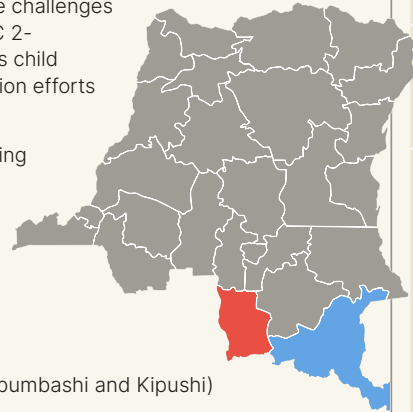
The objective of the project is to strengthen efforts by the Congolese government and other relevant stakeholders (at central and provincial level) in addressing child labor (CL) in the cobalt supply chain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Project has 3 outcomes: OTC 1- Increased common understanding of the challenges and opportunities for addressing child labor in the DRC's cobalt industry; OTC 2- Increased capacity of government and other relevant stakeholders to address child labor in the DRC's cobalt industry; OTC 3- Improved monitoring and remediation efforts by private sector of child labor in the cobalt supply chain.

Project beneficiaries include government agencies, the private sector (including mining companies and cooperatives), civil society organizations, local community-based organizations, workers' and employers' organizations, and traditional authorities whose activities relate to the prevention, protection, and relief of children in mining sites.

Project areas of intervention:

- 1 **Lualaba** (Kolwezi and nearby mining sites)
- 2 **Haut-Katanga** (Likasi -namely in Kambove- and nearby mining areas, Lubumbashi and Kipushi)



Period of Performance

October 2018 – September 2022



Funding

\$3,500,000 USD



Implementer

International Labor Organization (ILO)

Partner Agency

PACT

Final Evaluation Fieldwork Dates
April 3-19, 2022

Key Findings

Relevance

- The COTECCO project strategies and resulting activities are highly relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other stakeholders.
- Project implementation highlighted the need for a Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS) to ensure better planning and action of stakeholders and coordinating groups.

Coherence

- While the project worked to establish linkages between its different components and various institutional participants, some stakeholders still have a partial vision of the different outcomes and outputs and a limited understanding of how all the parts fit together to build a child labor elimination system.
- The project has coordinated with other donor-funded projects, private sector initiatives, and other interventions led by national stakeholders.

Effectiveness

- The COTECCO project is effective in multiple areas because of the quality of capacity strengthening workshops, and the establishment and/or strengthening of working groups among stakeholders.
- The institutional capacity of stakeholders from Government, the private sector, civil society, technical project implementers, and other development partners has been strengthened and all stakeholders have been positively positioned to prevent and combat child labor.
- Good quality research has been carried out; however, integrating the findings of the research to improve the orientation of efforts to eliminate child labor in cobalt mining is still needed.
- The project is initiating very interesting awareness-raising methods such as catchy songs and lively sketches and intends to develop further stakeholders' communication capacities through the ILO SCREAM modules.
- The development of a Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) is in the early stages, so it is difficult for the evaluation to assess its quality. There is a need to ensure greater clarity on the referral and remediation component of the CLMS and the need to include all stakeholders in its implementation.
- The establishment of functional provincial-level Inter-ministerial Commission to Combat Child Labor in Mines and Artisanal Mining Sites (CISTEMA) was not officially approved, partly due to turnover of personnel, including in Government.
- Although the project did include attention to gender issues in training and research content, specific work to address gender-related concerns has still been limited and can be increased further. More attention is also needed to address the specific vulnerability of children with disabilities who are more likely to be exploited if they are physically able to work, as well as orphans and children in households affected by HIV



PAS DE TRAVAIL DES ENFANTS DANS LES MINES

► Photo credit: ILO-COTECCO Project



Efficiency

- Insufficient project staffing contributed to the project's challenges to achieve all the project outcomes within the originally expected time frames.
- With staff time highly consumed by complex administrative processes and financial disbursement as well as reporting there was often too little time to focus on the needed personal follow up and mentoring by project personnel.

Sustainability

- Project sustainability is highly dependent on the ability of COTECCO stakeholders to implement the strategies, roadmaps and the CLMRS that are still under development. While all stakeholders are crucial to ensuring sustainability, the Government of DRC has the most important role.
- The role of the private sector, including workers and employers' organizations, and national civil society organizations/NGOs remains important for long term sustainability.
- Local stakeholders highlighted the need for further financial and logistics support so that they can implement their strategies and roadmaps.

✓ Achievements and Sustainability



Outcome 1 (OTC1)

Increased common understanding of the challenges and opportunities for addressing child labor in the DRC's cobalt industry



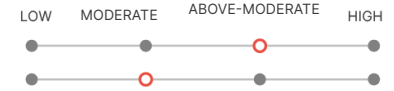
Outcome 2 (OTC2)

Increased capacity of government and other relevant stakeholders to address child labor in the DRC's cobalt industry



Outcome 3 (OTC3)

Improved monitoring and remediation efforts by private sector of child labor in the cobalt supply chain



RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- The COVID-19 crisis interfered with the project's ability to conduct training, hold in person meetings, and conduct actions at national level and at provincial sites. Given that the project is based in the provinces of Haut Katanga and Lualaba, geographic and logistics challenges limited national level in-person interactions. While digital technologies were used by the project to compensate for the difficulties due to COVID-19, these did not always function as needed: Some stakeholders did not have access, or only poor access, to digital technologies

- There was no midterm evaluation of the project, largely due to the COVID-19 situation. This meant that it was difficult to obtain external independent guidance during an earlier project stage. It was also not possible for the USDOL-ILAB staff to visit the COTECCO implementation provinces.

Promising Practices (PP)

- **PP1:** The development of the awareness raising song and sketch (short video) about child labor in cobalt mining using known musicians and actors
- **PP2:** Conducting a substantial number of well- targeted research studies on child labor in the cobalt mining value chain from different angles. When linked together, these may serve to inform the way forward.

Lessons Learned (LL)

- **LL1:** The time needed for systems building is often underestimated. Adequate time should be allocated for any systems building project like COTECCO and planning should include a risk analysis that reflects this.
- **LL2:** Project staffing needs to be realistic, as well as adapted and increased if that is found necessary during implementation. If a systems building project is headquartered outside the capital, a permanent staff member based in the project capital city is still needed.



Photo credit: PACT


















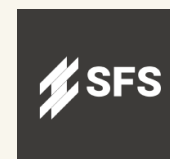
RECOMMENDATIONS	USDOL	COTECCO Project / ILO	DRC Government, private sector, and other local stakeholders
1 Clearly involve the key stakeholders identified through COTECCO in the design and development of a project extension and/or a possible future phase of the project or another project aimed at addressing child labor in the cobalt supply chain	 USDOL	 COTECCO Project / ILO	
2 Add a Project Steering Committee to the design. The members of the Steering Committee should be clearly defined and associated with the formulation of Phase		 COTECCO Project / ILO	
3 Increase advocacy with decision makers for the approval of and the official establishment of the provincial CISTEMA.		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
4 Increase the focus on social behavior change communications and go beyond awareness raising. Incorporate and scale up additional direct and culturally rooted social and behavior change communications.		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
5 Implement a more overt systems building approach indicating how all the different institutional and capacity strengthening, CLMRS development and other COTECCO components are integrated. A strong systems approach will contribute to increased sustainability over the long term		 COTECCO Project / ILO	
6 Ensure that the functioning of the CLMRS is clarified to include referral systems and all stakeholders in planning, data gathering, remediation and follow up.		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
7 With input from the private sector, identify decent work (self)employment opportunities in mining areas in future and direct support projects. In future projects, support the development of targeted training in the identified areas for older children with Government and other vocation education and skills training providers.		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
8 Develop and implement an Integrated Area-Based Approach (IABA) in cobalt mining localities. Nearby areas can be defined in agreement with the adjoining communities		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
9 Ensure full consideration of gender related issues (including of girls and boys, women) and those of other vulnerable groups during CLMRS development. Include training and decision-making on issues that affect these groups, analyses of their specific challenges and implementation of specific actions that reduce those challenges		 COTECCO Project / ILO	 DRC Gov., private sector and other local stakeholders
10 Increase COTECCO staffing and allocate one staff member to an office based in Kinshasa to provide more frequent and intensive support from COTECCO with CISTEMA and provide advocacy support with the ministries		 COTECCO Project / ILO	



Photo credit: Mei Zegers



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