

Final Performance Evaluation

Paraguay Okakuaa (Paraguay Progresses)



United States Department of Labor

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Bureau of International Labor Affairs
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20210

SUBMITTED BY

IMPAQ International, LLC
10420 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 300
Columbia, MD 21044
(443) 256-5500
www.impaqint.com

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Final Performance Evaluation of *Paraguay Okakuaa (Paraguay Progresses)*
Evaluation Report (Final)

AUTHORS

Jose María Álvarez Vega, Lead Evaluator
Marisol Zubizarreta, Evaluation Specialist

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This report describes in detail the findings of the final evaluation of the *Paraguay Okakuaa (Paraguay Progresses)* project. IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) conducted fieldwork for this independent evaluation from September 23 to October 9, 2019 in collaboration with the project team and stakeholders and prepared the evaluation report according to the terms specified in its contract with the United States Department of Labor. IMPAQ would like to express sincere thanks to all the parties involved for their support and valuable contributions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIRD	Fundación Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo
CL	Child Labor
CLAC	Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Pequeños Productores de Comercio Justo
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CODENIs	Consejerías Municipales por los Derechos del Niño, la Niña y el Adolescente
CONAETI	Comisión Nacional de Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil y Protección del Trabajado de los/as Adolescentes
CONTRAFOR	Comisión Fundamental de Derechos Fundamentales en el Trabajo y Prevención del Trabajo Forzoso
CSJ	Corte Suprema de Justicia
DGIFT	Dirección General de Inspección y Fiscalización del Trabajo
DGPNA	Dirección General de Protección de la Niñez y Adolescencia
EANA	Survey of Activities of Children and Adolescents
EpC	Espacios para Crecer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FL	Forced Labor
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
IMPAQ	IMPAQ International, LLC
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEC	Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias
MEC	Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias
MINNA	Ministerio de la Niñez y la Adolescencia
MTESS	Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social
ONNAP	Observatorio Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes del Paraguay
POA	Partners of the Americas
POK	<i>Paraguay Okakuaa</i> Project
QL	Quantum Learning Methodology
RAT	Registro Único del Adolescente Trabajador
SIF	Sistema Informático de Fiscalización
SINAFOCAL	Sistema Nacional de Formación y Capacitación Laboral
SNNA	Secretaria Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia
SNPP	Servicio Nacional de Promoción Profesional
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report
UIP	Unión Industrial Paraguaya
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2019, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) contracted with IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) to conduct performance evaluations of technical assistance projects in Paraguay, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. This report presents the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the final evaluation of the *Paraguay Okakuaa* (POK) project. The purpose of this report is to:

1. Assess if the project has achieved its objectives, identify the challenges encountered in doing so, and analyze the driving factors for these challenges.
2. Assess the intended and unintended effects of the project.
3. Assess lessons learned and emerging practices from the project and experiences in implementation that can be applied in current or future projects in Paraguay and in projects designed under similar conditions or for different target sectors.
4. Assess which outcomes or outputs can be deemed sustainable.

The report provides evidence to inform decision-making, an understanding of lessons learned, and recommendations for future projects. The evaluation team assessed the project through the perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders who participated in, and were intended to benefit from, the project's interventions. The team conducted semi-structured key informant interviews and focus group discussions during field visits to Paraguay from September 23 to October 9, 2019. The team used the data from these sources to address the evaluation questions identified in the terms of reference (TOR). Below we summarize the key findings, lessons learned and good practices, and recommendations.

Key Findings

Relevance

The evaluation team endorses previous assessments of POK as being a highly relevant intervention. All stakeholders considered the project's theory of change (ToC) to be valid and internally consistent. Stakeholders particularly highlighted that it builds on previous experiences, gives continuity to the efforts against child labor (CL) in Paraguay, and works through the existing institutional framework.

POK has proved to be a valid model for spreading the policies to combat CL down to the district level, contributing to the decentralization process and the strengthening of local governments. POK has done this without neglecting the central level, where capacity building and the consolidation of processes/programs have also been supported. The project is aligned with the classical dimensions of the fight against CL and is dealing with the determinants of CL in a very comprehensive manner.

However, the project encountered difficulties with participant selection and defining the different groups using the eligibility criteria. Technically, the process is a very refined system, but in practice applying it was slow and complex. Eventually, the project found a way out of this impasse by completing the selection process within the schools where children and adolescents who met the eligibility criteria had already been identified.

With respect to gender sensitivity, the project did consider gender issues and dealt with them when they occurred. However, it would have been helpful to have developed a specific strategy to approach gender issues in a more systematic manner.

Effectiveness

The implementation modality (a consortium of national and international organizations) is generally agreed to be an opportunity to build a synergistic venture around the extensive wealth of experience brought by the partners. During the early stages of the operation, it took time to integrate the project's models and concepts. Other external factors, such as the change of the central government at the national level in 2018, also represented challenges. However, overall, POK managed to overcome these challenges and delivered an extensive list of products and services of substantial quality—reaching and sometimes surpassing the targets set by the project.

Outcome 1: Access to and opportunities for education. The methodologies applied (Espacios para Crecer [EpC] and 4-H Clubs) appeared to develop skills among children and adolescents and prevent CL. The additional tutoring service allowed the project to have closer interaction with the families and play a key role in dealing with the socioeconomic barriers that prevent access to education. Looking beyond the direct impact of withdrawing children from CL, most of the stakeholders reported that the educational services provided by POK helped galvanize the role of the schools in the communities and have been instrumental in boosting the value of education for the families involved. Most stakeholders generally agreed that POK provides a solid foundation on which to continue reducing CL in the future.

Outcome 2: Livelihoods. POK has delivered an extensive list of products and services, which operate in a very participatory manner, linking with the existing local committees (Tekoporá) and involving the two major providers of professional training in the country, the Servicio Nacional de Promoción Profesional (SNPP) and Sistema Nacional de Formación y Capacitación Laboral (SINAFOCAL). The project achieved its targets for all 12 indicators under Outcome 2 except one (OTC 12, Links with social protection programs). For all other indicators, the project has exceeded its targets, demonstrating that POK has raised the level of competencies and skills of its participants. The evaluation notes that the project assisted households to gain skills to access employment and to strengthen livelihoods; however, it also recognizes the project's limitations in empowering community livelihoods on a significant and noticeable scale.

Outcome 3: Institutional support and labor law compliance. POK has helped various institutions at both the national and the local level to develop their capacities to enforce labor law compliance. The evaluation team confirms that, in all cases, the products and services delivered by POK (plans, guides, manuals, modules for the expansion of curricula, etc.) deserve a positive assessment, in terms of both quality and timely delivery; they were, in all cases, very relevant for the institutions involved and have good prospects of being integrated into the institutional routines in the future. Representatives from these institutions put forward several examples of how this support has helped them improve their institutional performance. The process of capacity building for most of the institutions is still in progress, requiring further investments and continuing reforms from the Government of Paraguay.

Outcome 4: Labor law compliance with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor in Boquerón. POK has started a process to protect labor rights in Boquerón, which were generally weak and not very developed at baseline. Because of POK, this process has now advanced several steps. The stable presence of the Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social (MTESS) office, although limited in human and material resources, represents an

institutional reference for local stakeholders. Other examples of progress include the strengthening of the *Consejerías Municipales por los Derechos del Niño, la Niña y el Adolescente* (CODENIs), the improvement of coordination mechanisms between local institutions, the effort to raise awareness of labor law rights issues, and the intention of the *Ministerio de Niñez y Adolescencia* (MINNA) to lend continuity to the EpC experience.

Project Objective: Reduce child labor in the Department of Guairá. The evaluation confirms the generally positive assessment of the project's effectiveness. It is not possible at this stage to quantify the scope of CL reduction within the group of direct participants, because the endline study to establish the program's impact in the five districts targeted by POK is still pending. However, there is evidence to suggest that the project has indeed impacted the different variables measuring CL among the group of direct participants. POK's sensitization about the risks of CL has helped withdraw some children and adolescents from CL. The testimony gathered from stakeholders indicates, however, that the impact of the POK model in reducing CL has been mainly indirect, via the desire of families and youths to adhere to education and pursue a better future—suggesting that this may be the mechanism that is operating to prevent and potentially eliminate cases of CL.

Sustainability

The project's management of its sustainability aspects has been flexible and adaptive. The project has established alliances and built on existing capabilities, an approach that paves the way for many products and services to be absorbed by local structures. POK's exit strategy for the remaining implementation months is to strengthen its efforts to coordinate with national institutions to integrate the products and services delivered by the project into their own routines and budgets.

This is likely to be the case for all products delivered under Outcome 3. The project delivered its stated outputs for developing the software platforms, although the evaluator did not independently verify the performance of their functionalities and the user's ownership and ability to use the system. However, these are also outputs with relatively good prospects for sustainability. The MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia (Boquerón) will continue delivering its services in this location although it will be important to review the protocols and technical procedures that remain in place after POK has ended. The agreement signed between POK and MINNA specifies that five EpCs will be absorbed by the *Abrazo* program. This is an encouraging sign of continuity, although the challenge of finding ways to expand the use of this methodology remains. Some outcomes related to generating knowledge, awareness, and changes to the socio-cultural paradigms are expected to be integrated into the dynamics of the target groups and translated into new patterns of behavior.

However, some products and services will face sustainability challenges of a different nature and scope. The networks and partnerships created at the local level, for example, show signs of fragility and will likely have to struggle to maintain their organizational dynamics. The 4-H Clubs and the entrepreneurship component will need to reinforce these local groups' articulation into national or local institutions if they are to continue operating. Although the tutoring service is likely to be discontinued, some of the lessons learned may continue as good practices for the schools involved and for the social services that have learned about its impact.

Good Practices and Lessons Learned

The evaluation identified the following **good practices**:

1. Building on existing capacities and linking with existing in-country programs and networks.

2. Applying the participatory approach to identify needed materials and their required design.
3. Using local languages in the different materials produced and the dissemination of messages at the central and local level as part of the communication campaign.
4. Conducting an explicit and deliberate effort to synchronize and harmonize project activities to suit the pace and dynamics of local communities.
5. Setting up tutoring services to reach out to the most vulnerable children and adolescents and engaging them in project activities and, by extension, the wider education system.

The evaluation team identified the following **lessons learned**:

1. Schools are key allies in reaching the community and identifying participant groups.
2. The involvement of schools enhances prospects of permanently instilling messaging against CL.
3. The model for effective economic empowerment of vulnerable communities in rural areas may require a more comprehensive approach and a longer cycle of intervention than was possible under POK.
4. A rigorous monitoring system is not only important for reporting results, but also helps inform the decision-making process and instill discipline into project implementation.
5. Sensitization of the communities where CL is culturally accepted should be conducted with a positive emphasis on what is acceptable under the law, rather than a negative emphasis on what is prohibited.
6. Women and youth are key target groups in rural areas for generating durable changes in cultural patterns.
7. Transition and testing periods for products and services delivered by the project should be considered part of the project life and, when possible, anticipated in the project design.
8. The availability of an effective learning program for youth in rural areas facilitates the school-to-work transition.
9. A gender perspective from the design phase onward ensures that the implementation team has the necessary tools and guidelines to apply gender sensitivity systematically.

Recommendations

To POK and MTESS

1. Follow up on the software platforms. POK could allocate extra time and resources during its remaining six months to ensure that the three software platforms delivered are fully operational by the end of the project.
2. Prepare a detailed plan for the MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia that delineates the goals, resources, procedures, and responsibilities necessary to continue outreach activities during the coming years.

To POK and MINNA

3. Set up a joint team to study the transfer of the EpCs to the Abrazo program and design a roadmap for their smooth transition.
4. Consider establishing priorities concerning the operationalization of the Observatorio Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes del Paraguay (ONNAP).

To POK

5. Strengthen the link between the mesas productivas (productive committees) at the community level and those at the municipal level.

6. Study alternatives to boost private sector interest in continuing at least some of the initiatives started by POK.
7. Develop a follow-up methodology for governmental institutions that have been supported by POK, to enable observation of any changes in organizational performance. This could start with collecting basic performance statistics.
8. Study options for EpCs and 4-H Clubs to remain available as relevant methodologies for the non-formal education of other country stakeholders.
9. Consider technical alternatives to obtain unique baseline values for the indicators of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and to enable baseline to endline comparisons.

To MTESS

10. Further investments and reforms are needed for MTESS to fulfill its' labor inspection mandate. In some cases, new financial commitments will be needed, and in other cases, the assignment of competencies or capacity to open investigations and coordinate with other institutional bodies relevant to this process.
11. Consider an apprenticeship model for rural areas. Since MTESS is working on a new proposal to update the apprenticeship contract, it could consider specifically developing proposals for an apprenticeship model in rural zones that account for the complexities and characteristics of the family sector.

To ILAB

12. Consider different options to optimize and accelerate the selection of direct participants. Engaging schools in areas where CL and hazardous child labor (HCL) cases have already been identified may be an alternative to the current selection process.
13. Study possible alternatives to enhance the impact of the livelihood component. The economic pillar of the ToC should be reviewed and revised regarding what must be done (outcomes), how it has to be done (process), and how long the process should last.

To all POK stakeholders

14. Reinforce the major aspects of the forced labor component in upcoming stages of the development process: (1) more specific knowledge about the size and characterization of the forced labor problem from a gender perspective, (2) improvement of investigation procedures, (3) an expanded alliance against forced labor (FL) with an enhanced role for indigenous organizations and trade unions, and (4) greater attention to domestic work and criadazgo (the practice of 'adopting' children as domestic servants).

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

In 2011, a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-financed study of child labor (CL) in the sugar industry in Paraguay revealed that approximately 196,000 children over 5 years of age have participated in sugarcane production and related activities. Approximately 28 percent of the workers in the sugarcane industry who had worked in the last seven days were children ages 5–17.¹ In November 2015, ILAB OCFT awarded a \$6 million cooperative agreement to Partners of the Americas (POA) to implement the *Paraguay Okakuaa* (POK) project to be administered over 48 months, from November 2015 through November 2019. On October 3, 2019, POK received a no-cost extension through May 15, 2020, extending the implementation period to 54 months.

The underlying theory of change (ToC) is that CL in the sugarcane industry can be reduced by improving education and income opportunities for vulnerable families, reducing the social acceptance of CL and improving the application of labor laws that protect children and adolescents. POK implemented educational and livelihood activities focused on children and adolescents whose households are in the Department of Guairá and who are engaged in or at risk of CL in agriculture. In December 2017, ILAB approved a project revision that added \$683,558 to incorporate activities to improve labor law compliance and acceptable working conditions, with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor in the Chaco, a significant cattle- and beef-exporting region. Finally, POK conducts institutional capacity-building activities (training, awareness raising, tool development, etc.) in Guairá and at the national level with key government institutions, including the Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social (MTESS), the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias (MEC), and the Secretaría Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia (SNNA) (upgraded to the level of Ministry during project implementation: Ministerio de la Niñez y la Adolescencia – MINNA).

The project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) identifies the project goal as reducing CL in Paraguay through the achievement of three outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Increased participation of children and adolescents in education
- Outcome 2: Households with increased access to livelihoods
- Outcome 3: Improved application of labor laws that protect children and adolescents

As part of the cost increase granted to POK in December 2017, a fourth outcome was added:

- Outcome 4: Improved labor law compliance and acceptable working conditions with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor (FL)

POA works with its implementing partners—Fundación ALDA, which implements the educational component, and Fundación Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD), which implements the livelihoods component—to achieve these four outcomes. The outcomes are divided into the 12 sub-outcomes (SOs) listed in Exhibit 1.

¹ *Child Labor in the Sugarcane Industry in Paraguay*, ICF, 2012

Exhibit 1. Summary of *Paraguay Okakuaa* Results Framework

Outcome 1: Increased participation of children and adolescents in educational opportunities
SO 1.1: Children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 access formal and non-formal education programs
SO 1.2: Communities supporting CL Prevention and Elimination
Outcome 2: Households with increased access to livelihoods
SO 2.1: Adolescents aged 14 to 17 with increased skills and personal competencies to continue with their education and/or access to future decent work
SO 2.2: Adults with better competencies for access to employment
SO 2.3: Adults with operating entrepreneurship strengthened
SO 2.4: Greater access by beneficiary households to the Social Protection Programs and/or projects at the local level
Outcome 3: Improved application of labor laws that protect children and adolescents
SO 3.1: A strengthened system of inspection for compliance with labor and child and adolescent laws (regarding child labor)
SO 3.2: Increased knowledge for local stakeholders and justice system officials for the application of labor and child and adolescent laws in Guairá
SO 3.2: Strengthened CODENIs [Consejerías Municipales por los Derechos del Niño, la Niña y el Adolescente] in target districts, to improve the articulation between member institutions of the CONAETI
Outcome 4: Improved labor law compliance and acceptable working conditions with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor
SO 4.1: Coordinate actions with key stakeholders to prevent and combat forced labor
SO 4.2: Raise awareness and provide training on forced labor to key stakeholders to improve working conditions
SO 4.3: Provide educational services that promote protected spaces for an additional 80 children (direct participants) vulnerable to child labor and/or forced labor

To achieve the above outcomes, the project planned to implement the following activities:

- Raise awareness of the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) and labor rights, and increase access to social protection services.
- Support improved multi-agency coordination (ministries and local governments) to reduce WFCL.
- Develop integrated data sharing systems for MTESS and MINNA: (1) Registro Único del Adolescente Trabajador (RAT) and (2) Sistema Informático de Fiscalización (SIF) for the MTESS and (3) the Observatorio Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes del Paraguay (ONNAP) for the MINNA.
- Provide education services and programs (*Espacios para Crecer* [EpC] and 4-H Clubs) to communities prone to CL in Guairá and Boquerón.
- Provide employment and training services to improve the livelihoods of households vulnerable to WFCL.
- Provide technical assistance to strengthen entrepreneurship or implement new ones.
- Strengthen labor law enforcement capacity and compliance by providing training and exchanges with services from other countries.
- Develop tools, instruments, and other mechanisms for labor law compliance and enforcement to protect children, benefiting various ministries (MTESS, MEC, and

MINNA), the judiciary, local governments, and coordination platforms such as the Comisión Nacional de Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil y Protección del Trabajo de los Adolescentes (CONAETI).

- Strengthening of local governments (regional government, municipalities, CODENIs, education sector) through training, raising awareness of FL, labor rights, and establishing a register for working adolescents.
- Support the deployment of the MTESS Regional Office in Boquerón.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the final performance evaluation are to:

1. Assess if the project has achieved its objectives, identify the challenges encountered in doing so, and analyze the factors driving these challenges.
2. Assess the intended and unintended effects of the project.
3. Assess lessons learned and emerging practices from the project and experiences in implementation that can be applied in current or future projects in Paraguay and in projects designed under similar conditions or for similar target sectors.
4. Assess which outcomes or outputs can be deemed sustainable.

The evaluation criteria for the performance evaluation are outlined below:

- **Relevance.** The evaluation team assessed whether the objectives and implemented activities of the project met the needs of direct and indirect participants, given the current economic and political context in the country.
- **Effectiveness.** The evaluation team assessed the effectiveness of the project's strategies and interventions in reducing the incidence of CL in the Borja, Iturbe, Mauricio J. Troche, Paso Yobai, and Villarrica regions and the incidence of forced labor in the Chaco region. The team identified the project's strengths and weaknesses in these efforts, and the positive and negative primary and secondary long-term effects produced by POK—whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally—in relation to the primary project objectives.
- **Sustainability.** The evaluation team determined whether the implementers took steps to ensure the sustainability of outcomes and key outputs produced by the project and their benefits to local or national stakeholders. The evaluation also determined whether the benefits of the project outcomes are likely to continue over time.
- **Good Practices and Lessons Learned.** The evaluation team identified the good practices and lessons learned that can inform the design of similar projects and future programming in Paraguay.

This evaluation report provides evidence to inform future decision-making by reporting on the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for project enhancement and for shaping future ILAB and POA projects in Paraguay, as well as projects to combat CL more broadly.

2.2 Methodology

The evaluation team addressed the evaluation questions using multiple sources of evidence and combining primary qualitative data with secondary quantitative data. Qualitative data were obtained from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). Quantitative data were obtained from tables presented in the quarterly technical progress reports (TPRs) to ILAB and other data provided by the implementing partners. Data collection methods and

stakeholder perspectives were triangulated to bolster the credibility and validity of the results. Exhibit 2 lists the evaluation questions that guided the data collection and analysis.

Exhibit 2. Evaluation Questions

#	Evaluation Questions
Relevance of Project Design	
1	To what extent was the theory of change valid and coherent given the implementing environment? Were the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of its project participants, communities, and other stakeholders?
Effectiveness	
2	To what extent has the project achieved its objective and planned outcomes at the time of the evaluation, and is the project likely to achieve them by the end of the project? Specifically, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How did the project strategies, including the educational and livelihoods activities, contribute to achieving the goal of reducing child labor in the department of Guairá? b) How adaptable and relevant was the <i>Espacios para Crecer</i> (EpC) model to the communities in the Chaco that were added with the cost increase in December 2017? Did the EpCs have an effect on the formal education process for child participants? c) In implementing 4-H clubs, have behavior or attitude changes been observed among the participants? If so, please describe the change(s) observed. d) How effective was the cost increase and the associated activities at improving labor law compliance and acceptable working conditions, in addition to raising awareness of forced labor, in the Chaco? e) How effective were the livelihood services in increasing opportunities for households? f) Did the electronic monitoring systems developed by the project meet the needs of the project in tracking the status of project participants and reporting to ILAB?
3	To what extent were the recommendations from the midterm evaluation implemented and what were the results?
4	Did the project cause unintended results on its target communities and participants? If so, what were they?
5	How effective was the project in engaging key government stakeholders? To what extent have the project's strategies been effective at promoting coordination among government agencies to better protect adolescent workers and children from labor exploitation?
6	What were the key internal or external factors that limited or facilitated the achievement of project outcomes?
Sustainability	
7	Which project activities/initiatives are most likely sustainable and transferable to key stakeholders (at the community, municipality, departmental, and national levels) before the project ends? What factors contributed to this sustainability?
8	How could the project have improved its sustainability efforts?
9	How sustainable are the electronic data systems that the project developed for external stakeholders (labor inspection system, RAT, and Observatorio)?
Good Practices and Lessons Learned	
10	What are promising practices and lessons learned that could benefit similar projects or future programming in Paraguay? This can include identifying gaps or areas that must be addressed in order to increase compliance with labor laws.

2.2.2 Evaluation Schedule

The evaluation team completed the document review during the first two weeks of September 2019. The site visit to Paraguay to collect information from semi-structured KIIs and FGDs was conducted between September 23 and October 9, 2019. Prior to the visit, the evaluation team

developed KII and FGD guides. During the site visit, the evaluation team conducted KIIs and FGDs with participants and stakeholders. After the site visit, the evaluation team held a workshop with stakeholders to present and discuss the preliminary results gathered, and then a debriefing with ILAB to discuss key findings and recommendations. Most of the data analysis and report writing was conducted in October 2019.

2.2.3 Site Sampling and Data Collection Methods

Site Sampling. The evaluation team determined the sampling of communities in consultation with POA’s home office and the POK project team, to ensure inclusion of such site variables as level of success, presence of good practices, representation of main strategies used, and proximity to the main centers. The evaluation team collected data and information from stakeholders at the national level of the country, in the capital, Asunción, and from the two departments covered by POK: Guairá and Boquerón. Most of the data collection was conducted in Guairá, since three of the four outcomes focused on that district. Outcome 4 covering Boquerón was incorporated only in December 2017. Twelve communities were visited in the five districts covered by the project in the Department of Guairá, and one community in Boquerón, as presented in Exhibit 3.

The evaluation team collected data from four sources: semi-structured KIIs, FGDs, document review, and analysis of secondary data and direct observations. The team used the data from these sources to answer the evaluation questions proposed for each analytic area.

Exhibit 3. Communities Visited

Department	District	Community
Guairá	Villarrica	Rincón
		Caroveni
		San Miguel del Este
		Curuzú Francisco
	Borja	Boquerón
		Takuare’e
	Iturbe	Potrero
		Candea Guazú
	Troche	Itacurubí
		Cerro Punta
	Paso Yobai	Centro
		Ñu Vera
Boquerón	Loma Plata	Yhalve Sanga
	Mariscal Estigarribia	Cayin ó Clim (Colonia Neuland)
		Neuland
	Filadelfia	–

Semi-Structured Interviews. The team conducted semi-structured KIIs to obtain stakeholders’ perspectives on the project’s implementation and progress. Exhibit 4 presents the number of KIIs conducted in each region.

Exhibit 4. Participants in Semi-Structured Key Informant Interviews

Stakeholder Group	No. of Participants	Female	Male
Central and Local Government	50	33	17
Staff and Implementing Partners	54	41	13
School Principals and Teachers	3	1	2
Civil Society Organizations	3	3	
Community Leaders	2	1	1
Donor/Embassy	2	2	-
Unions	1	1	-
Employers	2	-	2
Total	117	82	35

Focus Groups. The evaluation team facilitated 20 FGDs across the 13 communities listed in Exhibit 5: four groups with children, eight groups with adolescents and eight groups with adult women.² Each FGD type addressed different types of questions.

Exhibit 5. Participants in Focus Group Discussions

Community / Place	Group	Female	Male
Focus Group - EpC Rincón	Children	5	4
Focus Group - EpC Potrero	Children	6	4
Focus Group - EpC Yhaka Guazú	Children	6	5
Focus Group - EpC Neuland	Children (two groups)	6	11
Focus Group - 4-H Rincón	Adolescents	8	8
Focus Group - 4-H Caroveni	Adolescents	-	7
Focus Group - 4-H San Miguel del Este	Adolescents	4	3
Focus Group - 4-H General Andrés Rodríguez	Adolescents	7	7
Focus Group - 4-H Santo Domingo de Guzman	Adolescents	3	3
Focus Group - 4-H Cerro Punta	Adolescents	0	5
Focus Group - 4-H Paso Yobai	Adolescents	5	5
Focus Group - 4-H Juana Pabla Rodríguez	Adolescents	3	3
Women group Villarrica - Rincón	Women	6	-
Women group Villarrica - Caroveni	Women	14	-
Women group Villarrica - San Miguel del Este	Women	6	-
Women group Borja - Colegio General Rodríguez	Women	4	-
Women group Borja - Takuare'e	Women	7	-
Women group Iturbe - Potrero - San Francisco	Women	14	-
Women group Troche - Itacurubí	Women	11	-
Women group Paso Yobai - Ñu Vera	Women	3	-
Total		118	65

Document Review and Secondary Data. The evaluation team conducted a document review to inform the semi-structured KIIs and FGDs and supplement findings from other data collection

² Four of the planned groups were not held, three due to weather conditions and one due to the illness of the group coordinator.

efforts. The evaluation team also reviewed training documentation produced by the project as well as information published on its website and social media pages. The main source of information for the project's activities and budget information was the quarterly TPRs to USDOL from the first quarter of 2017 to the first quarter of 2019.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

The document review, stakeholder KIIs, FGDs, and direct observations of the project's activities generated a substantial amount of raw data. The team used standard qualitative data analysis methods, including matrix analysis, to categorize, synthesize, and summarize the data captured from the interview and focus group discussion transcripts, and the information from the internal document review report. The team initially reviewed the quantitative data presented in the TPRs by compiling all the tables into an Excel file and cleaning the data. When needed, the team requested further assistance from POA to clarify questions about the data or to request missing or additional information.

The data analysis process was driven by the 10 evaluation questions taken together, but the outcome of the process will be presented as a single analysis, criterion by criterion. The evaluation team considers this format to be a more compelling way of presenting the evaluation findings; it also allows the incorporation of new issues that emerged during the consultation process.

2.2.5 Limitations

The only limitations of the study and its evaluation are the general issues of reliability and generalizability that affect all studies of the nature and complexity of the POK project. Because the primary data for this evaluation were qualitative in nature, the study inevitably depended on the perceptions of the people volunteering the information and its interpretation by the evaluators. Since these are potentially subject to bias from individual experiences and opinions, every effort has been made to report only findings on which there was substantial agreement regarding the quality of the data and their meaning.

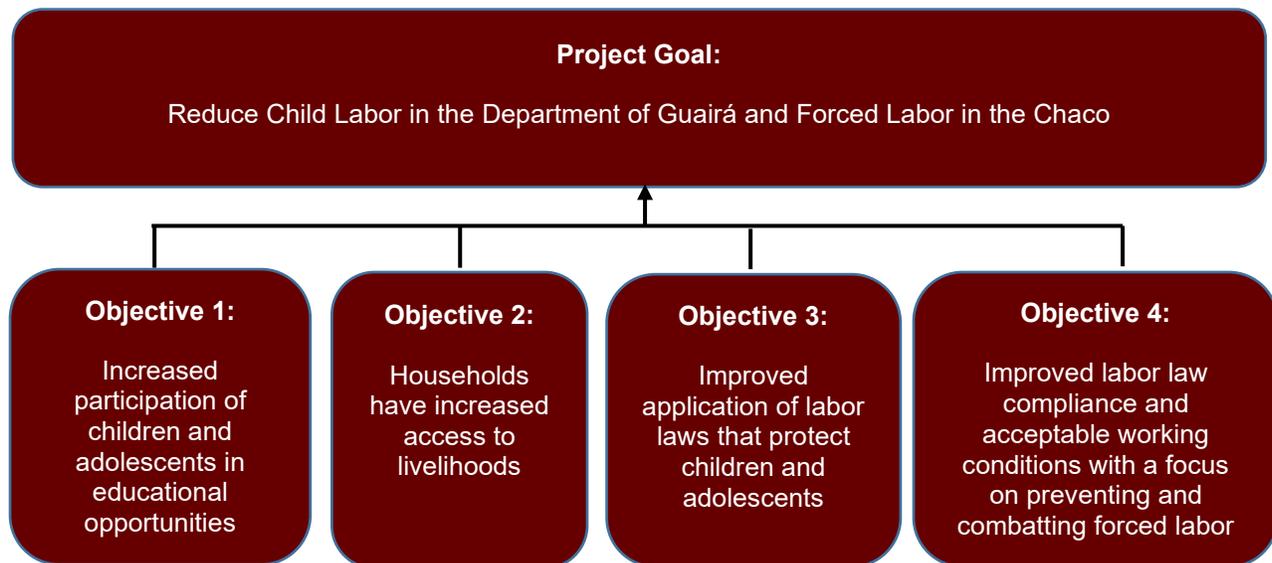
3. FINDINGS

This section presents the evaluation findings based on the data collected from the KIIs and FGDs conducted with project stakeholders in Paraguay, the secondary data analysis, and a review of project documents and reports. Key findings are presented for each of the three evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.

3.1 Relevance

The general consensus that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions was that POK is a highly relevant intervention. All the stakeholders consulted agreed that (1) the project's ToC is valid and consistent (see Exhibit 6); (2) it appropriately addressed the specific needs of target groups, participants, and stakeholders; and (3) it is consistent with national/local policies in the country as well as with the intent of the donor.

Exhibit 6. Paraguay Okakuaa Theory of Change



Relevance at the national level. The project clearly linked to, and built on, previous efforts carried out in the country by USDOL in partnership with the Government of Paraguay, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other related institutions at the national and international level. Examples of these previous interventions addressing CL during the last decade in Paraguay are *Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor* (CLEAR, 2013–2019), the *Global Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor* (GAP, 2008–2012), and *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor through Horizontal Cooperation* (2009–2013).³

³ CLEAR: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/country-level-engagement-and-assistance-reduce-child-labor-clear>
GAP: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/pdf_override/ProjectPrep_FY08_0.pdf
Horizontal Cooperation: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/combating-worst-forms-child-labor-through-horizontal-cooperation-south-america>

There are signs that the struggle against CL in Paraguay is making progress. Paraguay has already incorporated ILO conventions on child labor and forced labor into its domestic legal system,⁴ and the first interventions were approved and implemented about two decades ago, when its labor department was still a directorate under the Ministry of Justice. Steps were taken to develop the organizational, data and information, and policy infrastructure, including setting up the CONAETI in October 2002, the issuance of the dangerous CL list in 2001, the generation of data and information through the Survey of Activities of Children and Adolescents (EANA), and setting up the Tekoporá and the Abrazo programs in 2010. The current MTESS was only created in 2013, and the labor inspectorate under its responsibility was set up in 2015.

The POK project fits well into the national policy environment that started with actions aimed at enabling the legal framework, knowledge, policies, institutional capacities, etc. and that is progressively evolving toward effective implementation of those policies and the delivery of related services at the local level. In interviews, some of the stakeholders highlighted that POK was the first project with a holistic approach to make a significant investment in a specific department (Guairá) and to focus on a particular sector (sugar)—something seen as a logical step on the trajectory of the country, whose main challenge now is funding and effective implementation of its policies as designed.

In this way, POK has also contributed to the decentralization process in a highly centralized country that needs to move forward in devolving responsibility to, and strengthening, local government agencies (CODENIs, educational and social services, MTESS regional offices). Although significant progress in terms of cultural norms and policy developments in the country has been made, it is important to note that effective application of these policies at smaller territorial scales, in this case the district, requires the empowerment of local institutions and development tools, methodologies, and competent officials—all of which the project has aimed to provide. POK has done this within the contours of the country's central institutions (the judiciary, the labor inspectorate), whose capacity building and process and program consolidation (Abrazo, Jornada Extendida, etc.) also continue. Stakeholders generally concluded that POK's proposal has judiciously combined actions at the central and local levels in a model that can be tested and validated for further replication in other regions/areas.

Sector focus. POK's focus on agriculture, particularly in the sugarcane sector, is also widely regarded as a strategic decision because all the available data and information confirm that the bulk of CL in the country occurs in the agriculture and domestic domains in rural areas. A USDOL-funded investigation of CL in Paraguay's sugarcane industry in 2011 provided additional justification of the project's chosen focus. This inquiry, together with POK's baseline study and the survey for the selection of participants conducted later, shows the intent of the project's promoters to understand the characteristics and dimensions of the problem, and the willingness to adjust the project's design to realities on the ground.

Sugarcane is a subsector experiencing particularly significant changes. Although sugarcane production is still a predominant activity involving thousands of families in Guairá, some large processing companies have collapsed, and many families have abandoned sugar production. Simultaneously, but in the opposite direction, the "Fairtrade" movement seems to be making

⁴ Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, Law No. 1973); No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor, 1989, Law No. 1,657/01); No. 129 (Forced Labor, 1930); No. 105 (Abolition of Forced Labor, 1957); No. 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989), No. 111 (Discrimination [Employment and Occupation], 1958).

strides in Guairá and is progressively incorporating more and more small producers into the market for organic sugar. Employers in that sector, although mostly rejecting the responsibility of addressing CL in the value chain, are generally interested in getting rid of the negative image it brings to the sector. Several external factors, therefore, influenced the presence of CL in the sugarcane sector and affected the project's initial assumptions.⁵ In response, POK adopted a flexible approach, adjusting its actions and identifying additional sectors where children and adolescents are currently working in irregular situations that are not part of the sugar industry. Although sugarcane production served as the main criterion to identify areas for the project, it was not used as an exclusion criterion. POK has made observable efforts to address CL in other sectors such as domestic work and mining.

Another positive aspect relevant to the project is the presence of a wide range of communities with distinct socioeconomic and cultural realities (rural and urban), which provide the opportunity for comparing strategies and the possibility of replication in other areas of the country. The application of a CMEP has also been a positive project asset, since it has allowed prompt identification of implementation shortcomings and adoption of corrective measures—although some issues have been raised concerning the intensive time and energy demands of the CMEP (discussed in more detail in Section 3.2, Effectiveness). In general, there is wide stakeholder consensus around the importance of having first-hand data to inform managerial decisions. Monitoring activities also benefit from the concentration of activities in a single area because this enables more detailed follow-up and more interaction with stakeholders.

Outcome 2 (Livelihoods). The presence of this component in the project design is clearly consistent with the analysis of the problem presented in Section I of the CMEP, and it emerges as a logical and coherent response to the poor socioeconomic conditions faced by households in terms of income generation. However, although POK has generally realized the targets set at the outset of the project, the question still lingers as to whether the actions contemplated, and the time and resources provided (6.3 percent of the project budget), could be expected to trigger significant changes in household income dynamics and to break through the poor socioeconomic conditions. Achieving change on this scale would need a more comprehensive approach and a longer cycle of intervention—probably with more focus on the economic drivers of these communities (agriculture and livestock), and greater involvement of government extension services. This assertion should not be seen as a shortcoming in the project's design and even less so in its performance, because the project was not intended to achieve this level of impact. However, the evaluation team considers this to be a relevant input for reflection on the ToC.

Discussion of the ToC of this particular component is a complex and multifaceted issue. There is a general consensus that economic factors are a driving cause of CL, although other elements—such as gaps in regulatory frameworks, absence of educational opportunities, and the cultural paradigms—also contribute to the pervasiveness of CL. POK's analysis of problems, discussed in the CMEP documentation, refers to the lack of financial resources available to generate financial opportunities and to limited access to employment opportunities as two of the main causes of CL in the targeted communities.

⁵ It is worth noting that while this evaluation was underway, the Government of Paraguay announced the *National Plan for the Sugarcane Sector*, with the aim of creating 30,000 new jobs: <https://www.ip.gov.py/ip/gobierno-lanza-plan-nacional-de-la-cana-de-azucar-buscando-crear-30-000-nuevos-puestos-de-trabajo-por-ano/>

This analysis seems to justify, therefore, the presence of an economic component in the project's ToC aimed at tackling those factors. However, the scope and breadth of this component is a matter of discussion. While the absence of sufficient livelihoods may be a root cause of CL, the time and resources available for a project like this are insufficient to obtain the desired long-term systemic impact. Developing human capital might appear to be a realistic goal, but changing the economic dynamics is probably out of reach due to the significant influence of external factors that are beyond the control of any project of this scope and nature.

The project's ToC focuses on outcomes such as the "development of professional skills and personal competencies", but not the change in wider economic dynamics. In this sense, the theory and the practice of the project have been consistent and realistic. However, one of the specific outcomes in the ToC, "strengthening of operating entrepreneurs," should have been made more explicit, given the piloting character of this component.

A discussion of what can be done by a single project exceeds the scope of this evaluation, but the evaluation team believes that this is a relevant point for further analysis of the impacts of the strategies applied, identifying what works, and how to scale up successful strategies.

Participant Selection. Although there is no specific evaluation question in the ToR about the participant selection process, this topic was raised several times by representatives of the implementing partners. Issues have been reported concerning the time consumed in implementing the selection process and the difficulties found in shaping the target groups by applying the eligibility criteria.⁶ The evaluation team has learned that this is the standard procedure applied in all USDOL/ILAB-funded projects. The approach identifies the participants one by one, requiring considerable time and energy to identify those meeting the criteria—in this case, children involved in CL or at risk of being involved in CL. Technically, it is a very refined system, but in this particular case, it was slow and complex to apply. Some of the main problems reported are as follows:

1. The delays generally made it necessary to kick off project implementation before participant selection was completed; otherwise the implementation plan and schedule might be put under stress.
2. The initial selection did not reach the target figures expected in the design. There were two main reasons for this: those meeting the eligibility criteria were not easy to identify in sufficient number, and some families were reluctant to join activities that did not offer tangible products upfront to the participants. The project mainly offered educational and training services to increase knowledge and improve skills; sometimes their families needed to be convinced of the benefits of the project.
3. When conducting a project in a community considered generally vulnerable, it is usually problematic and controversial to select some households as participants and leave other households out of the selection process. Although the survey conducted as part of the CMEP may have some criteria to justify the decision, errors are likely to occur. The most common perception from those not included in the selection is that they have been left out

⁶ The different phases of the process are thoroughly described in Section IV of the CMEP document (p. 21 and following). The process starts with a community diagnostic, followed by a workshop with community leaders, development and application of a survey with all its different stages, selection of the participants, and the signing of an agreement. The initial timeline for beneficiary selection was four months, between October 2016 and January 2017.

unfairly. Targeting exclusively the most vulnerable may be difficult in terms of shaping the groups and may create feelings of rejection and discontent among those not selected.

Eventually the project found a way to expedite the process by approaching the schools where most children and adolescents that met the eligibility criteria had already been identified, and the selection process was completed there. All the children and adolescents in the corresponding age groups were invited to join the activities, either the EpCs or the 4-H Clubs. The project also incorporated an outreach tutoring service to identify the most vulnerable cases: dropouts, children and adolescents with learning difficulties, families with special needs, etc.

Using the school as the entry door and platform from which the project could later conduct a more refined search of the most vulnerable children was considered by most stakeholders an important lesson learned that might deserve thorough consideration for similar processes in the future. Schools are key infrastructures and provide services in the communities that might save time and energy in such a complex process. Selecting only those already at the school would be a tactical error in targeting, but ignoring the strategic value of the school in the community, its stable presence, the knowledge it possesses, and the bonds with the families would be missing an opportunity to enhance the project's potential impact.

Gender Strategy. Although the project was clearly gender sensitive and gender issues were considered and dealt with upon their occurrence (referral of adolescence pregnancy cases, timetables for the training courses, availability of sex disaggregated data), a specific gender strategy would have helped in approaching gender issues in a more systematic manner. For example, the staff could share basic concepts on gender equality, indicators could be gender sensitive beyond disaggregation, gender cultural paradigms could be discussed more thoroughly across the activities, and sensitization and awareness could include topics that are not usually included if not anticipated beforehand (relative access to resources, gender violence, etc.).

The evaluation team also found that the project has made efforts to work within the existing institutional framework: ministries (MTESS, MEC, and MINNA); platforms such as CONAETI and the Comisión Fundamental de Derechos Fundamentales en el Trabajo y Prevención del Trabajo Forzoso (CONTRAFOR); and local governments (department and district secretariats, etc.). Building on existing capacities inspired the design and subsequent implementation of the project and was widely appreciated by all the stakeholders.

In general, there is a consistent rationale that justifies the project's design. The three main components of the project (educational, economic, and legal/institutional) deal with well-known determinants of CL, and as such may be considered adequate, well-aligned, and inclusive of the classical dimensions applied to combat CL at both the policy and direct-action level. In addition, the three outcomes together represent a comprehensive and holistic approach to tackle CL in the agricultural sector, and in rural areas in general. Outcome 4 (labor law compliance in the Department of Boquerón, with a focus on forced labor) does not represent a significant variation from the project's ToC. While it expands the scope of the project to another region and puts special emphasis on a related situation, forced labor, the proposed intervention remains very similar: awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and educational services.

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 Overview of the implementation and delivery of products and services

This section begins with a discussion of the internal and external factors that may have affected the delivery of products and services, and thus the realization of the project's goals. A review and analysis of the main results achieved by the project regarding each of the four project outcomes then follows.

POK was implemented by a highly experienced consortium of organizations: the lead implementing partner and grantee, POA, and two national organizations, CIRD and Fundación ALDA. All implementing partners have extensive relevant expertise in the areas covered by the project: education, business and entrepreneurial services, and community development. POK enabled a partnership that brought together a wealth of expertise from a range of organizations at the national and international level, reflecting a positive confluence of institutional goals built on sound technical foundations.

Stakeholders highlighted the strengths of this arrangement as representing an opportunity to build an innovative and synergistic venture around the partners' wealth of experience. Each organization brought its own technical expertise, methodologies, and comparative advantages to the common ground, increasing the range of resources available and creating the opportunity for constructive dialogue. This integration of models, concepts, and structures also presented challenges during the early stages of implementation in assembling the different pieces of the implementation structure. However, there was general stakeholder agreement that these were mostly overcome as the implementation process proceeded.

External factors, such as the change at the central government level in 2018, also affected the project's implementation. The new ministerial teams required time to examine the project, endorse its activities, and put forward new ideas. This process slowed the pace of implementation because the project team had to rebuild its institutional alliances and catch up on project activities.

The project team also faced challenges in harmonizing project activities with community dynamics, mainly the productive activities of community members. Participating in surveys, trainings, meetings, committees, etc. requires time and energy, and although not widespread, some community informants reported that it was not always easy to be available for project activities. If the program became very intense or the timetables did not consider community members' other obligations and commitments, this could create some fatigue and rejection related to the project. Some members of the community referred to this situation as a challenge that they faced in actively participating in the project activities, but it was widely recognized that the project made remarkable efforts to work around these constraints and was generally successful in this regard.

These types of situations represented challenges and constraints the POK team had to overcome during the implementation process. While reviewing such difficulties with the benefit of hindsight reveals lessons learned around the importance of clarifying concepts and unifying criteria among all members of the partnership at the start of the process, the general consensus is that the project satisfactorily managed the situations that it confronted, and that POK made a conscious and proactive effort to accommodate each community's regular agenda and family commitments.

Despite constraints, POK managed to accelerate the implementation pace and deliver a long list of products and services of substantial quality, reaching and sometimes exceeding most of the targets set in the project's matrix. The independent interim evaluation conducted in April 2018

and the internal monitoring played a key role in identifying the bottlenecks and devising effective corrective measures.

3.2.2 Outcome 1 Achievements

The actions contained in this component primarily consisted of two educational services offered to children and adolescents, in 16 locations in the five districts of the Department of Guairá and one location in the Department of Boquerón. The first service, EpC, is for children ages 5 to 10 years, and the 4-H Clubs are for children/adolescents ages 11 to 17. Both initiatives filled an important gap in the complementary educational and recreational services offered to these age groups in the target areas, mostly rural but in some cases semi-urban areas. MEC plans to implement the Jornada Extendida (Extended Hours) scheme, but so far progress has been very slow due to lack of resources. The EpCs and the 4-H Clubs represented pedagogic proposals that were much more developed and comprehensive than the Jornada Extendida, which is a plan to incorporate after-school services into the schools' regular programs.

The evaluation team finds that both educational services performed very well and there is general stakeholder consensus that they are valid proposals to bolster the school environment and prevent CL. Beyond any immediate and direct impact on withdrawing children from CL, most stakeholders understood that the educational services provided by POK helped revitalize the role of schools in the communities and, as such, boosted the value of education for families and re-engaged them in school life. Stakeholders also recognized that, in this way, CL can be reduced in the medium and long term.

Exhibit 7. Outcome 1 Achievements

Indicator	Target	Achievements*	Comments
Outcome 1.1 Children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 access formal and non-formal education programs			
OTC 1: Number of children ages 5 to 17 promoted to the next grade level	2,312	2,691	The target was 80% total of the caseload of 2,890 = 2,312. The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
OTC 2: Number of children that complete educational opportunities	2,023	2,327	The target was 70% total of the caseload of 2,890 = 2,023. The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
E1: Number of children engaged in or at high-risk of entering CL provided education or vocational training services	2,890	3,370	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
E2: Number of children engaged in or at high-risk of entering child labor provided formal education services	145	15	The target was set at 145 children, but project officers argue that it was miscalculated. The project initially assumed that the number of dropouts was larger than what was later found in the field, where only 23 dropouts were identified.
E3: Number of children engaged in or at high-risk of	2,890	3,370	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project

Indicator	Target	Achievements*	Comments
entering child labor provided non-formal education services			
OTC 3: Number of children aged 5 to 17 years reinserted in the formal education system	145	15	(See comments above E2 indicator)
OTC 4: Number of children aged 5–17 years brought up to the correct grade level in the formal education system	145	15	(See comments above E2 indicator)
OTP 1: Number of children who receive school and family support activities	2,890	2,820	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
Outcome 1.2: Communities Supporting CL Prevention and Elimination			
OTC 5: % of beneficiary households who agree that CA should attend school	80%	99.9%	Baseline from the first intake was established at 43%.
OTC 6: % of beneficiary households who agree that CA under the legal working age should not work	80%	73.4%	Baseline from the first intake was established at 51%.
OTP 2: Number of awareness workshops and campaigns conducted	15	50 (31 workshops and 19 campaigns)	The target was set at 15 (9 workshops and 6 campaigns). The baseline value can be equaled to “zero,” since the count started with the project.
OTP 3: Number of adults participating in awareness activities to prevent and combat CL	600	605 adults	Baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.

* Achievements per CMEP as of October 2019.

The Espacios para Crecer (EpCs) and Supercamps. Stakeholders described the EpCs and the Supercamps as very successful. After initial difficulties in engaging with the school principals and shaping the groups according to the eligibility criteria, Fundación ALDA managed to break through the implementation challenges to complete the program of activities and achieve all the targets set. Thirty-three EpCs were implemented in Guairá that reached 999 children (of a target of 900), representing 806 families in 16 locations. A total of 630 children completed 70 percent of the 700 hours required. In the Chaco (Department of Boquerón), one EpC with four groups, organized directly by POA, reached 123 children (the target was 80 children); 63 children completed the 700 hours required.

Seventeen Fundación ALDA coordinators and facilitators were trained in the Quantum Learning (QL) methodology, all of whom described this methodology as innovative, dynamic, and transformative—showing a very high level of enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment. A similar situation prevailed in Boquerón, although there were only three facilitators in that area. School teachers and officers from the Abrazo program who were also trained in QL, expressed equally positive views about the QL methodology.

Importantly, the EpCs were implemented in very close coordination with families, something that enhanced the impact of the activity and expanded its effects to the family domain. Families and

teachers cited various examples of these effects on the school environment that can be reasonably associated with the EpC implementation:

- The school's role in communities has been strengthened.
- Interest in education has been boosted.
- Children's abilities increased, in some cases resulting in better academic performance (math and language) and overall life skills.
- Children's self-awareness and self-reliance also increased.
- Awareness of CL increased, and a new mindset about CL developed among families and teachers.
- Parents (especially mothers) were motivated to participate in school activities and became aware of children's rights and the dangers of CL.

An agreement has been reached with MINNA for five of the EpCs to be integrated into the portfolio of services of the Abrazo program. According to the information gathered by the evaluation team, MINNA is currently in the process of mobilizing resources to take over the five EpCs as of January 2020. MINNA has clearly expressed its political will to take the initiative forward but is still working to identify the necessary resources. It has been argued that a period of shared management would help in the transfer of all the expertise gained during POK implementation. Since EpCs teams are intended to remain in place until December 2019, it seems important to use the remaining time to explore the different options available to ensure that the legacy of knowledge and expertise developed during the last three years is not lost.

The 4-H Clubs and the Tutoring Services. Very similar comments can be made concerning the 4-H Club experience, which is generally described as a very successful initiative. Working with adolescents was unanimously regarded as a highly relevant project component, filling a widely recognized gap in the portfolio of services available for this age group, especially in rural areas. The 4-H methodology was similarly considered very effective in engaging the youth, triggering their interest in developing projects for their future, and increasing their technical skills.

The initial difficulties encountered in identifying participants and setting up the groups were overcome by attaching the 4-H Clubs to the schools' programs, in some cases even as part of the curriculum. POK managers and technicians realized the importance of being more proactive in enrolling youth, and schools were identified as the perfect platform to reach boys/girls and their families. As explained earlier, the decision to establish a tutoring service—a group of facilitators with the specific mandate of identifying the most vulnerable children and adolescents and working with them individually—has yielded very good results.

The 4-H tutoring service enabled the project, and by extension the schools, to have a closer interaction with the families. Tutors played a key role in dealing with the socioeconomic issues that normally act as barriers to accessing education. The tutor became in some ways a life coach for the child and/or adolescent to improve not only educational enrollment, but also empowered the youth in other life situations. As a personalized service, the tutoring service has been able to very positively impact the target families, but its personalized nature makes it difficult to scale up. Its integration into the existing educational or social structure remains a major challenge.

Another successful aspect of the 4-H methodology was the idea of using specific projects to develop different sets of techniques and abilities among youth—an approach that proved very attractive for the youth involved. Participants were able to present a long list of skills and abilities

resulting from their participation in the 4-H Clubs: technical abilities, sociability, self-reliance, tolerance, and group empowerment, among others. Teachers and families were likewise highly satisfied.

Additional positive impacts of 4-H on school dynamics reported by stakeholders include:

- Reactivated the PEI (School Pedagogic Project).
- Revitalized the role of the school in the communities.
- Increased the presence and participation of adolescents in school life.
- Improved school attendance and engagement in education, in general.
- Triggered innovation among both teachers and students.
- Increased CL awareness among school staff members.

3.2.3 Outcome 2 Achievements

The livelihood component delivered an extensive list of products and services (see Exhibit 8 for Outcome 2 targets and achievements). A total of 1,597 adults from 1,391 households were supported by POK under the livelihood component, with services that aim at developing their personal and technical abilities or improving their conditions for income generation. Two-thirds (63 percent) of the participants were women who were heads of the family. This component was conducted with a clear focus on women, targeting them as the priority group. The project even opted to link its activities with the Tekoporá committees, which are exclusively composed of women. This synergy allowed the project to benefit from the presence of an existing community structure at the grassroots level, while simultaneously nourishing the Tekoporá committees with fresh resources and new ideas.

Exhibit 8. Outcome 2 Achievements

Indicator	Target	Achievements*	Comments
USDOL Common Indicators			
L1: Number of households receiving livelihood services	1,350	1,391	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the counted start with the project.
L2: Number of adults provided with employment services	795	1,597	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the counted start with the project.
L4: Number of individuals provided with economic strengthening services	675	693	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the counted start with the project.
OTC 7: % of target households regularly meeting basic needs	90%	91.6%	Baseline from the first intake was established at 81%.
OTC 8: % of participants inserted into decent work		NA	N/A POK was required to review the CMEP with regard to this indicator (OTC 8). It identified the need to adjust the definition of "Decent Work." As currently defined, in order to consider participants as engaged in decent work, they must receive Social Security (IPS); however,

Indicator	Target	Achievements*	Comments
			in the rural areas in Paraguay, most of the participants are employed by micro/small companies, in which they have acceptable conditions of work but these do not include IPS.
Outcome 2.1: Adolescents aged 14 to 17 with increased skills and personal competencies to continue with their education and/or access to future decent work			
OTC 9: % of adolescents from 14 to 17 years of age who apply at least 60 percent of social work skills	70% of the 1,155 adolescents	122.9%	<p>Since POK enrolled more adolescents that the initial target, the final value exceeds the 100% achievement. The target should have been reset as the 70% of the final figure enrolled.</p> <p>This indicator is calculated by comparison between the pre-test and post-test results, which can be considered a proxy. It does not necessarily reflect the application of skills by the adolescent in real life.</p>
Outcome 2.2: Adolescents aged 14 to 17 with increased skills and personal competencies to continue with their education and/or access to future decent work			
OTC 10: % of target households with better competencies for access to employment	70% of the 1,350 households	98.5%	<p>The results of the pre- and post-tests reflects that 98.5% of the participant households (1,391) improved their skills for employment, in areas such as conflict management, teamwork, commitment, decision-making, and planning.</p> <p>Two percentage values have been added to obtain the final value of 98.8%: 60.9% + 37.6%. POK monitoring officers confirmed that there was no risk of double counting.</p>
OTP 4: # of adults in target households who complete courses for vocational training.	945	1,597	<p>The target was set at 945 adults.</p> <p>The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the counted start with the project.</p>
Outcome 2.3: Adults with operating entrepreneurship strengthened			
OTC 11: % of operating entrepreneurship strengthened	50%	100%	Annex A to the TPR reads: “The project has delivered technical assistance to 693 participant adults. Of this total, 385 (55%) ventures were strengthened (mostly orchards, plantations and / or animal husbandry) and the remaining 45% were new ventures, mostly resulting from trainings they received.” Some comments have been added in the body of this report about possible flaws in the measuring of strengthening an entrepreneurship.

Indicator	Target	Achievements*	Comments
OTP 5: # of adults in target households who receive technical assistance	675	693	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
Outcome 2.4: Greater access by beneficiary households to the Social Protection Programs and/or projects at the local level			
OTC 12: % of target households who use social protection programs that are available in the Department of Guairá.	50%	38%	Baseline value from the first intake was 30%. The final value shows underperformance due to the budgetary impasse currently affecting programs such as Tekoporá and Tenonderá, which has prevented many families from joining these programs.
OTP 6: # of district development plans that include actions to prevent and combat CL	5	5	Baseline value was “zero.”

* Achievements per CMEP as of October 2019.

Along the same line, POK established a very constructive connection with two main providers of professional training and capacity building in the country, the Servicio Nacional de Promoción Profesional (SNPP) and Sistema Nacional de Formación y Capacitación Laboral (SINAFOCAL), particularly the former. Thanks to this collaboration, POK was able to deliver training courses in a cost-effective manner to rural communities, where access to this type of training is usually very limited.

This component was implemented in a collaborative manner, with participants generally consulted about the training topics and the organization of training events (dates, timetable, etc.). An important effort was also made regarding the organizational development of local groups, with the purpose of enhancing their prospects for future sustainability. Strengthening local committees via formalization, training, and technical assistance—as well as the establishment and/or reinforcement of the links to resources at the municipal level (the mesas productivas)—have been additional lines of action well supported by the project. The linked spaces have been also used to address issues of CL, adolescent work and gender violence, co-responsibility for family care, etc.

The evaluation identified some issues concerning the training topics chosen to increase the capacities of the women’s groups. Although POK had some preliminary proposals (soap making, baking, handicrafts decoration, etc.), consultations were carried out to confirm the interest of the participants in these topics. The evaluation team still believes that POK could have been more proactive in offering courses and carrying out some sensitization in gender-typed non-traditional professions. Other successful experiences in the country—such as the project “Labor Inclusion of Women in Non-traditional Trades in the Road Sector,” a joint initiative between the Inter-American Development Bank and the Ministry of Civil Works (MOPC)—could have been used as a resources in this regard. As already noted, an explicit gender strategy might have anticipated this kind of issue and the scope of the support provided to participants.

As for the scope of the support provided under this component, the perception of the evaluation team, after gathering information from different groups, is that the last stages of the entrepreneurial cycle (i.e., the business plan and the provision of start-up capital) were less

developed in comparison with the provision of training and other services. In the sample the evaluation team examined, there was just one case where the business plan had been completed. Other participants, although appearing grateful for the support received, commented that it was still difficult for them to start a business venture. The statements gathered by the evaluation team indicate that the project has been able to spark a process of economic empowerment that still requires additional steps to be completed.

As discussed in the section on relevance, the project was not designed to empower the livelihoods of the communities on a significant scale. Given the scale of the resources invested and the influence of factors outside the project's purview, this degree of impact could not be expected. The project was meant to increase the capacities, skills, and competencies of a number of people, mainly youth and women, and through this, to expand their range of opportunities. This has been generally achieved. Support for this conclusion is presented below.

The indicators presented in Exhibit 8 make it evident that the project realized most of its specific targets; for example, the number of adults provided with an employment service, reached 1,597, compared to the target of 795 (Indicator L2). The project also exceeded its target for indicator L4, the number of individuals provided with economic strengthening services (675 adults), reaching 697 individuals. Other indicators, such as OTC 9, OTC 10, and OTP 4, also show that the project was able to raise the level of competencies and skills of project participants.

Regarding indicator OTC 11, although it is reported that 100 percent of the operating entrepreneurship have been strengthened, the qualitative view the evaluation team gained after the consultation process departs slightly from this view. Many of these operating entrepreneurship were actually very fragile, and the women consulted, although grateful for the attention and support they received, underlined that the contribution of these ventures to family income was still very limited. The calculation method applied in indicator OTC 11 describes the numerator as "number of projects implemented by the beneficiary households strengthened"—a calculation that requires a subjective assessment of when a project has been effectively strengthened. The evidence indicates that POK has equated the provision of support, which is an *output*, with the strengthening of the initiative, which can be considered an *outcome*. There is little doubt that the facilitation of basic training followed by the supply of some productive items enhances the possibility of a household's initiative to thrive, but there are still external factors that need to interact favorably with project activities to have any systemic effect on the very limited and adverse conditions imposed by a small rural market. Further verification is needed to confirm the extent to which the operating entrepreneurship have in fact been strengthened by the POK activities.

The evaluation team's assessment is that the project has delivered a wide range of products and services under this component that have increased the capacities of individuals and groups to develop businesses. In some cases, those individuals and groups (mostly individuals) have been able to start small initiatives that have generated additional income. The analysis presented in the relevance section examined whether these initiatives can reach the critical mass to influence the economic dynamics at the community level, but there is little doubt that the project has achieved its own targets, which were mainly aimed at improving capacities, skills, and competencies.

Interestingly, the evaluation team's observation is that the livelihood component, beyond its economic impact, has had a greater impact on changing socio-cultural paradigms and generating enthusiasm among the groups of participants. The activities conducted under this component

have performed an important motivational function: women have increased their confidence as individuals and as a group, and also their self-reliance, particularly the opportunities to socialize, strengthen community bonds, etc. The fact that the activities have been mostly directed at women is also serving to unlock new family dynamics, including enhancing the woman’s role in the family economic domain.

The project has also made an important effort to strengthen the organization of local groups. Productive committees have been set up and linked with the incumbent structures at the municipal level, although the results have been uneven across communities, depending on group leadership and distance from the municipality offices. The extent of the groups’ articulation with national/local institutions to continue operating is crucial and continues to be a major challenge for the future.

3.2.4 Outcome 3 Achievements

POK has supported a range of institutions at both the national and local level to develop their capacities and increase their ability to enforce labor law compliance—including MTESS, the judiciary, MINNA, MEC, CODENIs, and CONAETI—as well as activities involving the private sector. The project has delivered an extensive list of products and services to the above-mentioned institutions that are of consistently high quality and have been delivered in a timely fashion. Representatives from these institutions have expressed favorable views about the support they received from POK, and freely quote examples of how this support has helped them to improve their institutional performance.

Exhibit 9. Outcome 3 Achievements

Indicator	Target	Achievements	Comments
USDOL common indicators			
OTC 13: % of inspections conducted at a central and local level regarding CL	25% rest of the country; 5% Guairá (total 30%)	100% rest of the country; 25% Guairá	Annex A of the TPR reads in the intake column “30%,” which doesn’t seem to reflect the baseline value since it coincides with the target value. The achievement of 100% can be explained by a MTESS Resolution which dictated the inclusion of CL issues in every inspection carried out by the labor inspection department.
OTC 14: # of sanctions applied to businesses who do not comply with labor laws that protect CL	100	139	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
OTC 15: # of referrals sent to the competent agency by the MTESS through CL inspections.	100	0	The POK monitoring team reports that it was not possible to gather information about this indicator. The Dirección General de Inspección y Fiscalización del Trabajo (DGIFT) does not have this information; the referral mechanism is the Legal Department of the Vice Ministry of Labor.
Outcome 3.1: A strengthened system of inspection for compliance with labor and child and adolescent laws (regarding child labor)			
OTC 16: # of inspections that use	300	570	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.

Indicator	Target	Achievements	Comments
updated procedures and/or protocols			
OTP 7: # of MTESS inspectors trained in procedures for CL inspection	30	27	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count start with the project.
Outcome 3.2: Increased knowledge for local stakeholders and justice system officials for the application of labor and child and adolescent laws in Guairá			
OTC 17: # of local stakeholders and justice system officials with greater knowledge about combating CL.	35	187	The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project.
Outcome 3.3: Strengthened CODENIs in target districts, to improve the articulation between member institutions of the CONAETI			
OTC 18: # of priority actions for the project implemented by the CODENI (items b, d and e of article 34 of the CNA) of the target districts, for the prevention and elimination of CL and protection of adolescent workers.	15	10	The target was set at 15. The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project. Of the three priority areas, progress was made with the five CODENIs in: 1) providing specialized guidance to families—visits were made to families along with tutors with emphasis on guiding parents about adolescent work and the importance of registration; 2) referral to judicial courts—5 training modules, regarding their role as counselors and the municipal role in the promotion and protection of children and adolescents; and 3) RAT: no records were registered yet in the system.
OTC 19: CL monitoring mechanisms implemented	4	3	The target was set at 4. The baseline can be equaled to “zero” since the count started with the project. The three systems are the RAT, the ONNAP and the Labor Inspection system.

* Achievements per CMEP as of October 2019.

MTESS/Labor Inspectorate. POK supported the development of a strengthening and capacity building plan for two general directorates in the MTESS: the General Inspection Directorate and the Childhood and Adolescence Directorate. Protocols were updated and a new guide for the evaluation of labor rights was developed, all of which were integrated into a plan to formalize the conditions of employment.

Concerning labor inspection, the project organized training events and the sharing of other countries’ inspection services experiences (Peru, US) that the inspectors described as very inspiring and motivating. The inspectors generally noted, though, that effective implementation of the lessons learned from these events would require additional reforms to improve the working environment.

Another important product POK facilitated was the development of the training curriculum for the labor inspection initially elaborated by the ILO—consisting of four modules (Agriculture, Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Occupational and Safety and Health). This development was also linked to a professionalization plan for the inspection service; progress on this initiative has been limited because the new government, which took office in 2018, wanted to consider different alternatives from those included in POK’s proposal.

The evaluation team’s overall assessment is that POK helped the labor inspection service to increase its capabilities as an enforcement body. Inspectors believe the service has improved its credibility among the public in the last few years, although important challenges that inhibit adequate fulfillment of its mandate remain to be tackled. Limited human and material resources are probably the main constraint, but organizational aspects, such as procedures and attributions/authority to investigate and coordinate with other institutions (police, attorney, the judiciary, etc.), also remain outstanding issues to be addressed.

Labor Inspection Information System. The labor inspection information system has been developed in a participatory manner; the inspectors are highly satisfied with the input they brought to the design. Final improvements to the hardware infrastructure of the Ministry were made recently, and the initial tablets have been replaced by notebooks. According to the information available to the evaluation team, the system is ready to be used. A Ministry Resolution was issued on April 17, 2019 mandating use of the system, but it still has to be tested under regular operation. The IT department believes unexpected problems may arise, so the project should consider following up for an additional period to provide support, not only on potential technical issues, but also with management of the organizational changes associated with implementation of the new system. The IT department understands that this could be a critical period.

Register for the Adolescent Worker (RAT). The RAT system has been similarly developed and is ready to use, although the IT Department anticipates technical challenges for its maintenance. The framework used by the contractor is different from the one used by the IT Department, which may require the purchase of a new framework in the future. The intended users, the CODENIs, have been already given the details necessary to log in, but the CODENI officers consulted during this evaluation have reported problems in completing the log-in process. All agreed that some technical issues remain. One officer explained to the evaluation team that, despite availability of the online service, their CODENI is already completing the registration on paper and issuing certificates in coordination with the MTESS Regional Office—a development that is good practice to keep the Register running despite the remaining technical constraints.

The system has been described as “user friendly,” although CODENI officers still need to become familiar with the seven modules of data and the information that must be filled in. CODENIs in rural districts with few factories and formal businesses expect to make limited use of the Register, arguing that few contracts with adolescents in their area are in compliance with all the formalities required by the RAT. However, the main challenge for the RAT is still the reluctance of the targeted user and beneficiary (at the local level) to register in the system. The informality of the sector, and employers’ poor record of compliance regarding formalizing adolescent workers, are the main weaknesses. The CODENIs (especially in Guairá) did not report the request of the RAT for any adolescent in 2019. In Boquerón, the CODENIs have completed a few registrations, but none in electronic format. A communication effort has been made recently to change the public’s

perception about the CODENI in general, and the RAT in particular. Although this effort has yielded some results, a certain degree of potential user reluctance and mistrust remains.

The evaluation team has learned that MTESS has recently approved a revision of the apprenticeship contract, to make it better suited to current labor market conditions. This initiative could work well with the RAT, since both mechanisms aim to increase the regulation of adolescents in the workplace to create a protective work environment. The initiative may still need to pay specific attention to the characteristics of apprenticeship in rural areas, and this may be an area where POK could investigate the options available to support this initiative.

The evaluation team believes MTESS is genuinely committed to setting up both systems and is determined to make them functional, although some technical, financial, and managerial issues require POK's attention.

Judiciary. POK has contributed to expanding the manual with guidelines for the “Jueces de Paz” on CL issues. This group is deemed to be a key target group due to its extended presence in the territory. Judges expressed appreciation that they were given the opportunity to participate in the process of developing the manual.

A socialization and training process was conducted for 50 judges (of 380 judges in the country). A request has been made to continue the training process in local communities to ensure implementation. The Human Rights Directorate of the Supreme Court intends to continue with dissemination of this manual, including making it available online.

The evaluation team has received positive feedback from the judiciary stakeholders concerning the manual and the socialization process, specifically highlighting that POK support has served to update their mechanisms against CL to deal with emerging needs and the realities of different departments.

The collaboration with the judiciary also included sensitization and awareness-raising activities targeting *Jueces de Primera Instancia* and judicial clerks in the territory. CIRD, a POK implementing partner, has been responsible for implementing this part of the program.

Ministry of Childhood and Adolescence (MINNA). POK has linked with the Abrazo program to incorporate the EpCs into its portfolio of services. Abrazo facilitators have been trained in QL methodology, and they expressed positive views about it. Facilitators commented that full implementation by the Abrazo centers will require some changes in the protocols, which are quite rigid, leaving little room for improvisation or innovation.

Another key product developed by POK has been the software platform for the ONNAP. This ambitious initiative involves a wide range of organizations active in the childhood and adolescence field, with 244 potential users. Although the system has been developed, it still needs fine-tuning and testing under real-world conditions. Background data corresponding to the last five years have been uploaded, and a function has been set up to follow the “20 commitments of the Government of Paraguay with Childhood.” There are also plans to issue an annual report/yearbook presenting what has been done in the childhood sector. Various stakeholders have expressed expectations for this system that may be overly ambitious, and the increasing load may eventually overload the system during these early stages.

Ministry of Education and Science (MEC). POK conducted several meetings and discussions with the MEC to examine the different options for collaboration. Some options that were initially considered, such as the Open Learning Units or the Accelerated Education Program, were eventually ruled out, but the project did support development of materials for implementation of the Jornada Extendida for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in entrepreneurship, job skills, technology, and art. POK provided technical assistance with developing curricula in these topic areas. Directors and classroom teachers were also exposed to the QL methodology through interactions with facilitators and expressed similarly positive views about the non-formal educational techniques resulting from this methodology as a way to improve interest within the classroom. Pedagogic supervisors at the department level, who have also followed up on implementation of the EpC, expressed very positive views about the experience, and regretted that, in some cases, it is likely to be discontinued.

CODENI (Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents). At the local level, POK supported the CODENI staff with a particular focus on RAT, but also in networking with other institutions and influencing municipal budgets. The course has five modules; 17 CODENIs have been trained, 15 of them participating actively. POK has promoted dialogue with employers as well, and in some cases the Childhood Municipal Committee has been reactivated. As a result, the CODENI officers have a better understanding of their role and have expanded alternatives to take it forward. One officer stated that “they no longer see themselves as assistants of the judiciary system but as advisers or guides of families, employers, and the public, in general.” In the case of Boquerón, the three CODENIs involved in the process are working now in a more articulated fashion. Limited resources continue to be an important constraint, but POK has helped identify options within the limitations of the local context. In some cases, the role of the CODENI and the importance of children and adolescent issues within the municipality have also been enhanced.

As already noted, CODENI offices have a negative image in the community associated with their compliance role, which makes it difficult for them to work with families and employers to move forward with the RAT registration process. The communications campaign initiated within the project is overcoming this barrier, but it must be continued.

CONAETI (National Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers). POK has supported the CONAETI by developing the indicators of National Strategy against CL and aligning this strategy with the “20 commitments.” POK has also supported the CONAETI for the development of an action plan to operationalize the National Strategy, and in several awareness raising activities throughout the life of the project, for example, commemoration of the World Day Against Child Labor on June 12. The project also helped organize exchanges with the counterpart commission in Chile.

Private Sector. The project has conducted several actions to establish partnerships with the private sector and raise awareness about CL issues. One of the potential key partners within the private sector was the Centro Alcohólico y Azucarero del Paraguay (CAAP), but collaboration with this institution has been difficult due to key disagreements about the presence of CL in the sugar supply chain, a situation that the CAAP mostly denies or minimizes. Subsequently, their representatives have shown little will to cooperate with a project which, according to them, damages the image of the sector.

In other cases, such as with Petropar and the Fairtrade Movement, the collaboration has yielded better results. In the case of Boquerón, for example, there has also been involvement by the

Neuland Association in implementing the EpC. In addition, POK has organized several events with local companies, with the purpose of raising awareness of the importance of decent work and registration in the RAT. Along the same lines, the sensitization and awareness activities carried out in Paso Yobai (Guairá) with companies in the mining sector should be highlighted.

3.2.5 Outcome 4 Achievements

Outcome 4 was added to the project as part of the December 2017 project modification. Exhibit 10 shows the specific objectives set for this component, but its late addition has prevented monitoring and follow-up of this component from being formally included in the CMEP. Nevertheless, POA is informally tracking Outcome 4.

Exhibit 10. Outcome 4 Achievements

Outcome 4: Improved labor law compliance and acceptable working conditions with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor
SO 4.1: Coordinate actions with key stakeholders to prevent and combat forced labor
SO 4.2: Raise awareness and provide training on forced labor to key stakeholders to improve working conditions
SO 4.3: Provide educational services that promote protected spaces for an additional 80 children (direct participants) vulnerable to child labor and/or forced labor

Although the wording of the outcome refers to a specific “focus on preventing and combating forced labor,” the actual accomplishment of this goal had to be adjusted to the very specific context of Boquerón and the current status of labor rights enforcement in that area. Boquerón is a department characterized by its isolation and the very limited state presence in its territory. Its economic and social configuration is unique in Paraguay, due to the presence of the Mennonites as well as indigenous communities. Social dialogue and other dynamics around labor issues have been virtually nonexistent so far, and most social and institutional processes have to start from a very early stage.

POK can be regarded as a groundwork intervention to enhance the presence of MTESS in the region to deploy its resources and take initial steps to put an enforcement and protection system of labor rights in place in that neglected environment. To get to the point when a system is able to identify and tackle cases of forced labor, it is essential to first lay the foundation: effective institutional presence, functional procedures, some coordination mechanisms in place, and knowledge and information dissemination. The project has supported this process via institutional support, awareness raising, training, technical assistance, educational support, and the provision of materials and equipment.

An important milestone has been the establishment of the MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia (Boquerón). POK has supported this process by providing equipment, training the officer in charge, and providing ongoing technical support. The evaluation team has verified that this office is in operation and attending to various cases (not just CL), such as labor rights, mediation in disputes, and certifications. It has been reported that the demand for services from this office has been growing since its opening in 2018. This trend can be interpreted as confirming its relevance, but at the same time it may be a sign of a growing process that may require further investments.

Within the institutional domain, POK has also supported the establishment of the Departmental Council for Childhood and Adolescence and the elaboration of the Biannual Plan for CONTRAFOR.

Awareness raising on fundamental labor rights has been one of POK's priorities. The program has developed radio programs and TV spots in local indigenous languages, printed materials adjusted to the local culture, and campaigns to improve school retention among indigenous communities. It has also promoted labor rights generally through the printing and distribution of materials that have impacted Paraguayan workers more generally (not only indigenous workers) in a positive way. Promoting awareness of labor rights to indigenous communities was carried out through talks on topics such as the minimum wage, domestic work, night work, work in livestock and agricultural establishments—incorporating, in all cases, information on existing regulations and complaint mechanisms in cases of rights violations.

Another pillar of POK in Boquerón has been the training of different groups: civil servants from the regional government and the municipalities of Filadelfia, Loma Plata, Neuland, Mariscal Estigarribia; and traders and representatives of the Mennonite Cooperatives. CODENI officers, as already noted, have also been trained and supported to work in a more strategic fashion.

Finally, there is the EpC's experience in Boquerón—four groups involving 80 children from the Cayin ô Clim Nivaclé Community of Neuland. The activity was conducted in collaboration with the Asociación Colonia Neuland, the social branch of the Mennonite Cooperative in the district. Stakeholders describe this as an appropriate and successful experience. They unanimously highlight the relevance of this kind of pedagogic and recreational proposals for the children of indigenous communities, who normally do not have many opportunities to spend their leisure time in a positive and stimulating manner.

In summary, POK has been successful in setting in motion a process to protect the labor rights in Boquerón, whose baseline situation was generally weak and minimally developed. Thanks to POK, this process has moved forward. The stable presence of the MTESS Regional Office, although limited in human and material resources, represents an institutional reference for the local stakeholders. Likewise, the strengthening of the CODENIs, the improvement in the coordination mechanisms between local institutions, the awareness effort carried out, and the intention of the MINNA of lending continuity to the EpC experience, can all be regarded as examples of progress.

3.2.6 Project Objective: “Reduce Child Labor in the Department of Guairá”

The evaluation team's effectiveness assessment concerning achievement of the project goal is positive. See Exhibit 11 for the results attained by the project regarding the standard USDOL indicators. Although comparisons with the baseline values are not always a straightforward exercise (see subsequent comments about the monitoring system), in all cases the project has managed to improve the situations of the target households regarding CL issues.

Exhibit 11. Project Objective Achievements

Objective/Indicator	Achievements as of October 2019	Comparison with Life of Project Targets and Comments
Project Objective: Reduce Child Labor in the Department of Guairá		
<i>Households</i>		
POH1. % of livelihood beneficiary households with at least one child engaged in CL	20%	No specific target has been set. The baseline value (BLV) calculated in the first semester of 2017 for a caseload of 140 households was 43%. The final value (FV) was calculated in the second semester of 2019 for a caseload of 1,920 households. There is a significant reduction in the value of the indicators, but there are also significant differences between the size of the BLV cohort and the FV cohort.
POH2. % of livelihood beneficiary households with at least one child engaged in hazardous child labor (HCL)	12.2%	Similar comments to POH1. No specific target has been set. BLV in 2017 was 28%, but it was calculated for a significantly smaller cohort (140 households).
POH4. % of livelihood beneficiary households with all children of compulsory school age attending school regularly	98.8%	Similar comments to POH1 and POH2. No specific target has been set. BLV in 2017 was 97%, but it was calculated for a significantly smaller cohort (140 households).
<i>Children</i>		
POC1. % of beneficiary children engaged in CL	15%	No specific target has been set. The BLV has oscillated between 23% with a cohort of 1,342 children in the second semester of 2017 and 27% over a cohort of 2,820 children in the second semester of 2019.
POC2. % of beneficiary children engaged in HCL	9%	No specific target has been set. The BLV has oscillated between 17% with a cohort of 1,342 children in the second semester of 2017 and 18% over a cohort of 2,820 children in the second semester of 2019.
POC4. % of beneficiary children who regularly attended any form of education during the past six (6) months	99%	No specific target has been set. The BLV has oscillated between 97% with a cohort of 1,342 children in the second semester of 2017 and 93% over a cohort of 2,820 children in the second semester of 2019.

* Achievements per CMEP as of October 2019.

The indicators shown in Exhibit 11 were generated by the project through the CMEP. As already noted, the absence of a unique baseline value for the direct participants⁷ (this value is calculated every time that a new measurement is taken, sometimes every six months) prevents establishing a unique numeric value for any change in CL due to the project. It is evident, however, that the project has positively impacted the different measures of CL, both at household level and at the

⁷ For reference purposes, the prevalence of CL in children ages 5 to 17 years obtained by the Baseline Study conducted in the five districts of Guairá targeted by POK was 11.6%, with a confidence interval of 95%, an error of 3.4% and a variation coefficient of 0.02 (sample size of 1,627 households). This figure is substantially lower than the intake value (23%) obtained by the PMP at the start of the project (indicator POC1). It should be noted that the latter was calculated for a significantly smaller cohort.

child level. The indicator that measures the prevalence of CL most directly is POC1 (“% of beneficiary children engaged in CL”). The final value is 15 percent of children engaged in CL, whereas the different baseline values collected oscillated between 23 percent and 27 percent.

All available evidence indicates that an intervention like POK—a combination of services aimed at ensuring a full day of school or educational activity, increasing and improving technical skills of the youth and adults (mainly women), raising the levels of awareness and strengthening institutions in their capacity to deal with children and youth rights—is a model that works and delivers results at the district level. Moreover, if this model is applied in a systematic manner, supported by the data and information provided regularly by a rigorous monitoring system, the prospects of achieving what has been planned are raised.

The evaluation team, however, has expanded the analysis about the significance and key factors of these achievements—not to diminish their value but to enrich the analysis. Beyond the reduction of a few points in the prevalence of CL among the target households, which is a relevant numeric value, the evaluation team regards it as important to include the qualitative information gathered throughout the data collection phase.

First, it is important to note that, in some cases, the data sequence shows that the reduction of CL among the targeted households is still a volatile process. Comparisons between semesters show some figures going up and some down from one semester to another, making the influence of external factors a plausible interpretation of these changes. Here are two examples of these factors:

- Recession in the sugarcane sector and the subsequent out-migration of many producers and their families;
- Expansion of the Fairtrade scheme, which is very rigorous on CL. At the start of the project, two associations were registered in Fairtrade in Guairá; this figure has now increased to four associations, comprising approximately 800 families.

Moreover, the possibility of informant bias must be considered. After the dissemination of messages against CL, the recipients of those messages are less likely to report instances of CL, even if the information is collected by using the “line of life” technique, which is a highly reliable method. The endline study (still to be conducted) will shed more light on any POK-specific impact on the prevalence of CL in the five districts of Guairá covered by POK. At this point in the evaluation, the hypothesis that the project has been able to reduce CL and HCL among direct participants seems plausible.

It also seems important to bring into the analysis the way in which the project has been able to change the models and paradigms underlying CL in the POK intervention area. POK has deliberately focused its attention on a very specific group of families during a very specific period of time. The CMEP provides a snapshot of these two elements combined; but the community processes are dynamic, with some groups or individuals exiting the process while others make their way into it. It is important to assess to what extent the project has been able to influence the socio-cultural determinants of CL in the target communities. This would be an impact of significant importance due to the self-replicating nature of this kind of process. The following is a list that summarizes the main points expressed during the focus groups, reflecting the perception the participants (children, adolescents, and their families) have about CL.

- In virtually every focus group, children and adolescents recognized that they carried out some sort of work at home or on the family farm, small shop, or business (for example, masonry). Very rarely did they work for third parties. While the evaluation team has not established the precise percentage of children and adolescents that confirmed their participation in work, some of which may constitute typical household chores, the FGD evidence confirms that children and adolescents do indeed work in the communities.
- Most cases are working adolescents (10+), but there were work cases reported in the group of children under 10 years old. It must be noted that adolescents over 14 years old are entitled to work with some restrictions on activities and times. No verifications were conducted by the evaluation team on compliance with these restrictions, but they mainly refer to activities on family farms that might contravene these restrictions. Boys work mainly on the farm and girls at home. In a family with no boys, girls also work in the farm.
- Very rarely do adolescents stop going to school because of their work commitments. Their school attendance is combined with work before or after school.
- Many of them, particularly boys, described combining work with school as their “preferred option.” More girls than boys preferred only studying.
- When presented with a list of possible professions, most of them said they would like to continue studying after graduation from school and have dreams about becoming a doctor, teacher, psychologist, or other professional (such as police officer, electrician)—all professions that would require further studies. Becoming a professional football player was the main option more frequently checked by boys.
- They generally said they would like to continue their studies. Most of them, boys and girls, have plans and projects for their future lives and would like to pursue those plans. In some cases, they expressed their desire to leave their communities and go somewhere else to continue studying or find a job.
- Parents want their children to attend school, but most parents said they believed that doing some work is good for children, that working does not pose any major risk, and that both working and going to school are generally compatible.
- POK has helped both children and parents to be aware of the health and safety limits for children, but they do not think they are exceeding those limits.

The comments above are obviously a limited selection that emerged during the FGDs. After analyzing the quantitative and qualitative information available, the evaluation team believes that POK has been particularly successful in enhancing the value of education among children, adolescents, and their families. The information gathered also suggests that those who participated in the EpCs and 4-H Clubs have clearly developed personal and professional goals they would like to pursue. Specifically, the interest of children and youth has been documented throughout the FGDs in terms of individual and group empowerment, and the increased value attached to education as a means for improvement in the future (when immediate needs are replaced by strategic needs).

The qualitative data reflect a direct positive correlation between children and youth exposed to the educational component of the project (EpCs and 4-H Clubs) and their likelihood of remaining within the formal education system. In this sense, at-risk children and youth from Guairá and the Chaco areas are more likely to continue their education and reduce the number of hours they dedicate to paid and unpaid labor if they are exposed to this type of innovative methodological approach to non-formal education.

It is safe to assume that EpC and 4-H clubs are in themselves ways to foster greater links between families, schools, parents, and local institutions related to the rights of children and youth—which greatly contribute to this newfound understanding that education is instrumental in personal and professional growth. Parents still send their children to work, but they recognize that sending their children to school may offer them a brighter future in terms of accessing higher education (university) and/or higher paying jobs.

There is also a strong cultural component favoring child and adolescent work in Paraguay as a means of “training” for campesino communities, which was addressed by the project through diverse communication campaigns and specific trainings. However, this cultural factor should be considered as a key point for similar interventions. In the case of the Chaco, the presence of CL was not detected directly through FGDs. According to KIIs, indigenous children are more likely to drop out of school because of their lack of interest and absence of stimulating routines. Some interviewees stated that CL occurs when the entire family moves to a ranch, because the father is contracted for cattle-raising activities, in which both mothers and children participate. (No specific cases were mentioned; it is a trend they have observed in their community).

Stakeholders’ comments make it clear that at least some children and adolescents have stopped working as a result of the messages about the risks of CL delivered by POK. More knowledge and more awareness might have also influenced family dynamics and decision-making regarding the participation of children and adolescents in at-risk tasks or jobs within their domestic environment and/or their desire to go to school. From the testimony gathered, this is a plausible scenario, but everything indicates that the impact of the POK model on the reduction of CL has been mainly indirect, via the desire to adhere to education and pursue a better future.

The Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). Following standard procedure, projects funded by USDOL/ILAB are required to apply a CMEP, which is an instrument that compiles the different analyses and procedures to be applied during the implementation process: Analysis of Problems, ToC, and Protocol for Selection of Participants. The CMEP also contains the PMP. In this document, POK details, based on its objectives and outcomes, the indicators (quantitative and qualitative), the measurement approach (definitions), data sources, frequency of data collection, those responsible for reaching each indicator, and the analysis for each project component. The PMP serves to monitor and evaluate the project at its various levels and all project activities. It includes indicators specifically designed for the project (OTC and OTP), together with USDOL common indicators (E, L, POC, and POH). Although the ToR for the evaluation did not pose any specific question about the PMP, different stakeholders brought up various issues and comments about this instrument, some of which the evaluation team thinks are important to convey in this report.

The PMP is generally considered a very thorough system that has been instrumental in guiding project implementation and the reporting of results. It was particularly helpful during the second

part of the project, when there was a need to speed up the pace of implementation of some activities in order to achieve the targets. The implementing partners all recognized the importance of the system and describe its application as a learning process that will surely leave a positive impact in terms of monitoring skills. Notwithstanding this positive impact, the evaluation team noted signs of fatigue with respect to the length of the decision-making process needed to finalize the system, the time invested in generating the sources, and, in general, the intense effort required from the POK partners to match up to the PMP. It has also been argued that putting too much emphasis on measuring results ends up distorting the priorities and placing conditions on the adoption of sensible and well-justified managerial decisions. One cited example of the latter was the overlap between the EpCs and the 4-H Clubs because of the ages and interests of the participants. According to some informants, this overlap should have been resolved by allowing participants to transition from the EpCs to the 4-H Clubs, but the monitoring criteria prevented this helpful transition.

A software system was also contemplated for processing and reporting the results as measured against the different indicators. But after various attempts, this initiative was eventually ruled out. A spreadsheet was designed instead that serves for data processing, compilation of the indicators, and reporting of results. Every six months the filled-out spreadsheet is included as an annex (Annex A) to the TPRs; and it has become the quickest way to get a snapshot of what the project is achieving with regard to the different indicators. The spreadsheet is a very thorough instrument, and most of the data entered into the various tables involve several calculations based on the data collected during the work being reported. Stakeholders agree that it generally provides a reliable image of the project's progress and achievements, but some issues may be raised about its capacity to fully reflect the complexity and variety of situations that a project like POK has to cover in terms of its monitoring and reporting.

One of the most constraining situations may be the absence of a unique baseline value representing the value of the full caseload before the project began. Since the caseload has been gradually formed during the implementation process, the project has taken baseline values each time new participants are added to the caseload, basically every six months. It is understood that each baseline value reflects the existing caseload for the corresponding semester, including cases enrolled in previous semesters in addition to the newly enrolled cases. This means that those families or individuals enrolled at the beginning of the process are considered in several baseline measurements. The issue that can be raised here is that a family who has been involved in the project activities since the beginning of the project is not providing a genuine baseline value when answering the same question for the third or the fourth time. The only genuine baseline value is provided by the first measurement taken, because the third or fourth measurement represents a midline rather than a baseline value.

The absence of a unique baseline value is a constraint when making appropriate comparisons between the baseline and the final value. If the intake value is used for the comparison, the problem that emerges is that in most cases this value has been calculated over a small caseload. For example, the intake value for Indicators POH1, POH2, OTC5, and OTC—all of them measuring different variables regarding the beneficiary households—have been calculated over a caseload of 140 families, whereas the final value has been calculated over a caseload of 1,920

families.⁸ The statistical significance of the results is obviously very different for the two samples. If the baseline is calculated based on the values calculated over the following semesters, then some participants have been considered several times and it is not a genuine baseline value, as explained in the previous paragraph. A proposal to overcome this constraint is made in the recommendations section.

Inconsistencies have been also noted in the use of standard monitoring concepts such as baseline and target values, which are presented in different ways. The column labeled “Intake” alone is filled with different types of values—sometimes the baseline value taken from the first cohort, sometimes the real target, and sometimes the number representing the total caseload. The target row is also filled with different types of values, sometimes representing the real target, but other times the baseline value corresponding to the caseload to be attended to in that particular period. In addition, data disaggregated by gender are presented sometimes as the gender-disaggregation of the outcome—for example, the percentage of males and females for those children who have been promoted to the next grade—sometimes as gender-disaggregation of the wording of the indicator, for example, the percentage of male children in the full cohort that have been promoted to the next grade, and the same concerning female children.

Other inconsistency issues include cases of various indicators with very similar wording that in this particular project are reported with exactly the same values, reflecting exact duplication. But because the project is part of a bigger monitoring system, the enumerators have to make such reports anyway.

Despite the issue just discussed, the evaluation team established that the instruments used as part of the PMP have been generally able to provide a reliable picture of the project as implemented and have helped guide the implementing partners through the implementation process.

3.2.7 Project Response to the Interim Evaluation Recommendations

Exhibit 12. Project Responses to Interim Evaluation Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Project Responses and Evaluation Comments
1	Expand job training and employment activities to address the situation of adolescents aged 14-17 years who are engaged in HCL and focus its interventions more directly on HCL.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tutoring service has been the main instrument to engage adolescents aged 14-17 in HCL.
2	Promote that MTESS and CODENIs develop registration, law enforcement and awareness-raising actions not only in the sugarcane sector of Guairá, but also regarding the mining sector and children in domestic child labor, including <i>criadazgo</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POK has conducted awareness raising actions with mining companies in Paso Yobai. Domestic CL and <i>criadazgo</i> issues have been covered by the communication campaign.
3	Publish bi-annual results using a system of thresholds that may provide management and implementing partners with early information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TPR includes a spreadsheet (Annex A) showing progress towards the achievement of targets. Additionally, the POK monitoring

⁸ It should be noted that the evaluation is using data from the draft of Annex A corresponding to the TPR of October 2019, which had not been officially sent to the donor at the time of completing this report. The POK monitoring team facilitated this document upon request for the latest data from the evaluation team, which is aware of the draft character of the document.

#	Recommendation	Project Responses and Evaluation Comments
	on areas where they are not meeting their targets	team conducted regular meetings to review that progress with the partners.
4	Add to the educational status data collection in the project's monitoring system by providing disaggregated information on the type of activity/sector in which participant child laborers are engaged, as well as on the number of days/weeks that children missed school in the previous month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools have not been able to provide that information at the level of disaggregation required. Information of this nature is obtained via the tutoring service and in the labor status collected every 6 months.
5	Review the livelihood strategy in order to include additional costs/investments and thus compensate for any shortcoming from SNPP and guarantee that vocational training is provided in a timely and continuous fashion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy has been reviewed, and additional costs, such as the cost of materials for the organizations of courses, have been included.
6	During the months leading to the end of project life, POK should intensify its efforts toward optimizing coordination mechanisms among country and department/district levels of the MTESS, MEC, SNNA, and the CSJ.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts have been intensified although the response has been uneven. There is a need to continue strengthening coordination aspects.
7	POK should consider implementing the detailed list of recommendations provided under Section 3.5.14 of this report on how to promote greater sustainability of project achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAT and labor inspection systems have been enforced. MEC will not absorb EpCs and 4-H Clubs. As for the printing and handout of the EpC materials the project is considering providing only the educator's book. <i>Mesas productivas</i> have been set up Contacts with the corporate sector have been conducted with uneven results. Collaboration with the Camara Azucarera y Alcoholicera Paraguaya has not been successful. Representatives of the private sector, such as the Unión Industrial Paraguaya (UIP), participate regularly in the CONAETI and CONTRAFOR.

3.3 Sustainability

3.3.1 Paraguay Okakuaa Sustainability Planning and Exit Strategy

A sustainability strategy was one of the deliverables included in the cooperative agreement. Reviewing this strategy reveals that, in most cases, the ideas shaped in it point towards linking the outputs, outcomes, and processes promoted by POK with existing structures or policies. In some cases, there are realistic possibilities of establishing those links, although in others these links might only be established in best-case scenarios (see further comments and analysis below).

The project has established alliances and built on existing capabilities, an approach that the evaluation team assesses favorably from the sustainability point of view. It represents the possibility for many products and services to be absorbed by the existing local structures. The core services provided by POK to the communities—the educational and livelihood services delivered under Outcomes 1 and 2—constitute a very comprehensive package of interventions, providing an extensive list of services in a very localized area. Its immediate impact is high, but

mainstreaming these as a whole into the existing programs and budgets appears limited. There is a need to look for separate options for sustaining different components of the POK package.

Some processes or outcomes are expected to be integrated into the dynamics of the target groups and translated into new patterns of behavior. Knowledge, CL awareness, and changes in the socio-cultural paradigms, for example, are self-replicating processes, in that the knowledge about different topics (CL, pedagogic techniques, legal issues, etc.) and changing attitudes could continue with their own dynamic. The effects sparked by the project around the value of education for families and children's increased aspirations are obviously intangible effects; they are changes that then become ingrained in the cultural patterns of the people.

The evaluation team has established that the managers and technicians involved in project implementation are aware of the implications and demands of the project in terms of sustainability, and have generally adopted an adaptive and developmental approach, trying to find the best alternative, day by day, to each situation as it arises. The managerial style has been also constructive, open to dialogue, and partnership driven. In general, the project has tried to build on existing capabilities, which is a good approach in terms of sustainability. Another good practice in this regard has been the participatory approach applied in designing the different products and services. This generally acts as a factor that favors future ownership of the project deliverables.

The POK exit strategy for the remaining months of implementation is to redouble its efforts to coordinate with national institutions in integrating the products and services delivered by the project into their own routines and budgets. Technically, the strategy is adequate, and for specific products it will probably be successful, but in other cases, particularly with regard to the educational and livelihood services, it will probably run into the limits and restrictions of Paraguayan systems, both public and private.

The national budget allocation to children and youth's rights for ministries in charge of overseeing and implementing programs continues to be insufficient to bridge the gap between the actual needs and the resources available for this group—a constraint that becomes even more evident when comparing the situation of children and youth in urban areas to those in rural areas. This directly impacts the capacity of these institutions to continue activities after the life of the project, unless it is linked to other international cooperation funding and/or local organizations, to identify alternative ways to bring about change with the existing human resources. It is not clear at the territorial level how these institutions will improve their budgets, unless they continue to work in a collaborative manner to maximize the existing resources POK has already invested in these institutions. Future projects directed towards reducing CL should then establish a strong component regarding influencing policymaking in terms of investment in these key areas, to sustain efforts and strategies already in place.

Finally, there is always a risk of political instability, which could affect the continuation or at least the pace of implementation of some policies. Although CL is a domain around which consensus and the will to act are easily generated, it is not immune from the political atmosphere of the country. At present, the political atmosphere is supportive of the project's goals and, in general, CL and FL are issues that gather a great degree of consensus around the political spectrum, although there is no guarantee that this level of support and political commitment will continue in the future.

The specific prospects of sustainability for the project's products and services are discussed next.

3.3.2 Sustainable and Non-sustainable Outcomes

Some outputs/outcomes show good prospects of continuing to generate effects, although there will always be a need for the incumbent institutions to follow up and take further steps.

Manuals, guides, plans, follow-up mechanisms, and training modules developed for various institutions. This category includes products such as the guide on CL issues elaborated for the judiciary, the training modules for the labor inspection curriculum, the new guide for the evaluation of labor rights, the set of indicators for the CONAETI strategy, the four subjects developed for the curriculum of Jornada Extendida, and all those products delivered under Outcome 3 that are ready to be applied by the recipient institutions. These are generally products that are automatically incorporated into the routines and practices of these institutions, enlarging their pool of technical resources. It is important to note that the Chaco materials have been adapted to the particular indigenous target group and could be redesigned for other indigenous populations.

Capacity Building/Training. An important effort has been made in terms of capacity building with different groups of stakeholders—particularly with labor inspectors, the CODENI officers, judges, Abrazo facilitators, and other actors at the central and local level. Most actors that have been interviewed are satisfied with what has been achieved and show clear signs of ownership of the results. Trainees have generally participated in identifying the training needs and the training proposals. CODENIs, in particular, expressed great satisfaction with the progress made and generally believe that this training has enhanced its role and increased its capacities, although political swings may still affect its consolidation. The training effort, however, would need to be followed in some cases with additional measures to improve the working environment: more resources, attribution of competencies, coordination protocols, etc. These further stages of the process might have difficulty breaking through, however, given the current financial constraints.

Software Platforms. The platforms are powerful tools that are fully owned and backed by the corresponding ministries (MTESS and MINNA). They have been completely developed technically, although some issues remain to be followed up on during the first stages of implementation due to start shortly. There is a need to verify that all the different functions perform properly and that the potential users fully understand and own the systems. Management of organizational changes deriving from the implementation of the new systems will be critical in the upcoming months. In the case of ONNAP, it might be useful to set some priorities about the functions and data that the system could concentrate on during these first stages.

MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia (Boquerón). This office is part of the structure of the Ministry and will continue delivering its services in this location. The evaluation team understands, however, that POK has played an important role in delivering material and technical support to this office, and there is a need to anticipate the how the office will continue once the project ends. It seems important, therefore, to review the protocols and technical procedures that will remain in place for MTESS to take over some of the tasks that have been conducted so far by POK.

EpCs under the Abrazo Program. The agreement reached between POK and MINNA offers good prospects of continuity for the five EpCs (four in Guairá and one in Boquerón). The

evaluation team has learned that MINNA is currently in the process of linking with local governments and other potential sponsors to mobilize resources. In general, POK stakeholders are confident about the positive outcome of this process, and it has been generally assumed that the Abrazo program will take over all five EpCs from January 2020 on. In the meantime, it remains challenging to ensure that all the expertise and experience accumulated by POK's partners during the project are properly transferred to the Abrazo program.

The EpCs represent an innovative pedagogic methodology for non-formal education that can create protective environments against CL. A series of materials has been printed (in Spanish and in indigenous languages), and various groups of facilitators and teachers have been trained in this methodology. This is undoubtedly an asset in terms of expertise that will remain available for future use in the country, but its availability does not necessarily mean that the potential of this innovative methodology has been maximized and its use reached the optimal point. The continuation of the five EpCs under the Abrazo program is encouraging, but it still remains a challenge to find ways to expand the use of this methodology. The ideal scenario would have been for the MEC to mainstream the QL methodology into its programs and policies, but this option obviously has many financial, technical, and organizational implications not easy to overcome for a project like POK. MINNA has a positive will to succeed, but under the current budget restrictions, everything indicates that the capacity of the ministry to lead the scale-up of this process is very limited—making it important to look for other alternatives within the public and the private sector.

Other products and services delivered by POK where the generation of durable effects faces challenges of a different nature and scope are discussed below.

Networks/partnerships and local structures. The project has actively collaborated with various networks, including CONAETI and other councils and committees at the district and department level. Additionally, POK has capitalized and connected its resources to existing national programs directed towards low-income communities such as Tekoporá, to maximize efforts at the community level. Moreover, POK has influenced the creation of new structures, such as the *mesas productivas* distritales, that will help the livelihood component in terms of articulating productive projects for adolescents and adults in a protected environment at the community level.

The evaluation team's assessment of all these efforts is positive from several points of view, including sustainability, but the findings of the evaluation show that the consolidation of these structures, particularly at the community level, has been uneven. In several cases, members of these groups shared with the evaluation team their fear that once the POK facilitators finish their contract, they will not be able to continue networking and keep the organizational dynamics at the same level. These groups do not see themselves as having enough financial and operational autonomy to do so alone. However, some other local groups have shown a higher degree of confidence about the future and are willing to continue the process supported by POK. These groups foresee, for example, options to link with the SNPP via the *mesas productivas*, and to continue having access to training. It is the general belief that the two main factors conditioning the continuation of these groups are leadership and distance from the district offices.

The 4-H Clubs and the entrepreneurship component. Some of the analyses related to this component have been presented previously. The *mesas productivas* will be able in some cases to continue supplying the groups with training opportunities, but on a limited scale. The Tenondera

program that was supposed to develop new opportunities for the families that completed the Tekoporá program is currently experiencing a financial impasse. The 4-H clubs as a package are not expected to continue under new sponsorship, although implementation of this methodology through the schools might have given the regular teaching staff some ideas and inspiration.

Stakeholders believe that the groups involved in the entrepreneurship component will need to reinforce efforts to articulate with national and local institutions if these groups are to continue operating. The local municipality is a key actor that has already been involved with the process and could provide funding for these groups; however, their resources are limited. Other institutions focused on entrepreneurs as a target group could be included through this articulation effort. The participation, for example, of the State Government (Gobernación) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería) is crucial at the local level to improve the sustainability of financial and human resources in this sector is crucial, but they currently operate under important financial constraints.

Employers and the private sector. Partnerships with the private sector have been sought with uneven results. Lines of collaboration have been opened with Petropar, the Fairtrade Movement, and the Neuland Association in the Chaco, in this last case regarding implementation of the EpC. It is expected that the Fairtrade Movement will continue to grow in Guairá, which is a positive factor from the point of view of combating CL. The Mennonite cooperatives and associations in the Chaco also seem open to continue supporting the process and have already been approached by MINNA to explore possible ways of formalizing this collaboration. The project has held various events to raise awareness among employers and the private sector—one-off events that were generally well received and helped spread the message more widely across the private sector.

Tutoring services. The tutoring services provided by the project under Outcome 1, with the purpose of reaching out to the most vulnerable participants (mainly dropouts or adolescents with special needs), were considered by all stakeholders as very successful. The tutors are not able to reach youth on a large scale (about 20 youths for each tutor and six tutors in total), but the personalized assistance they provide triggered very positive results. The drawback is that it is very difficult to integrate such a personalized service into any of the existing social or educational structures. It is a low-scale/high-impact service that is not easy to accommodate within existing budgets. The service as such is likely to be discontinued, but some of the lessons learned from this experience may continue as good practices for the schools involved and for the social services that have learned about its impact.

4. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Good Practices

Building on existing capacities and linking with existing programs and networks in the country. Constructing the program processes from existing resources (human, technical, and material) avoids both overlapping and/or isolating program interventions from other actions. Even when these networks and programs have significant weaknesses, seeking to strengthen them represents an investment in the future and an assurance that the project is acting in accordance with the local pace and priorities. POK has demonstrated this approach by using the Tekoporá committees to establish its presence in the communities and by linking with SNPP and SINAFOCAL to conduct the training program

Applying the participatory approach to identify the need for and the design of materials. This approach has been a relevant strategy to create ownership of outputs and to incorporate different perspectives into documents—making them more likely to be used and applied by state institutions.

Using local languages in various program materials and in the dissemination of messages at the central and local level as part of the communication campaign. This action has enhanced the inclusiveness of the project and increased the chances of reaching out to rural and indigenous communities.

Making explicit and deliberate efforts to help synchronize and harmonize project activities with the pace and dynamics of the local communities. This has been particularly evident with regard to the dates, timetables, and frequency of project activities. Project demands on community structures and individuals must be realistic; otherwise they may generate community fatigue and confusion.

Setting up the tutoring services to reach out to the most vulnerable cases of children and adolescents, and to engage them in project activities and, by extension, in the education system. Due to its personalized character, this type of service is very demanding in terms of human resources, making it difficult to integrate into the educational or social structures, but it proved very effective in preventing children from leaving school and reincorporating dropouts into the education pathway.

4.2 Lessons Learned

Schools are a key ally in reaching out to the community and identifying beneficiary groups. Education facilities, due to their stable presence in communities, can be the entry point to complete the selection process and help introduce project activities. In communities where the occurrence of CL has been verified, the school could be the channel to enroll most of the children and adolescents as future participants in the project. Since a project like POK needs to ensure that the most vulnerable children are included, and some of them are out of school precisely because of their involvement in CL or HCL, identification of these cases could be conducted through an outreach service (tutoring that searches across the community to identify families and institutions to include in the caseload). Although not all the participants will meet the eligibility criteria (some of them will not be necessarily at risk of CL), this mechanism can speed up the

selection process (enabling the timely start of the activities) and still ensure that those in need are not left out.

Involving schools also enhances the prospects of instilling messages against CL in a permanent structure. Working through the schools also enables the possibility of strengthening a protective environment that will stay in place once a project is finished. A project like POK might enhance the role of the school as a mechanism to prevent CL in the communities. Conducting the educational component through the schools has shown that, although it does not directly offer economic alternatives to families, it has a protective effect on working children and adolescents.

The economic empowerment of vulnerable communities in rural areas requires a more comprehensive approach and a longer cycle of intervention than it does in an urban setting. The provision of agricultural inputs and basic training is insufficient to have a real impact on individual livelihoods. Generating economic opportunities requires a more thorough consideration of the ToC for this particular component. The high degree of vulnerability, together with adverse contextual conditions, compels project designers to search for more comprehensive proposals.

A rigorous monitoring system is not only important for the purpose of reporting results, it also helps inform the decision-making process and instill discipline into project implementation. The time and energy required to design and implement the monitoring system is obviously an aspect that needs to be optimized to avoid dysfunctional situations and the mishandling of resources; however, the availability of real-time data on progress toward the realization of project targets is an important input for management purposes and decision-making.

Sensitization of communities where CL is culturally accepted must be conducted by emphasizing what is acceptable under the law, rather than on what is prohibited. Community workers have insisted that it is important to approach the sensitization tasks from a positive perspective, aiming to generate ideas on options that are compatible with the law. In other words, there should be less emphasis on prohibition and more on proposition—that is, an approach that highlights what youth in rural areas *can* do as opposed to what they are *prohibited from* doing.

Women and youth as key target groups in rural areas generate durable changes in cultural patterns. Actions targeting groups of young people and women constitute a key element for any strategy that seeks to address the problem of CL in the agricultural family sector. Both groups (youth and women) are more open than other family members to change in an environment that is generally more conservative and reluctant to consider reform.

Transition and testing periods are important for the services delivered by the project. Transition and testing periods should be considered as part of the project's life cycle and, when possible, anticipated in the project design. This lesson applies to cases such as the transfer of the Abrazo program and the testing of the software platforms. With regard to the transfer of the Abrazo program, it seems important to ensure that there is a period for interaction between management teams and that a mechanism is in place to transfer the expertise and knowledge acquired by the project in an organized and smooth manner. Regarding the introduction of new software platforms, the project should take into consideration that the effective implementation of

systems usually requires a period to manage unexpected changes associated with incorporating the new technology. It is not unusual to require the allocation of extra resources for this purpose.

The availability of an effective learning program for youth in rural areas facilitates the school-to-work transition. The absence of training alternatives and technical courses in rural areas usually leads to an early and unsafe incorporation of youth into work on family farms. Adequate technical training in agriculture for youth could help to bring about innovation in family-run farms and slow the emigration from rural areas.

A gender perspective from the design phase onwards ensures that the implementation team has the necessary tools and guidelines to apply a gender-sensitive approach in a systematic way. This will also allow the project team to anticipate situations where a gender perspective can be applied and overcomes the typical reactive approach that addresses such needs only when a specific situation emerges.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the evaluation team's conclusions about the project's overall implementation and its progress on each evaluation criterion. This section also includes recommendations based on the evaluation team's findings presented earlier in Section 3.

5.1 Conclusion

The evaluation team's overall assessment of POK is positive concerning most of the aspects specified for analysis in the ToR. The evaluation team found a general consensus among stakeholders that POK was, overall, a successful and positive experience. No major issues emerged regarding the project's strategic decisions around the design or its implementation. An extensive account of the products and services delivered by the project shows all of them to be of notable quality, and preliminary signs of their positive outcomes are already visible. Some issues have arisen, however, concerning specific components and methodological approaches, and possible improvements to the sustainability of project outcomes.

5.1.1 Relevance

POK is an innovative initiative to tackle the complex issue of CL in the sugarcane sector and its supply chain using an area-based approach. POK has enabled the establishment of a broad partnership that integrates a wide variety of expertise from different organizations, national and international. It builds on previous experiences and gives continuity to the efforts against CL in Paraguay based on the existing institutional framework. All the stakeholders consulted considered the project's ToC to be valid and consistent.

POK has demonstrated clear links with existing policies in the country and has proved to be a valid model for the effective implementation of policies against CL at the district level. In this sense, it contributes to the decentralization process in a country that is highly centralized and needs to carry forward a devolution agenda to strengthen local governments. POK has done this without neglecting the central government, where the project also helped to build capacity and consolidate processes and programs.

The project is aligned with the classical dimensions of the fight against CL and is dealing with its determinants in a comprehensive and realistic manner. The ToC is consistent and the implemented activities reasonably contributed to the realization of the expected outcomes. The evaluation team understands, however, that the livelihood component under Outcome 2 deserves further reflection on how to enhance the impact of the activities and break through the poor socioeconomic environment prevalent in the area. Outcome 2, in any case, is important in the intervention logic by increasing the social capital of the participating households and communities.

Some issues were reported concerning the time consumed in selecting the participants, and the difficulties encountered in applying the eligibility criteria. Technically, the selection process is refined, but in practice it has been slow and complex to apply. Eventually the project found a way to expedite the process by approaching schools where children and adolescents who met the eligibility criteria had already been identified, and the selection process was completed there.

Another point to note is the absence of an explicit gender strategy. Although the project has been assessed as gender sensitive, and gender issues were considered and dealt with when they

occurred, a specific gender strategy would help in approaching gender issues in a more systematic manner.

5.1.2 Effectiveness

POK was implemented by a highly experienced consortium of organizations. This arrangement represented an opportunity to build an innovative venture by synergizing the extensive wealth of experience brought by the partners, but the integration of models, concepts, and structures presented a challenge during the early stages of the operation. External factors, such as the change in the central government in 2018 also was a constraint the project had to face once implementation was underway. Despite this, POK managed to accelerate the implementation pace and deliver an extensive list of products and services of substantial quality, reaching and sometimes exceeding most of the target values in the project's matrix.

- **Outcome 1: Access to and opportunities for education.** The evaluation found that the methodologies applied (EpCs and 4-H Clubs) performed very well, and there was general consensus among the stakeholders that they were valid proposals to bolster the school environment and prevent CL. The tutoring service enabled the project to have a closer interaction with the families, and tutors played a key role in dealing with the socioeconomic issues that normally act as barriers to accessing education. Beyond the immediate and direct impact in withdrawing children from CL, most of the stakeholders understood that the educational services provided by POK helped to revitalize the role of the schools in the communities and, by virtue of this, boosted the value of education for the families. Through this path, CL can be reduced in the medium and long term.
- **Outcome 2: Livelihoods.** POK has delivered an extensive list of products and services, acting in a very participatory manner, linking with the existing local committees (Tekoporá) and involving the two major providers of professional training in the country, SNPP and SINAFOCAL. The project has reached most of its targets for the number of adults trained and the provision of other services and has raised the level of competencies and skills of the participants. Although it was reported that 100 percent of the operating entrepreneurship have been strengthened, the evaluation team departs slightly from this positive view based on the qualitative data collected. The livelihood component, beyond its economic impact, has had a greater impact on changing socio-cultural paradigms and fostering an entrepreneurial dynamic among the groups of participants than in changing the prevailing organizational dynamics among community groups, which—although supported—are still fragile in the more remote areas.
- **Outcome 3: Institutional support and labor law compliance.** Various institutions at the national and local level have developed their capacities and increased their abilities to enforce labor law compliance due to POK, including MTESS, the judiciary, MINNA, MEC, CODENIs, and CONAETI. Activities involving the private sector have had similar effects. The evaluation team's assessment is that the project has delivered its products and services to the above-mentioned institutions effectively, in terms of both quality and timely delivery. According to the stakeholders interviewed, the selection of products and services made by the project (plans, guides, manuals, modules for the expansion of curricula, etc.) was relevant for all the institutions involved, and the prospects for their future integration into institutional routines are promising. Representatives from these institutions have expressed very favorable views about the support they received from POK, and they cited specific examples of how this support has helped them improve their institutional

performance. The strengthening process for most institutions has not yet been completed, and continued investments and reforms are still needed.

- **Outcome 4: Labor law compliance with a focus on preventing and combating forced labor.** In Boquerón, POK successfully set in motion a process to protect labor rights, which, at baseline, were generally weak and little developed. This process has taken a few steps forward with the help of POK. The stable presence of the MTESS office, although limited in human and materials resources, represents an institutional resource for local stakeholders. Likewise, the strengthening of the CODENIs, the improvement of the coordination mechanisms between the local institutions, the awareness effort that was carried out, and the intention of MINNA to continue lending to the EpCs are all examples of progress.
- **Project Objective: Reduce child labor in the Department of Guairá.** The evaluation team's effectiveness analysis gave the project high marks. Due to some technical issues related to the baseline values in the PMP, it is not possible at this stage to give a numeric value to the scope of the reduction of CL within the group of direct participants. The endline study, still to be conducted, will shed more light on the size of CL reduction in the five districts of Guairá targeted by the project. However, there are clear signs that the project has had a positive effect on the different measures of CL, at both the household and child level. In the absence of an impact analysis, these results cannot be fully attributed to POK, but from the testimony gathered, it appears that the POK model has made an important contribution to the reduction of CL in the target areas through the desire of families and youths to adhere to education and pursue a better future. This may be the primary mechanism operating to prevent and eliminate cases of CL.

5.1.3 Sustainability

Management of the prospects for project sustainability has been flexible and adaptive. The project has been diligent in establishing alliances and building on existing capabilities, an approach that has paved the way for many products and services to be absorbed into existing local structures. POK's exit strategy for the remaining months of implementation is to strengthen its efforts to coordinate with the national institutions to integrate the products and services delivered by the project into their own routines and budgets.

This is likely to be the case for the manuals, guides, plans, follow-up mechanisms, and training modules developed and, in general, for all the products delivered under Outcome 3. The software platforms also have relatively good prospects for sustainability, although there is a need to verify that all the different functions perform properly and that potential users fully understand and own the systems. The MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia (Boquerón), now part of the structure of MTESS, will continue delivering its services in this location, but it will be important to review the protocols and technical procedures that will remain in place. According to the agreement signed between POK and MINNA, the five EpCs will be absorbed by the Abrazo program. This represents an encouraging sign of continuity, but the challenge of finding ways to expand the use of this methodology remains. Some outcomes related to the generation of knowledge, awareness, and changes of the socio-cultural paradigms are expected to be integrated into the dynamics of the target groups and translated into new patterns of behavior.

Other products and services delivered by POK face sustainability challenges of a different nature and scope. The networks and partnerships created at the local level show signs of fragility and

will likely struggle to maintain the organizational dynamics. The 4-H Clubs and the entrepreneurship component, in general, will need to reinforce their efforts to articulate with national and local institutions if these groups are to continue operating. The tutoring service is also likely to be discontinued, although some of lessons learned from this experience may continue as good practices for the schools involved, as well as for the social services that have learned about its impact.

5.1.4 Good Practices and Lessons Learned

The main good practices identified by the evaluation are the following:

1. Building on existing capacities and linking with existing in-country programs and networks.
2. Applying the participatory approach to identify the needs and design of materials.
3. Using local languages in the materials produced and in the dissemination of messages at the central and local level as part of the communication campaign.
4. Conducting an explicit and deliberate effort to synchronize and harmonize project activities with the pace and dynamics of local communities.
5. Setting up tutoring services to reach out to the most vulnerable cases of children and adolescents and engaging them in project activities and, by extension, in the education system more generally.

The following points summarize the lessons learned identified by the evaluation:

1. Schools are key allies in reaching out to the community and identifying participant groups.
2. The involvement of schools enhances the prospects of instilling the message against CL in a permanent structure.
3. The model for effective economic empowerment of vulnerable communities in rural areas may require a more comprehensive approach and a longer cycle of intervention than was possible under POK.
4. A rigorous monitoring system is not only important for the purpose of reporting results, but also helps inform decision-making and instill discipline in project implementation.
5. Sensitization of the communities where CL is culturally accepted must be conducted with an emphasis on what is acceptable under the law, rather than what is prohibited.
6. Women and youth are key target groups in rural areas for generating durable change in cultural patterns.
7. Transition and testing periods for products and services delivered by the project should be considered part of the project life cycle and, when possible, anticipated in the project design.
8. Lack of an effective learning program for youth in rural areas makes the school-to-work transition more difficult.
9. A gender perspective from the design phase onwards ensures that the implementation team has the necessary tools and guidelines to apply gender sensitivity systematically.

5.2 Recommendations

The evaluation team makes the following recommendations based on the findings of the final performance evaluation:

To POK and MTESS

1. **Follow up on the software platforms.** POK should consider devoting extra time and resources during the remaining six months to ensure that the three software platforms

delivered are fully operational. The technical work has been completed, but full implementation of the three systems will involve some organizational changes that may still require specialized management. The challenges are different in each case, but not developing their full capacity runs the risk that potential users will not feel the benefits of using them. This risk hangs over the two systems already transferred to MTESS.

2. **Prepare for the continuation of the MTESS Regional Office in Filadelfia after POK.** It seems important to review the protocols and the technical and administrative procedures that will remain in place for MTESS to take over some of the tasks that have been conducted by POK so far. POK has played an important role in the establishment of this office, and there is a need for POK and MTESS to jointly design a detailed plan that anticipates the goals, resources, and responsibilities for continuing the process during the coming years.

To POK and MINNA

3. **Set up a joint team to study the transfer of EpCs to the Abrazo program and design a roadmap for their smooth transition.** Although MINNA is still in the process of mobilizing the resources for the takeover, it seems advisable to anticipate a process through which the experience and expertise acquired by the POK teams, both Fundación ALDA and POA, can be handed over to the new management. To ensure a successful transition, a period of co-management and the incorporation of some of the facilitators should be considered.
4. **Consider the establishment of priorities concerning the operationalization of ONNAP.** The expectations of different stakeholders about the potential of this system are overly ambitious, and expecting the system to perform so many functions may eventually overload it. An excessive number of indicators to analyze might delay the process for its implementation. There is a need to refine and choose a few SMART indicators—focusing on the most urgent matters, with an established deadline for finalizing the pilot phase. It has been noted that MINNA has very limited resources to invest in this instrument, and there is a need to optimize what is available.

To POK

5. **Strengthen the link between the mesas productivas (productive committees) at the community level and those at the municipal level.** The committees with weak leadership and those located at a relatively far from the municipal office where the mesas productivas operate are likely to disengage from the process if they do not receive some extra support. The mesas productivas at the district level should consider conducting some outreach work to reincorporate those committees and keep them in the loop; otherwise they might disconnect.
6. **Study alternatives to boost the interest of the private sector in continuing some of the initiatives started by POK.** It seems important that the project explore, in the remaining implementation period, different options to leave some sort of legacy among the employer associations and representatives. CONAETI and CONTRAFOR might be the spaces where the project could try to provide some ideas for which tasks, projects, or initiatives emerging from the POK experience should be continued by the private sector.
7. **Develop a follow-up methodology for governmental institutions.** POK could encourage governmental institutions that have been provided with new instruments (manuals, plans, guides, software, etc.) or whose staff has been trained by POK, to

establish some sort of follow-up mechanism in order to observe any changes in organizational performance. This could start with the collection of some basic performance statistics. From there, it should be possible to identify any remaining obstacles, draw lessons from practice, and apply corrective measures. The evaluation team deems it important to complement the incorporation of new inputs with some basic follow-up mechanisms to analyze their impact.

8. **Study options for EpCs and 4-H Clubs to remain available as relevant methodologies for non-formal education of other country stakeholders.** Both the EpCs and the 4-H Clubs have been described as very innovative, dynamic, and transformative methodologies, whose potential should be maximized at the country level. The Quantum Learning methodology applied by the EpCs is considered, for example, very adequate to work with indigenous communities. The continuation of the five EpCs by the Abrazo program represents a commendable effort but is still a modest initiative to reach what could be considered the optimal point. In this sense, it seems important to explore other options in the public, private, and social sectors so as to retain the methods in use, or at least available for use. Steps that could be taken include uploading bibliographical references, documents, and video material onto the webpages of the two organizations that have applied these methodologies under POK (CIRD and Fundación ALDA). Case studies and other materials could also be presented at a formal event or disseminated through ONNAP, and an additional effort could be made to offer the two initiatives as a ready-to-use set of resources in the field of non-formal education.
9. **Consider technical alternatives to obtain unique baseline values for PMP indicators and enable comparisons between baseline and final values.** An option would be to recalculate the baseline values every semester by aggregating the values obtained from new enrollments only. The calculation of the baseline values for each indicator, therefore, would be a cumulative process. Several measurements could be taken at different times, but only for the new enrollments; each individual or family would be considered only once. Every semester the project would add new members to the caseload, but the baseline value would not be a new measurement of the whole group; the project would recalculate the baseline value by adding the new cases to the numerator and the denominator. The baseline value would not be the value resulting from the first “N” families enrolled either; it would be the result of adding the different values taken every semester from the new enrollments up to the highest point of the caseload. If the caseload decreases after semester “4”, for example, the baseline value remains the same, because semester “4” represents the peak when the project was able to aggregate the baseline values from all the participants that have progressively enrolled. This baseline value would then be compared with the final value.

To MTESS

10. **Labor inspection will need further investments and reforms to fulfill its mandate.** In some cases, such as the appointment of new inspectors (according to some estimates provided by the ministry officers, the number of inspectors should be triple the existing number of 26), the Government should allocate new budget lines, which is obviously an important constraint in the current economic climate. In other cases, such as the assignment of competencies/capacity to open investigations and coordinate with other institutional bodies in this process, improvements might be obtained via regulatory reform.

11. **Consider an apprenticeship model for rural areas.** Because MTESS is working on a proposal to update the apprenticeship contract, it might consider the idea of specifically developing proposals for an apprenticeship model in rural zones that considers the complexities and characteristics of the family sector. These proposals should be directed to the relevant bodies for discussion and eventual approval of the model.

To ILAB

12. **Consider modifications to the process of selecting direct participants.** POK's experience has shown that the strict application of the eligibility criteria through the selection process protocol may not be a timely way to deliver the expected results for the numbers and time required to achieve the project targets. It would be worth considering different variations around the solution applied by POK in this case, which consisted of approaching the schools where the presence of CL and HCL cases had already been identified and completing selection of the participants there. For this purpose, the rest of the students in the corresponding age groups could be invited to join project activities. Simultaneously, an outreach service could be established to identify the vulnerable children and youth that are not in school.
13. **Review the content and format of the livelihood component.** The ToC of the economic pillar may need review and redefinition regarding what must be done (outcomes), how it must be done (process), and how long the process should last. It might be advisable to conduct a comparative analysis of the knowledge generated through similar experiences to identify what type of actions and arrangements work better to enhance future projects' livelihood components. While the evaluation team is not in a position to define which specific model the ILAB/USDOL project should use, the model could put more emphasis on organizing families/farmers around agricultural production and promoting greater involvement of youth as potential drivers of innovation in family farms; improving connections with agricultural extension workers; and allowing a longer intervention period. Agriculture usually represents the main economic pillar of the family sector in rural areas, and its importance cannot be underestimated when searching for a model to enhance the livelihoods of rural communities. Positive change in farmer/family economies does not take place suddenly, and should therefore be given no less than three to four years to bring about effective impact.

To all POK stakeholders

14. **Reinforce major aspects of the forced labor component in the upcoming stages of the development process:** (1) more specific knowledge about the size and characterization of the problem with a gender perspective; (2) improvement of investigation procedures; (3) an expanded alliance against FL, with an enhanced role for indigenous organizations and trade unions in the process; and (4) possibly more attention to domestic work and criadazgo.