Independent Final Evaluation of the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) Project: Botswana Country Report

American Institutes for Research
Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0046

2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Improvement in relevance, the quality, and access to education lies at the core of the Vision for the future…"

—Vision 2016

"An understanding heart is everything in a teacher, and cannot be esteemed highly enough. One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feeling. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child."

—Carl Gustav Jung

"Children feel they are not being treated with love, so they go home where there is love. Therefore other people are the reason San children leave school."

—Man, Ngarange, Botswana,
as quoted in **Voices of the San, Le Roux and White**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
APEC	Action Plan on the Prevention of Exploitive Child Labour
BCC	Botswana Council of Churches
BNYC	Botswana National Youth Council
BOCCIM	Botswana Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Manpower
BTEP	Botswana Technical Education Programme
CKGR	Central Kgalagadi
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DPE	Department of Primary Education
FSP	Family Strengthening Programme
GBDT	Gantsi Brigade Development Trust
GTFOSY	Gantsi Task Force on Out-of-School Youth
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLG	Ministry of Local Government
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOL	Ministry of Labor
MOLHA	Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PACC	Program Advisory Committee on Child Labour
PT	Permaculture Trust
PTA	Parents/Teachers Association
RAD	Remote Area Dwellers
RADP	RAD Parents
RADO	Remote Areas Development Office
RECLISA	Reducing Exploitive Child Labour in Southern Africa
S&CD	Social and Community Development
SOS	Save Our Souls
TECL	Towards the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour

TPR   Technical Progress Report

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

USDOL   United States Department of Labor

WFCL   Worst Forms of Child Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) signed a cooperative agreement with the American Institutes for Research for US$9 million to implement the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) Program. The program, which would be implemented in South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, and Namibia, would combat child labor by—

- Increasing public awareness of the importance of children's education, children's rights, and the worst forms of child labor.

- Improving educational opportunities for working children and children at risk.

- Improving social services for working children, children at risk, and their families or caregivers.

- Strengthening integration of government policies, laws, and regulations to promote the entry of working children into the formal education system and prevent children at risk from dropping out.

RECLISA's sister program—Towards the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (TECL)—is a project of the International Labour Organization (ILO), jointly with the governments and social partners in each of the countries it works in. It forms part of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, also known as IPEC. TECL focuses on assisting the governments of the participating countries to meet their obligations as states that have ratified the ILO Conventions on the Minimum Age for Employment (Convention 139) and the Prohibition and Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (Convention 182). In all the countries that it supports, TECL works under the direction of a national committee headed by the national government department or ministry responsible for addressing child labor. These committees include representatives from a range of government departments, business, labor, and other civil society formations. In Botswana, TECL developed a national Action Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (APEC) as the basis for mobilizing concerted action against worst forms of child labor.

This final evaluation report describes RECLISA's activities in Botswana and assesses project design, implementation, impact, and sustainability. It also briefly considers the appropriateness and advantages of the regional model, as well as the extent to which advantages were realized in the case of Botswana. The evaluation reviews the degree to which USDOL goals, project objectives, and country-specific outputs have been achieved. It also sets out to help the implementing partners in Botswana consolidate learning by identifying good performance, suggesting improvements, and highlighting those program aspects with potential for enhancing future interventions and optimizing impact. The evaluation documents RECLISA's contribution toward eliminating child labor and improving the future prospects of children in Botswana. The evaluative feedback should contribute to USDOL's efforts to continuously improve the efficacy of program conceptualization and design.

Botswana is considered a model African state, with a middle-income economy and a strong growth rate. It has instituted both policy and an institutional framework favorable to defending children's rights and combating child labor. Although at RECLISA's launch, the government did not have statistics on child labor and was uncertain of the extent of the problem or the necessity for attending to it, Botswana's prosperity has allowed it to spend on a social welfare system that services vulnerable citizens, including children. This social welfare system is indispensable, in light of Botswana's high income inequality, high unemployment rates, and the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS.

The implementation of RECLISA in Botswana was initially hampered by changes in the management of its lead country partner, the Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC), and the necessity to change one of its country implementing partners, the Botswana Council of Churches (BCC), when the relationship became untenable. RECLISA interventions are now implemented by Save Our Souls (SOS) Children's Villages in Gaborone, and in the Gantsi District, the Gantsi Task Force on Out-of-School Youth (GTFOSY), the Gantsi Brigade Development Trust (GBDT), and the Permaculture Trust. BNYC fulfills a coordinating and intermediary role as the lead country partner.

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Summary of Findings

RECLISA/Botswana was intended to prevent at-risk children from entering into child labor by enrolling them into and facilitating their attendance in formal education. Material barriers to attendance would be addressed by either facilitating access to existing government services or supplementing those services when necessary. The program would also increase public and government awareness of children's rights and the prevalence of child labor. Children in the program would be provided with psychosocial support to nurture the set of life skills necessary to attain improved outcomes for their lives. There would also be a vocational training component to equip the older children with skills to become employable or economically self-sufficient. The vulnerable groups specifically identified as beneficiaries were street children and children in rural areas where child labor was thought to be most prevalent.

The program's logic and primary strategy of enrolling children in formal education to prevent them from engaging in child labor is, on the surface, sound and appropriate to the Gaborone context. However, the same design is fundamentally flawed when applied in Gantsi. The fact is that schools in the Gantsi District are profoundly alienating for San children and, in the case of hostel schools, very unsafe. San children enter primary school at an average age of six years and most of them have very poor command of Setswana or English, the mediums of instruction. There are only two San teachers in the entire district, so there is no possibility of communicating in Naro. Independent studies referenced in this report also confirm assertions made by some interviewees that San children are vulnerable to prejudicial and discriminatory treatment by teachers.

To provide education to children of families living in remote areas, the Botswana Government has introduced a system of hostel schools, where children are boarded for the school term. The security at hostel schools is negligible, the ablutions unsanitary, and the ratio of caregivers to children alarming (e.g., 1 matron for 200 children at the hostel school visited).

Although enrolling children in school would be an element of a more appropriate program design, the core interventions would have to focus on the root causes of poor attendance rates in the district.

The problems experienced with program partners in Gaborone could not have been predicted. BCC was a credible and eminently suitable choice. Once the relationship proved untenable, the flexibility to change partners and the decisiveness with which the change was executed was ultimately good for RECLISA, as the results achieved by SOS will attest. Unfortunately, the direct focus on street children as beneficiaries was sacrificed.

The RECLISA program aligned well with government programs providing services to vulnerable children at risk of engaging in child labor. RECLISA supplemented these programs by fast tracking the materials provision that the government programs were meant to deliver. The government programs in question do not operate optimally, and so supplementation was and still is necessary. By supporting government interventions in this way, RECLISA was later in a position to enhance government service delivery by, for example, sharing its database of children with officials in the Gantsi District office.

The vocational interventions in Gantsi were innovative, providing access for children and demonstrably improving their future prospects. Under the Botswana Technical Education Programme (BTEP), such children would not qualify for training. The vocational training aspect of RECLISA, and the Gantsi efforts in particular, arguably deliver the most sustainable direct action outcomes of the RECLISA's Botswana program.

Although efforts to raise awareness of child labor were curtailed at the request of the Ministry of Labour (MOL), the goodwill RECLISA cultivated with the government as a result of complying with MOL's request has resulted in significant progress for the cause at policy level. It allowed BNYC to unobtrusively but systematically lobby its colleagues on the Program Advisory Committee on Child Labour (PACC) and, in conjunction with the work of TECL, inculcate a sensitivity to child labor issues that is being translated into consequential outputs in and across ministries and agencies.

The financial resources were too limited for program partners to implement optimally and maximize the gains against intended outcomes. It is reasonable to expect a regional program to be more cost-effective than individual country programs, but the extent to which cost-effectiveness was possible in this instance appears to have been misapprehended.

Recommendations

The insufficiency of the program design for the Gantsi District was conceivably avoidable, had a thorough research and needs assessment component been included in the contracted activities of USDOL's service providers. The Gantsi lesson—that an uninformed duplication of a program design between contexts can result in a program delivering completely unsustainable outcomes—should be enough of a justification for this recommendation to be seriously considered.

A revised program design for the Gantsi District should consider incorporating the following:

1. **Empowering Remote Area Dweller Parents (RADP) and facilitating their participation in school Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs).** Currently, RADP represents Remote Area Dweller (RAD) parents on the PTAs of hostel schools, simply because of the logistical challenges represented by the distances between settlements and schools. However, this arrangement deepens parents' sense of disempowerment, worsens their perceptions of education service delivery, and does not adequately serve the interests of RAD children.

2. **Sponsor San literacy workshops for San children and non-San-speaking teachers.** The Naro Literacy Project already offers these workshops and has developed workshop material that would also assist in teaching English to San children. These workshops can better prepare San children for school by promoting a positive school-equivalent experience, conveying the principles of written language, and giving them rudimentary skills in at least one of the languages of instruction (English). These workshops also pointedly contradict the common prejudice that San children are incapable of interactive classroom behavior. A campaign to convince non-San-speaking teachers to take language lessons seems indispensable as, currently, school entrants and the vast majority of teachers have no common language to communicate in—conceivably the ultimate constraining factor in realizing any educational benefits.

3. **Improving and extending vocational training courses.** The vocational training in Gantsi is an innovation supplementing the BTEP, with potentially national application. It is also, when considering the return on program cost in terms of sustainable outcomes, the intervention with arguably the highest impact.

4. **Piloting the introduction of assistant teachers for entry grades.** Currently, school entrants and the vast majority of teachers have no common language to communicate in. The difficulty of Naro may require years before adequate mastery, yet there is no formal facility for teachers to learn the local language; there is also very little incentive, as many teachers harbor ambitions to be posted elsewhere. Introducing teacher assistants into the classroom that could help bridge the communication gap between teachers and students during grades 1 and 2 is a potential solution that has been informally proposed and discussed at the Ministry of Education (MOE). The discussions in MOE are admittedly attended by some controversy, as there is a school of thought within the Ministry which holds that in order to service policy goals such as national unity and economic

competitiveness it is imperative to uncompromisingly reinforce the use of English and Setswana in institutional contexts.

5. **Sponsoring the inclusion of assistant caregivers at hostel schools that can speak the mother tongue of RAD children.** Hostel schools are the most alarming aspect of a dysfunctional system of education delivery to Remote Area Dwellers. A substantial part of the problem is the lack of human resources for proper care provision, and (once again) that appointed caregivers often cannot communicate with the younger, most vulnerable children. An intervention in this regard would make an invaluable contribution to resolving the challenges associated with hostel schools.

There are important lessons worth noting in terms of managing relations with the government tactfully and finding effective alternatives to assertive advocacy in awareness raising. BNYC managed to accommodate the sensitivity of the Botswana Government to the publicizing of human rights challenges in the country, while systematically raising the prominence of child labor as an issue in public discourse.

It does appear that one of the challenges experienced with RECLISA was an appropriate estimation of the resources that would be required to attain outcomes at each project site. This may have been a function of developing budgets without being adequately informed about circumstances prevailing at each intervention site. Although only briefly discussed during the evaluation at AIR regional office, it is plausible that an assumption existed that regionally managed programs would prove inherently more cost effective than country-based programs and this assumption biased the budgeting process toward underestimating resources required. It is recommended that a more circumspect and realistic budgeting process be adopted in future regionally based programs.

REGIONAL ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND AWARENESS RAISING

Summary of Findings

A regional program design may have advantages in certain contexts. The value of a number of those advantages—such as those relating to technical support for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and sharing lessons learned between country partners—were illustrated by the RECLISA program. However, the inherent potential in others—such as improved cost-effectiveness— were unrealized because the original budget proved too small to alone fund the attainment of outcomes.

The fact that targets and, generally speaking, outcomes were attained is a reflection on the commitment and resourcefulness of country partners who were compelled to marshal assistance, in addition to the RECLISA budget, in order to attain targets. GTFOSY, for example, had to use the vehicle sponsored by the mission society, which significantly shortened its lifespan. They were also compelled to repeatedly request assistance from the local RADP office for transport to execute RECLISA tasks, which strained relations between the entities.

Recommendations

The technical support for M&E provided in the RECLISA program is worth considering as a model for M&E implementation across all USDOL-funded programs.

Future regional programs should include mechanisms to maximize the value of sharing learning between country partners.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Summary of Findings

The evidence indicates that the RECLISA program in Botswana is a success. Vulnerable children were prevented or withdrawn from child labor through being enrolled in formal education. Vocational training significantly improved the future prospects of some beneficiaries. Partner organizations have also been positively influenced: RECLISA has contributed to policy-level reforms, and the service delivery of certain government functions has not just been supplemented, but enhanced.

RECLISA, by virtue of the needs that they address, requires a certain level of program sustainability. To some extent, the possibility of program sustainability has been facilitated by including an exit strategy component in project documents; another factor that facilitates program sustainability is the parallel program focusing on policy reform and capacity building through technical support of personnel at program partner offices. Both GTFOSY and SOS have made arrangements that will, in all likelihood, allow RECLISA interventions to continue as new programs with funding from other donors. However, the withdrawal of resources from programs like RECLISA, without any possibility of extending the funding period by the original donor, represents the highest possible sustainability risk.

Finally, the success of RECLISA is not without condition. At present, enrolling children in formal education in Gantsi is not a sustainable strategy. Unlike Gaborone, it is not factors external to school that drive poor attendance, but the conditions prevailing within the schooling system. Although the children that were retained in formal education in Gantsi through the relentless hard work of GTFOSY were temporarily prevented from being engaged in child labor, children will continue to drop out and the solution is not sustainable. Little opportunity existed to test the validity or applicability of the program design at each project site, resulting in an insufficient design being implemented in the Gantsi context.

The provision of material needs was the most effective intervention for enabling the enrollment of children in formal education and preventing their engagement in child labor. However, it is the vocational training interventions in both Gaborone and, especially, Gantsi that deliver the most sustainable outcomes and significantly improve the future prospects of children.

Recommendations

The contracted activities of USDOL's service providers should include provision for a thorough research and needs assessment component to inform program design for, and test program validity at, each site.

Programs that work are worth reinvesting in. USDOL should consider a review of funding policy, especially since it funds programs that require the intervention to continue to guarantee sustainability.

Program design elements that facilitate the possibility of the sustainability of programs—deliberate inclusion of exit strategy planning in project documents, direct action coupled with policy reform interventions, effective capacity-building activities (e.g., intensive mentoring rather than training workshops), and any others that might be identified—should be included in future program designs.

GOOD PRACTICES

The Practices that Stand Out in Securing Outcomes

The provision of material needs to school children in Gaborone directly addresses the conditions that keep children out of school, thereby making it easy to attend and stay in school.

Innovative vocational training in Gantsi allows children previously excluded from further education and training to have an opportunity to secure future prospects.

Wise Approaches

Initially, the necessity to change program partners was potentially very detrimental to implementation. However, SOS met their obligations admirably. The flexibility to adapt program strategy to partners' strengths had an influence on this outcome. If the emphasis on reaching street children directly had been adhered to rigidly, the outcome may not have been as positive.

An important contributor to success was how interventions aligned with, complemented, supplemented, and in some cases enhanced existing programs. This required (1) the acknowledgement that the logic of government programs was the most appropriate approach to securing RECLISA outcomes and services; and (2) a concerted effort to cooperate, collaborate, and partner with government officials at both national and district levels.

Replicable Models

The primary objective of the technical support visits by the M&E team was to ensure the effective execution of M&E processes, not to build capacity. However, capacity building did occur, resulting in (1) enhanced program management abilities in country partner offices, and (2) quality data and reliable quantitative figures in Technical Progress Reports. The latter is

very difficult to ensure in programs with multiple sites in so-called third-world contexts, and the model applied here is the most effective yet seen by this evaluator.

The program design included elements that facilitated the potential for program sustainability. In Botswana, the following provisions appear to have delivered results:

- Including an exit strategy component in project documents.

- Intensive capacity building.

- Coupling a direct-action program with a policy-reform program.

I   CONTEXT

Figure 1: Where is Botswana?

Source: http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/bw.htm
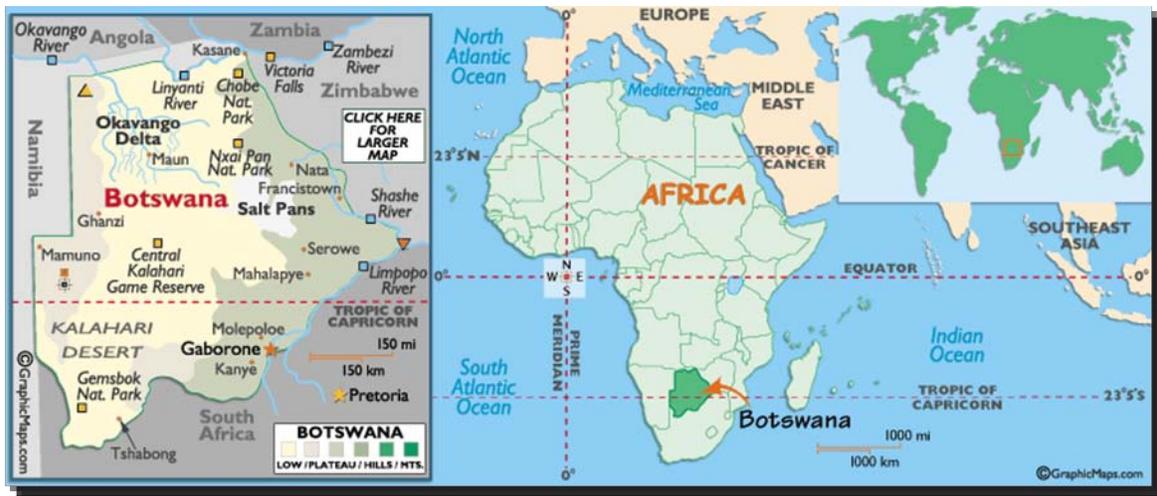
1.1   COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of Botswana is a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, slightly smaller than the State of Texas (600,370 sq km), with an estimated population of 1,842,323 citizens. It is regarded as a model of African democracy. Since its independence from colonial administration in 1966, it has held free and fair elections every five years, there are independent newspapers, there is political opposition, and human rights are generally respected. The country has enjoyed unparalleled peace and stability within the African continent, and two major investment services rank Botswana as the best credit risk in Africa.

Botswana has graduated from being one of the 10 poorest countries in the world to its current status as a middle-income country. It has maintained one of the world's highest economic growth rates since independence in 1966, though growth slowed to 4.7 percent annually in 2006–2007. Diamond mining has fueled much of the expansion and presently accounts for more than one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP) and for 70 to 80 percent of export earnings. Tourism, financial services, subsistence farming, and cattle farming are other key sectors.

However, an expected leveling off in diamond-mining production overshadows long-term prospects. Furthermore, despite the estimated per capita GDP of approximately US$15,000 at-purchasing power parity (based on data from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book), poverty and inequality remain high. The country's Gini coefficient is 0.6 (1 being complete economic inequality and 0 being complete economic equality); and unemployment was officially recorded at 23.8 percent in 2004, although unofficial estimates place it closer to 40 percent. In 2001, 36.7 percent of Botswana's citizens lived below the poverty datum line and 30 percent were classified as very poor (UNDP, 2002). Forty-seven percent of the population is still rural and 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas.

Botswana is also among the countries hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 2005, there were an estimated 270,000 people living with HIV. This gives Botswana an adult HIV prevalence rate of 24.1 percent, the second highest in the world after Swaziland. Life expectancy at birth fell from 65 years in 1990–1995 to less than 40 years in 2000–2005; a figure approximately 28 years lower than it would have been without AIDS. An estimated 120,000 children have lost at least one parent to the epidemic, precipitating the escalation of a host of concomitant social needs that, together, amount to a crisis for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). In an address to the UN assembly in June 2001, President Festus Mogae summed up the situation: "We are threatened with extinction. People are dying in chillingly high numbers. It is a crisis of the first magnitude."

In 1997, former President, Sir Keitumile Masire, endorsed the country's post-independence development goals of "an independent and self-sustaining society by 2016," (Presidential Task Group, 1997)—to coincide with 50 years of independence. Vision 2016, the document articulating these goals, underpins the government's intended development impact for Botswana—that of an "educated and informed nation."

1.2   EDUCATION

At 76 percent, Botswana's literacy rate is comparatively high for African nations. The National Literacy Programme attempts to service those in the population that are illiterate (24%) and provides an important opportunity for children out of school to access education. However, during both the midterm and final evaluations, interviewees indicated that children do not want to attend these programs because of the stigma attached to nonformal education.

According to official statistics, while approximately 88 percent of children attend school, approximately 30 percent of children complete secondary school. Girls and boys attended school at similar rates. School attendance and completion rates are highest in urban areas, where children live in close proximity to schools, and transportation is readily available. Attendance and completion rates are lowest in rural areas, where children live far from schools and where education service delivery to Remote Area Dwellers (RADs) is fraught with challenges to safety and social justice. In rural areas, it is also a cultural convention for children to remain at home and assist their families as cattle tenders, domestic laborers, or child care providers.

Education is not compulsory in Botswana. There are efforts underway to introduce a compulsory education policy, which under most circumstances would be welcomed. However, as is discussed in this evaluation, legislating compulsory education is likely to exacerbate the negative impact of current service delivery arrangements for Botswana's RADs.

Although education is not compulsory, primary education is currently free. Following extensive public debate, the government recently introduced a system of school fees for secondary and tertiary education. The fees are waived for orphans as well as children from families classified as destitute, and the state also provides uniforms, books, and development fees for qualifying students. Unfortunately, due to the administrative burden under which government officials operate, as well as the reluctance of people to be classified as destitute, the provisions are not optimally accessed or implemented.

The education system has been criticized for its Eurocentrism, which makes little meaningful accommodation for traditional culture and language; and its elitism, which fails to integrate a sufficiently vocationally-focused curriculum. However, at tertiary level there is a commitment to vocational training and a fairly sophisticated institutional infrastructure in place to deliver relevant curricula. In the Ministry of Education (MOE), there is a Department of Vocational Education and Training that is responsible for technical and vocational education in Botswana. Its substantive responsibility until fairly recently has been the provision of institutionally-based training through seven technical colleges. That responsibility has been extended to include professional and financial support for 41 community vocational schools (referred to as the Botswana Brigades). At first, the Brigades were an independent initiative started decades previously that supplemented the severely limited provision of vocational training offered by government; they became increasingly important over time. Both the Brigades and Technical Colleges fall within the Botswana Technical Education Programme (BTEP).

According to the MOE Web site, "The key aim of the BTEP is to improve access to, and quality of, vocational education and training and to produce graduates who are trainable, employable, or who have the ability and initiative to start their own businesses. BTEP also offers a new pathway to higher education."

Like most countries, Botswana suffers from a severe shortage of skills critical for economic growth, and the BTEP is now considered an important vehicle for addressing the skills deficit. Table 1 details the four qualification levels offered in the BTEP, as well as the nine current content areas. The intention is to extend the latter over time. Regardless of content area, all vocational training includes a focus on entrepreneurship as a core skill. Tertiary institutions offering a BTEP curriculum are reportedly subject to rigorous quality assurance processes before being accredited.

Table 1: Qualification Levels and Content Areas of the BTEP

Qualification Levels	Content Areas
• Foundation • Certificate • Advanced Certificate • Diploma	• Business • Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy • Building Construction • Hospitality and Tourism • Clothing, Design, and Textiles • Information and Communications Technology • Electrical and Mechanical Engineering • Multimedia • Agro-based

Research from Botswana's Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicates that unemployment rates increase as skills, qualifications, and experience decrease. As illustrated in Figure 2, the level of qualification correlates directly with level of unemployment, a consistent trend across the Labour Force Surveys conducted since the 1990s. Unfortunately, the present BTEP is not offering the

most at-risk citizens an opportunity to access employment because the criterion for enrolling in vocational training is the successful completion of Form 3 (Grade 10).

In addition to the aforementioned flaws, there is a long delay in addressing the significant challenges experienced by children from ethnic minorities who are compelled to receive instruction in Setswana or English. At best, these children speak Setswana or English as their second or third languages; at worst, they are completely unfamiliar with either one. The delay to address this challenge has contributed to a disproportionate number of adults from those groups being unqualified and unemployable. Without a firm and sensible policy on mother-tongue instruction, certain ethnic groups will always be poorly positioned to make the most of the education system and their children will remain vulnerable to exploitation.

Figure 2: Adult Employment by Level of Qualification
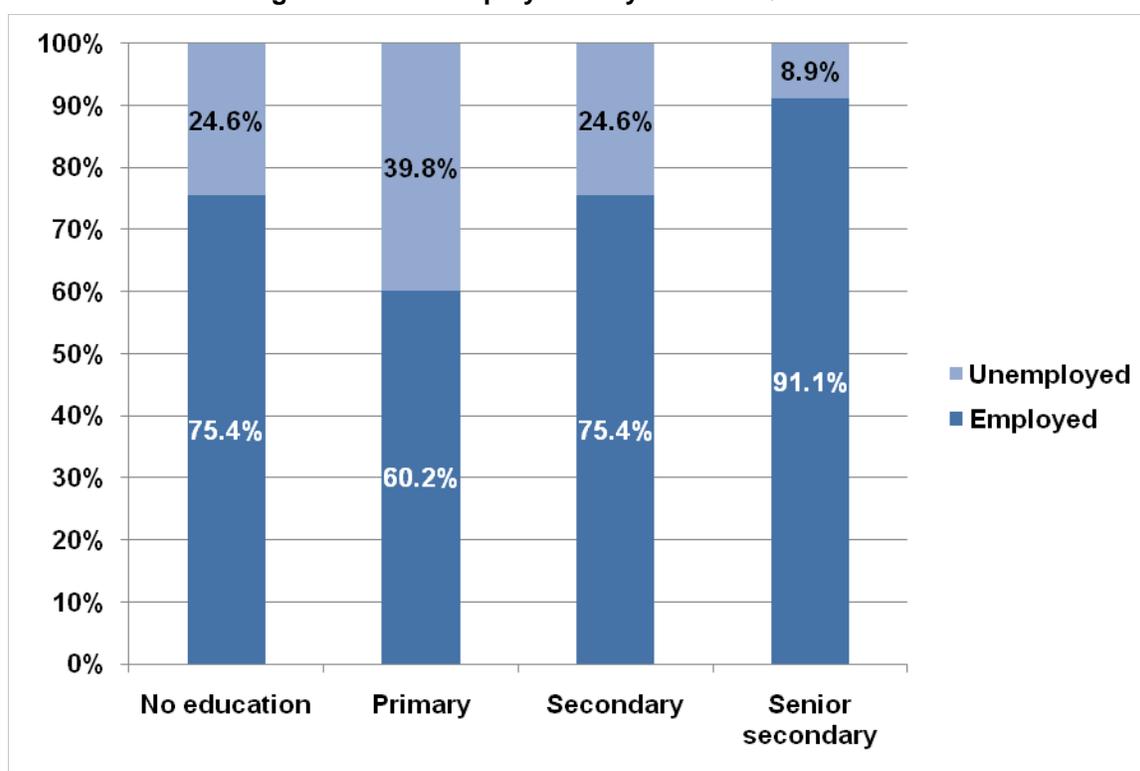
1.3   CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The years of economic prosperity enjoyed by Botswana has allowed the government to institute a wide range of social welfare services for vulnerable citizens. Although these services function as a social safety net, the intention is that the limited redistribution of resources would act as a catalyst for reducing poverty. The major programs that mitigate the vulnerability of children at risk of exploitation include—

- Programme for Destitute Persons

- Orphan Care Programme

- Supplementary Feeding for Vulnerable Groups

- Programme for Remote Area Dwellers

In recent years, the number of orphaned children has increased to such an extent that relatives and communities can no longer adequately assume the caregiving responsibility. In 2002, there were 39,571 registered orphans; in 2004, this number increased to 47,964. By 2006, there were 53,198 registered orphans throughout Botswana; though official figures are widely regarded as an underestimation and many thousands of orphans remain unregistered. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that there are 160,000 orphans in the country, of whom approximately 120,000 have lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS.

The orphan care program is a social allowance program and is therefore not means-tested. Eligibility is open to all Botswana children under age 18 who do not have parents. Orphans over age 18 are covered by the Programme for Destitute Persons, which also assists vulnerable children who are not orphans. Once again, many children who potentially qualify for support from the program do not have access because they are not registered.

Reasons for poor levels of registration include the fact that OVC are often ignorant of the services available to them, do not have the necessary documentation to register easily, are dependent on relatives who are negligent, or refuse to register because of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS or being classified as "destitute." There have even been reports of relatives refusing to register orphans in order to deny them inheritance rights. Consequently, identifying qualifying OVC for assistance under these various programs cannot rely solely on relatives, but falls to teachers, social workers, community leaders, or community members.

However, program efficacy is ultimately undermined by the lack of capacity in the system. Registration is facilitated by social workers who conduct a thorough assessment to determine eligibility. A recent study reported that, in the Department of Social Services, there are only 82 posts at the D3-C4 level to manage the caseload of 51,600 registered orphans. This works out to a caseload of 629 orphans for each post on an annualized basis. Given this caseload ratio, it is practically impossible for social workers to assess and register all orphans. Add to this the number of destitute children, and the inadequacy of the system becomes apparent.

In addition to food rations, these programs provide children with school uniforms, toiletries, transport, protective clothing, boarding requisites, tuition in private and vocational schools, street clothes, and payment of additional fees required by the schools (e.g., touring fees, sports fees, development fees, and other incidental expenses). The programs also ensure that the children access other social services, such as health care.

The School Feeding Programme, which falls under the Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme, is popular in all public primary and secondary schools in Botswana. The objective of this program is to provide prepared food to children to alleviate short-term hunger and enhance classroom learning. In some remote rural areas, school feeding has considerably increased school attendance and retention. Unfortunately, in every school visited during this final evaluation, it was reported that the feeding program is inconsistent; in some areas, to the extent that none of

the intended positive outcomes could be sustained. Some interviewees attributed the inconsistency of the program to poor coordination between MOE and the Ministry Local Government (MLG), the latter being responsible for implementing the School Feeding Programme; others suggested it might be a function of the government's budget cycle, with delays in implementation occurring between budget ends and new approvals.

1.4   CHILD LABOR

In general, the policy and institutional environment in Botswana is favorable with regard to meeting children's needs, protecting children, and defending their rights. The Botswana Constitution makes provisions for the basic rights and freedoms of individuals and it protects all persons from forced labor and slavery. In addition, Botswana has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment, ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. From 1993 to 2003, the National Programme of Action for the Children of Botswana, which had a secretariat based in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, served to ensure that children's rights were incorporated into the country's development planning.

The issue of child labor is also addressed in the Children's Act. Among its provisions, the law allows for only an immediate family member to employ a child age 13 or younger, and no juvenile under age 14 may be employed in any industry without permission from the Commissioner of Labor. No organization has yet petitioned the commissioner for such permission. Only persons over age 16 may be hired to perform night work, and no person under age 16 is allowed to perform hazardous labor, including mining. The law also prohibits the exploitation of adopted children for labor and protects orphans from exploitation or coercion into prostitution.

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MOLHA) is responsible for enforcing child labor laws and policies. Other government entities involved in child labor issues include offices within the MLG and MOE. The latter has developed and approved a strategy to mainstream child labor issues into its operations. District and municipal councils have child welfare divisions, which are responsible for enforcing child labor laws. Oversight of child labor issues is facilitated through the Program Advisory Committee on Child Labour (PACC), which includes representatives of various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, workers' federations, and employers' organizations.

The government continues to allocate the largest portion of its budget to MOE and the second largest portion to MLG, which is responsible for distributing books, food, and materials for primary education. The country also has a supplementary court system designed solely for juveniles.

Table 2: Representation on the PACC

Government	Private Sector	NGOs	Labor	Multilateral
Labor and Home Affairs	BOCCIM	Botswana National Youth Council	Botswana Federation of Trade Unions	UNICEF
Social Services	n/a	Botswana Council of Churches	n/a	n/a
Education	n/a	Ditshwanelo (Botswana Council for Human Rights)	n/a	n/a
Central Statistics Office	n/a	Child Line	n/a	n/a
Botswana Police Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not applicable

However, there are some policy gaps and conflicts that still need to be addressed. For example, the midterm evaluation indicated that Botswana lacks a common definition of "child" that permeates all laws pertaining to children. A common understanding of what constitutes child labor has yet to be fixed. There were also no policy imperatives to address child work and WFCL. Furthermore, the law does not prohibit trafficking in persons, although penal code provisions cover related offenses such as abduction and kidnapping, slave trafficking, and procuring women and girls for the purpose of prostitution. However, with the draft of the Action Plan on the Prevention of Exploitive Child Labour (APEC) being circulated and the announcement of the second phase of Towards the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (TECL), it seems that it is only a matter of time before the policy and institutional blind spots are resolved.

The midterm evaluation noted that the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) requested that the advocacy aspects of the Reducing Exploitive Child Labour in Southern Africa (RECLISA) program be delayed while it established the nature and extent of child labor in the country. The initial results captured in the latest Labour Force Survey are highlighted in Figures 3 through 5, though they have as yet to be officially released.

Figure 3: Proportion of Children Working in Botswana
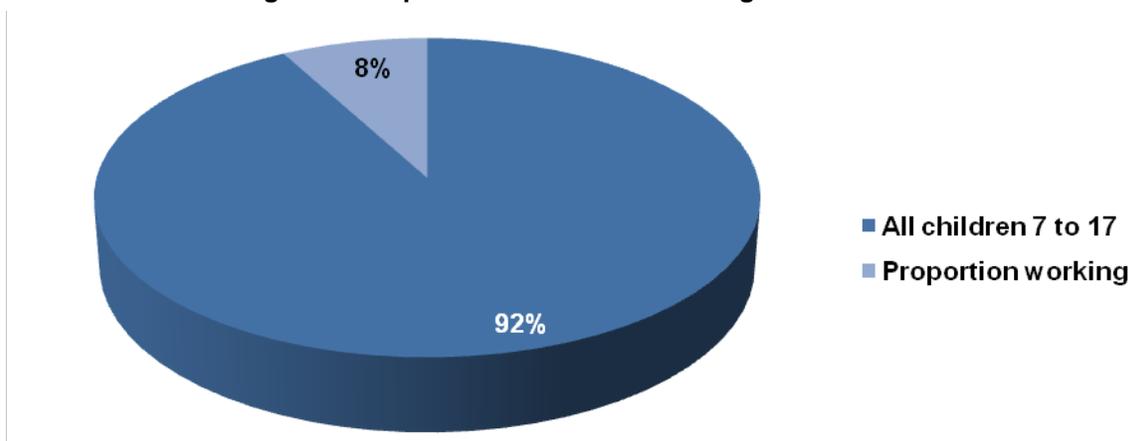
Regarding the extent of child labor—

1. Nine percent of all children aged 7 to 17 are reported to be working or engaged in economic activities, for a total of 38,375 children.

2. Over half of these—51.2 percent or 19,655 in total—are aged 7 to 13.

3. The majority of working children (64.9%) are located in rural villages; compared with 25.6 percent in urban villages and 9.5 percent in towns and cities.

Figure 4: Child Labor by Sector
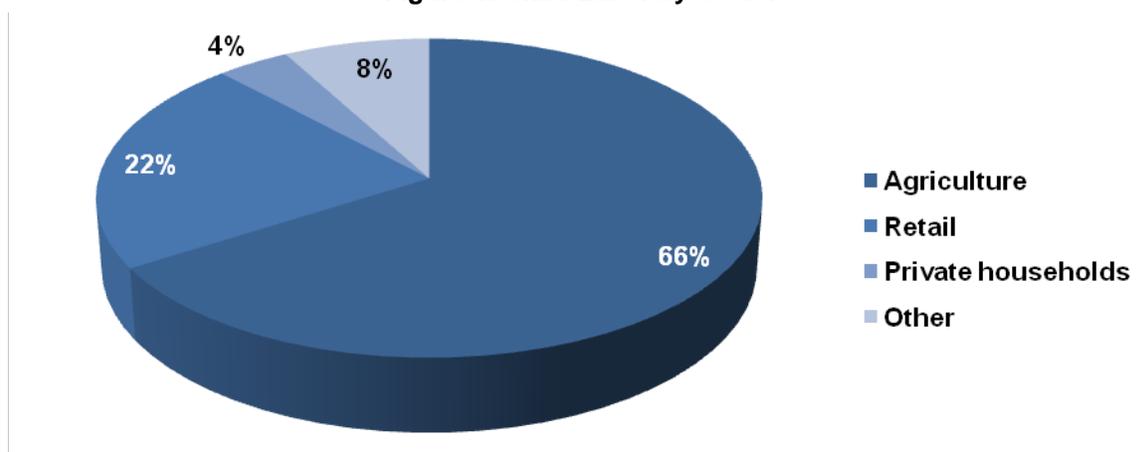
Regarding the sector split—

1. A total of 25,312 children (66% of working children) work in agriculture; 24,497 (58.7% of working children) work on family lands or cattle posts.

2. A total of 8,491 children (22% of working children) work in retail.

3. A total of 1,563 children (4% of working children) work in private households.

4. The remainder of working children are involved in the manufacturing, construction, hotel, and restaurant sectors.

Figure 5: School Attendance by Age Group
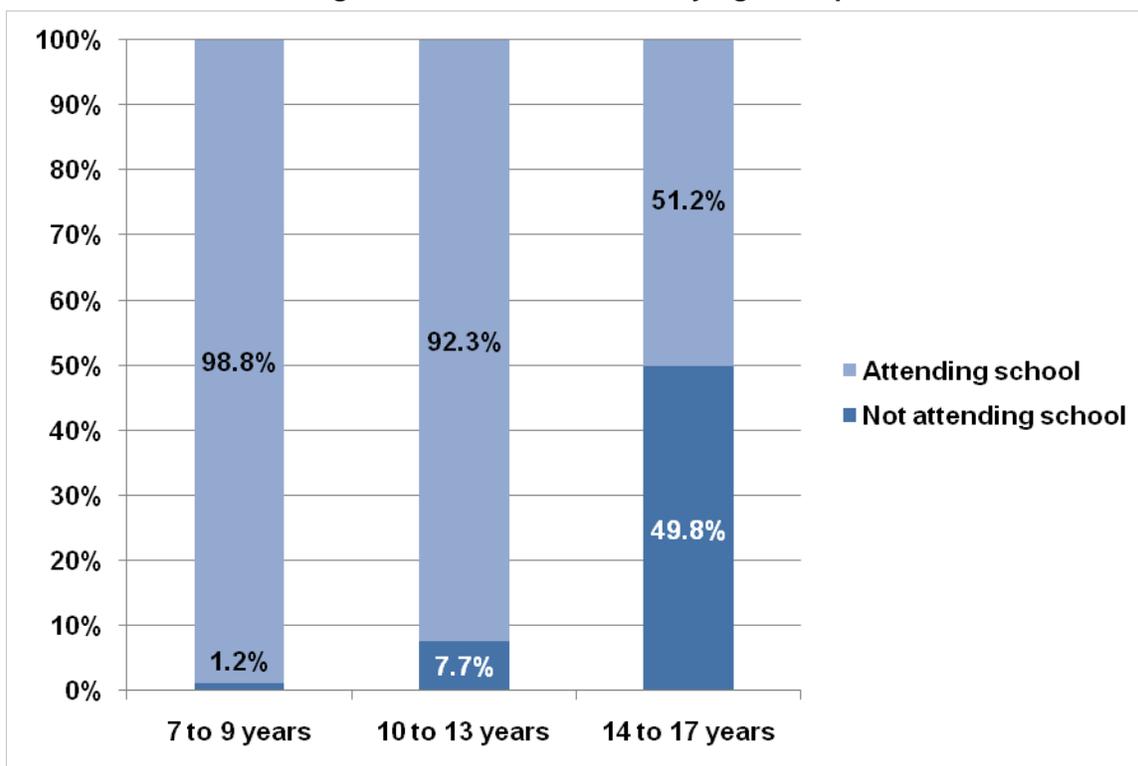
Regarding the impact of child labor on education—

1. A total of 19,000 children between 7 and 17 years (3.6%) are involved in child labor that affects their schooling; most of these children report that household chores are to blame.

2. Nineteen percent of all working children are not attending school.

3. Fifty children from the seven-to-nine age group (1.2% of the group) do not attend school.

4. A total of 1,115 children from the 10–13 age group (7.7% of the group) do not attend school.

5. A total of 6,229 children from the 14–17 age group (49.8% of the group) do not attend school.

1.5   ETHNICITY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

There can be no adequate understanding of prevailing social conditions in Botswana today without considering ethnicity and indigenous rights. These issues are particularly pertinent to the RECLISA program in Gantsi and have unfortunately been omitted from both the planning of the intervention and its assessment during the midterm evaluation. Consequently, the insufficiency of the program design for the Gantsi area and the conditions that predict an erosion of outcomes have not been noted.

Although the government officially considers all of the country's ethnic groups to be equally "indigenous," the earliest known inhabitants of the country, the San, are linguistically, culturally, and often physically (by appearance) distinct from the rest of the population. The estimated 50,000 to 60,000 San in Botswana represent approximately 3 percent of the country's population, but they are not a homogenous group. The feature that most clearly distinguishes one San group from another is language, and the major language spoken by the San in the Gantsi District is Naro. Despite their diversity, San peoples in Southern Africa are more similar to one another than any of their various countrymen. There is also a tragedy that unites them: All are caught up in a process of acculturation that has steadily unraveled the fabric of their society and inflicted a legion of social ills.

Today, the San remain economically and politically marginalized, have generally lost access to their traditional land in fertile regions of the country, and are vulnerable to exploitation by their non-San neighbors. Their isolation, limited access to education, ignorance of civil rights, and lack of political representation hinders their progress. After independence, a substantial portion of San resided in government-created RAD settlements and subsisted on government welfare benefits, supplemented by herding, hunting, and gathering. Very little has changed in this regard. Most employed San work as agricultural laborers on cattle farms owned by individuals of other ethnic groups.

Admittedly, the Botswana Government has instituted numerous initiatives since independence to better the lot of its San citizens. Despite these attempts, the conditions that perpetuate the marginalization of the San persist. One of these conditions is a distaste for addressing ethnicity directly; evident, for example, in the national census data which omits ethnic classifications. The determination to not officially acknowledge diversity elides ethnically delineated injustice rather than avoids it, and complicates any attempts at redress. It also elicits resentment among minorities who, for example, label the current language policy in education as yet another mechanism for the "Tswanafication" of society.

In recent years, cultural rights groups representing the San have emerged across Southern Africa. In addition to launching language programs and similar initiatives, they have asserted the rights of their constituencies and undertaken high-profile protests against government action (see Annex B), exacerbating the official reflex to avoid any hint of ethnic-based contention.

II   PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In its efforts to establish the RECLISA program in Botswana, the regional American Institutes for Research (AIR) office identified the Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC) as country partner. The organization's specific focus on youth, profile, easy access to government decisionmakers, and regional offices in major centers made it an appropriate choice. Unfortunately, as the liaison at BNYC points out, the local intelligence at BNYC's command could not be used during the early planning of the RECLISA program. At the time of the grant being awarded, changes in the leadership of BNYC and the requirements for AIR to produce the planning documents rapidly resulted in very limited participation from BNYC in this crucial early phase.

The early planning documents show that RECLISA was to prevent at-risk children in Botswana from entering into child labor by enrolling them and facilitating their attendance in formal education. Material barriers to attendance would be addressed by either facilitating access to existing government services or supplementing those services when necessary. The program would also increase public and government awareness of children's rights and the prevalence of child labor. Children in the program would be provided with psychosocial support to nurture the set of life skills necessary to attain improved outcomes for their lives. There would also be a vocational training component to equip the older children with skills to become employable or economically self-sufficient. The vulnerable groups specifically identified as beneficiaries were street children and children in rural areas where child labor was thought to be most prevalent.

As an advocacy organization, BNYC was assigned responsibility for the advocacy outcome of the program, as well as the coordinating role in Botswana; it would select local partners to implement the substantive programmatic aspects. Initially, BNYC chose the Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) to be its local-level partner. BCC has a long history of activism and community development, as well as a degree of credibility among stakeholders of a program like RECLISA. In addition, BCC had contributed to the little research that did exist on child labor and street children, and was already running a residential program for street children. BCC seemed an obvious choice for implementing partner.

By March 2005, however, concerns had arisen about BCC's role. There were differences concerning budget estimations, and BCC proposed that they be replaced because they were not satisfied that they could deliver on targets within the limited budget assigned to them. After consultations initiated by AIR, BNYC identified one of its affiliates, Gantsi Task Force on Out-of-School Youth (GTFOSY), to implement the Gantsi activities. GTFOSY is an informal organization that draws together partners from government organizations and NGOs and accomplishes a remarkable amount with very limited resources. Its main purpose has been to improve access to education for children and youth. GTFOSY would be responsible for enrolling children in formal education, as well as providing them with psychosocial support. GTFOSY then identified two service providers—the Permaculture Trust (PT) and the Gantsi Brigade Development Trust (GBDT)—to provide vocational training for program beneficiaries.

In September 2005, after BCC had formally withdrawn from RECLISA, BNYC and AIR approached Save Our Souls (SOS) Children's Villages to implement the Gaborone activities. Unlike GTFOSY, which operates under BNYC's subcontract because of its affiliate status, SOS is subcontracted directly by AIR/RECLISA and works in partnership as an implementing agency with BNYC.

With the institutional infrastructure in place, the two organizations set out to prevent 1,625 (BNYC/GTFOSY—525; SOS—1,100) rural and urban children from engaging in child labor, while enrolling them in formal or vocational education programs. BNYC provides national coordination and, through its affiliate GTFOSY (in cooperation with GBDT and PT), directly supports services to street children and children of farm workers in the Gantsi District. SOS, focusing on areas in and around the capital city of Gaborone, is extending its support to nonresident OVC at risk of urban child labor (including street children, though not in the direct way envisaged at the initiation of the RECLISA program).

RECLISA would run in parallel with a sister program—TECL—a project of ILO, jointly with the governments and social partners in each of the countries it works in. It forms part of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, also known as IPEC. TECL focuses on assisting the governments of the participating countries to meet their obligations as states that have ratified the ILO Conventions on the Minimum Age for Employment (Convention 139) and the Prohibition and Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (Convention 182). In all the countries that it supports, TECL works under the direction of a national committee headed by the national government department or ministry responsible for addressing child labor. These committees include representatives from a range of government departments, business, labor and other civil society formations. In Botswana, TECL developed a national APEC as the basis for mobilizing concerted action against worst forms of child labor.

III   EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology included a number of complementary data collection activities. The evaluation began with a desk review of relevant program documentation that informed the data collection approach in the field. The desk review extended through the evaluation and included the collection and review of supplementary literature and studies as they were encountered. The desk review was followed by in-depth interviews in beneficiary countries, supplemented by systematic site observations.

Due to the time constraints within which the evaluation was conducted, it was not possible for data collection to be as comprehensive as would ideally be required. However, an effort was made to secure a representative body of data and verify findings and conclusions through participatory mechanisms. Consequently, the findings and conclusions contained in this final report may be considered with an acceptable degree of confidence in their veracity.

DESK REVIEW

After an analysis of the purpose and scope of the evaluation and the specific questions in the Terms of Reference, the evaluators reviewed key project documents:

- The RECLISA Cooperative Agreement

- RECLISA Project Document

- Country Needs Assessments

- Project Performance Management Plans

- Various RECLISA Factsheets

- Technical Progress Reports

- Midterm Evaluation Reports and project responses to recommendations

In addition, the evaluator collected and reviewed research literature and studies that contextualized and complemented data collected during the fieldwork. These additional documents are referenced toward the end of the report.

INTERVIEWS IN THE UNITED STATES

Before visits to the field, the evaluators took part in conference calls with AIR HQ staff and with the project manager at USDOL. All three evaluators were part of these calls so that they were all working from common information that can be applied to their national contexts.

SELECTION OF SITES TO BE VISITED

The sites for field visits in the countries concerned were selected in consultation with AIR and implementing partners. The aim was to cover a cross section of activities, including those that have been both more and less successful and, where possible, some of the less accessible project sites.

SITE VISITS, COMMUNITY-LEVEL OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

In each community, the evaluator met with small groups of individual boys and girls (as appropriate to the activities concerned) who were beneficiaries of the program to discuss: their opinions and attitudes concerning child labor and education, the activities initiated by RECLISA, how they believe they have benefited, and how they see the future. The evaluator ensured that interviews with children were relaxed and informal, with a limited number of questions and an emphasis on valuing their points of view and encouraging them to express themselves, so that they might have a positive, confidence-building experience. In both Gaborone and Gantsi, interpreters were needed to facilitate these interviews.

Similar focus group and individual interviews took place with parents, teachers, and local leaders grouped appropriately according to community norms and specific project activities. Wherever possible, the evaluator visited and observed project activities.

INTERVIEWS WITH SUBCONTRACTORS

For each individual project visited, the evaluator talked to the local NGO responsible for the project. Questions that guided the process included those concerning project design, implementation, monitoring and sustainability, and the partnership with AIR, within the context of local and national child labor and education.

INTERVIEWS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

For each country, AIR's national partners were asked to suggest contacts with whom they have worked with in the government (local and national policymakers concerned with education and child labor issues), UN agencies, the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Embassies, and any international NGOs with whom they have collaborated or shared information. Individual interviews were then arranged by partners after consultation with the national evaluator. In-depth interviews were also conducted with key AIR staff in the regional office concerning all aspects of project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, management, and sustainability.

STAKEHOLDERS MEETINGS AND DEBRIEFINGS

At the end of fieldwork, the evaluator held a stakeholders meeting to bring together as broad a range of stakeholders as was feasible within the national context. This enabled the evaluator to verify his understanding of RECLISA initiatives at the end of the field visits and to facilitate discussion about the broader issues of education and child labor and the potential for ongoing activities in the country concerned.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The evaluation mission observed the utmost confidentiality relating to information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. In order to ensure freedom of expression and to mitigate any bias during the data collection process, representatives from implementing partner staff were not present during stakeholder interviews.

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IV   FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1.1   RECLISA Implementation

Design and work plans evolved appropriately in response to the disruption caused by a change in implementing partners, the changing circumstances in the implementation environment, and in some instances, where the initial rapid planning was not suitable to the context. In general, the changes to program design and work plans enhanced rather than undermined the achievement of outcomes. In fact, when considering the case of Gantsi, the more pertinent remark would be that there was a need for even greater flexibility to adapt plans to the implementation context.

At an early stage of implementation, BNYC argued that the assertive advocacy role envisioned for it might prove counterproductive and that more value would be derived from a cooperative engagement with Parliament and government ministries. Consequently, the public advocacy component of RECLISA was delayed in response to a request from MOLHA, which preferred to establish the extent of child labor before introducing the issue to broader public debate. Such caution is typical of the Botswana Government, whose sensitivity has been heightened since the Central Kgalagadi (CKGR) incident (see Annex B).

Consequently, broader public awareness and a public conversation on child labor across civil society and, importantly, in parliament—an early advocacy objective for BNYC—could not be realized. However, although public advocacy was almost entirely sacrificed for the implementation period (results from the Labour Force Survey are only now being circulated and have not yet been made public), evidence suggests that the BNYC argument has merit. Observations of positive interaction between BNYC and government representatives during the evaluation, the accommodation of government toward the evaluation, and the progress noted within government on child labor issues all lend further credence to BNYC's position. BNYC did actively promote the child labor message in government through mechanisms such as the Policy Advisory Committee on Child Labour, and the local conference allowed for significant advocacy. It is not at all clear whether more assertive advocacy would have proven more effective.

The early emphasis on street children in the program design for Gaborone was geared toward exploiting the strengths of BCC. A detailed knowledge of the street children situation was institutionalized in BCC through its research activities and the fact that BCC already ran a successful residential program for street children. The organization already had direct access to the target population and the more ambitious aspects of the program plan, such as home reintegration, seemed quite possible. However, when BCC withdrew from RECLISA, these advantages disappeared. SOS, which had never had an outreach program before RECLISA, had to rely on their enthusiasm to extend their services beyond their core beneficiary group of orphans within their villages. They also had to adapt the program plans to more realistically fit their budding capacities. They consequently adopted a strategy that focused on enrolling OVC at risk of child labor into formal education and centered their intervention in schools.

Street children would not be dismissed as beneficiaries, but would be reached indirectly. As the midterm evaluation put it, "Although tactics have changed, the fundamental strategy in relation to OVC on the streets remains the same: Keep them out of child labor and in school."

SOS was also required to assume responsibility for achieving the outstanding vocational training target for the Gaborone intervention. After some delay (as noted in the midterm evaluation), SOS was able to enroll 20 children at vocational training centers and meet this obligation.

Both SOS and the GTFOSY indicated that the administrative burden introduced by reporting requirements made implementation difficult, demanding time and energy that was not initially provided for in their planning. One of the GTFOSY fieldworkers raised this point by explaining that their remuneration was acceptable for part-time work, but the administrative responsibilities transformed their GTFOSY work into a full-time job.

In Gantsi, the GTFOSY was able to implement or, in the case of the vocational training, assist in facilitating all the planned activities to varying degrees of efficacy and success. The service that providers have delivered and the outcome—skilled graduates with improved prospects— is sustainable. However, it is the lack of resources for implementation that is the most persistent theme emerging from interviews and observations.

Both the community advocacy and the enrollment of children into formal education have proven highly problematic. For instance, any contact between implementer and beneficiary involves traveling vast distances, usually on gravel roads. Once again, transportation, financial, and human resources were stretched beyond acceptable limits in attempting to reach quantitative targets. It is a testimony to the commitment of GTFOSY that, against the Student Tracking System indicators at least, the intervention is a success. More importantly, the retention of children in formal education is enormously problematic when dealing with RADs for reasons ignored in the program design and for which there was no flexibility to subsequently redress. Implementation in Gantsi does demonstrate a high level of program fidelity, but whether this finding is positive must be considered from the perspective of the direct beneficiaries and whether project plans improved their well-being or reinforced the conditions that undermine it.

4.1.2   RECLISA Design

Both the explicit assumptions documented in the logical framework as well as key implicit assumptions evident in the program design need to be revisited.

There were a few erroneous assumptions made at the regional level that did not hold true and risked program efficacy. The first was that the budget provisions were adequate and that existing resources at certain sites could be used to supplement RECLISA resources without negative effect. It is now apparent that Gantsi did not have adequate resources to implement RECLISA and that redirecting their own resources to RECLISA was costly for them. GTFOSY was compelled to employ their own motor vehicle, already overused for existing programs that the Task Force had been implementing, to meet their RECLISA obligations. The wear and tear on the vehicle attributable to RECLISA was significant, and it had to be replaced during the course of the program. The repeated requests for use of the government's district office vehicles tested

the goodwill enjoyed by GTFOSY. It may well be that regionally coordinated projects have cost-saving potential, but not to the extent that was assumed in this case.

A further erroneous assumption was the underestimation of the technical and capacity-building support the regional office would have to extend to country and implementation partners to manage data collection and reporting requirements. In interviews, regional AIR staff assigned to provide technical support reported that efforts more intensive than initially anticipated were required to assist country offices in ensuring that high standards for management and reporting were maintained. At times, they felt that their ability to adequately perform their non-support-related duties might have been undermined.

The primary RECLISA implementation strategy—enrolling vulnerable children into formal education to mitigate their risk for involvement in child labor and improve their future prospects—appears sound. At the time of designing the intervention, no firm facts on the extent of child labor in Botswana were available. Existing studies relevant to the issue, such as the BCC study on street children, indicated that impoverished children were involved in economic activity for subsistence; consequently, they were not attending school. These children were unable to access government programs that would have relieved them of the necessity to engage in economic activity to survive and would have eased their access to education. In short, available research suggested that an intervention would plausibly result in the prevention of, or withdrawal from, child labor. The intervention would (a) mitigate the material imperatives keeping children out of education and engaged in economic activity, and (b) enroll children in formal education to reduce their risk of being engaged in child labor and improve their future prospects.

Interview reports in Gaborone provide some confirmation that the overall program logic, underlying assumptions, and primary implementation strategy proved sound. Teachers at Notwane and in Old Naledi could recount instances of children who were previously truant and involved in economic activity, but were no longer thus engaged and were now attending school consistently. A number of the children interviewed in Old Naledi also reported having ceased income-earning activities that had kept them from attending school.

None of these reported labor activities involved WFCL, however, and the interview data offers illustrative cases rather than generalizable findings. In addition, the findings from the Labour Force Survey on the extent of child labor suggests that, in urban areas such as Gaborone, the majority of children below age 14 are already enrolled in formal education, that labor activities reported as interfering with education were domestic chores, and that the agricultural sector was the foremost culprit in the exploitation of children; indicating presumably that rural children were most vulnerable. All of these facts imply that the focus on enrollment in formal education as the primary intervention strategy may not have been as satisfactory in achieving outcomes as assumed when the program was designed.

However, despite these ambiguities in the available evidence, the assumptions that led to the choice of enrollment in formal education as the primary intervention strategy remain defensible in the Gaborone context. Teachers, project staff, and government officials remain convinced that children's attendance at school reduces their vulnerability to exploitation. If there is not

sufficient objective data to convincingly confirm the veracity of this claim, there is also not sufficient evidence to convincingly contradict it.

The midterm evaluation noted that a couple of assumptions were challenged in the implementation and impeded project progress for a time:

- Teachers would be able to provide psychosocial support after-hours for RECLISA children. However, teachers were not incentivized to participate to this extent, as MOE policy does not allow teachers to take on paid work in addition to their teaching responsibilities.

- School premises could be used for the life skills classes. Principals would only agree on the condition that SOS assumed responsibility for the children and the premises, which the organization was not in a position to do.

In Gaborone, however, there were no high-risk errors in assumption significantly threatening intended program outcomes or their sustainability. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the Gantsi interventions. The overall program logic that suited the Gaborone environment so well was fundamentally flawed in the Gantsi context. The reason for this being that schools servicing remote areas tend to be both severely alienating as well as unsafe for children; apparently without exception according to both interviewee reports and, significantly, supplementary literature.

San children are eligible for schooling at ages as young as six years. Those whose parents live in remote locations have to attend hostel schools. Hostels are without exception understaffed; overnight, there is usually one caregiver to 200 children. The ablution facilities are most often inadequate and unsanitary. Security at hostel schools is negligible and girls are particularly vulnerable under such circumstances. Bullying and petty theft is rife. At a recent conference, during her presentation of a study on hostel schools, a researcher from the University of Botswana commented that if all hostel schools are like those reviewed in her study, they should be closed down (reported by two interviewees and confirmed by university personnel).

The classroom experience is little better. Many San children have an inadequate command of Setswana and English, the mediums of instruction. Because supply is limited, the government posts teachers where they are needed, at times to locations where they cannot speak the language of the children they teach. In Gantsi, where the local language is particularly difficult to learn and only two Naro-speaking teachers are currently posted, this language barrier tends to be the rule. In addition, studies suggest that ethnic-based discrimination and abuse occurs in Gantsi District schools, often perpetrated by teachers.

The consequence of these circumstances is predictable: Children run away from school and refuse to return. There is a commonly cited prejudice that San parents do not value education and, therefore, do not insist that their children attend school. Two recent studies contest this assumption, suggesting that San parents are ambivalent—they value the principle of education, but despise the manner in which education is delivered to their children. GTFOSY devotes an

enormous amount of energy to achieving its retention targets under these circumstances. The project coordinator likened the situation to "mopping the floor with the tap still running."

It should be clear from this description that the RECLISA program design is insufficient to achieve sustainable outcomes in the Gantsi District. It is also in contravention of explicit USDOL policy which states that:

Had the circumstances in Gantsi District schools been clear when RECLISA was designed it is unlikely that enrolling children in school would have been featured as the primary intervention strategy. The fact that these circumstances were not taken into account points to the inadequacy of the feasibility study conducted in advance of program implementation. The content of the feasibility study provides a fairly accurate but mainstream overview of conditions in Botswana. It does not, however, raise the issue of indigenous or "first peoples" rights.

The reason for the omission is easily determined. There is a general reticence in Botswana, and especially among the country's officialdom, to admit to or discuss the challenges concerning "first peoples." The official census does not even classify Botswana citizens according to ethnicity. Relying on secondary sources of information to compile the feasibility study was an error because the marginalized discourse on "first peoples" requires investigation beyond the mainstream. The manner and mechanisms for compiling feasibility studies is at fault in this instance and needs to be revisited.

Enrollment of children in formal education in the Gantsi District can, at best, be only one aspect of a program that must attempt to address the root causes of truancy in this context.

4.1.3   Existing Efforts in Botswana

At RECLISA's launch, there were no notable direct efforts at combating WFCL in Botswana. However, the country already had the rudimentary policy and institutional framework in place for securing children's welfare (see Section 1.1: Country Background). The key international conventions had been ratified, the Child Act was legislated, and social programs had been initiated that seemingly covered the basic material and educational needs of all vulnerable children (although there is the inevitable debate on whether the means test applied for qualifying a child as "destitute" is sufficiently inclusive). The welfare programs reflect an undeniable commitment to universal education on the part of the Botswana Government, even in the absence of a compulsory education policy.

RECLISA adopted enrolling at-risk children in formal education as the prime preventative strategy, meaning it aligned very well with existing government programs for children and shared the same delivery arena: schools and vocational training centers. The delivery of services for children has been inconsistent, due to intermittent resource constraints at government ministries, poor coordination between ministries and agencies, process and administrative bottlenecks within government, and severe personnel shortages at district level—worsened by administrative burden. Therefore, RECLISA's servicing of the same material needs as government programs that are intended to facilitate school attendance was also a correct (and crucial) option.

Interviewees at all schools reported that the feeding programs are often started after or well after the school term begins and are repeatedly interrupted. The supply of school uniforms, school equipment, and sanitary ware for children is also challenged, and the registration of children for access to government program services is backlogged. RECLISA offered either an alternative to the same services, or an additional entry point to government programs for vulnerable and at-risk children. Under the prevailing circumstances, both of these outcomes are needed.

The Gantsi intervention is illustrative of the extent to which government services have been supported through RECLISA. At district level, the Remote Area Development Office (RADO), Social and Community Development (S&CD), and Department of Primary Education (DPE) are acutely under-resourced, and their ability to deliver on their direct service mandates is hindered by their administrative obligations. Consequently, without GTFOSY activities the reach of services would have been significantly curtailed. GTFOSY more than equaled the government's efficacy in the field; not just because of the extra hands, but because of the diligence with which they applied themselves and the advantages they introduced, based on their local knowledge, command of Naro, and other local minority languages (Kaukau, Herero, and Kgalagadi).

The midterm evaluation reported that both the Gaborone and Gantsi sites have also contributed to improving the collection, quality, and utility of statistics on children and rights-related issues; in particular, with tracking the work status of children.

Toward the close of the program, GTFOSY received the data collection form for tracking work status. They conducted 40 interviews in May and June, in an attempt to survey a 10 percent sample of their beneficiary pool. Analysis has yet to be finalized, but a brief review suggests that the results will align with the following findings from the Labour Force Survey: *Primary school children are unlikely to have been engaged in labor, while children over 14 had been working in activities that were mostly domestic and not exploitive.* GTFOSY has also begun sharing their database of children with the district office functions, which before had no data sets to support their work. Data collection and management by GTFOSY is also a lot cleaner than that which is occasionally available from other sources. Because neither teachers nor government officers are Naro-speakers, the spelling of children's names on school registers and registration forms is inaccurate and inconsistent across data collectors. Records can often not be matched and children go "missing" as a result. By sharing their data, GTFOSY can at least keep other data sources clean.

Nationally, RECLISA prompted MOLHA to begin assessing the extent of child labor nationally and, at a policy level, there is renewed interest in developing child-friendly schools and revisiting the possibility of mother-tongue instruction.

4.1.4   USDOL Goals

RECLISA falls within the USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative (EI) that seeks to develop strategies and practices to bring out-of-school, working children back to school and retain the in-school children most vulnerable to labor exploitation. EI has five specific goals against which the success of relevant interventions must be considered.

Goal 1:   Withdrawing or preventing children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of direct educational services.

From government to community levels, there is already broad agreement in Botswana on the importance of education. Because the social welfare programs that are intended to ease access to education for vulnerable children do not function optimally, RECLISA assisted in enhancing their functionality in the locations in which it operated. RECLISA has also made a significant contribution to the information infrastructure used by education-related services in the Gantsi District. Vocational training innovations were also introduced in the Gantsi District that, should they continue to be implemented, may have national application. However, permanent reform of the social welfare programs, as well as the improvement of institutional infrastructures of education, as per recommendations made for the program design in Gantsi, for example, have not been affected.

Goal 2:   Strengthening policies on child labor and education, the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, and formal and transitional education systems that encourage children engaged in or at-risk of engaging in exploitive labor to attend school.

Although the policy and institutional infrastructure was already favorable in terms of safeguarding the welfare of children, an active focus on child labor was largely absent. Progress at policy level is more appropriately attributed to the TECL initiative in Botswana. With the circulation of the APEC draft, as well as the announcement of TECL II, prospects for policy reform are promising. However, RECLISA was able to make its contribution through the advocacy efforts of BNYC at PACC.

Goal 3:   Raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.

Despite complying with MOLHA's request to curtail awareness raising until the extent of child labor had been established, there are numerous awareness-raising successes to report. As evidenced throughout this report, through unobtrusive advocacy at PACC, constructive engagement of district officials, and educating community members during implementation, RECLISA has contributed to achieving this goal. In addition, RECLISA sponsored a national conference in Botswana, held in July 2007, on child labor and child trafficking. Interviewees are of the opinion that this event helped RECLISA significantly raise the level of knowledge and public discourse on these issues in the country. More than 100 people attended, five times the target set in the Project Document, and the most of any RECLISA conference up to that point. The active participation of government as well as civil society, the enthusiastic reception to lessons learned from other RECLISA countries, and the close involvement of our TECL colleagues, all helped make this gathering so successful.

Goal 4:   Supporting research and the collection of reliable data on child labor.

The rapid assessments commissioned by PACC have made an important contribution to the research on issues related to child labor in Botswana, simply because very little is currently available. The launch of RECLISA also prompted MOLHA to introduce items in the Labour Force Survey to explore the extent of child labor in Botswana. In the Gantsi District, the GTFOSY database has been shared with the district government functions responsible for attending to the needs of vulnerable children. Previously, no such reliable data was available in a useful format.

Goal 5:   Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

Both GTFOSY and SOS have made arrangements that will, in all likelihood, allow RECLISA interventions to continue on as new programs with funding from other donors. However, the withdrawal of resources from programs like RECLISA, without any possibility of extending the funding period, represents the highest possible sustainability risk. Enrolling children in formal education is not a sustainable strategy in Gantsi. Unlike Gaborone, it is the conditions prevailing within the schooling system that drive poor attendance, not external factors.

4.1.5   Direct Educational Interventions

At both implementation sites, the primary intervention strategy was to enroll vulnerable and at-risk children into formal education. Both SOS in Gaborone and GTFOSY in Gantsi have exceeded their enrollment and retention targets. Unfortunately, overall enrollment and dropout rates in the relevant districts were not made available, and no quantitative analysis of changes in school attendance in target communities has been possible. For various reasons, it is also unlikely that a significant change would have been discernable. Although SOS counts a large number of schools in its portfolio, comprehensive implementation occurred only in a smaller proportion of the total. Consequently, it is unlikely that a significant impact was made at district level, although within the particular communities where the schools enjoyed focused attention, this would be possible if data was readily available.

In Gantsi, field observations suggest that the quality of data available at government district offices is unlikely to be of a standard that could produce confident analyses.

Nevertheless, the manner of program implementation and qualitative evidence from interviews suggest that the impact on enrollment and dropout rates has been noteworthy. The requirement to monitor retention resulted in a sensitivity to dropout rates by project staff and stakeholders. At SOS, fieldworkers reported that there was regular follow-up with children as soon as a pattern of truancy became evident. Teachers reported that "most" of the children enrolled at school through RECLISA stayed in school. Because schools in Gaborone are relatively secure and conducive environments, it is material needs that pose the more formidable obstacles to attendance by vulnerable children.

The provision of school uniforms through RECLISA and government programs is an emotionally charged and surprisingly meaningful intervention. The stigma of poverty weighs heavily on children, and attending school dressed differently from your peers excludes you from a shared identity. Poverty makes you unequal, and without a school uniform you are marked as such. A child at school in Old Naledi Township who received a uniform from SOS stated categorically, "Without a uniform, I will not come to school."

In the Gantsi District, achieving target retention rates was more challenging because of the conditions in hostel schools, as well as the remoteness of settlements, which made following up with children difficult. Nevertheless, GTFOSY would regularly inquire of schools whether RECLISA children were in attendance, would use community sources to locate truant children, and arrange for them to be returned to school. Teachers in Gantsi were not reliable in reporting retention during interviews. At two schools visited during fieldwork, GTFOSY staff checked the presence of each RECLISA child, either reviewing the names with teaching staff or using school registers and students to fetch their friends from class. In both instances, it was obvious that teachers had overestimated dropout rates, in part due to not associating students with their Naro names. The evaluator also got the impression that the teachers were unduly influenced by their expectation that the children in question would not be present.

Although the evidence suggests that both SOS and GTFOSY have succeeded in improving enrollment and reducing dropout rates (thereby preventing participation in child labor), it is not as obvious whether school attendance improves the future prospects of children. The analysis of the CSO on the correlation between level of education and employment (see Section 1.2: Education) would suggest that this is the case. The assertion is certainly plausible for children in Gaborone because it is more likely that these children will continue to complete a level of schooling that improves their prospects after the RECLISA closeout. However, there is no plausible reason to believe that this will be the case in Gantsi. Without the continuous efforts of GTFOSY to ensure that RECLISA children return to school, it is more likely that they will not complete a level of schooling that improves their prospects.

From the CSO analysis, it is quite clear that tertiary or vocational training is most likely to secure a better future for children. Despite the challenges to tracking the vocational training aspect of RECLISA introduced by the changed implementing partner in Gaborone, the vocational training targets were reached. As reported in the midterm evaluation, BNYC facilitated computer training for 40 beneficiaries. After some delay, SOS managed to enroll 20 beneficiaries at a vocational training center in Gaborone, across a range of the BTEP content areas (see Table 1, page 3).

The criteria for registering for vocational training under BTEP are that the candidate should have completed schooling up to grade 10 and passed with at least a C. Since in the Gantsi District this is a high barrier to entry, some innovation was therefore required. PT offers a quality curriculum to students without school-related qualifying criteria and was contracted by RECLISA to train RECLISA beneficiaries. There are a number of success stories from the PT training, including one graduate who found employment at a horticulture project; another student received a grant from the Ministry of Youth and Culture to start a small stock-rearing project. Most of the remaining graduates have applied to the same grant program and are awaiting a response.

GBDT developed specific courses in basic bricklaying and small stock management that would be offered to students who did not qualify for training in any of the existing courses. Although enrollment was limited, the pilot courses were successful. The quality of the GBDT curricula is substantiated by the fact that two of the graduates have subsequently been promoted to BTEP-endorsed vocational training. The implications are very promising and the GBDT are enthusiastic about extending the program.

However, the pilot implementation has not been without its growing pains. The most important of these is the delay in the disbursement of funds, which has in turn delayed the implementation of the next round of training. Delays and changes in the administration of disbursements have strained relations between GBDT on the one hand and GTFOSY and BNYC on the other. The limited funds that are disbursed also limit the number of students that can be enrolled, which results in less than ideal living conditions for attending students who must be housed and fed for the four months they are on training.

There have also been challenges in retaining students in the guinea, fowl, and rabbit-rearing courses. Changes to selection criteria, such as older students with slightly more schooling, have been proposed.

Despite these issues, the vocational training interventions deliver sustainable outcomes and, with additional funding and minimal changes to program design, are the aspects of the Gantsi program with the potential to deliver the most significant impact.

It has been difficult to gauge with any degree of confidence the impact of psychosocial support and life skills training interventions in Botswana. The intent to recruit teachers into the role of support providers was confounded by the prohibition on them from receiving any reward for work outside of their professional role. It seems as though no deliberate alternative provision has been made; despite this, the SOS fieldworker interviewed did describe a number of instances in which he fulfilled this role.

Children interviewed in Gaborone were very enthusiastic about the weekend and holiday camps, described the activities, and reflected on the content of the life skills training received. They were all very young, however, and had difficulty in relating any "changes in way you do things" to the camp experience. Most of the interviews with children had to be conducted through an interpreter, and this complicated the process of trying to extract responses that might be considered evidence.

In Gantsi, the situation was exacerbated both in terms of the age of the children and the language barrier. However, the output produced by children from Gantsi in the art therapy workshops was sincere and revealing. GTFOSY staff reported that the output produced by the children precipitated more open dialogue with children and, in some instances, was used to engage them in counseling. The ultimate therapeutic value of the workshop and counseling, again, was not ascertainable under the circumstances of this evaluation. However, in both Gantsi and Gaborone, inquiries about future camps from children, teachers, and parents are very frequent.

4.1.6   Identification of Beneficiaries

In Gaborone, teachers are the foremost—though not the exclusive—source of information on eligible children. Teachers working in the SOS school communities identify children and submit their details to SOS. This mechanism is likely to support the objective to "prevent" rather than the objective to "withdraw," but aligns with the program logic of working through schools and enrolling vulnerable children in formal education. There are no deliberate mechanisms instituted for directly recruiting street children or for identifying children already in child labor. It is unclear how the latter might have been accomplished, as there are no obvious locales of child labor other than farms outside of Gaborone.

Community members also participate in identifying children for registration and enrollment. In the community serviced by Notwane Primary school, SOS has benefitted from the support of a community connector: the wife of the local councilor. A keen supporter of RECLISA, she demonstrates knowledge on every household in her community and is aware of their living conditions. Not only is she an invaluable source of community intelligence, but she is a convincing advocate of RECLISA, monitors the school attendance of children, and has certainly had some influence over the retention performance of RECLISA in that particular school. Whereas teachers are likely to identify vulnerable children attending school or children who are truant, the councilor's wife is also able to submit names of children who have not attended school for some time, including street children. She is a very persuasive example of the value of mobilizing key community members for involvement in the program.

In Gantsi, the GTFOSY fieldworkers and project staff rely primarily on their extensive network in the local community to identify children eligible for the program. Their local knowledge and language competency enhances their effectiveness. An interesting aspect of the work in Gantsi is that vulnerable children are remarkably mobile. It is quite common for them to move and live between family and friends across farms, villages, cattle stations, and Gantsi itself. For example, many of the children may also engage temporarily in labor while living on a farm or cattle station, then withdraw themselves to return home. Because of these dynamics, the distinction between "withdrawn" and "prevented" is not simple to apply.

4.1.7   Awareness-Raising Activities

At RECLISA's launch in Botswana, the policy and institutional framework was already favorable with regards to children's rights (see Section 1.1: Country Background). However, consciousness of child labor was low and not a mainstream consideration for government ministries or agencies delivering services to children. The national government was not certain of the prevalence of child labor, and there was doubt as to whether it was a severe enough issue to warrant close attention. Consequently, MOL requested that the awareness-raising activities be delayed nationally until it could determine the seriousness of the issue in Botswana. The relevant facts were collected through the latest Labour Force Survey and have yet to be officially released. Therefore, aside from the Child Labour Conference, no deliberate national awareness-raising mechanisms could be implemented during RECLISA.

However, the decision to comply with MOL's request appears to have been the correct one. The collaborative spirit that has marked the interaction on the Policy Advisory Committee on Child Labour and TECL has allowed BNYC to unobtrusively but systematically lobby the ministries represented. The rapid assessment studies commissioned through TECL assisted in convincing members on the existence and gravity of child labor in Botswana. Subsequently, MOE developed a strategy to mainstream child labor considerations throughout its operations, and all permanent secretaries have reportedly been briefed on the issue as a result of the APEC process.

All interviewees at the government district offices in Gantsi agreed that, because of RECLISA, they had been sensitized to child labor and it was now a consideration in the practice of their professions. However, teachers interviewed did not volunteer "raised awareness of child labor" as an impact of the RECLISA program. Although public forums were arranged to introduce RECLISA to the community and provide them with information on child labor issues, it became clear from interactions with interviewees and informants that it was the "value of education" message that was recalled most readily. The community is aware of RECLISA, so much so that project staff report being approached on the street with inquiries by community members; however, the association of RECLISA as an intervention targeting child labor is not conspicuous.

The exception was the engagement with the agricultural union, where the child labor message was prominent in delivery and, according to GTFOSY project staff, well received by farmers. However, a reported response from a farmer sympathetic to RECLISA's objectives illustrates the complexities involved in attempting to adopt the message. "Kids should be at school. But I see a young guy on my farm for weeks doing nothing. He is not going to school, so I give him some fencing to do. He earns some money and learns a skill I know I can use later."

Putting children to work is generally an accepted practice in Botswana. It is a way to teach responsibility and instill discipline. In Gaborone, teachers and representatives from communities serviced by SOS-targeted schools confirmed that, before RECLISA, no distinctions were drawn between child work and child labor, and the detrimental effects of the latter were not recognized. Since RECLISA, however, this has changed. In destitute families and especially families where the breadwinners are incapacitated, interviewees indicated that children are burdened with a sense of obligation to contribute to the family's livelihood. As a result of RECLISA, children have been made aware of their rights and are more likely to assert them.

4.1.8   Midterm Recommendations

The midterm evaluation proposed a number of recommendations for improving RECLISA in Botswana. The following section revisits the recommendations and considers efforts undertaken to address them.

1. Concerning the project design, USDOL should make sure that partners are included from the start to ensure ownership and that the project fits into the context.

    This recommendation obviously applies to the design of future projects and was not relevance to the continued implementation of RECLISA. It will be repeated in this evaluation with additional justification.

2. In terms of the implementation, awareness should be heightened at the national level by bringing the national conference forward to 2007 rather than 2008. This would ensure that national-level awareness instigates and supports community, school, and parental levels of awareness.

    The recommendation was followed. The conference appears to have succeeded at enhancing the awareness-raising of child labor issues in Botswana more broadly, though wider awareness and public dialogue on child labor was curtailed as a result of the deliberate curtailing of BNYC's advocacy role by request of the Botswana Government.

3. Psychosocial support remains an important part of the program to ensure that children internalize their rights and responsibilities and, in so doing, come to understand the value of education. The project should provide support to the teachers and explore ways of harnessing the RECLISA identity that the children have developed.

    No deliberate effort was made to "harness the RECLISA identity the children have developed." However, the outcomes that such an effort was intended to enhance are apparently being realized, according to interviewee data. In Gaberone, specifically, children enrolled in school through RECLISA and attending RECLISA camps are known among peers, positively, as "RECLISA children."

4. The working status of the children should be tracked. This may provide a deeper understanding of the extent of child labor in the country. Even though definitions of a child and child labor have not yet been formally accepted, the work of PACC, the national conference, and work status tracking should provide opportunities for the country to achieve an acceptable definition of the two terms.

    Efforts were made to implement this recommendation, but the tracking of working status has been problematic. Data collection tools were distributed fairly late in the implementation of RECLISA. The sample from which data has been collected is limited and it is questionable whether the data collected will (1) be of any value in resolving the contesting definitions of child and child labor, or (2) contribute to the knowledge base on child labor. Early analysis, however, does confirm one of the results of the Labour Force Survey: Primary school children are unlikely to have been engaged in labor, while

children over 14 had been working in activities that were mostly domestic and not exploitive.

5. The vocational training provides unique opportunities for children if it is relevant and appropriate, and if the children have a chance of becoming self-sustainable. The project should explore how it can enable sustainability of the project for this area.

    In Gaborone, the vocational training intervention was delayed and did not enjoy the emphasis that other aspects of the program have. It has subsequently been implemented, but the recommendation as it stands not been followed. Vocational training in Gantsi has been innovative and very successful, but plagued with growing pains that have not yet been resolved. In direct response to the success of vocational training in Gantsi and the recommendations of the midterm evaluation, AIR provided additional funds for this aspect of the intervention. It will be featured as an aspect of the interventions that project partners have secured further funding for.

6. RECLISA should formalize its partnership with MOE to enable the creation of a more conducive policy environment. Because the partnership model is central to the project, partners should synchronize their strategies and interventions so that the impact is greater. This synchronization will also assist the interventions of the PACC committee, where lessons learned from the project should explicitly inform the work of the committee and smooth the work of RECLISA.

    Although RECLISA did not formalize its partnership with MOE, the working relationship was quite evidently cooperative. The recommended harmonizing of interventions was also not implemented, but the consistent interaction at the national level between PACC members has encouraged progress in their distinct arenas of activity.

7. RECLISA financial procedures should be mainstreamed across the organizations.

    In response to the midterm evaluation, AIR did mainstream financial and contractual procedures through mechanisms such as centralized partner training, onsite training and support, manuals and PowerPoint presentations, and templates.

8. GTFOSY should explore the formalization of its structure so that it works within its own management and governance practices that are not hampered by voluntary partnerships. This would enable the project to ensure that the vocational courses are sustainable.

    GTFOSY has established the Thutho Isago Trust and included representatives from partner organizations in Gantsi on its board of trustees. The purpose of the trust will be to raise funds to continue with RECLISA interventions, including the vocational training.

9. In Gaborone, the budget for the vocational courses should be reviewed, and a reconciliation of the disbursement of uniforms and PTA funds should be conducted.

    This recommendation was followed and checked through the audit conducted in 2007.

4.1.9   Local NGOs and Organizations

The urgency of implementation and making first-quarter targets resulted in the rapid selection of implementation partners. Although the choices seemed wise and credible partners were selected, they failed to deliver. The AIR regional office recognizes that more could have been done in terms of careful, considered selection of partners and the early assessment of partners' capacities. However, the rapid planning and implementation requirements mean the intention may not have been executable. The initial selection of BNYC has proven fortuitous, and the necessary flexibility to review and act decisively to change ineffective relationships was to the program's benefit.

As more partners were added to the mix, the increasingly complex organizational structure has had some negative consequences. Most frequently cited are the delays in disbursement of funds. Flow-through of funding and communication on funding through so many organizational tiers is inefficient and a burden. In retrospect, it would have probably been better if operational coordination arrangements were bypassed when it came to funding and if all contracting, disbursement, and financial communication was managed directly by the AIR regional office.

Another negative consequence of the extended structure was that some organizations felt that they deserved to be, but were not, acknowledged as equally important partners in RECLISA. In particular, the vocational training service providers felt aggrieved in this regard.

The limited technical capacity to meet monitoring, evaluation, financial management, and reporting requirements complicated project management for implementing partners and required the regional office to provide a substantial amount of technical support.

4.1.10   Street Children

The early emphasis on street children in the program design for Gaborone was geared toward exploiting the strengths of BCC. A detailed knowledge of the street children situation was institutionalized in BCC through its research activities and the fact that it already ran a successful residential program for street children. The organization already had direct access to the target population and the more ambitious aspects of the program plan, such as home reintegration, seemed quite possible.

When BCC withdrew from RECLISA, these advantages disappeared. SOS, which had never before had an outreach program prior to RECLISA, had to rely on their enthusiasm to extend their services beyond their core beneficiary group of orphans within their villages. SOS had to adapt the program plans to more realistically fit their budding capacities. They consequently adopted a strategy that focused on enrolling OVC at risk of child labor into formal education and centered their intervention in schools. Street children would not be dismissed as beneficiaries, but would be reached indirectly.

In Gantsi, the permanent street children population is small. However, there is a mutable contingent on the periphery of the permanent group that are mobile, moving between family and friends across farms, villages, cattle stations, and Gantsi itself. The latter group is reached through conventional implementation strategies employed by GTFOSY. Attempts have been made to recruit the permanent group into RECLISA, but with little success. The already formidable conditions that make formal education unattractive and irrelevant to children in Gantsi are exacerbated in this group by habitual substance abuse. A lack of success with these children might be attributed to the absence of tailored strategies and the demand on resources to execute what became the mainstream tasks of the program.

4.1.11   Monitoring

In Gaborone, SOS had difficulty in monitoring core indicators such as retention, so the expectation for them to monitor child labor during the holidays has predictably gone largely unmet. For GTFOSY in Gantsi, monitoring child labor during the holidays was especially difficult due to distances to farms and between remote settlement locations. Both SOS and GTFOSY did run activities such as the psychosocial support camps during holidays, but this was of course not possible every holiday.

4.1.12   Conclusions

The program logic and primary strategy of enrolling children in formal education to prevent them from engaging in child labor is, on the surface, sound and appropriate to the Gaborone context. However, the same design is fundamentally flawed when applied in Gantsi. The fact is that schools in the Gantsi District (for reasons detailed in the preceding discussion) are profoundly alienating for San children, almost without exception. According to both interviews and supporting literature, hostel schools are very unsafe; this was evident in the school visited, wherein RECLISA children were enrolled. Although enrolling children in school would be an element of a more appropriate program design, the core interventions would have to focus on the root causes of poor attendance rates in the district.

The problems experienced with program partners in Gaborone could not have been predicted. BCC was a credible and eminently suitable choice. Once the relationship proved untenable, the flexibility to change partners and the decisiveness with which the change was executed was ultimately good for RECLISA, as the results achieved by SOS will attest. Unfortunately, the direct focus on street children as beneficiaries was sacrificed.

The RECLISA program aligned well with government programs providing services to vulnerable children at risk of engaging in child labor. RECLISA supplemented these programs by fast-tracking the material provision that the government programs were meant to deliver. Because the government programs in question do not operate optimally, supplementation was, and still is, necessary. By supporting government interventions in this way, RECLISA was later in a position to enhance government service delivery by, for example, sharing its database of children with officials in the Gantsi District office.

The vocational interventions in Gantsi were innovative, providing access to children who would not qualify for training under the BTEP and demonstrably improving their future prospects. The vocational training aspect of the program and the Gantsi efforts in particular arguably deliver the most sustainable direct-action outcomes of the Botswana program.

Although efforts to raise awareness of child labor were curtailed at the request of MOLHA, the goodwill cultivated with the government by complying with this request has resulted in significant progress for the cause at policy level. It allowed BNYC to unobtrusively but systematically lobby its colleagues around PACC and, in conjunction with the work of TECL, inculcate a sensitivity to child labor issues that is being translated into consequential outputs in and across ministries and agencies.

The financial resources were too limited for program partners to implement optimally and maximize the gains against intended outcomes. It is reasonable to expect a regional program to be more cost-effective than individual country programs, but the extent to which cost-effectiveness was possible in this instance appears to have been misapprehended.

4.1.13   Recommendations

The primary intervention strategy of enrolling at-risk children into formal education or alternative education programs appears reasonable and is vindicated in the Gaberone context. As the evaluation has revealed, however, the strategy is inappropriate for the Gantsi area because of the condition in the schools. The insufficiency of the program design for the Gantsi District was conceivably avoidable had a thorough research and needs assessment component been included in the contracted activities of USDOL's service providers. The Gantsi lesson then is that an uninformed duplication of a program design between contexts can result in a program delivering completely unsustainable outcomes by employing a strategy that, on reflection, may be ethically questionable; it is hoped that this justification be enough for this recommendation to be seriously considered.

A revised program design for the Gantsi District might have considered incorporating the following activities. The third and fourth are more challenging to implement because they would require close collaboration with MOE on introducing possibly controversial interventions under the circumstances. The first three, however, are feasible and have the advantage of having been piloted either within or outside of the RECLISA program:

1. **Empowering RAD parents and facilitating their participation on school PTAs.** Currently, RADP represents RAD parents on the Parent/Teacher Associations of hostel schools, simply because of the logistical challenges represented by the distances between settlements and schools. However, this arrangement deepens parents' sense of disempowerment, worsens their perceptions of education service delivery, and does not adequately serve the interests of RAD children. With some effort, parents' participation in PTAs could be secured and positive changes prompted as a result. This was illustrated in the Gantsi District by the determined action of one of the RADP officials who arranged transport for all parents to a PTA meeting of a hostel school. Her action was prompted by the protest of a parent who withdrew his children from the school because

they returned home with obvious signs of physical abuse. The meeting and resulting commitments produced positive results, which will unfortunately be difficult to sustain—parental involvement cannot at present be facilitated consistently with RADP office resources.

2. **Sponsor San literacy workshops for San children and non-San-speaking teachers.** The Naro Literacy Project already offers these workshops and has developed workshop materials that would also assist in teaching San children English. These workshops can better prepare San children for school by promoting a positive school-equivalent experience, conveying the principles of written language, and giving them rudimentary skills in at least one of the languages of instruction (e.g., English). The workshops also pointedly contradict the common prejudice that San children are incapable of interactive classroom behavior. A campaign to convince non-San-speaking teachers seems indispensable, as currently school entrants and the vast majority of teachers have absolutely no common language to communicate in; this is conceivably the ultimate constraining factor in realizing any educational benefits.

3. **Improving and extending vocational training courses.** The vocational training in Gantsi is an innovation supplementing the BTEP, with potentially national application. It is also, when considering return on program cost in terms of sustainable outcomes, the intervention with arguably the highest impact.

4. **Piloting the introduction of assistant teachers for entry grades.** Currently, school entrants and the vast majority of teachers have absolutely no common language to communicate in. There is also no formal facility for teachers to learn the local language and very little incentive, as many teachers harbor ambitions to be posted elsewhere. Meanwhile, the difficulty of Naro may require years before adequate mastery. Introducing teacher assistants into the classroom that could help bridge the communication gap between teachers and students during grades 1 and 2 is a potential solution that has been informally proposed and discussed at MOE, attended by some controversy. The discussions in MOE are admittedly attended by some controversy, as there is a school of thought within the Ministry which holds that in order to service policy goals, such as national unity and economic competitiveness, it is imperative to uncompromisingly reinforce the use of English and Setswana in institutional contexts. However, the concept is not entirely novel and might, with some substantiation, enjoy a favorable reception with certain officials.

5. **Sponsoring the inclusion of assistant caregivers at hostel schools that can speak the mother-tongue of RAD children.** Hostel schools are the most alarming aspect of a dysfunctional system of education delivery to RADs. A substantial part of the problem is the lack of human resources for proper care provision; also, once again, the caregivers that are appointed often cannot communicate, especially with the younger, most vulnerable children. An intervention in this regard would make an invaluable contribution to resolving the challenges associated with hostel schools.

Despite the systemic challenges presented, RECLISA was committed to working against child labor in the Gantsi District, and as the AIR regional office has asserted "was left with no choice but to make the best of the situation." There is merit in the argument that "it is not RECLISA's responsibility, nor is it within its power, to solve the fundamental problems described here." To completely avoid the risks inherent in implementing RECLISA activities in Gantsi, RECLISA would have had to exclude Gantsi's San children from the cohorts entirely or move to another district without such a minority. Neither one of these options would be ethically justifiable. However, RECLISA could have mitigated risk more successfully by tailoring the program design to the unique conditions in Gantsi, focusing on intervention strategies that ameliorate the negative conditions in schools and prioritizing others that are not as dependent on the schooling system.

There are important lessons worth noting in terms of managing relations with the government tactfully and finding effective alternatives to assertive advocacy in awareness raising. BNYC managed to accommodate the sensitivity of the Botswana Government to the publicizing of human rights challenges in the country, while systematically raising the prominence of child labor as an issue in public discourse.

It does appear that one of the challenges experienced with RECLISA was an appropriate estimation of the resources that would be required to attain outcomes at each project site. This may have been a function of developing budgets without being adequately informed about circumstances prevailing at each intervention site. Although only briefly discussed during the evaluation at AIR regional office, it is plausible that an assumption existed that regionally managed programs would prove inherently more cost effective than country-based programs and that this assumption biased the budgeting process toward underestimating resources required. It is recommended that a more circumspect and realistic budgeting process be adopted in future regionally based programs.

4.2   REGIONAL ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND AWARENESS RAISING

4.2.1   Regional Approach

With regard to appropriate program design in a regional context, there are certainly conditions under which a regional approach may be more appropriate than country-specific programs; for example, where cross-border migration is a key aspect of the challenge being addressed. There are aspects of the regional approach in this instance that were valuable.

In the experience of this evaluator, the regional design resulted directly in the most effective management of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) encountered to date. More often than not, the technical capacity to deliver on M&E requirements is missing from implementing partners. Deploying the responsibility for M&E to implementers is fraught with data-related risks. Having a centralized M&E team that travels to implementation sites, provides technical support, reviews and cleans data, and coaches local data-keepers ensures data integrity and enhances the utility of data during implementation. A similar arrangement, provided it is cost-effective,

could be feasible for country-based projects. It is essential that the appropriate capacity is based in-country and available on an ad-hoc rather than just a scheduled basis.

The technical support received by implementing partners from the regional office not only built technical capacity over a more reasonable time frame than the usual crash course, but also resulted in sound data for Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) that could be relied on by the local program partner for managing implementation, as well as by AIR regional, AIR international, and USDOL to make informed decisions.

The collegial atmosphere cultivated between program partners in the various countries is most often remarked on by project staff. There were lessons to be learned from each country and, in some instances, models of good practice have been adopted. This aspect was perhaps not exploited enough. The interaction also served to motivate program partners. As one interviewee put it, "You walk into this office and close the door, but you realize you are not alone in this, and that is very encouraging."

There is also the potential for regional programs to be more cost-effective, because overhead expenditure could be reduced. There would have to be an equivalent of an AIR office in each country for country-based programs; in a regional program, a single regional office could fulfill the functions that a country office might. This would presumably lead to cost savings. Unfortunately, this particular program is not an exemplary instance of how cost savings might be realized, because the budget for the regional program appears to have been too small to optimally realize program outcomes. The comparatively low expenditure for intervention in five countries, when compared with the general cost of USDOL programs in single countries, is not an accurate representation of cost savings that can be achieved through a regional implementation model.

4.2.2 Communication with USDOL

The response in the regional report regarding communication between AIR and USDOL is an accurate reflection of what emerged in discussions between evaluators concerning the information secured from the AIR regional office.

4.2.3 Capacity Development of Local Partners

SOS reported gaining significant value from program partner training as well as from the technical support provided. The reporting demands stretched—but also cultivated—their capacity to administrate in the project office and manage interventions to enhance efficacy. They are confident that the capacity that has been built over the period of program implementation will make it easier to secure funding for their Family Strengthening Programme (FSP).

BNYC indicated that the management capacity cultivated through RECLISA was of limited relevance to them as an advocacy organization rather than a project implementer. However, they did adopt the policy matrix—a tracking tool that effectively measures advocacy effectiveness by monitoring policy development—which has enabled better management of their core function.

GTFOSY acknowledged that there were capacity gains, although the administrative burden was perhaps counterproductive.

4.2.4   Conclusions

A regional program design may have advantages in certain contexts. The value of a number of those advantages, such as those relating to technical support for M&E and sharing lessons learned between country partners, were illustrated by the RECLISA program. Inherent potential in others, such as improved cost-effectiveness, were unrealized.

4.2.5   Recommendations

The technical support for M&E provided in the RECLISA program is worth considering as a model for M&E implementation across all USDOL-funded programs.

Future regional programs should include mechanisms to maximize the value of shared learning between country partners.

4.3   SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

4.3.1   Exit Strategy

Both SOS and GTFOSY have exit strategies in place that should secure program sustainability. SOS has designed a new project (FSP) that incorporates a number of the RECLISA interventions and introduces new elements that will be more inclusive of community stakeholders and children's families. They have already prepared a funding proposal and are confident that enough interest is being generated among donors; likewise, they are satisfied that the technical capacity they have gained through RECLISA and reviewed in their proposal document will sell it. The proposed program remains sensitive to child labor issues.

GTFOSY has established the Thutho Isago Trust and included implementing partners on the board of trustees. They already have a donor interested in funding the continuation of RECLISA interventions. However, the program design needs to be thoroughly reviewed and adapted to address the root causes of poor school attendance; it must also make the most of their more successful activities, such as the vocational training programs.

Should the planned alternative funding for these organizations not be secured, there will be no program sustainability.

A number of intervention outcomes are also sustainable and will have lasting positive effects: (1) those children who gain vocational qualifications, (2) innovations in vocational training courses, (3) the enrollment of children in formal education in Gaborone, and (4) formalized progress at the policy level on child labor issues.

4.3.2   Children and Other Beneficiaries

The program logic underlying RECLISA—that enrolling children in formal education reduces their risk of engaging in child labor and improves their future prospects—is sound for the Gaborone site. With enrollment and retention targets reached and the beneficiaries all being children vulnerable to exploitation, it follows that RECLISA has had the desired impact on those children. Many of those that have remained in the program for the full period have already reached a level of education that will improve their future prospects. With their circumstances improved, the more recently registered beneficiaries are more likely to persist with their education and graduate at levels that improve their future prospects.

The same cannot be claimed for the children in Gantsi. The circumstances that encourage dropping out remain unchanged, and children will continue to do so until the schooling system in the district begins to transform.

The value of the psychosocial support was difficult to ascertain. The interviews with children in both Gaborone and Gantsi did not provide convincing data. It was also not an aspect of the program that could be consistently delivered. However, the materials produced by children in the Heroes Books art therapy classes, reports from program staff, and the enthusiasm for camps voiced by children, parents, and teachers suggest that at least a positive impression was made, even if impact cannot be verified. The need for the psychosocial support programs, however, is self-evident when considering the developmental context of the children. The impact of the formidable social problems that RECLISA children are confronted with—poverty, material need, the incapacitation and loss of parents due to HIV/AIDS, and lack of care and social structure—should not be underestimated.

Vocational training undoubtedly improves future prospects for beneficiaries. Since each of the vocational training graduates will have the means for accessing economic opportunities to improve their livelihoods, the impact of RECLISA is likely to be significant. It has already proven to be so for a number of vocational training graduates, especially in the Gantsi District where jobs or land grants have been secured—a direct result of qualifying.

Among teachers and parents, there is sincere appreciation for the RECLISA intervention and dismay at its immanent closure. Some parents voiced concern that once RECLISA leaves, they will again be unable to meet their children's material needs. Therefore, it seems that RECLISA had a passing but significant impact on destitute parents and caregivers by relieving the burden of provision for a short time. This impact is obviously fleeting. Aside from some indications that parents and teachers are sensitized to child labor issues and the importance of education, there is little evidence of direct lasting impact.

4.3.3 Partner Organizations

SOS has been transformed in terms of capacity as well as focus. They are now determined to reach out and extend their impact.

The principal of the school in Old Naledi claims that the RECLISA intervention has transformed his institution: It is not only more orderly now, but is reaching and retaining more children.

GTFOSY has also improved capacity. More importantly, it has formalized a structure, the Thutho Isago Trust, through which it will enhance the partnerships it has developed in the Gantsi District to continue and extend the RECLISA interventions.

RADO and S&CD in the Gantsi District now have the benefit of a usable database, compiled as a result of RECLISA, which will hopefully enhance their service delivery.

GBDT has extended its service provision and is very excited about the potential for the new vocational courses. Providing training to an entirely new group of children who were previously outside of their sphere of influence has become a priority.

4.3.4 Community Members

When discussing RECLISA at the community level, the immediate associations with the program and the conception of its purpose articulated in interviews do not recognize the prevention of child labor as the program's first priority or as its major contribution to beneficiaries. Instead, it is the value of education in securing future prospects for vulnerable children that stands out as community members' perceptions of what RECLISA is for and what it is achieving. This perspective on RECLISA is possibly a function of its program logic and the visible interventions it implemented, combined with a poor understanding of the nature and consequences of child labor in these communities before RECLISA was introduced.

In Gaborone, interviewees are certainly informed about child labor, recognize that it does occur in their communities, and indicate that they would take (and in some cases have taken) action to confront the practice when they've noticed it. Their sense of urgency, however, is not invested in combating child labor. Rather, it is in improving the prospects of children through improving access to education.

If the issue of child labor is featured as middling on the list of priorities in Gaborone communities, the issue is overwhelmed in a sea of burdens in Gantsi. Many community members remain ambivalent toward child labor, in part because the alternative—educating children— is not attractive for reasons described earlier. The difference in the Gantsi District, however, is that child labor is thoroughly embedded in the web of ills that affect children. Agriculture is the sector with the highest contingent of child employees, and RECLISA has succeeded in sensitizing the leading employers—farmers. It is inevitable that any program attempting to improve the lot of Gantsi children will, directly or indirectly, address child labor.

4.3.5   Child Labor and Education Policies

The most significant outcomes at policy level can more plausibly be attributed to TECL. The release of the APEC draft and the briefing delivered to all permanent secretaries on its contents is a clear and unambiguous signal that the government's commitment to dealing with child labor will be translated into action. Interviews with BNYC staff and government representatives, however, left the evaluator with the impression that the manner in which the relationship with government was managed by RECLISA, the accommodations BNYC made, and the tone of interaction on PACC, all contributed to a facilitating environment for collaboration and progress. RECLISA deserves some recognition for this.

MOE has demonstrated its commitment by creating a child labor desk and appointing the DPE commissioner to it. The commissioner also sits on the PACC. The result has been a strategy for mainstreaming child labor issues in MOE operations—an important formalizing step. The strategy has already been approved and implementation has begun. The child labor desk has also reintroduced discussions within the ministry concerning the transformation of schools into "child–friendly" institutions, as well as the possibility of mother-tongue instruction within the education system.

The government's Circles of Support Model has reportedly taken a number of cues from RECLISA and has consulted with SOS.

The MOLHA is responsible for managing child labor issues. However, little initiative has been taken to develop anything beyond what existed before RECLISA and TECL began. MOLHA was not comfortable to act without a clear picture of the extent of child labor in Botswana. It has, however, overseen efforts to get the research done, which has recently been completed. It is anticipated that this key ministry will be participating more consequentially through TECL II and APEC implementation.

In effect, RECLISA's primary strategy in Botswana supplemented existing government programs designed to facilitate the school attendance of vulnerable children—the same group at risk of being engaged in child labor, and thus, targeted by RECLISA. The supplementation was essential due to ongoing government battles to successfully deliver these services to all eligible children. The government programs will continue. Whether they will be in a position to take up the slack in Gaborone and Gantsi when RECLISA withdraws is not clear, but there are no explicit plans to address the gap when RECLISA ends. In Gantsi District, it is assumed that the GTFOSY will continue the interventions with funding from an alternate donor.

There is also no indication that any of the interventions which are not currently part of existing government programs will be adopted by the government. MOE has launched the Circles of Support Model in the whole country to cater for OVC who encounter barriers to accessing education; hopefully, this model is a government effort toward helping not only RECLISA beneficiaries, but all children in Botswana. GTFOSY had applied for funding from the local district council, but was given a negative reply. A proposal has been sent to the Department of Social Services to fund some of the psychosocial support activities, especially the camps.

In 2008, the camps had already been funded by the District Multi-Sectoral AIDS Committee, which is a government agency.

4.3.6 Impact

In the process of identifying, registering, and enrolling children in formal schooling, the meeting of material needs has been the key facilitating factor. In Gaborone, the factors that keep children out of school are inevitably related to a lack of resources—school uniforms, school fees, school supplies, and food. Supplementing government programs that are intended to meet these needs makes it far easier for children to enroll and stay in school, and relieves them of the imperative to seek out other sources to fulfill these basic needs. Meeting material needs is quite simply the most effective intervention.

In Gantsi, it is not the lack of resources that keeps children out of school, but the conditions in the school. Although the interventions that took care of material needs are necessary, what kept children in school was the relentless, dedicated, and resourceful pursuit carried out by GTFOSY. It has been as effective as the TPRs suggest, but it is certainly not sustainable.

4.3.7 Lessons Learned Regarding Sustainability

Programs often cannot permanently meet the need they were designed to address. As a result, their close inevitably elicits dismay from their temporary beneficiaries. In these instances, outcomes with sustained effects are not enough; somehow, the intervention itself needs to be sustained. Removal of resources is the highest sustainability risk these programs face. There are elements of RECLISA that facilitate the possibility of program sustainability:

- **Inclusion of an exit strategy in the project documents.** Although focus on preparing for exit arrived fairly late in the implementation period, it certainly mobilized the program partners in Botswana to begin making alternative arrangements, and with apparent success. However, this may not be the case in other countries, and it is essential that USDOL carefully review its funding policies. It is this evaluator's opinion that successful programs that are still required are worthy recipients of extended funding.

- **Coupling of direct-action interventions with a program focused on policy reform.** This arrangement is more likely to enable the adoption of direct-action interventions by government at program closeout. It is also likely to eliminate the conditions that precipitate the necessity for the intervention by addressing the conditions through policy.

- **Capacity building of local program partners through the regional AIR office.** In the case of SOS, exposure to the technical requirements of donors and the coaching of local resources to contribute to delivering on those requirements may well have improved their prospect of securing funds from other donors.

No matter how sound a program design may appear, unless it is considered in light of detailed knowledge on each intervention site, there is every possibility that the design may prove to be fundamentally flawed.

4.3.8   Conclusions

Overall, the evidence indicates that the RECLISA program in Botswana is a success. Vulnerable children were prevented or withdrawn from child labor through enrollment in formal education, and vocational training significantly improved the future prospects of some beneficiaries. Partner organizations have also been positively influenced, RECLISA has contributed to policy-level reforms, and the service delivery of certain government functions has not just been supplemented, but enhanced.

The nature of the needs being addressed through RECLISA requires some level of program sustainability. The inclusion of an exit strategy component in the project documents, the parallel program focusing on policy reform, and the capacity building through technical support of personnel at program partner offices have facilitated, to some extent, the possibility of program sustainability. Both GTFOSY and SOS have made arrangements that will, in all likelihood, allow RECLISA interventions to continue on as new programs with funding from other donors. However, the withdrawal of resources from programs like RECLISA, without any possibility of extending the funding period, represents the highest possible sustainability risk.

Finally, the success of RECLISA is not without qualification. Enrolling children in formal education is not a sustainable strategy in Gantsi. Unlike Gaborone, it is the conditions prevailing within the schooling system that drives poor attendance, not external ones. Although the children that were retained in formal education in Gantsi through the relentless hard work of GTFOSY were temporarily prevented from being engaged in child labor, children will continue to drop out. The solution is not presently sustainable. Because little opportunity existed to test the validity of program design applicability at each project site, an insufficient design was implemented in the Gantsi context.

Provision of material needs was the most effective intervention, enabling the enrollment of children in formal education and the prevention of their engagement in child labor. However, it is the vocational training interventions in both Gaborone and, more especially, Gantsi that deliver the most sustainable outcomes and significantly improve the future prospects of children.

4.3.9   Recommendations

A thorough research and needs assessment component to inform program design for and test program validity at each site should be included in the contracted activities of USDOL's service providers.

Programs that work are worth reinvesting in. USDOL should consider a review of funding policy, especially because it funds programs that require the intervention to continue to guarantee sustainability.

Program design elements that facilitate the potential for sustainability of such programs should be deliberately included in future program designs. Such elements entail the deliberate inclusion of exit strategy planning in project documents; direct action coupled with policy reform interventions; effective capacity-building activities (intensive mentoring rather than training workshops); and any others that might be identified.

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V   GOOD PRACTICES

THE PRACTICES THAT STAND OUT IN SECURING OUTCOMES

The provision of material needs to school children in Gaborone directly addresses the conditions that keep children out of school, thereby making it easy to attend and stay in school.

Innovative vocational training in Gantsi allows children previously excluded to have an opportunity to secure future prospects.

WISE APPROACHES

The necessity to change program partners was potentially very detrimental to implementation. However, SOS met their obligations admirably. The flexibility to adapt program strategy to partners' strengths had an influence on this outcome. If the emphasis on reaching street children directly had been adhered to rigidly, the outcome may not have been as positive.

An important contributor to success was how interventions were aligned with, complemented, supplemented, and in some cases enhanced existing programs. This required acknowledging that the logic of government programs was the most appropriate approach to securing RECLISA outcomes and services; this also required making a concerted effort to cooperate, collaborate, and partner with government officials at both national and district level.

REPLICABLE MODELS

The primary objective of the technical support visits by the M&E team was not to build capacity, but to ensure the effective execution of M&E processes. However, capacity building did occur and the results include enhanced program management abilities in country partner offices, as well as quality data and reliable quantitative data in TPRs. The latter is very difficult to ensure, and the model applied here is the most effective yet seen by this evaluator.

The program design included elements that facilitated the potential for program sustainability. In Botswana, the following provisions appear to have delivered results:

- Including an exit-strategy planning component in project documents

- Intensive capacity building

- Coupling a direct-action program with a policy-reform program

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