



Independent Interim Evaluation

REACH-T: Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas

Implemented by:
Winrock International

Evaluator:
Bjorn Nordtveit, PhD

Cooperative Agreement Number: IL-24920-13-75-K

Financing Agency: U.S. Department of Labor

Dates of Project Implementation: September 2013 - September 2017

Evaluation Fieldwork Dates: October 23 - November 6, 2015

Total Project Funds from USDOL: US \$5,000,000



Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad
Consultores Asociados

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii
I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION	7
1.1 USDOL - OCFT	7
1.2 Project Context.....	7
1.3 The REACH-T Project.....	8
II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY.....	9
III. EVALUATION FINDINGS	15
3.1 Project Relevance	15
3.2 Project Progress	18
3.3 Impact.....	19
3.4 Sustainability	26
IV. MAIN CONCLUSIONS.....	28
V. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES	29
5.1 Lessons Learned.....	29
5.2 Good Practices.....	30
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	31
6.1 Key Recommendations	31
6.2 Other Recommendations.....	32

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Overview of Project Progress	33
ANNEX B: PowerPoint Presentation for Stakeholder Meeting	38
ANNEX C: Main Suggestions from Group Work during Stakeholder Meeting.....	45
ANNEX D: List of Documents Reviewed.....	47
ANNEX E: List of Interviews, Meetings and Site Visits	48
ANNEX F: Evaluation Terms of Reference	49
ANNEX G: Data Collection Matrix.....	69

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To central and local authorities for supporting the project and helping during the evaluation;

To project and partner personnel, for their dedication and support;

To USDOL and SFS for facilitating the evaluation and for advice throughout the process;

To Tea Factory Directors, Board Managers and Personnel from Tea Cooperatives for promoting Child Labor free policies;

To teachers, mentors, and community activists for their work for the project and availability for the evaluation;

To the direct beneficiaries for giving their time, often walking long distances to meet me.

Bjorn H. Nordtveit

This report describes in detail the interim evaluation of the Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas (REACH-T) project, conducted during October 2015. The report was prepared under a contract with Sistemas Familia y Sociedad (SFS), according to agreements specified in its contract with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The evaluation of the REACH-T project was conducted and documented by Bjorn H. Nordtveit, an independent evaluator in collaboration with USDOL/OCFT staff, the REACH-T project team, and stakeholders in Rwanda.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEPE	<i>Action Pour le Développement du Peuple</i>
ALERT	Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking System
CA	Community Activist
CAHR	Children at high risk of child labor
CL	Child Labor
CLMS	Child Labor Monitoring System
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CSS	Conditional Scholarship Support
DLI	District Labor Inspectors
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FERWACOTHE	<i>Fédération Rwandaise des Coopératives de Théiculteurs</i>
FRw	Rwandan Franc
GoR	Government of Rwanda
HCL	Hazardous Child Labor
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ILAB	USDOL Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO-IPEC	International Labour Organization Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IO	Intermediate Objective
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFS	Model Farm School
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labor
NAEB	National Agricultural Export Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCFT	USDOL Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REACH-T	Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas
REST	Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SCREAM	Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Me
SFS	<i>Sistemas, Familias y Sociedad – Consultores Asociados</i>
SHE	Sustainable Health Enterprises
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
WDA	Workforce Development Authority
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
WI	Winrock International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Description

On September 17, 2013, Winrock International received a four-year Cooperative Agreement worth US \$5 million from the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) of the US Department of Labor (USDOL) to implement a child labor elimination initiative in Rwanda called Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas (REACH-T). The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement was to support the significant reduction of child labor among children 5-17 years old in the production of tea in Rwanda by implementing a child labor monitoring system (CLMS); by increasing children's access to education; and by promoting decent work for older children, as well as economic opportunities for the households most vulnerable to child labor in tea growing areas. In addition, the project works to enhance the capacity of public and private sector, and civil society, to address child labor and to increase the knowledge base on child labor.

REACH-T aims to support 4,090 children involved in child labor or children at high risk of exploitive child labor, and provide livelihood services to 1,320 households of the most vulnerable children in tea growing areas. The project targets twelve tea growing districts, including Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Rulindo, Gicumbi, Burera, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rutsiro, Karongi, Nyabihu, Rubavu, and Ngororero. Winrock is associated with three key partners to implement this project: Action Pour le Développement du Peuple (ADEPE), Duterimbere, and Fédération Rwandaise des Coopératives de Théiculteurs (FERWACOTHE).

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

As per USDOL Management Procedure Guidelines, OCFT-funded projects are subject to external interim and final evaluations. The Interim Evaluation assesses and evaluates the project's implementation for the first two years, providing insight on what aspects are effective and determining whether the project is on track towards meeting its goals and objectives.

This evaluation employed a qualitative methodology, attempting to understand project activities and stakeholders' relationships with the project through a combination of observation, focus groups, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. A total of 267 interviews were conducted (involving 166 female and 101 male interviewees), either as individual interviews or in focus groups. The evaluator observed utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews.

Following the field visit, a stakeholder meeting was conducted to present the major preliminary findings and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, and obtain clarification or additional information from stakeholders.

Evaluation Findings

The project design and its corresponding Theory of Change are, according to most interviewees, largely appropriate and adequate as they respond to the needs in the twelve districts targeted in Rwanda's tea growing areas. The project does not limit its interventions to children working in the tea sector only, but also includes those in other labor situations. There is an overwhelming

need for social services in these areas, including education, and the demand far outweighs the possibility for the project to meet it (e.g. there are usually more children who meet the criteria than spaces for Model Farm Schools [MFS] in the communities). Of the number who meets the criteria selected by the community and Winrock, and express interest, there is a random selection of that group for the cohort. The process is transparent so the community sees that it is fairly done.

There are a few shortcomings in the design of the project, including two key project components – the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) initiative and the Catch-Up program – that have faced institutional changes that make implementation difficult. Further, disequilibrium in the implementation plan and budget was noticed, and in particular, project personnel felt that there is insufficient emphasis on livelihoods services and youth employment. Likewise, government interviewees suggested that the project focus more on “sustainable” activities, including livelihoods and youth employment.

Further, at the formal school level, some government interviewees (both at national and district levels) felt that the provision of school supplies materials was not always a sustainable way of ensuring continued school attendance, even if combined with income generating activities (IGA) among parents. The reason for this apparent contradiction is the poverty situation faced by many beneficiaries and that these interviewees felt that the project still does not provide “sufficient” training in IGA (e.g. one interviewee suggested to provide seeds or livestock together with longer training periods). The project, however, is working on providing additional training through Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups.

Some much-needed services were lacking: beneficiary children in secondary could not afford to participate in the school feeding program, and therefore went hungry during afternoons. It should be noted that school feeding program in the secondary schools is not a deliverable service under REACH-T. However, most interviewees wished the REACH-T project would contribute towards a school feeding program for secondary school beneficiaries. This could be done through paying for school lunches or training parents and/or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) to prepare lunch at home or at the school, and perhaps also use school gardens as a source of income or as a possible source of food for school lunches.

Interviewed beneficiaries in primary schools visited during the evaluation fieldwork mentioned being subject to corporal punishment (most often caning or whipping using a stick or a whip) at least once during the current school year, even though it is prohibited by law. Some interviewees indicated that it would have been useful if the project could provide pedagogical support in alternative disciplining methods for teachers.

The project encountered some delays during its first year of implementation. The girls identified for vocational training (in August 2015) through the Conditional Scholarship Support (CSS) Program had still not received training. The first MFS cohort had enrolled 236 beneficiaries and the second cohort had enrolled 216 (on schedule), resulting in 452 MFS youth enrolled by the end of September 2015 (against a targeted 615 as of October 2015). Hence, some of the project’s activities had just started up when the mid-term evaluation took place, and others had not yet started (see **Annex A: Overview of Project Progress** for reported figures as per October 2015).

The CLMS and its associated Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application were established in February 2015. Training of District Labor Inspectors took place in June 2015. Community activists (CAs) were trained in July and August 2015, and consequently the CAs began using the system in August 2015. The system consists of an innovative two-interface reporting system, using mobile phones to generate reports of observed child labor and computer software to retrieve these reports.

The project's policy and awareness work has started, including the completion of a baseline study, a labor law enforcement assessment, a school assessment, a skills training assessment and an Occupational Safety and Health Study. For formal education, the school academic year starts in January, and beneficiary children were enrolled in January 2015 as planned. Two types of volunteers have been associated with the project: community activists who are using the ALERT, and who are also helping with the tracking of beneficiary children if they are absent or drop out from school. Technically, these volunteers could also be tracking the work status of the beneficiary children during holidays and weekends, and report possible child labor through the CLMS system, but this is not possible in many cases due to long distances between beneficiary households.¹ At school level, two volunteer "mentors" (school teachers) are following up on the beneficiaries. Also, children are organized into groups (or "clubs") of ten, who are monitoring each other's schooling and reporting to the mentors if any of the beneficiaries are absent.

Most beneficiary children in formal school were working outside school hours; some were performing light work at home, but many others were involved in heavier work that interfered with their schooling (especially with homework).² Most of the MFS beneficiaries worked (many in tea production), and the girls identified for the conditional scholarship support/vocational training component (CSS, which had not yet started) were also in work.³ For these latter, project personnel expect them to be out of child labor after receiving training (as it may take some time to "understand the compliances for safe work in the 16-17 age group").

¹ Winrock respondents reported that CA and beneficiary children were selected in the same cells as the existing primary schools. The distances were not considered long (by project respondents). However, community activists complained about the distances and felt it was difficult if not impossible to regularly follow up on all the beneficiaries. Most children indicated that they were living 1-2 hours walking distance from school.

² E.g. in one primary school, many children got up at 4 AM to feed cows and fetch water (which made more than half of them sleepy during school hours). Of 47 students interviewed in this school, 15 worked in tea plantations during the holidays, and 8 during the school year (especially during the weekends). All were helping at home with light and normal housekeeping tasks, but some were also complaining about more heavy work, such as in the examples described above.

³ It would be difficult to evaluate individual cases in the framework of a short evaluation, but many children stated that their work interfered with their schooling. A few of the children in primary school and many more in secondary school, as well as most of those in MFSs and waiting for the CSS, gave examples of very long work days that may well fall within the definition of hazardous child labor (e.g., from 5:30-6:00 AM to 8 or 9 PM). The reasons for these long work hours were said to be to "help with housework" in the morning and evening, and labor in tea plantations or family fields during the day. No case of forced labor was detected; most children said they needed to "work to eat."

Moreover, these latter had little information about the project's intentions, other than that they would receive six months of vocational training. It should be noted that the beneficiaries' work situation is not due to the project's lack of monitoring, but is rather due to the beneficiaries' extreme poverty. Still, for most children the support, in terms of supplies combined with the mentoring program, made them return to school and attend school regularly even if they had to work outside school hours. However, the effectiveness of the support was diminished by the low durability of some of the supplies, in particular the shoes and schoolbags provided to beneficiaries in formal schools. Project respondents noted that most of the shoes distributed are second hand, but well-made and often better quality than new shoes. As this is often the children's only pair of shoes, they use them out of school hours and in rough terrain.

In order to support income-generating activities among the beneficiary households, VSL groups were formed, involving the beneficiary children's caregivers. Each member saves from 100-500 Rwandan francs (FRw) per week for one year. The groups provide loans to members, up to three times any individual's savings, generally at an interest rate of 5% per month for a maximum of three months. The groups also have a "social" component, providing relief funding to members in case of family bereavement or member hospitalization. Most interviewed participants and local authorities praised this initiative and found it useful, although more training in IGAs was requested, for example in agriculture and in husbandry. Some interviewees also asked for literacy training, as they could not read or write. As for the use of the money borrowed or generated through the final pay-out of the saving cycle, some interviewees suggested that they could use the funds to deal with "poverty" (i.e. periodical decline in income connected to the agriculture cycle to pay for essentials, such as food, health or school-related expenses); others expressed the wish to eventually be able to buy cattle.

Project partnerships and coordination mostly seemed to be good at the project level (between partners), as well as with relevant central and local government institutions (although more regular information was requested by some government partners). Moreover, the REST has contributed to creating awareness on the topic of child labor among personnel at tea factories and cooperatives, as well as among local authorities (although it faced difficulties to develop policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry, as originally intended). Cooperation with other organizations is ensured through the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), a government institution that is coordinating and evaluating development initiatives in Rwanda.⁴ However, REACH-T is missing clear coordination with other programs offering social protection services. In particular, health insurance and the school feeding program in secondary school seem to be important for ensuring continued schooling for beneficiaries.

Finally, in reviewing the project's objectives, interviewed stakeholders had different views on the sustainability of the project's actions. For example, some interviewees saw the provision of educational supplies as a "basic" strategy, lacking sustainability. Other activities, such as awareness raising, income-generating activities through the VSLs, and promotion of alternative

⁴ The JADF was established in 2007 by Ministerial Instructions No. 04/07 of 15/07/2007 to serve as a consultative forum for district development stakeholders (Civil Society Organizations, Nongovernmental Organizations, Development Partners, Private and Public Sectors and Local Government).

livelihoods and decent work through MFSs, were praised for their potential for sustainability beyond the project's life. Likewise, government authorities found the Child Labor Monitoring System important for future monitoring of child labor in the country.

In conclusion, despite some initial delays and challenges, the project has made headway towards meeting its targets and objectives to reduce exploitive child labor in Rwanda's tea-growing areas in alignment with the REACH-T Project Document and its objectives. A number of good practices should be underlined, including the project's community-based approach to beneficiary selection and monitoring, the CLMS/ALERT system, and multi-stakeholder approach to addressing child labor.

Recommendations

1. Review key project activities, their budget, and their sustainability. In particular, it is recommended to:
 - Re-equilibrate the budget in view of a changing implementation environment and identified needs of project beneficiaries and stakeholders;
 - Review project targets and determine which planned activities are feasible in the current implementation context;
 - Explore possibilities for an extension to provide project support until the end of a third school year (i.e. to the end of 2017).
2. Review the quality/quantity of the equipment provided to beneficiaries, and in particular:
 - Assess the possibility to improve the "package," especially in view of reports of shoes and bags that have already broken;
 - Consider offering much-needed access to the school feeding program for beneficiaries in secondary school or training PTAs in school gardens or other sustainable methods to provide lunch for secondary school children;
 - Consider the possibility to offer needs-based equipment, e.g. sanitary pads for girls in secondary school.
3. Consider strategies for providing toolkits to those having completed vocational training as a part of the MFS or the CSS, e.g. sewing machines, hairdressing supplies, carpentry tools, etc.
4. Review the transition strategy of the CLMS and the associated ALERT, and consider how these tools could help central and local authorities, and community activists, to better monitor the child labor situation in Rwanda in the future. In particular, the *mobility* of both the local activists and of those following up on the reporting should be considered.
5. Provide training to the VSL members on how to calculate each member's "due" after a completed cycle of savings. Also, enhance their training in income-generating activities.
6. Review the direct monitoring of beneficiaries, especially assessing whether it is possible to better follow up on the work beneficiaries are doing outside school hours (including during holidays), to ensure that they are not involved in exploitive child labor.
7. Provide awareness raising for teachers in disciplining methods to reduce incidence of corporal punishment;
8. Seek stronger cooperation with other projects and programs, especially those offering social protection services that project stakeholders can benefit from.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 USDOL - OCFT

The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). OCFT activities include research on international child labor; supporting U.S. government policy on international child labor; administering and overseeing cooperative agreements with organizations working to eliminate child labor around the world; and raising awareness about child labor issues.

USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects generally seek to achieve five major goals: (1) Reducing exploitative child labor, especially the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), through the provision of direct educational services and by addressing root causes of child labor, including innovative strategies to promote sustainable livelihoods of target households; (2) Strengthening policies on child labor, education, and sustainable livelihoods, and the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, to address its root causes, and to promote formal, non-formal and vocational education opportunities to provide children with alternatives to child labor; (3) Raising awareness of exploitative child labor and its root causes and the importance of education for all children, and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures; (4) Supporting research, evaluation, and the collection of reliable data on child labor, its root causes, and effective strategies, including educational and vocational alternatives, microfinance and other income generating activities (IGA) to improve household income; and (5) Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The approach of USDOL child labor elimination projects – decreasing the prevalence of exploitive child labor through increased access to education and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable families – is intended to nurture the development, health, and safety of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor and enhance their future employability.

1.2 Project Context

The project context is best reflected in the project’s baseline report,⁵ a survey targeting 2,850 households with at least one child aged 5 to 17 years old in tea-growing villages across twelve districts. Overall, about 88% of the surveyed children in this geographic area had two living parents, 11% had one parent, while 1% of the children were orphans. A disproportionately large number of orphans and children with only parent were to become project beneficiaries because of their situation in abject poverty. In fact, *most* households studied in the baseline report were characterized by high levels of poverty (just 7.4% of households reported having access to electricity and 53% owning a mattress) and by low levels of education: “32% of

⁵ Laterite Ltd. 2015. *REACH-T – Baseline Prevalence Study on Child Labor in Tea-Growing Areas in Rwanda* (Final Draft; August 2015). It should be noted that the project beneficiaries are selected among the poorest households in this area.

household-heads reported having no formal education, about 31% of household-heads reported having completed primary school and less than 10% having completed secondary school” (p. 9).

The report also found that the importance of tea as one of Rwanda’s main export products was not reflected in the composition of household income in tea-growing areas, as only an “estimated 35% of the interviewed households reported generating some income from tea, either on their own farm or working for a third party (e.g. working for the tea factory/plantation, working for other farmers)” (p. 9). Further:

The majority of children who work in tea farming are involved in plucking tea leaves and weeding. About 7% are involved in applying fertilizers/chemicals and 20% in carrying sacks/bags of tea to weighing stations, two activities which constitute hazardous child labor (HCL). The main difference between boys and girls is that girls are almost two times more likely to engage in holing/planting seedlings. Boys are marginally more likely to carry bags of tea to the weighing stations, to prune and to fetch firewood to dry the leaves. Younger children are more likely to be involved in plucking, while older children are more likely to help with weeding, applying fertilizers and holing/planting seedlings. In general, there are not many differences in the type of tea-related activities children engage in between age groups. In addition, the share of children farming tea is lower in the vicinity of tea factories, despite the fact that the closer a household lives to a tea factory the higher the likelihood that tea will be a major source of income (p. 11).

This latter is likely due to the prohibition of child labor on factory-owned tea fields, which seemed to be systematically enforced by factory personnel in the areas visited during the evaluation. Other tea producing areas owned by cooperatives or farmers (*thé villageois*) did not have the same level of structured enforcement for laws and policies preventing child labor.

Tea growing areas constitute core geographic areas for development initiatives because of the general poverty of the population, which leads to child labor in tea and other sectors. This also makes interventions complex, since simply providing education services, without addressing the key problem of poverty, may not be enough to eradicate child labor. Both central and local authorities are aware of these challenges, and are systematically cooperating with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) through structured partnerships where expectations are outlined in so-called development “Performance Contracts.” Performance Contracts are set up both vertically between different government levels, and horizontally between local authorities and project partners. Further, a government institution, the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), steers NGO coordination on development goals and also performs a yearly evaluation of local project performance.

1.3 The REACH-T Project

On September 17, 2013, Winrock International received a four-year Cooperative Agreement worth US \$5 million from USDOL to implement a child labor elimination initiative in Rwanda called Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas (REACH-T). The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement is to support the significant reduction of child labor among children 5-17 years old in the production of tea in Rwanda by implementing a child labor monitoring system (CLMS); by enhancing labor law enforcement efforts on smallholder farms; by increasing children’s access to education; and by promoting decent work for older children and economic opportunities for households vulnerable to child labor in tea growing areas.

REACH-T aims to support 4,090 children involved in child labor or at high risk of exploitive child labor, and provide livelihood services to 1,320 households of the most vulnerable children in tea growing areas. The project targets twelve districts: Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Rulindo, Gicumbi, Burera, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rutsiro, Karongi, Nyabihu, Rubavu, and Ngororero. Winrock is associated with three key partners to implement this project: *Action Pour le Développement du Peuple* (ADEPE), *Duterimbere*, *Fédération Rwandaise des Coopératives de Théiculteurs* (FERWACOTHE).

The REACH-T project's Theory of Change (ToC) assumes that the reduction or elimination of child labor will be a progressive and cumulative result, deriving from the application of a three-pillar approach:

- Streamlined, vertically integrated CLMS, using community activists to recognize and report child labor abuses and enforce laws;
- Catalyze tea sector leadership, building private sector capacity to address child labor and enhance awareness of the risks of child labor in tea by working directly with members of the tea sector; and
- Provision of services through a community-centric model; community members will serve as program focal points for the provision of direct services to members of households where children are involved in or at risk of child labor.

The project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) identified seven main intermediate objectives (IO) that provide the framework of the ToC: (1) Increased enforcement of child labor laws in the tea sector; (2) Increased school attendance among beneficiary children 5-17 years of age in target districts; (3) Increased incomes in beneficiary households; (4) Increased opportunities for safe employment for beneficiary children of legal working age (16-17 years); (5) Child labor issues addressed in the Government of Rwanda's policies and private sector action plans; (6) Community attitudes towards child labor changed; and (7) Beneficiary households referred to social protection services.

These objectives will be accomplished by providing the financial, material, and social support needed to place child laborers back into the education system, improve household livelihoods, facilitate household access to social protection, promote safe work standards for older children of working age (16 and 17 years old), build the capacity of government and tea stakeholders, raise awareness of the negative consequences of child labor, and increase enforcement and the availability of data on child labor in tea production through the CLMS.

II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Objectives

As per USDOL Management Procedure Guidelines, OCFT-funded projects are subject to external interim and final evaluations. The interim evaluation assesses and evaluates the project's implementation for the first two years, providing insight on what aspects are effective and determining whether the project is on track towards meeting its goals and objectives. The evaluation addressed the following issues:

- A. Relevance: Assess the relevance of the project's Theory of Change to the issue of child labor in Rwanda and whether activities are being implemented in accordance with the project design.
- B. Progress: Evaluate the project's progress made so far, and whether it is likely to complete all activities and results as delineated in the project document. Analyze the factors that may be contributing to successes and challenges. Assess what is currently happening on the ground and if necessary make recommendations to ensure the project will meet the agreed-upon outcomes, goals and timeline.
- C. Impact: Describe the results of the project by the date of the evaluation, at institutional and community levels, and especially, on the lives of beneficiary households and children.
- D. Sustainability: Assess the steps taken by the project to mainstream project activities and recommend actions to increase sustainability before project phase-out.

Specific Terms of Reference (TOR) questions provided by USDOL that the interim evaluation seeks to answer are as follows:

1. To what degree is the project design appropriate and adequate to address the key causes of child labor among beneficiary children and households?
2. At midterm, is the project on track to meet its targets/objectives?
3. Please assess the strengths and weaknesses of the CLMS, including at the national, sectoral and community levels. In particular, please assess the status of the Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application. How has the collaboration been between Labor Inspectors and community volunteers in monitoring under the CLMS?
4. How effective is the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring System (DBMS)? Does it meet the needs and requirements of the project?
5. Please assess the effectiveness of the education interventions provided to children (i.e. the conditional component for children attending public schools, Catch-up programs, Model Farm Schools, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET].) Has the mentoring program been effective in preventing beneficiary children from leaving school?
6. How effective is the livelihoods program in reducing child labor? In particular, please assess the training programs to promote safe, decent and sustainable work in agriculture and the Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups. Is the livelihoods program, in whole or in part, sustainable?
7. How have recent changes in national law and policy affected the project's implementation plans and abilities to fulfill the objectives and goals? In particular, please look at the impact of the Justice for Children policy and the Ministry's decision to end Catch-Up funding on the project.
8. How effectively is REACH-T coordinating with implementing partners and stakeholders to reduce child labor?

9. Please assess the youth employment component of the project, including transitioning legal working age children from child labor to acceptable work.
10. Have the project beneficiaries been able to access social protection programs?
11. To what extent has the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) been effective as a platform for industry and government stakeholders to reduce child labor? Where are they at in the process of developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry?
12. To what extent has the project's sustainability plan been deployed? Thus far, have challenges come up regarding this plan? If so, does the evaluator have recommendations for moving forward?

These questions will be addressed in Section III of this document, and will be classified into four subsections, including (1) Relevance: reviewing TOR question 1 above; (2) Progress: reviewing question 2; (3) Impact: reviewing questions 3 – 11; and (4) Sustainability: reviewing question 12 above.

2.2 Methodology

Before beginning fieldwork, the evaluator created a data collection matrix, which outlined the source of data for each TOR question (see **Annex G**). This helped make decisions as to how the time in the field was to be allocated. It also helped ensure that all possible avenues for data triangulation were explored and is intended as a guide indicating where the evaluation findings are coming from.

The following principles were applied during the evaluation process:

1. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives were triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions.
2. Efforts were made to include parents' and children's voices and beneficiary participation, using child-sensitive approaches following the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor⁶ and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children.⁷
3. Gender and cultural sensitivity were integrated in the evaluation approach.
4. Consultations incorporated a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, allowing additional questions to be posed that were not included in the TOR, whilst ensuring that key information requirements were met.
5. As far as possible, a consistent approach was followed in each project site, with adjustments made for the different actors involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality.

⁶ See: <http://www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=3026>

⁷ See: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html

2.3 Sampling

A two-stage cluster sampling strategy was used to identify six communities in the three implementation zones (i.e. the Western, Southern, and Northern Provinces). At the first stage, three districts, one in each province, were identified through random selection. At a second stage, two communities were selected in each district through stratified sampling, based on a clustering of communities with “promising practices” and with “implementation challenges,” in order to cover a variety of implementation categories in distinct geographic environments. In practice, the scope of the evaluation made it very difficult to find significant differences between communities.

This led to the selection of Nyabihu District in the Western Province (field visits to Muringa and Karago sectors); Nyamagabe District in the Southern Province (field visits to the Buruhukiro sector); and Gicumbi district in the Northern Province (field visits to Shangasha and Mukarange sectors).

Table 1: Overview of Interview Categories

	Kigali/ Central	Western Province	Southern Province	Northern Province	Female	Male	Total
Child and youth Beneficiaries	-	13 (MFS)	12 (formal)	111 (formal) 16 CSS	10(MFS) 73 (formal) 16 (CSS)	3 (MFS) 50 (formal)	152
Parents/ VSL groups	-	-	12	45	50	7	57
Tea factories/ cooperatives	-	2	2	1	-	5	5
Community activists	-	2	1	2	3	2	5
School directors, mentors, teachers	-	4	2	3	3	6	9
Government staff	4	5	1	9	5	14	19
Project staff	5	5	3	-	4	9	13
Partner staff	4	1	1	1	2	5	7
Total	13	32	34	188	166	101	267

The table above gives an overview of interview categories held in Kigali and in the three provinces. A total of 267 interviews were conducted (involving 166 female and 101 male interviewees), either as individual interviews, in focus groups, or in larger community groups (these latter were organized exclusively in the Northern Province; see **Section 2.8** on “Limitations” below). Most project and government staff interviews were held as individual interviews, or in small focus groups of 2-4 participants.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

This evaluation employs a qualitative methodology and is limited in time and scope. Hence, it used a qualitative approach to obtain “thick” descriptions of project activities and stakeholders’ relationships with the project. Thick descriptions can be understood as “transcending research paradigms,” and “involve detailed, rich descriptions not only of participants’ experiences of phenomena but also of the contexts in which those experiences occur.”⁸ The “thickness” of the descriptions therefore relates to the multiple layers of culture and context in which the experiences (e.g. of children involved with or at risk of child labor) are embedded. In this evaluation, the evaluator attempted to obtain such thick description of the children’s lives through a combination of observation, focus groups, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Some of the interviewed beneficiary children were asked to draw pictures of a certain aspect of their lives (e.g. what do you do in your free time?). The evaluator then established a dialogue with them based on various aspects of their drawings. The evaluator took pictures of the drawings to use them in the subsequent analysis (the children kept the drawings and pencils). Because the evaluation corresponded with the end of the school year, this approach could be implemented only in the Southern Province.

In most interviews with government officials and project staff, the evaluator used English or French as the language of communication. For interviews with children, parents, and in other cases when the interviewee did not speak English or French, an independent translator translated from French to Kinyarwanda and also assisted in recording interviewee data.

2.5 Other Relevant Issues

The evaluator spent approximately three days in each district. One day was used for interviews with local officials and implementation counterparts, and/or visiting other institutions as suggested by project or official staff. The evaluator then spent one full day in each community visited (see table above for type and gender of interviewees).

2.6 Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The evaluation mission observed utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and to ensure freedom of expression of the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, beneficiaries and implementing partner staff members were not present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff accompanied the evaluator to make introductions whenever necessary in order to facilitate the evaluation process, make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

⁸ Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 250-260.

2.7 Stakeholder Meeting

Following the field visits, a stakeholder meeting was conducted that brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including the implementing partners and other interested parties. Stakeholders from all of the districts served by the project were invited.

The meeting was used to present the major preliminary findings and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, and obtain clarification and additional information from stakeholders, including those not interviewed earlier. The PowerPoint presentation showing the main findings is included (**Annex B**), as well as the results of the group work (**Annex C**).

2.8 Limitations

The fieldwork for the evaluation lasted about two weeks and the evaluator did not have enough time to visit all of the project sites. All efforts were made to ensure that a sufficient number of sites were visited to obtain a good understanding of project performance. A cost-efficiency analysis is not included because it would require impact data which were not available.

It should be noted that due to weather inclemency and impassable roads, the visit to Groupe Scolaire Kibyangira in Buruhukiro Sector proved impossible, and a last-minute change to Mata Primary school in Nyaruguru Sector took place, which also led to an unscheduled visit to the Mata Tea Factory.

The evaluation's second week coincided with sixth grade examination, so the evaluator was able to use systematic sampling only in three project sites, in the Muringa and Karago Sectors (for Model Farm Schools) and in Mata Primary School. In the Northern Province, using project beneficiary lists collected from Kigali, larger group discussions were organized (involving all the children who had come to take part in the evaluation).⁹ This explains the larger number of interviewees from the Northern Province in the table above. Beneficiaries who were withdrawn from child labor and those who were prevented from entering child labor were interviewed.

Also, it should be noted that the visit also coincided with the end of Sector and District Performance reporting, which led to difficulties meeting with government officials in some districts (e.g. in Nyamagabe District, Southern Province, the evaluator could only meet with the Labor Inspector).

⁹ The use of systematic sampling is often preferred over on-site convenience sampling, since the former may reveal reporting issues as well as undocumented absenteeism and/or dropout. In the case of the evaluation of beneficiary schoolchildren in the Northern Province, many of the children had walked for more than an hour to take part in the evaluation. This was not part of the initial methodology, but the evaluator felt it would be culturally unacceptable to use subsamples of the children in focus group sessions. Instead, larger sessions were organized, giving *all* the children the opportunity to provide feedback on project activities. Also, in this way all the children's names and their reception of project services could be checked against project reporting lists. It should be noted that with a qualitative strategy, the sampling did not intend to be representative in the quantitative sense. Accordingly, the unequal sampling will not have skewed the findings, since no differentiation or comparison between communities is made.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The interim evaluation is organized around the review of the twelve questions from the Terms of Reference (see **Section 2.1**), which are subdivided into the following four sections (1) Project Relevance; (2) Project Progress; (3) Impact; and (4) Sustainability.

3.1 Project Relevance

This section assesses the relevance of the project's Theory of Change (ToC) to the issue of child labor in Rwanda and whether activities are being implemented in accordance with the project design.

Question 1: To what degree is the project design appropriate and adequate to address the key causes of child labor among beneficiary children and households?

The very complex and multifaceted project design and its corresponding Theory of Change are, according to most interviewees, largely appropriate and adequate, as they respond to needs in Rwanda's tea growing geographic areas, but do not limit project intervention to children working in the tea sector. As noted in the project's baseline study – and as evidenced by interviews – there is lower prevalence of children working in the tea sector than in other sectors in the project implementation areas. Still, exploitive child labor in tea production is of concern. Prior to REACH-T implementation, the concerned communities had little knowledge of child labor.¹⁰

There is an overwhelming need for social services, including education, in the project intervention areas and the demand far outweighs the possibility for the project to supply it (at times, beneficiaries needed to be identified through sweepstakes, since the number of possible beneficiaries so largely exceeded provision). During fieldwork, most interviewees, and especially government staff, teachers and project staff underlined this *numerical* limitation of the project. However, as noted by project staff, "Local authorities seek to maximize the impact of the project; and we cannot reply to [all] their requests."

Also, there are a number of other shortcomings in the design that were identified by respondents, some linked to the quickly evolving situation in Rwanda. Specifically, two project components, the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) initiative, and the Catch-Up program have faced institutional changes that made implementation difficult, if not impossible. For REST, the newly created Steering Group on Child Labor makes the initiative partially redundant and institutionally unanchored (see also the reply to TOR question 11 in **Section 3.3** below for a more in-depth analysis of this issue). The Catch-Up program (a program targeted at children and youth who have dropped out, which is seeking to reintegrate

¹⁰ In most interviewee's opinion, the services provided by the project are useful and its Theory of Change corresponds to local needs. The review of the project design does not enumerate all the positive strategies of the project, so as not to duplicate **Section 5.2** on Good Practices. Instead, this section emphasizes possible shortcomings and/or design issues.

them into primary schooling) could not be implemented since it has been discontinued by the government under the grounds that schooling is now free and mandatory, and early drop-outs should be eliminated (see also TOR question 7 in **Section 3.3** below). For this latter, interviewees (including school directors, local civil servants, teachers and community activists [CAs]) deplored its discontinuation, stating that it was still a necessary program. Moreover, the initial plan to institutionalize Model Farm Schools (MFS) and provide certificates to attendees was not feasible within the remaining timeline of the project, according to project personnel (the youth still receive project certificates on graduation, which is regarded as a step out of poverty and into a vocational or agricultural skill). Any such institutionalization would need strong Government support, including financial support, and it is unlikely that the Government would prioritize MFS as an alternative to its own vocational training institutes. Still, Winrock personnel indicated that they are working with FERWACOTHE to adopt the program and seek support for sustainability so it would be a locally accessible training program. The fact that some attendees were hardly literate would make it difficult to institute a government-sanctioned certificate. In many ways, the MFSs function in a similar way to the now-defunct Catch-Up program, in the sense that it offered an alternative to unschooled children and those who had dropped out.

Despite a number of adequate and important activities, project staff felt there were disequilibria in the implementation plan and budget. In particular, it was felt that there is not enough emphasis on livelihoods services and youth employment. Also, since the target population is living in abject poverty, many stakeholders could not afford health insurance, which was a service project staff wanted to provide within the project budget (it should be noted that such component would not necessarily prove sustainable).

Further, at the formal school level, the provision of materials may not always be a sustainable way of ensuring continued school attendance, even if combined with income generating activities among parents. A high-level district civil servant was especially critical of this component:

The project has helped children to come back to school. However, they [the beneficiaries] should get something that may generate income (*quelque chose de rentable*), not school supplies... When the project finishes, they [beneficiaries] cannot buy supplies because they're too poor... Also, the equipment packages are the same for all; they should be adjustable to each individuals' situation, not constitute a one-size-fits all solution.

During fieldwork, stakeholders regretted the lack of some important services: access to the school feeding program in the secondary schools is not a deliverable service under REACH-T. However, teachers and children at the secondary school level indicated that beneficiary school children could not afford participating in the program, and therefore went hungry during the afternoons (primary schools are generally double shift, and organize classes in the morning or in the afternoon, whereas secondary schools have classes during both mornings *and* afternoons). This has led to beneficiaries sleeping during afternoon sessions, or leaving school

to seek something to eat. Moreover, secondary school girls complained of the lack of sanitary pads in the equipment kit, leading to their absence from school for 3-4 days per month.¹¹

Another lacking activity consists of pedagogical support in alternative disciplining methods to prevent corporal punishment (e.g. canings on the hands or buttocks using a stick, or whipping). Even though it is prohibited by law, *all* interviewed beneficiaries in primary schools mentioned being subject to such punishment (i.e. they said they had been receiving corporal punishment at least one time during the current school year), whereas none in MFS or secondary school said they were subject to such punishment.

Further, some interviewees questioned the cost-effectiveness of certain activities; for example, vocational training for 16-17 year old youth to ensure transition into “age-appropriate work.” Perhaps the project’s theory of change on this particular point could be further discussed.¹² During the training, these young people are likely to continue working (as demonstrated by evaluation findings; see TOR question 9 in **Section 3.3** below), and the component further seemed to suggest to some interviewees that tea production and farming are not, somehow, “appropriate” work for young adults (i.e. aged 18 and above). Whereas tea production and farming are certainly not lucrative in Rwanda, other interviewees confirmed there is little evidence that tea-related work is not “appropriate.” One interviewed tea factory manager said:

All the personnel working for the factory [in factory-owned tea fields and the factory unit] are enrolled in Rwandan social security (*ils ont la sécurité sociale*). They can have a career in Tea. My factory production chief started in the fields. As a matter of fact, I, myself, started in the fields. The field supervisors check the workers and evaluate them every six months. Those working well are recompensed.

In line with this, the project is teaching about tea through its MFS (and will strengthen this component), as it is important for the new generation of agriculturalists. Also, its study on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) has been conducted to create safe work conditions in the sector. In conclusion, whereas the project’s theory of change and main activities are *mostly* adequate and useful, there are both strategic and budgetary issues that could be reconsidered in order to improve project performance for the remaining time of project implementation (see Recommendations in **Section 6.1**). Also, as noted above, there are also a number of planned activities that are unlikely to be implemented as stated in the project document, and a review of targets may therefore be useful.

¹¹ The *quality* of the project-provided equipment is seen as an impact issue rather than as related to project relevance, and is therefore discussed under TOR question 5, **Section 3.3**).

¹² This particular comment is *not* intended as a recommendation for a change of project strategy in regards to the vocational training in other sectors, such as carpentry or sewing, as the beneficiaries are identified and are eagerly awaiting their training. In the evaluator’s opinion, this training should be accomplished as satisfactorily as possible in this project’s context. For future projects, however, service cost to this age group may be compared to, for example, assistance to younger children in child labor, or engaged in/at risk of WFCL.

3.2 Project Progress

This section evaluates the project's progress made so far, and whether it is likely to complete all activities and results as delineated in the project document. It attempts to analyze factors that may be contributing to successes and challenges, and assess what is currently happening on the ground.

Question 2: At midterm, is the project on track to meet its targets/objectives?

The project encountered some initial delays due to the interrupted start-up of activities, mainly because of administrative issues related to questions about the tax status of the project. Also, there was some confusion because of the baseline: the project management initially conceived of it as a tool for selecting geographic target areas and beneficiaries. However, this had to be changed as the baseline was only recently finalized (in October 2015). In any case, the selection of districts seemed *very* appropriate; not only because of the tea production in the targeted communities, but also because of the general poverty context and widespread use of child labor.¹³

The first cohort of beneficiaries in primary school were selected for calendar year 2015 (which corresponds to the academic year); the first cohort of MFS had just finished the 6-month agricultural related part of their training and was waiting for a 3-month vocational training at the time of the evaluation.¹⁴ Also, two other cohorts of MFS are planned, which led the project staff to express some concern for the timing of remaining activities (452 out of a targeted 950 youth have been enrolled and partially trained).¹⁵ IMPAQ International, a Maryland-based research, evaluation and technical assistance firm, is assessing the impact of the MFS program and helps organize the selection of beneficiaries. Project respondents noted that IMPAQ is bringing randomization that fits the participatory and transparent, community-based selection strategy already in use by the project for the selection of all project beneficiaries. The selection seems to have been very well done (see **Section 5.2** on Good Practices).

The girls identified for vocational training under the Conditional Scholarship Support (CSS) program in August 2015 had still not received training at the time of the evaluation. The Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) was also only recently functional (with community activist trained and starting to use the system in August 2015).

¹³ Project interviewees also indicated that adjustments to the initial selection were made upon the initial presentation of (draft) baseline findings.

¹⁴ MFS offers six months of training on improved agricultural methods, entrepreneurship, enterprise development, and life skills. The curriculum covers safe practices and students are provided with protective gear. Tea growing is also taught. In an effort to support Government policies to develop farm skills for local towns and secondary cities, REACH-T has added a vocational skills component to the MFS program and this component is still in progress.

¹⁵ The first MFS cohort enrolled 236 beneficiaries and the second cohort enrolled 216, resulting in 452 MFS youth enrolled by the end September 2015.

As noted in the project's Technical Progress Report (TPR) from March 31, 2015, the "implementation delays reported... have been progressively diminished." In particular, the project's research, policy and awareness work had been well established, including the completion of a baseline study, a labor law enforcement assessment, a school assessment, a skills training assessment and an OSH Study. Project management remained confident that the project would achieve most of its targets on time, especially as related to the number of direct beneficiaries. A number of other targets may be difficult to complete at 100% within the project timeline (e.g. number of resolutions taken by REST; parents making in-kind contributions to the schools; institutionalization of MFS),¹⁶ and a comprehensive review of targets should be undertaken. Concerning the timeline, it should be noted that the project's effective date was in September 2013, which did not match well with the school year (January to December). In view of the initial delays, it may be useful to review possibilities to extend the project until the end of the 2017 school year (see Recommendations in **Section 6.1**).

3.3 Impact

This section describes the results of the project by the date of the evaluation, at institutional and community level, and especially on the lives of beneficiary households and children.

Question 3. Assess strengths and weaknesses of the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) and its associated Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application.

The Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS), with its associated Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application, is an innovative two-interface reporting system which uses telephones to generate reports on observed child labor, and computer software to retrieve reports. In the project communities, 88 "community activists" (CAs) – volunteer local people, often identified by the sector administration – have received training in the use of the telephone part of the system. These volunteers are charged with reporting child labor if they see any of it occurring in the community in which they live. The reports are relatively simple: the volunteers fill in the child's name and the type of work he or she was involved in, using drop-down menus. Also, the CA indicates any action to take to remedy the situation, such as "return to school," or "return to parents," etc.

A number of district vice mayors and other officials, including 30 district labor inspectors, have received training in retrieving these reports and are supposed to follow up on them. Also, project staff members have access to the reports. CLMS is a password-protected system; no outsider can access it and some users have limited access based on needs. The software uses three languages (Kinyarwanda, English or French) depending on the user's needs and preferences.

The volunteers seem to be largely competent in its use, as evidenced by a number of reports they have already submitted. However, the system is presently quite limited since the

¹⁶ See also overview of project progress in **Annex A**.

volunteers cannot monitor the child labor situation *continuously* (because this is not a remunerated, full-time employment); further, they can only cover a very limited geographic area, since most of them do not have any transport means. With a relatively small number of volunteers, the CLMS/ALERT cannot cover even the project intervention areas, since project beneficiary children are often living one or two hours of walking distance from the community center and school, and it would be difficult to track all of them regularly (e.g. once a week).¹⁷ Moreover, remote areas do not always have good telephone connection, so the system is not always functioning. Further, the volunteers complained about a lack of “feedback loop” – in many cases they would like to get more advice on what to do when they report incidences of child labor. Also, in some cases they seemed uncertain about which cases to report (a review of reports showed that they corresponded to fairly “standard” cases of child labor, for example young children in tea production being told to go home or back to school by the volunteers). The evaluator did not verify the reported cases, but they seemed authentic since they corresponded to the situation frequently found in the field.

It should be noted that this system had only been used for a few months at the time of the evaluation fieldwork, and feedback routines will undoubtedly be set up and improved as time goes by. In the future, the role of such feedback and follow-up may be transferred to labor inspectors. However, their time and ability to follow up on the reports may be relatively restricted, and they do not have transport means for follow-up on individual cases. At the regional level, inspectors said they were happy to receive the reports, but that they would not act on them *specifically*. This was also underlined from project personnel, indicating that many of the labor inspectors, especially at the district level, did not have time or transport possibilities to follow up on individual cases. The labor inspectors’ lack of time *and* transport makes it difficult to find an efficient way to incentivize them, especially since they don’t see child labor as their key priority (although they have child labor as part of their performance contracts).

Question 4. How effective is the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring System?

Theoretically, the project has a two-pronged system for the tracking of the direct beneficiaries. Two types of volunteers have been associated with the project, community volunteers and community activists. CAs may be involved in the tracking of children if they are absent or drop out from school. Technically, these volunteers should also be tracking the work status of children during holidays and weekends and report work through the CLMS system. However, as noted in Question 3 above, long distances between children, who often walk 1-2 hours to go to school, limit the possibility of regular tracking of their work status. In most cases, these community volunteers/activists would only follow up on beneficiaries’ prolonged absences.

¹⁷ It should be noted that REACH-T is currently looking into the possibility of providing bikes to CAs to facilitate better monitoring.

At school level, two volunteers are following up on the beneficiaries. These *mentors* are regular teachers who have been trained on child labor and project-related issues. Also, children are organized into groups (or “clubs”) of ten, who are monitoring each other’s schooling and reporting to the mentors if any of the beneficiaries are absent. The project has simplified paperwork as much as possible, and during the meetings with 123 children during fieldwork, the evaluator found that all the children were registered, had received supplies, and were followed up on by the mentors and/or by organized child clubs. However, in about 10% of the cases, there were small errors; for example, in the children’s names (incorrectly spelled, or missing first name) or incorrect education level.

For MFS beneficiaries, teachers are following up on their regular schooling. It should be noted that all of the MFS children interviewed were working. As they were 17 years of age, they were allowed to work by law. For one group, most children had left tea production work but said they now earned less; some also *ate* less than before. Previous salaries at the tea plantations were about 5,000 – 7,000 Rwandan francs (FRw) per month; whereas they said their current salary ranged from 50 FRw to 300 FRw per day, and that they were working both at home and with small business or agriculture production. Their work hours outside of home were from 7 or 8 AM to 4 PM; most said they were up from 5 or 6 AM and went to be around 9 PM. Another MFS group of children said they still worked in tea production, working from 7 AM to 3 PM on the tea plantations. It was unclear why the first group had chosen to quit tea-related work.¹⁸ The MFS classes take place from 9 AM to 1 PM twice a week. The afternoons on school days, in addition to all the other days, except Sunday for some children, were devoted to work. Likewise, most beneficiary children in primary school worked; some performing light work at home, but many others said they were involved in heavier work that interfered with their schooling. In a focus group of 47 students in formal school, for example, seven said they were prevented from doing their homework because of their need to work; and eight said they worked in tea production during the school year – every day before or after school, and/or on Saturday and Sunday. Also, fifteen said they worked in tea production during the holidays.

It should be noted that the work situation described above is not due to the project’s lack of monitoring the beneficiaries’ work status, but is rather due to their extreme poverty. Any project attempt of strict monitoring and prevention of children from work could lead to perverse effects, such as children working during the night, or becoming involved in much worse work than that in which they are currently engaged. Instead of strict enforcement, *monitoring* of their work situation – and continued awareness-raising on exploitative child labor – would in all likelihood be more efficient.

¹⁸ A local agronomist, who helped with practical lessons for the children, said that the local administration had “worked against child labor in tea production” in that area, and that it is possible the MFS students had left tea-related work because of their relatively young age. Also, the MFS teacher had encouraged them to seek alternative employment. Winrock noted that age appropriate and safe work in tea was encouraged and that “MFS students can work in tea if conditions are safe and compliant which requires another form of inspection.”

Question 5: Effectiveness of the education interventions provided to children.

Support to children in formal school, including the mentoring program: For many children, this component has made them return to school. The mentors are following up on the children's schooling, and this component seems to be satisfactorily implemented. However, three issues should be noted, including: (1) the *incompleteness* of the supplies and support, especially for secondary school children (who need access to school feeding program; and girls need sanitary pads). (2) The supplies are often of *short durability*, especially shoes and schoolbags. The project purchased used shoes for the children, who complained about the quality of these shoes. Project respondents noted that the used shoes often were of better quality than new, cheaply made ones and that children use their shoes and bags out of school hours and in rough terrain, thus diminishing the durability of the equipment. In fact, the evaluator took pictures of shoes that were little more than rags. One child reported that he was beaten by the teacher for coming barefoot to school; his shoes provided by the project had dissolved. Also, the schoolbags provided by the project had in most cases broken and the children were no longer using them for school. (3) The project has not provided pedagogic guidance to mentors and other teachers in alternative disciplining methods, and interviews with beneficiaries demonstrated that corporal punishment is prevalent in all the schools, but mostly affect primary school children (it was reported to *not* take place in secondary schools or MFS). Despite the aforementioned issues, most interviewees noted that this component is effective, since it has led to enrollment and attendance of many children who would otherwise not be in school.

Catch-Up programs: Most interviewees underlined the need for this component, and regretted its discontinuation. During interviews with children beneficiaries, it was observed that many were older than their peers, having discontinued school for several years. A 13-year old boy, for example, said he had been out of school for two years and was reenrolled in 4th grade (P4), but was then shifted over to P2, since he was not literate. He had been promised he could "return to P4" if he learned to read and write. In this and similar cases, a catch-up type of program would have helped the children transition back into school.

Model Farm Schools: These schools were initially set up with the aim of teaching farming. However, regional development plans emphasize vocational training and such component has been added, but had not yet been implemented at the time of the evaluation. Also it should be noted that two more "generations" of MFS training will be organized by FERWACOTHE. Similarly to primary schools, interviewees said that some of the project-provided supplies were of low quality; e.g. the children showed the evaluator ripped and/or damaged rain clothes, but said the boots received were of "good quality." For the vocational training, which has not started yet, no "kit" has yet been provided (e.g. sewing machine, carpenter tools, etc.), but project respondents indicated that such kits would be provided subsequent to training. Another problem mentioned by the teachers consists of the unequal schooling of students; ranging from quasi-illiterate to others with some secondary education and who could read and write. It was difficult to teach such heterogeneous groups.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)/Conditional Scholarship Support: Girls have been identified for the training, but it had not started yet at the time of the evaluation. During the fieldwork, the evaluator interviewed sixteen of them, eleven of which still worked in tea plantations. They were all 16 and 17 years old, so they were of legal working age. For this component, no start-up kit had been planned, but the girls were enthusiastic about learning

vocational skills. It should be noted that most of the beneficiaries enrolled in MFS and TVET are working (see also question 4), so the cost effectiveness of these components are uncertain.

Question 6: How effective is the livelihoods program in reducing child labor? Is the livelihoods program, in whole or in part, sustainable?

The livelihoods program is implemented through the Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups, which are composed of 10-30 people who are caregivers of project beneficiaries in formal schools, CSS programs or MFS. Each member saves 100-500 FRw per week for one year.¹⁹ The groups also provide loans to members, up to three times the amount of any individual's savings, at 5% per month for a maximum of three months (case of the evaluation VSLs). The groups also have a "social" component, providing relief funding to members in case of family bereavement or member hospitalization.

The VSL members requested further training in income-generating activities, to support their savings and loans. Such training sessions have been planned by Duterimbere (the NGO in charge of implementing this component). Further, the many monetary components of the VSL (dissimilar member savings per week; social expenses; income from loans) make the calculation of each member's savings difficult, and some members were worried that they would not be receiving their due at the end of the yearly cycle. Duterimbere interviewees said that they would be present in the communities during redistribution of funding to avoid such problems.

Question 7: How have changes in national law and policies' affected the project?

Justice for Children policy: Project interviewees said that this policy has no direct link with child labor issues or with the project's implementation and strategies.

National Tea Policy: Contradictory information was provided to the evaluator as to what extent child labor had been included in the policy. The final draft of the policy was not available at the time of the evaluation fieldwork, but National Agricultural Export Board (NAEB) interviewees confirmed that "child labor is included in the policy document and will also be included in the tea regulations."

Catch-Up Program: Since this program is no longer supported by the Government, project interviewees found that its implementation would be difficult and not prove sustainable, and have suggested to reallocate the budget for other activities (i.e. enroll more beneficiaries in formal schooling). In the field, most teachers regretted the discontinuation of Catch-Up and said it was a "necessary" and "useful" program.

¹⁹ As of November 22, 2015, 100 FRw correspond to 13 US cents; and 500 FRw to 67 cents. Counting 50 weeks of savings in a year, a VSL member may save between \$6.50 and \$33.50, and take up a loan of a maximum of three times his or her savings, i.e. between \$19.50 and \$100.50. It should be noted that Rwanda's price level ratio of PPP conversion factor (GDP) to market exchange rate is given by the World Bank as 0.4 (for 2011-15), so the amount is more important in Rwanda than it would have been in the US. Still, it is a relatively small savings amount, especially at the lower end of the saving scale.

Steering Committee for Child Labor established, with Regional subdivisions: This creation has limited the usefulness of the project-created Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST), since the former would be responsible for creating legal text and policies related to child labor (including in tea production). The absence of government institutional support has made the latter institutionally “rootless,” although it may be possible to create an institutional relationship between REST and the Steering committee.²⁰

Question 8. How effectively is REACH-T coordinating with implementing partners and stakeholders to reduce child labor?

The project is working in direct partnership with three organizations, including ADEPE for delivery of services for education initiatives, Duterimbere for livelihood activities and FERWACOTHE for awareness-raising and MFS. Project partnerships and coordination mostly seems to be good, at the project level (between partners) as well as at the central and local government levels (although more regular information sharing is requested by some Government partners, such as the Ministry of Public Service and Labor [MIFOTRA]). Moreover, the REST initiative has contributed to connections between tea factories, cooperatives, local officials, and project partners on the topic of child labor, and has also helped raise awareness.

Moreover, cooperation with other organizations is ensured through the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), a government institution established in 2007 (by Ministerial Instructions No. 04/07 of 15/07/2007) to serve as a consultative forum for district development stakeholders. JADF is coordinating and evaluating various development initiatives, including those of the private sector, local government, NGO partners and religious organizations, and is also organizing a local “open day” in which projects are presented and shared with the community. Moreover, JADF organizes an annual evaluation of development initiatives, including REACH-T.

However, the project is missing clear coordination with other projects to strengthen missing components of the project. For example, an interviewee suggested that the project ought to reach out to Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE), which is a local initiative making inexpensive sanitary pads out of banana leaf fibers, which could be part of the equipment provision to secondary school girls.

Question 9. Please assess the youth employment component of the project, including transitioning legal working age children from child labor to acceptable work.

The youth employment components of the project, and especially its impact in transitioning children from child labor to acceptable work, cannot be assessed at this point since these

²⁰ Winrock indicated that “REST is meant to provide a forum as a subcommittee of the National Committee on CL; it has been discussed as the best way to structure it. It will be a complement to the National Committee as a forum for the tea sector to agree on standards, youth employment and child labor prevention in tea production especially in small holder [tea plantations].”

activities have not yet been implemented and/or have not been completed. Both the MFS and the CSS components are appreciated by stakeholders and seem to be positive initiatives. The existence of a “toolkit” for children to continue the work in the sector they will be trained in would greatly enhance the probability that the enrollees are actually transitioning into different work than the one in which they are currently employed. Also, the training cycle is short – 6 months for the CSS and 3 months of vocational training for enrollees in MFS – and it is difficult to know whether the training would be intensive/effective enough to give them skills that are competitive in the community.

Question 10: Have the project beneficiaries been able to access social protection programs?

Project staff would like to connect beneficiaries with two key social protection initiatives. One is the health insurance program (*assurance maladie*), amounting to 3,000 FRw a year per person. Most poor people are unable to pay the fees, especially if they have large families (see the discussion on VSL members’ capabilities for saving in Question 6 above). Some interviewees indicated that they cannot access education services without health insurance; i.e. that education authorities refused their enrollment in school without having first paid the insurance. However, project staff said this was not the case and that legally, school authorities cannot refuse children on any ground, including a lack of uniform or of not having paid the insurance.

A second program, already mentioned above, is the school feeding program, in which beneficiaries in secondary school should be enrolled to have better chances to succeed in schooling. They are currently unable to pay the fees to access this program.

Project staff (both local and central) were aware of other social protection plans, and had in some instances helped local people to obtain a correct “classification.” The government has recently proceeded to classify the population according to their poverty level, and several project beneficiaries, despite being among the poorest, had been classified as wealthy since they had not known to give correct information about their households. The project staff is planning more work to identify and disseminate awareness on social security programs and/or services for which the beneficiaries are eligible. In particular, they are planning to train the community activists on this issue, and will seek to help beneficiary families to access social protection plans.

Question 11. To what extent has the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) been effective as a platform for industry and government stakeholders to reduce child labor? Where are they at in the process of developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry?

The REST initiative has had some meetings, which, according to interviewees, have been useful to raise awareness about child labor among stakeholders. Whereas staff at tea factories had some prior knowledge of child labor issues (among others, because of the existence of the USDOL “watch list” and because of their cooperation with Rainforest Alliance), many did not have a clear conception of what it entailed, and its legal implications according to Rwandan law. The REST initiative has been effective as a platform to raise awareness among stakeholders (still one of the factory managers found it “normal” that children worked with their parents during holidays, and saw child labor as a “cultural” phenomenon).

However, since there is no formal recognition of the REST initiative (i.e. no institutional “anchorage”), members cannot participate in the process of developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry, as related to child labor. For that, they would enter into direct competition with the Steering Committee on Child Labor, which is the official committee tasked with this work. As the Steering Committees operate at district level, and the REST at sector and node level, the cooperation between the two institutions has been minimal, and is further strained by the lack of official recognition of REST.

3.4 Sustainability

This section assesses the steps taken by the project to mainstream project activities and recommends actions to increase sustainability before project phase-out.

Question 12: To what extent has the project’s sustainability plan been deployed? Thus far, have challenges come up regarding this plan? If so, does the evaluator have recommendations for moving forward?

First, it should be noted that the selection of beneficiaries has been done with the involvement of community members themselves, who have rightly been able to select the poorest community members as project beneficiaries. Whereas this is a good strategy, it also poses evident challenges for sustainability. For example, a parent gave his occupation, during the evaluation interview, as “beggar.” It is difficult to imagine how the project approach could be successful in such dire circumstances with limited “building ground” in terms capacity or skills. Moreover, many of the children were orphans, or had parents who were living with disabilities. In certain circumstances, the only sustainable action that the project could provide to these beneficiaries would be to somehow connect them to social protection services – hoping that these latter would be sustainable enough to lead to a better life – and thus to reduce child labor.

In reviewing the project’s intermediate objectives and their sustainability, interviewed stakeholders had different views on the sustainability of the project’s actions:

IO1: Increased enforcement of child labor laws in the tea sector. This component is sustainable through the CLMS and its associated ALERT mobile phone application. Both community activists and the MIFOTRA interviewees were interested in this application and were positive regarding its continuation. A few challenges remain, however. The first is the organization of the transfer to the authorities and creation of an institutionalized feedback loop to CLMS users (i.e. the project’s community activists). It should be noted that the activists are volunteers (and not civil servants), and do not have any means of transport.²¹ A second challenge is to ensure follow-up on their report from government officials and/or other child protection services (who would also be likely to have limited access to transport). A third issue is the question of cell phone credits, which have been given to community activists for reporting; it is unsure whether there

²¹ Project respondents noted that CAs “are selected to operate in their cells of residence, which does not necessitate any special transport. They are able to monitor and work with mentors who live nearby.” It was further indicated that the project could consider providing bicycles, which, however, may be more challenging to use in hilly terrain.”

will be any mechanism for continuing this. Further, both project staff and government personnel are eager to expand the coverage of the reporting system. This would be a positive evolution; however, in view of the remaining time of the project and the complexity of having any systematic coverage, even of one region not to mention a province, the system may be more likely to continue as a pilot initiative, providing “samples” of child labor in tea growing regions. As such, it could indicate certain trends, without needing to provide full coverage of the country.

IO2: Increased school attendance among beneficiary children 5-17 years of age in target districts. It should be noted that a large number of children – 2,250 at the time of the evaluation – have been identified, provided with supplies and enrolled in formal schooling. In view of its low quality and heavy use, the provision of certain equipment is not sustainable. The education of the beneficiary children may continue beyond the project’s end if the VSL groups and planned IGA activities prove successful. Some VSL members indicated that they would continue saving after the project’s end. Other parents indicated that they could not continue supporting their children’s schooling without project support. In particular, the payment of health insurance was raised as a challenge, as well as the school feeding program. Without further assistance, in one way or another, it is likely that many beneficiaries would drop out at secondary school level, if not before.

IO3: Increased incomes in beneficiary households. Sustainability of this component is dependent on the VSL and associated IGA activities proving successful. Presently, without any full cycle of VSL completed (1 year), it is difficult to assess the outcome of the component and its potential for sustainability.

IO4: Increased opportunities for safe employment for beneficiary children of legal working age (16-17 years). This component could prove sustainable, especially if the children receive sufficient training in vocational skills and are provided with a kit of materials at the end of the training. Winrock respondents noted that such toolkits will be provided to graduates of the yet-to-begin vocational training courses that complement the MFS. Moreover, the training in farming skills is likely a sustainable initiative, since most children are involved in farming – and will be so in the future – even if they also take up a different job such as carpentry or sewing.

IO5: Child labor issues addressed in Government of Rwanda’s policies and private sector action plans. The project has had an active advocacy role within government institutions. Its partnership with FERWACOTHE is another positive component, as this has raised awareness among private stakeholders and tea cooperatives (typically tea cooperatives have had less oversight on the child labor situation in their fields than factory-owned lots). However, the non-institutional grounding of REST has also limited the impact and possible sustainability of project intervention in legal and policy issues. Still, it is clear that the government and associated groups’ (FERWACOTHE, factory managers, cooperative leaders, etc.) attitudes have changed as a result of the project’s awareness-raising, and such change is sustainable.

IO6: Community attitudes towards child labor changed. There is an increasing understanding of the problem of child labor in the project communities, and this change is sustainable. However, the poverty situation among many project beneficiaries – and also in other households – is so dire that child labor is likely to continue, even if the households are aware of the benefits of education and the dangers of child labor.

I07: Beneficiary households referred to social protection services. These are inherently sustainable approaches as long as the services are provided for free and provide sustainable benefits. If the project is providing access to health insurance and the school feeding program for beneficiaries through payment of the fees, it is not sustainable unless the project is capable of negotiating a “deal” with the concerned authorities for continued protection after the project ends, until the beneficiary has reached eighteen years of age and/or has completed secondary school.

IV. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

REACH-T is a timely project, working in a difficult but key sector, because of the abject poverty of the beneficiaries. In the intervention areas, the local population faces various barriers to education, including lack of money to pay for school supplies, uniforms and shoes. Also, there is lack of distinction between child work and exploitative child labor; caregivers often find child labor “normal” to teach the children to be independent and to work. Furthermore, many children need to work for their own sustenance.

In the face of this difficult situation, Winrock has devised a complex and ambitious project strategy with numerous activities and services. After some initial delays, the project seems to be catching up and is offering an important set of services to the communities. One interesting and useful approach has been a whole family approach, not limiting intervention to one person per household, which would have diluted the effect of the project.

However, despite the richness of the approach, there seem to be some missing elements that can be added in the project’s second phase, such as pedagogical follow-up and better support for secondary school children. Furthermore, the provision of educational supplies is ultimately a very *basic* strategy, and has some shortcomings (lack of sustainability; similar kits for everyone; lacking durability of some equipment). As was noted by one government interviewee, quoting the much-used adage “you should teach them to fish, not give them the fish.” This latter also insisted on adopting various strategies for the provision of equipment that could be used for income generating activities, instead of a one-time supply of school materials.

Also, the catch-up program could have been an important additional element to the project strategy, and would have been especially beneficial for beneficiaries who have been re-enrolled in formal schooling after a prolonged time out of school.

In conclusion, despite some continued challenges, most interviewees agree that this is a relevant project with good strategies and a relevant theory of change. It has led to a growing understanding of child labor in the project implementation areas, and as evidenced by evaluation observations and interviews, to well-functioning VSL groups, MFS, and the CLMS/ALERT system. Equally importantly, it has led to a large number of children returning to formal schools, most of whom have a much-reduced work situation. It has also led to youth with a hope for training in vocational skills that can improve their livelihood situation in the years to come.

V. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

5.1 Lessons Learned

1. Need for institutional anchorage of project institutions and activities. In particular, institutions such as the REST would have needed an official recognition and institutional anchorage to be effective in developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry. An example of such anchorage would be to connect it to, and have it reporting to the District Steering Committees on Child Labor.

In terms of project activities, if the project were successful in connecting beneficiaries to social services, such as health coverage and the school feeding program, the effectiveness and sustainability of such approach are dependent on whether the “solution” goes beyond the project’s duration. Cash support for one or two years without possibilities for continuation of these services would in all likelihood lead to drop out and discontinued schooling for many beneficiaries at the end of the project.

2. Supplies provided to children may be enough to make them return to school in the short term. However, it may also be perceived as a rather reductionist²² strategy (especially if the underlying poverty situation is not addressed). Further, the quality and durability of the materials provided needs to be monitored. The supplies could also be adapted to individual needs for better effectiveness; for example, provide gender-specific allocations in order to improve girls’ schooling in secondary (e.g. through the provision of hygienic pads).

3. There is a need of continuous assessment of project strategies in view of a quickly shifting implementation situation. In particular, early adaptation to a changing institutional environment would be beneficial, e.g. for REST and Catch-Up activities. Hence, the possibility to rapidly devise strategies for reallocation of funds, and/or quickly acting on needs, such as the school feeding program and/or health insurance would be advantageous. Regardless of the decision taken (continue/discontinue Catch-Up program activities; allow/not allow project payment of the school feeding program and health insurance for beneficiaries), it is important to come to a solution quickly, so as not to encumber implementation and allow for new strategies to evolve as a response to the initial decision taken. Similarly, it is important that project-related research do not “hold up” project implementation. Often, research activities take longer time than initially expected, especially if organized from abroad, and if it needs lengthy rounds of review and clearance, etc.

It should be noted that in most interviewees’ opinion, this project is characterized by good communication between all implementing partners (donor, host government, implementing

²² This may be reductionist in the sense of reducing the children’s complex situation to a need of school supplies. It should be noted that the project document and underlying ToC *do not* adapt such reductionist strategy. Nevertheless, several government officials directly or indirectly criticized the project’s distribution of supplies during interviews.

partners, including home office of grantee), but interviewees also noted that the decision making processes for project related questions could have been faster.

4. Project implementation dates should take into account the local school year, to the extent possible. Rwanda, similar to much of Central and Southern Africa, is operating with an academic year matching the calendar year. Already at project conception, this could be taken into consideration to maximize project effectiveness. In this case, ceasing all project activities in September 2017 may not be the best way to proceed.

5.2 Good Practices

1. REACH-T is working at several levels, addressing the needs of several groups, including government and regional authorities as well as involving district and sector authorities. Also, it is working at school and community levels. The strategy is multiplying venues for awareness-raising and the likelihood of impact.

2. Use of mentors and community activists for awareness raising and monitoring of beneficiaries as well as of the child labor situation in the community through the CLMS. This is an effective way of raising awareness and also, through its reporting function, effectively involves local authorities in both the monitoring and child labor situation locally.

3. Community involvement in the selection of beneficiaries has led to services being provided to those who need it most. Through its selection mechanisms, the project has managed to involve the most disadvantaged as stakeholders and beneficiaries. The good practices of selection could be adopted in other projects, and is noteworthy. Paradoxically, the project's success in this regard has also led to challenges, since the most destitute population is also the one for which project activities are at risk of being the least sustainable. The poverty level for many project beneficiaries is such that participation in saving activities, or in investment for the most basic income generating activities, is almost impossible.

4. The CLMS and its associated ALERT mobile phone application is a good practice at many levels: it is an innovative technology with a lot of potential; it helps with tracking the work status of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries; it raises awareness among local officials and community members; and it is not limited to school hours but can potentially cover weekends, holidays and after-school hours. However, as with all new technology, it also faces some challenges: its geographic coverage is limited, and the strategy for expansion and turnover to Government are still a challenge (which government level, and who specifically, would be able to react to the reports; what is the official status of the community activists; who, in addition to key stakeholders, should have access to the reports).

5. Research activities: The project is involved in/has commissioned multiple research activities and has already completed several studies that are documenting the needs of children in tea growing areas of Rwanda.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Key Recommendations

1. Review key project activities and associated budget. The project implementation context has changed since project conception. Also, initial delays may make it difficult to achieve all planned targets. It is recommended to review key project activities, targets, and their sustainability. In particular, it is recommended to:

- Re-equilibrate the budget in view of the changing implementation environment;
- Review project targets and determine which planned activities are feasible in the current implementation context; and
- Explore possibilities for an extension to provide project support until the end of a third school year, for direct support and monitoring of beneficiaries until the end of 2017.

The aim of this recommendation is to maximize project effectiveness and impact for the next two years of implementation, and to enhance possibilities for sustainability.

2. Review supplies provided to beneficiaries. Interviewees noted that some of the materials/supplies provided to beneficiaries were of low quality (or in any case of low *durability*), and that access to some services would improve the impact of the project. It is recommended to review the quality/quantity of the equipment provided to beneficiaries, and in particular:

- Assess the possibility to improve the “package,” especially in view of reports of low-quality shoes and bags, which have broken;
- Consider offering much needed access to the school feeding program for beneficiaries in secondary school and/or seek a more sustainable solution to this issue;
- Consider the possibility of offering individualized and needs-based equipment, e.g. sanitary pads for girls in secondary school; and
- Provide awareness-raising for teachers in discipline methods to reduce incidence of corporal punishment.

The aim of this recommendation is that the services, equipment and supplies provided maximizes the beneficiaries’ benefits from schooling, and their chances to succeed in their coursework.

3. Toolkit to beneficiaries receiving vocational training. No toolkit has yet been given to students of vocational training, although such toolkits are planned for those completing the MFS and the CSS. As the beneficiaries are poor, it is unlikely that they can invest in such a toolkit themselves. It is recommended to provide follow-up to ensure that all the beneficiaries of vocational training receive an appropriate toolkit (e.g. sewing machines or hairdressing supplies for CSS beneficiaries). The aim of this recommendation is to ensure that youth involved in labor are transitioning into acceptable work.

4. Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS). Interviewees pointed to some uncertainty as how the CLMS should evolve, and in particular, how to ensure further development and sustainability of this component. It is recommended to review the transition strategy of the CLMS and assess how it could ensure connection and cooperation between labor inspectors, local authorities, and community activists. In this regard, it would be useful to consider how to ensure sustainability of telephone use (purchase of credits, etc.) for the community activists, to ensure that they continue reporting on child labor after the discontinuation of project services. The aim of this recommendation is to ensure a sustainable expansion of the CLMS and ALERT.

5. Village Savings and Loans groups. VSL members requested further training on income-generating activities and were also unsure about how to calculate each member's due after one cycle of savings (one year). It is recommended to provide training to the VSL members on how to calculate each member's "due" after a completed cycle of savings. It is also important that project members are present for the first end-of-cycle settlement in the VSLs. The aim of this recommendation is to: ensure stakeholder confidence in the VSL approach; increase possible earnings for household members through this type of saving and loans cycle; and thereby help households to reduce child labor and increase children's opportunities for continued education.

6.2 Other Recommendations

1. Review the direct monitoring of beneficiaries. During fieldwork, the evaluator noted that some of the children's names and grade levels were incorrectly registered. It would be good to update these lists. Also, it may be useful to see whether it is possible to better monitor the work that beneficiaries are doing outside school hours (including during holidays), to ensure that they are not involved in exploitive child labor. In view of the poverty situation among many beneficiaries, however, it would be inadvisable to try to prevent *all* forms of child labor, as it may result in undesirable outcomes. The aim of this recommendation is to ensure that the lists of beneficiaries are up-to-date and to provide better monitoring so as to prevent beneficiaries from engaging in exploitive child labor.

2. Cooperation with other programs. Project cooperation with other initiatives, programs and social protection initiatives is limited. It is recommended that the project seek stronger cooperation with other projects and programs, for example:

- Sustainable Health Enterprises (or SHE), making sanitary pads out of banana leaf fibers; and
- Any social protection programs (or initiatives supporting vulnerable people's access to such programs) that can be helpful to the beneficiaries

The aim of this recommendation is to improve the efficiency of the project, and seek to make activities more sustainable.

ANNEX A: Overview of Project Progress

Note: for the overview, the evaluator used project estimates (including targets) and project data from October 2015.

Area	Indicators with October 2015 Targets		
Project Objective: Incidence of Child Labor in Target Districts Reduced	POC.1 #/% of children in child labor	Target	900
		Actual	1338
	POC.2 #/% of children in hazardous child labor	Target	500
		Actual	0
	POC.3 # (%) of children at high risk (CAHR) of child labor	Target	2415
		Actual	1819
	POH.1 #/% of households with children in child labor	Target	490
		Actual	0
	POH.2 #/% of households with children in hazardous child labor	Target	800
		Actual	0
	POH.4 #/% of households with all children of compulsory school age in school	Target	1000
		Actual	1903
IO 1.1 Improved institutional coordination between private sector and government stakeholders for CL law enforcement (REST)	# of government agencies and tea companies/cooperatives actively participating in REST meetings	Target	40
		Actual	12
	# of joint actions/resolutions on child labor taken by REST	Target	14
		Actual	0
IO 1.2 Increased understanding of CL enforcement roles and responsibilities among stakeholders	#/% of policy recommendations presented to MIFOTRA and other concerned ministries	Target	4
		Actual	1
IO 1.3 Improved follow up on child labor abuses	#/% of reported child labor cases referred to social protection services	Target	60%
		Actual	20%
IO 1.3.1 Improved CL monitoring systems	#of CA reporting CL cases using ALERT system	Target	32
		Actual	43
	#of DLIs using ALERT/CLMS data for their reporting	Target	2
		Actual	12
IO 1.3.2 Increased DLI and CA knowledge of monitoring systems and responsibilities	#/% of DLIs and CAs demonstrate correct use of ALERT/CLMS (pre/post-test and demonstration on use of ALERT)	Target	631
		Actual	100
IO 2 Increased school attendance among children 5-17 years of age in target districts	#/% of target children attending formal and catch-up school 75% of the time	Target	2700
		Actual	2208
	E-1 # of children receiving educational services (4090)	Target	3315
		Actual	3157

Area	Indicators with October 2015 Targets		
	E-2 # of children receiving formal education services (target: 2250)	Target	2250
		Actual	2250
	E-3 # of children receiving non-formal education services (catch-up) add target	Target	450
		Actual	0
IO 2.1 Reduced economic obstacles to school attendance	#/% of children who receive school kits	Target	2250
		Actual	2250
IO 2.2 Improved safety and Health of learning environment	#/% of target schools meeting basic minimum required health and safety standards (GoR and UNICEF safe schools standards)	Target	20
		Actual	28
	#/% of target schools whose school improvement activities (grants) are completed	Target	2
		Actual	0
IO 2.3 Increased community support for education	#/% of communities in which PTAs hold regular meetings	Target	40
		Actual	30
	% of target schools where parents make in-kind contributions to the school	Target	50%
		Actual	0
IO 2.3.1 Increased tea sector financial and in-kind contributions to crèches and ECD	# of crèches/ECD established by tea factories/cooperatives#/% of companies or cooperatives donating in-kind (space) and/or financial support for ECD and crèches	Target	1
		Actual	0
IO 3 Increased incomes in beneficiary HH	#/% beneficiary households with an increase in assets (Beneficiary intake/Follow up form)	Target	100
		Actual	Data not yet available
	#/% beneficiary households with improved food security (Beneficiary intake/Follow up form)	Target	100
		Actual	419
	L1- # of households receiving livelihood services (target 1320)	Target	660
		Actual	419
	L2- # of adults provided with employment services	Target	105
		Actual	0
	L4- # of individuals provided with economic strengthening services	Target	1215
		Actual	419
L5- # of individuals provided with services other than employment and economic strengthening	Target	440	
	Actual	0	
IO 3.1 Improved yields in tea	#/% beneficiary HH with increase in kilos produced per hectare	Target	250
		Actual	Data not yet available
IO 3.1.1 Improved use of modern agricultural techniques on tea farms (MFS+/women)	#/% beneficiary HH (thé villageois) who correctly and consistently (amount and frequency) apply fertilizer (sample)	Target	250
		Actual	Data not yet available
IO 3.2 Improved access to markets for HH engaged in IGA	# beneficiary HH selling IGA products in new markets	Target	250
		Actual	0

Area	Indicators with October 2015 Targets		
IO 3.2.1 Increased production of IGA goods/services	#/% beneficiary HH reporting increases in production	Target	250
		Actual	Data not yet available
IO 3.2.2 Improved skills in tea/IGA production, entrepreneurship and IGA marketing	#/% beneficiaries with well-designed business plan	Target	250
		Actual	0
	#/% beneficiary HH using new technologies (agriculture/IGA)	Target	250
		Actual	0
IO 3.3 Increased HH savings	#/% beneficiary HH with increased savings (per records)	Target	20%
		Actual	2%
IO 3.3.1 Increased participation in VSLs and SACCOs	#/% beneficiaries who join VSLs	Target	244
		Actual	419
	#/% of VSLs linked to SACCOs	Target	8
		Actual	0
IO 3.3.2 Improved financial literacy skills	#/% beneficiaries using appropriate record keeping for businesses	Target	80
		Actual	120
IO 4 Increased Opportunities For Safe Employment Of Beneficiary Children Of Legal Working Age (16-17)	# tea companies hiring children of legal working age in acceptable work	Target	4
		Actual	0
	#/% beneficiary children (16-17) safely employed (self-employed, small enterprise, tea companies)	Target	20%
		Actual	0
	E4- Number of children receiving vocational training services (MFS and TVET)	Target	615
		Actual	907
IO 4.1 Reduced Disincentives For Tea Cooperatives and Companies To Hire Children 16-17 in acceptable work not prohibited by the law	# safe gear kits supplied to tea companies and cooperatives	Target	175
		Actual	0
IO 4.1.1 MIFOTRA and Tea stakeholders agree on acceptable work under the law for Children 16-17 in tea production and/or around	List of acceptable work shared with Tea cooperatives and companies	Target	N/A
		Actual	0
IO 4.1.2 Improved knowledge among tea cooperatives and companies of OSH and laws regarding hazardous and non-hazardous work for children 16-17	# of personnel at tea companies and cooperatives with increased knowledge of OSH and hazardous work	Target	100
		Actual	0

Area	Indicators with October 2015 Targets		
IO 4.2 Improved technical, entrepreneurial, marketing and financial skills among children 16-17	% of beneficiary children 16-17 who demonstrate increased skills from training received	Target	75%
		Actual	0
IO 4.2.1 Increased access to startup and financial support services	#/% beneficiaries receiving start- up kits	Target	475
		Actual	0
	#/% Beneficiaries joining VSL	Target	440
		Actual	419
IO 4.2.2 Increased access to skills training (MFS and TVET)	#/% beneficiary children 16-17 receiving support to access TVET and other technical training centers	Target	440
		Actual	455
	#/% beneficiary children 16-17 enrolled in MFS	Target	475
		Actual	452
	MFS curriculum validated by WDA	Target	1
		Actual	0
IO 5 Child labor issues addressed in GoR and Private Sector Policies and Actions Plans	C1- # of policy initiatives to which the project has contributed substantively (see list)	Target	3
		Actual	1
	#/% of tea cooperatives with internal policies addressing child labor and/or OSH	Target	3
		Actual	0
	# of cooperatives that apply for certification	Target	3
		Actual	4
IO 5.1 Increased understanding of CL policies and laws by local authorities (district, sector, cell and village level)	#/% of local authorities with increased knowledge of national child labor laws/policies (disaggregate by group) (pre/post-test)	Target	566
		Actual	865
IO 5.2 Increased understanding by tea cooperatives and companies of child labor laws, OSH and certification requirements	#/% of tea cooperative and company trainees able to identify key provisions of CL laws, OSH and certification requirements (pre/post-test)	Target	950
		Actual	893
IO 5.3 Active engagement of REACH-T stakeholders on project studies and performance results	# of meetings organized to discuss results of project studies and performance results with government ministries, agencies and other stakeholders (REST, National Steering Committee or other)	Target	4
		Actual	1
IO 6 Community attitudes towards child labor changed	#/% of HH with positive change in attitude regarding CL	Target	70%
		Actual	Data not yet available
	#/% of target communities (sectors) with sample of leaders, teachers and tea cooperatives with positive change in attitudes regarding CL	Target	70%
		Actual	Data not yet available

Area	Indicators with October 2015 Targets		
IO 6.1 Improved community-led and child-led awareness raising activities and events in target districts (SCREAM, community meetings)	# of community-led or child-led awareness raising activities or events implemented (sample)	Target	40
		Actual	61
IO 6.1.1 Improved Child Labor Message, based on a harmonized interpretation of CL laws and regulations	Quality message developed (Y/N) – quality defined as covering negative effects of CL; key laws and policies addressing CL; attributes of education and intervention strategies to reduce CL	Target	1
		Actual	0
IO 6.2 Expanded child labor message dissemination by tea cooperatives and companies	# of awareness raising events held by tea cooperatives and companies focused on child labor and OSH	Target	58
		Actual	27
IO 7 Beneficiary HHs receive benefits from social protection services	#/% of beneficiary households receiving social protection services (e.g. health insurance, One Cow Per Family)	Target	40%
		Actual	20%
IO 7.1 Increased capacity of community volunteers to assist beneficiary HH to access SP services	#/% of beneficiary HHs referred to social protection services by community volunteers (CPCs/CAs)	Target	40%
		Actual	20%
IO 7.2 Improved information on types, benefits, sponsors, and means of accessing social protection services	#/% communities (sectors) receiving a directory of social protection services and means of accessing services	Target	81
		Actual	0

ANNEX B: PowerPoint Presentation for Stakeholder Meeting

Reach-T

Mid-term independent evaluation

Bjorn H. Nordtveit

Center for International Education

University of Massachusetts Amherst

November 6, 2015

Thank you

- ▶ To central and local authorities for project support and help during the evaluation;
- ▶ To the project staff, and associated partner staff, for their dedication and support;
- ▶ To Tea Factory Directors, Boards, Managers and Personnel from Tea Cooperatives for promoting Child Labor free policies – and for a warm reception and wonderful tea!
- ▶ To teachers, mentors, and community activists for their work for the project and availability for the evaluation;
- ▶ To the direct beneficiaries for giving their time, often walking long distances to meet me.

Overview of Presentation

- ▶ I will follow the structure of the evaluation report
- ▶ Background, Context and Project Description
- ▶ Evaluation Objectives and Methodology, including evaluation questions
- ▶ Evaluation Findings, including answers and supporting evidence for each of the evaluation questions
- ▶ Main Conclusions
- ▶ Lessons Learned and Good Practices
- ▶ Recommendations

Section 1: Background, Context and Project Description

Background and Context

- ▶ Tea Industry: a core sector for development initiatives
 - ▶ General poverty of the population leads to child labor in tea and other sectors
 - ▶ Reducing child labor in the tea sector need to be accompanied with other efforts; otherwise the problem is just displaced
- ▶ Existence of a structured partnership with the Government, with expectations from Central and Local Authorities clearly outlined
 - ▶ Performance Contracts with authorities set development goals
 - ▶ Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) involves partners to coordinate development goals and evaluates project performance from the Government's side
 - ▶ The structured context enhances project effectiveness

Project description

The project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan identified seven objectives:

- ▶ Increased enforcement of child labor laws in the tea sector
- ▶ Increased school attendance among beneficiary children 5-17 years of age in target districts
- ▶ Increased incomes in beneficiary households
- ▶ Increased opportunities for safe employment for beneficiary children of legal working age (16-17 years)

- ▶ Child labor issues addressed in Government of Rwanda policies and private sector action plans
- ▶ Community attitudes towards child labor changed
- ▶ Beneficiary households referred to social protection services

Key Activities to support objectives

1. Monitoring: CLMS and Labor Law Enforcement (Winrock)
2. Education (Winrock/ADEPE/FERWACOTHE)
 - ▶ Direct education services for children aged 5–17, focusing on enrollment of children under 15 in public schools
 - ▶ Catch Up program (discontinued)
 - ▶ Non-formal vocational education - Model Farm Schools (MFS)
3. Livelihoods (Duterimbere and FERWACOTHE)
 - ▶ Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Committees
4. Youth Employment (FERWACOTHE and Duterimbere)
5. Raising Awareness (Winrock, FERWACOTHE)
 - ▶ Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea (REST)

Section 2: Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

1. **Relevance:** Assess the relevance of the project’s Theory of Change to the issue of child labor in Rwanda and whether activities are being implemented in accordance with the project design.
2. **Progress:** Evaluate the project’s progress made so far, and whether it is likely to complete all activities and results as delineated in the project document. Analyze the factors that may be contributing to successes and challenges. Please assess what is currently happening on the ground and if necessary make recommendations to ensure the project will meet the agreed-upon outcomes, goals and timeline.
3. **Impact:** Describe the results of the project by the date of the evaluation, at institutional and community level, and especially, on the lives of beneficiary households and children.
4. **Sustainability:** Assess the steps taken by the project to mainstream project activities and recommend actions to increase sustainability before project phase-out.

Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative methodology
 - ▶ Limited in time and scope
- ▶ Use of a qualitative approach to obtain “thick” descriptions of stakeholders’ relationship with the project
- ▶ Understanding the project, using:
 - ▶ Observation
 - ▶ Focus groups
 - ▶ Semi-structured and unstructured interviews

Section 3: Evaluation findings, including supporting evidence for the evaluation questions

To what degree is the project design appropriate and adequate?

- ▶ The design is largely appropriate and adequate
 - ▶ It responds to needs in Tea growing areas, but does not limit itself to children working in the Tea sector

- ▶ Overwhelming needs in these areas; one main challenge is that the project, as designed, cannot respond to the demand (at times beneficiaries need to be identified through sweepstakes)
- ▶ Prior to the project, little knowledge of child labor among communities
- ▶ Some disequilibria in the implementation plan and budget
 - ▶ Not enough emphasis on livelihoods education and youth employment
 - ▶ At the formal school level, the provision of materials may not always be a sustainable way of ensuring continued school attendance, even if combined with VSL
- ▶ Some lacking activities (e.g., pedagogical support to prevent corporal punishment, which is widespread; school feeding support in secondary)
- ▶ Question of cost-effectiveness of certain activities (e.g., for 16-17 years old youth)

At midterm, is the project on track to meet its targets/objectives?

- ▶ Some initial delays
- ▶ The project's effectiveness date was September 2013, which did not match well with the school year (January to December)
 - ▶ First "implementation year" (with direct beneficiaries) was the school year 2015
- ▶ Also, the end date does not fit the school year
 - ▶ According to the plan, the last (full) implementation year will be the school year 2016
 - ▶ Review of possibilities to extend the project until the end of school year 2017 (see recommendations)
- ▶ The project direction is confident that most project activities are now on track, and that the project will meet its targets

Strengths and weaknesses of the Child Labor Monitoring System

- ▶ Two-interface system
 - ▶ Telephone to register child labor and computer to review reports
 - ▶ Protected system – no outsider access, and access limited based on user needs
 - ▶ Three languages – dependent on user needs and preferences
- ▶ 88 volunteers have received training in its use
 - ▶ They seem to be largely competent in its use
 - ▶ Recent start-up of use (since August 2015)
- ▶ Some challenges
 - ▶ Remote areas do not always have good telephone connection
 - ▶ Lack of "feedback loop" – the volunteers would like to get more advise on what to do with the cases reported
 - ▶ At times, lack of knowledge of what to report and when

How effective is the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring System?

- ▶ As simplified as possible (this is a good thing)
 - ▶ Sufficient to track data for reporting purposes
- ▶ Some reporting challenges identified
 - ▶ Some errors in children's names and grade identified
 - ▶ Lacking first names
- ▶ Tracking system when children are not in school is limited
 - ▶ Community activists cannot follow up on all the beneficiaries – who are often living far away from the school
 - ▶ Most children work before or after school; during weekends and during holidays
 - ▶ In some cases, this may be child work; in others, surely child labor or exploitative labor

Effectiveness of the education interventions provided to children

- ▶ Some parents and children say that the equipment provided “has made the difference”
 - ▶ Problems with some of the equipment, which is easily broken (shoes, bags...)
 - ▶ This in some cases leads to corporal punishment (e.g., for not having shoes)
- ▶ Follow-up by mentors is a good initiative
- ▶ Children clubs not yet very functional but could be a very good initiative
- ▶ Many children are still in labor
- ▶ Specific problems for children in secondary schooling
 - ▶ Absence of money for the “school feeding program” leaves them hungry in the afternoon; often making them fall asleep, or leaving school in the afternoon
 - ▶ Absence of sanitary pads for the girls makes them leave school for 4 days per month

Effectiveness of the livelihoods program

- ▶ Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Committees are a very good initiative
 - ▶ Consists of a saving instrument, loans, and a “social” component
 - ▶ Savings are from 100-500 FRw per week
 - ▶ Maximum lending of 3x savings, at 5% per month for a maximum of 3 months (case of the evaluation VSLs)
 - ▶ Component will be accompanied by some training in Income Generating Activities
 - ▶ Social component provides assistance to members in case of family bereavement or member hospitalization
- ▶ The many monetary components of the VSL (dissimilar member savings per week; social expenses; income from loans) make the calculation of each member’s “due” extremely difficult
- ▶ The equipment provided (wooden box for cash...) is of somewhat low quality

How has changes in national law and policies’ affected the project?

- ▶ Justice for Children policy
 - ▶ No direct link with the child labor issue or with the project’s implementation and strategies
- ▶ National Tea Policy
 - ▶ First draft versions did not include child labor issue
- ▶ Catch-Up program
 - ▶ Has been discontinued
 - ▶ Interviewees find that the program was very useful, and is still necessary
 - ▶ Example: an illiterate child is re-entered back into P4 through project efforts after several years of work. When the school authorities find that he cannot read; he is put in P2 – with the promise of moving back to P4 if he can “make it” (the result is a likely dropout).
- ▶ Steering Committee for Child Labor established
 - ▶ Lack of institutional linkage is making the Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) institutionally “rootless.”

Effectiveness in coordinating with partners and stakeholders

- ▶ Project partnerships and coordination mostly seems to be good
 - ▶ At project level (between partners)
 - ▶ At central and local government levels (more information sharing is requested)
 - ▶ With tea factories and cooperatives
 - ▶ With schools (head teachers and mentors)
 - ▶ With community activists/CLMS users
 - ▶ With other organizations through JADF
- ▶ Missing clear coordination with other project

- ▶ E.g., Sustainable Health Enterprises (or SHE), making sanitary pads out of banana leave fibers

The youth employment component of the project

- ▶ Model Farmer Schools (MFS)
 - ▶ Good initiative, but children are still in labor outside school hours
 - ▶ Choice of beneficiaries very well done
 - ▶ Problems with some of the equipment (quality of raincoats...)
 - ▶ Some difficulties due to the different level of education of children (some are quasi-illiterate)
 - ▶ Some difficulties due to lack of equipment (e.g. Existence of “theoretical” courses in hairdressing)
 - ▶ Lack of final “toolkit” for children to continue the work in the sector they are trained in
- ▶ Girls’ skills training
 - ▶ The girls have been identified (June), but are still waiting for the training

Access to social protection programs

- ▶ Project staff is aware of the social protection programs and will raise awareness locally
- ▶ The community activists will be trained on this issue, and will seek to help beneficiary families to access social protection plans
 - ▶ These components are not yet fully operational
 - ▶ Few examples of project progress in this area

The Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea

- ▶ Have had some meetings which have been useful to raise awareness about child labor
- ▶ Limited impact on policymaking, because of lack of official recognition of the REST
- ▶ Child Labor Steering Committees operational at Central and District levels
 - ▶ REST initiative operational at local (Sector, Node and Factory/Cooperative) levels

Assess the implementation of the project’s sustainability plan

- ▶ Increased enforcement of child labor laws in the tea sector
 - ▶ Sustainable through CLMS (the challenge is to make CLMS sustainable)
- ▶ Increased school attendance among beneficiary children 5-17 years of age in target districts
 - ▶ Equipment provision is not sustainable
 - ▶ Some possibilities of sustainability through VSL and planned IGA activities
- ▶ Increased incomes in beneficiary households
 - ▶ If VSL and IGA activities are successful
- ▶ Increased opportunities for safe employment for beneficiary children of legal working age (16-17 years)
 - ▶ MFS and CSS are likely to end with the project, unless other partners/NGOs use the mode
- ▶ Child labor issues addressed in Government of Rwanda policies and private sector action plans
 - ▶ The REST initiative could be sustainable if it obtains a legal recognition
- ▶ Community attitudes towards child labor changed
 - ▶ Increasing understanding of problem of child labor in project communities
 - ▶ Poverty leads to continued child labor
- ▶ Beneficiary households referred to social protection services
 - ▶ Inherently a sustainable approach (as long as the services provide sustainable benefits)

Section 4: Main Conclusions

- ▶ Timely project – working in a difficult sector
 - ▶ Poverty of key beneficiaries
 - ▶ Various barriers to education (lack of distinction between child work and child labor...)
- ▶ Complex and ambitious project strategy with numerous activities
 - ▶ Some missing elements (e.g., pedagogical follow-up; better support for secondary school children)
 - ▶ The provision of educational supplies is a bit basic strategy; and has some shortcomings (lack of sustainability; similar kits for everyone; lacking quality of some materials)
 - ▶ The catch-up program could have been an important additional element
- ▶ Some initial delays – but project seems to be catching up
 - ▶ Growing understanding of child labor in the project implementation areas
 - ▶ Functioning VSLs, MFS, CLMS...
 - ▶ A large number of children returned to formal schools

Section 5: Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Need for institutional anchorage of project institutions and activities
 - ▶ Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea (REST)
 - ▶ Model Farm Schools (for sustainability)
- ▶ Supplies provided to children may be enough to make them return to school in the short term
 - ▶ But may be a bit reductionist strategy, especially if the underlying poverty situation is not addressed
- ▶ Need of continuous assessment of project strategies in view of the implementation environment
 - ▶ Early adaptation to a changing environment is crucial, e.g., for REST, Catch-Up...
 - ▶ Project implementation dates should take into account the local school year

Good practices

- ▶ Project is working at several levels – addressing needs of several subgroups
 - ▶ Multiple venues for awareness raising
 - ▶ Involvement of district and sector authorities
- ▶ Use of mentors and community activists for awareness raising and monitoring
- ▶ Community involvement for selection of beneficiaries
 - ▶ This has led to services being provided to those who need it most
- ▶ Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS)
 - ▶ Innovative technology with a lot of potential
 - ▶ Strategy for expansion and turn-over to Government is still a challenge
- ▶ Research activities

Section 6: Key Recommendations

- ▶ Review key activities and their sustainability
 - ▶ Consider providing awareness raising for teachers in disciplining methods to reduce incidence of corporal punishment
 - ▶ Re-equilibrate the budget in view of the changing implementation environment
 - ▶ Explore possibilities for an extension to provide project support until the end of a third school year of direct support and monitoring (2017)

- ▶ Review transition strategy of the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) and how it should connect to labor inspectors and/or local authorities/activists
 - ▶ Check sustainability aspect of provision of telephone credits to community activists
- ▶ Review the direct monitoring of beneficiaries
 - ▶ Especially in view of the work they are doing outside school hours (including holidays)
- ▶ Review the quality/quantity of the equipment provided to beneficiaries
 - ▶ Assess the possibility to improve the “package,” especially in view of reports of low-quality shoes and bags, which have broken
 - ▶ Much needed access to school feeding program for beneficiaries at secondary school
- ▶ Consider providing those having completed vocational training as a part of the MFSs or the CSS with a toolkit
 - ▶ E.g. sewing machines, hairdressing materials, etc.
- ▶ Seek stronger project cooperation with other projects and programs
 - ▶ E.g., Sustainable Health Enterprises (or SHE), making sanitary pads out of banana leave fibers
 - ▶ Also strengthen beneficiaries’ awareness of social protection programs
 - ▶ Review issue of health insurance (since it is a necessary element for continued schooling)
- ▶ Urgently provide training to the Village Savings and Loans associations (VSL) on how to calculate each member’s “due” after a completed cycle of savings
 - ▶ Every member is saving a different amount (FRw 100-500 per week) and such calculation is complex
- ▶ Policy issues
 - ▶ Explore possibilities of institutional grounding of REST (perhaps anchored as a local element of the Steering Committee on Child Labor)
 - ▶ Consider ways of better integration of Child Labor issue in the final version of the National Tea Policy

Thank you

bjorn@educ.umass.edu

Group discussions

Discussion themes

1. How to ensure the continued schooling of children in formal schools
 - ▶ Consider ways to strengthen income generating activities for parents
2. How to connect the project beneficiaries with social protection services and/or other services?
 - ▶ Consider which projects/programs would be most relevant
3. How to strengthen the pedagogical aspects of the program
 - ▶ E.g., consider training in alternative disciplining methods to avoid corporal punishment
4. How to ensure that beneficiary children are not working
 - ▶ Consider the monitoring aspects of the project
5. How to provide institutional anchorage of project activities
 - ▶ Consider CLMS, REST and MFS

ANNEX C: Main Suggestions from Group Work during Stakeholder Meeting

TOPIC I: How to ensure the continued schooling of children in formal school (consider ways to strengthen IGA for parents)

Ways to strengthen IGA's for parents include the following:

- Households whose children are REACH-T project's beneficiaries are members of voluntary saving loan groups.
- These VSL's members will not only be educated on financial literacy but trained on how to create income generating activities and linked to microfinance institutions.
- REACH-T will have to put in place a fund which will serve as startup capital and VSL members can borrow from it at the end of the VSL cycle.

TOPIC II: How to connect the project's beneficiaries with social protection service and /or other services?

The first step is to identify all social protection services existing in the area and assess the needs of beneficiaries that the project can't meet. After identifying beneficiaries' need, efforts have to be made in advocacy for social protection services in the area.

TOPIC III: How to strengthen the pedagogical aspect of the program? (Consider training in alternative disciplining method to avoid corporal punishment)

- To promote child friendly education system by raising awareness among teachers and parents, providing them with a list of alternative disciplining methods which are not related to corporal punishment.
- Train teacher mentors on disciplining methods which not related to corporal punishment so that they could give the information to their fellow teachers

TOPIC IV: How to ensure that beneficiary children are not working (consider the monitoring aspect of the project)

To ensure that beneficiary children are not still working more effort has to be put in the following;

- Strengthen the mentorship program; both teacher mentorship and peer mentorship in schools where beneficiary children are enrolled

- Use paper-based monitoring to collect information about school attendance and absences so that we could track every single child's situation
- Liaise with the local authority especially those in charge of education
- Advocate for and link poor families to other social protection services

TOPIC V: How to provide institutional anchorage of project's activities (consider CLMS, REST and MFS)

To provide institutional anchorage to project's activists, consider the following ways:

1. CLMS:

- Handling CLMS to Government: Child labor monitoring system is still in its pilot phase, which is the reason why it is being managed by Winrock /REACH-T. Later it should be transferred to a government institution depending on what will be agreed up between Winrock and the government.
- Encouraging community participation in child labor monitoring system: CLMS is being used by people from the local community. The project has 88 users with a possibility to expand the numbers with one user per village.
- There is a need for a continued capacity strengthening of users and local authorities in terms of using the system, use of data from it in line with tracking and referring child labor incidences.

2. REST: REST is new structure from the REACH-T's initiative. The way to provide it with institutional anchorage is strengthen them in terms of building the capacity of its member and then make them independent from the project.

3. MFS

There are three ways to give MFS program the sustainability, security and stabilities after the project phase out:

- Give to the children the quality entrepreneurial skills during MFS studies
- Providing start-up kits to MFS graduates
- Gathering MFS graduates in cooperative

ANNEX D: List of Documents Reviewed

DOL Management Procedures & Guidelines for Cooperative Agreements

Notice of Cooperative Agreement Award

Project research and studies, including

- Baseline Prevalence Study on Child Labor in Tea-Growing Areas in Rwanda

- Labor law enforcement assessment

- Occupational Safety and Health Study

- Skills training Assessment

Reach-T Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (June 2014)

Reach-T Intervention information (by district)

Reach-T Project document

Reach-T Technical Progress Reports and Comments from DOL

Rwandan policy documents, including

- Integrated Child Rights Policy (September 2011)

- National Policy on Elimination of Child Labour (March 2013)

- Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS2 – 2013)

- Justice for Children Policy (2014)

ANNEX E: List of Interviews, Meetings and Site Visits

The names of the interviewees were intentionally left blank in accordance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002, Public Law 107-347.

Date	Location
Oct 22	Kigali
Oct 23	Kigali; WI/REACH-T office; NAEB; NCC, Remera; MIFOTRA office, Kacyiru; FERWACOTHE; Duterimbere; WI/REACH-T office
Oct 24	WI/REACH-T office
Oct 25	Kigali, Rubavu
Oct 26	Rubavu ADEPE offices/REACH-T Node; Nyabirasi sector; Rubavu district; REACH-T office/Rubavu
Oct 27	Rubavu, Nyabihu; Nyabihu District; Nyabihu Karago sector; Karago sector
Oct 28	Nyabihu District; Mulinga sector
Oct 29	Buruhukiro Sector
Oct 30	Huye – Nyamagabe; Nyamagabe district office
Oct 31	Umuganda
Nov 2	Gicumbi district
Nov 3	Gicumbi district
Nov 4	Gicumbi district
Nov 5	Kigali Winrock Office
Nov 6	Stakeholder Meeting, Kigali

ANNEX F: Evaluation Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for the

Independent Interim Evaluation

of

REACH-T Project

Rwanda Education Alternatives

For Children in Tea Growing Areas

Cooperative Agreement Number: IL-24920-13-75-K
Financing Agency: U.S. Department of Labor
Grantee Organization: Winrock International
Dates of Project Implementation: 30 September 2013 - 29 September 2017
Type of Evaluation: Independent Interim Evaluation
Evaluation Field Work Dates: Oct 23 - Nov 6, 2015
Preparation Date of TOR: August 2015
Total Project Funds from USDOL Based
on Cooperative Agreement: US \$5,000,000

Vendor for the Evaluation Contract:



Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad
Consultores Asociados

ACRONYMS

ADEPE	<i>Action Pour le Développement du Peuple</i>
ALERT	Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking System
CA	Community Activist
CAHR	Children at high risk of child labor
CL	Child Labor
CLMS	Child Labor Monitoring System
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
DLI	District Labor Inspectors
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FERWACOTHE	<i>Fédération Rwandaise des Coopératives de Théiculteurs</i>
FY	Fiscal Year
GoR	Government of Rwanda
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ILAB	USDOL Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
IO	Intermediate Objective
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFS	Model Farm School
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labor
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPECL	National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor
OCFT	USDOL Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
REACH-T	Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas
REST	Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SC	Save the Children
SCREAM	Supporting Children’s Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media
SFS	<i>Sistemas, Familias y Sociedad – Consultores Asociados</i>
SORWATHE	<i>Société Rwandaise de Thé</i>
SP	Social Protection
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
WDA	Workforce Development Authority
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

USDOL - OCFT

The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). OCFT activities include research on international child labor (CL); supporting U.S. government policy on international child labor; administering and overseeing cooperative agreements with organizations working to eliminate child labor around the world; and raising awareness about child labor issues.

Since 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated over \$900 million to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects to combat exploitive child labor in more than 90 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL range from targeted action programs in specific sectors of work to more comprehensive programs that support national efforts to eliminate child labor. USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects generally seek to achieve five major goals:

1. Reducing exploitative child labor, especially the worst forms (WFCL) through the provision of direct educational services and by addressing root causes of child labor, including innovative strategies to promote sustainable livelihoods of target households;
2. Strengthening policies on child labor, education, and sustainable livelihoods, and the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, address its root causes, and promote formal, non-formal and vocational education opportunities to provide children with alternatives to child labor;
3. Raising awareness of exploitative child labor and its root causes, and the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;
4. Supporting research, evaluation, and the collection of reliable data on child labor, its root causes, and effective strategies, including educational and vocational alternatives, microfinance and other income generating activities to improve household income; and
5. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The approach of USDOL child labor elimination projects – decreasing the prevalence of exploitive child labor through increased access to education and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable families – is intended to nurture the development, health, safety, and enhanced future employability of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor.

USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects are designed to ensure that children in areas with a high incidence of child labor are withdrawn and integrated into educational settings, and that they persist in their education once enrolled. In parallel, the program seeks to avert at-risk children from

leaving school and entering child labor. The projects are based on the notion that the elimination of exploitative child labor depends, to a large extent, on improving access to, quality of, and relevance of education. Without improving educational quality and relevance, children withdrawn/prevented from child labor may not have viable alternatives and could resort to other forms of hazardous work.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, Congress provided new authority to ILAB to expand activities related to income generating activities, including microfinance, to help projects expand income generation and address poverty more effectively. The addition of this livelihood focus is based on the premise that if adult family members have sustainable livelihoods, they will be less likely to have their dependent children work and more likely to keep them to school.

The approach of USDOL child labor elimination projects – decreasing the prevalence of exploitive child labor through increased access to education and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable families – is intended to nurture the development, health, safety, and enhanced future employability of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor.

Project Context²³

Widespread poverty, limited access to education, and lack of enforcement of labor laws are drivers of child labor in rural economies.²⁴ In Rwanda, an estimated 8.9% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old are involved in child labor, with a staggering 84% of all child labor occurring in the agriculture sector.²⁵

Most child labor in tea occurs among smallholder farmers that are typically members of the tea cooperatives in Rwanda. Many children in tea growing areas engage in child labor in order to supplement their family's insufficient income. Winrock's pre-award rapid assessment in the project's 12 target districts indicated that the average percentage of the local population under the poverty line is 30%. This practice increases family income while children "learn the trade," a process that is deeply ingrained in agricultural communities. Families also use child labor to avoid hiring outside labor which would take away from the family's income. During REACH-T team field visits, tea growers revealed that very few rely on tea as a primary source of household income. Therefore, in some households child labor is used both as a preventive measure and as a means to cope with economic shocks, as the households cannot pay laborers with income received from tea production.

Currently, there is no system or process for monitoring the informal tea producing sector. Law enforcement is weak and there are only 30 District Labor Inspectors (DLIs), one per district, to

²³ Adapted from the REACH-T CMEP

²⁴ ILO, "Rural Development Through Decent Work – Policy Brief," 2011.

²⁵ UCW, "Understanding Children's Work," 2011.

monitor all labor issues, including child labor. Furthermore, Rwanda's Vision 2020 plan includes increasing agricultural productivity to make tea the leading export by 2017. As Rwanda scales up tea production, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) and the tea industry must address child labor issues in the supply chain. As tea production increases child labor will also increase, unless child labor laws are rigorously enforced and monitoring structures and systems are standardized.

There are multiple factors that cause child labor in tea production in Rwanda. REACH-T has defined seven contributing problem areas related to the existence of child labor, including: (i) lack of enforcement of child labor laws; (ii) children out of school due in large part to limited access to quality education in tea growing communities, inadequate infrastructure, and financial and opportunity costs that prevent many families from sending children at school; (iii) demand for child labor among poor households that depend on income from child labor; (iv) few options of safe work for children aged 16-17 years; (v) limited government and tea sector capacity to address child labor; (vi) lack of community awareness of what constitutes child labor and safe work; and finally, (vii) limited access to social protection services for vulnerable, rural households.

The GoR has worked to eliminate child labor through the endorsement of the International Labor Convention No. 138 of June 26, 1973 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; the International Labor Convention No. 182 of June 17, 1999 concerning Worst Forms of Child Labor; the National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor (NPECL) of March 2013; the Ministerial Order No. 6/2010 of 13/07/2010 determining the WFCL; and the Guidelines to combat child labor in the City of Kigali (2012). However, despite these efforts, child labor elimination continues to be hindered by: the absence of a national, multi-sector strategy and comprehensive policy framework to combat child labor; lack of reporting of child labor abuses; limited capacity of DLIs; gap in scope of labor inspector for informal sector; lack of CLMS data and analysis at all GoR levels; a lack of awareness and knowledge about CL issues; and a lack of monitoring of the tea sector at grassroots level.

While Rwanda mandates and provides free basic education, one of the main barriers to children's school attendance is the associated costs that parents incur in order for children to access education programs, such as uniforms, supplies and "top up" fees.²⁶ When parents with school-aged children cannot afford school materials, their children are not able to attend school, and many are pushed into child labor, including working in the tea sector. At the same time, the demands associated with child labor may also pull children out of school. The other factors that affect children's attendance include poor quality schools or poor infrastructure, and inability to reintegrate or address the needs of children who have dropped out school.

Children aged 16-17 years old may work legally in Rwanda, and contribute to their families' livelihood, potentially liberating their younger siblings from the pressure to work. However, most

²⁶ While Rwanda provides free basic education for 12 years, most schools are not completely free and head teachers or schools will often charge fees to "top up" teachers' salaries as incentives.

children aged 16-17 lack access to safe work because tea sector employers lack knowledge and incentive to hire children of legal working age and youth lack marketable technical skills. Children are unaware of their rights and the existing services available to them. Communities are also unaware of occupational safety and health (OSH) standards for children in agriculture and the requirement for protective gear.

The REACH-T Project

On September 17, 2013, Winrock International received a four-year Cooperative Agreement worth US \$5 million from USDOL to implement a child labor elimination initiative in Rwanda called Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea Growing Areas (REACH-T). The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement is to support the significant reduction of child labor among children 5-17 years old in the production of tea in Rwanda by implementing a child labor monitoring system (CLMS), enhancing labor law enforcement efforts on smallholder farms, increasing children's access to education, and promoting decent work for older children and economic opportunities for households most vulnerable to child labor in tea growing areas.

REACH-T aims to support over 4,090 children involved in CL or children at high risk of exploitive child labor (CAHR), and provide livelihood services to 1,320 households of the most vulnerable children in tea growing areas. The project targets twelve tea growing districts of Rwanda: Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Rulindo, Gicumbi, Burera, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rutsiro, Karongi, Nyabihu, Rubavu, and Ngororero. Winrock is partnering with five organizations to implement this project: Action Pour le Développement du Peuple (ADEPE), Duterimbere, Fédération Rwandaise des Coopératives de Théiculteurs (FERWACOTHE), Save the Children (SC), and a collaborative tea sector partner, Société Rwandaise de Thé (SORWATHE).

In response to the problem analysis, the REACH-T project's Theory of Change (ToC) assumes that the reduction or elimination of child labor will be a progressive and cumulative result, deriving from the application of a three-pillar approach:

- **Streamlined, vertically integrated Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS):** Build the capacity and commitment of stakeholders in communities (community volunteers, such as Child Protection Committees [CPC] or Community Activists [CA]), at district and national levels, and within the tea industry to recognize and report child labor abuses and enforce laws through the use of the CLMS. The CLMS will also enable referral of vulnerable households (HH) to existing social services in the community.
- **Catalyze tea sector leadership:** Build private sector capacity to address child labor and enhance awareness of the risks of child labor in tea by working directly with members of the tea sector.
- **Provision of services through a community-centric model:** Community members will serve as program focal points for the provision of direct services to members of households where children are involved in or at risk of child labor.

The project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) identified seven main intermediate objectives (IO) that provide the framework of the ToC:

IO 1: Increased enforcement of child labor laws in the tea sector

IO 2: Increased school attendance among beneficiary children 5-17 years of age in target districts

IO 3: Increased incomes in beneficiary HH

IO 4: Increased opportunities for safe employment for beneficiary children of legal working age (16-17 years)

IO 5: Child labor issues addressed in Government of Rwanda policies and private sector action plans

IO 6: Community attitudes towards child labor changed

IO 7: Beneficiary HHs referred to social protection services

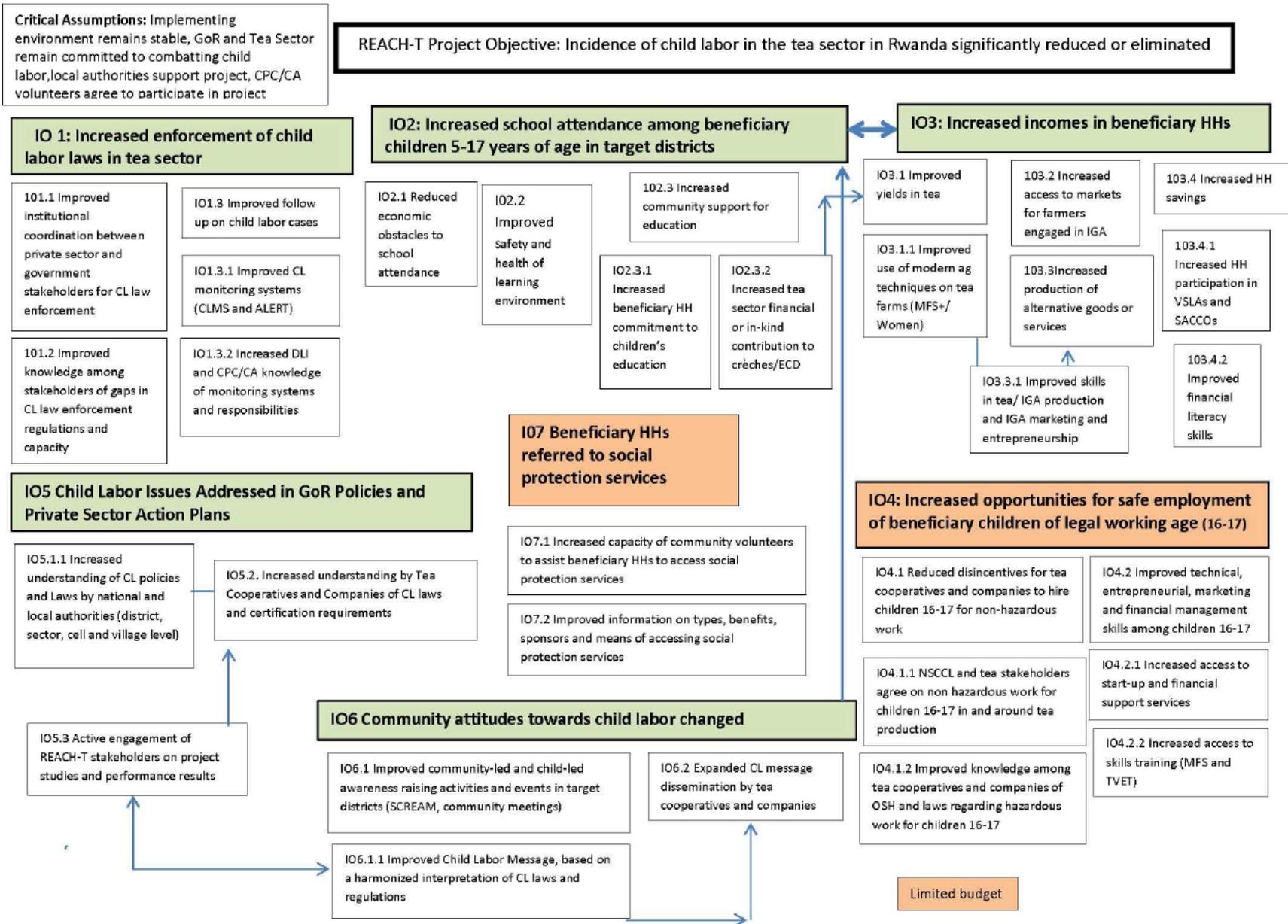
These objectives will be accomplished by providing the financial, material, and social support needed to place child laborers back into the education system, improve household livelihoods, facilitate household access to social protection, promote safe work standards for older children of working age (16 and 17 years old), build tea stakeholder and government capacity, raise awareness of the negative consequences of child labor, and increase enforcement and the availability of data on child labor in tea production through the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) and the Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking System (ALERT) .

By designing and strengthening child labor monitoring through the CLMS and enhancing private sector and government collaboration through the Roundtable on Elimination of Child labor and Sustainable Tea (REST), REACH-T works to provide a replicable model for reducing child labor not only in the tea sector but in other formal and informal sectors as well. The REACH-T approach aims to build the long-term resiliency of rural communities and strengthen the ability of tea growers and community structures to engage and partner with the tea companies and cooperatives to monitor child labor, support education, provide social protection services, and plan economic development and growth. Within this framework, REACH-T blends an area-based and a sector-based approach in order to catalyze private sector- and community-led reduction of child labor.

REACH-T also strengthens the institutions that are best positioned to monitor and sustain child labor reduction, referral, tracking and enforcement, and raise public awareness of the hazards of child labor throughout the Rwandan tea growing areas.

Below is the REACH-T Results Framework, which depicts the critical assumptions, seven intermediate objectives, and supporting results.

REACH-T Results Framework



II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

As per USDOL Management Procedure Guidelines, OCFT-funded projects are subject to external interim and final evaluations. The interim evaluation of the REACH-T project is due in late 2015.

Interim Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The Interim Evaluation will assess and evaluate the project's implementation for the first two years, providing insight on what aspects are effective and determining whether the project is on track towards meeting its goals and objectives. The evaluator may also identify further points of importance during the mission that may be included in the analysis as appropriate.

The evaluation will address the following issues:

1. Assess the relevance of the project's Theory of Change (ToC), as stated in the REACH-T CMEP, to the issue of child labor in Rwanda and whether activities are being implemented in accordance with the project design.
2. Evaluate the project's progress made so far, and whether it is likely to complete all activities and results as delineated in the project document. Analyze the factors that may be contributing to successes and challenges. Please assess what is currently happening on the ground and if necessary make recommendations to ensure the project will meet the agreed-upon outcomes, goals and timeline.
3. Describe the results of the project by the date of the evaluation, at institutional and community level, and especially, on the lives of beneficiary households and children;
4. Assess the steps taken by the project to mainstream project activities and recommend actions to increase sustainability before project phase-out.

The evaluation will identify any specific implementation areas that may benefit from adjustments to ensure the project can be as successful as possible during its remaining period of performance. It should provide recommendations for enhancing achievement of project objectives and addressing limitations in order to improve the project's ability to achieve results by the end of project.

The evaluation will also assess and make recommendations according to the extent which the project has started to take steps toward sustainability, ensuring that the project's approaches and benefits continue after the completion of the project, including sources of funding and partnerships with other organizations. This includes the direct project partners.

The scope of the interim evaluation includes a review and assessment of all activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement with Winrock. All activities that have been implemented from project launch through time of evaluation fieldwork should be considered. The evaluation should assess the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the Cooperative Agreement, Project Document and CMEP. The evaluation will assess the positive and negative changes produced by the project – intended and unintended, direct and indirect, as

well as any changes in the social and economic environment in the country – as reported by respondents.

Intended Users

The intended users are OCFT, Winrock, its project partners, and other stakeholders working to combat child labor in Rwanda and more broadly. The evaluation will provide an assessment of the project's experience in implementation and its effects on project beneficiaries. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations will serve to inform any project adjustments that may need to be made, and to inform stakeholders in the design and implementation of subsequent phases or future child labor elimination projects as appropriate.

The evaluation report will be published on the USDOL website, so the report should be written as a standalone document, providing the necessary background for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of the project.

Evaluation Questions

Specific questions that the evaluation should seek to answer are found below. The evaluator may add, remove, or shift evaluation questions, but the final list will be subject to approval by USDOL.

1. To what degree is the project design appropriate and adequate to address the key causes of child labor among beneficiary children and households?
2. At midterm, is the project on track to meet its targets/objectives?
3. Please assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS), including at the national, sectoral and community levels? In particular, please assess the status of the Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application? How has the collaboration been between Labor Inspectors and community volunteers in monitoring under the CLMS?
4. How effective is the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring System (DBMS)? Does it meet the needs and requirements of the project?
5. Please assess the effectiveness of the education interventions provided to children (i.e., the conditional component for children attending public schools, Catch-up programs, Model Farm Schools, and TVET.) Has the mentoring program been effective in preventing beneficiary children from leaving school?
6. How effective is the livelihoods program in reducing child labor? In particular, please assess the training programs to promote safe, decent and sustainable work in agriculture and the VSLAs. Is the livelihoods program, in whole or in part, sustainable?

7. How have recent changes in national law and policy affected the project's implementation plans and abilities to fulfill the objectives and goals of the project? In particular, please look at the impact of the Justice for Children policy and the Ministry's decision to end Catch-Up funding on the project.
8. How effectively is REACH-T coordinating with implementing partners and stakeholders to reduce child labor?
9. Please assess the youth employment component of the project, including transitioning legal working age children from child labor to acceptable work.
10. Have the project beneficiaries been able to access social protection programs?
11. To what extent has the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) been effective as a platform for industry and government stakeholders to reduce child labor? Where are they at in the process of developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry?
12. To what extent has the project's sustainability plan been deployed? Thus far, have challenges come up regarding this plan? If so, does the evaluator have recommendations for moving forward?

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND TIMEFRAME

A. Approach

The evaluation fieldwork will be qualitative and participatory in nature and use project documents including CMEP data to provide quantitative information. Qualitative information will be obtained through field visits, interviews and focus groups as appropriate. Opinions coming from beneficiaries (teachers, parents and children) will improve and clarify the use of quantitative analysis. The participatory nature of the evaluation will contribute to the sense of ownership among beneficiaries.

Quantitative data will be drawn from project documents including the CMEP, TPRs and other reports to the extent that it is available and incorporated in the analysis. As an annex, the report will also include a table showing an overview of the project progress by listing indicators, targets and achievements to date (please see example of template for this table in Annex 1 of this TOR). For those indicators where the project is experiencing challenges, a brief analysis will be included in the results.

The following principles will be applied during the evaluation process:

6. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives will be triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions.
7. Efforts will be made to include parents' and children's voices and beneficiary participation generally, using child-sensitive approaches to interviewing children following the ILO-IPEC guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor (<http://www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=3026>) and UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html).
8. Gender and cultural sensitivity will be integrated in the evaluation approach.
9. Consultations will incorporate a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, allowing additional questions to be posed that are not included in the TOR, whilst ensuring that key information requirements are met.
10. As far as possible, a consistent approach will be followed in each project site, with adjustments made for the different actors involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality.

B. Interim Evaluation Team

The evaluation team will consist of:

1. The international evaluator: Mr. Bjorn Nordtveit
2. As appropriate, an interpreter fluent in necessary languages will travel with the evaluator and assist during his work in different regions.

One member of the project staff may accompany the team to make introductions. This person will not be involved in the evaluation process and will not attend the evaluators' meetings or interviews with key informants.

The international evaluator will be responsible for developing the methodology in consultation with Sistemas, Familias y Sociedad (SFS), USDOL, and the project staff; assigning the tasks of the national consultant and interpreter during the field work; directly conducting interviews and facilitating other data collection processes; analyzing the evaluation material gathered; presenting feedback on the initial findings of the evaluation during the national stakeholder meeting; and preparing the evaluation report.

The responsibility of the interpreter in each provincial locality is to ensure that the evaluator is understood by the stakeholders as far as possible, and that the information gathered is relayed accurately to the evaluator.

C. Evaluation Milestones

1. Document Review

Pre-field visit preparation includes extensive review of relevant documents. During fieldwork, documentation will be verified and additional documents may be collected. Documents may include:

- CMEP documents,
- Baseline and endline survey reports,
- Project document and revisions,
- Cooperative Agreement,
- Project Results Frameworks and Monitoring Plans,
- Work plans,
- Technical Progress and Status Reports,
- Correspondence related to Technical Progress Reports,
- Management Procedures and Guidelines,
- Research or other reports undertaken by or related to the project, and
- Project files (including school records) as appropriate.

2. Question Matrix

Before beginning fieldwork, the evaluator will create a question matrix, which outlines the source of data from where the evaluator plans to collect information for each Terms of Reference (TOR) question. This will help the evaluator make decisions as to how he is going to allocate his time in the field. It will also help the evaluator to ensure that he is exploring all possible avenues for data triangulation and to clearly note where the evaluation findings are coming from. The question matrix shall be forwarded by the evaluator to SFS before start of fieldwork and shared with USDOL.

3. Interviews with stakeholders

Focus groups and/or informational interviews will be held with as many project stakeholders as possible. The evaluator will solicit the opinion of children, community members in areas where awareness-raising activities occurred, parents of beneficiaries, teachers, government representatives, legal authorities, union and NGO officials, the action program implementers, and program staff regarding the project's accomplishments, program design, sustainability, and the working relationship between project staff and their partners, where appropriate.

Depending on the circumstances, these meetings will be one-on-one or group interviews. Technically, stakeholders are all those who have an interest in a project, for example, as

implementers, direct and indirect beneficiaries, community leaders, donors, and government officials. Thus, it is anticipated that conversation will be held with:

- OCFT staff responsible for this evaluation and project prior to the commencement of the field work;
- Implementers at all levels, including child labor monitors involved in assessing whether children have been effectively prevented or withdrawn from child labor situations;
- Headquarters, Country Director, Project Managers, and Field Staff of Grantee and Partner Organizations;
- Government Ministry Officials and Local Government Officials who have been involved in or are knowledgeable about the project;
- Community leaders, members, and volunteers;
- Education personnel including school teachers, assistants and school directors;
- Project beneficiaries (children withdrawn and prevented and their parents);
- International NGOs and multilateral agencies working in the area;
- Other child protection and/or education organizations, committees and experts in the area; and
- U.S. Embassy staff member.

4. [Field Visits](#)

The evaluator will visit a selection of project sites. The final selection of field sites to be visited will be made by the evaluator. Every effort should be made to include some sites where the project experienced successes and others that encountered challenges, as well as a good cross section of sites across targeted CL sectors. During the visits, the evaluator will observe the activities and outputs developed by the project.

[D. Sampling, Site Selection and Data Collection Methodology](#)

Criteria for selecting communities, beneficiaries and other sources:

A two-stage cluster sampling strategy will be used to identify six communities in the three implementation zones, i.e., the Western, Northern, and Southern Provinces. At the first sampling stage, three districts, one in each province, will be identified through random selection. At a second stage, two communities will be selected in each district through stratified sampling, based on a clustering of communities with “promising practices” and with “implementation challenges,” to cover a variety of implementation categories in distinct geographic environments.

This evaluation is employing a qualitative methodology and is limited in time and scope. Hence, it will be using a “compressed ethnography” approach to obtain “thick” descriptions of stakeholders’ relationship with the project. Thick descriptions can be understood as “transcending research

paradigms,” and “involve detailed, rich descriptions not only of participants’ experiences of phenomena but also of the contexts in which those experiences occur.”²⁷ The “thickness” of the descriptions therefore relates to the multiple layers of culture and context in which the experiences, e.g., of children involved with or at risk of child labor, are embedded. In this evaluation, the evaluator attempts to obtain such thick description of the children’s lives through a combination of observation, focus groups, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Communities will be informed as late as possible about the evaluation fieldwork, and the evaluator will take precautions so as to minimize the children and other stakeholders’ disruption from their normal activities. Stakeholders should be asked to continue their normal work and not make specific arrangements for the evaluator – other than making themselves available for an interview that in most cases would last approximately 1 hour.

Criteria for sampling interviewees/beneficiaries:

Six beneficiaries (three girls and three boys) will be selected in each community through systematic sampling, using project beneficiary lists collected from Kigali (main office) and a table of random digits. If children are classified according to age, the sampling will be organized to make sure different age groups and services are represented. Beneficiaries who are withdrawn from child labor and those who were prevented from entering child labor will be interviewed. The use of systematic sampling is preferred over on-site convenience sampling, since the former may reveal reporting issues as well as undocumented absenteeism and/or dropout. A similar sampling strategy will be used to identify two households in each community, one for households with a girl beneficiary and one with a boy beneficiary.

No particular sampling strategy will be used for other interviewees, the number and categories of which are limited by the time available for work in the field (i.e., we will use a “convenience” sampling strategy).

	Western Province	Southern Province	Northern Province	Female	Male	Total
Beneficiaries	12	12	12	18	18	36
Parents	4	4	4	6	6	12
VSLA/REST	2	2	2	-	-	6
Community leaders	2	2	2	-	-	6
School	2	2	2	-	-	6

²⁷ Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 250-260.

directors/teachers						
Project & gvt. staff/other	2	2	2	-	-	6
Total	24	24	24	24	24	72

The table above gives a basic overview of expected interview categories per community. In addition, interviews will be held with participants involved in Roundtable on the Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) forum establishment, and Model Farm Schools, as well as Community Activists. Also, stakeholders having given or received project training will be interviewed (e.g., Leadership in modern agriculture; Agriculture, Health and Safety; Managing the Ecology; Model Farm Schools establishment).

At central (Kigali) level, the evaluator will meet Government Ministry Officials who have been involved in or are knowledgeable about the project. In the field, relevant Local Government Officials will be interviewed. Also, it is of particular importance to set aside sufficient time for interviews with project staff.

The specific list of interviewees may be adjusted, in coordination with project staff, to reflect realities in the field as information becomes available.

Data collection methods:

Open-ended and unstructured interviews will be used to gather data on project implementation from (i) project staff and (ii) government officials. Focus groups (one per community) with open-ended interview schedules will be organized for the children beneficiaries. Some of the younger interviewed beneficiary children may be asked to draw pictures of a certain aspect of the project and/or of their lives (e.g., what do you do in your free time? What has the project changed in your life?). The evaluator will then establish a dialogue with the children based on various aspects of their drawings. The evaluators will take pictures of the drawings to use them in the subsequent analysis (the children will keep their drawings).

Other relevant issues:

It is expected that the evaluator will be spending approximately three days in each district. One day will be used for interviews with local officials, and implementation counterparts, and/or visiting other institutions as suggested by project or official staff. The evaluator will then spend one full day in each community visited (see table above for type and gender of interviewees). In view of the limited time available for fieldwork (and the uncertainty related to the political situation, transport, weather clemencies, etc.) it should be noted that the strategies and sample sizes may be subject to in-field modifications.

Non-transcribed (“raw”) field notes will be imported into NVivo for coding and analysis. NVivo is a workspace for qualitative analysis, offering tools to deeply analyze unstructured (qualitative) data.

E. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The evaluation mission will observe utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure a maximum freedom of expression of the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and beneficiaries, implementing partner staff will generally not be present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff may accompany the evaluator to make introductions whenever necessary, to facilitate the evaluation process, make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

F. Stakeholders Meeting

Following the field visits, a stakeholders meeting will be conducted by the evaluator that brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including the implementing partners and other interested parties. The list of participants to be invited will be drafted prior to the evaluator's visit and confirmed in consultation with project staff during fieldwork. Stakeholders from all five provinces served by the project will be invited, though it is understood that some may not be able to attend due to travel related challenges.

The meeting will be used to present the major preliminary findings and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, and obtain clarification or additional information from stakeholders, including those not interviewed earlier. The agenda of the meeting will be determined by the evaluator in consultation with project staff. Some specific questions for stakeholders may be prepared to guide the discussion and possibly a brief written feedback form.

The agenda is expected to include some of the following items:

1. Presentation by the evaluator of the preliminary main findings
2. Feedback and questions from stakeholders on the findings
3. Opportunity for implementing partners not met to present their views on progress and challenges in their locality
4. If appropriate, Possible Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise on the project's performance
5. Discussion of recommendations to improve the implementation and ensure sustainability. Consideration will be given to the value of distributing a feedback form for participants to nominate their "action priorities" for the remainder of the project.

A debrief call will be held with the evaluator and USDOL after the stakeholder workshop to provide USDOL with preliminary findings and solicit feedback as needed.

G. Limitations

Fieldwork for the evaluation will last two weeks, on average, and the evaluator will not have enough time to visit all project sites. As a result, the evaluator will not be able to take all sites into consideration when formulating their findings. All efforts will be made to ensure that the evaluator is visiting a representative sample of sites, including some that have performed well and some that have experienced challenges.

Findings for the evaluation will be based on information collected from background documents and in interviews with stakeholders, project staff, and beneficiaries. The accuracy of the evaluation findings will be determined by the integrity of information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

Furthermore, the ability of the evaluator to determine efficiency will be limited by the amount of financial data available. A cost-efficiency analysis is not included because it would require impact data which is not available.

H. Timetable

The tentative timetable is as follows. Actual dates may be adjusted as needs arise.

Task	2015 Date(s)
Draft TOR submitted to USDOL	Mon, Aug 10
Input received from USDOL and Winrock on Draft TOR	Wed, Aug 26
Evaluator submits Methodology/Sampling Plan to SFS	Wed, Sept 2
Evaluator submits List of Stakeholders/Interviewees for Winrock feedback	Wed, Sept 2
Evaluator submits Question Matrix and Suggested Itinerary	Mon, Sept 14
TOR Finalized	Fri, Sept 25
Logistics Call	Mon, Sept 28
Finalize Field Itinerary and Stakeholder List for Workshop	Fri, Oct 2
Cable Clearance Request sent to USDOL	Mon, Oct 5
Contract signed by Evaluator	Mon, Oct 5
Evaluator interviews USDOL	Wed, Oct 7
Fieldwork	Oct 23 – Nov 5
Stakeholders Meeting	Fri, Nov 6
Post-fieldwork Debrief Call with USDOL	Thurs, Nov 12
Draft Report sent to SFS for quality review	Mon, Nov 23
Draft Report to USDOL and Winrock for 48 hour review	Mon, Nov 30
Draft Report sent to USDOL, Winrock and stakeholders for comments	Wed, Dec 2
Comments due to SFS	Wed, Dec 16
Revised Report sent by Evaluator to SFS for quality review	Tues, Dec 22
Revised Report sent to USDOL	Tues, Dec 29
Approval from USDOL to Copy Edit/Format Report	Tues, Jan 5
Final Report sent to USDOL	Tues, Jan 19

IV. EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

Ten working days following the evaluator's return from fieldwork, a first draft evaluation report will be submitted to SFS. The report should have the following structure and content:

- I. Table of Contents
- II. List of Acronyms
- III. Executive Summary - providing a brief overview of the evaluation including sections IV-IX and key recommendations (5 pages)
- IV. Background and Project Description, including Context (1-2 pages)
- V. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology- including the list of Evaluation Questions, identifying the respective Report section where each question is answered (3-4 pages)
- VI. Evaluation Findings, including answers and supporting evidence for each of the evaluation questions. (15 pages)
- VII. Main Conclusions - a summary of the evaluation's overall conclusions (1-2 pages)
- VIII. Lessons Learned and Good Practices (1-2 pages)
- IX. Recommendations - identifying in parentheses the stakeholder to which the recommendation is directed (1-2 pages)
 - Key Recommendations – critical for successfully meeting project objectives and judgments on what changes need to be made for future programming
 - Other Recommendations – as needed
- X. Annexes, including but not limited to:
 - An overview of project progress (see template in Annex 1 below)
 - TOR
 - Question Matrix
 - List of documents reviewed
 - List of interviews, meetings and site visits
 - Stakeholder workshop agenda and participants

The total length of the report should be approximately **30 pages** for the main report, excluding the executive summary and annexes.

The first draft of the report will be circulated to OCFT and Winrock for a 48 hour review. This initial review serves to identify and correct potentially sensitive information and/or inaccuracies before the report is released for formal, detailed comments. Then the draft report will be officially submitted to OCFT, Winrock, partner organizations and relevant stakeholders for a full two week

review. Comments from stakeholders will be consolidated and incorporated into the final report as appropriate, and the evaluator will provide a response to OCFT, in the form of a comment matrix, as to why any comments might not have been incorporated.

While the substantive content of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the evaluator, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB/OCFT in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR. **All reports, including drafts, will be written in English.**

V. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

SFS has contracted with Mr. Bjorn Nordtveit to conduct this evaluation. He is a Norwegian evaluator based in the US, who holds a PhD in International Educational Policy and is a French speaker. He has relevant experience in Rwanda (World Bank) and on education and CL-related issues. He has carried out eleven (11) project evaluations of USDOL-funded projects, mainly in African countries, as well two synthesis reports on DOL-funded evaluations and vocational training strategies to reduce CL. Dr. Nordtveit teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Bjorn will work with OCFT, SFS and relevant REACH-T staff to evaluate this project.

SFS will provide logistical and administrative support to the evaluator, including travel arrangements (e.g. plane and hotel reservations, purchasing plane tickets, providing *per diem*) and all materials needed to provide all deliverables. SFS will also be responsible for providing the management and technical oversight necessary to ensure consistency of methods and technical standards.

ANNEX G: Data Collection Matrix

Evaluator: Bjorn Nordtveit

Date: September 13, 2015

#	TOR Question	Methodology	Data Source(s)/ Means of Verification	Stakeholders to Interview	Relevant Desk Review Documents
1	To what degree is the project design appropriate and adequate to address the key causes of child labor among beneficiary children and households?	Review of project documentation; one-to-one interviews; review of all Program Objectives and Indicators.	Triangulation between project documentation; interviews and observation.	DOL and project staff, local stakeholders, including parents; partner organization staff and government staff at central and local levels.	Baseline Report; all project documentation including lists of Program Objectives and Indicators (in the CMEP).
2	At midterm, is the project on track to meet its targets/objectives?	One-to-one interviews; document reviews; review of all Program Indicators.	Project staff; government counterpart staff; technical progress reports; verification of implementation status locally.	Senior project staff & M&E personnel; Government Counterpart.	Technical Progress Reports; Comprehensive M&E Plan (CMEP).
3	Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS), including at the national, sectoral and community levels? In particular, please assess the status of the Accountability for Labor Law Enforcement Referrals and Tracking (ALERT) mobile phone application? How has the collaboration been between Labor Inspectors and community volunteers in monitoring under the CLMS?	One-to-one interviews; observation (including spot-check of ALERT); review of IO1.3.	Individual interviews; triangulation with project and government staff; observation.	Senior project staff; stakeholders involved in monitoring, including partner organization staff; Labor Inspectors and community volunteers.	Technical Progress Reports; Baseline Report.
4	How effective is the Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring System (DBMS)? Does it meet the needs and requirements of the project?	Focus groups (with children); one-to-one interviews; review of IO1.3.	Focus groups and individual interviews; triangulation with project and	M&E personnel (including those of partner staff, especially Save the	Comprehensive M&E Plan (CMEP).

#	TOR Question	Methodology	Data Source(s)/ Means of Verification	Stakeholders to Interview	Relevant Desk Review Documents
			government staff, including local administrative personnel; spot checks.	Children); children and school personnel; parents.	
5	Assess the effectiveness of the education interventions provided to children (i.e., the conditional component for children attending public schools, Catch-up programs, Model Farm Schools, and TVET.) Has the mentoring program been effective in preventing beneficiary children from leaving school?	Focus groups (with children); one-to-one interviews; review of IO2.1, IO2.2; IO2.3; and IO4.2.	Focus groups and individual interviews, possible use of drawing methodologies for younger children in focus groups.	Children (in public schools); catch-up programs; Model Farm Schools and TVET. Senior project staff and local government officials, as well as parents.	Baseline Report; Comprehensive M&E Plan (CMEP).
6	How effective is the livelihoods program in reducing child labor? In particular, please assess the training programs to promote safe, decent and sustainable work in agriculture and the VSLAs. Is the livelihoods program, in whole or in part, sustainable?	One-to-one interviews; review of IO3.1; IO3.2; IO3.3 and IO3.4.	Individual interviews; documentation.	Training program participants (including partner staff); VSLA members; trainers; project staff; staff from Collaborating partners, especially Société Rwandaise de Thé.	Baseline Report; other documentation as available related to income and production.
7	How have recent changes in national law and policy affected the project's implementation plans and abilities to fulfill the objectives and goals of the project? In particular, please look at the impact of the Justice for Children policy and the Ministry's decision to end Catch-Up funding on the project.	One-to-one interviews; document reviews; review of IO5.1; 5.2; and 5.3.	Individual interviews; documentation.	Senior project personnel and Government counterpart (Central level).	Justice for Children policy; communications from the Ministry (if available).
8	How effectively is REACH-T coordinating with implementing partners and stakeholders to reduce child labor?	One-to-one interviews; review of IO2.3. and IO3.1.	Individual interviews.	Project personnel and members from all five implementation partners.	Project documentation - including Grant documentation

#	TOR Question	Methodology	Data Source(s)/ Means of Verification	Stakeholders to Interview	Relevant Desk Review Documents
					(Notice of Obligation).
9	Assess the youth employment component of the project, including transitioning legal working age children from child labor to acceptable work.	One-to-one interviews; review IO4.1 and IO4.2.	Individual interviews.	Project personnel; community representatives; youth project participants.	Project documentation and legal information as available.
10	Have the project beneficiaries been able to access social protection programs?	One-to-one interviews; review of IO7.1. and IO7.2.	Individual interviews.	Project personnel; parents.	Relevant project or government information or documentation, if available.
11	To what extent has the Roundtable on Elimination of Child Labor and Sustainable Tea (REST) been effective as a platform for industry and government stakeholders to reduce child labor? Where are they at in the process of developing policies and common codes of conduct for the Rwandan tea industry?	One-to-one interviews - review of IO1.1 & assess progress against IO1.2.	Individual interviews.	Project personnel; industry and government stakeholders.	REST-related documentation.
12	To what extent has the project's sustainability plan been deployed? Thus far, have challenges come up regarding this plan? If so, does the evaluator have recommendations for moving forward?	One-to-one interviews; document reviews; review IO3 (including 3.1.; 3.2.; 3.3.; and 3.4). Also review other indicators in view of sustainability of the interventions, e.g., on policy levels and community awareness, IO5.2 and IO6).	Individual interviews and project documentation.	Senior project personnel; government counterpart.	Project sustainability plan.