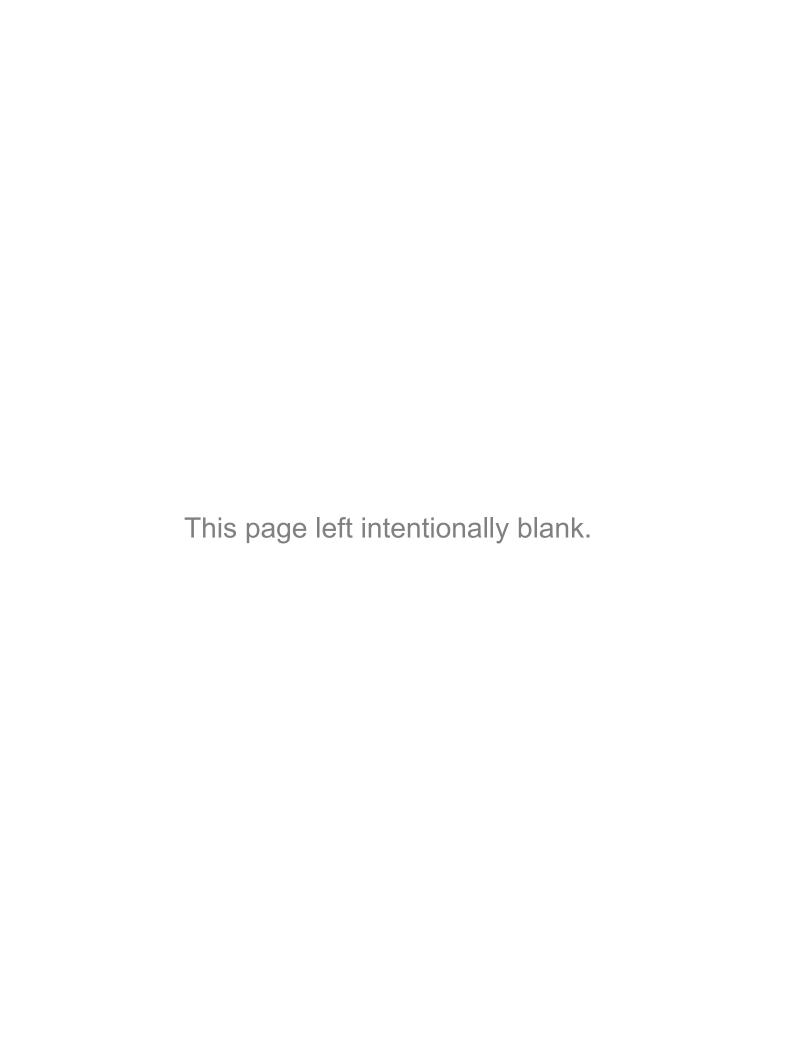# Independent Midterm Evaluation of the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) Project: Regional Report

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

2007

MACRO
INTERNATIONAL INC.

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Independent Midterm Evaluation of the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) Project: Regional Report

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APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAC	Adopt-A-Cop Program
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training Programmes
AIR	American Institutes for Research
BCC	Botswana Council of Churches
BNYC	Botswana National Youth Council
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CLC	Child Labor Committee
COPE Clubs	Care, Protection, and Empowerment Clubs
DMS	Data Management System
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOE	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DOSD	Department of Social Development
DPE	Department of Primary Education
EDSC	Education and Development Support Centers
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
GBDT	Gantsi Brigade Development Trust
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
GTFOSY	Gantsi Task Force for Out-of-School Youth
ICLP	International Child Labor Program
ILO	International Labour Organization
LANFE	Lesotho Association of Nonformal Education
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEP	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
MIET	Media in Education Trust
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NGOC	Non-Governmental Organization Coalition on the Rights of the Child

OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PACC	Program Advisory Committee on Child Labor
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PSL	Peer Support Leaders
PT	Permaculture Trust
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RECLISA	Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa
SAPS	South African Police Service
SC-Swz	Save the Children-Swaziland
SGB	School Governing Board/Body
SMT	School Management Team
SOS	Save Our Souls Children's Village
STS	Student Tracking System (Juarez)
TECL	Towards Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) project falls within the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Program Objectives to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The project is a part of USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative (EI) that seeks to develop strategies and practices to bring out-of-school, working children back to school and retain the in-school children most vulnerable to labor exploitation. The midterm evaluation of this project sought to determine what is working and what is not, and to identify lessons learned as a guide to project implementation in its final two years.

RECLISA is being implemented in five Southern African countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland, each directed by international or local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs). American Institutes of Research (AIR) is the prime contractor of RECLISA and operates the Regional Office, located in Centurion (Pretoria), South Africa. The regional staff provides capacity building on project management and other services to implementing partners. Each country has taken a different approach to identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable children, and tracking their progress. A Student Tracking System (STS) was developed to do the latter,[1] although it has proven problematic. (The implementing partner in South Africa developed its own data collection system because it must monitor multiple projects.) Each implementing partner has its own structure and budget, as well as approach to delivering the project.

A qualitative methodology was used in collecting data, using individual and focus group interviews with project staff and other stakeholders, and using a Participatory Rapid Appraisal drawing technique to obtain the input of child beneficiaries. Difficulties were encountered in planning for data collection as the evaluators had to work with individual field assistants who lacked awareness of the project. Consequently, project directors and others had to set aside time to assist the evaluators.

The findings from the research are presented in several categories: (1) Choice of Implementing Partners; (2) Program Design; (3) Project Implementation; (4) Partnership and Coordination; (5) Management and Budget; (6) Sustainability and Impact; (7) Region-Specific Questions; and (8) USDOL-Generated Questions on Regional Operations. Information included in the first six categories has been distilled from each of the individual Country Reports found in the appendices. The findings for the final two categories have been distilled from information obtained in interviews with AIR/RECLISA and with individual Project Directors.

The findings are followed by Conclusions and Lessons Learned (categories 2–6) and recommendations (categories 2–6; 8). The recommendations focus largely on how AIR/ RECLISA can be more proactive in providing support to the implementing partners, both in capacity building and in the development of sustainable strategies addressing child labor in each of the target countries. Recommendations are made in the following categories:

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[1] The STS was developed by Juarez and Associates on behalf of USDOL and, at the beginning of this project, was required by USDOL for all EI projects.

Program Design:

- Meeting all of the needs of children

- Government involvement

- Vocational education

Project Implementation:

- Implementing partner support

- Tracking the work status of children

- Providing psychosocial support

Partnership and Coordination:

- Identification and sharing of lessons learned

- Partnership with government agencies and NGOs/CBOs

- Partnership with the International Labour Organization's Towards Elimination of the Worst Forms of Labor

- Partnership with the World Food Programme

- Assistance in Creating Circles of Support/Care

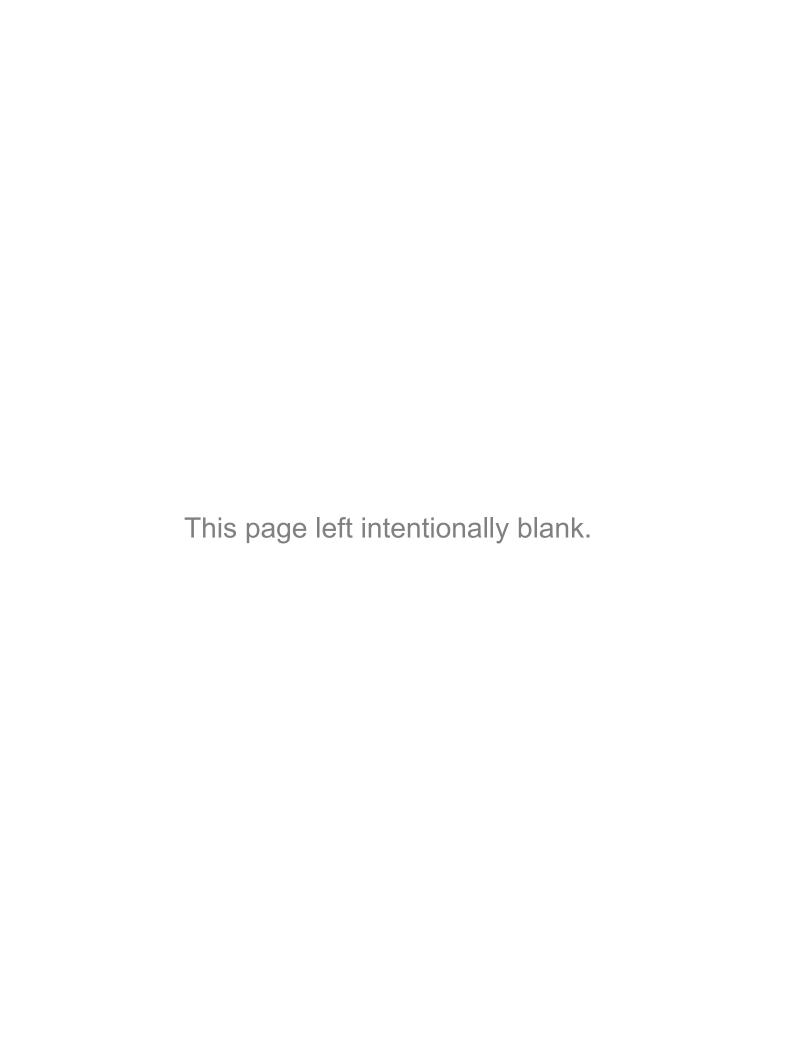**Management and Budget:**

- Need for cost-effectiveness evaluation

- Conference follow-up

- Financial management

- Managing for results

Sustainability and Impact:

- Exit strategies

- Resolving confusion between child labor and child work

AIR/RECLISA Regional Operations:

- Increase cost-effectiveness and "value added" of the AIR/RECLISA Regional Office.

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I   INTRODUCTION

1.1   PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Child Labor Education Initiative (EI) of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) seeks to eliminate the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) through the provision of basic education. EI 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. EI also seeks to prevent at-risk children from leaving school and entering child labor.

In addition to providing direct education and training opportunities to working children and those at risk of engaging in exploitive work, EI has four goals:

1. Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.

2. Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.

3. Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor.

4. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.[2]

Under these guidelines, the Reducing Exploitive Child Labor in Southern Africa (RECLISA) project was launched in July 2004 to meet the following goal, purpose, and objectives:

Goal: Reduce the number of children engaged in WFCL in Southern Africa—Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland.

Purpose: Increase the number of working children and at-risk children participating in formal, informal, or alternative education.

Objectives:

1. Increase public awareness of the importance of children's education, children's rights, and exploitive child labor.

2. Improve educational opportunities for working children and those at risk.

3. Improve social services for working children, children at risk, and their families or caregivers to facilitate participation in formal or alternative education.

4. Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school.

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[2] The progress of the current projects in relation to the four EI goals is discussed in the Findings section.

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

1.2   EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

Under USDOL guidelines, the scope and goals of this independent midterm evaluation include—

Scope:

1. To review and assess all of the activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the project's prime contractor.

2. To assess the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the Cooperative Agreement and project document.

Goals:

1. Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved.

2. Assist the International Child Labor Program (ICLP) to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad ICLP technical cooperation program framework.

3. Assess progress in terms of children's working and educational status (prevention/ withdrawal, enrollment, retention, completion of educational programs).

To further guide the evaluation, USDOL generated a number of questions to be answered by each country and a number of country-specific questions. The six areas of inquiry include—

1. Program Design

2. Project Implementation

3. Partnership and Coordination

4. Management and Budget

5. Sustainability and Impact

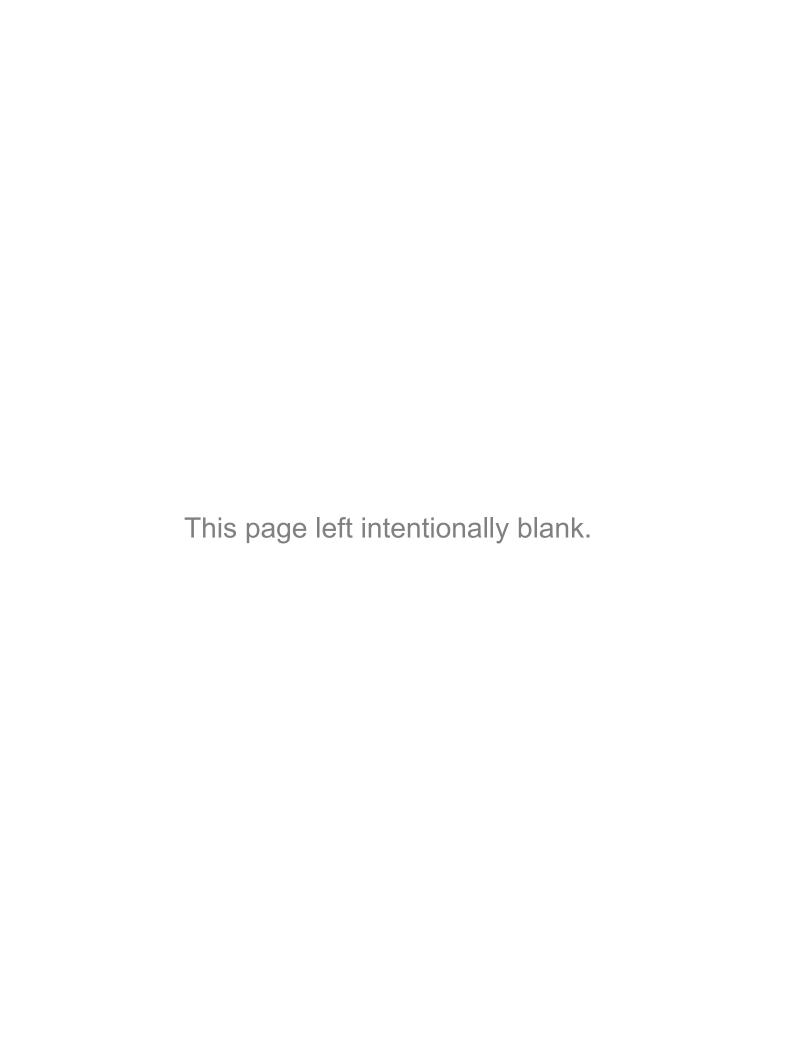6. Country and Region-Specific Questions

The complete Terms of Reference (TOR) may be found in Appendix 3.

The midterm evaluation was conducted in Southern Africa October 2–28, 2006. Dr. Nancy Horn was the team leader and evaluator for the project implemented in South Africa by Khulisa

Management Services. Beverley Barry was the evaluator for the Lesotho and Botswana projects, and Dr. Bjorn Nordtveit was the evaluator for Namibia and Swaziland. Individual country reports are attached to this regional report as Appendix 5.

1.3   STRUCTURE OF REPORT

Section II provides relevant background information on the RECLISA project as it is being implemented in each of the five countries. Section III outlines the methodology employed in data collection at each site and presents a number of limitations to the study. Section IV presents the findings of the research in six categories: (1) Program Design; (2) Project Implementation; (3) Partnership and Coordination; (4) Management and Budget; (5) Sustainability and Impact; and (6) Region-Specific Questions. Within each of these categories, the specific questions developed by USDOL are answered. Section V draws conclusions about these five country projects and identifies lessons learned. Section VI presents the recommendations to be taken into consideration over the final two years of the project. The appendices provide the reader with the specific country information upon which this regional report has been constructed, lists of the Regional Office's training and consultation sessions for the partners, as well as a list of awareness-raising activities undertaken in each country.

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II   BACKGROUND

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This section provides a brief sketch of the AIR/RECLISA project as it is being managed in Pretoria, and as it is being implemented in the five Southern African countries.

2.2   AIR/RECLISA

AIR/RECLISA works with national partners in each of the five countries: the Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC), Save Our Souls Children's Villages (SOS) Botswana; Lesotho Non-governmental Organization Coalition on the Rights of a Child (NGOC), in cooperation with the Lesotho Association for Nonformal Education (LANFE); Africare (Namibia); Khulisa Management Services (South Africa), in cooperation with the Media in Education Trust (MIET) in the North West; Thembalethu Home-Based Care in Mpumalanga; Sithabile, Ithuteng, and South African Police Service (SAPS) in Gauteng, and Save the Children-Swaziland (SC-Swz). Through a combination of field-based service delivery activities and national or regional work for awareness-raising and policy strengthening, RECLISA is preventing at-risk children from entering child labor, while ensuring that they receive education or training. By 2008, when the project will end, at least 10,000 such children in the five countries will have benefited from project support.

The responsibilities of the AIR/RECLISA office in Pretoria are included in their mission statement as follows:[3]

1. Provide overall management for the project, ensuring implementation excellence, financial soundness, and timely reporting to the client.

2. Provide technical leadership and support to implementing partners in each country as needed.

3. Develop and manage a monitoring and evaluation system that assures accurate reporting on beneficiaries while contributing, via lessons learned from the individual sub-projects, to the state of knowledge on child labor issues in the region.

4. Coordinate the project's regional program, with lead responsibility for initiatives such as the regional conference and the project website.

5. Work with each partner to integrate national efforts and take advantage of synergies across various activities.

6. Assist as required in developing capacity within indigenous national and local partners.

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[3] American Institutes for Research. 2005. *AIR-RECLISA Regional Office Mission Statement.* Centurion: AIR-RECLISA, November 8.

7. Liaise with the donor (USDOL) and with other regional efforts, notably the International Labor Organization (ILO) Towards Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (TECL) project.

2.3   THE RECLISA PROJECT IN EACH COUNTRY[4]

2.3.1   Botswana—BNYC and SOS

The two organizations will prevent 1,625 (BNYC 525; SOS 1,100) rural and urban children from engaging in child labor, while enrolling them in formal or vocational education programs. BNYC provides national coordination and, through its affiliate the Gantsi Task Force on Out-of-School Youth (GTFOSY) (in cooperation with the Gantsi Brigade Development Trust [GBDT] and the Permaculture Trust [PT]), direct support services to street children and children of farm workers in the Gantsi district. SOS, focusing on areas in an around the capital city of Gaborone, is extending its support to non-resident orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) at risk of urban child labor. The project uses extracurricular academic and psychosocial support services as key interventions to build the self-confidence and motivation of its beneficiaries. Increasing public and government awareness of children's rights and the prevalence of child labor, along with identifying and enrolling out-of-school children, constitute the core of RECLISA's strategy in this country.

2.3.2   Lesotho—NGOC and LANFE

In Lesotho, it is envisioned that 2,000 child herders and other vulnerable children will participate in learning opportunities provided by NGOC and LANFE. The project is being implemented in three districts: Mohale's Hoek, Mokhotlong, and Quthing. RECLISA trains nonformal education (NFE) facilitators and provides learning materials. To address a broader range of household needs along with the ability to earn a living, the program is introducing gardening skills and a range of life skills along with the literacy and numeracy classes offered by LANFE. Roving facilitators provide necessary support and supervision.

2.3.3   Namibia—Africare

In the Caprivi region, RECLISA will prevent 1,775 OVC from becoming victims of child labor. To accomplish this, the project is establishing community-based care and maintenance mechanisms to care for its beneficiaries, centering on Care, Protection, and Empowerment (COPE) Clubs based in communities and schools. A significant component of the Namibia strategy aims at greater access to educational opportunities for OVC through the Resource Exchange Program. The project directly pays for supplies or small, non-construction infrastructure projects to improve the quality of education for all students at the school. In return, participating schools waive school fees for the OVC enrolled there. RECLISA trains teachers, as COPE Club patrons, on how to instill culturally appropriate skills, values, and norms to young people in need of nurturing. The third component of the project is food security through food

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[4] Each of the country project summaries was excerpted from the Fact Sheets developed by RECLISA.

production and food processing. RECLISA offers technical guidance and training for nutrition-oriented gardening and agro-processing techniques to the children's caregivers.

2.3.4 South Africa—Khulisa Management Services

By 2008, Khulisa will have reached 2,600 beneficiaries in several categories: pregnant teens and teen moms in (target = 500) and out (target = 100) of school and involved in NFE programs in three locations in the North West: Madibogo, Rustenburg, and Winterveldt; in Mpumalanga, children farm workers, and OVC in (target = 400) and out (target = 250) of school in the Nkomazi Region; in Gauteng, OVC at Sithabile and Ithuteng (target = 650), and prevention of child trafficking in inner-city Johannesburg (target = 700). In addition to these five projects, Khulisa planned and made the arrangements for the South Africa/Regional Conference on Reducing Exploitive Child Labour through Education, Putting Children First, held July 4–6, 2006 in Johannesburg.

The objectives upon which the five Khulisa projects were constructed include the following:

- Creating partnerships with the Department of Education (DOE) and schools in the three provinces of implementation.

- Creating partnerships with local nongovernmental organization (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) already active in child issues.

- Local community, regional, and national awareness-raising.

- Equipping school principals and Life Orientation course teachers with a Project Management course (with subsequent projects to expand community awareness).

- Teaching both in- and out-of-school children several variations of a Life Skills course.

- Providing psychosocial support to children in the form of the Memory Box and Suitcase Project techniques and in making referrals for those in greatest need.

- Creating Circles of Support/Care to support children at risk.

- Providing organizational support to local implementing NGOs/CBOs.

2.3.5 Swaziland—SC-Swz

By 2008, RECLISA will have prevented 2,000 children in the Lowveld from entering child labor. To encourage the enrolment of OVC in primary schools and NFE programs, the project establishes community support committees, while offering training on children's rights, HIV/AIDS education, and basic life skills. It is introducing viable income-generating projects and providing basic relief in the form of school fees and uniforms. RECLISA's efforts to prevent children from becoming victims of child labor also include raising the awareness of traditional leaders, politicians, and civil servants through workshops, meetings, and a national conference on child labor held in November 2006.

2.4 PROJECT PERSONNEL

The human resources involved in the implementation of each county-specific project are described in this section.

2.4.1 Botswana

Personnel are employed by BNYC and SOS. The following personnel are paid by BNYC:

- National Coordinator—two days/month

- Project Accountant—one day/month

- Capacity Building Manager—one day/month

- Monitoring Officer—one day/month

GTFOSY staff employed in the project are as follows:

- Project Manager—0% (not paid for by RECLISA)[5]

- Field Staff—full-time

- Administrator—100%

SOS staff employed in the project are as follows:

- Project Manager—2.5 hours/day per month

- Youth Leader—2.5 hours/day per month

2.4.2 Lesotho

NGOC staffing of the project includes the following positions:

- Executive Director—50%

- Finance/Administrative Officer—50%

- Office Assistant—100%

- Program Officer—0% (not paid for by RECLISA)

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[5] Ms. Beppie Wessels manages RECLISA's work in Gantsi on behalf of BNYC as part of her commitment to GTFOSY, and does not bill any of her time to RECLISA.

LANFE staffing of the project includes the following positions:

- Director—40%

- Finance Officer—40%

- Monitoring Officer—100%

- Roving Animators—0% (volunteers in the program)

2.4.3   Namibia

Africare staffing of the project includes the following positions:

- Project Coordinator—260 days

- Project Officer—Agricultural Officer—260 days

- Project Officer—Community Activator—200 days

- Office Assistant

2.4.4   South Africa

Khulisa has identified several of its permanent staff to work on the RECLISA project:

- Project Manager—50% (oversees all project management activities, facilitator, strategist leader)

- Project Coordinator and Gauteng Project Coordinator—60%

- Project Social Worker—50% (curriculum development, curriculum implementer in Mpumalanga)

- North West Project Coordinator—80% (facilitator, implementer)

- Mpumalanga Project Coordinator, Consultant—25% (curriculum head and developer, lead facilitator)

- Project Database Constructor and Manager—40% (Student Tracking System [STS] database and support person; conference coordinator)

- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager (South Africa and Regional)—90%.

Other field personnel complete the Khulisa team; each of the Field Coordinators works on a part-time basis:

- North West—three Field Officers

- Mpumalanga—two Field Officers

- Gauteng—one Field Officer and Data Capturer combined

2.4.5   Swaziland

SC-Swz staffing of the project includes the following positions:[6]

- Project Manager—80%

- Field office Coordinator—80%

- Two Field Officers—80%

- Country Director—varies monthly

- Program Coordinator—varies monthly

- Field Officer—varies monthly

- Finance Officer—varies monthly

2.4.6   AIR/RECLISA Office

The final Project Document indicated that there would be three people in the Regional Office: a Project Director, an Education/M&E Specialist, and an Office Manager. Currently, four persons are working full-time, and an M&E Specialist is working part-time in the office:

- Project Director/Chief of Party

- Education/M&E Specialist

- Financial Manager (previously Office Manager)

- Child Labor and Education Associate

- Administrative Assistant

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[6] The time charged varies because of the timesheet reporting system (the partners did not provide any other paperwork to support their reported allocation of time). SC-Swz informed us that work categories that are not explicitly included in the reporting system (e.g., travel time, coordination time, sick and maternity leave) has been charged to SC-Swz's own budget and has not been covered by RECLISA.

The last three positions are locally hired, and the last two are those that were reinstated this year. According to AIR, the original Regional Office staffing pattern and budget (as per the contract awarded to AIR) included all five positions currently filled. As the project document was developed (a process that took more than a year until final approval in January 2006), AIR estimated that a reduced rand-dollar exchange rate would not support the original plan. Therefore, in the final project document budget (submitted to USDOL in September 2005), AIR eliminated two local positions, the project vehicle, and other approved items deemed unaffordable. By early 2006, however, the rand-dollar exchange rate became more favorable. When the additional financial and technical support required by the partners became clear, AIR reinstated the original two local positions. The current Regional Office staffing pattern is the one to which USDOL originally agreed. AIR/RECLISA informed USDOL, through technical progress reports and informal communications, about the changes in staffing.

An M&E Consultant (Mairy Tsigoida) also works part time (60%) on regional M&E support.[7] In the latter capacity, she participates in occasional regional team meetings, takes primary responsibility for Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) management (including indicator tables), and carries out site visits (usually with AIR personnel).

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[7] Approximately 40% of her time is devoted to South Africa and Khulisa. Because she is based at Khulisa and covered by their budget, she is not technically part of AIR's Regional Office staff.

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III   METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Macro International Inc. (Macro) and USDOL provided the general parameters for field data collection, the former provided the time line and the latter the questions. The research proceeded as follows. Before departure to the field, a document review was undertaken (see individual country appendices for the bibliography of references consulted). Teleconferences were held with Patrick White of USDOL, and with Tony Doggett of AIR. The Team Leader also drafted a Terms of Reference (TOR) to be shared with AIR and the implementing partners.[8]

3.2   DATA COLLECTION

Once in the field, the team met to discuss the questions, design the general data gathering strategy, determine if there were any additional questions to pose in each country, identify and request additional documentation, and obtain further advice on individuals and groups to interview. The team also designed the data collection instruments to be used. Because of the heavy interview schedule each of us was to undertake and RECLISA's view that local partners did not have the time to assist, Macro arranged for field assistants to be hired to make all of the interview appointments.

The data collection methodology employed in this evaluation research was qualitative. Individual interviews, focus group interviews, and observations were used at each location with each stakeholder or group of stakeholders. USDOL created 29 questions in five categories to be posed in each country, and an additional number of questions relevant to each country and the Regional Office. The team devised other questions that targeted the types of support children at risk needed to prevent them from withdrawing from school and entering child labor, the type of stigma attached to OVC by other children and members of the community, and how officials and others in each country viewed child labor. A special Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) drawing technique was developed by the team to obtain children's participation. This exercise entailed answering the question "How has your life changed since becoming a part of the RECLISA project?"[9] This is usually more efficient than asking the question outright (in a group, answers are normally repeated). Requiring children to draw their responses provides an individual's perception of his or her own change. The facilitator then inquires about the picture, which takes attention away from the person and places it onto the picture, and it allows for a greater depth of analysis. The lead evaluator of the team has successfully been using this methodology for more than 20 years.

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[8] It is against current USDOL practice to share evaluation teams' full TOR with implementing partners. Therefore, the team leader reformulated and "compressed" each evaluator's TOR for sharing with the Regional Office. The Regional Office did not receive the TOR until two days before the team arrived. The full TOR included questions about the functioning and cost effectiveness of the regional approach (see Appendix 3).

[9] In Swaziland and Namibia, the following questions were also explored, "What are you doing when you're not at school?" to explore the children's possible working status, and, in one site in Namibia (where the project had made use of "Hero's Books," a psychosocial tool), "How has this project made you feel like a hero?"

In some cases a ranking exercise was undertaken to assign the project implementers a "grade" for their activities, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being perfect.[10] In Botswana and Lesotho, a "peak experiences" methodology was undertaken. This method involves identifying experiences that provided interviewees a feeling of well-being. These experiences are then evaluated to see whether the circumstances of well-being can be reproduced.

The range of individuals interviewed included the AIR/RECLISA staff (in most cases, as a group); implementing partner staff (current and former); government officials in the regional and national ministries of education, labor, health, and social services; school principals and teachers; NGO/CBO local-level implementing organization staff; traditional leaders; NFE animators; the U.S. Embassy Labor Attaché; the children beneficiaries; and others.[11]

3.3   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time and effort from each of the implementing partners were required to develop the list of stakeholders and provide their contact information.[12] The RECLISA Regional Office's midterm evaluation budget[13] was used to cover staff time and to bring one staff member from each of the partner organizations to the Regional Feedback Workshop held at the end of the evaluation in Centurion.

In Botswana, several people were not available for interview, including GTFOSY members, as well as officials from the NFE and the Department of Primary Education (DPE). There was insufficient time to implement the PRA exercises among the children. In South Africa, several interviews were not held in Gauteng because of communication misunderstandings with the field assistants.

During most evaluation exercises, the implementation agency (or country partner) is responsible for the appointment arrangements. However, AIR felt that the workload of each implementing partner was already stretched, and that field assistants should be brought in to help with the evaluation-related preparations. Consequently, Macro hired a field assistant to make the appointments with stakeholders in each country. This proved to be a less-than-optimal arrangement, because the field assistants did not live in the implementation area, nor did they have the necessary knowledge of the project or the RECLISA partners.

The scope of this evaluation did not allow for an in-depth analysis of project budgets and expenditures, including AIR's, against implementation needs. Therefore, the evaluation team did not engage with the Regional Office about the specific budget items of the regional program.

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[10] This methodology was not used successfully in all locations, and so it is reported on only selectively in the South Africa report.

[11] For a full listing of individuals interviewed, please see the appropriate appendix in each of the country reports.

[12] AIR observed that during the evaluation, "RECLISA partners had to provide far more administrative support than had been agreed with USDOL and Macro at a cost to project implementation."

[13] AIR budgeted US$55,000 to cover the midterm evaluation effort.

It should be noted that this is an evaluation of past, not future, experiences. AIR and implementing partners expected that several of the actions evaluated were to take place before the end of the project. Whenever the evaluation team found concrete plans for the imminent implementation of activities (e.g., for training of Child Labor Committees [CLCs] in Swaziland), we have tried to include it in the evaluation findings. Other long-term or unplanned future activities have not been reflected.

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IV   FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This section begins with a brief comment on how AIR chose their implementing partners and how, in turn, each of the local-level implementing partners was identified. The findings of the research in accordance with the categories and questions posed by USDOL are then reported. Where possible, we present a summary of findings. However, in most instances the findings from each country are considerably different. In such cases, we highlight key findings from each country.

4.2   CHOICE OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

According to AIR, a substantial amount of time was invested in identifying suitable partners for each RECLISA country. Final selections were made on the basis of AIR's existing knowledge of the region, personal visits by senior AIR staff to some target countries, extensive contacts by phone and e-mail between Washington and each country, and strategic proposals from prospective partners.

- **Botswana:** BNYC's specific focus on youth and its regional offices in major villages made it a likely RECLISA partner. BNYC then chose Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) to be its local-level partner. By March 2005, after concerns about BCC's role first surfaced, and after consultations initiated by AIR, BNYC identified one of its affiliates, GTFOSY, to implement the Gantsi activity. GTFOSY is an informal organization that draws together partners from government and NGOs. Its main purpose has been to improve access to education for children and youth. GTFOSY in turn identified two other organizations within the task force (i.e., PT and GBDT) for RECLISA to hire as service providers for the vocational part of the program. In September 2005, after BCC had formally withdrawn from RECLISA, BNYC and AIR approached SOS to implement the Gaborone activities. Unlike GTFOSY, which operates under BNYC's subcontract because of its affiliate status, SOS is subcontracted directly by AIR/RECLISA and works in partnership as an implementing agency with BNYC.

- **Lesotho:** AIR invited NGOC to be a partner during the bidding process. NGOC was, therefore, part of the initial development of the project design, budget, and institutional arrangements. As the leading body of a host of organizations that promote children's rights, NGOC selected LANFE for local-level implementation because of its widespread involvement in NFE, which means that NGOC is the contracting agency to AIR and LANFE is the local implementing agency to NGOC.

- **Namibia:** AIR selected Africare to respond to RECLISA in Caprivi because it was an opportunity for Africare to adapt and implement a project it had developed for Zimbabwe, and because it had already been working in Caprivi on another project. As the implementing partner, Africare directly provides the goods and services set forth in its project document.

- **South Africa:** Khulisa was an early participant in the RECLISA project, having worked on the proposal with AIR. Khulisa had originally identified, through an examination of government statistics and the use of the global imaging system, five provinces for implementation: North West, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KwaZulu/Natal. When USDOL awarded the proposal, the funds were insufficient to cover the last two provinces, so they were dropped. However, the total number of project activities and beneficiaries in South Africa remained as originally proposed. They were simply redistributed among the three remaining target provinces to save costs. Khulisa identified their local implementing partners through consultations with a range of potential stakeholders, learning of the different NGOs/CBOs working on child-related issues in each province, interviewing and observing potential partners, and then creating a relationship for implementation.[14] In North West, MIET will implement the RECLISA program interventions (when the Education and Development Support Centers [EDSCs] have been fully established) with assistance from the Department of Health (DOH) and DOE; in Mpumalanga, Thembalethu Home Based Care—already working on caring for OVC and former child farm workers; in Gauteng, partnerships were created with Ithuteng and Sithabile children's homes—established agencies dealing with OVC and other at-risk children; a partnership was also created with SAPS to gain entrée to the schools in the inner-city Johannesburg area where there is a considerable number of trafficked children.

- **Swaziland:** Early in 2004, two senior staff members from AIR's Washington office, Tony Doggett and Talaat Moreau, visited Swaziland and Lesotho. Anticipating the forthcoming USDOL solicitation, Tony Doggett (who eventually became RECLISA's Project Manager) investigated potential partners in both countries. In Swaziland, he met with representatives of a number of NGOs and found one, SC-Swz, already concerned with the effect of child labor but without the necessary resources to address it.

4.3   PROGRAM DESIGN

4.3.1   Relation to Existing Government Efforts

This relationship varies considerably from country to country.

- **Botswana:** The projects complement the government's efforts to ensure that all children attend school and the DPE's Circles of Support project. Tracking of work status will contribute to the National Labor Force Survey implemented by USDOL, and data on dropouts will supplement the data collected by the Drop-Out Survey. The projects also help implement policy to assist children with accessing social welfare opportunities and with obtaining exemption from school fees.

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[14] The original design called for partnerships with provincial DOEs, but because of a misunderstanding between USDOL and the South African USDOL and then between the South African USDOL and DOE delayed implementation, Khulisa was forced to move ahead with local NGOs/CBOs to gain access to the children.

- **Lesotho:** The project complies with the Children's Protection Act (1980), to be replaced by the 2005 Child Protection and Welfare Bill; the Labour Code (1992); the Constitution (1993); the Free Primary Education program and bursary scheme for OVC in secondary schools; and the NFE bill (drafted 10 years ago but not yet passed). The project fills the implementation gap in the work done by the Lesotho Distance Learning Center within the Ministry of Education and Teaching (MOET) and extends the work of LANFE into three geographical areas where there was no coverage. There is no consensus about the meaning of "child labor" and "child work" even in government circles.

- **Namibia:** The project fills a gap in service provision that has been created by the government's inability to extend the school fee forgiveness policy in a timely manner. Africare is filling this gap—as a temporary bridge—by paying for school fees for selected OVC that become members of COPE Clubs. Namibia is also addressing the poverty issue through the food security intervention component.

- **South Africa:** The project complies with a range of international covenants, the constitution, and laws and bills addressing the needs of the school-age population. The project fills a policy implementation gap experienced by several government departments. There is a clear differentiation at the policy level between "child labor" and "child work."

- **Swaziland:** The project extends the work with OVC in the Lowveld by SC-Swz, which is filling a government implementation gap in the provision of services to affected children.

4.3.2　Support for Theory

The effectiveness of the underlying project theory (reducing exploitive child labor by improving access to education) cannot be proven assessed with only the current results of the project. The project has not been implemented for a sufficient period of time to provide data on its effect (and thus the effectiveness of the approach), for example, by comparing the dropout rate of target children with that of non-target children.

The theory is difficult to prove for the following reasons:

1. The lack of comparison with national dropout rates.

2. The way the data is recorded in the STS (in all countries but South Africa).

3. The considerable confusion that exists in each of the countries between what constitutes child labor and normal child socialization/work in the family.

4. The difficulty of offering a full range of services addressing all the poverty issues that cause child labor.[15]

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[15] The projects focus on specific activities that partially address prevention (e.g., OVC have need of housing, food, school uniforms, safety). USDOL EI projects do not have the mandate or resources to address all of the root causes of child labor. In the case of RECLISA, each partner identified specific things it could do to alleviate children's plight. In some cases, the projects provide a more holistic range of services (e.g., the Circles of Care/Support in South Africa).

5. The lack of the tracking of the work status of children (the STS has not yet accommodated this requirement and the Data Management System [DMS] of Khulisa has just been modified).

However, project activities such as payment of school fees, provision of uniforms, provision of meals, and the like have all made formal schooling more accessible. During the evaluation fieldwork, many respondents found that the project strategy is sound and helps prevent child labor.

4.3.3   Strengths, Challenges, and Assumptions

Strengths

- Several of the implementing partners were consulted during the design phase to provide advice and to identify government service delivery gaps (Lesotho and South Africa), although local-level partners were not always consulted.

- The projects are "embedded" in the normal activities of all the implementing partners and their collaborators.

- Funding has been made available to address the needs of OVC and children at risk (all countries).

- Different innovative strategies for psychosocial support (COPE Clubs and the Hero's Book in Namibia, the Suitcase Project in South Africa).

- The food security intervention in Namibia and Swaziland is reducing the risk of OVC engagement in child labor.

- Increased awareness on the part of school children of their rights and the types of support they can obtain from the government that would allow them to attend school.

Challenges

The cultural/legal confusion that exists in the differentiation between child labor and child work at the government, regional, and local level has hindered the full and clear implementation of policy in most countries.[16]

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[16] The confusion between exploitive/worst forms of child labor and child work is one of the rationales for the existence of the RECLISA and TECL projects. While a challenge, this confusion is not a project weakness: RECLISA did not assume that this distinction would be clearly made by civil society or government before the project began.

There is little connection between school or vocational education completion and the ability of educated children to find jobs. While staying in school brings benefits to children in many undocumented ways, the type of formal education offered in the five implementing countries does not provide job skills training. Therefore, many rural children, where most of the projects are being implemented, are unaware of any future work possibilities either in their home areas or in other locations.

Issues emerged in the following countries that created a need for the original project design to be adjusted, which, in turn, delayed implementation:

- **Botswana:** Because of various changes and delays in project implementation, some shifts in design have been made. BNYC has also concluded that the expectation for them to intervene at the parliamentary level is unrealistic. Likewise, because the project was geared toward BCC's approach to the project, SOS has suggested design shifts because of the budget, time constraints, and policy changes at the government level.[17]

- **Lesotho:** The project was originally designed to provide distance education to 2,000 herd children and OVC in three areas (Mokhotlong, Mohale's Hoek, and Quting), but then a more inclusive approach toward other working children and older school dropouts was taken, although now the project focuses largely on herd boys, especially in Mokhotlong. LANFE was not included in the design process and, as a result, significant confusion exists about common definitions or consensus on exploitive child labor practices. A baseline study was undertaken by a consultant, but the report was deemed unacceptable by a RECLISA steering committee (composed of the MOET, USDOL, DOA, and other NGOs) and a new consultant was hired to finish the work.

- **South Africa:** Negotiating the bilateral agreement between USDOL and the South African USDOL took approximately one year following USDOL award to AIR. Project implementation was further delayed by the protocols involved in linking the South African USDOL with DOE, and then DOE's internal communication system with the provincial DOEs—which delayed implementation another eight months. Consequently, Khulisa had to create another set of local implementing partners in each province, which also took time. Therefore, instead of working directly with the provincial DOEs at the outset, Khulisa worked with the local NGOs/CBOs to gain access to the children. It was only in August of 2006 that the first part of the Project Management course was delivered to the principals and teachers of the Life Orientation course (at the time of the site visit it was planned to be finished in January when the course is completed and participants implement their community awareness-raising projects). Now that the provincial DOEs are on board, greater synergies are being created between schools and NGOs/CBOs.

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[17] The choice of street children as a primary target group for Botswana was the result of AIR's initial consultations with its prospective Botswana partners. The fact that BCC already ran a successful residential program for street children suggested that home reintegration might be possible. However, when BCC withdrew from RECLISA, this option disappeared. SOS adopted the more holistic concept of OVC at risk of child labor, which subsumes street children. Although tactics have changed, the fundamental strategy in relation to OVC on the streets remains the same: keep them out of child labor and in school.

- **Swaziland:** The government became aware of and classified the Lowveld as an emergency area. Subsequently, the government took over the payment of school fees for some OVC, meaning that SC-Swz had to determine for whom it would pay school fees and provide school uniforms. Moreover, the project targeted OVC at the primary and vocational training levels, but covering the latter proved too costly so there will be a shift to OVC at secondary schools. Originally, the project was supposed to pay for 75% of school fees and parents were to contribute 25%. This was not possible because of family poverty.

Assumptions

It was assumed that creating access to quality education would decrease the dropout rate of at-risk children and children who had, in the past, been involved in exploitive labor.[18] During the project design, it would have been advantageous to perform a complete review of prevention and withdrawal activities. At-risk children are faced by poverty, HIV/AIDS, and the actions of people who see children as commodities for sale. Actions to address these issues could include awareness-raising campaigns specifically addressing those who traffic children (this is part of the SAPS Adopt-A-Cop Program [AAC] in South Africa). Likewise, working with the police departments and Department/Ministry of Home Affairs in many of the RECLISA project areas might have created a better local understanding of the child labor and trafficking issues.

The basic needs of OVC, street, and trafficked children include food, shelter, and clothing. Children are not able to stay in school, regardless of any life skills training and psychosocial support, if they cannot eat and do not have a safe place to live—at the very least. Without this enabling environment, OVC must find work to support themselves. In some cases, RECLISA provides these services directly through the project, and in others, indirectly through the local implementing partner.

Where children are in school—and trying hard to stay there—they encounter the additional need to pay school fees and purchase school uniforms and supplies. Government policies exist that pay school fees or ban the rejection of any child who wants to attend school, but governments are not implementing these policies successfully in all cases. For example, the Circles of Support/Care as designed for South Africa could have been used in each project to address a complete range of services (either indirectly or through cooperation with other projects) to ensure that children at risk have what they need to stay in school.

Certain cultures and governments have also not come to terms with the meaning of exploitive child labor. Culturally, it is assumed that children learn how to be members of their societies by taking on different household jobs (e.g., child care and other domestic work, farming, herding). In more remote locations, children do not have the option of attending school and parents do not necessarily see the need for them to attend. The San in Ganzi are viewed by the Tswana as third-class citizens and not "entitled" to schooling. When considering the Basotho herd boys and the San children, the issue is cultural. Changing the mindset of the dominant ethnic group in each country cannot be done simply through awareness-raising about child labor. Making NFE

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[18] Most of the project's beneficiaries are prevented children, and a few are withdrawn (e.g., girls at Ithuteng who had previously been trafficked and used for sex work when Mama Jacky found them).

available is a start, but the NFE institutions themselves are experiencing problems reaching out to the many constituencies for which they are responsible.

The psychosocial trauma that children face when they have lost their parents is also not being addressed consistently in each country. Namibia and South Africa use powerful psychosocial programs to address the difficulties of children's past, but the teachers' understanding of the children's plight is sometimes lacking.[19] In South Africa, Khulisa has developed a relationship with the Education-Psychology Department of the University of Witwatersrand to provide counseling assistance to Sithabile and Ithuteng, but in most other locations the Department/Ministry of Social Services is inadequately staffed to provide these services to those in need.[20] Without them, however, some children do not perform well in school and become even more vulnerable to dropping out and experiencing labor exploitation.

The need for psychosocial support is associated with the need to create a protective and safe environment for the children in the schools. Therefore, it is important to address the issue of corporal punishment in schools, at least as a part of the training of the teachers dealing with RECLISA beneficiaries. An insecure school environment can cause children stay out of or not return to school just as poverty and child labor can. The fact that the countries in Southern Africa continue to practice corporal punishment in schools should be addressed in the training provided to teachers, which should include alternative disciplinary strategies.

Each implementing partner has tried its best, within constrained budgetary circumstances, to implement its project as designed. Because of the shift of partners and budget in Botswana, however, several design changes are being or must be made: the frequency of information sharing meetings among the three sets of partners; the conduct of vocational courses in Gantsi; support for students after they receive vocational training; and the official registration of GTFOSY as a legal entity. Another assumption—that teachers would be able to provide after-hours support for RECLISA children in Gaborone—was challenged by the implementation of a policy that states that teachers are not allowed to do paid work in addition to their school work. Moreover, it was assumed that the school premises could be used for the classes, yet the principals agreed to allow the use of the premises only if SOS assumed responsibility for the children and the premises. SOS cannot be responsible for both the children and the premises. Each of these design issues has impeded project progress.

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[19] For example, during the evaluation, a project-trained teacher who was in charge of psychosocial counseling (a "COPE Patron") laughed at one child's description of being hit by a parent, and explained loudly which of the children had lost parents and which were very poor. During the drawing exercise, the same COPE Patron, in reaction to a 12-year-old's drawing, stated, "This child is not right in his second floor" (the child had drawn a frog and a car). Clearly, the psychosocial attention provided to the children was, in this case, inappropriate.

[20] In some cases, expertise is available but not used (e.g., in Namibia, the MOE in Caprivi has a psychosocial expert, but the project does not work with this person).

4.4   PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

4.4.1   Support for Four EI Goals

In each country, local conditions for awareness-raising, strengthening of formal and transitional education systems, strengthening national institutions and policies, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts have been addressed, each in its own manner. A list of awareness-raising activities for each country is provided in the country report appendices. However, regardless of the activity, the average citizen/person needs face-to-face contact to ensure awareness. Given the high rate of illiteracy in each country, newspaper columns are not always effective. Radio broadcasts are often one-off (except in Mpumlanga) and the message may not be consistent.

The national conferences in each country raise the awareness of high-level stakeholders—government employees and policymakers. To date, conferences have been held in Lesotho and South Africa, and the Swaziland conference took place after the site visit (November 2006). The Botswana and Namibia conferences will take place in 2007 (the original design was one per year, but it was subsequently decided that a conference in 2008, just before the project ends, would not be appropriate).

Local-level awareness-raising has taken place among government department and ministry staff, local-level DOE/Ministry of Education (MOE) and other ministry officials, NGOs/CBOs, traditional leaders, schools, and local communities (although this has not yet been undertaken on the local-community level in South Africa). In Botswana, this has occurred through Program Advisory Committee on Child Labor (PACC) meetings and by orienting collaborating organizations. In Lesotho, traditional authorities hold community meetings (*pitsos*) at which child labor issues have been addressed and the community has responded (by providing huts that act as learning centers for children and by accessing support for school supplies). Lesotho has already hosted its national conference, raising the awareness of government staff and policymakers, but there has been little follow-up on this level (therefore, confusion remains about what constitutes child labor, especially as it refers to herd boys). In Namibia, the awareness-raising of child labor issues is to be made through intervention of COPE Club patrons, COPE/Parents Clubs, and Child Welfare Sub-Committees. In South Africa, the school principals and Life Orientation course teachers, who have participated in the Project Management course, will hold local awareness activities after they finish their course in January 2007. In Swaziland, the CLCs have raised community awareness, and the media has also been very supportive.

The strengthening of educational systems has been undertaken in different ways in each country. In organizational development terms, South Africa is strengthening management capacity through the Project Management course. In terms of bringing a greater child labor focus to the schools and supporting educators and children in their respective roles, activities have taken place in each of the project countries. In Botswana, particularly in Gantsi, more children are attending classes offered by the NFE Department and DPE. In Lesotho, educational opportunities for working children and those at risk have been created in geographical areas where they did not exist. In Namibia, the development of the COPE Clubs has increased the awareness that schools can be hubs of support for OVC. The in-kind contribution of agricultural tools has enabled schools to develop gardens for feeding OVC, and the Resource Exchange Program has enabled

the school to purchase much-needed photocopy paper and ink (to reproduce books), books, stationery, and agricultural and sports equipment. In South Africa, design, implementation, and revision of the different versions of the Life Skills curriculum and its intended incorporation into the DOE Life Orientation course has assisted the DOE with delivering outcome-based education and in making the curriculum more relevant to children's needs. The project intends for the schools to become the hubs for the Circles of Support/Care (perhaps under the Deputy Director and/or the SMT or SGB), and in so doing raise the need for children to remain in school to access support. In some cases, schools have become the hubs for food distribution (when the school has developed a garden). The Project Management course has added to the skills of principals and educators, increasing their ability to design, implement, track, and evaluate different project initiatives. In Swaziland, more children are staying in school with the project payment of school fees, and the provision of school uniforms is strengthening the school as a means for developing a child's future. The operating CLCs, in helping to provide this support, are also strengthening schools.

The South Africa/Regional conference developed a declaration and a number of resolutions, each of which is designed to strengthen the child labor policy environment specific to each partner country. It is not clear what the outcomes of the Lesotho conference were because the project stakeholders are still struggling to define the difference between child labor and normal work in child socialization, especially as it applies to herd boys. RECLISA's many discussions with national institutions and policymakers contribute to the leveraging of influence on how different government departments and ministries can address issues of child labor, especially through the participation in ILO/PACCs. Specific activities in South Africa include the strengthening of the SAPS AAC program by designing a child labor awareness curriculum to be added to the AAC message delivery in schools. Khulisa is also strengthening Sithabile by providing assistance to have it officially registered with the Department of Social Development (DOSD). Khulisa has also strengthened the DOH in North West by involving it in the identification of pregnant teens and working with them on the types of messages that are delivered in the care of infants.

Sustainability is a problem for most countries, although in each country significant capacity building of NGOs/CBOs is taking place. In Botswana, the partners have an array of official relationships, each of which has had its focus expanded to include child labor issues. In Lesotho, NFE will continue among herd boys as the lessons being delivered are the normal activities of LANFE (although the locations are different). However, MOET has stated that absorption of animators and roving animators as NFE facilitators would be difficult.[21] In Namibia, there is no indication that the project will formally be taken over by the MOE, but individual schools may carry on with the COPE Clubs. In South Africa, project sustainability is found in the normal activities undertaken by the NGOs/CBOs with whom Khulisa has partnered. In Swaziland, the CLCs are intended to become a permanent village institution, although significant capacity building must take place for this to occur. SC-Swz will continue its normal work in the Lowveld beyond the project implementation period.

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[21] The quotation about RECLISA absorption was that "it is impossible but it is a possibility." NGOC understood this confusing statement to mean that, although because nothing is formalized yet, there remains a possibility for a formal agreements taking place in the future. The development of such buy-in, including a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry, is part of AIR and NGOC's Year-3 plans.

4.4.2 Project on Track

RECLISA appears to be almost on track in terms of the numbers of beneficiaries. Each implementing partner is undertaking the activities defined in its work plan, developed in accordance with the Log Frame and the PMP. However, there are some activities that have not yet been completed. In Botswana, awareness-raising activities at the district and national levels have not been completed largely because the Labor Force Survey data collection is in process, and SOS has not completely implemented the vocational courses (mainly because of its late start in the project). In Lesotho, the vocational skills training portion of the Project Document has not yet been undertaken. In Namibia, training for the Child Welfare Sub-Committees has not been completed. In South Africa, general community awareness awaits the completion of the Project Management course and the implementation of awareness-raising activities by participants. The Circles of Support/Care are not yet fully operational in many project locations.[22] In the North West, handing over RECLISA activities to EDSCs has been delayed because of the North West DOE's timetable in establishing each center. In Swaziland, approximately half of the CLCs have not yet been trained and so are not operational.[23] The identification of target beneficiaries has been delayed because of the government and other NGOs/CBOs' willingness to pay for school fees for OVC. The project wants to be sure their beneficiaries are not receiving support from other agencies.

4.4.3 Development and Effectiveness of M&E Tools

The project STS was developed by Juarez Associates by two different MIS developers. The second developer recently redesigned the STS to be more effective and provided some training to the implementing partners. However, problems remain (e.g., users have been unable to transfer the system from one computer to another, the RECLISA Regional Office has not been able to download and use data from each of the partners). There is still room for considerable improvement of the system, even though it is being used by each partner, except Khulisa.

Khulisa established its own system because the STS could not accommodate multiple projects. Khulisa used its own funds to establish this system (also based on Access, a relational database). It is a highly user-friendly system and generates a range of different reports that help Khulisa track all the children who have been registered on the system, even after they turn 18 years old (some users of the STS have experienced that the reports generated by the program do not include those 18 and older). Khulisa has also generated a number of forms that track child registration, assessment, and participation in activities.

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[22] The Circles of Support/Care are "partially operational" in most project locations. The social worker supports the counseling and social work needs of each site. For example, in Mpumalanga and Gauteng, the social worker serves as a liaison with Home Affairs Department to obtain ID documents for beneficiaries and make referrals wherever necessary. In the North West Province, the liaison role with the Health Department and MOET is a function of the Circles of Support.

[23] Training was being implemented during the field visits. RECLISA explained the project's future plans for training as follows: "This year's training is only the first of three phases. CLCs now go back to their communities to implement their initial training. At the same time, Save the Children's RECLISA field workers will visit every target community for monthly follow-ups. On the basis of this experience, additional training will be targeted to specific problems and needs."

The forms to collect data on children were developed in concert with AIR/RECLISA. Therefore, there is a generally agreement between the two systems, although the Khulisa system has generated other forms for data collection.

The PMP is now the basis for the development of the annual work plans. As mentioned previously, the M&E system for project performance numerically tracks beneficiaries, but not the process of project implementation. For instance, most projects have a psychosocial component, yet tracking the outcomes of these interventions is not done. There are no results that report the increased well-being of children. An effort in Lesotho to collect information on the strategies and the results achieved by animators will also attempt to gather information on the attribution of change to project inputs in the future. A policy matrix has also been developed to track changes in policy in the future. In Namibia, a School Resource Exchange Program Application Form is used by the school to request funds for in-kind materials such as stationery, sports equipment, and agricultural inputs, so the project tracks what it provides to each school. Africare also uses some of its own internal monitoring documents to track activities.

4.4.4   Identification of and Data Collection on Beneficiaries

Children enter the system usually through some type of assessment and registration, which varies from country to country[24]—sometimes with the help of schools or NFE activities, and sometimes with the help of NGOs/CBOs and other governmental departments. In Botswana, teachers working in the SOS schools identify beneficiaries, and GTFOSY identifies out-of-school children on farms, on streets, and at home. In Lesotho, LANFE animators identify beneficiaries and track their attendance. In Namibia, COPE Club patrons, principals, school development boards, and local leadership identify school children who are orphans or in particularly vulnerable situations. In South Africa, pregnant teens in the North West are identified by DOH clinics. Children at risk both in and out of school in Mpumalanga are identified by Thembalethu home care givers, by Peer Support Leaders (PSLs) in schools, and, in the future, by those who have received the Project Management training. In Gauteng, those most at risk are targeted in Sithabile and Ithuteng, and will be identified by SMTs/SGBs in schools in the future. SAPS identifies at-risk (of trafficking) schools in central Johannesburg area. In Swaziland, children are identified by field officers, teachers, and CLCs.

Once registered, data are collected on the activities in which children participate (if in school, attendance records are collected; if not in school, attendance at informal learning opportunities is tracked). Donations made to or on behalf of children (e.g., school fees, uniforms) are also tracked. In Botswana, SOS has not been able to consistently monitor the learners, especially on retention and the funding provided for school uniforms and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) fund.[25] In

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[24] The basic assessment and registration procedures and forms were developed centrally (to meet USDOL Government Performance and Results Act [GPRA] requirements) by the regional technical team, and then rolled out to and refined with each partner. What does vary from country is the sequence and method by which children move from identification as potential beneficiaries to enrollment in education and registration with RECLISA.

[25] SOS does not seem to have a clear overview of whom has been paid or not. The evaluator for Botswana noted that "the project needs to reconcile the funding provided (for uniform distribution and the payment of the PTA funds) and the distribution spread to establish which schools still require uniforms and PTA funds" (Country Report, p. 20).

Lesotho, data entry is problematic because of the time limitations for data collection of the roving animators and the monitoring officer. In Namibia (as in most of the other countries), there is no budget to follow up with children who drop out, even though they remain in the system. In South Africa, Khulisa's system has been able to track dropouts (4% at the time of the evaluation). In Swaziland, some problems were experienced during the identification of the first generation of project beneficiaries, partially because of the time pressures placed on SC-Swz.[26]

4.4.5   Tracking the Work Status of Beneficiaries

According to USDOL, the requirement to track the work status "has been in place since the earliest stages of the project design," yet according to AIR/RECLISA, this is a new requirement, dated to July 2006. At the time of the evaluation, no country tracked work status. Moreover, no significant follow-up is conducted after a child is absent from school for more than two weeks without an excuse. After the country feedback session in South Africa, Khulisa developed the appropriate forms and data entry process to track work status. Khulisa, as others, will have to train its field coordinators in how to obtain this sensitive information. In Lesotho, the animators "know" the working status of the herd boys: in most cases children start working when the "birds start to sing" and stop "when it gets dark." In between the dawn-to-dusk work, children attend the NFE classes for two hours.

At the time of the evaluation, Juarez (through Jimin Patel's field visit) had modified one STS system, in Gantsi, to track work status, and GTFOSY was already using the modified system.

4.4.6   Rehabilitating Victims of Exploitive Child Labor and Removing Educational Barriers

Psychosocial support activities in most of the projects attempt to rehabilitate children. In Namibia, the use of the Hero's Book and the COPE Clubs,[27] and in South Africa, the use of the Suitcase Project help children redefine their past, present, and future. In South Africa, a social worker helps counsel some students and refers others to the more professional assistance provided by DOSD. Khulisa also trains PSLs to help address the psychosocial needs of classmates. In Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa, Life Skills courses are being taught through LANFE (Lesotho), the COPE Clubs (Namibia), through the Life Orientation course (part of the

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[26] The selection of the first generation of learners in Swaziland was problematic because of the time pressures placed on SC-Swz: by August 2005, 33 qualified children had been assessed and enrolled. Another 317 had been identified and were attending classes, but had not yet been assessed and, therefore, were not eligible to be counted. With the August deadline approaching and AIR's Regional Office asking Swaziland (like all partners) to get as close as possible to their Year 1 target, SC-Swz immediately paid school fees for an additional 450 children. While most of these additional enrollments were, indeed, qualified beneficiaries (thereby supporting the intervention's quality), all of these enrollments had to be subsequently re-qualified, and some individual cases turned out to be problematic. The key lesson learned by the project, and applied in Year 2, was the importance of working throughout the year to assess as well as identify enough beneficiaries to meet the agreed quantitative targets, while simultaneously ensuring quality.

[27] Aside from the Hero's Book being used in two schools in Namibia, counseling is offered by trained teachers at each school. However, as noted earlier, this training has in some cases proved insufficient.

South African curriculum), and through nonformal teaching of teen moms and out-of-school children (through "eduvision"—use of Takalani Sesame as the basis of a curriculum).[28]

Barriers to education are bureaucratic, financial, and psychosocial. Some governments require that children have birth certificates to access formal education, yet many children in poverty lack this and other documents. There is significant stigma attached to being an orphan in each of the countries of implementation, sometimes the result of the lack of school uniforms, personal hygiene, and unkempt appearance. Children in certain locations complained of the "smell" of OVC and did not want to associate with them. The failure to pay school fees has also prevented a number of children from attending school, despite government regulations against rejecting children who cannot pay their fees or policies saying that the neediest will have their fees paid.[29] Many children are also hungry when they come to school. In Namibia and South Africa, the cultivation of gardens either at the school or at the NGO/CBO has helped alleviate some of this stress, but they have not solved the feeding problem as there is insufficient output. In Botswana, San children in Gantsi are stigmatized and often treated as third-class citizens. In formal schools, if children are absent 20 consecutive days, they are dropped from the school register. If children do not start primary school by age 10, they are prevented from enrolling. This difficult situation is exacerbated by the lack of learning materials written in the San language. In Lesotho and Swaziland, the hunger barrier has been partially resolved through an association with the World Food Programme (WFP). Other barriers include topography and seasonal changes, as both of these take herd boys to the cattle posts. Among the Basotho, cultural rites of passage require that boys attend traditional school, thereby removing them temporarily from NFE classes. That the dominant culture does not perceive that herd boys have a right to education is also a barrier. Animators do not receive timely payment for transport, which also inhibits the delivery of NFE.

4.4.7   Effectiveness in Preventing At-Risk Children from Engaging in Child Labor

In several of the countries, defining "child labor" and "child socialization and work" prevented a common understanding of child labor. Therefore, identifying those engaged in child labor is a challenge. The data collection system used by each of the implementers does not provide an accurate depiction of the prevention of at-risk children from engaging in exploitive child labor nor can it accurately assess those who have been withdrawn from exploitive labor.[30] The poverty level in each of the communities of implementation is so high that each child could be viewed as being at risk and each child is probably engaged in some form of income-generating activity. The STS and Data Management System (DMS) can track those who have dropped out of the program (and school), but cannot provide reasons why. Some interviews with children and their caregivers yielded information on the types of work that children undertake, but respondents

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[28] There is a need to improve sharing of tools generated to implement each of the projects. For example, Khulisa at the evaluation feedback session did not know of the Africare Hero's Book, and neither group knew that the other had generated a Life Skills curriculum.

[29] Both Namibia and South Africa have inclusion regulations, but both countries are experiencing difficulties in implementing their policies.

[30] The lack of tracking of the children's work status makes any such assessment impossible. It is also believed that many of the local statistical services (e.g., in South Africa) are neither timely nor accurate.

were reluctant or unable to give full answers to questions about the types of work they do and the hours that they are engaged.[31] Vocational courses provide out-of-school children the opportunity to learn a skill that can help them become more self-sufficient and less vulnerable to engaging in WFCL.

4.4.8   Role of RECLISA in Changes in Enrollment/Dropout and Quality of Education

RECLISA has been successful in keeping children in school and in enrolling some who were previously engaged in child labor. School personnel indicated that RECLISA support "prevents children from dropping out of school," but did not have numbers to support this claim. In Botswana, formal school retention records will be updated at the end of the year (as is the case with most countries). Of the 45 students who enrolled in NFE and vocational classes, 15 dropped out (33% dropout rate).[32] In Lesotho, the animators generally know the reason why boys drop out (traditional school or moving to cattle posts if temporary). As no comparisons are made on the dropout rates between RECLISA and non-RECLISA students (and no comparisons are made with national statistics), it is not clear how much the project can be credited with increased enrollment and reduced drop out. What is important to remember in most projects is that children receive a range of support from the project and local-level implementing partners. For instance, in South Africa, Thembalethu provides school uniforms, soap powder, soap for personal hygiene, food, food packets, and, in some instances, housing. Without these support activities, children might not be in school.

Formal schooling is accessible to students in all countries, most of which have a provision to pay school fees for OVC. The availability of vocational training and NFE is limited in Namibia, South Africa,[33] and Swaziland. In Lesotho, NFE is the primary means by which herd boys receive education in basic literacy and numeracy. In Botswana, vocational education provides educational opportunities for San children.

The quality of education children receive varies from country to country. RECLISA implementers in Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa have provided Life Skills training, making education more relevant to children's lives. In Botswana, PT and GBDT have increased their skills and abilities to teach vocational rabbit and guinea fowl rearing courses, but they are severely hampered by their lack of San-language ability and teaching materials. In South Africa, the Project Management course has increased the skills of teachers in designing and implementing specific projects. The training of PSLs has provided children with an opportunity

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[31] See Lisa H. Jaycox, et al. 2006. Challenges in the evaluation and implementation of school-based prevention and intervention programs on sensitive topics. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*(3), 320–336, for how evaluation of "evidenced based" programs is managed in American schools.

[32] Six out of 10 children completed the PT course on goat rearing. Of the 19 who attended the rabbit rearing and guinea fowl course, seven dropped out. Of the 16 who attended the bricklaying course, four dropped out. Four bricklaying students found employment immediately after the course and were doing their competency test for a national vocational training testing institute on the day of the evaluation. Two others have been assisted by the GBDT trainer to find employment with a building company.

[33] NFE will be made more available in the North West through the EDSCs and the courses offered through ABET, and in Mpumalanga, Thembalethu provides skills training in tailoring, crafts, and microbanking.

to develop their leadership skills and to serve as a source of support for OVC, but this activity is not slated for inclusion in the Life Orientation course.

4.4.9 Effectiveness of Awareness-Raising Activities

For the most part, awareness-raising has targeted either senior-level policymakers and the newspaper-reading population (through the regional and national conferences), or the actual participants in the project (NGOs/CBOs, governmental agencies involved, schools, and targeted beneficiaries). Widespread community awareness has not taken place in most countries. In Botswana, parents of RECLISA children in Gaborone do not fully understand the purpose of the project and see it as a source of inputs that they themselves should be providing (e.g., soap powder for washing uniforms, Christmas presents, and clothes). In Gantsi, the staging of "celebration days" has increased community awareness. In Lesotho, the traditional *pitso* and the media have been used to raise community awareness, but further awareness-raising on the differences between child labor and child work is needed to make the media interventions more effective. In Namibia, the COPE Clubs and child welfare committees are responsible for raising community awareness. In South Africa, a project management course will contribute to raise local awareness. The media, notably radio, are also being used. In Swaziland, the CLCs are responsible for building community awareness in monthly community forums, and a radio-talk show has called upon the RECLISA director to share information on child labor. The lessons learned in working with the media for the Regional Conference have not been shared with the other countries, and no "planning book" has been developed to help each successive country reach out to the media when planning its national conference.[34]

4.4.10 Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society to Monitor Children at Risk of Being Trafficked

While specific elements of civil society are being strengthened to monitor OVC and children at risk, only trafficked children in South Africa are being tracked by the local partner. Some live in Ithuteng and Sithabile. Community capacity building to monitor children at risk has taken place in several countries with varying results. In Botswana, the projects depend on the local managers, and the communities have not been capacitated to take on this role. In Lesotho, the LANFE model is based in community development that aims to develop the capacity of animators and roving animators through its own training and skills development programs. This approach, coupled with the connection of the animators to LANFE's associates and networks, provides the means to monitor and track herd children. In Namibia, the project builds the capacity of COPE Club patrons, COPE/Caregiver representatives, and Child Welfare Sub-Committees. In South Africa, RECLISA and MIET are building the capacity of EDSC directors

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[34] One of the discussions that the Regional Office has facilitated through the Yahoo Groups mechanism is about lessons learned about working with the media. Some partners shared their experiences, particularly with radio. Others noted that the way in which the media work is unique to each country and that each country, therefore, needs to develop its own strategy. However, while the specifics of the media vary from country to country, there is a baseline as to what could/should be provided across the board (e.g., press releases, check list as to what to do when working with the media). Khulisa hired a PR firm to handle this for the Regional Conference. This knowledge could be packaged and shared with the other countries so that information shared with the media is appropriate.

in the North West, and in Mpumalanga, the Field Coordinators work both for RECLISA and Thembalethu and will continue to monitor the children at risk after the project ends. In Gauteng, Sithabile and Ithuteng will continue such monitoring, including the monitoring of child trafficking. In Swaziland, a Community Action Cycle model is being implemented but has not yet reached full capacity largely because the CLCs have not been fully capacitated. Because SC-Swz is the direct implementer, it does not build the capacity of other NGOs/CBOs directly, even though it does work with them in areas of common interest (see Section 4.5.4—Working with Local NGOs/CBOs).

4.5   PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

4.5.1   Initiating Partnerships

In Swaziland and Namibia, the implementing partners are the agencies that also deliver services, so no further partnerships have been developed. In Botswana, BNYC is partly funded by the government and is in a position to support the USDOL survey on labor, although to the detriment of awareness-raising activities. In Lesotho, NGOC is the implementing partner, and they sub-contracted with LANFE to deliver the program. In South Africa, there are several implementing partners: MIET and EDSCs in the North West, Thembalethu in Mpumalanga, and Sithabile, Ithuteng, and SAPS in Gauteng.

The partnership in Lesotho was established through the RECLISA steering committee, which is composed of MOET, USDOL, DOA and other NGOs. While motivated by legitimate concerns about cooperation between TECL and RECLISA, the decision to continue with the PACC and abandon the RECLISA Steering Committee produced unwelcome consequences. The senior figures represented on the original Steering Committee were replaced by more junior figures who usually attend PACC meetings, with a consequent loss of project agency. In South Africa, partnerships with NGOs/CBOs took place when the right of entry into the schools was denied for a year. Identification of partners then took place through rigorous research and negotiation.

4.5.2   Coordination with Government Departments and Agencies Addressing Children's Issues

At project start-up (September, 2004), AIR's Project Director and the RECLISA Project Manager from each country partner called on key government officials and ministries, U.S. Missions, and international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, in every project country to brief them on the project and consult about the best way forward. However, coordination has been problematic in all implementation countries. Engagement with many government departments/agencies has largely been through participation in each country's TECL-sponsored PACC. In most countries, many core government institutions (such as education and labor) are unaware of the particulars of RECLISA, or they feel that they are not sufficiently involved in the project's activities (see the Country Reports for specific examples).

In Lesotho, the project began with an awareness-raising campaign for government officials and high-level policymakers. In South Africa, project implementation was delayed because of misunderstandings between USDOL and the South African USDOL, and between the South African USDOL and the South African DOE. To overcome initial difficulties, the U.S. Embassy's Labor Attaché was brought in. Once all the protocols were followed, the relationship was established with the South African DOE and the right of entrée into the schools was granted. This led the way for relationships to be established with provincial DOEs, which are now collaborating with Khulisa in helping to identify schools with the greatest needs. Khulisa has also established good working relations with the North West DOH and with the Gauteng DOSD. In Namibia, the project is engaging in the Regional OVC Forum.

4.5.3   Relationships with ILO/TECL

The relationship between RECLISA and ILO/TECL has been difficult. Both projects are working with limited budgets. Moreover, TECL only has an office in South Africa. Its presence in the other four countries is limited to the PACC structures. TECL undertakes most of its research by using consultants. At times, TECL consultants have asked RECLISA for clarification and support (which has a cost).[35] Despite a partner workshop in September, 2004, it appears that the clarification of roles on regional and country levels was not sufficiently established at the outset of the RECLISA project. An informal memorandum of understanding (MOU) might have prevented these misunderstandings. Project involvement with TECL in countries other than South Africa is through participating in the PACCs. In Botswana, SOS has not been invited to PACC meetings. In Swaziland, the RECLISA team was not sure whether it could charge "coordination time" to the timesheets reporting system, and thereby to RECLISA (see Section 4.6.1 for information about timesheet reporting).

At the Regional Feedback Workshop, implementing partners were urged to share their on-the-ground lessons learned with colleagues at the PACC meetings so that ILO can know what types of policy development and implementation should be emphasized in their meetings with governments.

4.5.4   Working with Local NGOs/CBOs

Each implementing partner has expanded its network to garner the support needed from governments and NGOs/CBOs to help children at risk stay in school by addressing some of the root problems of poverty. In Botswana, local collaborative relationships have been created to conduct children's assessments, run camps, and access resources; relationships with WFP and the newly formed Herders Association have been established in Lesotho; relationships with other NGOs/CBOs in Namibia have been developed through participation in the Regional OVC Forum; the South African NGO/CBO network is being expanded through the establishment of the Circles of Support/Care; and SC-Swz in Swaziland participates in the Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organizations, an umbrella organization that has developed consortia on food security, gender, HIV/AIDS, and human rights.

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[35] Some RECLISA project members complained about TECL consultants asking them to do work for which TECL is already paying, be it background research or copy editing.

4.6   MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

USDOL reviewed and approved all funding allocations in the project budget. The evaluation team did not carry out any in-depth analysis of project budgets and expenditures, including AIR's, against implementation needs.

The volatility of the South African rand in relation to the U.S. dollar constrained the project budget, as financial projections were made based on a higher exchange rate.[36] AIR/RECLISA noted that "a solid analysis of the actual costs of meeting USDOL and U.S. Government requirements (including technical, financial, and performance reporting as well as general contractual responsibilities) may have been useful for all parties concerned, including USDOL."

The budget does not include a visible inflation factor for each year. Even though inflation is not shown separately, AIR's budget template does factor it in. Salaries are escalated each year according to a partner-entered percentage. For all other costs, AIR advised its partners that, for each line item, they should estimate a cost that included inflation for Years 2 to 4, add up the budget for all four years, divide by four, and use that inflation-adjusted figure for each year. AIR followed the same practice.

Financial management is difficult for all implementing partners, not only because some activities appear to be underfunded, but also because each partner is not fully cognizant of which expenses are allowable and which are not. AIR has provided increasing levels of financial management support since the very first days of RECLISA.[37] However, those efforts have proven insufficient. One challenge lies in the complexity of U.S. Government financial requirements, particularly for smaller NGOs used to more flexible types of funding. Another stems from high staff turnover among the implementation staff. Since 2005, Africare in Namibia, BNYC in Gaborone, and NGOC in Lesotho have all replaced the finance officers originally trained by AIR.

As part of the project design, each country is to hold a child labor conference. The South Africa conference was also a regional conference (held in 2006). It was organized jointly by Khulisa and AIR, and had input from ILO and other stakeholders. Documentation from the Lesotho conference is available on, and disseminated through, the project website. The primary outcomes were increased awareness and input into the national action-planning process on child labor that TECL manages. At the time of the evaluation, regional conference proceedings were at the printers (and were distributed to all participants on November 24). AIR took the technical lead in preparing these proceedings and covered the costs with its budget.[38] The packet comprised a brochure and a CD-ROM, the latter including a complete list of conference delegates. A CD-ROM of TECL material was also added. Finally, since July the RECLISA Website has hosted a set of regional conference materials, including all available presentations from the event.

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[36] Africare in Namibia was the only partner to identify an exchange rate in its budget—USD $1 = 6 Rand.

[37] See annexed list of monitoring and support missions undertaken by RECLISA/AIR.

[38] AIR noted that, "AIR budgeted and paid for all national conference costs from our regional office budget. This had no impact on project operations, other than ensuring that BLNS partners did not have to divert any funds for these conferences and enabling the Regional Office to assume much of the associated financial management burden (such as making payments)."

However, there is no conference planning guide to assist the other countries in organizing country conferences.

Each country has experienced difficulties in management and budget on both the financial and technical aspects of project implementation. In Botswana, varying levels of per diem are charged by each partner, and SOS does not use these at all in calculating project expenses. The field workers in Gantsi are part-time and receive a small allowance from RECLISA. They believe the pay is inadequate, but GTFOSY, as an unregistered entity, does not have any clear human resource guidelines for employment contracts.[39] In Lesotho, LANFE has experienced delays in tranche payments because of difficulties with NGOC: gaps in expenditure, incorrect reporting, lack of appropriate or sufficient evidence, and non-alignment to reporting requirements. The delay of payments has delayed implementation of the project in several different areas. At certain times, LANFE has been forced to borrow money from other donors to meet its own needs, which may have weakened its relationships with other organizations. Further support is needed for the development of a strategy to ensure sustainability, especially the absorption of animators into MOET and enabling the learning centers to become financially self-sustainable. Training is also required on results-based management. In Namibia, there has been almost a complete turnover in staff. AIR/RECLISA has provided technical support to facilitate the handover, which has been smooth. In South Africa, as in all other countries, the Management for Results framework needs to be strengthened. In addition to Log Frames detailing project activities, each coordinator in the three target provinces conducts quarterly and semi-annual tracking of output indicators. Coordinators report on the results, which the M&E system then captures. It is necessary to further distinguish between results and outputs: which activity produces which output, which produces which outcome, which produces which result. In Swaziland, timesheet reporting is considered a major constraint to project implementation, largely because reporting sick and maternity leave and time for cooperation activities and travel were problematic. This issue was addressed at the Regional Feedback Workshop when AIR/RECLISA said it would set up training sessions on how to use the timesheets and how to claim funds. This type of training should have been provided to implementing partners at the outset of project implementation.

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[39] The field workers in Gantsi now receive P1000 as a voluntary allowance, plus per diem on field trips. This represents a substantial increase over what they received as volunteers before RECLISA. While they still may wish for higher allowances, GTFOSY and BNYC are confident that the current levels are equitable.

4.6.1 Project Management Tools

In all five countries, RECLISA has implemented tracking systems for the quantitative results required by USDOL under its GPRA/common-indicator system. The regional office has the STS database in its system, and it collects input information (i.e., databases) from its partners in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland. At the time of the evaluation, RECLISA had problems using the system centrally (e.g., the database from Namibia could not be opened). Both AIR/RECLISA and the implementing partners experienced many difficulties in using the STS to track the project beneficiaries.[40]

At the Regional Feedback Workshop, several partners complained about the use of timesheets. It appears that some categories of work do not easily fit into the work categories listed on the timesheets. Training at the outset of the project by AIR/RECLISA as to how each of the work categories is defined would have prevented this confusion.

For the indigenous NGOs, there has been a lot of confusion surrounding a number of HR issues. An initial HR management workshop could have prevented this confusion.

The PMPs, related to each of the Log Frames, are now used as the basis for developing work plans in each of the implementation countries.

The lack of follow-up on the payment of funds to schools to cover school fees in Swaziland has created a misunderstanding about whose school fees are being paid, and in one case, apparently led to the non-payment of the funds to cover the children's schooling.[41]

4.6.2 Achievements and Expenditures

Because of the fluctuating value of the rand, limitations have been placed on the Regional Office's expenditures so that a portion of the budget would be available for the ramping up of activities envisioned in the second half of the project. This has put limitations on expenditures

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[40] AIR described the situation in the following terms: "Juarez never held any STS workshops in the region for RECLISA. During her post-Task-1 site visits early 2005, Dr. Virginia Seitz of Juarez was supposed to do initial STS training, but she did not feel competent to do so. Instead, Allan Brown (then the RECLISA M&E Consultant) attempted to assist partners in installing and customizing the system, based on what he had learned from the users' manual. We believe this lack of training, in fact, to be one of the reasons for the difficulties we have experienced with STS (the other being specific problems with the system design and interface plus changes in USDOL tracking requirements). Having established a close, technical working relationship with Jimin Patel at Juarez, however, AIR was able to take advantage of his authorized visit in August 2006 for field-testing a new users' manual to have him provide direct technical support in Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. This proved invaluable. RECLISA's experience is that, even with multiple on-site technical support visits by AIR for STS training, the materials-based training strategy has not worked well in practice. As the evaluation report notes, the Regional Office's own staff is still working to understand the system fully, and AIR's partners continue to struggle with it. We do not object to the concept of a centrally funded and developed, EI-specific tracking system. In fact, it has much to offer in cost-effectiveness. However, the execution of that concept has been less than ideal."

[41] The funding was transferred to the school's account, but was not used to pay the children's school fees. See additional information in the Country Report. This case, in Mahhoshe, is currently being investigated by SC-Swz.

that had been budgeted in the Project Document (e.g., the procurement of vehicles for project implementation).[42]

In Botswana, the project is highly dependent on its collaborating partners for additional resources, and the project would not be able to continue in Gantsi without this support. In Lesotho, the project has forecasted that to keep up the pace of recruitment, monitoring, and providing direct services and products to learners, the allocated budget is insufficient.[43] In all other countries, achievements match expenditures. RECLISA's financial resources are constrained, which may pose risks to the project's success. However, there is also a positive side of the budget constriction, which has allowed the partners to leverage funds from other sources to complement project activities.

4.6.3   USDOL Assistance

AIR/RECLISA found that the feedback on the Technical Progress Reports and overall communications have been good.

On the Federal reporting requirements, implementing partners did not have sufficient clarity for how to charge the project with specific types of expenses. This prompted the Project Director to say (when asked at the end of the workshop to write down one point that was learned during the workshop), "The level of confusion and unhappiness among AIR's partners about issues of budgeting and financial management needs more listening and support from the Regional Office."

The provision of financial management workshops at the outset of the project would have considerably lessened this confusion.

AIR/RECLISA felt that some of USDOL's requirements changed (e.g., that of tracking the work status of children, made clear only in August 2006). According to USDOL, the work status requirement has been in place since the earliest stages of the project design. Regardless of when the requirement was formulated, this tracking requirement necessitated a modification of the STS used by the four countries, and additional work on the DMS by Khulisa. RECLISA expressed frustration that the clarification of reporting for USDOL did not include any increases in the budget, even though time and effort will be expended to change the data capturing system, to

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[42] According to AIR, "the only expenditures that AIR limited were its own, primarily the Regional Office's and, to a lesser extent, in its home office. These savings were accomplished by eliminating, postponing, or downgrading approved expenditures in AIR's budget. AIR encouraged all partners to spend their own budgets fully; we did not limit spending by any partner. Because of the funds thereby saved (as well as the more favorable exchange rate that currently prevails), AIR is now able to offer extra financial and technical resources to all partners with needs that have been identified by the midterm evaluation or previously by the Regional Office."

[43] During the evaluation mission to Lesotho, a persistent issue was the lack of candles and other equipment. According to AIR, "LANFE failed to budget for candles, AIR and LNGORC discovered this oversight through our respective field monitoring visits. AIR's regional office immediately worked with LANFE to adjust their budget so that candles could be purchased as necessary." The evaluator for Lesotho found that there is still a "lack of sufficient learning materials: animators do not have candles for classes in the evening. Stones and sand are used to teach children how to read and write. The project attempts to provide these resources, but not adequately" (Country Report, p. 25).

train data gatherers in this sensitive area, to collect the data from each participant (which will more than double in number over the next two years), and to enter the data.

The feedback provided by USDOL on the Technical Progress Reports could be improved. The framework for reporting is not sufficiently oriented to results. Rather, it focuses on the activities themselves instead of the results of these activities. As the number of students is tracked, the "road map" process to get to these numbers is being largely ignored.[44] In implementing a better tracking for results methodology, each activity must produce a result that, together with all the other results, leads to the numbers of students retained or prevented from dropping out of school. If USDOL is interested in reviewing each of the models implemented in Southern Africa toward the end of establishing best practices, then results reporting must be improved. RECLISA's management system is largely based on the numerical tracking system required by USDOL. As noted by AIR, "The [evaluation's] findings about the need to strengthen quality, with which we agree, should not obscure the fact that RECLISA's primary objectives—as specified by USDOL through our approved PMPs—are numerical, and that the project has effectively managed for these results."

4.7   SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

4.7.1   Exit Strategies

Where an implementing partner has collaborated with an NGO/CBO that has ongoing operations (e.g., Khulisa's partners in South Africa, SC-Swz in the Lowveld in Swaziland, LANFE in Lesotho, SOS in Botswana), the inclusion of child labor prevention activities will be extended in the normal course of operations. In Lesotho, it is highly unlikely that the animators will be absorbed into MOET, so an exit strategy will have to be developed. In general, those projects that are more "stand alone" will need to develop exit strategies in the next year. In Namibia, the COPE Clubs may continue as school principals and COPE Club patrons believe that they are a good idea and community members have indicated they will continue to cultivate the gardens. The project director will be conducting exit workshops over the next two years to hand over the project to the communities.

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[44] An example of such monitoring and evaluation roadmap is presented in Appendix 4. The First Level of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) could be designed based on the original project proposal and the annual work plans. At this First Level, the time frame for each activity, the proposed outcome, indicators, means of verification, and persons responsible are presented in table format. The Second Level MEP includes an outline of an activity-input-output-outcome-impact formula to be used for each separate activity, and is divided into three different "Screens." The first screen entails tracking the inputs required for each activity. The second screen entails tracking the outputs generated through the deployment of inputs for each activity, and the third screen links the outputs to the outcomes of the activity.

4.7.2   Project Impact to Date: Individual Beneficiaries and Partner Organizations

Government departments/ministries, NGOs/CBOs, school staff, and children are more aware of issues related to child labor. In Botswana, children became "visible" once they received uniforms, and they became children again when attending camps as they did not have to scrounge for food for themselves and their families. In Lesotho, herd boys can now read and make basic calculations. They are more well-mannered and have learned how to play together. Animators working for LANFE have been provided with additional skills training, and local community members have become interested in what has been happening in the classes (many villagers themselves are illiterate and innumerate). In Namibia and Swaziland, OVC have increased opportunities of schooling as the project pays for their school fees and uniforms. In South Africa, children who participated in the Suitcase Project ranked the project a "10" because, as one beneficiary said, "Khulisa is an angel that came to us in the day to make it possible for us to see a future." School principals and Life Orientation course teachers have been trained in Project Management and will further increase community awareness once they have implemented their practicum projects. Teen moms realize that to make their career goals come true, they must stay in school. In Swaziland, as well as in Lesotho, the debate continues as to what constitutes child labor and what is normal socialization/work in a family.

4.7.3   Community Interest and Buy-in

This has varied from country to country. In Botswana, community members in Gaborone see what the project is providing as a type of "entitlement" that should continue. Community members in Gantsi are conflicted by much of what the project is teaching about child labor as there is no real culture of education among the San. In Lesotho, involvement of traditional authorities has led to the establishment of learning centers through the allocation of a hut for classes. The project has heightened community interest in literacy and numeracy education. However, it is unlikely that the project will be extended after funding stops. There is a desire to develop self-sufficiency projects such as gardening or the development of craft skills, but these have not been included in the budget. In Namibia, community interest has been stimulated in the COPE Clubs and in the maintenance of the gardens. In South Africa, community buy-in will be developed after the Project Management course has been completed. In Swaziland, the project is based on community structures such as the CLC, and each CLC is supposed to design a strategy to address child labor in the community.

4.7.4   Changes in Perception and Policy About the Importance of Education for Children as an Alternative to Child Labor

While it seems clear that the awareness about the importance of education for children has been raised in all countries, it is not clear to what extent education is seen as an alternative to child labor largely because of the poverty of the children, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the lack of career preparation in the school curriculum. Moreover, the cultural perceptions of child work remains embedded in the fabric of many societies and the project has not yet developed adequate strategies to change these perceptions, especially among populations that remain largely illiterate.

However, the project has developed a number of strategies to address cultural perceptions of child work (see annexed list of awareness-raising activities in each country—Appendix 1). It would be premature to attempt to assess the impact of these interventions at this stage, because this type of strategy needs to "mature over time" to achieve significant impact. However, there are many specific examples of impact to date. In Gauteng Province, SAPS has requested more frequent training on the Child Labor modules that RECLISA has developed for them, which indicates a changed attitude toward and increased awareness of the problems of child labor and trafficking among the personnel involved with the youth desk of SAPS. Discussions during training sessions and meetings with SAPS and educators indicate the normal project activities have challenged the cultural norms regarding child labor and the value of education. Participants are eager for more information—particularly information related to mitigation practices. OVC are regularly attending training, which indicates that they perceive the life skills training as important and are dedicated to the process. Beneficiaries participating in the suitcase project now see themselves as valued persons with a future to look forward to rather than the standard culturally influenced perception of being "losers." In North West Province, there is some indication that the stigma of teen pregnancy is being reduced by the increased referrals of pregnant teens taking place in schools. There are children who attend training sessions, even though their transportation costs are not paid for and they are not part of the target group, indicating a change in cultural attitudes toward education. In Mpumalanga Province, the establishment of an Education Desk at Thembalethu and the ongoing support it receives indicate a shift in cultural attitudes toward NFE. At the community level in other countries, there are some signs that parents and guardians are beginning to place a greater value on education. For example, in Lesotho, a teacher reported a willingness on the part of parents/guardians to enable herd children to attend classes by offering to look after the cattle while classes are conducted. Herders who are over the project age limit have asked to attend classes in Lesotho. Project implementers in Lesotho are having more success in attracting "outside" support for the herd boys, indicating a growing awareness of the health and security needs of these children. Individuals have contributed the use of land for the herders to grow vegetables, and clothing and blankets to afford better protection from the elements.

Project implementers have also worked diligently with government departments/ministries, NGOs/CBOs, schools, and high-level policymakers, but in each country the implementation of policy is problematic.

4.7.5   Government Willingness to Carry On Project Implementation or Objectives

No formal commitment has been made in any country by any government agency to take over, on a large scale, the implementation or the objectives of the project, though interest in the project has been demonstrated in most countries. However, at the school and NGO/CBO level there is evidence that project activities will continue.

4.7.6   Interventions with the Greatest and Least Impact

The impact of the interventions varies by country. In Botswana, awareness at school, the provision of uniforms, and the payment of the PTA fees have had the greatest impact. The least impact has been on the children trained in vocational education—only 4 of the 45 have obtained

jobs. In Lesotho, the baseline study served as a solid starting point for the recruitment of learners and to build initial awareness among community members. Ongoing awareness activities held in *pitsos* have triggered the registration of learners. In Namibia, the children said that the COPE Clubs had the greatest impact, as did the payment of school fees and the provision of uniforms. In South Africa, the Suitcase Project and the several variations of the Life Skills curriculum have had the greatest impact on the children. The Project Management course has had the greatest impact on principals and educators. The DMS has had the greatest impact on project management. In South Africa, the Circles of Support/Care have had some positive impact even though they are not fully developed.[45] In Swaziland, the payment of school fees and the provision of school uniforms and food aid (provided by SC-Swz through its connection to WFP) had the most impact on children.

4.7.7 Lessons Learned on Project Accomplishments and Weaknesses in Terms of Sustainability

These lessons are presented in Section V: Conclusions and Lessons Learned.

4.7.8 Meeting End Goals and Taking Corrective Measures

Each country team believes it will meet its end goals (allowing for the changes made in the original design). The problem of differentiating between child labor and child work, however, will make meeting some goals a challenge. To overcome this problem, awareness activities must include an emphasis on defining these terms. However, awareness will not necessarily change age-old cultural perceptions on child socialization. In Lesotho, because MOET is active in only five of the ten regions, incorporation of the animators into MOET activities in the three regions may not be possible. Learning centers will also have to develop ways to become self-sufficient.

4.8 REGION-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

4.8.1 Effectiveness in Raising Awareness of Children's Education, Rights, and Exploitive Child Labor

The South Africa/Regional conference was an effective means of raising regional awareness. Delegates (more than 270) developed a declaration and several resolutions that chart the way forward for each country.[46] That the conference provided delegates the opportunity to share their perceptions, learn about WFCL, and then draft plans on how to resolve these issues was a benchmark in Southern African history. The results of this effort will be determined through a follow-up survey that Khulisa planned to disseminate in January 2007.

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[45] Some of the results of the Circles of Support/Care include the Bishop Simeon Trust donation of funds for uniforms that enabled several children to attend school. Also, student teachers from Wits University provided assisted learning support to OVC returning to formal education. The U.S. Embassy as another participant in the Circle of Support in Gauteng visited a site in the project area to conduct an informal needs assessment after which they will decide on the provision of assistance.

[46] That is, one declaration and one resolution for South Africa and one for the other RECLISA countries.

4.8.2   Results-Based Management Capacity

The Technical Progress Reports list activities, but do not sufficiently address the individual results achieved in undertaking these activities. While the numerical and other results to be achieved are found in the Log Frames, PMPs, and common indicators, the "road map" setting forth the "small" results achieved with the implementation of each activity has not been addressed. This is explained by AIR in the following terms: "RECLISA's systems focus primarily on quantitative targets, but that makes them no less significant—particularly given USDOL's own emphasis on meeting numerical targets. It is true that AIR's strategy began by emphasizing quantitative results (to meet our contractual obligations) and needs to continue moving toward increased quality—an issue that we ourselves raised with the evaluators as a Year 3 priority. And it is true that it would have been better for this shift to have taken place earlier. (Both the long USDOL-mandated planning and approval process, and the unexpectedly complex challenges of managing multiple partners, delayed this.)"

However, it is important that, when establishing a cooperative agreement, the lessons learned point out the results achieved in each activity so that future project designers can say: in this type of project, with these elements present, this type of activity produces this type of result.[47] For example, we learned how awareness-raising activities in Lesotho led the chief to donate a hut for LANFE to hold NFE classes for herd boys. We learned how the Regional Conference produced a declaration and resolutions, and we will learn how these are being addressed in each country. We have also learned that through the implementation of different psychosocial support activities children are more emotionally adjusted and can participate more effectively in learning activities. We also learned that performing a complete review of children and providing for the needs emerging from that review will increase the possibility of children staying in school. Without these points on the "road map," we would not really understand how the project obtains the ultimate result it was designed to achieve.

4.8.3   Tools and Systems to Monitor the Impact of National/Regional Child Labor Conferences

The regional and one country-specific conference had been conducted at the time of the evaluation. It was difficult to evaluate the impact of the Lesotho conference, because, as noted in the country evaluation for Lesotho, "the conference has been hailed as a success, [but] there are no project documents to show its successes on site. AIR stated that the conference documents were lost and NGOC said that they did not have any project documents to share with the evaluator."

The regional conference will be followed up by a survey, and country-specific conferences will provide input to the national child labor action planning and implementation processes supported by TECL. Significant follow-up entails country RECLISA directors and the AIR/RECLISA

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[47] The logic model of results-based management and reporting asserts that a certain activity (input) generates certain outputs that lead to certain results, which, in the aggregate with other results, leads to the quantitative result. This is not specifically identified by the existing report formats. Rather, a set of activities set the context and gives the reader a sense that the activity *might* lead to the result.

office to work more closely with government agencies and the ILO/TECL project to ensure that policies are designed and implemented to keep children in school and reduce involvement in WFCL. It is also important that successive conferences allow for time to reflect on what has been learned in the previous conferences.

4.9   USDOL-GENERATED QUESTIONS ON REGIONAL OPERATIONS

4.9.1   Costs and Benefits of Managing RECLISA as a Regional Project

All the budget costs are within the purview of the USDOL contracting system and have been approved by USDOL. To date, the costs of running the Regional Office may not be as effective or efficient as they need to be. The Regional Feedback Workshop revealed (1) the need for improved sharing between implementing partners; (2) the confusion about the use of timesheets; (3) the need for improved systems for managing for results; (4) the need for improved cooperation with ILO/TECL (both at the regional and country levels); and (5) the continuing difficulties in using the STS. AIR/RECLISA may have been aware of many of these issues, but it has not been sufficiently proactive in resolving them, largely because of its initial focus on quantitative results.

Despite the Juarez STS workshops, problems remain with the STS. With the training of the AIR/RECLISA Office Manager in the area of financial management and budgeting (during a workshop she attended in Washington, DC), each of the partners is now receiving appropriate financial training. This training will be extended when an AIR staff member comes to supplement what the Office Manager has learned. The M&E consultant (whose total salary is paid by Khulisa, even though the majority of her work is done for the region) is an auditor who has appropriately followed the PMPs and brought the development of work plans into PMP alignment (this is also a relatively new approach). Yet, a results-based management approach has not been sufficiently developed and used, and a specific training course on this topic has not been developed or implemented.

The AIR/RECLISA Deputy Director writes the Technical Progress Reports, but these are activities-based rather than results-oriented, and the feedback received from USDOL does not require that results be charted. The Education/M&E Specialist role ranges from general technical oversight and support to field-support visits, in which the USDOL-required quarterly reports (which she oversees) are only one part. The Child Labor and Education Associate role ranges from assisting with M&E and STS issues, to desk research and technical support for the Regional Office, to training and support site visits.

A review of the AIR/RECLISA Regional Office needs to be undertaken. At this point, a considerable amount of money is being spent on the capacity building of implementing partners on how to manage a USDOL-funded project, on writing reports, and, to a lesser extent, on M&E. Despite this level of investment, more training is needed on finance and budgeting, and, for some implementation partners, STS. AIR/RECLISA should not tell the partners how to do their jobs, but build capacity for them to do their jobs. This capacity does not come through "conversations" alone, but through a rigorous training and mentoring program to ensure the success of the partners.

The AIR/RECLISA office also needs to consider ways in which it can be more proactive on behalf of the project. The project's focus on quantitative results has left a gap in identifying the results of each activity (qualitative) that lead to the quantitative results. AIR/RECLISA needs to consider how to further its relationship with TECL, and how it can help partners to work with governments and obtain their "buy in" so that these governments can take over the project once the funding stops. AIR/RECLISA needs to assist in creating relationships with service providers so that the ultimate beneficiaries—the children—have a real chance to finish school and create a more positive future. AIR/RECLISA needs to help create partnerships with potential employers of children who are graduating from high school. Most of these ideas were not part of the original program design, yet they constitute the "value added" that AIR/RECLISA could provide in the final two years of the project.

4.9.2   Benefit of Splitting the Project into Five Country Projects

As noted above, the evaluation did not have the time or mandate to conduct a budget and cost-effectiveness analysis of the project. Such an evaluation is necessary to address the issue of splitting the project into five country projects.

4.9.3   Changes Needed in AIR/RECLISA Project Management

The Project Director, when asked, "What would you do differently if the project were started again; and what will you do differently in the next two years?" noted that he would have implemented the following activities or actions:

- Front-end the financial/contractual training, including inviting Justin [from AIR/Washington] to address recordkeeping. Address timesheets more directly and comprehensively in training and conduct follow-up to determine if there is any confusion.

- Clarify USDOL expectations for Log Frames and M&E and create consistency (or at least more advance notice) in USDOL's definitions and requirements.

- Fill the two vacant positions more quickly (problem of exchange rate).[48]

- Shift from quantitative to qualitative planning and implementation so that there is a cross-fertilization of design and implementation.

- Spend more of the budget on direct technical processes (i.e., identify where things need to be fixed or improved; look more at the quality of impact, especially in the provision of technical support).

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[48] AIR noted on this issue: "If we had known more in 2004 about actual expenditure rates, particularly in terms of a more favorable exchange rate in 2006, the Regional Office would have reverted to the original staffing pattern sooner. Without advance knowledge of this trend, however, AIR took the only prudent course of action—to avoid the real risk of running out of funds before the project was complete and all targets had been met—by cutting back on some approved expenditures, including local staff positions."

- Hold meetings with partners with a greater focus on impact and how the project is really changing the lives of children. Conduct a gap analysis to determine if materials and processes are appropriate.

- Increase attention on developing exit strategies and on sustainability (i.e., the project must have governments allocate funds to take on RECLISA's objectives). The Regional Office must support the partners in determining how to lobby governments to take on the project.

In addition to the items identified by the Project Director, the evaluation team suggests the following:

- Despite the site visits made by AIR/RECLISA, the strategy of "conversations"[49] has not produced the cutting-edge management this project requires. Efforts such as designing an agenda for each meeting, identifying needs, setting goals, and reviewing progress should take place at each site visit. Staff should be ready with any questions on any topic the AIR/RECLISA visitor can answer.

- AIR/RECLISA should work more closely with ILO/TECL to develop strategies for policy development and implementation in each country (AIR/RECLISA should distill all the lessons learned from on-the-ground implementation and share these with ILO so it knows which policies to advocate).

- AIR/RECLISA should develop a regional strategy to follow up with governments on the declaration and resolutions made at the regional conference after the follow-up survey has been conducted.

- AIR/RECLISA should help partners work effectively with country-level WFP personnel on providing food to OVC through schools and NGOs/CBOs in locations of operation as part of creating the Circles of Support/Care that can enable children to stay in school.

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[49] AIR noted that "the term 'conversations' reflects our purposefully low-key approach to partner interaction. We try not to present ourselves as experts or inspectors (even though AIR's role encompasses both functions), but rather as colleagues. So rather than take a didactic or authoritarian tone, we consult (i.e., have conversations) with our colleagues in each country. Our experience demonstrates that this strategy, while more time-consuming, has paid significant dividends in team-building and (for our smaller partners) organizational capacity-building. This does not mean, however, that our trips are unfocused. Each visit has specific objectives from the Regional Office's perspective, which are incorporated into an informal agenda agreed with the respective partner and including that partner's own objectives. Each visit incorporates needs assessments and (as required) question-answering. Each is followed by a team debrief at the Regional Office, where findings are presented and plans made for the next steps." The evaluation team did not find sufficiently capacity building at local levels (some of this is the result of changing management personnel). However, as for example, the timesheet or coordination problems showed, this low-key training approach has not always been sufficient.

- AIR/RECLISA should help partners identify multinational and national corporations to provide additional support to the project through their "social responsibility" requirements. This support could be in the form of job shadowing opportunities; direct contributions; in-kind contributions of clothing, supplies, and school implements; sponsorship of student school fees; and the like.

The key issue in these recommendations is to increase the value added that AIR/RECLISA could provide. The recommendations made above and in Section VI will help to reach this goal.

V   CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This section draws together key conclusions and lessons learned by RECLISA implementers to lay the groundwork for the recommendations that follow. We used the findings and what participants reported as lessons learned during the Regional Feedback Workshop as the basis for the analysis.[50] As with the previous section, this section is organized around the categories of questions posed by USDOL.

The evaluation process itself has contributed to the project. The posing of questions and clarification of issues during the implementation of individual and focus group interviews has raised the level of awareness of interviewees and helped implementing partners to reconsider several strategies they were employing. That the projects will be managed differently was a statement made at the Regional Feedback Conference, which was seen by all as a learning experience.

5.2   PROGRAM DESIGN

While all projects are in compliance with current government regulations, each project appears to have taken on the role of "implementing arm" for government policy. However, not all stakeholder departments/ministries fully understand RECLISA, and not all have "bought into" the project because there have been insufficient connections made with appropriate government agencies. Moreover, orientation sessions at the outset of the project and sitting together on the TECL PACC were insufficient to maintain interest in the project. Visits to government agencies need to take place from time to time to remind governments of what RECLISA is doing and to encourage them to take over the project once USDOL funding ends. These visits would also help the governments with defining child labor and child work.

RECLISA has used a prevention focus rather than a withdrawal focus.[51] As a prevention measure, most children found in the areas where RECLISA is working are at-risk because of poverty and HIV/AIDS. Many children, although this cannot be fully substantiated by the STS, work to earn some sort of income whether they are in school or not. That different elements of the project are keeping children in school—in addition to them having some sort of employment—can be substantiated.

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[50] For a full presentation of the conclusions and lessons learned in each country, please see the individual country reports found in the appendices.

[51] According to the project document, the overall aim of the project is to prevent children from engaging in exploitive labor. That is, RECLISA has been focused on prevention since the earliest stages of its design.

The projects were not designed with a complete understanding of the children's needs in mind. If such an understanding is not strengthened, children may not receive the goods and services they need to stay in school.

RECLISA has provided children with a number of inputs, but in a limited number of cases this has created a "dependency" or "entitlement" mentality among children and their families.[52] In certain implementation areas, there seems to be some confusion about what the project will provide and what government social services should provide.

Assumptions made by AIR/RECLISA concerning the ability of implementing partners to financially manage the projects were too optimistic. Although some training on the subject was presented at the outset of the project, more follow-up was needed in an environment of greater transparency to determine what the particular issues were.

The inclusion of vocational education in the design was extremely good and had a lot of potential, but implementation has proven difficult and more costly than RECLISA anticipated, which has led to some implementing partners dropping the endeavor altogether. The project needs to reconsider how this effort can be improved.

5.3   PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Delays in almost all the project countries led to the late implementation of several parts of each project, although it has not delayed the identification and registration of the appropriate numbers of children. The PMP asks that numbers be reached, but does not require that results of each activity be reported. Although these activities are part of the Log Frames, there is no "results charting" for each activity.

Awareness-raising needs to be continual and targeted at all levels, from grassroots to senior management. National conferences help expand this awareness with senior policymakers, but the lack of a sufficient budget for a more comprehensive set of follow-up actions makes it difficult for project directors to sustain this awareness raising.

The STS is still giving project implementers some difficulty, although less so since the Juarez representative delivered workshops on the system. The system developed by Khulisa seems to be much more user-friendly.

Tracking the work status of children requires changing the STS, revising the data collection forms, training data collectors, increasing the allotted amount of time to collect this sensitive information from beneficiaries, and providing extra time to enter the data.

Capacity building for NGOs/CBOs needs to be continual so that when the project ends local implementers will be able to take over. In some cases, capacity building has not yet taken place

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[52] For example, mothers and grandmothers interviewed in Mpumalanga expected RECLISA to provide them a sack of mealie meal so that they could feed their children who are in school. Otherwise, children would have to do some sort of work to generate income to purchase food.

while in others it is in process. If local institutions are to take over the implementation of the project, then (1) close connections with government agencies need to be further developed, (2) orientation sessions for each group need to be devised and implemented, (3) as the RECLISA implementing partners develop lessons learned, they must be shared with those who will take over the project, and (4) future implementers must be taken to each of the stakeholders and introduced as the person/agent who will be concerned with child labor issues.

Psychosocial support for those children who have been engaged in WFCL is absolutely critical to the children's ability to perform well in school. The three models being used (i.e., the Suitcase Project, the Hero's Book, and the COPE Clubs) have all had significant results. More children are in need of this type of support. Projects should devise strategies for how this should take place.

5.4   PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

AIR/RECLISA has not yet provided the full extent of capacity building that partners need, especially in the area of financial management. Services need to be provided in a more proactive manner (rather than reactive). Sharing of information among partners currently takes place through a "yahoo groups" mechanism, which is not sufficient. More regional exchange meetings should be held in which partners demonstrate what they do so that they can learn from each other—not only telling about it, but demonstrating it, providing handouts, and being prepared for questions. The Project Director reported that much capacity building takes place through "conversations" during field visits rather than during targeted training on specific topics. Having learned that such effort is insufficient, AIR/RECLISA said it will be more proactive in the final two years.

Agreements with appropriate government departments/ministries were not established in all countries. This might mean that the government will not assume any responsibility for the inclusion of child labor issues in future activities.

The "partnership" with the ILO/TECL project suffers from a lack of direction. While in most countries, RECLISA directors participate in TECL PACCs, they must proactively share what they are learning on the ground so that TECL staff can know where there are gaps in policy and difficulties in policy implementation. Greater synergies between the two projects can be developed by taking this more proactive stance.

WFP can play a valuable role in helping children stay in school by providing schools with the ability to establish feeding programs. WFP is involved in some countries, and in others is prevented from addressing the needs in secondary school because of government policy to have feeding programs only in primary school. AIR/RECLISA should explore a partnership with WFP in the region so that children are provided the food they need.

To develop the Circles of Support/Care, more work needs to be undertaken with appropriate government departments/ministries, NGOs/CBOs, traditional leaders, businesses, faith-based institutions, and others, to provide for the needs that children have to stay in school.

5.5 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Financial management and reporting practices are complicated and must be revisited by AIR/RECLISA when providing follow-up workshops to resolve the many points of confusion that exist in financial allocation and reporting. All partners must conform to the same institutional practices.

STS maintenance is a challenge in the four countries using it. The Juarez developer should be accessible to respond to any issues that arise and should revisit the region to make the system more user-friendly. This is an ongoing need, and AIR/RECLISA should consider this in its staffing needs. An IT professional is needed to assist partners in using the STS.

A system for results tracking needs to be developed for use by all RECLISA partners. While the ultimate numerical results are being tracked through the STS, activity results are not being sufficiently tracked. Therefore, it is unclear which activity produces which result and whether the activities in which partners are engaged are part of a "road map" that leads to the reduction of WFCL and the prevention of school dropouts.

The feedback USDOL provides on the Technical Progress Reports often consists of a set of questions rather than an inquiry into the results achieved in each country. It is often felt that USDOL's comments inquire into how activities are implemented on a case-by-case basis rather than holistically to determine if, overall in each country, the project is producing high-quality and sustainable results.

5.6 SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

No partner, as yet, has a specific exit strategy, although each partner is undertaking a considerable amount of capacity building with their local implementing partners so that they can take over the activities. Linkages with appropriate government departments/ministries in many countries have not been solidified.

Individual beneficiaries recognize that they might not be in school if the project had not been implemented, and the children, by and large, see the value of staying in school to create a future for themselves. Partner organizations see the real need for a focus on child labor so that WFCL can be stopped. However, considerable confusion remains on what constitutes child labor and child work. There is consensus that child prostitution is a WFCL, but other work falls into a "gray" area. More work needs to be done to clarify the definition of WFCL in each country.

VI   RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Drawing on the regional findings, conclusions, and lessons learned, this section presents the regional recommendations. For individual country recommendations, please see the different country appendices. This section begins with a brief presentation on the needs that children in the region have and where the meeting of these needs can be augmented so that WFCL can be reduced and children can remain in school. The remaining recommendations follow the other four categories of questions used in guiding the research and the writing of this report.

6.2   PROGRAM DESIGN

6.2.1   Meeting the Needs of Children

The direct needs that must be met for children to stay in school include the following:

- Payment of school fees

- Provision of school uniforms, including shoes

- Provision of school supplies.

To provide children the support needed to stay in school, the following are also needed: food; housing; clothing; income; psychosocial support and caring environments; safety and safe places (police); items for personal hygiene; health care; help in registering births, deaths, and in getting government grant support; life skills/positive life styles training; career development/income generating opportunities; for teen moms, a crèche for their children; and recreation.

The RECLISA project addresses the first three needs directly in some of its projects, and the rest of the needs are provided largely by local implementing partner efforts or by the project itself. To develop appropriate support mechanisms, however, all of these elements must be provided in each of the projects.

Rationale: Children will not be able to stay in school, regardless of life skills training and psychosocial support, if they have nothing to eat or do not have a safe place to live—at the very least. Each of the projects has had to identify partners who can provide for these needs so the children can return to or stay in school. Without this enabling environment, the children would have to find work to support themselves. Children must be provided all of the needs outlined above for them to be withdrawn from WFCL and to remain in school.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should "inventory" who provides what service, and where there are gaps so that it can either (1) provide the additional services directly, or (2) create further partnerships with other organizations/agencies to ensure that the children at risk receive all they need to stay in school.

6.2.2   Government Involvement

Rationale: Not all relevant government departments/ministries (e.g., education, labor, health, social development, police) are cognizant of RECLISA goals and activities.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should attempt to create greater awareness of the project in all countries by—

- Having the country director visit government departments/ministries regularly

- Writing appropriate materials to share with each government agency

- Conducting conference follow-up activities with each government agency.

6.2.3   Vocational Education

Rationale: Providing vocational education has proven very difficult for many implementing partners, resulting in it being dropped in most cases.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should undertake a brief inquiry into why this is so and identify ways in which the issue can be resolved—whether it be an increase in budget, implementing partner staffing, working more directly with appropriate ministries, or garnering extra support through partnerships with potential employers. The evaluation team believes that vocational education is a very important facet of the project and should not be allowed to fall by the wayside.

6.3   PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

6.3.1   Implementing Partner Support

Rationale: AIR/RECLISA needs to be more proactive in providing capacity-building support for project management.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should create and deliver a number of workshops to be implemented with each partner on Strategic Planning, Managing for Results, Charting Results, STS, Financial Management, Reporting Lessons Learned, and the like.[53]

6.3.2   Tracking the Work Status of Children

Rationale: The projects may require additional budgetary support to actively track the work status of children.

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[53] From the note cards filled out at the Regional Feedback Workshop, the country delegates requested the following training and sharing workshops: (1) budgeting; (2) financial management; (3) HR concerns about salary; (4) timesheets; (5) work status tracking (how it might be done in other countries); (6) sharing of psychosocial tools utilized in each project; and (7) sharing of life skills curricula with other partners before finalizing each curriculum in each country.

Recommendation:

- USDOL should inquire of partners how much additional funding is needed to track this information and then provide that amount.

- Juarez must revise the STS and provide any training necessary on the update.

6.3.3   Providing Psychosocial Support

Rationale: Many children have benefited from the strategies employed, yet not all children who need it are receiving it.

Recommendation:

- AIR/RECLISA should attempt to develop a "best practices" manual of different tools used by a range of different stakeholders in the region (see the soon-to-be-published UNICEF Swaziland manual, as well as the website http://www.repssi.org). Workshops should also be provided to empower implementing partners to address this need in children so that more of them can perform more effectively in school.

- Each implementing partner should try to create partnerships with government social service agencies, NGOs/CBOs, universities, and others, to make sure this element of the project is covered for children.

6.4   PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

6.4.1   Identification and Sharing of Lessons Learned

Rationale: The implementing partners are not fully cognizant of the programs their partners are implementing and have no reliable means of acquiring this information.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should extrapolate specific programmatic "successes" or "lessons learned" from each Technical Progress Report submission and share these items by e-mail with all partners (not just post them on the yahoo groups site, which may not be accessed as often as need be). Each of the items shared should then be presented at regular staff meetings of each partner so that it can be determine if what one partner is doing is applicable to another partner's activities.

6.4.2   Partnerships with Government Agencies and NGOs/CBOs

Rationale: Not all implementing partners have provided the full extent of capacity building to government agencies and NGOs/CBOs so that they are prepared to take over the project when the funding stops.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should develop closer relationships with each government and interested NGO/CBO to stress the regional importance of a focus on child labor. AIR/RECLISA should enter a direct dialog with governments and major CBOs/NGOs to help

expand their awareness, to share the lessons learned from each of the projects, and to prepare them further for taking over the project. National conferences are a good opportunity to do this, but only two remain.

6.4.3   Partnership with ILO/TECL

Rationale: Synergies are not being created between RECLISA and ILO/TECL.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should coordinate and share the collection of lessons learned so that implementing partners can be more proactive in providing on-the-ground information to ILO/TECL in how it can support RECLISA in advocating for policy changes and implementation of policy among government agencies.

6.4.4   Partnership with WFP

Rationale: Where appropriate, feeding programs need to be established to help children stay in school.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should explore, in coordination with partners, establishing a relationship between WFP and local implementing agencies/schools to ensure that children are fed daily. AIR/RECLISA should then facilitate the creation of an MOU for this relationship to be established.

6.4.5   Assistance in Creating Circles of Support/Care

Rationale: All of the children's needs in each country are not being fully met, partly because partnerships with appropriate agencies (governmental and nongovernmental) have not been established.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should undertake a "scan" of all national agencies (governmental and nongovernmental, including international NGOs) in each country involved in providing goods and services to vulnerable children. Each implementing partner should work with AIR/RECLISA to develop a strategy for how to bring these organizations and agencies into the child labor prevention field in terms of the provision of the goods and services OVC and others need to remain in or come back to school.

6.5 MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

6.5.1 Evaluating the Cost Effectiveness of the "Regional Approach"

Rationale: The regional approach is a pilot approach. This present evaluation is not mandated to carry out a detailed analysis of the financial aspects of the project, and, therefore, cannot evaluate to what extent the approach is cost-effective. Such an evaluation would be useful for both AIR and USDOL.[54]

Recommendation: USDOL should carry out an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the regional approach. The budget structure (costs for overhead, capacity building costs, personnel costs), which has been approved by USDOL, should also be evaluated. Such evaluation/cost-benefit analysis/audit is especially important because the fluctuation of the rand has necessitated important budget shifts.

6.5.2 Conference Follow-up

Rationale: There is a need for continuous follow-up with conference participants to capitalize on the achievements of the conference.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should maintain an active exchange with conference delegates, either through e-mail updates or visits, to assist them with implementing the declaration and resolutions that have been developed.

6.5.3 Financial Management

Rationale: There is considerable confusion among implementing partners on how to charge different expense items.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should provide consistent follow-up to any workshops on financial management provided to partners, and then it should provide follow-up workshops where there are gaps.

6.5.4 Managing for Results

Rationale: The reporting system is focused on activities rather than results.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA, through the Deputy Director (M&E) and the M&E Specialist, should develop a results-based managing system (perhaps similar to the one proposed in the South Africa Country Report), devise workshops, and deliver these with all implementing partners. Subsequently, all reporting done for the Technical Progress Reports should be results

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[54] AIR noted that "it is unfortunate that the [evaluation] team did not pursue such financial issues more systematically. A solid analysis of the actual costs of meeting USDOL and U.S. Government requirements (including technical, financial, and performance reporting as well as general contractual responsibilities) may have been useful for all parties concerned, including USDOL."

rather than activity focused. USDOL's feedback on these Technical Progress Reports should also be more results oriented.

6.6   SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

6.6.1   Exit Strategies

Rationale: No RECLISA implementing partner has devised an exit strategy.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should create a strategy to provide assistance to implementing partners in developing exit or handover strategies. AIR/RECLISA should then monitor the activities that will facilitate the handover (including all range of awareness- and capacity-building).

6.6.2   Resolving Confusion Between Child Labor and Child Work

Rationale: Considerable confusion exists with the definition and the application of these terms.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should attempt to generate written materials to share with all stakeholders regarding the difference between these two forms of work. Each implementing partner must then create culturally relevant materials (written and pictorial) to use in continuing awareness activities in each country. A budget must be provided to implementing partners for these additional activities.

6.7   AIR/RECLISA REGIONAL OPERATIONS

6.7.1   Increase Value Added of AIR/RECLISA Office

Rationale: AIR/RECLISA's activities focus on capacity building and report writing to support partners.

Recommendation: AIR/RECLISA should hold a strategic planning session during which it devises systems, outreach activities, and proactive support activities to help partners make the RECLISA project more sustainable and embedded in local governmental and nongovernmental operations. The nature of this outreach is described in Section 4.9.