



FINAL EVALUATION BRIEF | MAY 2022

FINAL EVALUATION OF RICHES PROJECT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Funded by the Department of Labor's Bureau for International Labor Affairs, the Reducing Incidence of Child Labor and Harmful Conditions of Work in Economic Strengthening Initiatives (RICHES) project was designed to address and prevent harmful child work within women-led enterprises.

USDOL commissioned Devtech Systems, Inc. to conduct an independent final performance evaluation of RICHES. Full report results and learning: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/evaluation_type/final_evaluation/Final-Performance-Evaluation-of-RICHES-Project-Final-Report-508-05262022.pdf

KEY RESULTS

OUTCOME 1: Increased understanding of child labor and acceptable conditions of work in the context women's economic empowerment (WEE) initiatives

- The pre-situational analysis (PSA), which assesses the intersection of child labor, harmful child work, and women's economic empowerment initiatives, served as a foundational document for understanding the contexts of harmful child work and developing the RICHES toolkit.

OUTCOME 2: Increased availability of tools to integrate child labor awareness and acceptable conditions of work into WEE initiatives

- The toolkit is available in digital formats on free open-source platforms, which removes barriers of cost and access that may have prevented organizations from utilizing and adopting the toolkit.

OUTCOME 3: Increased applicability, adaptability, and adoptability of tools to integrate child labor awareness and acceptable conditions of work into WEE initiatives.

- The toolkit is praised for its applicability primarily for the harmful child work framing, the assessment tools, and the context-responsive interventions in the pilot sites. In terms of adaptability, the phased "minimum package" approach and the flexibility to select tools based on each organization's needs and capacity are key enabling factors. The tool's adoptability is inherent to its open source/access feature.

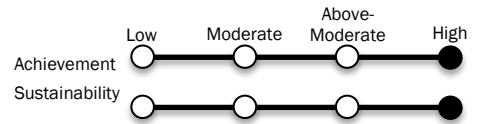
OUTCOME 4: Increased awareness and adoption of tools to integrate child labor awareness and acceptable conditions of work into WEE initiatives by a broad range of stakeholders.

- RICHES successfully disseminated the PSA and the toolkit. The project also developed communication channels and partnerships through which it deployed strategic outreach. In order to ensure the sustainable adoption of the toolkit, it is necessary to continue strong awareness initiatives with high-level actors.

DETAILED RESULTS

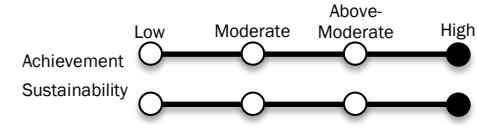
OUTCOME 1

RICHES produced a rigorous PSA that assesses the intersection of child labor, harmful child work, and WEE initiatives. The PSA was highly significant to developing the toolkit through the framework of harmful child work and targeted specifically to WEE. The PSA was formulated into three shorter, focused briefs (global, the Philippines, and El Salvador). Key PSA findings were presented in short videos, providing a medium that is quick and engaging to deploy. The PSA was universally described by interviewed stakeholders as a “foundational” document which is readily available and is anticipated to remain relevant in the medium- to long-term.



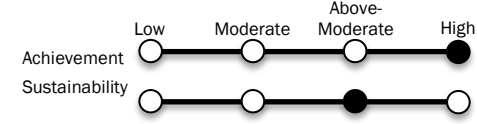
OUTCOME 2

13 modular guides and trainings and 46 unique tools were created at a high level of coherence with the PSA insights. Project implementers and experts express high satisfaction with the project’s responsiveness to country-level and stakeholder needs. The digitization of some tools and integration of data collection with open-source technology were responses to implementation constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By making the toolkit publicly available online and free of cost, RICHES eliminated a large barrier to organizations that could not have afforded a toolkit placed behind a paywall. The translation of the toolkit into additional languages further increases its availability to new stakeholders.



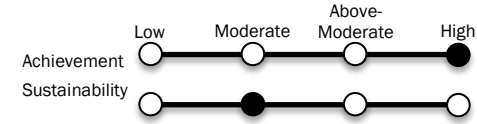
OUTCOME 3

Stakeholders praised the applicability of the toolkit primarily for the harmful child work framing, the assessment tools, and the context-responsive interventions in the pilot sites. In terms of adaptability, the phased “minimum package” approach and the flexibility to select tools based on each organization’s needs and capacity are key enabling factors. The tool’s adoptability is inherent to its open source/access feature as there are no fees nor access permissions required for organizations to integrate the materials into their capacity development and advocacy initiatives. While stakeholders are confident that the toolkit will continue to be relevant in the future, some limiting factors identified by stakeholders include resourcing challenges, such as lack of physical space and dedicated staff necessary to implement the toolkit, and the need for a larger sample size of pilots to gain further insight into whether the toolkit needs to be further refined, translated, or otherwise adapted to increase applicability in other contexts.



OUTCOME 4

The project successfully disseminated the PSA and the toolkit and implemented communication and outreach with strategic partners. Communication channels and partnerships to promote awareness and adoption of the tools post-project were also developed. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has diverted some stakeholders’ bandwidth and resources to new pandemic-related priorities, which was beyond the project’s power to control. While noting the ease with which the toolkit could be incorporated into their existing efforts, certain interviewed stakeholders shared they could not prioritize the toolkit as intended due to the urgency of new pandemic-related work.



Interviewed stakeholders from pilot organizations noted several factors that limit the sustainability of the tools, such as the importance of providing financial resources for WEE initiatives and government agencies to continue working on harmful child work, as this requires dedicated resources internally and active cooperation externally.

RICHES successfully engaged with higher-level actors and government groups (such as the Philippines Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippines Department of Trade and Industry) to promote boarder utilization of the toolkit. Engaging additional higher-level actors requires an advocacy strategy spearheaded by a single organization, which is a role Grameen had filled until the closing of the RICHES project.

PROMISING PRACTICES

This final performance evaluation identified the following promising practices:

1. Coherent articulation of learning inputs, assessments, and mitigating action and responses to harmful child work by stakeholder type to increase awareness and inspire concrete action toward achieving the project-level objective (integration of child labor issues into WEE).
2. Diversification of the types and modes of delivery of the toolkit to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Partnering with existing networks of organizations supporting WEE for leveraging reach and resources toward achieving the toolkit's adaption and adoption by the broadest possible stakeholders.
4. Government partnerships for high-impact policy-level adoption.

LESSONS LEARNED

This final performance evaluation identified the following lessons learned:

1. Increasing the understanding of child labor and acceptable conditions of work (ACW) in the context of WEE initiatives is most effective and relevant to stakeholders when framed through the lens of "harmful child work."
2. The flexibility of the toolkit to align with WEE (financing) organizations' capacities and needs encourages their buy-in and use of the tools.
3. Aspiring for the toolkit's adaptability at a global scale inevitably necessitates the toolkit be responsive to all contexts to meet stakeholders' expectations.
4. The project's successes were enabled by the interconnected, dynamic efforts of experts and implementers providing direct support, networks advocating for the toolkit's relevance, and organizations delivering the last-mile implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This final performance evaluation identified the following recommendations, organized according to the intended audience:

GRANTEE

1. Document the successful adaptive and adoptive strategies of the pilot organizations to help guide the work of new organizations implementing the toolkit.

USDOL and Grantee

2. Maximize opportunities for adoption of the toolkit in geographical areas and WEE networks that do not require new translations or context-specific nuances for the toolkit
3. Support the global network of experts, associations, and organizations to pursue future advocacy and provide direct technical support to new organizations interested in using the toolkit.
4. Follow-up on the advocacy relationships built with key high-level actors and expand to new high-level relationships to increase reach and potential impact.

EVALUATION METHODS

This performance evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The evaluation team conducted a desk review of programmatic documents provided by the Department of Labor, Grameen Foundation, and the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative. The team then conducted key informant interviews with 24 stakeholders involved in the project's implementation, review of tools, and piloting of the toolkit.

Funding for this evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor under contract number 47QRAA20D006X with DevTech Systems, Inc. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.