

FROM PROTOCOL TO PRACTICE: A BRIDGE TO GLOBAL ACTION ON FORCED LABOR

The Bridge Project

Grantee: International Labour Organization (ILO) | Project Duration: September 2015 – July 2023



PROJECT DETAILS

Award: Total funding as of FY23, \$18,745,138

Goal:¹ Build on the momentum that led to the adoption of the new Protocol and Recommendation No. 203 to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labor and improve countries' capacity to address forced labor through achievement of five intermediate objectives (IOs)

Countries: Malaysia, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Peru, and Uzbekistan

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

Assess the performance and achievements of the Bridge Project's goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes, implementation and management, and intended and unintended effects

Evaluation Fieldwork: External evaluation carried out from September 2022 – April 2023 using in-person data collection in Nepal and Niger and remote data collection in Malaysia, Mauritania, Peru and Uzbekistan

Conducted 150 key-informant interviews, 15 focus group discussions with grassroots beneficiaries and 195 online surveys with training participants

Respondents included project staff, key project partners, trainees, and representatives of national statistical institutes, labor ministries, academic institutions, and private sector organizations

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

ACHIEVEMENT

SUSTAINABILITY

IO 1 – Increased knowledge, awareness, and ratification of the ILO Protocol and Recommendation



High



Moderate

IO 2 – Improved and responsive national policies and/or action plans and/or legislation on forced labor with strong implementation, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms



Above Moderate



Above Moderate

IO 3 – Increased efforts to collect reliable data in order to carry out research and share knowledge across institutions at national, regional, and global levels



Moderate



Above Moderate

IO 4 – Workers' and employers' organizations actively support the fight against forced labor



Above Moderate



Low

IO 5 – Increased awareness and access to livelihood programs for victims of forced labor



Above Moderate



Moderate

¹ https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/projects/WCMS_445527/lang-en/index.htm



KEY PROMISING PRACTICES

Virtual learning and knowledge sharing meetings and webinars for project staff helped the project to learn and adapt

Project Liber8 Chatbot, piloted in Malaysia, could be important for reporting and referral of forced labor and human trafficking for frontline agencies

Tripartite regional consultations in Mauritania fostered partnerships with regional and local authorities leading to the expansion of project's social dialogue strategy

Incorporation of forced labor module in Nepal's National Labor Force Survey generates information to allow a more comprehensive understanding of the scale of forced labor

Integrated approach for addressing slavery through a range of services in Niger strengthened beneficiaries' ability to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve economic independence

Collaboration with national office for justices of peace and indigenous justice in Peru and training them on forced labor and referral mechanisms helped reach remote areas with critical information

Contextualization of ILO Toolkit for Journalists: Reporting on Forced Labour and Fair Recruitment to the limited freedom of press reality in Uzbekistan



KEY INSIGHTS FROM TRAINING PARTICIPANT PERCEPTION SURVEY

74% rated the training as either high or moderately high in increasing capacity to enforce forced labor laws, prevent forced labor, and assist victims of forced labor

Prosecutors, judges, public defenders, labor inspectors, and police were perceived as having **the highest increase in capacity** among targeted stakeholder groups

71% rated training as highly effective or moderately high effective at improving knowledge and awareness about national forced and child labor laws and legislations

92% rated training as realistic and of high or moderately high technical quality

83% believe they were able to apply or use new knowledge and skills gained as a result of the trainings

80% prefer face-to-face training or a combination of face-to-face and virtual training

81% believe content on the Bridge Project's e-learning online platform was relevant to enhance knowledge and skills on law enforcement, prevention and victim assistance



TRAININGS OFFERED UNDER THE BRIDGE PROJECT



Forced/child labor law enforcement, prevention, and victim assistance for law enforcement professionals such as police, judges, public defenders, and prosecutors



Communication strategy/media toolkit for reporting on forced/child labor and fair recruitment for media professionals (journalists)



Identifying and referring forced/child labor victims and cases for labor inspectors, employers, trade unions, and other NGOs



Awareness raising around forced/child labor issues for high-level government officials, parliamentarians, and politicians



RECOMMENDATIONS

For the next phase of the Bridge Project²

Develop a **detailed sustainability plan** that provides a clear roadmap to sustain key outputs and outcomes

Develop **effect level indicators** that measure the use or application of outputs at the outcome level

Reinstitute regular learning events with project staff and conduct **periodic country level performance assessments** to promote learning and continuous improvement in project performance

Provide training in the primary language of training participants and develop and implement an aggressive strategy to promote the array of available e-learning courses and materials

Collaborate with the ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative to identify potential recruitment agencies to work with to combat forced labor practices

For the ILO and other grantees

Build on the successes of the Bridge Project to continue to strengthen livelihoods in Niger through investments in training beneficiaries to strengthen skills and capacities, as well as provide equipment and inputs

For USDOL and Other Donors

Use the ILAB Global Accelerator Lab project to **provide technical and financial support to key stakeholders in Malaysia** to implement the National Action Plan for Forced Labor (NAPFL)

Streamline the technical progress report (TPR), so it contains only essential information required by the grants office and grants officer representative (GOR) to provide effective oversight of the project



LESSONS LEARNED

Global. Critical to regularly produce and post new content on websites and social media platforms to attract and engage audiences

Malaysia. Identifying and working with champions in key ministries helps ensure the institutionalization of capacity building tools and activities

Mauritania. Labor administration and criminal justice must work together to prevent labor violations from escalating into forced labor

Nepal. Needs assessment exercises should ensure that it fully assesses employment or income potential and determines social and cultural appropriateness of livelihood interventions

Niger. Critical to have a monitoring and evaluation function to oversee implementation of livelihood interventions through digital platforms for learning and accountability

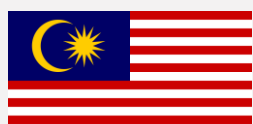
Peru. Strong participation of key government and non-government organizations in developing the national action plan created ownership and commitment to implement the plan

Uzbekistan. High level of governmental political will and motivation facilitated the elimination or near elimination of systemic forced labor in the cotton sector



Niger Woman Livelihood Intervention Participant

² ILO is beginning the implementation of the follow-on Bridge II Project in June 2023 to build on the progress made under the Bridge Project



MALAYSIA

BB Previously, no one really cared about forced labor. But with assistance from Bridge, we put forced labor on the national agenda with the action plan. However, we still need help with the implementation of the national action plan. *Government Representative* JJ

ACHIEVEMENTS

Adoption of key policies, such as the National Action Plan for Forced Labor, National Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking in Persons, Employment Act amendments (FL provisions and definitions), Worker's Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act amendments, and Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act amendments

Supported employers and worker organizations, through training and awareness-raising support for the Malaysia Employers Federation and Malaysia Trade Union Congress

Implemented key surveys and studies on forced labor, including the situation and gap analysis on laws, policies, programs and the ILO Forced Labour Convention; migration cost briefs on domestic work and plantations sector; advising on methodology of the employment survey on palm oil plantations

Successful ratification of the ILO Protocol on Forced Labor

Effective e-learning course for law enforcement agencies (Royal Malaysian Police, Department of Labour, Immigration Department, etc.) and institutionalization of e-learning courses for government agencies

CHALLENGES

Bridge Project implementation ended sooner than stakeholders thought it should have and the government and other stakeholders will require ILO continued support to effectively implement the NAPFL

Trade unions have limited capacity and will require on-going capacity building to be effective in continuing to implement activities against forced labor

LESSONS LEARNED

Champions in key ministries are crucial to facilitate acceptance of interventions and create ownership

Training is more effective if offered in Malay or combination of Malay and English and with the use of both international and national trainers

Readiness of government to address forced labor due to international pressure was key to the Bridge Project's success

Use of online applications for e-learning and webinars during COVID-19 pandemic were very effective and well received

Use of real-life short case studies modeled on experiences of women migrant workers made the training experience less theoretical and more realistic



CONTINUING PROGRESS IN MALAYSIA

With Funding from USDOL, ILO is implementing the **Global Accelerator Lab Project: Intensifying Action Against Forced Labor and Child Labor (GALAB)** in Malaysia

GALAB has a mandate to support the NAPFL as well as Alliance 8.7 activities

However, while ILAB staff believe GALAB can provide important support to the implementation of the NAPFL, some project staff are concerned that GALAB **might not have adequate resources** to provide all of the required support to effectively implement the plan



MAURITANIA

BB People do not have income so the ILO should focus on this because people cannot get out of poverty and are likely to return to forced labor or slavery situations.

NGO Representative

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Joint circular on the anti-slavery law from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense adopted in 2021

Drafts of collective agreements produced for the coastal artisanal fisheries, domestic employment sectors, and livestock (agro-pastoral) sectors

Regional tripartite consultations led to social dialogue strategy addressing fundamental labor rights in fisheries, livestock, and domestic worker sectors



Meïmoune Ould Mahmoud,
Forced Labor
Survivor

CHALLENGES

Reluctance of government to acknowledge the extent to which slavery exists, statistical survey to determine prevalence of slavery was not approved

Turnover of key influential personnel, labor minister who supported the project was replaced and subsequent ministers were less supportive of focus on FL

Strong stakeholder perception that **activity focus should have been on decent employment and income generating activities** to support forced labor victims

LESSONS LEARNED

Tripartite regional consultations with professional sectors at the local level that fostered partnerships with regional and local authorities and led to the project's social dialogue strategy

Demonstrated flexibility to change course when planned FL strategy proved to be unviable

Governments readiness to acknowledge workers vulnerability to FL is key for implementing similar interventions

Labor administration and criminal justice must work together to prevent labor violations from escalating into forced labor



CONTINUING PROGRESS IN MAURITANIA

Regional consultations led to the decision to focus on **Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW)** such as collective bargaining and freedom of association, linked to livelihood strategies in the fisheries, livestock, and domestic work sectors

New focus falls under the IO.4 (Workers' and employers' organizations actively support the fight against forced labor)

ILO **sought and received funding** from the US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and the US Embassy to **implement these interventions under two projects** that are currently being implemented and a third one to start in 2024



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Our prestige at home and at the community has increased and we are now respected.

Beneficiaries of Siraha and Saptari

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Conducted 2 surveys (National Labor Force Survey & Employment Relationship Survey) and 2 rapid assessments (on Haruwa-Charuwa and Freed-Haliyas) **in efforts to collect and share reliable data on forced labor**

3 International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) affiliated trade unions **conducted programs on forced labor** in three provinces



Shanti Devi, Nepal Livelihood Intervention Participant

CHALLENGES

Significant lag time between the end of training and when beneficiaries received livelihood support kits with equipment to support income-generating activities

Geographical spread of beneficiaries hindered smooth monitoring and provision of ongoing technical support on livelihoods interventions

Some livelihood intervention skills not appropriate for local circumstances – vegetable production training but unavailability of irrigation, no market for those trained in cooking

LESSONS LEARNED

Collaborating with other UN agencies on conducting joint research is cost effective and builds ownership towards the outcomes (Brick Kiln)

Arranging National Skills Testing Board certifications for livelihood trainees facilitated employment opportunities

Livelihood mapping key for determining social and cultural appropriateness of livelihood skills and aligning with market gaps and needs



LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS ENDLINE SURVEY RESULTS

71% of livelihood participants experienced an increase in their income

56% applied the skills/knowledge obtained from the skills trainings

63% started their own business

80% have their own income-generating activity of which **56%** are related to the skill training



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRIDGE II

Continue aggressive policy reform initiatives

Focus interventions on “haruwa-charuwa” in Madhesh Pradesh with policy, awareness raising, knowledge, social mobilization, and livelihood interventions during the next phase of the project



BB Before the project, we had no source of income. Now we have the means to fatten the sheep provided by the project using feed from feed breeding techniques and sell the animals and have more income, so we can take better care of our families. *Woman Beneficiary Tchintabaraden* 99

ACHIEVEMENTS

Forced labor study will contribute key data by providing estimates on the prevalence and characteristics of forced labor

“Another improvement we made was the way we collected data in Niger. We adjusted from paper survey to electronic data collection that allowed real time data analysis and results.” – *Bridge Project Staff*

As part of the follow-up activities from an ITUC forced labor event, National Trade Union Committee conducted **two follow-up meetings** with the Ministry of Labor and 5 telephone interviews with the Director General of Labor

CHALLENGES

“The distribution of kits and equipment was done **without any follow-up or maintenance support**, and some of the equipment **broke down** or became **unusable** after a short time. This has left us in a difficult situation, as we cannot afford to repair or replace the equipment on our own.” - *Woman Beneficiary Tchintabaraden*

Beneficiaries had limited access to equipment and inputs for production and due to administrative delays did not receive livelihood kits until nearly 1 year after training

Livestock-focused activities did not work well because veterinary services and other inputs were not available and livestock were imported, making them susceptible to disease

LESSONS LEARNED

Successful model for sensitizing women victims of slavery about their rights and legal processes and promoting the rights of victims of slavery

Mobilizing the actors of the criminal system and parents of slaves to address slavery

Active participation of justice actors, community relays, slavers, and relatives of victims was decisive for the success of the project



Niger Woman Livelihood Intervention Participant



LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS ENDLINE SURVEY RESULTS

50% of livelihood participants experienced an increase in their income

78% of beneficiaries reported that they applied the skills/knowledge obtained from the skill training and **23%** of these beneficiaries started their income-generating-activity after the training

71% of beneficiaries reported positive changes in their lives due to the training (improved income, living conditions, social relations, education for children and increased self-confidence)



PERU

BB It was a very good idea for the Bridge Project to hire PP
Peruvian Catholic University (PUCP) to conduct training on
forced labor. PUCP is one of the most respected
universities in Peru so receiving a certification from PUCP
motivated us and made us very proud.

Training Participant

ACHIEVEMENTS

Key policies, plans and legislations adopted or ratified, including:

- National Action Plan to Combat Forced Labor
- Ratification of 2014 Forced Labor Protocol
- Legislative Decree No. 1323 (family and gender violence)
- Approval of the Protocol of the Public Prosecutor's Office for the performance of prosecutors in the prevention, investigation and punishment of forced labor cases

Institutionalization of on-line forced labor training within several key institutions including the justice ministry, national migration office, national labor inspectorate, and the national police

Collaboration with GLOBAL.G.A.P. to incorporate forced labor indicators in the certification process and create awareness

CHALLENGES

Ministries require assistance to implement policies, plans and Inter-agency collaboration and information sharing is weak

Political turmoil and frequent changes of key personnel undermined effectiveness

LESSONS LEARNED

Readiness of the government to address forced labor was key to project success

Strong participation of key government and NGOs in developing the national action plan created ownership and commitment to implement the plan

Non-traditional partners such as the justices of peace and the national police have helped increase the effectiveness of the Bridge Project

Communication strategy using creative approaches was effective, such as use of drama, drawing, role plays, radio programs, audio visual materials and assisting Ministry of Education in working with students on forced labor



CONTINUING PROGRESS IN PERU THROUGH BRIDGE II

Focus will be on supporting a set of livelihood interventions for forced labor victims that were delayed and never fully implemented in the first phase

More specifically, the project will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Labor and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) to: (1) promote livelihood for people identified as victims of forced labor, (2) monitor the implementation of the pilot for labor reintegration of victims of forced labor

Provide technical support to the government for the implementation of the national action plan to combat forced labor and the sustainability of gains made under first phase of the Bridge Project



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRIDGE II

Focus strengthening inter-governmental agency coordination, communication, and information sharing to combat forced labor

Analyze key lessons learned, challenges, and success factor from the livelihood interventions in Nepal and Niger and apply these learnings to the livelihood strategy in Peru



UZBEKISTAN

BB We do not really have a problem with forced labor like before. The government worked hard to eliminate it. I would like to have training on other topics to help me conduct inspections like occupational safety and health. JJ

Labor Inspector



ACHIEVEMENTS

Stakeholders surpassed project training post-test score targets

- Overall, post-test score target of 60%, but 71% achieved
- For training for directors of regional labor inspectorates, average post-test score among 14 participants was 75%
- For media kit training for journalists, average post-test score among 22 journalists was 91%
- 56 labor inspectors trained on soft skills that can be used during labor inspections, with average pre-training score of 41% and the average post-training score of 80%

Media training toolkit and media-friendly glossary were adopted to Uzbekistan context



CHALLENGES

A majority of labor inspectors interviewed by the evaluation team **believe forced labor has been eliminated in the cotton sector** and want to shift focus from forced labor to other labor inspection issues

Labor inspectors need permission of business ombudsperson to inspect non-state-owned enterprises, which is a lengthy process that decreases effectiveness of inspection

Labor inspectorate is weak and has insufficient number of labor inspectors so they cannot effectively inspect establishments where forced labor might exist



LESSONS LEARNED

Contextualization of ILO Toolkit for Journalists: Reporting on Forced Labor and Fair Recruitment by including the ILO Conventions ratified by Uzbekistan, national legislation on forced labor, and Uzbek news articles worked well

Strong governmental political will and motivation facilitated the elimination or near elimination of systemic forced labor in the cotton sector

E-learning tools require facilitation by an experienced trainer to increase their effectiveness



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRIDGE II

Address the needs of labor inspectors by incorporating inspection areas important to labor inspectors such as occupational safety and health and fundamental principles of rights at work with its forced labor capacity building interventions and activities

Determine why more trained journalists have not developed media products through informal inquiry to ascertain the reasons that more journalists have not written articles or developed other media products to help increase awareness of forced labor

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