

Stop Child Labour's Management Response to the External Evaluation of the Out of Work Programme (2014 – 2017)

May 2017

Introduction

In October 2016, the Stop Child Labour coalition commissioned an external evaluation of its 'Out of Work, In to School' programme, that ran from May 2014 to April 2017 and is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim of the programme was to establish child labour free zones using an area-based approach in Asia, Africa and Latin-America, and to mobilize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and companies to actively address child labour in their full production and supply chains in order to contribute to the creation of child labour free zones and child labour free supply chains. To further support this process and achieve multiplier effects the programme also included a Northern component of lobby and advocacy and public campaigning to mobilise policy makers, companies and consumers to be part of the solution.

The objective of the evaluation was to reflect on the results, implementation, and design of the "Out of Work" programme and to provide the stakeholders with recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the results of the programme. The evaluation team was also asked to identify recommendations for further upscaling and/or adjustment or innovation of the Stop Child Labour approach if possible and necessary. For the evaluation a selection was made of 4 different case studies (3 in India, 1 in Uganda) and an in-depth field study of the projects in Mali, to reflect the diversity of the activities and projects. Also the lobby and advocacy component of the programme in the Netherlands was evaluated as well as the relationship with and expectations and needs of SCL partners engaged in this programme.

Stop Child Labour considers the overall quality of the evaluation report to be good. The evaluation provides many valuable recommendations. These recommendations are useful and relevant for both the coalition members as well as the SCL local partners. SCL found in particular useful the recommendations for its programme and activities from a business perspective, especially since SCL will be working more intensively together with companies and CSR initiatives. It appears that many of these lessons have already been taken up and/or will be further incorporated in the next programme. We agree that some activities could certainly be further intensified, structured and more focused in the future. The evaluation gives some very concrete ideas on how to deal with this.

Main conclusions

The evaluation concludes that overall the Stop Child Labour coalition has been very successful in effectively setting up child labour free zones around the world, thereby significantly reducing child labour and increasing school attendance of children in these zones. Furthermore the evaluation confirms that the interventions have not only led to impacts concerning child labour and education but have also been influential in a larger sense ('the broader landscape') in dealing with the root causes of child labour. Other impacts that have been identified by the evaluation team relate to improved social cohesion, improved health and safety, improved wages of adults, improved health, and in establishing a social norm in the community that no child should work and all children must go to school. The evaluation also stressed the flexibility and effectiveness of the SCL approach to tackle child labour in areas

with a lot of migration as well in urban settings. Furthermore the evaluation team noted much evidence of replication and spin-off effects from ongoing successes of the child labour free zones.

Concerning the collaboration with CSR initiatives and companies, the evaluation concludes that the companies involved in the child labour free zones are to be seen as frontrunners, as these companies accept that there are no quick-fix solutions to eliminate child labour. They are willing to invest in developing a long term solution to not only remove children from working in their supply chains but also remediate their situation by getting them into school. The evaluation confirms that SCL has contributed to CSR initiatives and companies in the Netherlands, Europe and at international level to adopt their policies and improve their practices in support of the elimination of child labour and the creation of child labour free zones. The evaluation identified good potential for more positive changes in the coming years.

There where it concerns lobby and advocacy activities, effects in southern countries are seen mainly at local level in liaising with public authorities and other stakeholders, where the collaboration and lobby activities enhance local ownership, sustainability and potential for upscaling the child labour free zone activities. Also in the Netherlands and at European level the SCL coalition has been effective in its lobby and advocacy and many stakeholders see the added value of SCL partners as experts on effective lobby and advocacy with regards to child labour. The evaluation does see room for further improvement with regards to the better external communication on the embeddedness and relationship of child labour within a community based approach and within a supply chain approach.

Finally, the evaluation identifies the strength of the local SCL partners as a strong factor of success of effective child labour free zones. Without exception the evaluation team found the local partner organisations (NGO or union) to be highly capable, motivated and effective in working at community level, including collaboration and lobby and advocacy work at local level with public actors. A few areas were identified by the local SCL partners themselves that could be improved further: a) engaging with companies, especially to develop a business case; b) engagement with national level public agencies; c) skills to support teachers.

Recommendations and SCL Follow-up

The evaluation produced an elaborate set of recommendations organized under four main headings: Deepening, Scaling, Synergy and Capacity building. A selection of the main recommendations are presented below along with an explanation on in what way the recommendations will be dealt with by SCL.

Deepening

- 1) Although the evaluation team found overwhelming evidence of successful child labour free zones with effects at many different level, they do stress the need for further improvement of systematic data collection. The evaluation team stresses the importance of having a set of key performance indicators that capture the main impacts and that show the cost-effectiveness of the CLFZ approach. Also systematic data collection, analysis and reporting on these indicators based on baseline surveys, monitoring and end-line evaluations can be improved. SCL will explore the possibilities of further linking existing and new monitoring data to cost-effectiveness and will increase the use of quantitative and percentage data.
- 2) The evaluation calls for a more specific distinction between the different phases of developing a CLFZ, distinguishing between initiation, development, finalization and

maintenance and spin-off phases with different levels of intensity. These 4 phases together have a life span of 8 to 12 years. The evaluation suggests that making this distinction will help to develop a more concrete idea of results to be expected in the different phases, the expected duration and the required financial and human resources. This information is particularly when dealing with the private sector partners. Although the activities developed by SCL are always based on an elaborate baseline/context study identifying the necessary activities to move towards a child labour free zones, and the intensity and scale of these activities are based upon the pathway of change foreseen, a systematic distinction between these different phases is not yet made. In the future SCL will aim to organize results and planned projects more according to the different phases as identified by the evaluation.

Upscaling

- 3) The evaluation shows very positive results with regard to the child labour free zones. However, it does stress the importance of upscaling to take place once the child labour free zones have been established. There is need to develop an upscaling strategy in order to achieve greater impact and reach out to the entire supply chain and hot-spot areas for companies. Upscaling can start by identifying and strengthening already ongoing replication and copying processes and by setting up strategic partnerships with leading companies, to bring about changes in targeted sectors. SCL has started developing upscaling strategies and approaches in different areas and will continue to do so – and scale up its intensity – under future programmes, while also exploring and identifying enabling company business models for this.
- 4) In communication to companies, the evaluation recommends to develop communication and promotion materials on the establishment of a CLFZ that are structured as an ‘investment proposition’, to consider support and adoption of the CLFZ approach. This will require the above-mentioned linking of results to costs. A start has already been made under the current programme in communicating SCL in this matter to individual companies. A more systematic approach in this regard will be explored.

Synergy

- 5) The evaluation stresses that there is further improvement possible with regard to creating more synergy between activities at project (local) level and at programme level. Appointing a sector coordinator per sector can furthermore assure effective mutual exchange of information, between community-level work on CLFZs, supply chain actors and market demands, and policy work at national and international level relevant to the supply chain. In the following programme SCL will establish firmer links between sector relevant activities in the global North and South, coordinated through sector coordinators.

Capacity building

- 6) Local SCL partners identified improvement of skills in a few areas: skills in building up relations and engagement with companies, from the perspective of establishing partnerships, with guidance on information sharing with companies; skills on policy analysis, policy lobby and advocacy, and its relevance for working on a CLFZ; skills on platforms for advocacy at national level and approach for demonstration of CLFZ pilots; skills on M&E and baseline and evaluation studies, as well as data analysis to draw firm conclusions and acquire factual information on CLFZ progress. For those

partners that will continue under the next programme of SCL, a needs assessment will be done to identify in what area necessary skills need to be enhanced. For those partners that will not continue under new funding, it will be assessed to what extent final support is needed in order to ensure sustainable results. More in general, broader linking and learning between existing local SCL partners and new partners is a key component of the SCL approach and will continue to exist under future programmes.