MID TERM REVIEW 2016

Synthesis Report

INDIA

MALI

UGANDA

ZIMBABWE

October, 2016

1. Introduction

In 2016 a Mid Term Review was carried out in 4 countries: Mali (February), India (March), Uganda (May) and Zimbabwe (September). The main objective of the Mid Term Review was to assess whether the projects were on the right track in achieving their targets and whether any action should be taken to address any issues that may impede achieving the set objectives. See ToR for the Mid Term Review, attached as annex. The projects were all at different stages in the implementation process, however they all have the same date as project end. Therefor the issue of sustainability was also an important aspect that was taken into account during the visits: how do partners ensure that a sustainable basis has been created by the project end.

In total 14 different projects were reviewed. There are elaborate country reports for each of the 4 visited countries. These reports are for internal use, but can be made available on request. This synthesis report aims to point out a few common findings and recommendations for the future. During each of the MTR visits, a Most Significant Change Story exercise was also conducted. A synthesis of this exercise and all the stories that have been collected through this exercise will be presented in a separate report.

2. Main findings

Children in School/Out of Work

❖ Nearly all partners are well on track towards achieving the intended results. These partners have managed to ensure significant increases in the number of children going to school, and mobilize community committees that are responsible for tracking children out of school.

❖ Intrinsic ownership by the community of the social norm that 'no child should work, every child must be in school' is clearly more existent in areas that have been involved in the programme for a longer period of time. Project areas that have had no earlier involvement with SCL/similar child labour or protection programmes clearly need a lot more awareness raising in the final year of the project to establish a firm basis for the child labour free zone.

❖ Bridge schools are a very effective way to re-integrate out-of-school children (back) into school. The way these bridge schools are organized differ per context to cater for the needs of the children attending to ensure they can be mainstreamed into school within a certain period of time. In some areas the bridge schools that were set up by the project team are no longer necessary as all the children in the area are in school. However, not in all situations, bridge schools are a necessary or feasible solution for mainstreaming children into school. In rural areas where out of school children are very dispersed making it difficult for them to all attend the same bridge school, children that have been withdrawn from child labour may receive extra individual support either outside or during school hours to catch up to their age-appropriate level of schooling (e.g. in Chipinge, Zimbabwe). In areas where school enrolment is extremely low, the schools adjust the level of schooling to the children in the classrooms (for example in Budphura, India).

❖ Although all partners have defined criteria for identifying children at risk of dropping out, the focus in many projects seems to lie more on the out-of-school children. There are sometimes also challenges in ensuring sufficient capacity at school level to monitor (and

document) children at risk of dropping out. In some cases this has been solved by providing some extra support for 'focal point teachers' in charge of monitoring. This will need to receive extra attention once the programme comes to an end, to ensure that this monitoring takes place also after the project ends.

Child-friendly environments

❖ In all contexts partners have contributed to making schools more child friendly environments and increasing the attractiveness of the schools. This has been done either by contributing to the organization of extra-curricular activities such as games, sports and school clubs, or by adding educational volunteers to the schools or by conducting teacher trainings that are more focused on the rights of the child.

❖ In areas where only the teachers unions are present, the teacher trainings alone and engaging children in extra-curricular activities such as dance and drama can already have a great impact in the motivation and engagement of children and their parents in schooling. While on the other hand in CLFZ where NGOs and companies/CSR activities work, the teachers unions can make a significant change with complementing the activities in the schools in and around the CLFZ.

Decent work

❖ In project contexts where partners have collaborated with companies and workers union's from the start of the project, the link with improving overall working conditions and eradicating child labour clearly exists (see projects in Uganda and India). In project contexts where these linkages have not been established firmly from the start, the link is less present and still to be further strengthened.

❖ Improving working conditions happens through extensive lobby and collaboration with companies. Mapping data and concrete information on the situation of working conditions and number of workers in need of improvement in working conditions helps to strengthen the lobby. Lobby is done through workers unions (e.g. BWI) but not exclusively, in some case the implementing NGO/CBO is in charge of the lobby for better working conditions (e.g. SAVE, Manjari).

❖ There is also evidence from India (Budhpura) that due to stronger monitoring of the workplace, children were being banned from the production area and being replaced by (young) adults from neighbouring areas seeking employment opportunities. An additional benefit has been that the replacement of work previously done by children, by adults has led to an increase in production levels as well.

CSR activities

❖ Both in India and Uganda partners have been very successful in establishing links with large companies, and successfully convincing these partners of the complementary role they have to play in establishing child labour free zones. In Mali collaborations with large scale companies are yet to be further developed, although local producers and entrepreneurs in

the child labour free zones are included and take their responsibility in creating and strengthening the child labour free zones.

❖ The collaboration with companies takes on different forms. This can be by: actively tracking the presence of children in the production area, developing improvement plans with families that are using child labour, funding school infrastructure/school materials, engaging in awareness raising campaigns and motivating others to actively abandon the use of child labour in their production areas.

❖ When working in a supply chain project it is very important to take time to build up trust between the company/CSR initiative, NGO and/or unions. For a company it is very difficult to understand the area based approach, as they are initially more concerned with their own product and the families in those businesses. The child rights approach is not their core business and time and some persuasiveness is required to start a pilot CLFZ as a learning point.

❖ Setting up a fruitful collaboration with a company/CSR initiative also requires a prudent approach. Baseline studies showing a high number of child labour in the production area of the involved company should be communicated carefully toward the company. An accusing attitude will not lead to an effective partnership as the company will feel the need to take on a defensive stance instead of looking at opportunities to solve the problem (see case Zimbabwe).

Lobby & Advocacy

❖ The engagement of local authorities in the activities at the field level is done by practically all partners. In some cases partners have been successful in engaging local authorities to the extent that they have contributed to school infrastructure and awareness raising activities in other communities. Lobby activities at a national level has deserved less attention up until now, with the exception of Uganda. This also has to do with lack of clear collaborations structures of the SCL partners at national level (see below).

❖ Lobby and advocacy activities requires a strong country leader who has sufficient experience with the SCL approach and therefor is accepted by partners as a natural leader of the lobby and advocacy strategy. Tensions between partners in who is taking the lead in these activities have led to a standstill in many cases, which needs maximum attention in the last year.

❖ Indications that the achieved results will be sustainable can already be seen in several project contexts, through the following aspects:
  o Active engagement of local and international entrepreneurs/companies that play an active role in condemning child labour as well as tracking children out of school or present in the workplace
  o Unions that have integrated child rights awareness and tracking of children in their core business
  o Local authorities that actively raise awareness on the importance of children to go school and ensure that accessibly of education improves in their areas.

❖ Snowball effects (i.e. effects of the child labour free zone spreading beyond the initial intervention area) are as of yet only seen in those areas that have had one or more years of extra support before the start of the "Out of Work"-programme. This shows that in order for the child labour free zones to spread to other areas, a significant time investment is crucial.

Coordination, Management and M&E

❖ Coordination with different SCL partners in 1 country requires time to be set up. In some countries coordination was more formalized – such as in India –, in some countries (Uganda) collaboration between partners had not been formalized with no one having a formal responsibility to bring the partners together, led to limited and more ad hoc exchange between the different partners. Even in countries where budget was allocated to a specific partner for convening and exchanging between the SCL partners, it took time to decide on clear responsibilities and a common vision on how to move forward (India, Zimbabwe and Mali).

❖ Collaborations between NGO's, companies and teachers unions in the child labour free zones work best when there is a clear distinction between the roles and activities that each partner will play in the given community. It should be clear to the community members that all partners come from the same programme and share the same vision. In some areas different strategies and lack of presentation as 1 team has led to confusion in the project areas.

❖ The collection of data seems to be running quite smoothly in all contexts. Grasping the M&E reporting system took time, but is now being understood well by most partners, leading to more reliable numbers and data.

❖ All partners have their own interpretation of how to track children in and out of school, based on local structures and already existing systems that can be built upon. Not in all cases a clear exit strategy exists on how to transfer these tracking/tracing systems to actual community volunteers and/or local authorities.

3. Recommendations for the future

❖ Not all areas are appropriate for developing a child labour free zones. There should be a more thorough check to see if all elements that should be in place in the area identified to work towards a child labour free zone, are indeed in place. Possibly new elements should be added.

❖ Important to identify a key person who is in charge of coordinating the SCL partners at country level. In all countries the SCL partners had trouble in identifying a key person leading the country level team. Therefor national level sharing of experiences and activities and external communication to third parties as well as lobby activities have not been as effective as they could have been in the case of a clearly appointed person for this from the start.

❖ Better monitoring of the causal relation between decent work and less children working. We do see progress in improving working conditions as well in a reduction in children working and examples of linkages between the two. However, the direct causal relation between the two is not something that has been measured in a structural manner in all project contexts. In Tiripur, there are plans to link baseline data on working conditions of workers participating in Workers Education Groups, to changes in education status of their children. The experiences with this analysis can be used for improving the monitoring of the causal link for other projects in the future.

❖ There is more ground to be won in terms of working together with certification schemes/standards. Even though the perspectives may be different, common ground can be found. It would be good to identify from the start of the projects possible certification schemes/standards that work in the area and together focus on building strong resource agencies that can be employed by the private sector for consultancies or trainings after project ends.

❖ Stronger focus on children at risk is required to make sure that those children continue their education as well as the monitoring of the children at risk.

❖ Stronger focus is also required to improve the school infrastructure and quality of education as in some projects we see real obstacles to properly mainstream children. More lobby and advocacy on quality of education at District and National level is also required.