

Project on Converging against Child Labour: Support for India's Model

Background of Convergence Project

The 2001 Census estimates there are 12.6 million children (between the ages of 5 to 14 years) engaged in economic activities, either as marginal or main workers. The causes of child labour include poverty, lack of access to quality education, gender discrimination, large family size among others. Children work in a number of occupations, many of them harmful to their physical, psychological and moral well-being. During the last two decades, the Government of India has put into place an enabling environment for the elimination of child labour. This includes policy and legislative measures as well as schemes and programmes launched in conjunction with state governments, partners including NGOs and international bodies such as the ILO.

The Convergence Project was developed in response to a need articulated by partners. It has been increasingly felt that Elimination of Child Labour needs concerted action on the part of several Ministries and Departments and Social Partners. The Project would seek to build on the good practices and lessons learnt from previous child labour projects implemented by the Government of India and the ILO and attempt to develop a holistic and replicable model for Elimination of Child Labour.

The model further calls for:

- Building on existing structures, schemes and programmes rather than establishing new ones. This would require action to complement features of major national programmes like the NCLP, SDIS, SSA, NREGS, poverty alleviation and health programmes and ensure that their benefits impact child labourers and their families.
- A family centered approach, where educational rehabilitation of the child is accompanied by the economic upliftment of the family.

Geographical Coverage

The Project would be implemented in two districts each:

- Bihar (Katihar and Sitamarhi)
- Gujarat (Surat and Vadodara)
- Jharkhand (Ranchi and Sahibganj)
- Madhya Pradesh (Jabalpur and Ujjain)
- Orissa (Cuttack and Kalahandi)

Objective of the project

The Development Objective of the project is to contribute to the prevention and elimination of hazardous child labour, including trafficking and migration of children for labour.

Strategies

- Establish long-term prevention strategies for coordination and institutional strengthening, education and training, enhancing family livelihoods, community empowerment, enforcement, awareness raising and child labour monitoring and tracking;
- Strengthen linkages between national, state and district levels and within each of these levels;
- Strengthen capacities of partners and community-based organisations to work for the elimination of child labour;
- Test important interventions for identifying and protecting children at risk of being trafficked or forced to migrate for labour;
- Refine the model through research, knowledge sharing, networking and media campaigns.

Expected outcomes

- An effective Convergence-based model for prevention and elimination of child labour, including trafficking/migration of children for work, demonstrated in two districts in each of five States.
- State-level capacities to coordinate action against child labour and support converging interventions at district level have been enhanced.
- A strengthened enabling environment for the prevention and elimination of child labour has been in place at the National level to take the convergence model to scale.
- Workers and employers' organization developed capacities to actively participate and promote the convergence model at district, state and national levels.

Partners

- Government Partners: Ministry of Labour and Employment; Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Department of Elementary Education; Ministry of Rural Development; Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation; Ministry of Women and Child Development; Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Railways.
- Social Partners: Employers (CIE comprising AIOE, EFI, SCOPE and sectoral business associations); Workers Organizations (Five major Central Trade Unions: AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS, INTUC and affiliates at state and district levels), NGOs and Civil Society Organizations; Media

Institutional Framework

The National Steering Committee (NSC) established within the framework of the MOU between the Government of India and the ILO will provide policy advice and guidance for project implementation. The NSC is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment and has representatives from Government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations, and non-governmental organizations. An Inter-Ministerial Project Review Committee headed by Joint Secretary (Child Labour), MOLE will periodically review and monitor the progress of the Project and ensure effective coordination among the relevant government departments. The progress of project implementation at State and district levels, will be monitored by the State project Steering Committee (SPSC) of the respective project states. At the district level, the project would function under the guidance of the District Collector, who is also Chairman of the District level Child Labour Project Society.

Target Beneficiaries

- Direct Beneficiaries: 19,000 children (5-14) withdrawn and prevented from hazardous work and provided a range of educational and pre-vocational training opportunities, and their rehabilitation monitored and tracked.
- Indirect Beneficiaries: 29,000 children to indirectly benefit from capacity building of institutions, awareness raising.
- In addition, 2000 adolescents (14+) from NCLP schools provided opportunities for skills development.
- 5,000 families to be linked with activities for their economic upliftment.

Duration

The Project is approved through 2013.

Donor

The Convergence Child Labour project is funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). US \$ 6.85 million has been committed to the project. The project would benefit from in kind contribution from the Government of India.