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IDS Policy Briefs

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University of Nairobi

POLICY BRIEFS



Mapping Best Practice in Child Labour

02 APR 2009

INSTITUTE OF
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

By

Isabela Kambua Munandi

Introduction

The Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, is collaborating with International Labour Organisation – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) to provide intellectual input and profiling, through a research and dissemination approach for the child labour policy domain in the country. This Policy Brief is a contribution to bringing into perspective a common understanding on best practice and how it can be applied by actions such as the National Plan of Action for Time Programme on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NPA). The input is from a rigorous review of literature.

Kenya Government Efforts in the Fight against Child Labour

In 1992, the recognition of the seriousness of child labour to the social and economic fabric of the country, led the Government of Kenya (GoK) to accept to work with the ILO-IPEC programme on the elimination of child labour. This government has also ratified several international instruments aimed at preventing and eliminating Worst Forms of Child Labour and, ultimately, child labour in the country (GoK, 2006). The government has as well made efforts to translate the ratified international instruments into law and practice (GoK, 2006; ILO-IPEC, 2004a; Aduda *et al.*, 2005; ANPPCAN 2005). However, despite encouraging results over the years, acknowledged is that there is need to scale up (Omosa *et al.*, 2004; Njoka *et al.*, 2006). Against this, the government has put in place a national framework (National Plan of Action for Time Bound Programme on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour - NPA) that provides direction and purpose with a view

to effectively mainstreaming child labour issues in national development (GoK, 2004; IDS, 2005).

In implementing the NPA, continuous efforts are to be made to identify and document lessons learnt and good practices. The continuous efforts of identifying and documenting lessons learnt and good practices are lauded globally as a best practice for the significant reason that they provide a feedback, that when properly managed, enriches institutions' efforts in creating desired impact. But what are lessons learnt, good practice, best practice and a practice? How do we identify a lesson learnt and a good practice?

The relevance of discussing best practice is twofold: firstly is to bring out a common understanding on general definitions as regards to lessons learnt, good practice and best practice; and, secondly, to come up with a guide that would be used in determining lessons learnt and good practice. This is prompted from an identified need to come up with: a) a clear distinction especially between the terms good practice and best practice; and (b) a consolidated list of criteria that would guide in measuring good practices and lessons learnt.

Definition of Concepts

In general, this report defines *lessons learnt* as concepts, processes or activities that influence the attainment of the overall objective. These lessons learnt include, whether in part or full, a practice's strengths and weaknesses (ANPPCAN, 2005; ILO-IPEC, 2005). *Good practices* (also referred to as effective or working practices) are defined as concepts, processes or activities that are particularly innovative towards the successful achievement of the overall objective. A good practice can be anything that works, whether in full or in part. Relatively, good practices can be classified into three levels:

Level 1: Innovative Practices: Practices at this level may not be substantiated by data or formal evaluation, but they have actually been tried and a strong empirical case can be made.

Level 2: Successfully Demonstrated Practices: Practices at this level have been demonstrably successful in one setting, location or situation. Although this practice is localised, it has characteristics potentially transferable to other settings or situations.

Level 3: Replicated Good Practices: Practices at this level have demonstrably worked in many locations or situations (e.g. across countries, projects, sectors or different settings addressed by the same project – e.g. in different communities or with different groups).

Source: Murray et al, 2003

Best practice covers anything that works, whether fully or in part, and that provides useful lessons learnt (IFRC, 2004). In definition, it is a management idea which asserts that there is a concept, process or activity that is more effective towards the achievement of the overall objective than any other concept, process or activity (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_Practice). The significance on the concept of best practice is that it does not commit institutions to one inflexible, unchanging practice. Instead, it is a philosophical approach based around continuous learning (feedback, reflection and analysis of what works or does not work and why) and continuous

improvement (IFRC, 2004; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_practice). Generally, a practice can be a project, programme, policy-level activity or one element of an activity. It can be small or large (Murray et al, 2003).

Relevance of the three concepts

The relevance of the three concepts, (lessons learnt, good practice and best practice), is that a practice has been tried and, from the resulting experience, it is possible to determine if that practice has worked well and under what conditions. From the information acquired, it is possible to consider whether to adopt or avoid the practice or, how to build upon or overcome the practice.

Documentation of Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

The documentation of lessons learnt and good practices involves a rigorous exercise that initially entails review of reports aimed at identifying: a) a practice; b) objectives of the practice; c) stakeholders in the practice; d) strategies applied by the practice to attain its goals; e) accomplishments of the practice; f) the practice's challenges; g) general concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the attainment of the practice's objectives; and, h) outstanding concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the attainment of the practice's goals (Chutha, 2005; Munandi, 2005). The process of identifying concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the

Table: A Guide to Identifying a Good Practice

Accessibility: Is the practice within easy reach of the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders? Is the practice straightforward or uncomplicated to the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders? Are the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders comfortable with the practice? Explain.

Effectiveness: Has the selected practice influenced or contributed toward the achievement of the overall objective? What are the verifiable indicators? Explain.

Efficiency: Has the selected practice influenced or contributed toward the achievement of the overall objective with a minimum expenditure of available resources (human, financial, material and time)? Explain.

Ethical Soundness: Does the practice follow principles of social and professional conduct? Is the practice consistent with ILO Labour Standards and Conventions? Explain.

Influence on national legislation and policy: Has the selected practice been instrumental in positively influencing national legislation or policy? Explain.

Innovativeness: What is special about the practice in terms of achieving the overall objective? What strategies, initiatives and resources have been introduced over and above those provided in the initial work plan of the practice so as to enable: Provision of efficient and effective delivery of services; and, Continuation over the medium to long term basis?

Participatory: Are the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the practice? Explain. For example, were the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders considered at the design stage? Were the target beneficiaries and stakeholders considered at the implementation stages of the practice? How else are the target beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the practice, directly or indirectly?

BN 282007

attainment of a practice's objectives is undertaken basing on a guide (as is discussed in more detail below). Following the rigorous review of reports, a process of consultation with implementers and beneficiaries is undertaken with the aim of validating or verifying the information acquired (Chutha, 2005; Munandi, 2005).

Determining a Good Practice

The table below presents a guide to determining a good practice. Based on this guide, during the planning stage of the identification process, discussion on a scoring system aimed at determining a good practice should be held. Relatively, the scoring system should include the minimum number of criteria that would declare a practice as a good practice. In general, the minimum number of criteria used in establishing a good practice, as is with reports reviewed, is two. Discussions on a scoring system are conducted in recognition of the fact that no practice can fulfil all the 12 criteria as described in the table: *A Guide to Identifying a Good Practice*. In addition, the scores are useful in facilitating decisions as to which practices to adopt, build upon or avoid.

Promotion of innovative internal and external linkages:

Has the selected practice been effective and efficient in facilitating innovative collaboration, networking and integration of activities that contribute towards attainment of overall objective? Explain.

Relevance: Is the practice contributing, directly or indirectly, toward attainment of the overall objective? Explain.

Replicability/Reliability: Can the practice be replicated, either in full or part, under similar conditions or other situations? Explain.

Responsiveness: Is the practice consistent with the needs of the target beneficiaries? Explain.

Sustainability: Is the selected practice and/or its benefits likely to continue and, to continue being effective over the medium to long term? (Explain).

Example: Is the practice likely to continue after the initial funding? (Explain). Has the practice introduced benefits that are likely to continue being effective over a medium to long term? (Explain). An example of a benefit is change of stakeholder attitude in favour of a project or programme's overall objective.

Sources: (Murray et al, 2003; IFRC, 2004; ANPPCAN, 2005; ILO, 2006; ILO-IPEC, 2005; Chutha, 2005)

Determining a Lesson Learnt

Compared to good practices, there is not much difference in determining lessons learnt. First, both

documentation involves a rigorous exercise that includes reviewing reports as well as consulting implementers and beneficiaries to validate or verify information. Secondly, the attributes used in identifying good practices can be used as a guide to determining lessons learnt. The difference is from the definition of the two concepts - lessons learnt encompass all that influence the attainment of planned outputs, while good practices consist of that that is particularly innovative towards the successful achievement of planned output. Other attributes that guide in identifying lessons learnt include:

External Environment: What outside forces (political, economic, social, technological, legislative or environmental) have been significant towards attainment of the overall objective? (Explain).

Internal Environment: What internal attributes (human, financial and technological) have been significant towards attainment of the overall objective? (Explain).

Conclusion

This report does not claim to be exhaustive on the topic of lessons learnt, good practice and best practice. It however forms a starting reference point. Recommended is to build upon the discussions and come up with a handbook on best practice in fighting against child labour.

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Institute for Development Studies

The Institute for Development Studies (IDS) is one of the oldest and best-established research institutes in Africa. The IDS is a multipurpose and multi-disciplinary research institute focusing on social and economic issues of development in Kenya and the rest of Africa. It undertakes research and training in collaboration with other social sciences organisations, provides a facility that enhances intellectual stimuli between local and visiting scholars, and offers professional consultancy services to various government, regional and international development agencies, voluntary bodies and the general public in Kenya. Since its inception in 1965, IDS has carried out research on issues of development concern to Kenya, Africa, and the rest of the world. Its research findings have informed government policy, fed academic discourse, and enlightened students for more than a generation.

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The documentation of lessons learnt and good practices involves a rigorous exercise that initially entails review of reports aimed at identifying: a) a practice; b) objectives of the practice; c) stakeholders in the practice; d) strategies applied by the practice to attain its goals; e) accomplishments of the practice; f) the practice's challenges; g) general concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the attainment of the practice's objectives; and, h) outstanding concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the attainment of the practice's goals (Chutha, 2005; Munandi, 2005). The process of identifying concepts, processes or activities that influenced or contributed to the

Table: A Guide to Identifying a Good Practice

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Responsiveness: Is the practice consistent with the needs of the target beneficiaries? Explain.

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Example: Is the practice likely to continue after the initial funding? (Explain). Has the practice introduced benefits that are likely to continue being effective over a medium to long term? (Explain). An example of a benefit is change of stakeholder attitude in favour of a project or programme's overall objective.

Sources: (Murray et al, 2003; IFRC, 2004; ANPPCAN, 2005; ILO, 2006; ILO-IPEC, 2005; Chutha, 2005)

Determining a Lesson Learnt

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Internal Environment: What internal attributes (human, financial and technological) have been significant towards attainment of the overall objective? (Explain).

Conclusion

This report does not claim to be exhaustive on the topic of lessons learnt, good practice and best practice. It however forms a starting reference point. Recommended is to build upon the discussions and come up with a handbook on best practice in fighting against child labour.

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